

SOLIDARITY SASHES

MISS PIGGY and 19 OTHER TITLES for WOMEN WHO THREATEN TRUMP'S INSECURITIES

I believe the presidential election of 2016 has brought about a rise in suppressed anger about many significant, legitimate issues in America, including a depressed economy, terrorist threats, political distrust, and class disparity, to name just a few. It has also brought out some things I disagree with strongly. Whether toward the disabled, Mexicans, Muslims, war heroes or any number of people – including those who simply have differing views – Republican nominee, Donald Trump, has communicated a pattern of hate- and fear-mongering. He has unleashed a shocking wave of disparaging views and immature verbal assaults on others. One wave, of particular note for this project, is his pattern of name-calling and degrading women.

Alicia Machado, Miss Universe 1996, was mentioned in the first presidential debate by Hillary Clinton because of derogatory, verbal abuse that she

endured by Trump following her win. Trump's response in his interview on *Fox News Live* on September 27, 2016, when asked about this being brought up in the debate, was to double-down and justify his 20-year-old, racist, body-shaming remarks, further attacking her. Upon hearing this, I was overwhelmed with disgust at either his ignorance or his flagrant chauvinism. This was even before the release of the now-infamous 2005 audio recording with *Access Hollywood*, where Trump bragged about his unsolicited, sexually aggressive moves on women.

In "Solidarity Sashes," the names and words Trump has used against women – words meant to emotionally harm and publicly demean – are transformed into titles to share with and empower people in solidarity together. The words take the form of wearable body sashes to directly reference the pageant context of Machado's experience, as well as

the Suffragists who fought for women's right to vote over 100 years ago. These sashes highlight the absurdity and transparency of Trump's insecurities. They are an expression of empathy and a refusal to accept the objectification of women.

To be clear, this project is not a pro-Hillary statement. It is a pro-dignity statement. I shared a prototype with my students and colleagues who voiced a desire to wear a sash, too. To easily allow others to join in, I made patterns for paper sashes so that anyone, anywhere, can print, color, assemble and wear their own. They can be downloaded from my web site: originalia.org/art_SolidaritySashes.htm. I will wear all 20 – a different one for each day – leading to Election Day: Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

— Julie Mader-Meersman
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