

Armory Week Lowdown: Shows to See

Sharmistha Ray, New York, 2 March 2019



Carol Saft, *Three Men Carry* (2001). Bronze. 15.24 x 17.78 x 3.81 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Carol Saft: *Fallen Men*
Lesley Heller Gallery, 54 Orchard Street
20 February–7 April 2019

On the Lower East Side, Carol Saft's small figurative bronze sculptures on view at Lesley Heller Gallery are part of an ongoing series that focus on moments of communal empathy. These miniature figures are first hand-carved with a penknife by Saft in wax, before being cast in bronze; their forms bear the markings of the artist's touch, just as the compositions of these works show bodies embracing, holding, or supporting one another. In *Up and Over* (2008)—a wall-mounted seven-inch sculpture that depicts two men—the stronger, more able man is caught in the action of heaving a man that appears to be physically limp over his shoulder. In *Dancing Men* (2010), two men are poised facing each other to either begin or end a ballroom dance. The figures have a coarse, unadorned quality to them that amplify their frank sincerity.

Given that the sculpted figures are almost all men, *Fallen Men* offers a radical—and hopeful—gesture when it comes to questions of healing in the age Trump, #MeToo, and toxic masculinity. As Saft herself says of her bronze figures: 'It is the humanity of my figure's gestures that I hope will endure for as long as the bronze of which they are made survives.' The simple experience of these humble figures in a city where human connection can be fleeting is a precious gift in itself. Love is transformational, and we can all be its agents.