

Genesis BELANGER

*Garage Magazine,
Genesis Belanger's Dinnertime At the Core of the Void*

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GARAGE

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By Sophie Kemp

Genesis Belanger's Dinnertime At the Core of the Void

The artist's first ever major solo exhibition is now showing at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Connecticut.



Genesis Belanger, *A Fortress of Order and Generosity* (detail), 2020
Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin. Photo: Pauline Shapiro.

For [Genesis Belanger](#)'s first major solo exhibition, she turned several rooms at [The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum](#) into a funeral parlor where everyone's eating asparagus spears and manicured hands bloom up from the void. Belanger works primarily in unglazed ceramics, making pieces that tango between surrealism and pop art. In the context of this exhibition, her work takes on the form of a sort of fucked-up dinner party, one where fingers spring out of matte floral arrangements and the proportions of everything are completely destabilizing.



VIEW OF GENESIS BELANGER'S STUDIO, 2020 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.
PHOTO: PAULINE SHAPIRO.

The exhibition, titled "[Through the Eye of the Needle](#)," gets its name from the New Testament of the Bible. "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," says Jesus to his disciples. The name is tongue-in-cheek, a commentary on late stage hyper-capitalism where corporate greed seeps into every corner of everyday life, and where it feels like we are dying repetitive, small deaths in that process. On entering the exhibition, there's a waiting room. Deflated ceramic balloons hang flaccid from a potted plant, and a bag sits on a couch with its contents spilled out. You get this sense, almost immediately, that you are entering a space that has been recently abandoned and that everyone left in a hurry. Once you cross the threshold there's more of that sense of abandonment, and of isolation. In a vestibule connecting the main two arteries of the exhibition, a ceramic foot idles beneath a faucet. Belanger's work is often interested in disembodiment, of viewing human forms in fractured states.



"YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA GET," 2020 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.
PHOTO: PAULINE SHAPIRO.

In the largest of the three galleries dinner is served and chaos reigns. The colors are muted, Belanger favors soft grays and greens, evoking the 50s, where everything was doled out of cans and made out of plastic. In one corner of the room, a box of chocolates is filled with dismembered body parts, and in another a tongue sticks out of a horn that rests on a chair. In the center of the room is a massive curtain that belongs in a hospital waiting room or in some church basement. Belanger made all of this work before the pandemic, and it takes on an eerie and timely resonance today. You can't help but look at any of this work and think about images from March of vacant buildings and empty streets. Art is known to be prophetic, and Belanger's exhibition only underscores this truth.



"NO MORE NEWS," 2020 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.
PHOTO: PAULINE SHAPIRO.

This exhibition also underscores the continued urgency of anti-capitalist, feminist art. So much of looking at these pieces is about the experience of viewing feminized forms dismembered and disemboweled. Throughout the history of advertising, women have been reduced to parts of wholes: manicured hands holding cleaning products and showing off diamond rings, winking eyeballs and feet in shoes. Belanger's work hones in on this, and also reminds us that in doing this, in reducing bodies into parts, death forms. It is a lonely existence, being scrapped for parts. But this is the reality for all of us, when you really think about it.