

Genesis BELANGER

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Genesis Belanger experiments with forms while establishing supreme aesthetic abilities over artistic narratives. While her work has always encapsulated feelings of being perpetually disturbed and frustrated by gender biases and social oppression, she also reflects on the self and its myriad connections, through everyday life. The Brooklyn-based multimedia artist is currently platforming the bodies of her ceramic artworks at **Gallery Perrotin's Paris** outpost. The surreal art theatre titled ***Blow Out*** paves its way into reflecting the multifaceted meaning of the title, to stage the story of a high-living heartbreak. The illustrious solo exhibition featuring Belanger's works in ceramics along with her experiments in gouache has been on view since October 15, 2022, and will be on display till December 17, 2022.



The waning moon sculpture on displayImage: Courtesy of Pauline Shapiro, Courtesy of Perrotin

The Brooklyn-based artist is known for her creative ability to target societal demons which she stages as glamorously animated figures and forms. Her ceramics, primarily, in soft and subtle visual tones appear as perfect ensembles for clay animation, platformed as intangible sculptural contrivances. It is only as one starts relating and observing her dramatic art set design, does the dark witty road she takes to portray tormenting issues register. Belanger approaches her designs through various art movements including—Baroque, Pop, Art Deco, Surrealism, and Chicago Imagism, a direct indication of her experiences from working in the fashion industry.



The close-out saleImage: Courtesy of Pauline Shapiro, Courtesy of Perrotin



Sculptural elements from Genesis Belanger's exhibitionImage: Courtesy of Pauline Shapiro, Courtesy of Perrotin

Exploring the multitude of meanings of a ‘blowout,’ Belanger curates the exhibition in a series of three—intertwined, thorny, and complex installations. A close-out sale, remnants of a gala dinner, and a surgeon’s room are each designed to dramatise the reverberating catastrophes of everything grave and sensational. Rolled-out pigmented clay sheets carved into sinister little body parts—severed fingers, bent limbs, dismembered torsos, flappy tongues, and carved-out organs, well-conceived with highly contrasting coloured aesthetics. Belanger’s world, built in discreet interiors starts to unfold with her close-out sale setting of a lonely discount store. A powder-coated steel pushcart assumes the burden of presumptions latched onto masculinity.



Installation view featuring Healthy Living, Impulse Buy and Three for OneImage: Courtesy of Pauline Shapiro, Courtesy of Perrotin

The pushcart ironically titled ‘Healthy Living’ brims with a surplus of phallic goods including—a soda pop baring with a squirming tongue, a used milk carton with a flaccid straw, ceramic hot dogs in a bun, a bunch of saggy asparagus, and a thorny cactus. Everything is representative of hegemonic masculinity that in Belanger’s world is caged in a cart reduced to powerlessness. Furthermore, one of her latest experiments in the form of wall-mounted dioramas entitled ‘Impulse Buy’ offers a pretty-looking shelf on hand-crafted tiles, mounted with used goods, and a severed hand. She centre stages the room with a life-size bubble gum machine ‘Three for one’ whose sunny demeanour masks a dark disarray of illogical aspirations and washed-up ambitions.



The decadent banquet setting from the exhibitionImage: Courtesy of Claire Dorn, Courtesy of Perrotin



Installation view of the 'Blow Out' exhibitionImage: Courtesy of Claire Dorn, Courtesy of Perrotin

The following room unfolds as the still-life aftermath of a heedlessly self-indulgent dinner party. Clay-crafted lego bouquets arranged with flowers and occasionally manicured fingers surround the hall with a buffet table with clean white sheet exhibited at the centre of the space, the table serving severed limbs wearing luxurious accessories, costly items, half-burnt candles, and leftover food created out of clay, lends the neat buffet table a mysterious and almost eerie vibe. Diagonal to the table, Belanger places a pretty-looking teal chaise lounge, seating a posed nude female, cut in pieces, the stoneware sculptures resonate with the American artist's previous designs reflecting on society's reduction of a woman to their physical countenance. Next to the body parts, a throwaway carpet slips down the lounge carrying a spilt bowl of fruits. The room also showcases two dazzling table lamps designed as headless women, posing their way through the decadent party in frilly chemise tops.



The buffet table and sculptural lamps on displayImage: Courtesy of Claire Dorn, Courtesy of Perrotin

A dejected neurotic is personified through two wall-mounted dioramas emphasising Belanger's skill of changing scales and playing with narratives. A downcast head and a broken mirror clutched in a severed hand, surrounded by loose prescription drugs, and deflated balloons, offers a lens into Belanger's documentary style of self-reflection and absurd solutions to everyday problems. Shifting perspective in the farther end of the room, Belanger's potted plant-bearing cut oranges titled the 'Waning moons' are staged next to four well-dressed busts.



Installation view featuring *Minor Procedure* and *Masculine* still life artworks
Image: Courtesy of Pauline Shapiro, Courtesy of Perrotin



Minced body parts crafted with clay
Image: Courtesy of Claire Dorn, Courtesy of Perrotin

Taking a more sinister turn on the artist's perspective centred on problems deeply ingrained in society, mostly concerning women and their stature, one moves to the third room, displaying the interiors of a depraved surgeon's operating room. The eerie silence that prevails is a surreal evocation of the feeling of doom that lurks over hospital waiting rooms. A woman's minced body parts are strapped to a purple gurney, styled with a bottle of uncorked champagne and a loose stiletto. The pink straps tying down the body parts can barely hold the pieces together, indicating the surgeon's incompetence and ignorance. Sited on a nearby surgery table are certain oddballs in the form of a tape dispenser with a frisking tongue, another potted cactus with a ribbon tied around it, three manicured fingers, a wrench, and a large molar. The discomforting aura of the space further takes the form of a pastel-coloured curtain that conceals a group of women waiting patiently for their turns. Their identities are almost entirely concealed, except for their voguish footwear that protrudes from below. Do the four women patiently wait for their turn to meet death, perhaps?



The concealed women waiting behind the curtainsImage: Courtesy of Claire Dorn, Courtesy of Perrotin

Art has always been a powerful medium to express emotions that are difficult to. Through all of its glares and glories, it remains at the artist's disposal for sentimental expressions, subject to perceptive changes owing to the observers. Genesis Belanger's artworks are powerful. Voicing uncomfortable scenarios in visually appealing settings, she is able to portray and vocalise her strong opinions in a palatable way for viewers to digest.

The exhibition 'Blow Out' will be on view at Gallery Perrotin, Paris till December 17, 2022.