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Spike Island

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Nina Beier

European Interiors

21 July to 23 September 2018

Preview: Friday 20 July, 6–9pm



Danish artist Nina Beier works with an array of objects that carry particular social histories, from human hair wigs to mechanical rodeo bulls and cigars to luxury soap. By physically challenging these objects in various ways, she investigates how their value is constructed and communicated and reveals implicit power structures.

For *European Interiors*, Beier attempts to loosen up binary constructs such as masculine/feminine, interior/exterior, organic/artificial, global/domestic. For example, the artist employs real hair wigs grown by women in China and India that have been bleached, permed, dyed, cut, and styled in order to imitate a variety of western hair types. Each wig is framed under glass, shifting its status into that of an image while also emphasising its physicality.

Beier uncovers multiple layers of meaning in her objects: what is implied through the intention, use and trading of the objects and perhaps most importantly, what is projected onto them. A central work in the exhibition is the large installation *Female Nude* (2015). The nut of the endangered *Lodoicea* palm tree, native to the Seychelles, is the largest plant seed on earth. Exhibited on a mound of fertilizer, the seed is anthropomorphised: appearing as hips, a vagina and buttocks. Displaying the seed in this way, Beier makes use of fetishized motifs pointing to the violence of globalisation while foregrounding its exoticised narrative: *Lodoicea* seeds are more frequently collected than germinated. Shown alongside this work is *Beast* (2018); two motorised rodeo bulls repeatedly perform their act of resistance in a mechanical ballet that simulates the rejection of human domination.

At a timely moment, *European Interiors* dissects a jumble of power structures that make up our current reality from the most intimate to a global scale.

Image credit: Nina Beier, *Beast* (2018) Mechanical bull, plastic tanks, baby milk formula. Installation view (2018) Kunstmuseum St. Gallen. Photograph by Sebastian Stadler

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For further information and high resolution images please contact Jane Faram, Communications Manager on 0117 929 2266 or jane.faram@spikeisland.org.uk

Notes for editors:

- Nina Beier (b. 1975, Denmark, based in Berlin) has held solo exhibitions at the Kunstverein in Hamburg; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp; Kunsthaus Glarus, Switzerland; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco.

Beier's work has been included in group exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Artists Institute, New York; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Swiss Institute, New York; and the Power Station, Shanghai.

She has been awarded the Prize of the Böttcherstraße, Arkens Rejse pris and recently her work was included in 13th Biennale de Lyon and the 20th Biennale of Sydney. She is represented by Metro Pictures, NY, Standard (Oslo), Croy Nielsen, Vienna.

- Nina Beier's *European Interiors* is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation. Soap is generously supplied in-kind by Soapworks Ltd.
- Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design. It is a place where artists and the public can meet, enabling audiences to engage with artists' research and production. Within the 80,000 square foot building, Spike Island offers visitors a year-round programme of exhibitions, events and activities in the central gallery spaces, as well as providing working space for artists, designers and creative businesses.
- Spike Island is a partner of Tate as part of the Plus Tate network.
- The gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm. Entrance is free.

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