

METRO PICTURES

Sara VanDerBeek: Women & Museums

September 5 - October 5, 2019

Sara VanDerBeek presents six large photographs from her new series *Women & Museums* in our upstairs gallery. Exploring the female body as a site of production and reproduction, VanDerBeek worked using existing light in multiple museums across Europe and the United States to capture on film a more sensorial experience of museum objects. The artist's selections in this presentation were informed by in-depth research with museum staff at the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts during her recent exhibition there, as well as VanDerBeek's intuitive response to objects that resonated with her experiences as an artist, mother and woman.

This presentation makes the multifaceted and complex nature of interpreting material cultures evident, while also underscoring the role of photography in shaping our understanding of diverse histories, ancient cultures and societies today. Layering figures, faces and vessels, VanDerBeek presents the roles and representations of women as a continuum that is fluid and evolving. The work's associative network of images posits questions of institutional authority, cultural appropriation and the roles of artists and museums at this critical moment of discourse around the female form.

Eva Respini, Barbara Lee Chief Curator at the ICA/Boston, and curator of the critically acclaimed exhibition *Art in the Age of The Internet* observes: "VanDerBeek's large scale works collapse time, cultures, and space in a way that speaks to our digital age. These screen-like works emulate the scroll of images that has become the dominant mode of digesting images today. Yet VanDerBeek's insistence on materiality and deft use of analogue processes links these works to the rich history of photographic and film experimentation in collage and montage in the early and mid-twentieth century that has always been a touchstone for the artist."

Women & Museums V is emblematic of VanDerBeek's approach. In it, a ceramic vessel created in 1968 by Lucy M. Lewis is pictured atop a detail of a Japanese Meisen kimono printed in a pattern emulating Italian Renaissance marbled paper. Lewis, an innovative artist from the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico and mother of nine children, was a succinct and powerful translator of ancient patterns onto contemporary hand-built forms and a significant inspiration for VanDerBeek. The combination of the ceramic and textile patterns calls attention to the interconnected nature of the two mediums and their practitioners, many of whom were and are women.

Sara VanDerBeek was born in Baltimore in 1976 and lives and works in New York. She has had one-person exhibitions at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota; Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Baltimore Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Fondazione Memmo, Rome; and Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland. The exhibition *VanDerBeek + VanDerBeek*, curated by Sara VanDerBeek and Chelsea Spengemann and featuring work by both Sara VanDerBeek and her father, pioneering film and video artist Stan VanDerBeek who studied at Black Mountain College with Buckminster Fuller, John Cage and Merce Cunningham, will open on September 20 at Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Asheville, North Carolina.

For press inquiries, please contact Christine McMonagle at christine@metropictures.com

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Image: Sara VanDerBeek, *Women & Museums V*, 2019, dye sublimation print, 96 x 48 inches (image), 243.8 x 121.9 cm.

