

METRO PICTURES

Nina Beier

April 16 - May 23, 2015



Metro Pictures is pleased to announce the opening of Nina Beier's first one-person exhibition in New York, following her participation in two group shows at the gallery. The Danish artist, who is based in Berlin, spent part of the past year working in New York while she installed exhibitions at London's David Roberts Art Foundation and Objectif Exhibitions in Antwerp.

Beier's latest works at Metro Pictures elaborate on her interest in the relationship between objects and their representation. Persistently tracking the status of images in our world, Beier develops a transmutable lexicon all her own. She extracts objects from their circumscribed settings and exposes their layers of historical, cultural and social information.

In *Plunge*, a series of sculptures, Beier selects photographs found on image banks and reproduces them using actual objects. Cast in clear resin inside oversized wine glasses and hollow glass man

nequin heads, the individual objects are suspended in a paradoxical state in which they simultaneously remain independent things, comprise an image and become parts of a sculpture.

In another series, Beier presses Hermès silk neckties, with their distinctive all-over patterns, inside large frames with down jackets, sleeping bags, feathers and human hair wigs. Approximations of two-dimensional compositions, the neckties coil around sleeping bags, constricting the suggested figures inside them into a semblance of an embryonic form, or animate the jackets, wigs and feathers as if caught in a sudden windstorm.

"Beier's recent inquiries are centered on ubiquitous representations of things that appear on and within other things, questioning the ways objects at once are exhausted by human signification yet are not fully determined by language and apprehension." – in progress essay by the Post Brothers.

Nina Beier's exhibition "Cash for Gold" opens at Kunstverein Hamburg on May 22 (catalogue published by Mousse with text by John Miller). Her exhibition at Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius, Lithuania opens June 20 and she will contribute a work to this summer's exhibition of public art on Governor's Island. Beier is the 2014 recipient of Germany's prestigious Kunstpreis der Boetcherstrasse.

Beier has had one-person exhibitions at Kunsthhaus Glarus, Switzerland; Nottingham Contemporary, UK; Mostyn, Llandudno, UK; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. Her work has been included in group shows at Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; CCA Wattis, San Francisco; Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; The Artists Institute, New York; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Swiss Institute, New York; and the Power Station, Shanghai.

Persian rugs provided by Eliko Antique and Decorative Rugs. Eliko is a wholesale dealer of antique and semi-antique rugs in business for over 30 years. It serves trade clients worldwide, with an ever-changing collection of fine Persian, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, European and Caucasian pieces. Eliko maintains an inventory of more than 5,500 rugs in all sizes, with a strong emphasis on oversize pieces.

519 W 24TH ST NEW YORK, NY 10011 T 212 206 7100 F 212 337 0070
WWW.METROPICTURES.COM GALLERY@METROPICTURES.COM

Beier's practice charts lines of flight through the social and political problematics of representation and exchange, uncovering and re-shrouding phenomena so as to identify moments of conflict and correlation. One of her primary fields of interest is that of tracing the fidelity of meaning through the convoluted relationships between objects and images, pinpointing the various ways mediation mutates information from things to representations and back again—how images subsume or discard their referents to become distinct objects in their own right. Beier's recent inquiries are centered on ubiquitous representations of things that appear on and within other things, questioning the ways objects at once are exhausted by human signification yet are not fully determined by language and apprehension. Teetering on the edge between deep symbolism and an emptiness of meaning, Beier's object collages interrogate the interpretation of things, dialectically contrasting allegorical and symbolic possibility with a tendency to experience objects as being what they are.

Beier's investigations have frequently drawn her to textiles, as it is a cultural product that mediates between flat surfaces and three dimensional forms and signals to her a field that is at once loaded with historical and socio-political significance, yet often operates with a flippant logic of non-meaning, free-expression, and fashion, free of interpretation. An inheritor of a colonialist and museological paradigm, the design policy of Hermes states that their scarves can depict *anything*. Like the abstract values of commodities exchanged in the mysterious realm of the global market, each object is divorced from its historical particularity and has joined a conversation of commodities speaking to other commodities; all existence enters a field of generalized exchange.

This lack of restriction bears resemblance to a trope in stock photography that feature objects in open metaphorical configurations, which Beier has repeatedly returned to in her work. Here too the depicted object compositions have no particular intention injected from the author's side, and the more they can possibly mean to their viewers the more profitable they are. The now-ubiquitous image banks incorporate everything into their system, spanning the full range of visual phenomena in anticipation of possible client needs. Often author-less and homeless images produced for potential commercial circulation, they contain mutable, empty, and open-ended metaphors so as to anticipate and envisage a limitless variety of possible uses, intentions, and customers. As the inventory of these images grows and grows, the stock becomes more and more specific while simultaneously becoming more and more generic, resolving some age-old tensions at the heart of industrial cultural production in general: between formula and originality, familiarity and novelty, quantity and singularity. The cataloguing of the images has become more and more complex, continuously defining and redefining imagery in order to bait the right customer, forestalling the client's clumsy process of matching a general idea to a particular representation. Not only objects or people or places enter into this world, but now even feelings, ideas, concepts. Objects and juxtapositions of objects in this field become tools of abstraction, readymade quasi-objects teeming with analogy and metaphor. Particular objects enter into the infinite inventories of these varied terrains and become flattened, literally and figuratively, at once interchangeable, equivalent, and vacant of meaning, yet charged with possible significations.

Indicated in both the rise in popularity of objects in textiles and the use of objects as empty analogues in stock photography, there seems to be a growing renewal of interest in current thinking into the possibilities of objects to not need to represent. The "(re)turn to things" reverberates throughout contemporary art, science and technology studies, anthropology, sociology, and back to philosophy, as scholars grapple with different ways of coming to terms with the thingness of things and making sense of a world shot through with reification and commodity fetishism. One can say that the flatness offered by the ties and the comprehensive miscellany of image banks offers a promise of a non-hierarchical relation between things, a "flat ontology" where no single object is deemed inferior or superior, authentic or inauthentic, just as Beier reduces her varied things and things with images of other things into an indifferent and neutral plane. Rejecting anthropocentric projection, objects are regarded as real, discrete, and independent, irreducible to their perception or relations or uses.

Beier makes visible the paradoxical condition of objects and signification today, simultaneously acknowledging the emptiness of things yet demanding that meaning can still be found in such an impasse.

-extracts from in progress essay by Post Brothers