

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

GENESIS BELANGER: THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE September 21, 2020 to May 9, 2021

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *Through the Eye of a Needle*, the first major solo museum exhibition of New York-based artist Genesis Belanger (b. 1978). The exhibition will debut an entirely new body of work specially conceived for the Museum and will be on view September 21, 2020 to May 9, 2021. Belanger's first museum presentation was in *Objects Like Us*, a 2018 group exhibition at The Aldrich curated by Amy Smith-Stewart and David Adamo.

Genesis Belanger's conceptual methodology blends Surrealism and Pop art with a self-possessed feminism informed by a professional career inside the fashion and advertising industries. Her studio practice is chiefly centered on the creation of porcelain and stoneware sculptures and tableaux. Staging her sculptural objects on upholstered furnishings of her own invention, Belanger constructs uncanny scenes that perform narratives about our anxiety afflicted present.



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

Her process begins with patterned forms pressed from rolled clay sheets, which she then models by hand and only fires once. She never uses glazes and chooses clays for their natural color, preferring a soft confectionary palette: creams, beiges, and pastels. Uniformly matte, the sculptures impersonate stone and cement and parade inherently relatable personalities.

Anthropomorphizing common household objects, Belanger imparts beauty products, design accessories, and food items with feminized attributes: lipsticks with wagging tongues, lamps with ladies' pearls, and tins with doey-eyed sardines. She fancies gendered motifs—well-manicured fingernails, lipstick smeared cigarettes, and candy-colored pills—that personify women's troubles, desires, and addictions. Her dreamlike jumbles invoke Surrealists like René Magritte and Kay Sage as well as Pop artists like Marisol and Claes Oldenburg, but her inimitable creations are undoubtedly about our image-obsessed moment.

At The Aldrich, Belanger will create her largest and most elaborate mise-en-scène to date. Dozens of animated objects will be attentively arranged on ghostly furnishings: a standing piano, an extended dining table, a round coffee table, a sofa, and more. The furniture will be shrouded in monochromatic grey upholstered skirts while an immense pleated curtain will fill an entire gallery wall, casting the room in a palpable funereal atmosphere.

Genesis Belanger (b. 1978) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She holds a BFA from The School of the Art Institute, Chicago, IL, and an MFA from Hunter College, New York, NY. Selected exhibitions include *Coins for the Ferryman*, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); *Holding Pattern*, New Museum, New York (2019); *A Strange Relative*, Genesis Belanger & Emily Mae Smith, Perrotin, New York (2018); and *Cheap Cookie and a Tall Drink of Water*, Mrs. Gallery, Maspeth, NY (2017).

The exhibition will be accompanied by the artist's first museum publication, a full-color 80 page catalogue, featuring an essay by the exhibition's curator, Amy Smith-Stewart.

Organized by Amy Smith-Stewart, Senior Curator, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

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