

**NINA BEIER**  
**12.09.2014 -13.12.2014**



## NINA BEIER

In 1957, Roland Barthes published *Mythologies*. In this landmark collection of essays, he examined the tendency of contemporary social value systems to create modern myths and examined how signs are elevated to the level of symbols. His book, considered a key antecedent of cultural studies, coincided with the expansion of advertisement and marketing industries in the 50s.

In *Mythologies*, Barthes calls upon concepts of semiology previously developed by philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century. Saussure describes the connections between an object (the signified) and its linguistic representation (such as a word, the signifier) and how the two are connected. Working from this structure, Barthes builds a conception of the modern myth as a further sign, with its roots in language, but to which something has been added. To make a myth, the sign itself is used as a signifier, and a new meaning is added, which is the signified; but according to Barthes, this is not added arbitrarily. Although we are not necessarily aware of it, modern myths are created with a reason.

In conceiving this exhibition at DRAF, our primary intention was to scrutinise Nina Beier's latest developments in sculpture by gathering a group of works, either commissioned or presented in London for the first time, and unravel a carefully researched study of contemporary symbolic language, myths and images.

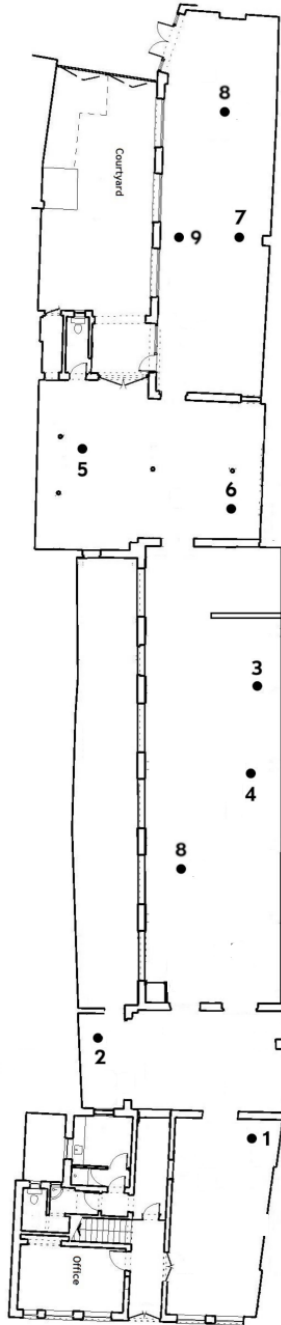
Dual motifs such as liquidity and aridity, containers and the contained, production and products, objects and images, surface and depth, consumption and labour, offer a dynamic point of entry into the exhibition. Each work, or group of works, scrutinises collective products of imagery and cultural interaction, instruments through which we constitute and articulate the world. Beier's work deconstructs and transforms digital components (digital patterns,



stock images, etc). But at the same time, it refuses abstraction by embracing the – sometimes absurd or grotesque - materiality of the gesture, of the objects, of the environment, of sculpture itself for it reinforces its classical vocabularies or museological approaches.

What constitutes the links of the chain of signification (and the contingent relationship between signifier and signified) when everything can be a symbol and all symbols loose their value? Hybrid and unstable, these works are bastard objects, paradoxes embodied through ideas of display, value, ownership, cessation and growth. They investigate the transitory nature of both objects and people. They suggest an antagonism at the core of the relationship between man and creation, and assert a combative status between surface and subject, image and object. In doing so, Beier composes an exhibition with “confused” objects caught between the portrait and the portrayed that forms her own ‘Mythologies’.

Vincent Honoré Director, DRAF



1. **SCHEME** is an installation from **2014** for which Nina Beier has subscribed the gallery to a local vegetable box service that weekly delivers seasonal produce. Each week new vegetables replenish the old, and the stack of green crates grows over the course of the exhibition. Mimicking images of sprawling, abundant yield, the display nods to the generic image of the 'horn of plenty.' The work is lent by Croy Nielsen, Berlin.

2. The flat screens of the three works **LOU LOU**, **POTATO POTATO** and **MONEY MONEY**, all **2013**, are commercially manufactured mock fireplaces that display digitally-animated flames while radiating heat. Here, the monitors have been re-programmed with throbbing animated objects: a perfume bottle, a potato, a wallet. These symbols of value, of desire, livelihood and wealth, allude to Beier's interest in narrative objects, extrapolated from the logic of script-writing theory.

The works are lent by Standard (Oslo) and Croy Nielsen, Berlin.

3. **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** is an installation from **2013** by **NINA BEIER** and **SIMON DYBBROE MØLLER**. The work comprises different replicas of Auguste Rodin's hand study sculptures including *The Hand of God*, *The Secret*, *Two Hands*, *Hand of Pianist* and *The Cathedral*. The original sculptures were made in the 1890s, when labour became increasingly estranged from the body as machines replaced the hand. Here, reproductions in varying sizes and materials are painted by the artists in crimson and fleshy tones. Removed from their pedestals, the severed hands splatter the tiled floor, pointing now to the digital realm of its artificial patterns.

The work is on loan from Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.

4. **TILEABLES** is a 125 square-metre mosaic of ceramic tiles printed with texture patterns designed for 3D modelling software to imitate surfaces such as skin, concrete and mud. This work, created for the exhibition, takes the relationship between the digital and physical namesake to its absurd

conclusion. In contrast to their digital use, the ancient tradition of ceramic tiling is considered one of the slowest-changing mediums, due to the labour involved in replacing surfaces. British economist David Ricardo (1772-1823) inaugurated the modern science of economics by locating value in the time of labour and fatigue, now complicated by the shift to the abstract cognitive activity of creative and digital industries.

This installation was made possible by the expertise and generosity of Johnson Tiles in producing the work in kind for DRAF, and will reconfigure and evolve for different spaces and contexts.

5. **LIQUID ASSETS** is a sculpture from **2013** seemingly comprising components of a suit of armour. These fragments are taken from a life-size bronze statue of a knight, which has been dissected, the 'flesh' removed, reducing the elements depicting his armour to autonomous objects. Here, the human is outlasted by the commodification of the bronze, itself vulnerable to melting down into another form of exchange value. The work is lent by Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.

6. **WALLET** is a sculpture from **2013** comprising unused white cotton underwear, which in this exhibition fills up a section of one of the glass cabinets displaying the sculpture *Liquid Assets*. Pressed flat against the glass, the underwear is both image and object. It recalls underwear stuffed into drawers, at the back of suitcases, or into shoes on the beach: a distortion of private habits in the public realm. As with *Stand* or *Industrial Revolution*, Beier hybridises existing works to produce new installations.

7. **STAND** is the title of three differently sized stacks of hand-knotted Persian carpets. The individual weaves of the carpets are largely lost from sight, yet the hand-knotted edges still present physical manifestations of their value and abstract labour-time. *Stand* acts as elaborate pedestals for a new series of works from 2014, **PLUNGE**.



Beier received the in-kind support of Persian carpet specialists Bakhtiyar, London to produce STAND at DRAF. The work is lent by Standard (Oslo), Oslo.

8. The compositions of objects suspended in resin in the **PLUNGE** series, created for this exhibition, adopt motifs borrowed from the pictorial language of photographers working for online image banks. In this stock photography, objects such as nail polish, neckties, pills, light bulbs and scissors are often used to create open-ended metaphors that are brought out by individual use. Beier's incongruous combinations offer a network of signifiers crystallised in the translucent matter of the resin.

#### **FORMAL PROBLEM BUSINESS PLUNGE**

Novelty martini glass, resin, Hermes tie

#### **WEALTH LEAK BEAUTY PLUNGE**

Novelty martini glass, resin, nailpolish

#### **SOCIAL DEPENDENCE RESOURCE PLUNGE**

Novelty martini glass, resin, choker chain, minibar bottles, whiskey

#### **RUSE ADDICTION ERUPTION PLUNGE**

Novelty white wine glass, resin, mouse trap, pills

#### **CROWD VISION WASTE PLUNGE**

Novelty white wine glass, resin, dried fish, light bulb

#### **SOLID CAUSALITY PRODUCE PLUNGE**

Novelty white wine glass, resin, coffee beans, ceramic cup



## **CREDIT FLOW CUTS PLUNGE**

Novelty champagne saucer, resin, credit card, scissors

The works are lent by Laura Bartlett, London.

9. **FLOWAGE, 2013**, in which blocked garden hoses extend water into the gallery space, plays with the unspoken physiology of the building, regurgitating the (usually hidden) fluidity. The pledge of enduring commitment and permanence represented by the diamonds rings fitted to the hoses is subverted by the flow of the water beneath, a literal manifestation of the liquidity ubiquitous in Beier's research into the liberation of the sign.

The work is lent by Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City.





Nina Beier, *Scheme*, 2014. Online organic vegetable box scheme, delivered to host gallery at timed intervals, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Croy Nielsen, Berlin



Nina Beier and Simon Dybbroe Møller, *Industrial Revolution*, 2013. Replicas of the Rodin sculptures (*The Hands of God*, *The Secret*, *Two Hands*, *Hand of Pianist*, *The Cathedral*). Bronze, plaster, resin, acrylic, paint, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artists and Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.



Nina Beier, *Liquid Assets* (detail), 2013. Cut up bronze sculpture, dimensions variable. Installation view, *Liquid Assets*, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Glasgow, 2013. Courtesy the artist and Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.



## NOTES ON THE ARTIST

Nina Beier was born in 1975 in Aarhus, Denmark. She lives in London and graduated from the Royal College of Art, London in 2004. She has recently exhibited her work in 2014 in solo exhibitions at Mostyn, Llandudno and Nottingham Contemporary; at the Glasgow Sculpture Studios in 2013 as well as in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna in 2014; Centre Pompidou, Paris and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2013; Museion Bozen, Bolzano, The Artist's Institute, New York, KW Institute For Contemporary Art, Berlin and Tate Modern, London in 2012.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition is curated by Vincent Honoré, with Sandra Pusterhofer.

It was produced by DRAF including Rachel Cass and Benedict Goodwin, assisted by Soianne Berner, Celia Archer and Sofia Lemos. It was installed with Francesco Gorni, Harry Lawson and Alex Roberts.

The Founder, the Board of Trustees and the Director of DRAF would like to thank the artist for her trust and commitment, and the following individuals, galleries and organisations whose invaluable help made this exhibition possible:

Johnson Tiles, for their generosity and in particular, Darren Clanford for his expertise in producing *Tileables*.

The Danish Arts Foundation for supporting the production of the *Plunge* series.

Bakhtiyar for supporting the production of *Stand*, in particular to Masoud Mazaheri-Asadi for his generosity and enthusiasm.

Laura Bartlett Gallery, London, Croy Nielsen, Berlin, Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City, Standard (Oslo), Oslo for their assistance and for hosting the artist's dinner.

Frontier Craft Lager for providing the drinks at the Opening Reception, in particular to Benedict Sedgwick for his kind support.

Special thanks to Gaëlle Merlin and to Zayne Armstrong for their professional expertise.

## **OCTOBER AT DRAF**

An Evening of Performances

Thursday 16 October, 7-10pm, free entry.

DRAF is transformed into a stage for our annual evening of performances.

Quinn Latimer & Megan Rooney, Joe Moran, planningtorock, Sarah Lucas and Eloise Hawser present new live works for an unmissable event.

Thanks to DRAF Galleries Circle (Sadie Coles HQ, Hauser & Wirth, Lisson Gallery, The Modern Institute, Sprüth Magers, White Cube), Mousse magazine and Frontier Craft Lager.



## **DRAF**

David Roberts Art Foundation (DRAF) is an independent, non-profit foundation founded in 2007. It is directed and curated by Vincent Honoré. DRAF develops an international and collaborative programme of contemporary art exhibitions, commissions and live events.

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The nearest tube stations are Mornington Crescent and Camden Town.  
DRAF is a 15 minute walk from Kings Cross St. Pancras.  
Busses: 24, 27, 29, 88, 134, 168, 214, 253

## **OPENING TIMES**

Thu - Sat, 12 - 6 pm  
Tue - Wed by appointment

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