

New York Exhibition

Rachel Maclean

NATIVE ANIMALS

Sept 24 – Nov 9, 2019

Opening:

Tuesday, Sept 24, 6 – 8 p.m.



Native Animals, 2010, Digital print, 20" x 30".

Arsenal Contemporary NY is pleased to announce esteemed Scottish artist Rachel Maclean's first solo exhibition in New York. Maclean's densely rich environments combine horror and fantasy to critique modern desires and fears. In creating original costumes and sets, and employing herself as the prime actor, Maclean has established a distinct filmic and photographic voice which deftly melds common folklore with contemporary hyper-realities while conveying a rich satire on our world.

Made up of a series of digital paintings and a filmic installation, *Native Animals* cloaks itself in traditional narratives and images of British identity to discuss the contemporary political climate. The characters that make up the exhibition and the settings in which they are placed recall the stories on which British children are raised, such as *The Wind in the Willows*, and an idyllic agrarian lifestyle put forward by landscape painters such as Gainsborough and Constable. Due to their ubiquity, these foundational stories are infinitely adaptable — in *Native Animals*, Maclean pushes them to an absurd end while commenting on how their enduring quality and legibility has been harnessed for diverse political agendas.

A multi-character, 8-channel film sits in the centre of the exhibition. Each character, from a porcine union-jack dotting politician to a phone-addicted white cat, stand in as an archetype in the UK's political landscape as it considers its exit from the European Union. Set apart on independent monitors, these anthropomorphized incarnations menace one another through tacit acts of ridicule in

a perpetually cycling theatre, falling between farcical and cruel. Maclean points us to the mechanisms of belonging and nativeness at play in the performance of national identity.

I'm Terribly Sorry, a 2018 VR work by the artist, will be screened in the backroom and is the artist's first piece in this medium. Similarly set in a dystopian urban British landscape of manic tourism, I'm Terribly Sorry reflects the desire for constant documentation and performance of the self. The interactive virtual reality piece, like Native Animals, deals with the divisive campaigns of the UK government leading up the Brexit vote, focusing on how these social realities construct new subjects for the 21st century.

Based in Glasgow, Rachel Maclean (b.1987, Edinburgh) graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in 2009. Her work came to public attention in New Contemporaries later that year. In 2017, she represented Scotland at the 57th Venice Biennale. She has since received significant acclaim, with major solo shows at the Zabudowicz Collection, London; Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh; Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Château de Servières, Marseilles; Artpace San Antonio, Texas; HOME Manchester and the Tate Britain.

Information:

Marie-Eve Lafontaine

Managing Director

+1 212 658 0017

melafontaine@arsenalcontemporary.com

www.arsenalcontemporary.com