

Wrecking Ball

Kate Mackeson

May 13 – June 25, 2022

"Instead of considering truth, I considered the effects."
(*Digestif*, Kate Mackeson at La Plage)

On February 26, 2020, Elise Stefanik, a congresswoman from New York and a member of Donald Trump's impeachment defense team, received a round of applause while being publicly acknowledged by Trump a day after the US Senate acquitted him on two articles of impeachment. In the image Stefanik stands out in a red dress in a sea of mostly navy or black suits, a newly minted symbol of Trumpism. Stefanik, once lauded for being a millennial moderate, induces both identities through physical signaling that applies splitting based on the viewer.

Kate Mackeson is interested in the repetitional value of images depicting distinguishable women wearing a red dress, the human impulse to categorize their grouping, and the problem of "inessential ornament" in the way information is accepted or assumed based on the aforementioned details.

Visualized through a mix of architecture and iconic imagery, the works in *Wrecking Ball* apply a presupposed value where the stereotypical symbol of each woman acts as a main driver for the images selected by Mackeson. As a literal interpretation of the visual and mental climb these roles provoke, the grouping of 'women' and 'red dress' become a physical barrier built of immediate, predetermined stereotypes and their worn references materialized in thin aluminum framing.

The social coding of the stereotype traces itself back to an impulse. The largely recognizable female celebrity or politician in a red dress, whether celebrated or hated, conjures a certain stability through signaling. The strength of the image coupled with Mackeson's precarious framing structure allows for a coexistence of both instability and stability. One does not corrupt the other, rather the two definitions share a sightline that disowns the individual for the sake of the category.

Historically women have faced unique scrutiny through socialized mechanisms coded to dissolve the individual host into concepts that cycle through polarities meant to provoke on demand. The caging definition of a 'woman in a red dress', a mythological type, acts as a compulsion to signal visibility through a framework, an element that is activated through the sculptural works.

Each of the sculptures in *Wrecking Ball* features a cutaway, archway, or other architectural detail suggesting an interruption to the power of the image, rendering the projection without density beyond the framing. This module choice informs our current limits of truth, implying memetics as a narrative device influencing reason more than reality itself.

Kate Mackeson (b.1985) lives and works in London and received an MA at the Royal College of Art (London) in 2015. Mackeson has exhibited widely including Sundry, (London), Villa Concordia, (Germany), Pozi Driv Two, (London), Fructa, (Munich), La Plage (Paris), Exo Exo @ New Galerie (Paris), Cell Project Space (London). *Wrecking Ball* is Mackeson's first solo exhibition in the US, she is represented by Sundry, London.