

Greenspon presents *Columbine Cafeteria* by Bunny Rogers (b. 1990), the artist's first solo exhibition in the United States.

*Columbine Cafeteria* is both an exhibition and a sprawling installation, comprised of visual vignettes and artworks in a range of media including, digital animation, sculpture, textiles, clothing, stained glass, and paintings. This collision of old and new technologies is apt, as Rogers addresses well known, highly charged and difficult subjects in the uncomfortable zone between historical record and fantasy. As the exhibition title suggests, *Columbine Cafeteria* pivots around the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado. It is the second body of work that Rogers has dedicated to that watershed event; the first was presented in *Columbine Library*, her 2014 exhibition at Société, Berlin. Rogers has painstakingly researched not only the event but also the unsettling phenomena that arose in its wake, specifically on-line communities dedicated to the shooters Dylan and Eric. The artist likewise melds fantasy and fiction with forensic data, suggesting that our experiences reside in the flux between the two.

The tables and chairs used in the Columbine cafeteria, as well as garbage bins and mops used in public schools around the country, are referenced here in a series of meticulously fabricated sculptures that are manipulated into a type of portraiture. Arranged in installation-like tableaux, they are here infused with emotion, pathos, and beckon both sympathy and aversion. *Reject Chair set (1)*, (all works 2016) is a partially melted stack of plastic chairs that have fused together; suspended in mid-decomposition, it evokes the resigned sadness of Martin Kippenberger's drunken lampposts. Adjacent to this is Cafeteria set, a table surrounded by 14 chairs, the same that would have been arranged around the Columbine cafeteria tables. On the table is a smattering of apples, hand-carved to have jack-o-lantern faces, with votive candles, lit and flickering inside. The manufactured, benign horror of Halloween is transcribed onto the healthy snack, which is also a classic gift from student to teacher. It tinges the already loaded scene with the insinuation of trouble that was never supposed to happen—within the safe space of school, or of trick-or-treating. The apples appear throughout the gallery, huddled together in scattered groups, and take part in other artworks. So many carved faces could suggest stand-ins for the school kids themselves, while the amassment of their tiny lights has the effect of a vigil.

Rogers includes a video, two stained glass windows, and a suite of portraits in addition to the sculptural works. The characters depicted, and who populate both *Columbine Cafeteria* and *Columbine Library*, come from the cartoon series *Clone High*, aired from 2002-2003, which featured famous historical figures like Abraham Lincoln, Cleopatra, and Gandhi reincarnated as teenagers, navigating the dramas of high school. Rogers assumes the identity of the protagonist Joan

of Arc, defined by her cynicism and lack of feeling. In one episode, Joan meets a new clone, understood to be Mandy Moore, who teaches her how to appreciate a holiday called Snowflake Day. Joan finally responds with feelings, and calls her—with tears in her eyes—“an angel.” Rogers savors the connection between these two characters and, as if she were Joan, memorializes Mandy in several works throughout the exhibition. *Mandy’s Piano Solo in Columbine Cafeteria*, is a video of her at a piano, occasionally slugging from a bottle of wine, playing a trio of Elliot Smith songs in the digitally rendered, recreated space of the shootings.

In a highly aestheticized and mannered way, Rogers takes on the subject of childhood trauma, a complex arena that she shares with artists such as Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Robert Gober, and Karen Kiliminik to name some of the very few who have also tackled those difficult topics. Within the context of Columbine, Rogers brings forth the parallels between great vulnerability and great evil, which are so potent in the experience of every child. She raises questions about the formation of empathy, the nature of mourning and tragedy, as well as the possibilities for faith and redemption.

Bunny Rogers was born in Houston, Texas, and lives and works in New York City.

Recent exhibitions include: *Pure Fiction*, curated by Julie Boukobza, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris (group, 2016); *We are All Traitors*, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson (two-person, 2016); *wrjnger*, Foundation de 11 Lijnen, Oudenberg (solo, 2016); *Columbine Cafeteria*, Société, Berlin (solo, 2016); *Unorthodox*, Jewish Museum, New York (group, 2015–16); *jrassjr, Co-Workers: le réseau comme artiste*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (solo, 2015); *Columbine Library*, Société, Berlin (solo, 2014)

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