

Michael Benevento is pleased to present *Van Goddess and the Masturbakers*, a solo exhibition by New York based artist Gina Beavers. For her second installment with the gallery, Beavers expands her lurid palettes and sculpted surfaces into an experimental new body of work. With a buoyant feminist critique and sharp sense of humor, Van Goddess addresses the dissolving structures of masculinity today and throughout the canon of art history.

At the heart of the exhibition is a stage. A cubed platform, oversized and tilted precariously towards the viewer titled *Photoshop Mistake Mondrian Cube* (2018). Blocking all points of egress and stretched wall to wall, the stage is painted in classic Piet Mondrian style... à la Gina Beavers. Forms protrude out of Mondrian's gridded network of primary colors: a large relief of a face in *Mondrian Face* (2018), the top half of an apple in *Mondrian Apple* (2018), and the heel of a woman's shoe in *Mondrian Shoe* (2018). Atop the stage is a 28 inch cube of the same Mondrian paintings each full scale. To get backstage the viewer has to turn around and walk through the exhibition in its entirety.

Beavers navigates the viewer through the historical canon of male genius artists, the "master bakers," with images of desire and guitar culture. In the first room a cube of Van Gogh-esque paintings sit in front of a gigantic palette hanging on the wall, *Van Gogh's Palette* (2018). The famed *Starry Night* is reproduced into a pair of sizeable socks in *Van Gogh Socks* (2018), a single skirt in *Van Gogh Skirt* (2018), a huge mug in *Van Gogh Mug* (2018), and other museum gift shop take-aways. The seven foot palette looks as if it were stolen from Van Gogh's studio, and then comically enlarged. One could imagine a colossal sized palette knife hurriedly mixing floral colored paints en plein aire. Was this gargantuan Van Gogh suddenly overtaken with inspiration while walking through a field of flowers or haystacks? And was this T-Rex of art history able to capture the fleeting beauty before him in time? We may never know definitively but, as Beavers suggests, we can take a trinket of this genius' aura home with us for a reasonable price.

We are then whisked into the room of master cake bakers, where Beavers pokes fun at grotesque TV cooking personalities celebrated in popular culture. TV greats like Buddy Valastro of *Cake Boss* or Paul Hollywood of the *Great British Baking Show* inform three cake paintings titled *Butt Cake How To* (2018), *Flower Cake How To* (2018), and *Bustier Cake How To* (2018). Each painting depicts a step-by-step tutorial on how to make a cake in the female form, reducing sexualized female bodies to bulbous edible shapes. Through the lens of cake baking, Beavers shows us how the female body is eaten and consumed both literally and allegorically.

The concept of baking continues in the next room with *Guitar Cake How To* (2018), a large painting illustrating a frame-by-frame tutorial for a multilayered guitar cake. A complimentary cube of

paintings act as a prism for capitalist desires; a sexualized mouth spewing out wads of cash in *Money Lips I* (2018), a cascade of coins covering a woman's crotch in *Crotch Coins* (2018), and female eyes with thick impasto eyelashes, *Eyes with Yellow Shadow* (2018). This current of desire and male bravado brings *Van Goddess and the Masturbakers* full circle.

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