Mika Rottenberg
Easypieces

Employing absurdist satire to address critical issues of our time, New York–based artist Mika Rottenberg (b. 1976, Buenos Aires, Argentina) creates videos and installations that offer subversive allegories for contemporary life. Her videos interweave documentary elements and fiction, and often feature protagonists who work in factory-like settings, manufacturing goods ranging from cultured pearls (NoNoseKnows, 2015) to the millions of brightly colored plastic wholesale items sold in Chinese superstores (Cosmic Generator, 2017). “Mika Rottenberg: Easypieces,” the artist’s first solo museum exhibition in New York, brings together several of her recent videos and kinetic sculptures, set within installations that expand on the videos’ narratives and intensify the disorienting aspects of her work. The exhibition also premieres a new video installation, Spaghetti Blockchain (2019), which investigates the ever-changing relationships between humans and the material world.

“Easypieces” takes its title from the book Six Easy Pieces (1994), in which theoretical physicist Richard Feynman introduces the fundamentals of physics to general audiences. Rottenberg’s exhibition likewise considers our interactions with matter, while questioning human attempts to explain the inexplicable. Her investigations reveal the unseen connections between the basic or “easy” items that we manipulate and consume almost without thinking—from luxury goods and plastic knickknacks to emails, Bitcoin, and particle beams—and matters of the universe beyond our control.

Together, the works in the exhibition trace central themes in Rottenberg’s oeuvre, including labor, technology, distance, energy, and the increasingly interconnected relationship between the mechanical and the corporeal. Through these works, Rottenberg illuminates how seemingly insignificant objects and practices can radically alter our environment, our social structures, the ways we communicate and interact with one another, and aspects of our existence that we cannot elucidate or even imagine.

This exhibition is curated by Margot Norton, Curator.

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