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MUSEUM

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NEW MUSEUM TO PRESENT THE FIRST MAJOR NEW YORK SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION BY MIKA ROTTENBERG



Mika Rottenberg, *Spaghetti Blockchain*, 2019 (still). Single-channel video installation, sound, color; approx. 21 min. © Mika Rottenberg. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

New York, NY... The New Museum is pleased to present the first New York solo museum presentation by New York–based artist Mika Rottenberg (b. 1976, Buenos Aires, Argentina), on view in the Museum’s Second Floor Galleries from June 26 to September 15, 2019. “**Mika Rottenberg: Easypieces**” will premiere a new video installation, *Spaghetti Blockchain* (2019), alongside several of Rottenberg’s recent video installations and kinetic sculptures.

Employing absurdist satire to address critical issues of our time, Rottenberg creates videos and installations that offer subversive allegories for contemporary life. Her works 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” 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 relationship to the material world,

while questioning human attempts to control or 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 objects to emails, Bitcoin, and particle beams—and matters of the universe beyond our control.

In *Spaghetti Blockchain*, Rottenberg creates a kaleidoscopic apparatus in which energies and objects transport and transform across states of matter, weaving together images and sounds from myriad sources: Tuvan throat singers in Siberia, the CERN antimatter factory, a potato farm in Maine, and ASMR-inducing tabletop vignettes. As with a blockchain, the narratives Rottenberg presents do not culminate, but feed into one another in perpetuity. The deep, guttural overtone produced by a Tuvan throat singer in the vast Siberian countryside travels through a makeshift, rotating hexagonal structure to an antimatter factory, where giant servers power multicolored wires and an array of materials are melted, cut, sprayed, kneaded, smashed, and scored. As with many of her works, Rottenberg confuses interior and exterior, macro- and microscopic, right-side up and upside-down, self and other, prompting viewers to become more aware of their own bodies.

The exhibition also brings together several of Rottenberg’s best-known kinetic works and videos, set within sculptural installations that expand on the videos’ narratives and intensify the disorienting aspects of her work. At the exhibition entrance, viewers will encounter *AC and Plant* (2018), a sculpture comprising the back of an air conditioner that drips water onto a potted plant. Other pieces—a video installation viewed through a tiny aperture in sculpted lips (*Lips (Study #3)* [2016]), a whipping ponytail (*Ponytail (Orange)* [2016]), a hallway filled with buzzing fans (*Ceiling Fan Composition* [2016]), and a rotating fingernail painted with an image of the cosmos (*Finger* [2018])—further activate the space.

NoNoseKnows, which premiered at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015, investigates the peculiar process of cultured pearl manufacturing, in which oysters are deliberately infected to produce pearls. In this work, six-foot-four fetish performer Bunny Glamazon sniffs small bouquets, provoking an allergic reaction: her eyes tear up, her nose grows, and her climactic sneeze produces plate after plate of noodles. Elsewhere, tables of women delicately cut and place an irritant into the shells of living oysters, while another team sorts pearls at lightning speed in a factory in Zhuji, China, a major hub for freshwater pearls. *NoNoseKnows* illuminates the absurd labor practices that drive the globalized capitalist economy, honing in on the perversions that inhabit the space where the biological and the industrial collide.

To create *Cosmic Generator*, which premiered at Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2017, Rottenberg filmed in two locations at opposite ends of the earth: a Chinese restaurant in Mexicali, a border town between Mexico and California, and a wholesale market in Yiwu, China. She collapses notions of distance and time to consider how masses of plastic objects sold in the Yiwu Market circulate the globe freely and rapidly, while people and certain products face greater restrictions to crossing the US-Mexico border. As with many of Rottenberg’s works, the sequences of *Cosmic Generator* orbit one another, producing new connections.

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 explores how seemingly insignificant objects and practices can radically alter our climate, our social structures, the ways we communicate and interact with one another, and aspects of our existence that we cannot elucidate or even imagine.

A fully illustrated catalogue published by the New Museum accompanies the exhibition. The catalogue includes an essay by Margot Norton, a conversation between Mika Rottenberg and art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson, and newly commissioned texts on the artist's work by social and political theorists Diana Coole and Samantha Frost.

This exhibition is curated by Margot Norton, Curator.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Mika Rottenberg in Conversation with Margot Norton

Thursday July 11, 7 PM

New Museum Theater

TOUR DATES

Following its presentation at the New Museum, "Mika Rottenberg: Easypieces" will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago from October 1, 2019, to March 8, 2020.

ALSO ON VIEW: SUMMER 2019

Marta Minujín: Menesunda Reloaded

June 26–September 29, 2019

Third Floor

Lubaina Himid: Work from Underneath

June 26–October 6, 2019

Fourth Floor

Diedrick Brackens: darling divined

June 4–September 8, 2019

Lobby Gallery

Melanie Crean, Shaun Leonardo, Sable Elyse Smith: Mirror/Echo/Tilt

June 18–October 6, 2019

Fifth Floor

Sydney Shen: Onion Master

April 30–September 1, 2019

Storefront Window

ABOUT NEW MUSEUM

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

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