

Sophie Lisa Beresford

7th May – 11th June 2011
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm
(or by appointment)

Preview: Friday 6th May, 6 - 9pm



Workplace Gallery is pleased to announce our first solo exhibition by Sophie Lisa Beresford.

The work of Sophie Lisa Beresford addresses the order and status of 'things' and situations, and beyond that our held assumptions about the way in which we live and our cultural stereotypes. Through a polygenetic assimilation of established and global cultures as distinct and diverse as Hinduism, and Makina Techno music, Beresford reorders the totemic symbols of those cultures to reflect her own emergent philosophy and theory of the universe and her position within it. Beresford's practice emerges unashamedly from within the 'Charva' culture of the North East of England. Gleaning her subjects and ideas from all aspects of her life Beresford presents an intuitive detailed portrait of her culture. Through a constant process of reflection and re-examination Beresford employs a variety of means incorporating Dance, to-camera monologue, sculpture, painting, text and photography often mixing technology that enables her to record thoughts and situations quickly and directly such as iPhone screen grabs, built in laptop cameras and microphones, and compact digital cameras, with an ongoing interest in slow meticulous techniques that have been used across cultures for millennia such as Jewellery making, beading, and embroidery.

Beresford's performances and videos see the artist delivering un-choreographed and spontaneous high-energy dance routines to hardcore dance music in locations ranging from the privacy of her bedroom and domestic interiors, to public spaces such as Pizza Takeaways and Museums. Regardless of the privacy or otherwise of the location Beresford appears compellingly immersed in a trancelike state that calls into question any projected anxiety the viewer might have about losing control of oneself in the company of others. Alongside these vigorous 'Dancing' works Beresford presents 2 large-scale and contemplative video projections that focus on the conceptual underpinning and display of jewellery handmade by Beresford after a period of time living in Arizona and studying Native American jewellery making techniques. A large slow moving and posturing hand wearing a crystalline ring floats enigmatically in front of a large sheet of Gold leaf that fills the screen. Adjacent, a projected slide show text work reveals Beresford's intimate reflections on the experience of travelling through Arizona, and the significance of Jewellery, characteristically offset by Beresford's repeated use of emoticon symbols and reference to popular culture and mass-produced consumer products.

"To understand the world in a new way :) your way. And your way is the way to be. Jewellery has become a part of my life. I dream in Jewellery."

Sometimes I don't know what I think is an embroidered text work made using gold thread encrusted with sequins and precious stones. The pointed sentence overlooks a large shallow plinth offering a collection of objects and artefacts each customized by Beresford with intricate beadwork and crystals in complex geometric formations. The altered objects, which include a Gourd, a £20 note, a pipe, and a children's book are shown alongside Jewellery hand made by Beresford, each piece made as a gift for a specific individual. Beresford's fascination with people and how they relate to both her and wider world is further explored in *Magic Numbers*; an iPhone relentlessly playing a slideshow of screen grabs Beresford has made when she has been alerted by an incoming message or call that has also coincided with the time showing a 'Magic Number'.

Throughout the exhibition are a series of photographs drawn from Beresford's daily life. *Hindu Goddess* is a confrontational image of the artist covered in blue paint and with shocking pink lipstick. Beresford's portrayal of herself in the form of goddess. Anonymous Handprints is a photograph of Beresford's backside taken immediately after she was "pestered" for sex in her local park on her way home one evening. As a "compromise" Beresford allowed the two Lads to "smack her arse" as hard as they could on condition that they documented it for her afterwards on her camera phone leaving red raw hand prints on the artists backside. In marked contrast *Me n Barney* show the artist decorated in handmaid jewellery with a tame Barn Owl perched on her shoulder, the two looking completely comfortable in each other's company. *Pasty Pigeon* is an image of a 1:1 scale Pigeon made by Beresford from Greggs pasties - an iconic 'speciality' of the North East of England, Pasty Pigeon is a macabre object that met a sinister end when Beresford fed it to the real pigeons outside of Tesco's superstore in Gateshead.

Sophie Lisa Beresford (b. 1986 Sunderland, UK) graduated from Sunderland University in 2008. Exhibitions include *Group Exhibition* VeSch, Vienna, *Moving Image* New York, USA, *Mural Newspaper* Abrons Art Center, New York, *NADA Art Fair* 2010 Miami, USA, *Sideshow* Nottingham, *Summer Residency* Exhibition Cooper Gallery, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee, *Psychic Geography* Workplace Gallery, *Dancing* The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, *Slab in the City* Sunderland, *TOMORROW THE FUTURE* Fishmarket Gallery, Northampton, *"All My Favourite Singers Couldn't Sing..."* Workplace Gallery. In 2010 Beresford was awarded the The Journal Culture Awards- Newcomer of the Year. Sophie Lisa Beresford lives and works in Sunderland, UK

Workplace Gallery was founded by artists Paul Moss and Miles Thurlow; based in Gateshead UK, Workplace Gallery represents a portfolio of emerging and established artists through the gallery programme, curatorial projects and international art fairs. Workplace Gallery opened in 2005 at 34 Ellison Street, Gateshead - part of Trinity Square Shopping Centre particularly noted for its iconic Brutalist car park designed by architect Rodney Gordon for the Owen Luder Partnership, which featured as a key location in Mike Hodges 1971 cult British gangster film *Get Carter* starring Michael Caine. Since the original gallery was demolished in 2008 as part of the planned regeneration of Gateshead Town Centre, Workplace Gallery has relocated to The Old Post Office in Gateshead; a listed 19th Century red brick building built upon the site where the important British artist, engraver and naturalist Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) lived and died.

The next exhibition at Workplace Gallery will be a solo exhibition of new work by Matt Stokes opening on 24th June 2011. To celebrate the opening of Sophie Lisa Beresford please join us afterwards at Central Bar in Gateshead.

Kindly supported



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