

Nadia Belerique, Bed Island, Toronto, Daniel Faria Gallery

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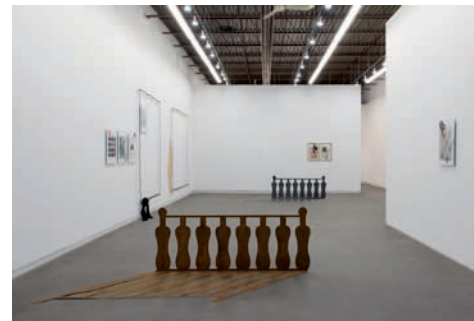
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Nadia Belerique

Bed Island, exhibition views, Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto, 2016.

Photos : courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery

Nadia Belerique *Bed Island*

Nadia Belerique's *Bed Island* is a psychic space. More like a diorama of thought-experiments than an art exhibition, each piece exists in dialogue with its neighbour—hinting towards the conditions of its making and conscious of its current surroundings. Belerique has composed an immersive installation with a balance of colour and form that hums, inviting viewers to oscillate freely between the negative spaces. I am conscious of my own movements, how I stretch or bend to get a closer look, how each new perspective creates a conceptual composition of its own. This display of metaphysical intimacy triggers a familiar flutter of Romantic solitude: the natural rhythm of mind and body, the slowing of time and depth of silence, the luxury of indulging in extended moments during the transition between sleep and waking.

Every object belongs just as much as it mystifies. This uncertainty is active, causing a regular flicker between what the eye observes and what the mind can comprehend. The three wall-mounted steel frames are large and irregular, performing their role as markers of psychic intimacy by dangling nervously. A silhouette carved directly into the drywall teases with its verisimilitude; instead of providing respite from abstraction, it is incomplete, lacking sharpness and detail, incised by one of the frames. This fragmented body is omnipresent: in hands pointing away from themselves, clothing acting limp and discarded, and the hazy form of a single boot print. A small, vertical, almond-shaped slit stands out to me. This tiny tear in the wall is equal parts subtle, sensual, and violent. Its shape is slightly irregular and its borders are smooth, but marred with minor cuts and chips. A small gathering of fine white powder rounds the crux of its lowest point. The section of plywood revealed by this cut is textured with arched treelines rippling out from a rounded, darker-hued knot. Detached from the body and spread open for display, this vaginal cavity is my punctum: all thoughts on the work originate and return to here.

The physicality of the sculptural work, the floating off or digging into the walls, furthers a psychic conversation between object and viewer that is echoed in the photographs. Created in the manner of a performance that merges digital with analogue, each image is a personal invitation into the artist's own psychology of making. Everyday objects find new life as compositional reverberations of their former selves; the artist's role is to observe and record. Belerique's practice is characterized by materials and driven by process. The hybridization of her installations is highly subliminal, her own psychology forming the unifying point of research. In *Bed Island*, viewers are offered a rare opportunity to forget that they are in a gallery. Instead of filling a space, the work *creates* one. By paying close attention I understand more clearly than ever that the abstract has always been constructed out of real hardware.

Nadia Belerique will be participating in the 2016 Gwangju and Montréal Biennales.

Alex Bowron

Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto,
April 21—June 4, 2016