

Danielle Dean

Bazar

September 16 – October 21, 2018

Danielle Dean's first solo exhibition at 47 Canal builds from her recent presentation at Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette in Paris, France, where she premiered her short film *Bazar* (2018). The film was conceived during time spent by the artist in the archives of the Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville (BHV), regarded as one of Paris's foremost department stores since being founded opposite Paris's Hôtel de Ville in 1856, and today a member of the Groupe Galeries Lafayette.

Legendary in Parisian retail folklore, BHV is where Duchamp claimed to have bought his bottle rack readymade in 1914. Its name is derived from the Persian *bāzār*, meaning market, and it was designed to evoke the large, eclectic bazaars of Turkey and Egypt. Dean worked with women from Permis de Vivre la Ville (License to Live in the City), an association that promotes social engagement in Paris's *banlieues* (suburbs), many of whom are second generation descendants of former French colonies like Martinique, Algeria, and Guadeloupe. Together they analyzed retail catalogues produced by BHV from the 1880s until the present day, discussing how these construct an image of a normative French consumer. A script, interspersed with language from the catalogues, developed from these conversations and participants from these workshops appear in *Bazar's* semi-improvised scenes alongside animated illustrations designed by Dean. In one section, a woman dances krump next to a Nespresso machine, merging her interest in the expressive Californian street dance style with Dean's investigation into the exaggerated power of consumer imagery. The result is a far-reaching and humorous visual document that combines archival research with a range of personal experiences to interrogate how the circulation of commodities as images has shaped lives historically and in the present.

Dean regularly takes cultural objects—such as Nike's True Red sneaker or the Elmina Castle in Ghana, erected by the Portuguese in 1482—as starting points for multi-layered artworks that analyze how subjects are formed in the postcolonial world. *Bazar* continues her ongoing analysis into the entwined histories of consumerism and colonialism. The catalogues of department stores such as BHV were a key media through which France extended influence into its colonies, and both luxury and quotidian commodities were frequently bought and shipped by mail. Not only did this generate a broad consumer base for French retail, but these documents also established an ideal of French subjectivity that was strikingly white, upper middle class, and Parisian. The sole image of a black woman encountered by the reading group in BHV's catalogues was of a maid depicted to make bed sheets appear whiter. BHV's retail literature illustrates a relationship whereby European nations extracted vast human and material wealth from their colonies while enforcing unattainable social and cultural expectations upon colonized subjects through the soft powers of consumerism and desire. This system persists, in intricate ways, in the neocolonial operations of global corporations like Amazon.

The imperative to consume, and the imagery that emerged conjunctively, reconfigured 19th and 20th century conceptions of space and time. In one animation, Dean depicts a procession of household goods on top of a colonial map, as if these objects are migrating, or marching to work. Processes of fragmentation and dissociation continue to inform how globalization is experienced today. Reflecting this, for the exhibition at 47 Canal *Bazar* will be split from a linear film into a dynamic four-channel video installation. The moving image work is physically extended into the gallery through sequence of cut out standees that have been produced from hand-drawn renderings of items in BHV's catalogues. These emphasize the way that advertising is experienced as a landscape: as social theorist Emanuele Coccia describes in his book *Goods: Advertising, Urban Space, and the Moral Law of the Image*, advertising constitutes "a powerful open-air laboratory that produces socially relevant images."¹ The sculptures function as a physical and conceptual frame for the film, and highlight the art gallery itself as a mechanism of commercial display.

Scenes from BHV's catalogues have also been translated into a series of watercolors. Presented achronologically, these excerpt a broad historical range of catalogue pages, from the early leather bound hardcovers to later glossy cover stock. The watercolors investigate the accelerating fungibility of marketing media across space and time, harnessing the imaginary for consumer attention and prefiguring the immersive advertising spaces of today. Characters from the film loiter in the drawings, as if hiding behind larger-than-life goods. Emphasizing the human life that is subsumed in the production of commodities, they call particular attention to the radical presence of the subject who asserts herself, despite and through racialization and colonization, to reclaim history. Dean animates the archive, searching for political openings between its cracks.

¹ Emanuele Coccia, *Goods: Advertising, Urban Space, and the Moral Law of the Image* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), xii.

Danielle Dean received her BFA from Central Saint Martins in London and MFA from California Institute of the Arts. She has been a fellow of the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program and a resident at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; and Rijksakademie van Beeldene Kunsten, Amsterdam. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit. She has participated in group exhibitions at institutions such as SFMOMA Open Space, San Francisco; Centre D'Art Contemporain Genève; Sculpture Center, New York; Goethe Institut Nigeria, Lagos; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA; DiverseWorks, Houston, TX; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and Tate Modern, London. Her work is soon to be included in exhibitions at the South London Gallery; the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. She is also represented by Commonwealth and Council in Los Angeles.

This is the first exhibition in 47 Canal's newly renovated gallery at 291 Grand Street.