



STATE OF CONCEPT
ATHENS

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RACHEL MACLEAN

NEW WORLDS

May 12th – July 14th, 2018

Opening: May 11th, 20:00 to 23:00

It is with great pleasure that we announce the first solo exhibition of Scottish artist **Rachel Maclean** in Greece, at State of Concept Athens on the 11th of May at 8pm.

The exhibition is the second part of "State Affairs" with subtitle - Folder 002, which is a new exhibition chapter of our programme that commenced in November 2017 with artist Anton Vidokle.

"State Affairs" is dedicated to artists that work mainly with video, and presents artistic practices that focus on thematics that are being narrated gradually through several artworks and a longer time span and are distinguished for their interest in shedding light in historical conditions and how they affect contemporaneity. The programme aims to address directly current affairs, predicaments, problematics and cul-de-sacs of contemporary living, by summoning the past.

For this exhibition, entitled *New Worlds*, the artist will present her films *The Lion and The Unicorn (2012)* and *A Whole New World (2014)*.

Rachel Maclean is working mainly with film and photography, creating otherworldly characters and imaginary worlds, which she uses to address questions that are dealing with thematics such as politics, nationalism,

identity, feminism a.o. Moving between history and fantasy, Maclean constructs narrations that are dominated by grotesque aesthetic elements, British television pop culture, consumerism and other contemporary social phenomena. In her works the artist is playing all the characters, which she constructs as "clones" that embody unstable identities: conversing, interacting and shifting between cartoonish archetypes, ghostly apparitions and hollow inhuman playthings.

Her exhibition at State of Concept Athens, presents a pivotal problematic that stretches throughout the European continent: the all increasing rhetoric around national identity, and the augmentation of nationalism in periods of crisis and instability.

"A Whole New World" visualises the fantastical ruins of a fallen empire. Combining grand narratives with cheap product placement, the work explores themes related to British imperial history and national identity. Shot entirely using green-screen, the film presents a computer-generated landscape littered with fallen statues and the distressed paraphernalia of a bygone age. Narrated by a statuesque Britannia Goddess, the narrative adapts a variety of existing tales, including St George and The Dragon and Tarzan. The action frequently shifts genre, moving from all singing, all dancing musical score to dry political debate, sedate period drama to battlefield conflict. Maclean plays all the characters in the work, miming to audio in variety of languages and bedecked in an elaborate combination of prosthetic make-up, historical costume and Union Jack encrusted tourist tat. The work strongly references the resurfacing demand of a part of Scottish society for independence from the United Kingdom that increased after the Brexit.

"The Lion and The Unicorn" is a short film inspired by the heraldic symbols found on the Royal Coat of Arms of The United Kingdom, the lion (representing England) and the unicorn (representing Scotland). The piece uses representations of both alliance and opposition to explore national identity within the context of the upcoming referendum on Scottish independence.

The video features three recurrent characters: the lion, the unicorn and the queen. These figures seem to emerge from disparate genres, including shadowy

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Tousa Botsari 19, Athens, 11741, Wednesday - Friday 4:30pm-8:30pm, Saturday 12pm-5pm

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historical reconstruction, playful nursery rhyme and pragmatic TV interview. Inhabiting the rich historical setting of Traquair House in the Scottish Borders, they are seen drinking North-sea oil from Jacobite crystal, dividing up the pieces of a Union Jack cake and inciting conflict over the mispronunciation of Robert Burns.

Rachel MacLean (born 1987 in Edinburgh) lives and works in Glasgow. Working predominantly with the moving image, Maclean has had significant recent success, with her representing Scotland at the 57th Venice Biennial and with major exhibitions at HOME, Manchester and Tate Britain in 2016. After graduating from Edinburgh College of Art, her work came to public attention in New Contemporaries 2009. She went on to win the Margaret Tait Award in 2013, was twice shortlisted for the Jarman Award, and achieved widespread critical acclaim for Feed Me (2015) in the British Art Show 8.

Recent solo exhibitions include: Ok, You've Had Your Fun, Casino Luxembourg (2015), Please, Sir..., Rowing, London, (2014); The Weepers, Comar, Tobermory, Mull, (2015); Happy & Glorious, CCA, Glasgow (part of GENERATION: 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland), (2014); I HEART SCOTLAND, The Edinburgh Printmakers, (2014); Invites, Zabłudowicz Collection, London, (2014); Quick Child, Run!, Trade Gallery, Nottingham, (2014); Over The Rainbow, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh (2013) and Lolcats, Generator Projects, Dundee (2012). In 2013, Maclean received the Margaret Tait Award, which was established by Glasgow Film Theatre to support experimental and innovative artists working with film and the moving image. Recent group exhibitions include As real as walking down the street and going to the grocery store at Rowing, London; New Ideas for the City at the State Museum of Urban Sculpture, St Petersburg; and Costume: Written Clothing, Tramway, Glasgow (all 2013).

For further enquiries and press images please email us at info@stateofconcept.org or call Maria Adela Konomi at +306945714119

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