

# It's Nice That



Genesis Belanger

Work / Art

## Artist Genesis Belanger explores the strange things that advertising conditions us to want



Words by Laura Snood, Monday 21 May 2018

From hot dogs peeping out of handbags and squeezing into strappy sandals to fruit bowls filled with bananas, strawberries and a casual boob, Brooklyn-based artist Genesis Belanger's ceramic sculptures mix consumer goods with more than a touch of the surreal. Inspired by claymation, cartoons like *The Simpsons* as well as artists Dorothea Tanning, Louise Bourgeois and Fernando Botero, her work also draws heavily on the advertising industry, where she worked until breaking away to focus on sculpture. "The advertising industry understands the strength of visual persuasion and I find it fascinating that our desires can be manipulated through aesthetics," Genesis tells It's Nice That. "I use elements of that persuasive language in my work."

Cigarettes, the proof that the ad men can make even premature death seem sexy, feature often in her sculptures, draping languidly over ashtrays or pinned to the wall like a modern-day scone. “I made a series of these cigarette marquees after learning that in the late 1920s a woman smoking a cigarette was a (male-orchestrated) feminist act of resistance,” she explains. “I find this to be a great historical example of how what we choose to consume can be used to express our values, and how our habits of consumption are manipulated by external forces such as the advertising industry.”

Genesis begins each work with extensive sketches, working out through repetition the ideas and shapes that she finds interesting. Her use of clay is partly a comment on the categorisation of objects. By using clay – a material usually associated with craft – she wants people to question the hierarchy given to artworks over other handmade objects.

Genesis’ work is currently on display as part of the group exhibition Uncanny Memories at London’s Sophia Contemporary. Featuring work by Jonathan Baldock, Matthew Hansel, Matt Lipps, Theo Mercier and Adam Parker Smith, the show brings together a group of young artists that play with the uncanny in their work. “Objects are often surrogates for our self-identity,” says of her work in relation to the theme of the show. “The uncanny is the feeling of something being strangely and uncomfortably familiar, this discomfort comes from seeing ones projected self in an object. I am using humour and style to address the complexity, nuance and dissonance of human psychology.”



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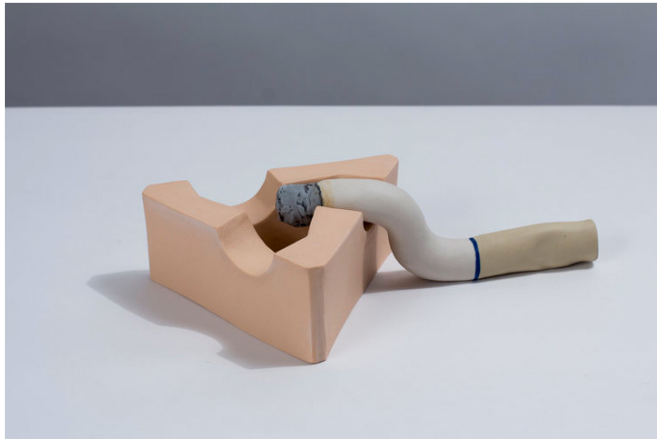
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