

**ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION INVITES
ROSIE GIBBENS, *SOFT GIRLS*
1 JULY-15 AUGUST 2021**



Rosie Gibbens, *Death Becomes Her*, 2021. Digital collage. Courtesy the artist

Rosie Gibbens' first solo exhibition, *Soft Girls*, features a series of moveable humanoid sculptures, a video and a new live performance. The installation resembles a modern Frankenstein's laboratory, with fabric body parts scrambled into new configurations and combined with everyday items such as domestic appliances and exercise equipment.

At the root of the exhibition is Gibbens' fascination with the Anatomical Venus – late-18th century Italian wax models of reclined women with open torsos displaying detailed reproductions of innards for the purpose of medical training. Death, sex, religion and science swirl around these highly crafted objects. Although not seen as shocking at the time, to our contemporary eyes they undoubtedly appear bizarre and unsettling.

Gibbens' research connects this concept of the Venus– also known in their day as 'Slashed Beauties' – with the motif of the glamorous yet helpless victim in crime fiction, television and cinema. These tropes also feature in the uncanny almost-human quality of sex dolls and crash-test dummies, and the outlandish exaggerations of classic animated cartoons. Simultaneously, in cult horror films such as *Hellraiser*, Gibbens sees a dark celebration of the violated Venus bodies, with ghoulish agency returned to the previously supine and passive figures.

As viewers move through Gibbens' installation they become implicated in a physical exchange with the sewn and stuffed creatures. In the performance and video, Gibbens interacts with the sculptures like puppets, pulling ropes and pulleys to help them to perform deadpan burlesque routines and enact euphemistic gestures. Eyeballs pop out from the figures, confronting the viewers with the sculpture's own form of unsettling gaze. From one end of the room a huge Looney Tunes tongue unspools, a crude representation of erotic and consumer desire.

Using absurd humour across her practice, Gibbens explores gender performativity and sexual politics in an unflinchingly and disarmingly direct manner. With her own bodily experience at the centre of her work, Gibbens describes imagining herself as an 'alien visitor trying to participate seamlessly in contemporary life, but not quite managing.'

BIOGRAPHY

Rosie Gibbens (b.1993, UK) received an MA from the Royal College of Art in Contemporary Art Practice: Performance and a BA in Performance Design and Practice at Central Saint Martins. Selected group exhibitions include: *The Artist is Online*, König Gallery, Berlin (2021); *Hot Air*, Bad Art presents, London (2021); *Recreational Grounds*, Thames-Side Studios Gallery, London (2021); *Ridiculous*, Elephant West, London (2020); *Antisocial Isolation*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2020); *Salon Acme*, Mexico City (2020); *Absinthe 3*, Collective Ending, London (2019); *Slow Sunday*, Steakhouse Live, London (2018); *Learn Where the Meat Comes From*, out_sight Gallery, Seoul (2018); *Revolve Performance Festival*, Uppsala, Sweden (2018).

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION INVITES: Dedicated to solo presentations by UK-based artists without UK commercial gallery representation.

ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION

Zabludowicz Collection is a philanthropic organisation including a growing collection of contemporary art and a programme of international exhibitions, events and artists' residencies. Founded in 1994, the Collection is dedicated to fostering new audiences and a sustainable environment for contemporary art, offering a variety of opportunities and support for artists and art organisations. All of its activities are privately funded and free for the public to access.

For more information, images or any other press enquiries please contact:

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VISITOR INFORMATION

We are looking forward to welcoming you back to the gallery. Our priority is keeping all visitors and staff safe. In order to do so, we have made a few physical and administrative changes to the gallery.

Admission: FREE

Thursday–Sunday,
12–6pm or by appointment

Café, Library and Shop

The **Shop** sells limited edition artworks,
50% of the proceeds go directly to the artist.
shop.zabludowiczcollection.com

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