

Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Next Nasher Public Exhibition Artist, Jer'Lisa Devezin

Dallas-based artist's multimedia sculpture is a monument to Black hair, bodies, and culture

DALLAS, Texas (May 26, 2021)—The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the next exhibition for Nasher Public in the Nasher Store gallery, Jer'Lisa Devezin: *Beaucoup Shive / Madam C.J. Walker ain't got nothin' on me* on view May 27 – June 20, 2021.

Jer'Lisa Devezin's soft sculpture titled *Beaucoup Shive / Madam C.J. Walker ain't got nothin' on me* comprises millions of strands of discarded, found, and discounted synthetic and human hair in a towering monument to Black people and the residue they leave behind. From a distance, the sculpture suggests a black monolith and takes the form of graduated spheres stacked atop one another—recalling the influence of artists Nari Ward and David Hammons, as well as Black hair culture of the 1990s. Closer inspection reveals the incredible variety of textures and colors Devezin wove together to create *Beaucoup Shive...*'s rich and tactile surface, which not only appeals to the viewers' sense of touch but gives off a subtle and sentimental aroma evocative of Black barber shops or hair salons. Intermittent audio emits from the sculpture, encouraging viewers to lean in a little closer to hear appropriated audio clips from popular Black movies and snippets of conversations Devezin recorded with shoppers at local beauty supply stores. The sculpture has a physical presence while simultaneously evoking the absent Black body.

Devezin's title for the work combines references to her hometown and the first "Black woman millionaire in America". In New Orleans patois, *Beaucoup shive* translates to looking or feeling good, while the second half of the title invokes Madam C. J. Walker (1867–1919), who made her fortune in a homemade line of haircare products for Black women called the "Walker system". The title is a proclamation: Devezin is *here*, she "made" it, and with her Nasher Public installation, the artist is claiming precious space and celebrating the beauty and vibrancy of Black hair, bodies, and culture.

Jer'Lisa Devezin on *Beaucoup Shive / Madam C.J. Walker ain't got nothin' on me.*:

Looking at hair as discarded material raises [the] question of how this bodily residue can be transformed in space. The range of curl patterns and textures found in the heads of Black people vary from the most delicate strands to the coarsest grain. To explore these ideas, I am creating a 'hair clump' form influenced by Black hair and Black culture. A hair clump is a memorial and a rebirth of bodily residue; a remnant and a record. Specifically pertaining to Black hair, this piece is meant to be bold, nappy, disgusting, oily, thick, loud, and yet, still beautiful. The black hair clump is particularly important to Black women as we have all experienced a love/hate relationship with our hair, both before and after Madam C.J. Walker invented her growth serum and straightening products for Black hair care in the early twentieth century. This work continues my ideas of reclaiming negative stereotypes of Black women, while recontextualizing the representation of them, their bodies, and our transformative nature.

Beaucoup Shive / Madam C.J. Walker ain't got nothin' on me is Devezin's first soft sculpture and her largest work to date. To maintain the appearance of *Beaucoup Shive...*, Devezin will perform *Kept* once a week throughout the run of her Nasher Public exhibition. Ranging from 30 to 60 minutes, *Kept* is a series of durational

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performances during which Devezin treats the sculpture with such common Black hairstyling products as beeswax and styling spritz, and using techniques like hair rolling with hot water to ensure the sculpture maintains its overall shape and aesthetic while on view. Beyond general maintenance of a sculpture, *Kept* is a meditation on the care and attention of Black bodies. Devezin performs gestures with the kind of tenderness and affection infrequently afforded to Black women and invites viewers to reconsider traditional ideas of beauty and the labor that goes into maintaining them.

Kept performances will begin at noon on the following dates:

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Saturday, June 19, 2021

For images, please follow [this link](#).

About Jer'Lisa J. Devezin | Jer'Lisa J. Devezin was born and raised in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana. She has a Bachelor of Arts from Dillard University and a Master of Fine Arts from Southern Methodist University. Devezin's practice is interdisciplinary with an emphasis on sculpture and performance. Her experimental investigations through mixed media and performance explore the relationships between physical labor, sexuality, and reclaiming the representation of black womanhood and Black culture. Much of her influence comes from the aesthetics and culture of the diaspora, specifically African and Haitian art, Black culture, and nostalgic memories of New Orleans. Devezin is a recipient of the inaugural Talley Dunn Equity in the Arts Fellowship and was artist-in-residence at the Joan Mitchell Center of New Orleans, 2013-14. Her work has been shown at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, 500X, and The MAC Dallas. She currently works as an Instructional Specialist in Visual Art with Dallas College and is also an Adjunct Professor with Tarrant County College.

About Nasher Public | Nasher Public is an ongoing, two-pronged public art initiative which aims to generate access to public art by North Texas artists at the Nasher and throughout the greater Dallas community. The project will launch first at the Nasher in a newly formed gallery, presenting monthly exhibitions over the next year, followed by an ongoing series of off-site exhibitions in partnership with area businesses. The new gallery, formerly occupied by the Nasher Store, fronts Flora Street and is directly accessible from the Nasher's entrance foyer. For the duration of the project, the space will be open to the public free of charge during the museum's public hours, and viewable through the windows during off hours.

About Nasher Sculpture Center | Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. Visitors must book a timed ticket in advance. For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.

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