

## Features

Karine Giboulo: *HYPERland* | Text and photo: Brinae Bain



Karine Giboulo in front of *HYPERland* at the Opening Reception, November 15, 2014

Montreal artist Karine Giboulo exhibition, *HYPERland*, at the Angell Gallery introduced viewers to bold and colorful sculptures that commented on the ‘hyper’ society that we live in today, a time of global extremes and excesses.

The first piece the viewer confronts is *Pain Killer* (2014), a powerful work that criticizes the Western World’s abundant reliance on prescription medications. The rest of the show is just as political as that first image, challenging everything from excessive consumerism, capitalism, power, and our ever-growing dependence on technology.



Installation view



Karine Giboulo, *Pain Killer*, 2014



The exhibition's title piece, *HYPERland*, is centered in the main gallery, and offers a complex gradient view of consumerism and the abuse of power. The pyramid-like structure is topped with scenes of nature; the utopian scene features green hills, a vibrant rainbow, and lively animals. The natural world, what is given to us as free, is often marketed to the consumer as a product to buy into. I think that this is what Giboulo's piece hints at. Below the plexiglass encased nature scene is a grey structure, resembling a built

Karine Giboulo, *HYPERland*, 2014, Detail

architecture. The building holds at its apex a boardroom of wealthy business types, below them are the white collar workers who monotonously serve their bosses above. The next level comments on society's dependence on commercial necessity, the Nestlé formula scandal, and the treatment of the elderly. The lowest level, and yet the most visually appealing, is the inner room of a third-world factory. Dozens of women sew together a zebra printed fabric for consumption in the West. However, it is the back of the sculpture to have the biggest social impact; here, at the very bottom, we find a scene dedicated to the living conditions of rural Africa. Several characters sit in tents in a barren wasteland; these figures are completely isolated from the 'urban' structure that houses the others, they are exterior to the developed world.



Karine Giboulo (second from right) discussing *HYPERland* with visitors



Karine Giboulo, *Savage Beauty*, 2014

All of Giboulo's works confront issues that we sometimes take for granted; it's almost odd that these whimsical clay figures can instill such a social critique. Giboulo cites that her work is inspired by her travels; her live experiences have allowed her to try and reflect the configuration of our effervescent world. A large part of her work is about viewing, how Westerners view the world and each other, and how others view us. This notion is clear in her *Savage Beauty (Self-Portrait)*. The white woman captures the zebra as a marvelous oddity and the local native captures the woman in the same way. In a comical fashion, Giboulo criticizes much of what we have learned to take for granted.

The exhibition includes eight of Giboulo's colorful sculptures and several detail photographs, which create not only create a dialogue between works, but also highlight important details of the much larger structures. I believe that Giboulo accomplishes a great deal with her vibrant and comical figures. Her work presents the viewer with entertaining, thoughtprovoking situations that reflect on, what have become, society's standards.

The exhibition will be at the Angell Gallery until December 20th; it is an excellent chance to see Giboulo's work outside of Montreal.

\*Exhibition information: November 15 – December 20, 2014, Angell Gallery, 12 Ossington Avenue, Toronto. Gallery hours: Wed - Sat, 12 - 5 p.m.