Beauty Tricks



Brief description: Stained glass artwork in lightbox, made by Scottish artist Pinkie Maclure in 2017.

Beauty Tricks' is an artwork that critiques the human and environmental impact of the beauty industry and the pressure women sometimes place on themselves and each other. At the centre of the panel is a young blond-haired woman wearing a decorative pink dress and purple cloak. Her arms are outstretched in a pose deliberately mimicking an image of the Virgin Mary known as the Madonna of Mercy from an Italian Renaissance altarpiece. Yet this religious icon is transformed by Maclure into a contemporary image of a willing victim of the beauty and fashion industry, with a halo of Botox needles and scalpels, and her torso marked for plastic surgery. The vivid bright blue, pink, yellow and purple colour palette is an unusual combination in stained glass, but deliberately chosen by the artist to reference not only the Virgin Mary but also the so-called colours of femininity. Around this central image are various images, motifs and slogans associated with the construction and representation of beauty and knowledge, including a young woman shooting at a mirror, a vomiting young woman, a grandma knitting a net for barbie dolls, flowers in various stages of bloom, discarded beauty products, and palm trees and snails (from which ingredients for some beauty products are derived). At the top is the mischievous medieval demon Titivillus, who steals books, scribal errors, and misspoken words and takes them to hell. Here, the demon flits about the spires of All Souls' College, Oxford, unnoticed by the women distracted by appearances. Pinkie Maclure is a multidisciplinary artist based in Argyll, Scotland. She made 'Beauty Tricks' in 2017 for an exhibition entitled 'Art of Glass', held at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, and presented in partnership with The National Centre for Craft & Design, 6 April - 16 September 2018. This artwork was purchased in 2024 with support from The Art Fund and ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

Object type: panel

Number of objects: 1

Production date: 2017

Production period: 21st century

Designer: Pinkie Maclure

Manufacturer: (1966=) Maclure, Pinkie

Dimensions: Height: 1220 mm, Width: 622 mm

Inscription: PM 2017

Acquisition: purchase 19.2.2024

Acquisition source:

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