

Critic's Pick



Katie Bethune-Leamen, *The accumulation of pictures of your tattered asshole on your phone 01, 02, 03* (detail), 2019, ink-jet prints, artist's frames, tile, 75 x 101 x 2 1/2".

alternating hot and cold streams of water. Upstairs, three circular frames connected by a wiggly line of forest-green tiling house images of pale pink flowers. Pretty and innocuous, the blooms are on the verge of wilting; some petals are already darkened and mottled. Bethune-Leamen produces further contrast by likening each flower to a “tattered asshole” in the work's title. There's a messy joy in her titling process; each one unfurls with associations and exclamatory remarks. Take, for example, *Cherry studded ham wall cloud (your tiny beautiful body! torn open and this brought out! x210)*, 2019, which features a constellation of dozens of pearl-and-bronze pins corralled by burgundy tile. The title lends vulgarity and scattered sweetness to the work, a charm that's slightly uncomfortable and wholly infectious.

— Daniella Sanader

Toronto

Katie Bethune-Leamen

Susan Hobbs Gallery

137 Tecumseth Street

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In “La douche écossaise,” Katie Bethune-Leamen's recent irregularly shaped porcelain sculptures are complemented by bronze casts of similarly lumpy forms. Embellished with imperfect pearls, these new blobs sit atop thin, brightly colored steel rods with wide bases, whose height gives the works a human scale. Indeed, the mushy abstractions of these objects make bodily associations hard to ignore—each piece could be an ear, a tongue, an internal organ, or a thing one ingests or expels—even as the luster of bronze and pearl creates an equally compelling sense of the ornamental.

The pearl, a hardened animal secretion laden with human-assigned value—both gross and precious—is perhaps the ideal material flourish for Bethune-Leamen's work. The artist's interest in generating tension through associative opposites is foregrounded throughout the exhibition, including in its title, which translates as “the Scottish shower,” referencing a hydrotherapy practice of standing under