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Dirty Princesses

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We live in a culture where Disney is one of the most recognisable brands in the world. Over the years, Disney has been accused of sexualising its characters, often as a way to entertain children. The brothers who founded the company, Walt and Roy, collected folk tales and created their own versions, imbuing them with implicit sexuality. Despite the explicitness of some of these sculptures, their sheer bad taste adds to their appeal to children of all ages.

When first encountering Beevors' oversized figures we confront a confrontational aesthetic. Her account is a deliberate clashing of extended visual mixed metaphor. 'Debbie Does Disney' plays with iconic imagery, creating a range of new meanings. The title provides the clue as to Beevors' approach to the exhibition. She has frequently made use of popular culture in her work. She has used the images of Mickey Mouse, for example, in The Little Mermaid, where Ariel is seen as a symbol of female empowerment. However, Beevors takes this further, creating sculptures that criticise the commercialisation of Disney and its impact on women. Her approach is to use the iconography of Mickey's magical world, but to invert and subvert it, creating a new meaning.

These sculptures invade the gallery space. They are part of a larger body of work that reflects a contemporary social morality built on fear and mindless aggression of the gross merchandising machine. The exhibition creates a layering effect. Different meanings, sometimes surprising, can be found in the works. Beevors takes on the challenge of the frontal demands inherent in the creation of cultural symbols. She produces images that are not restrained, they are angry and striking. The colours are bright, and the postures are powerful. Theulptures are a blend of the monumental works of art history such as Canova's as it would seem inappropriate. The colours and shapes, the shifting perspectives as the viewer moves around the sculptures, create something standing on its head, while not touching the ground; the challenge of the frontal demands inherent in the creation of cultural symbols have been consistent themes in Beevors' critique all the more necessary.

The exhibition creates a layering effect. Different meanings, sometimes surprising, sometimes shocking, can be found in the works. Beevors plays with the figures, creating unexpected combinations that can be seen in a new light. The exhibition challenges us, while the marks of their making remind us of the long process of their creation. These images do not represent ideals of beauty or femininity, but they are a reflection of the contemporary social morality built on fear and mindless aggression. The sculptures are a critique of Disney and the impact of its commercialisation on women, and they are a celebration of the power of art to challenge and subvert the expectations of society.