

Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Acquisition of Nicole Eisenman's *Sketch for a Fountain*

Five-part work, currently on view, is acquired through the tandem support of the Kaleta A. Doolin Acquisition Fund for Women Artists and the Green Family Collection

DALLAS, Texas (May 20, 2019) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the acquisition of artist Nicole Eisenman's group of five sculptures *Sketch for a Fountain*, now on view in the Nasher Garden.

Originally presented at Skulptur Projekte Münster 2017, *Sketch for a Fountain* comprised two figures in bronze, and three in plaster that were scanned prior to, but not able to be cast in bronze in time for, the exhibition. The group at the Nasher is entirely in bronze and are working fountains installed at the back of the garden. The three figures with water elements were purchased through the Kaleta A. Doolin Acquisition Fund for Women Artists and the two sculptures without water elements are a promised gift from the Green Family Collection.

"This group of works by Nicole Eisenman joins the ranks of some of the most important figurative sculpture of the modern era in the Nasher collection, and we are exceedingly grateful to the generosity of patrons Kaleta A. Doolin and Debbie and Eric Green for this thoughtful gift," says Director Jeremy Strick. In addition to fortifying this dialogue with art history, the whimsical sculptures will undoubtedly bring great delight to all of our visitors and enhance the appreciation of the garden's design."

Primarily working as a painter, Eisenman made sculpture as a student at the Rhode Island School of Design but only returned to it a few years ago, most recently for the aforementioned 2017 Skulptur Projekte Münster. An important precedent for her Münster project was the 2013 Carnegie International, where, along with a selection of her paintings, she exhibited a group of sculptures in the museum's sculpture court, alongside Greco-Roman sculptures from the permanent collection, and described her figures as "scruffy, bohemian great-great-grandchildren of those gods." Working largely in plaster, with occasional items of assemblage, Eisenman has focused primarily on figures and heads.

Sketch for a Fountain was inspired by the long history of fountains, one of the oldest forms of public art. Eisenman's figures – larger-than-life, of indeterminate gender, and almost cartoonishly fleshy – exemplify the appeal of her humorous and humane aesthetic. Lounging and dozing, they could be lingering in an arcadian reverie or sleeping off a bacchanal, their torpor disturbed only by the gentle sprinkles of water spewing from different parts of their bodies, which in places sprout elements that seem to be drawn to the dampness, such as mushrooms and slugs. Eisenman's figures evoke associations with a range of art historical precedents, including Greco-Roman representations of hermaphrodites, Paul Cézanne's *Bathers*, George Segal's introspective figures, and the whimsical public sculptures of Tom Otterness.

An ambitious, contemporary imagining of a timeless subject, *Sketch for a Fountain* is a strong addition to the collection of the Nasher Sculpture Center. Eisenman's work joins those of other painter-sculptors, including Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Willem de Kooning, and also offers another interpretation of the sculptural group, in

conversation with Segal's *Rush Hour* and Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Bronze Crowd*. Her approach to the figure invites comparison with a range of Nasher artists; in addition to Picasso and de Kooning, to whom her approach has strong affinities, one could also include Auguste Rodin, Alberto Giacometti, and Antony Gormley.

About Nicole Eisenman

Born in Verdun, France in 1965 and based in Brooklyn, New York, Nicole Eisenman has explored narrative and the figure in paintings, works on paper, and sculptures that combine references to art history with elements of popular culture and challenge our assumptions about gender, family, and such ordinary moments as having a meal, attending a party, or sharing a bed with a loved one. Elements of the absurd, the banal, the countercultural, and the queer intersect and mingle with references to such artists as Philip Guston, Pablo Picasso, Pieter Brueghel, and Max Beckmann. Eisenman emerged in the 1990s with raucous, satirical works that made no secret of her strongly feminist sensibility. In the years since, she has explored portraiture, multi-figure compositions, and intimate views of lovers; the humorous, transgressive tenor of her work has been deepened by a frequently introspective quality and her openness about her sexual identity, describing herself as "gender fluid," but tempering her position by adding, "I use the 'she' pronoun. I'm a little bit old school. I believe in the radicality of stretching the definition of what 'she' is."

For high resolution images, please follow this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n9xphg1y5zfmdvc/AAAtlrzO5dYWkk4KhD2iPps3a?dl=0>

About the 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 Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm, and from 10 am to 5 pm on the first Saturday of each month. 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.

For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.