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REVIEW - 04 MAY 2018

Nadia Belerique: 'The Weather Channel'

The artist creates a dreamy, domestic space in which ideas of intimacy and concealment are explored at Oakville Galleries, Ontario

BY ARYEN HOEKSTRA

When Nadia Belerique opened her solo exhibition, 'The Weather Channel', at Oakville Galleries in early April, snow could still be seen falling through the gallery's windows. Exactly two years prior, Belerique presented 'Bed Island' at Toronto's Daniel Faria Gallery to somewhat friendlier skies. Comprised of an installation of to-scale drawings of blankets and pillows outlined in steel, a pair of rusting headboards and photographs of objects culled from her home and studio, 'Bed Island' had an atmosphere akin to the meditative isolation of a bed. For the photographs, Belerique arranged the objects on a raised transparent platform and shot them from below, mimicking the glass bed of a scanner.

The raised platform – a recurring sculptural form within Belerique's practice – takes centre stage in 'The Weather Channel'. *The Lake Room* (2018), her largest of these works to date, stretches across two

rooms of Oakville Galleries' Gairloch Gardens venue, a Tudor-style home set on a sprawling lakeside estate bequeathed to the Toronto suburb in the early 1970s. A frosted sheet of Perspex, cut to resemble the architectural footprint of a generic suburban bedroom, lays atop steel legs, just shy of the ceiling, its surface scattered with photographic transparencies, lamps, upturned bottles, leaves, strips of film and other clutter. Two strategically placed shoes and the backside of a pair of jeans can be seen from below, suggesting an inhabitant of this room-within-a-room contemplating the world through their window.



Nadia Belerique, 'The Weather Channel' 2018, exhibition view, Oakville Galleries. Foreground: *Wet Traps*(detail), 2018, glass, chain, resin, stickers, found objects, pouring medium. Centre: *In The Belly of a Cat Part 2, or Run*, 2018, inkjet print on dibond. Courtesy: the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto; photograph: Toni Hafkenscheid

Like the beds' double entendre, 'The Weather Channel' refers to an empathic channelling of emotion as well as television forecasting, and the suburban ritual of TV time. Postwar families were structured around their boxy sets, a common centrepiece of the home. Our contemporary screens, flatter and more mobile, channel our attention in increasingly intimate ways. Here, Belerique cites both kinds of screens with sheets of glass that lean against the gallery walls, subtly referencing the space's domestic architecture, while mirroring the former home's west-facing windows and their views of Lake Ontario. The weather outside,

reflected upon these panes, makes Belerique's installation feel simultaneously as exterior as it is interior.

In the South Gallery, which receives the most natural light of any of the four rooms, a collection of glass bottles, *Wet Traps* (2018), are cut to varying heights, so they seem to bob up and down on the gallery's wooden floor. A series of chains suspended from the ceiling casually hang amongst and into these, their drooping strands evoking an exaggerated light pull or a leak from above. With the horizon reflected onto the glass panes leaning over them, the bottles seem further adrift, like household refuse caught in the tide.



Nadia Belerique, *Doors*, 2018, installation view, Oakville Galleries, inkjet prints, stickers, artist's frames. Courtesy: the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto; photograph: Toni Hafkenscheid

The exhibition's dreamy, domestic cues recall the work of another Canadian-born photographer, Moyra Davey, particularly the images she captured in her apartment in the early 2000s of dust trapped under a paw or collected under a bed – framing the particles as an intimate index (hair, fibres, skin) of time and lived experience. In 'The Weather

Channel', Belerique positions objects as similar traces, while leaving deliberately ambiguous whose story they tell: our passing bodies, reflected onto the glass, inhabit her bedroom while observing its contents from a short distance. In this fugue state, the relationship between subject and object is particularly unstable: here, possession and possessor leave traces of themselves on one another, rendering their edges uncertain, shifting like the weather.

Nadia Belerique: The Weather Channel runs at Oakville Galleries until 3 June.

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- Hoekstra, Aryen. "Nadia Belerique: The Weather Channel", *Frieze*, May 4, 2018.
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