

Sophie Cunningham's sculptural work is a critical exploration into the irrational psychology behind the expediency and disposability of Western shopping habits. In a world of low costs, fast trends and carefully orchestrated return policies, her work interrogates the pervasive ways in which fast-fashion brands embody throwaway attitudes of mass consumption to the detriment of everything else.

Toying with elements of the bizarre, Cunningham creates absurd, tongue-in-cheek sculptural arrangements made from fast-fashion items ordered online, which live as long as a retailer's return policies. She sends back these items with a memento to act as a provocation, entering the artwork directly into the supply chain before the cycle of consumption begins again.

By leveraging the opacity of these capitalist systems, which feel so far removed from conventional artistic practice, Cunningham repurposes them as conduits for her own acts of resistance and rebellion. Her sculptures advocate for a new attitude towards commodity and value production, rallying against Western society's disposability complex of mass material consumption.

In her works, she raises questions about the damaging practices of fast-fashion brands; 'Papier-mâché Boots' follows the story of a pair of high-heeled cream boots on film, as Cunningham unboxes the boots, duplicates them in humorous papier-mâché form, and sends them back to the retailer as a customer return, after which she seemingly gets a full refund. Speculation ensues as to what happened to the papier-mâché boots. Are they in the warehouse? Have they gone undetected? Are they with another unassuming customer? Or simply in a landfill site?

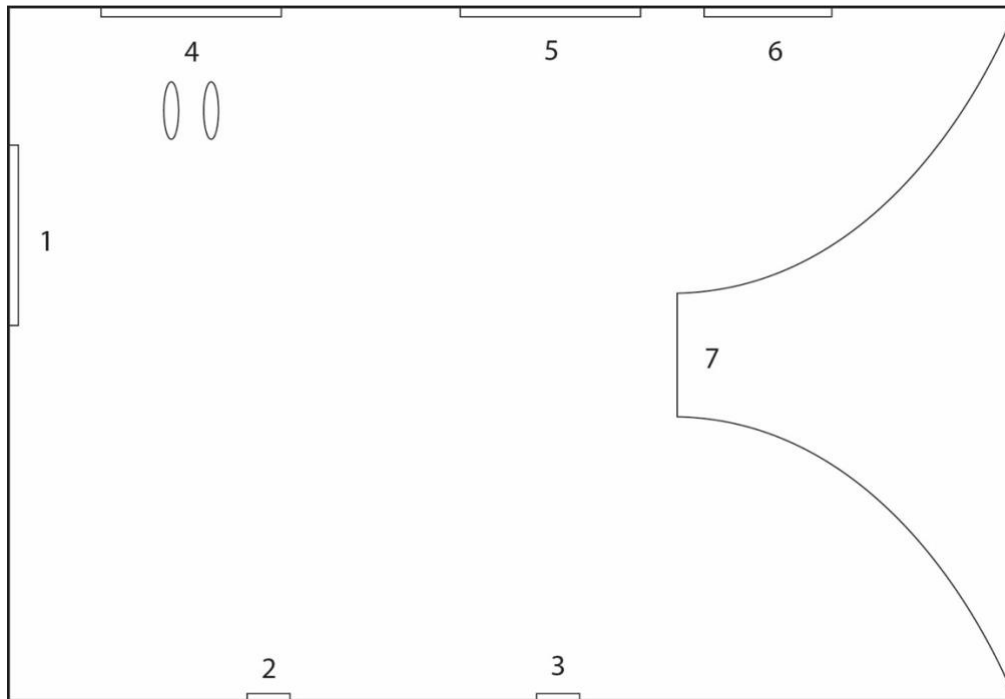


In debut work 'Consumption of Beige Bag', a collaboration with dessert designer Hebe Konditori, Cunningham evolves her previous art interventions through the surreal presentation of the human *consumption* of a consumer object.

The works presented in this exhibition poke fun at the notion of the 'irrational consumer response', bypassing the obtuse webs of communication in which customers find themselves embroiled when trying to contact fast-fashion brands. Her artworks figuratively and literally cut to the core of the damaging production chains and attitudes towards disposability that these brands perpetuate, building a case for a more caring, conscious approach towards fashion and clothing.

Bio

London-based artist Sophie Cunningham (b.1992 West Midlands) graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2015 and completed an MFA Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2022. Cunningham is the winner of the Gilbert Bayes Award from the Royal Society of Sculptors (2023) and was shortlisted for the East London Art Prize at BowArts (2023). She was also invited to speak as a Guest Speaker for 'Live Conversations: Designed to Make a Difference' at the V&A (2021). Recent exhibitions include *Baggage Claim* at Staffordshire Street Gallery (2023) and *Bottleneck* at Hartslane Gallery (2023).



List of Works

1. *Consumption of Beige Bag*, Video 00:04:00 (2023)

Made in collaboration with Hebe Konditori and performed by Gabriella Scarvaci

2. *Consumption of Beige Bag Polaroid 7*, Polaroid, 8 x 8cm (2023)

3. *Consumption of Beige Bag Polaroid 4*, Polaroid, 8 x 8cm (2023)

4. *Papier-mâché Boots*, Video 00:03:30, Cream PU Croc Point Toe Heeled Calf Boots Size 3 (2022)

5. *Mementos for the Supply Chain*, Video, 00:04:00, (2021-23)

6. *Vinyl Kickflare in Nude Return Parcel Packets and Mementos (28 Day Duration)*, Wood, Plastic, fuji instax, 30 x 45cm x 5cm (2023)

7. *Vinyl Kickflare in Nude Sculpture (28 Day Duration)*, 98% Polyester, 2% Elastane, 330 x 250 x 170cm (2023)



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