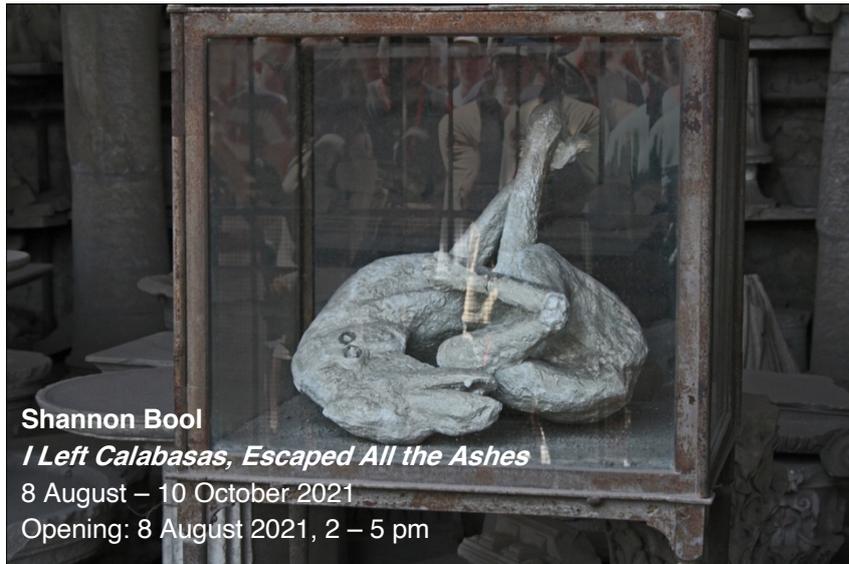


# SPACED OUT



Shannon Bool

*I Left Calabasas, Escaped All the Ashes*

8 August – 10 October 2021

Opening: 8 August 2021, 2 – 5 pm

SPACED OUT | Gut Kerkow

Greiffenberger Straße 8

16278 Angermünde

[spacedout.gut-kerkow.de](http://spacedout.gut-kerkow.de)

Shannon Bool's installation, *I Left Calabasas, Escaped All the Ashes*, features a crisp pairing of sculptural floor works that allude to an interplay of images, systems of value and means of production and draw attention to notions of beauty and the construction of perspective.

In the middle of the exhibition space, one encounters a black and white tiled marble floor (*Entrata Reale*, 2019) – its tiles neatly shift in size and shape to reveal a fixed-point perspective. The tiles have the quality of being an image, even though they are presented on a low plinth in the manner of sculpture. In this sense, the work mediates between the realms of image and object. Resting on the highly polished tiles is a bronze cast of a cow-pie (*Phidias' Minerva*, 2021). It is implied that an event has taken place, perhaps one in which the sharing of a field for farm animals has become intimate with the luxuries of human dwelling. The cow-pie was cast from the excrement of an Aberdeen Angus cow living on the farmland of Gut Kerkow, the land upon which the exhibition space Spaced Out is located. Something just outside the gallery has gone through a series of transformations and found its way indoors. It has moved a long way up the food chain in the process, in terms of its cultural value. Or has it? A curious economy of production and exchange is at play here.

The underlying sensibility of Bool's work stems from collage, which allows the artist to explode the historic charge of the images she appropriates by recontextualizing them into unfurling constellations of associations that continuously move between what is actual and what is virtual. The works relate to the site in which they are presented, to the perspective from which they are viewed (both physically and culturally), to their materiality as objects and how they have come into being, and to their value as images in terms of their ability to circulate through various traditional and social media platforms. In the end, they engage in a struggle to grasp what might constitute beauty in contemporary culture, while – *appropriately* – pointing toward the eye of a beholder who would have to judge. It turns out this is a difficult and historical task, as it should be.

For example, the design of marble floor is inspired by a photograph of the entrance hall of Kris Kardashian's humble mansion in the city of Calabasas in California, where a wildfire destroyed much of the region extending up into the Santa Monica Mountains in 2018. The fire is memorialized in a line from the lyric of Lana Del Rey's hit song, *Wild at Heart* – Bool has appropriated the line as the title of the exhibition. The artist's references extend the circulation of ashen imagery to include that of a Pompeiiian dog that was captured in a cast of volcanic ash and presented centuries later in a glass

vitrine. The immortalized canine is taken even further out of context and re-contextualized as the accompanying image of the exhibition's invitation. Somehow the excessive mediation of the dog, Kardashian, Del Rey and the cow-pie effect a greater sensibility in the associative process. They become more real in a representational circuit. True to the nature of media as in-between tangible phenomena, the insertion of the 'Kardashian, American style luxury' marble floor – an image of an entrance that has only one viewpoint to *properly* 'see' it – into the middle of the gallery draws one's attention to the hyper circulation of floating and disembodied images in general, especially those of celebrity. What Bool has appropriated is much more than imagery (it is not the first time the artist has tapped into the Kardashian phenomenon), what is appropriated is also the dizzying series of associations that circulate not only in the artist's mind, but very literally throughout the internet and social media. (Keyword searches, say, in a web browser, always produce these kinds of associations; they bear testimony to a phantasmic human presence within data networks.) The work bears a networked sensibility in this regard.

This networked sensibility has an uncanny effect on the qualities of Bool's artworks as objects: they oscillate between a magnificent splendour in the precision of their production to mediate multiple histories on the one pole, and a melancholy abandonment to the earthly status of their alienation value as appropriations on the other. What is revealed, laid bare, or recovered in this oscillation is an access to the beauty of the objects in themselves, as artworks.

Text by Maxwell Stephens

Shannon Bool was born in Comox, Canada and lives and works in Berlin. Bool attended the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver, Cooper Union, New York, and graduated from Staedelschule, Frankfurt (2004). Bool was artist in residence at the Villa Romana in Florence, Italy (2013). Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at: Agnes Etherington Art Centre (2020); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2019); The Canadian Cultural Center, Paris (2019); Musée d'art de Joliette, Joliette (2018); Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Calgary (2017) and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2015). Bool has been included in various group shows at: Sprengel Museum, Hannover (2019), Oakville Galleries, Oakville (2019), National Museum of Germany, Bonn (2018), Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, Frankfurt (2017); White Cube Gallery, London (2017); The National Gallery, Ottawa (2017); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2016) and La Biennale de Montréal (2016). Her work can be found in the collections of the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Lenbachhaus, Munich; The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Foundation Sandretto, Turin, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, and numerous private collections.