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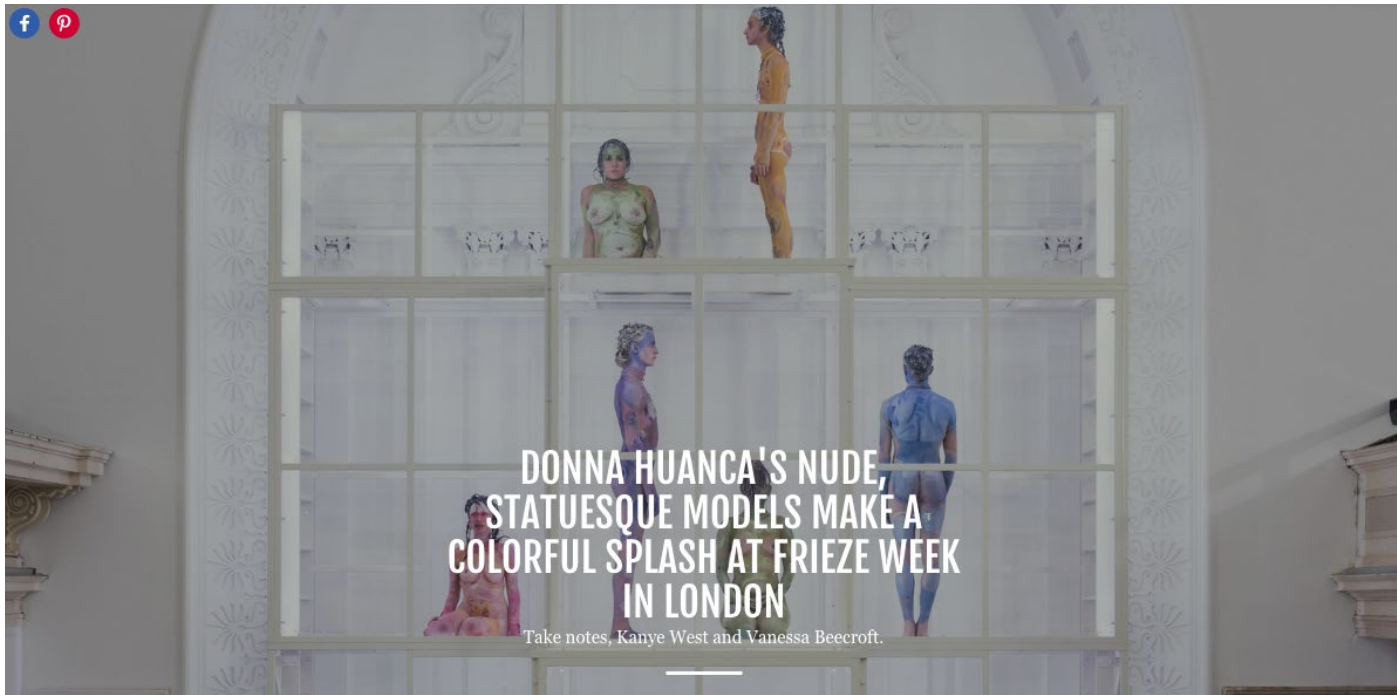


Photo: Thierry Bal

by Skye Sherwin

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With plenty of nudity and rumors about hallucinogens, Donna Huanca's solo exhibition "Scar Cymbals," at the [Zabludowicz Collection](#), was always going to be one of the most talked about offerings of [Frieze Week](#) in London. Yet though Huanca delivered a rainbow-colored visual spectacle for her performance on Friday night within the exhibition, the overall vibe is more meditative than sensationalist.

In the main gallery, her installations have a minimalist aesthetic that would suit a New Age temple or high-concept spa. There's a sand maze carved from low ridges, a two-story glass house, and, for Friday's special performance, a monolith of ice in which rambutans, an Indonesian fruit, had been frozen.

Against this stripped-down backdrop, Huanca's performers looked a motley tribe, dressed in nothing more than body stockings and lashed with pigments — hues of bright yellow, lapis lazuli blue, pale jade — in turmeric, coffee and clay. With a focus on the skins society inhabits, the back gallery is similarly populated by a crew of models, or "sculptures," wearing hides, clothes and clear plastic sheets. They took deliberate, slow steps while a spacey soundtrack resounded.

Like the festivals mashing up Catholic and local folk traditions, which she witnessed visiting her parents' home as a child, the Bolivian-American artist's work draws on diverse cultures. The smell of Palo Santo, a wood that's mixed with peyote and ritually ingested in psychedelic rites across the Americas, is pumped throughout the art space. Yet while the show courts out-of-body experiences, the performers remain bound to earth through traces of their existence.

Their interactions with the clear clean forms in the gallery left gentle marks of color, a record of bodies moving in space and time that will continue to accrue day by day, with performers in situ during the show's run. In one room body stockings are heaped like lizard skins, but identity, Huanca suggests, cannot be so easily shed.