

# The Creators Project

## Body Painting and Performance Art Collide in 'SCAR CYMBALS'

DJ Pangburn — Nov 20 2016



SCAR CYMBALS, 2016, performance view. Commissioned by Zabłudowicz Collection. Courtesy the artist and Peres Projects. All photos by Thierry Bal

In Donna Huanca's imagination, the naked body is a number of things. A fleshy sculpture, a canvas meant for paint, an anatomical performance prop, a model, and so much more. In her first UK solo exhibition, *SCAR CYMBALS*, the New York-based artist takes over the Zabłudowicz Collection, installing painted models in various poses and positions throughout the space. The resulting performance piece includes sculptural elements, draped fabrics and latex, canvas paintings, sound, and works on plastic sheets descending from the gallery ceiling.

*SCAR CYMBALS*, which opened September 29 and runs until December 18, is an ever-evolving installation. Its daily metamorphosis unfolds with Huanca painting the models anew, then moving them into different spaces or onto platforms. The movements, slow and deliberate, are meant to conjure private rituals and meditations within the space. The effect is a bit like Matthew Barney doing a live, theatrical production—making artists' models the actual focal points of the work.

Huanca also designed a three-story glass structure that interacts with the height and neo-classical stucco work of the 19th century, former Methodist chapel. Since the models are covered in paint, the glass structure becomes more and more opaque as their bodies make contact with the glass. Other sculptural elements are inspired by the shapes and patterns created by minerals and rock formations. The body paint covering the models is inspired by minerals' natural pigments.



MELANOCYTES/ETHERIC LAYER, 2016, performance view



SCAR CYMBALS, 2016, performance view

Huanca has also worked as a musician and sound artist, under the name Rua Minx, and the installation's sonic elements go beyond atmosphere. Huanca embedded sound works inside the sculptures and created a "standalone totem-like sculpture," all of which respond to the movements and proximity of the models and visitors by emitting varying bass tones that affect the body.

As Zabłudowicz Collection notes, Huanca is interested in how human bodies occupy and move through space and how a life's worth of gestures creates "invisible histories." Huanca hopes that in exposing the naked body, then concealing much of it with layers of paint, latex, and cosmetics, she can get viewers to confront intrinsic reactions to flesh—to see it as something familiar but also abstract and inaccessible.



SCAR CYMBALS, 2016, performance view



SCAR CYMBALS, 2016, performance view



SCAR CYMBALS, 2016, performance view



SWEAT DUCT/MENTAL LAYER, 2016, performance view, detail



*SWEAT DUCT/MENTAL LAYER, 2016, performance view, detail*



*VEINS/PHYSICAL BODY (Scrawls), 2016, detail*

*SCAR CYMBALS* runs through December 18 at Zabłudowicz Collection in London. To see more of Donna Huanca's work, visit, [here](#).