



Palumbo, Jacqui. "This Artist Is Exhibiting a Nightmarish Display of Intestines around the World." *CNN*, 8 Dec. 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/samara-golden-artist-guts/index.html>.

This artist is exhibiting a nightmarish display of intestines around the world

The artist Samara Golden has spent months painting guts — lurid, swollen, sinuous forms in bloody red, purplish-blue or a sickly yellow. Made of expandable foam, encased in balloons like misshapen sausage links, they are layered onto large-scale panels that loom above viewers.



Credit: Courtesy Night Gallery

One installation saw the multicolor intestines surround humanoid foam figures sprawled on a mirrored platform, exhibited at Art Basel Miami Beach. Portraits of her making the work show her hand-painting each grotesque detail.

"I liked this idea of 'guts' as being this word that could be a lot of different things," Golden said in a phone call. "You can have gut intuition, or you can have the guts to be bold and do something. Or you can feel it in your gut."

"It's mixed (in) with the visceral, disgusting (but) important role that actual intestines play." That role is still quite mysterious — though our intestines are responsible for absorbing essential nutrients and moving waste along, the gut microbiome is also being studied for its ability to modulate our brains, from mood to neurological function and disorders.

But Golden's foray into looking deeply inward came from a much more complicated installation, one that first exhibited at Night Gallery in Los Angeles this past January and has now traveled to the newly expanded Art Gallery of New South Wales for the exhibition "Dreamhome: Stories of Art and Shelter." In this presentation of "Guts," the intestinal display is just one level of a multi-tiered structure she created that looks like a skyscraper within the

space. Look up or down, and mirrors create a vertiginous illusion of infinite levels — the "floors," which feature guts, iridescent pools of water, snakes and crustaceans, and piles of furniture go on forever. The further up or down you peer, the more abstract each layer becomes, with a shimmering, mirage-like effect.

"A lot of the imagery from my installations comes from (things) I don't totally understand that I dream about," she said. "Or I feel like they're just glimpses of something in (my) peripheral vision."

But the intricate display of intestines has become somewhat of the star of the project, both for the wider associations Golden began to make about our collective health — "All of us are so fragile," she noted — and her obsessive making of the work, something she found boiled down to the simple pleasure of experimenting with materials.

"I really enjoyed making the guts part of it. I couldn't stop," she recalls of her time preparing for the Night Gallery installation. "It was more of a direct relationship to making (things) — most of my projects have been really complicated."

Golden spent close to half a year with Night Gallery's team to get the components of the ambitious skyscraper illusion just right, and later, roughly two months of 16-hour studio days to put together the Miami presentation. In Sydney, she worked with the Art Gallery of New South Wales for another four months to adapt the project into the space, blurring the boundaries of the museum interior and her installation. "It's supposed to look like it's part of the architecture," she explained.

But she also revisited the intestinal layers again, meticulously repainting them rather than showing them as they were in LA. After all, she'd since put in hundreds of hours to perfect a somewhat macabre new skill, and found her gut-painting had vastly improved.

"I'm not one of those artists that...has regular days," she said. "I really burn the candle five ways."