

DEPARTURE LOUNGE

PRESS RELEASE

13 August 2021

Haley Morris-Cafiero: *Weight Bearing*

Saturday 18 September – Saturday 30 October 2021

Departure Lounge, Bute Street, Luton

Admission Free

****Opening event Saturday 18 September, 2.30-6pm. All welcome, admission free**.**

Activist artist Haley Morris-Cafiero presents a newly-commissioned and highly personal series of self-portraits at Luton's Departure Lounge gallery this autumn.

Morris-Cafiero can be described as part performer, part artist, part provocateur and part spectator. Her work explores themes of body image, online bullying and societal expectations about female appearance.

In this new photographic series, *Weight Bearing*, Morris-Cafiero has responded to the alarming reports of increased requests for help with disordered eating during the Coronavirus lockdown by drawing on her own experience of living with an undiagnosed eating disorder, many years ago. In these new, constructed self-portraits Morris-Cafiero uses imagery and symbols from everyday situations to communicate the invisible feelings that she associates with trying to control her body's size and conform to the wider society and the media's expectations of what a woman should look like.

Haley Morris-Cafiero said: "Imagine that you are trying to push an oval-shaped ball into a hole. When you push the ball towards the hole, it moves in a different direction. After multiple tries, the ball is finally over the hole and you discover that the hole is too small. This is how I would describe my attempt to control my body and to meet other people's expectations of how I should look. I hope the images help those who are struggling with an eating disorder to find their voice and seek help".

Departure Lounge Director Matthew Shaul said: "We are delighted to have commissioned Haley to make these powerful new images and to finally be able to show a full exhibition of her work following last year's Covid-enforced window display *Invisible in Plain Sight*. These new self-portraits go to the heart of what Departure Lounge is about as a gallery, they ask searching questions about what contemporary photographic portraiture is and what we should expect of it. Haley's often unsettling images distil identity and the extremes of emotion that characterise our collective struggle to deal with modern experience'.

Haley Morris-Cafiero lives and works in the UK and is currently Senior Lecturer in Photography at the University of Northampton. Her photographs have been widely



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



exhibited in solo and group exhibitions internationally and have featured in numerous newspapers and magazines. Previous projects include *The Bully Pulpit* (2019), in which she took on the appearance of those who vilified her on social media, and *Wait Watchers* (2015) in which she captured strangers' responses to her physical appearance.

Weight Bearing is generously funded by Arts Council England. It is organised by Departure Lounge and is delivered in partnership with The Culture Trust Luton.

[ENDS]

PRESS ENQUIRIES: For further information, interview requests and images please contact: Hazel Foxon email hazel@foxon.org or tel 07801 234930 (not for publication)

Notes to Editors

Visitor Information

Departure Lounge, 64 Bute Street, Luton LU1 2EY

Open Thursday – Saturday 1.00pm– 6.00pm, and by appointment Admission free

Telephone 01582 878100

www.departure-lounge.org.uk email: galler@departure-lounge.org.uk

Haley Morris-Cafiero's photographs have been widely exhibited in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad, and have been featured in numerous newspapers, magazines and online. Born in Atlanta, USA she is a graduate of the University of North Florida, where she earned a BA in Photography and a BFA in Ceramics in 1999. Nominated for the Prix Pictet in 2014 and a 2016 Fulbright finalist, Morris-Cafiero holds a MFA from the University of Arizona in Art. The Magenta Foundation published her monograph, *The Watchers*, in 2015. She is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at the University of Northampton.

Departure Lounge was set up in Luton 2010 initially organising a series of international contemporary art exhibitions in empty shops. With a particular emphasis on photography and portraiture, we curate an independent programme of exhibitions and commissions with the support of The Culture Trust Luton and, on a project-by-project basis, Arts Council England and other funders.

The Culture Trust Luton is an arts and cultural charity providing exceptional and meaningful engagement with museums, arts centres, libraries and public art for the people of Luton and beyond. Luton Culture aims to deliver exemplary public engagement with arts and culture through its locally relevant and nationally important arts and cultural programmes, whilst actively nurturing creativity and artistic talent.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

