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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

## Rachel Feinstein Got to Be an Artist in Residence at Chatsworth House Thanks to Gucci's New Initiative

*The artist unveiled her beautifully complex sculptural work today*

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*Artist Rachel Feinstein at work on Britannia. © Photo: Courtesy of Gucci*

A Roman personification of the British Isles, Nymphenburg porcelain, and a so-called "Rococo Hut." These seemingly disparate phrases—plausibly united under the metaphorically pink umbrella of the late 17th- and early 18th-century fine and decorative art movement—are not the sort of terms that frequently crop up in the year 2019. But leave it to Gucci, patron saint of all creative works blossoming with maximalist innuendos, to help bring them together. However, it is artist Rachel Feinstein who deserves full-fledged credit for the fact that you are seeing these concepts side by side.



Here, paint colors are examined. Photo: Courtesy of Gucci

Feinstein, a sculptor whose multimedia works are often tinged with fairytale and Baroque references, is the first artist to take part in Gucci and Chatsworth House's artist-in-residence program. The initiative—as well as Feinstein's inaugural work—were unveiled today. One half of the piece in question, titled *Britannia*, is a ceramic sculpture now placed in the grotto of the British estate's gardens. Every bit human-sized in scale and form, *Britannia* is in fact intended to evoke a larger-than-life figure, in that it depicts the Roman personification of the British Isles.



A look at one detail of Feinstein's Nymphenburg creation. Photo: Courtesy of Gucci

In order to make *Britannia*, Feinstein consulted with the Nymphenburg porcelain factory. Nymphenburg, located in Munich, Germany, is widely considered to be one of the finest producers of porcelain. Their wares can be found in museum collections around the globe—as well as in the finest personal collections throughout Europe. This however being a Feinstein creation, there is an added narrative element. In addition to making *Britannia*, Feinstein has envisioned and constructed the *Rococo Hut* now on Chatsworth's grounds. The precision needed to make *Britannia* come to life is wonderfully at odds with the woodland quality of the hut. It's also the perfect location for the performance of a (perhaps fairy tale-themed) thespian pursuit, in Feinstein's estimation.



*The Rococo Hut. Photo: Courtesy of Gucci*

As fairy tales are often governed by a thematic rule of three, so too is this story, in that the alignment of Feinstein and Gucci's preexisting visions is naturally counterbalanced by the longstanding collection of Chatsworth. The house (which has served as the setting for a notable fashion exhibition in recent years, and is itself the subject of an upcoming Sotheby's auction) has a venerable collection of dovetailing 18th-century works, which belong to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire.



*Feinstein on the Chatsworth grounds. Photo: Courtesy of Gucci*

In order to make this fantastical and sculptural pairing a reality, Feinstein first began a residency on the property this month last year. A second visit took place in October, and now, thanks to those efforts, her works will remain in the grotto for the next five years. As for Gucci and Chatsworth, this is just the start of the story, as more artists who embody Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele's vision will be coming to the house to take part in additional such residencies over the next few years. It's the continuation of a partnership that has seen the sponsorship of an exhibition ("House Style," that aforementioned fashionable tour-de-force) and the photographing of an advertising campaign—among other things. It's just that this time around, art and decorative arts history are even closer to the fore.