

NEWS

## Coco Fusco Casts Trump as a Heartless Tin Man

Contentious relations between the United States and China underscore the display of Fusco’s “Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century” at the Anren Biennale in China’s Sichuan province.

Sarah Rose Sharp November 4, 2019



Coco Fusco, “Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century” (2018), Produced in collaboration with Chico MacMurtrie (Courtesy Tettero, Anren Biennale 2019 © Coco Fusco/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

Many critics of President Trump bemoan the fact that, like the Scarecrow in the *Wizard of Oz*, he appears to lack a brain — but artist [Coco Fusco](#) sees it another way.

“The Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz* movie has no heart and needs oil,” the artist told Hyperallergic, answering the question of how that character became the inspiration for her [“The Tin Man of](#)

[the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)” (2018), created in collaboration with [Chico MacMurtrie](#). The piece was displayed at Art Basel earlier this year, and is now on display in China’s Sichuan province at the second [Anren Biennale](#), which opened earlier this month. Obviously, the

contentiousness of recent US-China relations makes the display of this piece a particularly interesting choice.

“I think that is probably why the biennial in Szechuan wanted the piece — it was their idea,” Fusco speculated. “In Basel the piece got a lot of attention from Chinese journalists as well.”



President Benjamin Harrison (left), dressed as an improvised Tin Man in an 1890 editorial cartoon from Puck. (via Wikipedia Commons)

Fusco also noted that there is historical precedent for lampooning the President of the United States as a Tin Man, referencing an 1890 political cartoon that portrays President Benjamin Harrison wearing improvised tin armor (poking fun at his proposed tariff on tin). This stands as a reminder that history is ever repeating itself, and a nod to the timelessness of Frank L. Baum’s iconic pantheon of characters. Although, when it comes finding a mascot for the worst traits of our Commander-in-Chief, it’s really a tough call between no heart, no brain, and no courage. An embarrassment of metaphoric riches for our artless embarrassment of a president!

*The Anren Biennale will run through February 12, 2020.*