

Murray Guy

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LUCY SKAER *Harlequin Is As Harlequin Does*

18 February — 24 March 2012

Murray Guy is very pleased to announce our first solo exhibition with Lucy Skaer, *Harlequin Is As Harlequin Does*, comprising new sculptures and silkscreened photographs. Please join us on Saturday, February 18 from 6 to 8pm for an opening reception with the artist.

In the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, the Harlequin (or Arlecchino) was a wild and rogue servant—a fool who lacked money and food, and whose comic and cowardly antics interrupted and frequently unraveled the plot. Originally wearing a peasant's shirt and long trousers, the Harlequin evolved into a highly recognizable figure with a tight-fitting outfit decorated with triangles and diamonds. This geometric "harlequin" pattern both designates an individual—a figure composed of a repertoire of familiar gestures—and a graphic scheme that suggests an infinitely expandable décor.

Skaer suspends various materials — copper, tin, resin, celluloid, bronze, brass, mahogany, a coin collection—within or underneath harlequin-like surfaces. Solid copper ingots are sliced diagonally to form a series of triangles, while salvaged mahogany is carved and polished into emerald-cut forms with triangular facets; old coins and small brass miniatures of Brancusi's *Newborn* are cast in tin prisms, and piles of 35mm film frames are submerged in resin. As ostensive definitions of "Harlequin," these sculptures are like figures that act, interrupt, deflect, and solicit. Each has the pretense of a narrative: the mahogany, for example, is over a century old; it was salvaged from a riverbed in Belize where it had sunk while in transit to the UK. (Belize was a former British colony, and mahogany was a staple in Victorian furniture—furniture that Skaer has altered and animated in many previous projects.)

Amongst the sculptures Skaer will present a new series of photographs that depict Leonora Carrington's house in Mexico City. Showing only its rather ordinary exterior, these photographs have been screenprinted over with grey triangles and planes that highlight and obscure various details. Skaer has worked with Carrington in the past, producing a short film of her hands in 2006 entitled *The Joker*. Her previous interest had less to do with Carrington's surrealist paintings and more with her continued survival—the seemingly astonishing fact of simultaneity, that Skaer and Carrington could be alive and producing work at the same moment. Following Carrington's recent death, these new photographs emphasize a relationship between inside and outside, narrative and image; like the sculptures, they are a conceit for the possibility that an exterior form might (or might not) reflect some pregnant interior history.

Lucy Skaer (b. 1975 Cambridge, UK) recently presented a major public commission in Leeds, England. Entitled *Film for an Abandoned Projector*, she produced a film for an abandoned 35mm Kalee projector in Leeds' former Lyric Theatre (a site which is currently used as a church by Zimbabwean immigrants.) Reanimating the cinematic space, Skaer treated the projector as a technological object whose memory or unconscious could be sounded out by her film's continuous flow of images. A new version of this film—which Skaer altered by removing the center of each frame, leaving visible only the margin—is currently on view in *Scene, Hold, Ballast*, an exhibition of Skaer's work at the SculptureCenter, New York, through March 18. (Grouped into distinct "scenes," many of these cutout celluloid frames appear in the sculptures at Murray Guy.) Skaer's work can also be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where her film installation *Flash in the Metropolitan*, which was made in collaboration with Rosalind Nashashibi, is on view through August 2012. And on February 29, Skaer will give a talk about her recent work at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, New York.

In addition to her exhibition at the SculptureCenter, Skaer will have a solo exhibition opening in July 2012 at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna. Recent solo exhibitions include *A Boat Used as a Vessel*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland; *The Siege*, Chisenhale Gallery, London; *Lucy Skaer*, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; *Rachel, Peter, Caitlin, John*, Location One, New York, and Art Unlimited, Art | 42 Basel; and *Art Now: Pygmalion Event*, Tate Britain, London. Recent group exhibitions include *Elles*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; *Intensif-Station*, K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Düsseldorf; *Leopards in the Temple*, SculptureCenter, New York; *For the blind man in the dark room looking for the black cat that isn't there*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; and *When Things Cast No Shadow* — The 5th Berlin Biennial. In 2009, Skaer was shortlisted for the Turner Prize, and in 2007, she represented Scotland at the 52nd Venice Biennale.

For information or images, please contact the gallery at +1-212-463-7372 or info@murrayguy.com.