

The Hepworth Wakefield presents the UK's first museum survey of work by American artist Lynda Benglis. The exhibition is the largest presentation of Benglis' work in the UK, featuring over 50 works that span the entirety of her prolific career to date.

Aged 73, Benglis is one of America's most significant living artists. Born in 1941 in Louisiana, USA, she was heralded as the 'heir to Pollock' by Life magazine in 1970 and emerged as part of a generation of artists forging new approaches to sculpture and painting in the wake of Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism and Pop Art.

During the 1960s and '70s Benglis established her name within a male-dominated art world and became famous not only for her radical re-envisioning of sculpture and painting through works employing wax and poured latex, but also for her works incorporating her own image which dissected the politics of representation and society's construction of gender roles. The most infamous of these was published in the pages of Artforum in 1974. An explicit parody of both the male ethos of the time and the tradition of the 'pin-up girl', it showed a naked, confrontational Benglis posing with a giant dildo and sunglasses. Its inclusion in the magazine resulted in a handful of editors resigning in protest.

The incredible breadth of Benglis' work is explored in this expansive exhibition, which highlights her enduring desire to challenge the traditions of sculpture and painting, and explore the physical dialogue between work and viewer. Key early works on display include latex 'fallen paintings' such as *Baby Contraband* (1969), the polyurethane pour *Night Sherbet A* (1968), the cast metal cantilever *Wing* (1970) and glitter-encrusted 'knots' such as *Sparkle Knot IV* (1970). Several of her videos and photographic works are also presented, including the sensual video *Female Sensibility* (1973), featuring Benglis touching, kissing and licking the face of fellow artist Marilyn Lenkowsky.

Benglis remains prolific and continues to develop a unique approach to exploring form and unconventional materials that has defined her practice since late 1960s. Her recent ceramic and polyurethane works are also presented along with several molded paper works, which are being exhibited publicly for the first time.

Over the past 50 years, Benglis has divided her time between studios in New York, Santa Fe, Ahmedabad in India and Kastelorizo in Greece, with each diverse location having subtle, yet discernible, influences on her practice. Drawing on the significance of place and landscape to Benglis' work, the exhibition layout is geographically-defined, to echo the influence of these studio localities on her art: each providing a rich resource of forms, iconographies, materials and motifs.

Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana in 1941, Lynda Benglis moved to New York City in the late 1960s. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and two National Endowment for the Arts grants, among other commendations. Her work is held in important public collections and has been exhibited at Tate Modern, The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Benglis was the subject of a 2010-11 international retrospective that travelled to The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; The Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Le Consortium, Dijon; New Museum, New York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

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