

Lucy Skaer is an English artist (born in 1975, lives and works in Glasgow) who has gained international recognition on the art scene in only a few years. In 2007, she was among the six artists selected to represent Scotland at the Venice Biennale and in 2009, she was a Turner Prize finalist. Following her solo exhibitions at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh and the Chisenhale Gallery in London, the Kunsthalle in Basel devoted a monographic exhibition to her in 2009, as did the Witte de With in Rotterdam in 2016. She is represented in France and in the United States by Peter Freeman, Inc.

Within the framework of multi-dimensional installations, in which sculpture and drawing are particularly important, Lucy Skaer develops working procedures where recognisable, abstract objects and images are transformed by all sorts of manipulations, repetitions and disparities of scale. The artist acts through removal, replicas, distortion and quotes, at the whim of encounters, research and a continued fascination for the history of art. Driven by reality's prolific links with the sublime, Lucy Skaer endeavours to reveal the very essence of certain objects and materials to give a personal and evocative interpretation of elements relating to the past. Beyond their apparent diversity, all of her works explore the mechanisms through which we give meaning to things that we love and think we know: press photographs reproducing familiar, enlarged and redesigned masterpieces; extracts from early cinema manipulated to the point of abstraction; objects cut apart and reconfigured ; domestic objects turned into prints of their forms.

The exhibition at the Mrac Occitanie is her first solo exhibition in France. Lucy Skaer will present an overview of existing pieces from the last five years as well as new works, one of which, *Eccentric Boxes*, is the result of a coproduction between the Mrac and the Rennes Biennale 'Incorporated'.

*Eccentric Boxes* (2016) is an installation made in and on the basis of her family home, a house that she gradually alters and displaces. For several months now she has carried out a series of operations there modifying, removing and substituting certain architectural elements or furniture, a process that she records through photographs. For *Eccentric boxes*, Lucy Skaer removed the living-room wooden floor and embedded certain pieces of furniture in it, removing slats to build a chest. Each one of her operations leaves scars in the wood, and these incisions are highlighted with inlays of stones and ceramics, which literally illuminate the floor before it is transformed into a sealed box. The process here is as much physical as it is psychological, bringing about the need for memory in our family histories and, no less urgently, of uprooting.

*Sticks and Stones* (2013-2017 in progress) is a series of sculptures that start with a pair of slice of

red mahogany. This precious and sacred wood species was used in Brazil from the end of the 19th century to build ships and especially for mass exportation to produce non-expensive furniture made in the United Kingdom. From these mahogany slices steeped in history, the artist made eight copies, produced in different materials such as marble, aluminium, bronze or *papier mâché*. Each sculpture is a prototype for the next. The initial shape of the object thus gradually evolves, providing a series of strange horizontal sculptures lying on the ground. Through this sculptural variation, Lucy Skaer explores different historical and cultural strata incorporated into the thickness or the surface of the objects.

In *One Remove* (2016), produced for her exhibition at Witte de With, two lines of oval tables obstruct the flow of visitors. One comprises tables of modernist inspiration, the other neo-classical mahogany tables with a line of lapis lazuli along its length. On the floor, a Moroccan carpet echoes the carved interlocking of the modernist tables. Here domestic objects become sculptures, summarising the history of forms that change gradually with time and throughout cultures. Through this ambiguity between abstract and narrative, sculptural object and functional object, Lucy Skaer presents a work with a strange seductive power that is both familiar and mysterious.

Lastly, Lucy Skaer will present a brand new work to the Mrac that is still in production, in which she transforms her personal collection of abstract objects into animals. These objects that are either manufactured or found in the countryside, and which the artist has collected for the appeal they inspire in her, become the bones of strange creatures forming their skeletons. As it is often the case with Lucy Skaer, this piece is inspired by ancient traditions: in the Middle Ages, the prey in the hunting scenes, its capture and slaughter, is depicted with a satisfaction and desire that might offend our contemporary sensibility. By this way, the artist establishes a parallel between object and death, between the animate and the inanimate, between desire and satisfaction, and *in fine* between abstraction and narration.

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