



Kluisstraat 86 -  
rue de l'Ermitage  
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## SIX POSSIBILITIES FOR A SCULPTURE

12 April – 29 June 2013

Group exhibition  
curated by Zoë Gray

Featuring  
Hedwig Houben  
Jennifer Tee  
Caroline Achaintre  
Robert Orchardson  
Emmanuelle Lainé

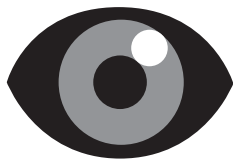
In an art world of endless possibilities, can we talk about only six possibilities for a sculpture? This exhibition presents the work of five artists who embraces sculpture as an active force rather than static object.

The art critic Rosalind Krauss once asked: “How necessary is sculpture to producing the effects of sculpture?” Her 1979 essay *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* examined the increasingly immaterial practices within the medium. Whilst she would later bemoan the breakdown of distinctions between media, her essay was an important milestone in what became known as the post-medium condition.

The artists included in this exhibition do not limit themselves to working in any one medium, yet they all engage with the practice of sculpture, of giving physical form to their ideas. They embrace the theatricality of sculpture – once maligned as its weakness – and choose to activate their forms in various ways, sometimes even literally putting them on stage.

To greater and lesser extent, they are all engaged with questions of making, of process, even of craft. As Eva Grubinger and Jörg Heiser note in their introduction to *Sculpture Unlimited* (Sternberg Press, 2012), “an interest in the history of sculpture seems to be experiencing a revival, which includes a return to traditional techniques and production methods, and may even appear strangely radical and new in our age of the Internet and simulation.” What strikes me particularly about this return to traditional techniques in the works of the artists presented here is that it is combined with a conceptual savvyness, a lightness of touch, and a generous helping of humour.

Whilst the exhibition is not designed to be about the building that hosts it, it would be disingenous to ignore entirely the heavily laden symbolism of the space. A former Masonic lodge, it has the codes of Freemasonry engrained in its very fabric. The works in the show flirt with the totemic presence of sculpture, with its potential as a ritualistic form. Nevertheless, any rituals that the works may evoke are purely artistic, and function within the realm of contemporary art, a space that allows for great freedom and great possibility.



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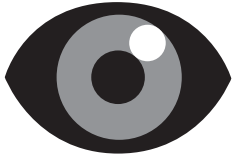
Jennifer Tee presents four floor-based pieces, each knitted from hand-dyed wool. These seemingly flat pieces are far from two-dimensional. Their crystalline forms, tactile texture and the gradation of their colouring create the illusion of relief, drawing us into their decorative and beautiful surfaces. Independent works in their own right, they are also the stage and inspiration for a new piece of choreography, performed by the artist and a professional dancer. The shapes and interactions made by their bodies are guided by the shapes and interactions of the floor pieces, whose muted eloquence finds a fleeting new form of expression, which lasts for just a few moments.

The latency or potential of objects is explored in Emmanuelle Lainé's work, even if very few actual objects are presented. Educated as a sculptor, Lainé often creates works that reveal the traces of their making: shapes presented together with their molds, or amorphous shapes surrounded by the powders, liquids, and fibres of their construction. Here she retains this very physical approach, but presents us with a photograph. After working for several weeks in La Loge to create a site-specific installation on this stage, Lainé invited photographer André Morin to photograph her work. She plays with the trompe-l'oeil possibilities that photography affords, and the theatricality of the space, to present a work that is at once material and ethereal.

Operating, perhaps, at a counter-current to the other artists in the show, Robert Orchardson takes forms that were once on a stage, and translates them into abstract sculptures in a gallery setting. Intrigued by the way in which materials in a stage set can take on multiple meanings within the context of a play, he revisits Isamu Noguchi's designs for a 1955 Royal Shakespeare Company production of King Lear. This avant-garde production – hailed at the time as a failure by theatre critics – becomes Orchardson's source material for a sequence of works that defy narrative and exhibit a mute eloquence. Adapted here to work with the theatricality of La Loge's architecture, they become prototypes, carriers of ideas in a way that might previously have been described as "formalist."

Over the past few years, Hedwig Houben has been exploring the possibilities afforded to her by sculpture: possibilities for a better understanding of her own creative process. Her video presented here is the conclusion to the series that gave this exhibition its name. It began as an artist's talk, in which she spoke of six shapes found in her studio, examining her own reactions to them. The script from this performance was reworked several times, adding – for example – sections sung by the artist, or moments in which the sculpture under discussion joined in the debate. In the fifth and final iteration of the piece, the sculpture has become the main narrator, who uses flashbacks to discuss its own evolution and Houben's artistic choices. With an underlying humour, Houben reveals the melancholy and doubt that she encounters while making art. These emotional states are again brought to the fore in the song she has created for this exhibition, presented upstairs, called Soundtrack for a Sculpture.

While Caroline Achaintre's sculptures do not actually speak, somehow one imagines they might. Her ceramics are anthropomorphic and have a certain formal viscosity, as if freezing a moment of transformation from one state (or one emotion) to another. Display is a very important aspect of her work and plinths, shelves and stands have become an integral but flexible part of her pieces. Her wall-based woollen works – which appear to be tapestries, but which rather than being woven are actually made with a tufting gun – refer to primitive patterns, animal hides, the applied arts of early Modernism or the riotous combinations of shapes and colours of Postmodernism. They also have a shamanistic quality, or something of the carnivalesque about them. While remaining too beautiful and seductive to be considered abject or deviant, there is nevertheless a subversive potential contained within these sculptures.



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## Events

Thursday 16 May, 19:30

Emmanuelle Lainé in conversation with Sandra Patron (director of Parc Saint Léger, Centre d'art contemporain, Pougues-les-Eaux)\*

\*This conversation will be in French. All other events are held in English.

Wednesday 22 May, 19:30

Robert Orchardson in conversation with Wim Waelput (director of KIOSK, Gent)

Saturday 25 May, 16:00

Performance by Jennifer Tee, followed by the artist in conversation with Annick Kleizen (associate curator, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam)

Thursday 13 June, 19:30

Hedwig Houben in conversation with Vanessa Desclaux (independent curator, Paris)

Saturday 15 June, 16:00

Lecture The Pedestal of Broken Dreams by Vivian Sky Rehberg (art critic, course director, MA Fine Arts, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam)

Wednesday 26 June, 19:30

Caroline Achaintre in conversation with Sophie von Olfers (curator, Portikus, Frankfurt-am-Main)

## Practical information

Exhibition open Thursday to Saturday, 12:00 – 19:00

Free entrance

La Loge is a privately funded, non-profit association.