

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Floorr Magazine
Holly Hendry
Anonymous
1 June 2017

Floorr

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Could you tell us a bit about yourself? How long have you been a practicing artist and where did you study?

I studied my BA at the Slade School of Art in London, then lived in Newcastle after graduating. More recently I completed my MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art in London. I've been making things for as long as I can remember but considering the possibility of being a practicing artist came while studying, so I would say that I've been a practicing artist since then.

Your sculptures give the appearance of the body/flesh being constricted or cut/sliced through, could you tell us about these works and the inspiration for them?

The thinking and making for these works revolves around edges - architectural edges, body edges, the meeting of edges, the puncture of edges. Edges also relate to the inside and outside of things, skins, messiness and tidiness and when and people's edges can be interchangeable or porous. In this way, the idea of the edge, to me, defines or outlines where something is - so they're really about absences and presences through borders. I'm interested in our own edges and this literal or imagined membrane that surrounds us, and other things when these contours shift and morph, or turn inside of themselves.

In my sculptures, such as the Gut Feelings works, the cross section gives the inside an edge. It is a cut and slice to learn and reveal. A lot of the time I use architectural drawings or plans to technically work out the larger sculptures, and I have used motifs from these drawings, and the architectural drawings of my Dad, in some past works. I have also recently been looking at a lot of my partner's medical books where diagrams show our internal workings or methods of fixing to keep us alive longer. Both the architectural drawings and anatomical cross sections are examples of a segment of a thing. They are turning a 3d object into a 2d image, in the same way ancient remains in a museum may be sliced in half and displayed for us to learn from, and to prove its authenticity.

For my recent work Wrot (shown at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art) the slice was significant within the entire installation. The work on the whole acknowledges this idea of surfaces and peripheries but I used the cut in a literal sense to slice through the architecture. The cross-sectional layers also referenced archaeology and burial, so all of the objects contained within the layers existed on the flat plane of the cross section - as if they were held within the flatness of the surface. The making is very tied to this, as the works are formed by pouring materials into moulds, so this invisible surface is a trace of this process too, a previous supporting skin that has been removed.

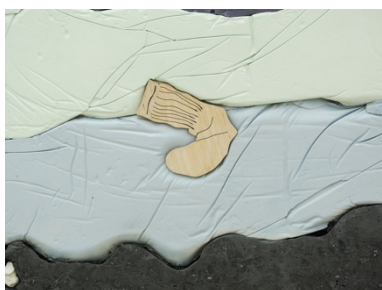


Image: Wrot, 2017 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (c) Mark Pinder

Tell us a bit about how you spend your day/studio routine? What is your studio like?

My routine is completely dependent on what I am working on at the time, and what that entails. Due to the larger scale of most my works, things are usually made in parts, so I would work on one specific section at a time. A day in the studio can be small tests and drawings, reading and research or it can be hectic pouring or sanding or chopping or pasting. I seem to always work in ways that teeter on the edge of my capability in terms of scale or quantity which is a physical challenge but also a thrill. These sorts of out-of-control processes are at odds with the more reflective studio intervals, where small objects and details are made, and where I draw up spaces

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on computer programs to attempt to grasp the quality and scale of it. There is a real yo-yoing of macro and micro happening quite physically and mentally.

The studio itself is a hectic collection of moulds and frameworks, chunks of materials and tests, as well as finished works and their corresponding smaller details. Currently I have a wall of jesmonite noses protruding at different heights as company. They were modelled on family members and inspired by the Nasothek collection of plaster noses in the Glyptoteket museum in Copenhagen, which stood opposite the museum where I exhibited the works.

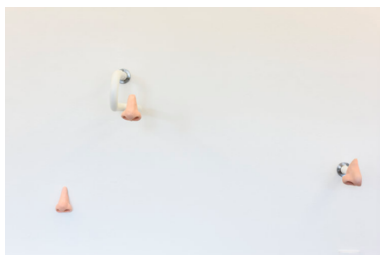


Image: Nasothek, 2017 (c) Alastair Philip Wiper



Image: Nasothek (detail), 2017 (c) Alastair Philip Wiper



Image: Wrot, 2017 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (c) Mark Pinder

What artwork have you seen recently that has resonated with you?

Philip Guston's paintings have always felt very significant to me, but recently seeing some of his drawings from the 1970's had a real gut impact. I think to make simple lines so chunky and weighty while being both hysterical and sinister in their current relevance is incredible.

Where has your work been headed more recently?

Recently I have been thinking about agglomerates and aggregates, barriers, cartoon violence, metal cracks, potholes, big foot, mud, digging and swallowed objects. The work titled 'Flatbone' that was part of Wrot at the Baltic feels in line with some my current thoughts, considering positive and negative forms and stacks that are bolted and cut. For this work I had been thinking about materials and flatness - things weathering or being ground down into different shapes by things like the sea, air or humans. The work originated from seeing some medieval ice skates made from cow bones that were found in the London Crossrail dig. This idea of human ingenuity and the impressions we leave.

How do you go about naming your work?

Titles are very important. When discussing my work, I tend to talk about the material processes and back-to-front techniques that happen in order to create the sculptures, but the final results are usually cleaner cut than

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their backsides or hidden hollows. Considering this and the somewhat sugary appearance of the work, I would hope that the titles add a bit of a muckier side to the work, usually referencing really specific terms, actions or things that tie directly to my research.

Is there anything new and exciting in the pipeline you would like to tell us about?

I will be making a work for 'The Box' at Pippy Houldsworth gallery in London, and a larger body of work that will be shown in Berlin later in the year, as well as a public commission in London next year.



Image: Nasothek, 2017



Image: Lithic, 2017



Image: Wrot, 2017 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (c) Mark Pinder