

# Keeping it Real: An Exhibition in Four Acts Act 1: The Corporeal

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The relationship between art and reality has been a consistent preoccupation in modern and contemporary art. *Keeping it Real* examines this relationship through over fifty works from the *D. Daskalopoulos Collection*, Greece. Uniting these works is that their meaning is rooted in their materiality.

**Marcel Duchamp's** *Fountain*, 1917/64, the meticulously hand-crafted copy of a mass-produced urinal, is the starting point for this year-long series of four displays. Duchamp's so-called ready-mades eradicated conventional distinctions between reality and art and influenced later artists exploring questions of identity, gender and sexual difference.

**Sherrie Levine's** riff on Duchamp's iconic work queries the idea of originality, while **Robert Gober's** melancholic sculptures are reminders of human vulnerability. A surreal sense of the uncanny pervades **Louise Bourgeois'** hanging sculpture as much as **Paul Thek's** sardonic riposte to the white cube gallery. Strategies of humour and irony are central to both **Sarah Lucas'** multi-limbed sculpture and **Sue Williams'** collages.

Performance brought the body more directly back into art as seen in **Marina Abramović's** ritualistic cleaning of a skeleton and **Kiki Smith's** light boxes. It also informs **John Bock's** homage to the actress Winona Rider and the implied threat of shooting in **Jimmie Durham's** sculpture. The artist's body is directly present in **David Hammons'** prints, **Jim Hodges'** use of his own saliva in his drawings, and **Despina Isaia's** weave of her hair into lyrics from the musical *Funny Girl*.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, *Keeping it Real: From the ready-made to the everyday*, available from the Whitechapel Gallery Bookshop for a special exhibition price of **£17.95**.

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