

ISelf Collection: Bumped Bodies

10 April – 12 August 2018

Gallery 7

Free Entry

This spring the Whitechapel Gallery presents *Bumped Bodies*, a new display of work by 23 international artists which explores the relationship between the body, objects and the environment.

Featuring work by **Huma Bhabha**, **Tony Cragg** and **Sarah Lucas**, *Bumped Bodies* is the final chapter in the ISelf Collection displays, a private collection of contemporary art which focuses on personal identity and the human condition.

The display is named after **Paloma Varga Weisz's** *Bumped Body* (2007), an ambiguously gendered pregnant form. The white figure encased in a gleaming copper shell hangs from the gallery wall. It explores the idea of pregnancy as an extreme form of selfhood, examining the tension between the expectant body as a subject and an object.

Works on show offer fragmented, deconstructed and visceral perspectives where the body intersects with inanimate objects. **Mark Manders'** enigmatic figures are sandwiched between a bedstead or wooden blocks (*Composition with Short Verticals*, 2010 and *Vertical Bed*, 2007 – 12). **Berlinde De Bruyckere's** *Quan* (2009) features a frail, naked figure dissolving into a mattress.

Many artists in this display question a sense of physical cohesion by duplicating and modifying bodies, or evoking the figure through uncannily fragmenting body parts and shapes. **Alexandra Bircken's** *Simone* (2013) has been sliced in half, while **John Stezaker's** *Untitled (5 Nudes)* (c. 1980) features a repeated silkscreen print of a female nude to create a pattern. **Rebecca Warren's** composition of striding high-heeled legs without a torso is raised on plinths, commenting on the traditions of modernist bronze sculpture (*as yet untitled (Croccioni bronze)*, 2009).

In *Oral Gratification* (2000), **Sarah Lucas** places rugby balls (covered in cigarettes) on the back of an office chair. The chair itself becomes a stand-in for the body that would usually sit on it. Traces of the body are also evoked by **Bojan Šarcevic** who laces the branches of a tree branch with human hair in an unsettling work (*Presence at Night*, 2010).

The visceral quality of the marks used by artists is apparent in the display. In Huma Bhabha's striking portrait in pastel *Untitled* (2013), decisive gestures of vibrantly-coloured purple and orange are evident.

Meanwhile, **Wael Shawky** (b. 1971, Egypt) presents the story of the crusades from an Arab perspective using puppets in *Cabaret Crusades: The Path to Cairo* (2011-12), which exaggerate and distort human and animal forms, to revisit history and reveals hidden truths.

In this final display drawn from the ISelf Collection, artists reflect on the subject of self by questioning physical and material cohesion. As our sense of physical reality shifts, these artists can open up the possibilities thinking beyond selfhood. This display continues the Gallery's commitment to showing art from exceptional but rarely seen public and private collections.

Featuring also: **Maria Bartusová**, **Alexandra Birken**, **Tiane doan na Champassak**, **Ruth Claxton**, **Enrico David**, **Georg Herold**, **Kati Horna**, **Seb Patane**, **Pipilotti Rist**, **Daniel Silver**, **Nicola Tyson**, and **Cathy Wilkes**.

Press Release

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Notes to Editors

- **ISelf Collection:** Central to the ISelf Collection is identity, with particular reference to the human condition. Through painting, sculpture and vintage photography the themes of birth, death, sexuality, love, pain and joy are all rigorously explored. Many of the works examine the existential dilemma that is inherent to human nature. Figuration plays a major part, and a majority of the artists represented are women. The ISelf Collection was established in 2009 by Maria and Malek Sukkar, and the collection is curated and managed by Anderson O'Day Fine Art.
- **ISelf Collection displays:** The exhibition continues the Whitechapel Gallery's dedicated collections programme in Gallery 7, which reveal rarely-seen works from around the world. Previous displays were *ISelf Collection: Self-Portrait as the Billy Goat* (27 April – 20 August 2017); *ISelf Collection: The End of Love* (30 August – 26 November 2017) and *ISelf Collection: The Upset Bucket* (5 December 2017 – 1 April 2018).
- **Curators:** The Whitechapel Gallery ISelf Collection displays are curated by Emily Butler, Mahera and Mohammad Abu Ghazaleh Curator, Whitechapel Gallery with Candy Stobbs, Assistant Curator, Whitechapel Gallery.
- **Catalogue:** The displays are accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue entitled *Creating Ourselves*, with essays by Glenn Adamson, Frances Borzello, Emily Butler, Nicholas Cullinan, Amelia Jones and Lydia Yee, as well as an interview between Iwona Blazwick and collector Maria Sukkar. Special exhibition price: £24.99.

Visitor Information

Admission: Free

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

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