

PP3: Lucy May

Three Hundred Pounds of Heavenly Joy



Open 24/7: 1st Dec 2011 – 29 Jan 2012
Private View Thursday 1st December 6-9pm
Free Mulled Wine & Lollipops for early birds!
(6 - 7.30pm at 30 Queensdown Road;
7.30 – 9pm at Three Sisters Pub)

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Press Release

WW's Patio Projects #3 is a new public sculpture from artist Lucy May.

Inspired by the many kebab shops and Turkish Ocakbasi in the local area, *'Three Hundred Pounds of Heavenly Joy'* is a wry celebration of that iconic symbol of low culture, the doner kebab.

Lucy May's works are fantastical hybrids of consumerist materiality and decorative style, portraying a grotesque yet seductive vision of the world. Signifiers of bad taste and low culture are fused with the grandeur and excess of the Baroque. The work revels in the tension between high art and vulgarity.

Further info

'Three Hundred Pounds of Heavenly Joy', 2011, approx 200cm (height) x 100cm (diameter) mixed media (steel, wax, rags, cement, stone, paint).

Inspired by the signage, interior décor and visceral appearance of the plethora of kebab shops, restaurants and butchers in Dalston and in Ridley Road adjacent to the artist's studio, *'Three Hundred Pounds of Heavenly Joy'* is a free-standing sculpture that depicts a life-size doner kebab emerging from a brightly-coloured decorative base of stonework and fake split logs.

Lucy May is a graduate of The Royal College of Art and The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. For more info please visit: www.lucymay.net

Patio Projects is WW Gallery's rolling public art programme on view 24/7, offering artists a bursary to realise site-specific work for a one-month solo exhibition. For more information please visit www.wilsonwilliamsgallery.com, or contact Chiara Williams & Debra Wilson at wwgallery@gmail.com.

Artist Statement

"I am interested in the parallels between historic depictions of abundance and the visceral, and contemporary popular culture. The work is an attempt to give these 'cultural rhymes' a physical form.

My works are fantastical hybrids of consumerist materiality and decorative style, portraying a grotesque yet seductive vision of the world. Signifiers of bad taste and low culture are fused with the grandeur and excess of the Baroque. The work revels in the tension between high art and vulgarity.

Underpinning all my work is a strong sense of interiority, a desire to embody psychological states in physical forms. Memory, melancholy and the study of human anatomy have been fundamental influences. References to mortality, commemoration, celebration, both from first-hand experience and via secondary cultural productions, are found throughout the work.

The work is also informed by Far-Eastern decorative arts, particularly from the context of sites of worship. I am fascinated by the DIY spirituality of domestic and makeshift shrines, particularly the creative use of mass-produced objects in such sites. The act of customisation, of placing an idiosyncratic stamp on the base and ordinary, also feeds into my work. I see these interventions as a projection of humanity onto the banal and standardised language of commercialism.

In addition, I wish to examine the rhetoric of morality that surrounds our view of abundance, consumption and authenticity.

¹ McGuinness, Patrick; preface to *A Rebours*, J.K Huysmans, xv. Penguin Classics, 2004.

The doner kebab has become an iconic symbol of low culture, in particular its associations with binge drinking, hedonism and an unhealthy lifestyle. The work is intended to be wryly celebratory and references over-indulgence, aptly in time for Christmas and the so-called 'party season'

It also references the tendency for drunk people in urban areas to throw their half-eaten takeaways into people's front gardens.

The sculpture is intended to be an enigmatic object, mute but also dense and seductive. I hope that viewers will find it both amusing and thought-provoking."