

GROUND WORK

14 SEPTEMBER – 13 OCTOBER 2022

Tom Bull
Marian Lee
Gabriela Pelczarska
Jesse Pollock
Catriona Robertson
Irena Posner
Alexandra Searle
James Southall Ford
Josh C. Wright

STUDIO WEST is proud to present GROUND WORK, a group exhibition of artwork by London's most exciting emerging sculptors. The pieces on show are thematically united by the artists' Collective commitment to working in three dimensions and their mutual interest in ideas of form, matter, tension, physical force, and substantial transformation. Combining the industrial and solid with the fragile and decaying, the artists in this exhibition speak to us through the objects they create. When shown together, the sculptures become suggestive of an almost apocalyptic wasteland, void of humanity and populated only by unexpected assemblages and nameless forms.

Alexandra Searle's sculptures recall the body in a simplified and abstracted form, and explore ideas around health, medicine, and hypochondria. Central to her inquiry is material transformation and the blurred barriers between the organic and the inorganic. Her works straddle the bodily and the industrial, drawing attention to our increasingly machine-reliant existence. For Catriona Robertson, her own body comes into play as the vehicle through which her monumental pieces are constructed. Working with recycled materials, she creates large-scale, site-specific column-like structures which recall formal architectural tropes, yet their materiality implies a post-capitalist incarnation whereby scrap metal stands in for marble.

Irena Posner, meanwhile, works with reclaimed marble and limestone using traditional direct carving methods. Her practice is very physical, revolving around kinetic interaction with materials. Unlike many of the other sculptures on show, her pieces are made through a reductive method, carving away stone to reveal hidden shapes enclaved within.

Central to Gabriela Pelczarska's work is an interconnected relationship with the forces that bind us - gravity, friction, acceleration, and surface tension. She recontextualizes found and cast

items through unique combinations which are humorous, playful, and pointed, drawing inspiration from construction sites and images glanced during urban cycles.

James Southall Ford explores contemporary modes of economic consumption and the potential harms they may cause. Much of his work reaches a point of near collapse, mirroring the tension in Pelczarska's sculptures and inviting ever-present forces to disrupt his pieces. In their precarity, Southall Ford's pieces challenge capitalist logics - fragility rejects usefulness and productivity.

Jesse Pollock's sculptures explore arcadian visions and pastoral ideals with a dystopian and eerie undertone. They hark back to a rural pre-capitalistic existence, inspired by working in a remote studio in Kent. Pollock's pieces contain a sense of frustration at the current state of affairs, leading the viewer to their central proposition – a reluctantly patriotic return to the bucolic traditions of the past, as a route to questioning the present.

Though visually different, Josh C. Wright's sculptures contain a similar sense of foreboding. They appear to be formed of solid and heavy red bricks when in fact they are each hand-made from Jesmonite and painted to deliberately mimic the real thing. They are lightweight, precarious, and stacked in ways that seem as though they could fall at any moment. Central to Wright's practice is an ongoing exploration of the relationship between anxiety and sculpture.

Marian Lee's work is provocatively playful. It allows for active audience engagement yet it is unclear as to the nature or aim of this participation. There is a jet-black merry-go-round that the viewer may spin – but why? These dysfunctional and disobedient objects are sculptural when static and performative when active. They stage unlikely locations of play that are populated by barely decipherable fragments of myth, culturally significant architectural structures, and industrial elements of late capitalism.

Aesthetically similar to Lee's work, Tom Bull's slick black sculptures explore pastoral symbols to create disquieting, dark, and slightly absurd maquettes of 'country life'. His work interrogates rural British society, both past and present, with a surreal and ominous sidelong gaze at personal and collective issues around land, loss, community, wealth, access, labor, and violence.

Overall, GROUND WORK celebrates the work of London's most exciting contemporary sculptors, while shining a light on the common themes emerging in their practices. An overwhelming sense of anxiety, apprehension, and use of both literal and metaphorical tension comes through much of the work, perhaps a salient reflection of urban life in these strange times. When shown together, the sculptures visually combine to present an unusual, almost apocalyptic immersive environment, where scrap materials, fragments, memories, and functional objects have become jumbled into new and intriguing

assemblages. The exhibition champions the power of sculpture to move us, explores the limits of material transformation, and invites reflection on the issues we face today in an urban metropolis.

ABOUT STUDIO WEST

STUDIO WEST is an art gallery in Notting Hill founded in 2021 by curator Caroline Boseley. Its annual exhibition and events programme features the work of the UK's most exciting emerging and newly established artists. It endeavours to fully support the artists it works with through mentorship, hosting opportunities, network building and knowledge sharing, nurturing their growth and helping them to build sustained professional careers without requiring exclusive representation. For collectors, it offers the opportunity to learn more about London's vibrant emerging art scene and purchase artwork made by incredibly promising talents.

Since inception, STUDIO WEST's values have remained the same. It aims to engage fully and authentically with the local community, create a comfortable and welcoming space for all visitors, encourage investment in contemporary art created by emerging and newly established artists and, most importantly, always prioritise the needs of the artists' it works with.

The gallery opened in November 2021 with a duo show by Victoria Cantons and Xu Yang and has since hosted multiple group exhibitions, including 'The Reality in Whytch You Create', 'Fancy a Bite?', 'GROUNDWORK', 'SKIN DEEP' and 'The Angel in the House', and three solo shows with Karolina Albricht, Lydia Makin and Brynley Odu Davies respectively. The gallery runs an annual Open Call Exhibition and Art Prize titled 'NOW Introducing' that invites applications from any artist currently studying on or recently graduated from a London based BA, MA or alternative study programme.

STUDIO WEST is becoming known for thoughtful concept-driven exhibitions, authentic community engagement, and offering comprehensive support to London's emerging artists.

STUDIO WEST

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