

**Richard Hughes**

April 12 — May 18, 2013

March 23, 2013—For his third solo show at Anton Kern Gallery, UK-based artist Richard Hughes has turned the gallery into a stage for a magic dance performed by a street gang of enchanted lamp posts, ice-cream-wafer-like garden walls and broken memorial statues found in the most dilapidated and dark corners of (British) suburbia. With his first artist monograph freshly published by JRP Ringier and two recent solo exhibitions at Tramway Art Space in Glasgow and Firstsite in Colchester, England, Hughes' work is at the center of public attention.



Richard Hughes is known for his exceptional skill to turn ordinary, sometimes slightly repulsive objects that might be found in a hovel of a rooming house or unceremoniously dumped by the side of the road — bleak monuments to abused domestic or public spaces — into narrative sculptures. Their placement in a gallery space instantly invites questions as to its recent history, use, and function, or imminent action. Upon closer inspection, all objects reveal themselves as casts, meticulously crafted replicas of every-day things injected with an element of fantasy. The beauty within this ostensibly abandoned world lies in the moment of surprise when materials reveal themselves as “fakes.” This is the moment when hidden images and cultural memories become visible and intelligible, when the vernacular becomes a universal language. Hughes' sculptures are not ready-mades. As facsimiles of common objects it's not the object that is transformed but its reappropriated meaning and ability to reconfigure the object for the viewer. Gradually, these objects-turned-sculptures reveal their inherent capacity to tell stories, to evoke narratives that are charged with everyday-life experience and humor.

Richard Hughes has had solo exhibitions at Tramway, Glasgow (2012); Sculpture Court, Tate Britain (2006); The Showroom, London (2004); and is currently presented at Firstsite, Colchester, UK, in an exhibition entitled *Time is over, time has come*. His work has been exhibited internationally, including presentations at the François Pinault Collection, Punta della Dogana, Venice (2009); the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2008); and the Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2006). Hughes was selected for the 55th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh (2008); the fourth Liverpool Biennial (2006), and the British Art Show 6 (2005). He was nominated for the Beck's Futures award in 2006 and was the recipient of the EAST International award in 2003.

The exhibition will open on Friday, April 12, and run through Saturday, May 18, 2013. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm. For further information and images, please contact the gallery at (t) 212.367.9663, (f) 212.367.8135 or email: [info@antonkerngallery.com](mailto:info@antonkerngallery.com).

**Upcoming exhibitions: Shio Kusaka (May 23 – June 22)**

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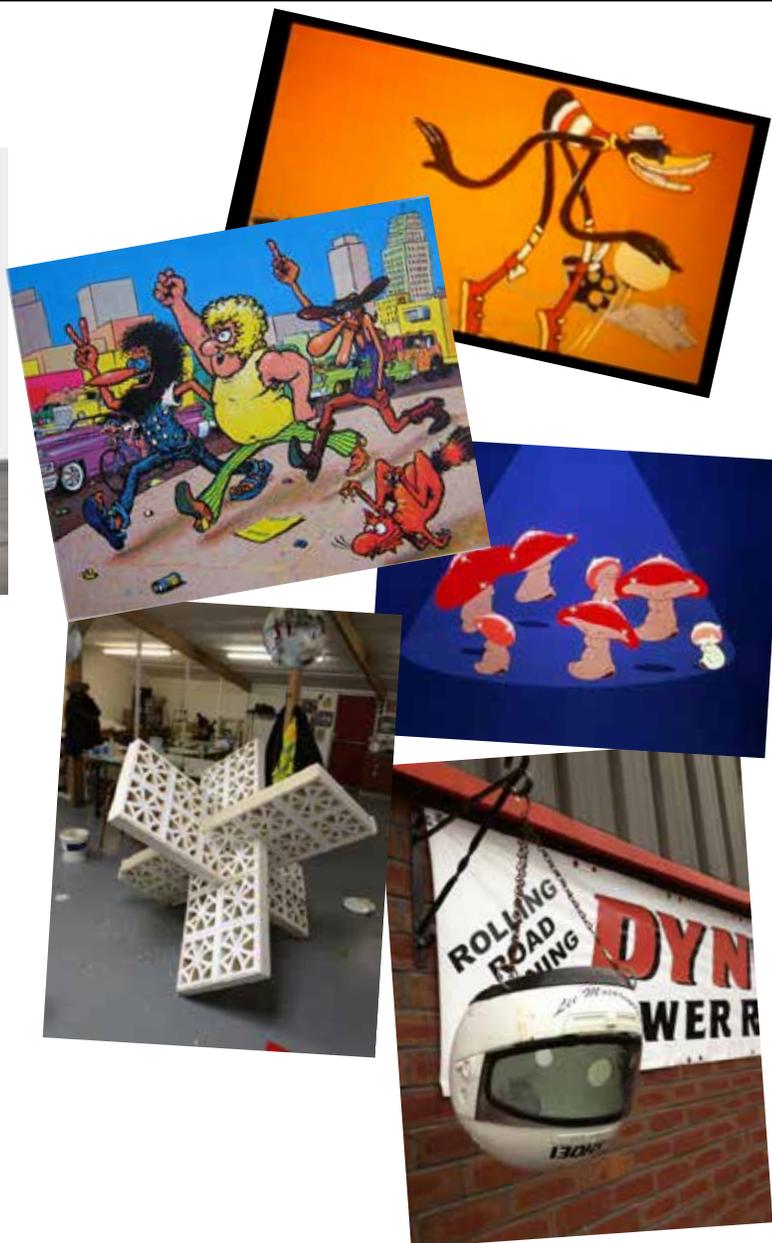
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Writing from Bargains Farm, Staplow, Ledbury in Herefordshire, England, in an early morning email Hughes says:

Had an early night and woke early, so thought I'd put some thoughts down about the show. Let's use the "pedestrian" piece from Tramway as a point of reference. Personally this was the most successful new work from that show (as fitting in with my previous body of work but being a departure, as another means to illustrate the human figure), so something in me said I should go with this as the starting point for a group, a street gang that needed to be set free. As the main pieces are still being given the coat of fake concrete and are in bits I'll send images of the maquettes too to give more of an illustration, as these are what I'll be working from in the gallery for geometry, height and spacing (images of the state of play of the actual work will be sent too). This is probably fairly important; it's much easier to work out with a piece such as this (although I made loads to work from, based on cartoon imagery, comic book frames and YouTube dance clips) what they will look like from small maquettes that were selected as the basis for the group and then scale up. The playful stances can be worked out more immediately in three dimensions when you're dealing with a puppet or toy scale model than the real thing. For the main space a series of four figures stride around the space. A primitive, celebratory stance. Street dance, tribalism, battling for territory, letting go even. Dancing in the face of adversity. A recalled, recollected, LSD-dreamlike-infused hybrid of estate street furniture and a blur of *Fantasia*, 80s *Kia-Ora* adverts, Robert Crumb, *Freak Bros*, and the hammer sequence from *The Wall*. But these are a distant memory as direct influences, simply a residue. Like some previous work (mattresses sprouting mushrooms etc.), the notion of enchantment within suburbia. Magic from within the shit, at the same time a sense of disquiet and a new tribalism. Slow robots or automatons of another era, like the droids in *Laputa*.

Another work elsewhere depicts a broken piece of municipal street sculpture, a monument to an unspecified individual. Cast in faux white marble and aged, all that remains is one foot stood on its base. Over time, the vandals and erosion have destroyed the body, the legs. A concrete depiction of the off-cuts from an addiction to "krokodil" (YouTube it. Or don't. But maybe do. But it's pretty



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 AND RICHARD HUGHES  
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shocking.) Eros has had the shit beaten out of him. We get a foot and a supportive structural wire. The equivalent of my previous shoe sculptures in more monumental form. A lost prosthetic. A selfportrait of sorts, cast from my foot. A sculpture of a sculpture. The artist as riot or uprising detritus.

Another group of objects consists of redundant hanging baskets, tribal mementoes of fallen warriors. Cast in fiberglass from a selection of full-face motorcycle helmets that are presented inverted hanging from chains on brackets to become containers. But the plants have been and gone. Based on the helmet that hangs outside my now unoccupied motorbike repair shop following the tragic death of its owner in a tragic Boxing Day waste disposal incident.

Also, an impossible union of three garden walls, made in coated Styrofoam. Three colours based on Neapolitan ice cream.