

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Elaine Cameron-Weir *A WAY OF LIFE*

March 7 – April 13, 2024
508 West 24th Street, New York

Opening: March 7, 6 – 8pm

Lisson Gallery presents its inaugural exhibition with Elaine Cameron-Weir. Entitled *A WAY OF LIFE*, the show features floor-based and suspended sculptures, as well as wall-hung objects, that explore themes around tradition and subculture, conformity and self-definition, repeatable gesture and singular occurrence. Among the central subjects of the exhibition is the concept of end-times, as seen through personal mortality and revelation as well as the larger theater of historical change.

In a work titled *western procession of my oldest wounds (hit parade) wrecked high altar of buying tears*, Cameron-Weir has adorned a long factory conveyor belt that divides the main space with rows of used aluminum horseshoes. Each end of the conveyor belt is suspended from pulleys fixed in the ceiling while two pairs of metal drums draped by battered lead and containing flickering candles set in steel grit, act as counterweights. Horseshoe nails and horse-leather military garments have also been utilized in other works, together suggesting the worlds of horseracing, gambling or frontiersmen, but could also refer to an impending change in politics according to the ‘horseshoe theory’ – in which both the far-left and far-right are drawn inexorably closer to each other and their extremes.

A work titled *pupil of couture / 4horsemen hairshirt (SS 2024 apocalypse collection)* features four horsehide jackets, similar to those used by soldiers in WWII trenches (hence the name trench coat), nested inside one another, outspread like a crucifix and similarly being held in limbo above the gallery floor by two pairs of studded leather sacks. These resemble stylized saddle bags or chaps used by ranchers or cowboys when herding animals, as well as the kind of spiked jackets worn by punks from the 1970s onwards, long since subsumed into mainstream fashion items. The four jackets also reference the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, foretold in The Book of Revelations as harbingers of the End of Days, representing and carrying famine, pestilence, disease and death. The ominous arrival of the four horses was said to precede the Second Coming of Christ, often depicted as an open-armed descent from heaven, although some theologians believe this to be a moment of reckoning, rather than rapture. What, if anything, might be held up for worship here is not entirely clear, but the show’s title, *A WAY OF LIFE*, infers that these objects carry with them evidence of work, leisure and purpose- ways to spend time, and quantify or judge a life.

Lining the walls of the gallery are a series of groupings of small grisaille sgraffito enamel plates that are each suspended in an undulating white bronze frame. Cartoon-like images of barbed wire knots are etched into the surface of the enamel, resembling wounds, penitence and obstacle. These depictions of knots are connected to one another by twisted wires, as if this imagined fence had been cut apart and strung back together. Here the iconography extends back to the original Crown of Thorns (one relic of which is purported to be in the Louvre) and forwards to the modern-day patents used to fence off huge swathes of America’s Great Plains in the late 1800s.

A further pair of sculptural works in commercial display cabinets spell out the words, *MY LIFE, MY WAY*, using bones roughly cast in aluminum and outlined in neon light. This fragment of text reads like a familiar slogan, motto or song lyric. Its presentation appears as a kind of signage made from bodily remains suggesting an evidentiary approach to biography, in which relics of the self are put on view for all to see.

About the artist

Elaine Cameron-Weir's work is informed by the array of systems and structures that humans have created to deal with the unknown – be that through scientific inquiry, religion, modes of governance or creative practices. Her sculptures incorporate part-objects repurposed from their scientific, medical, military or faith-giving functions into reliquaries or representations of larger systems of belief and power. Her installations combine these found fragments with definitively handmade elements, using techniques as varied as vitreous enameling, glass casting, metalworking and leather tooling. Together these arrangements are often suspended from the ceiling, seemingly levitating from the ground, yet being simultaneously held in tension by gravity and an architectural framework of pulleys and cables. Materials can also be ephemeral, incorporating heat, light and scent, suggesting transformations of solid matter into dust or diffusion into atmosphere. Cameron-Weir's sculptures often form uncanny mirror images, through symmetrical details that emphasise the dualistic nature of any narrative or narrator. Although her practice resists straightforward characterization or iconographic interpretation, Cameron-Weir's works offer the possibility of passage through a portal or beyond a threshold, further facilitating the transition from one state to the next.

Elaine Cameron-Weir was born in 1985 in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada; she lives and works in New York. Past solo exhibitions at institutions include: Dressing for Windows (Exploded View), SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, USA (2022); STAR CLUB REDEMPTION BOOTH, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, USA (2021); exhibit from a dripping personal collection, Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund, Germany (2018); Outlooks, Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, USA (2018) and viscera has questions about itself, New Museum, New York, USA (2017). Her work has featured in major group exhibitions including The Milk of Dreams, curated by Cecilia Alemani at the 59th Venice Biennale, Italy (2022); New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century, BAMPPFA, Berkeley, USA (2021); Present Tense, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA (2019), as well as the Belgrade Biennale, Serbia (2021); the Montreal Biennial, Canada (2017) and the Fellbach Triennial of Small-Scale Sculpture, Germany (2016).

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Beijing. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estate of Leon Polk Smith. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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