

# Siobhan Hapaska

## a great miracle needs to happen there

26 August - 01 October 2011

**Kerlin Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of new work by Siobhán Hapaska. The exhibition will comprise of two large scale installations, 'a great miracle needs to happen there' (2011) and 'footings' (2011).**

'a great miracle needs to happen there', takes a structural starting point from the Hanukkah menorah and the story of the miracle of the oil. Each of the eight 'candlesticks' is replaced by industrial engine stands that have been carefully and beautifully clad by hand in polished brass and solder. The traditional and sacred olive oil is replaced with the limbless trunks of uprooted olive trees, displaced, distressed and burnt. At the same time the common place, industrial machinery is transformed into something precious, almost sacred. At the centre of the installation a complete olive tree, the Shamash, replete with root ball is held high by a similarly adorned engine crane.

Siobhán Hapaska's practice has long been known and celebrated for its diverse vocabulary of materials, its complex layering of narrative and its immaculately crafted, descriptive detail. In the past two years olives and olive trees have featured prominently. The olive tree's 7,000 year history in religious, cultural and political discourse opens the work to a multitude of readings and potential interpretations. It is a work that resonates with history and our contemporary condition of displacement and loss.

'footings' presents a grid of 25 similar forms. Each is a 15 cm square cube born out of a concrete test mould (used in building to create the perfect concrete form). Each cube is a composite of jesmonite, iron powder, white granulated marble, slate powder, perlite and vermiculite. Within each floor based unit there lies a reserve of olive oil that in turn plays host to a floating, lit taper. Like 'a great miracle needs to happen there', 'footings' is a work with many entry points and associations from modernity's obsession with reduction and the grid to the complex history of sacred votive offerings.

Hapaska's first major solo exhibition, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London in 1995, introduced the two major strands in her sculptural practice at that time. The show's title piece, 'St Christopher', was a scrupulously naturalistic representation of the patron saint of travellers lugubriously cut off at the knees. Other works, both wall-based and freestanding, resembled nothing on earth. Strange, mutant forms in immaculately finished, opalescent fiberglass, they appeared to have traveled back from an imaginary future. Much of Hapaska's work ever since has referred obliquely to travel and rootlessness, suggesting a restless yearning for an indeterminate elsewhere.

Hapaska has had solo exhibitions in recent years at the Kerlin Gallery Dublin; Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York and Camden Arts Centre, London. She has also participated in various group exhibitions including Life? Biomorphous Forms in Sculpture', Kunsthaus Graz, Austria, 'Micro-narratives: tentation des petites realites', Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint Etienne, 2009, 2008 and 'Neo Futur – ver de nouveaux imaginaires', les Abattoirs, Musée d'art moderne at contemporain, Toulouse, France, 2006; 'British Art Show' in September, 2005 and Printemps de Septembre in September 2005, 'Artifice' at the Deste Foundation, Athens and the Centre for Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki and a highly acclaimed three-person exhibition with Charles Long and Ernesto Neto at Magasin 3, Stockholm. In 1997, she took part in Documenta X. She won the 1998 Irish Museum of Modern Art / Glen Dimplex Artists Award, represented Ireland at the 2001 Venice Biennale, and won the Paul Hamlyn award in 2003.