

Mary Mary

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Sara Barker - 'THE THINGS THAT ARE SOLID, ABSORBED AND STILL'

7 September - 26 October 2013

Mary Mary is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by Sara Barker. For this show, Barker has produced complex and delicate brazed and welded assemblages combining painted aluminium, steel and brass. The second of the two gallery spaces houses a glass construction, which both partitions and becomes the work, as it encircles and supports a light and branching metal form.

Barker's frame of reference often draws from language and literature through a process that gives material and meaning equality. Developing from texts such as Magdalena Tulli's 'Solid Objects' and Elif Shafak's 'The Forty Rules of Love', descriptions and extracts lend themselves to titles, suggest colour and influence shape and form. Recently texts describing organic processes such as the conditions that effect plant growth, branches and leaves (as in Bruno Munari's 'Design as Art') have been referenced, mirroring an organic process of making.

Barker works in a way that sees pieces 'grow' out of themselves as if branches of a tree, with each section aiding the development of the next. Like Leonardo da Vinci's drawings exploring the branching systems of trees and blood vessels, Barker's slim metal drawings start to navigate space, their scaled up linearity reminiscent of Victorian plumbing systems, pathways and rivers.

This is very much a process held between making and unmaking, where the working method is pushed to the forefront of the work and there is a clear interest in materiality and a visceral intensity in creating surface through process and thinking through making. Barker attempts to find unexpected qualities in materials, and a lightness in making that refutes the idea of sculpture as always solid, dense and volumetric. She is most interested in exploring a tactility and fluidity found through a language of drawing and painting and using paint as a sculptural medium, with its own weight, density, and optical possibility.

Also evident here is Barker's introduction of glass as a material, which she uses to distort, compress and contain specific sculptural and pictorial viewpoints. Here she uses the material to confuse and complicate an 'image' of the works, changing and controlling the speed at which it is experienced by the viewer. Equally for Barker there is something interesting about the material of brick next to glass, the juxtaposition of powdery surface next to sharp pristine edge that talks about a threshold between interior and exterior space, referencing the notion of the 'room' and personal spaces, which is so central to her practice.

Born in 1980 in Manchester, Barker lives and works in Glasgow. Recent exhibitions include Drawing:Sculpture, Leeds City Art Gallery & The Drawing Room, London; The Geometry of Things, GAK Bremen; New Order: British Art Today, Saatchi Gallery, London; Woman at a Window, Modern Art / Stuart Shave, London; Tracing the Century, Tate Liverpool; A House of Leaves, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (all 2012).

Forthcoming projects include a sculptural commission at Baltic, Gateshead (2013) and solos at Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2014); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2015) and The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2016). Future group shows include The Best is Yet to Come, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2013).

Opening on the 10 October 2013, Sara Barker is also presenting new work at the gallery's temporary London project space, Mary Mary at 10 Northington Street, which continues until the 23 November 2013. Please contact the gallery for further information.