

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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Blanton Museum of Art Presents New Work by Lily Cox-Richard



“Lily Cox-Richard: She-Wolf + Lower Figs.” recasts sculptural history in color

AUSTIN, TX—July 9, 2019—The Blanton Museum of Art will present *She-Wolf + Lower Figs.*, an installation by sculptor Lily Cox-Richard, in the Contemporary Project space from July 27 to December 29, 2019. The installation is the first of entirely new work made for the Contemporary Project.

“We’re thrilled to be presenting new work by Lily Cox-Richard in the Blanton’s Contemporary Project,” said Claire Howard, the Blanton’s assistant curator of modern & contemporary art and curator of the exhibition. “Cox-Richard’s work methodically examines the history and meaning of both artistic and everyday materials. Her sculptural installation at the Blanton focuses on plaster reproductions of classical sculpture, raising questions about their role in perpetuating notions of physical perfection and whiteness as ideals.”

The installation responds to the Blanton’s William J. Battle Collection of Plaster Casts. Containing around 70 replicas of ancient Greek and Roman sculptures made in the 19th century, sets of casts like these were once an integral part of artistic training. The Battle Cast Collection is one of the few remaining collections of this kind in the United States and is still used for teaching today.

Cox-Richard's installation questions the equation of the physical whiteness of classical sculptures and their casts with cultural and aesthetic standards that they were thought to embody, such as beauty, purity, and taste. Many Greek and Roman marble sculptures were originally polychromed but lost their pigmentation over time. White plaster casts reinforced the myth that these sculptures and the ancient people they represented were all white. Cox-Richard subverts this narrative by adding color to sculptures she made from 3D scans, near-perfect indices of artworks much like plaster casts.

A highlight of the installation is a colorful sculpture of a she-wolf based on 3D scans of casts taken from the bronze original (5th century BCE–12th century CE) in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. Cox-Richard's *She-Wolf* (2019) is made of scagliola, a handmade artificial marble used in ancient Rome and revived in the Renaissance. By recasting the she-wolf in color, Cox-Richard envisions a different mythology—in technicolor—for this sculpture. *She-Wolf + Lower Figs.* also includes an intervention using casts from the Battle Collection that evokes the original sculptures' polychroming.

Cox-Richard's *Ramp* (2019) is a thirty-foot-long sculpture of seven concrete slabs that resembles a long sidewalk. *Ramp* visualizes the Western canon of art and civilization—founded on the models of ancient Greece and Rome—as a form of infrastructure challenged by alternative narratives. The slabs are pushed upward by an oozing substance, and their corners have been ground down to reveal a colorful aggregate including fragments of casts made using 3D scans of the Battle Casts' heads.

"The stylization of hair, the aggregate in a sidewalk—so much information is packed into these details," said Cox-Richard. "In translating objects into other materials, through processes like mold-making and scanning, some details are obscured, and others accumulate."

This installation is organized by Claire Howard, Assistant Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art.

Major funding for the Contemporary Project is provided by Suzanne McFayden.

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Gallery Talks: Claire Howard on *Lily Cox-Richard: She-Wolf + Lower Figs.*, Thursday, September 5, and Thursday, October 3, at 12:30pm.

Public Program: Lily Cox-Richard in conversation with Claire Howard on Friday, October 18 from noon to 1pm.

About the Contemporary Project:

Begun in 2017, the Contemporary Project presents recently made work by contemporary artists. The next Contemporary Project, opening in January 2020, will be new work by Ed Ruscha. Past Contemporary Projects include *Vincent Valdez: The City*, *Clarissa Tossin: Encontro das Águas*, *Kambui Olujimi: Zulu Time*, and *Susan Philipsz: Part File Score*.

About Lily Cox-Richard:

Lily Cox-Richard's sculpture engages familiar forms and materials that have become unmoored from their original contexts and roles. She mines this distance by digging into their cultural and materials

histories and forging new paths between them. She has been awarded an Artadia grant, a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, a postdoctoral fellowship in the University of Michigan's Society of Fellows, and residencies at the Core Program, Millay Colony, RAIR Philadelphia, and the MacDowell Colony. Recent solo exhibitions include *DiverseWorks* (Houston), *Yvonne* (Guatemala City), *Artpace* (San Antonio, TX), *She Works Flexible* (Houston), *Hirschl & Adler Modern* (New York), *Vox Populi* (Philadelphia), and the Hudson River Museum (New York). Lily Cox-Richard lives and works in Richmond, VA, where she is assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts.

About the Blanton:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection of art in Central Texas. The museum is recognized for its Latin American holdings, modern and contemporary American collection, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, an encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, and Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*. Through exhibitions, educational outreach, and public programs, the Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

Image Captions:

Left: Lily Cox-Richard, 2018. Photo by Emily Peacock

Right: Lily Cox-Richard, *She-Wolf* and *Ramp* in progress, 2019. Photo courtesy of the artist