

NUDS

Sarah Lucas's most recent series of sculptures, *NUDS*, marks a significant development in her work. Tights stuffed with fluff have been fashioned into ambiguous biomorphic forms that reaffirm many of Lucas's key themes, from erotic anatomical anagrams to the projection of abjectness. Their tactile and ephemeral materials glance back to earlier figurative works such as the *Bunny* series of 1997 – which embodied sexual female forms – fragile, available, literal – through disembodied, gesturing limbs. Lucas has tellingly said of the tights that inspired her early work: "I thought there was something so human about them ... something quite sexy".

By contrast with the *Bunny* sculptures, the *NUDS* tilt towards abstraction. Their indeterminate organic shapes, offset by plinths of stacked breeze blocks, recall the smooth-contoured sculptures of British Modernists such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. The influence of other canonical figures, notably Hans Bellmer and Louise Bourgeois, is manifested by the works' suggestion of limbs, breasts, orifices and other corporeal fragments. Lucas achieves a paradoxical combination of sturdiness and fragility, the stuffed nylon at once evoking carved stone and flesh, and underscoring the satisfaction of sculpture viewed in the round. The coinage *NUDS* itself implies knots, nodes, or nudes and is evidence of Lucas's use of puns, slang and language as an element of her sculpture, and the works brim with other allusions, inviting different interpretations from the tender to the auto-erotic.