

Sarah Lucas  
Yamashita Kikuji

01 – 20 April 2016  
1 Davies St London W1  
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

In spring 2016, Sadie Coles HQ presents a single sculpture by Sarah Lucas alongside works by Japanese painter Yamashita Kikuji (1919 – 1986), dating from 1968 to 1975. This juxtaposition reveals how each artist has used Surrealism in a different time and context – teasing the body into suggestive, comical or abject guises.

Sarah Lucas's *Father Time* (2011) is one of her largest sculptures to date. Slabs of pink foam have been arranged into a towering spiral staircase which winds heroically into the air. This modular stack – reminiscent of Modernist architecture in cast concrete – is subverted by its own lightweight material and candy-floss hue, which also carries a jarring bodily subtext. Lucas has created a 'stairway to heaven' out of pointedly banal, and ironically fleshly, matter: the religious allusion of the work's title is undercut by more earthly possibilities. The staircase meanwhile acts as a hyperbolic plinth (recalling Lucas's regular use of furniture as a supporting device): positioned on the steps are individual *NUD* sculptures – stuffed pairs of nylon tights wrought into knotted contortions. These become human 'nudes' descending (or ascending) the minimalist stairs, their flesh tones and undulating forms chiming with the anthropomorphic bombast of the larger structure.



The nude body, and its potential to morph into something uncanny or grotesque, is a continual subject of Yamashita Kikuji's phantasmagorical paintings. Born in 1919, Yamashita studied under the Surrealist Japanese painter Ichiro Fukuzawa in Tokyo, and as a young man he travelled to Europe where he was introduced to the works of artists including Max Ernst, Salvador Dali and Hieronymus Bosch. The pairing of Lucas and Yamashita reveals how each artist has transposed the perverse and fantastical imagery of Bosch into an explicitly Surrealist register. *Father Time* was first shown as part of 'LUCAS BOSCH GELATIN' (2011), an exhibition at Kunsthalle Krems which set Lucas's work, and that of the Austrian collective Gelatin, in dialogue with Bosch's corpus (the sculpture carries echoes of his fabulous architecture, which includes steps running between heaven and hell).

In both Lucas's sculptures and Yamashita's paintings, the body recurs in fragmentary, erotically suggestive and comedic forms. In *SHINMEI-NI-TSUKU (Dependence Gods)* (1968), Yamashita constructs an interplay of anatomy and architecture that resonates in subject and mood with *Father Time*. Mechanical constructs – latticed frameworks, chequered patterns – are interrupted by more unstable organic spectres – a sagging visage, elongated hands and sunflower. Rather than being self-contained and earthbound, the symbolist bodies of Yamashita's painting appear to be floating and unfurling. *Ghost run* (1975) meanwhile abandons perspectival logic or narrative coherence in favour of a compression of differently sized, and contrastively rendered, figures – a matron with full breasts, a cavorting girl, or ghostly faces with saucer eyes. Metamorphic in mood and appearance, this cast of characters forms a counterpart to Lucas's *NUDs*, whose effects range from coy playfulness to naked eroticism.

Sarah Lucas (b. 1962, London) studied at the Working Men's College (1982–3), London College of Printing (1983–4), and Goldsmith's College (1984–7). Major exhibitions include MoMA New York (1993); Museum Boymans-van Beunigen, Rotterdam (1996); Portikus, Frankfurt (1996); the Freud Museum, London (2000); Tecla Sala, Barcelona (2000); and *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* (with Angus Fairhurst and Damien Hirst) at Tate Britain (2004). A retrospective took place in 2005 at Kunsthalle Zürich, Kunstverein Hamburg and Tate Liverpool. Recent international residencies and exhibitions include *LUCAS BOSCH GELATIN*, Kunsthalle Krems, Austria and *NUZ: Spirit of Ewe*, Two Rooms, Auckland, New Zealand (both 2011); Museo Diego Rivera Anahuacalli, Mexico City (2012); and *Ordinary Things*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2012). In 2013 she had a major retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery (2013), which was followed by surveys of her work at Secession in Vienna (2013–14) and at Tramway in Glasgow (2014). In 2015 she represented Britain at the Venice Biennale, with the exhibition *I SCREAM DADDIO*.

Yamashita Kikuji (b. 1919, Tokushima, Shikoku Island, d. 1986) was a Japanese painter, printmaker, collagist and teacher. He graduated from the Kagawa Prefectural Technical School in 1937 and later studied under the Surrealist painter Ichiro Fukuzawa in Tokyo. In 1939 he was drafted into the Japanese Imperial military to fight in China, and memories of what he saw and did as a soldier there, including killing a Chinese prisoner, indelibly informed his later production. His work became emblematic of the 'Reportage' style of painting, whereby artists expressed Socialist concerns in a style combining Social Realism and Surrealism. Selected exhibitions include his first one-man show at the Shinbashi Gallery, Tokyo (1962); a joint exhibition with the painters Tatsuo Ikeda and Hiroshi Nakamura at the Aoki Gallery, Tokyo (1963); 'The Movement of Modern Art', Kyoto Museum of Modern Art (1964); and the first Tokyo exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (1975). In 1974 he helped form the Hitohito society.

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