

5 MAY 2015



## SARAH LUCAS – I SCREAM DADDIO BRITISH PAVILION AT THE 56TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA



Sarah Lucas plastering, 2015. Photo by Julian Simmons

The British Council is delighted to present *I SCREAM DADDIO*, a new exhibition by Sarah Lucas which has been conceived and created for the British Pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia.

Commenting on the exhibition, her first as Commissioner of the British Pavilion, Emma Dexter, Director Visual Arts at the British Council, said:

*“Sarah is one of our foremost artists and it is entirely appropriate that she should be representing the UK in Venice, the grandest of stages. Sarah has risen to the occasion, her provocative new pieces interrogate our assumptions about gender and domesticity, drawing on her previous work but on an unprecedented scale. I am confident that the British Pavilion this year will inspire, confound and move audiences both in Venice and around the world.”*

Sarah Lucas’s solo presentation for the British Pavilion will centre on an extensive new group of works, made specifically for the commission. Ranging in scale from the domestic to the monumental, the works reprise and reinvent the themes that have come to define Lucas’s powerfully irreverent art – gender, death, sex, and the innuendo residing in everyday objects. Throughout this latest group of

works, the body – sexual, comedic, majestic – remains a crucial point of return, while Lucas’s work continues to confront big themes with a distinctive wit. “Humour”, she has remarked, “is about negotiating the contradictions thrown up by convention. To a certain extent humour and seriousness are interchangeable. Otherwise it wouldn’t be funny. Or devastating.”

Responding to the formal, neoclassical spaces of the British Pavilion, Lucas’s sculptures for Venice mark a dramatic new stage in her evolving iconography. Over the past few years, her soft sculptures in tights and wire have increasingly transmuted into bronze, resin and concrete. In 2013, at the last Venice Biennale, she exhibited a sequence of gleaming bronze figures based on the twisting biomorphic forms of her *NUDs* sculptures. The latest works similarly channel the ambiguity and vulnerability of earlier compositions – whether the *Bunny* series of the late 1990s (disembodied legs fashioned from stuffed tights) or the later *NUDs* – while paradoxically exuding a classical permanence, heft and solidity.

*Maradona*, a grandiose figure in joyous repose – part man, part maypole, part praying mantis – stands in duplicate at the centre of the exhibition. Named after the iconic Argentine footballer, the figure squats on the ground while an enormous phallus soars majestically into the air. Its arched torso and gravity-defying erection are caught between earthbound and transcendent postures – treading a delicate line between beauty and buffoonery. The sculptures’ painted yellow surfaces (deep cream and gold cup) capture the organic texture of their bulbous stuffed nylon prototype. Combining corporeal resonances with sinuous ‘abstract’ form, Lucas’s new works evoke – and subtly subvert – the Modernist aesthetic of British artists such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, especially the recurring trope of the reclining nude or lone standing figure. The female body features more literally in a series of plaster sculptures of fragmentary pairs of legs which are gracefully animated through their combination with the ordinary domestic furniture that has featured since Lucas’s earliest installations. These bawdy, empowered muses form a chorus line that upends the traditional objectification of the female form in male art history, while recalling the incomplete bodily casts Lucas has created throughout her career, such as *You Know What* (1998) or *CNUT* (2004).

Other works are more domestic in scale and subject. Lucas’s *Tit Cat* sculptures – again derived from models made from stuffed tights – combine the wiry forms of cats with tied-off, drooping orbs suggestive of breasts. Arching and prancing, their tails variously drooping and rearing, these strange metamorphic creatures epitomise the way in which Lucas’s art slides between real and surreal registers. In one work, a cat is presented atop a recliner chair and footstool, both items cast in bronze and concrete; while in another an octopus’s bronze tentacles sprawl over a workaday wooden chair (also fashioned from bronze), its lumpy extremities spilling erotically onto the floor. In both, domestic scenes are translated into weighty simulacra, the chair assuming the status of a throne, the animals of magical shape-shifters.

*I SCREAM DADDIO* is accompanied by a new book, designed by Julian Simmons and published by the British Council, with the generous support of the Art Fund. Additional thanks to Kvadrat for the production of a bespoke bag.

## BIOGRAPHY AND SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

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). She exhibited in the seminal group show *Freeze* (1988), which was followed by solo shows *Penis Nailed to a Board*, City Racing, London, and *The Whole Joke*, Kingly Street, London (both 1992). In 1993 she collaborated with Tracey Emin on *The Shop*, Bethnal Green Road.

She has since exhibited internationally – 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); *NUDS*, Museo Diego Rivera Anahuacalli, Mexico City (2012; recently chronicled in the encyclopaedic book *TITTIPUSSIDAD* with photography by Julian Simmons); and *Ordinary Things*, a major exhibition of her sculpture, at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2012). From 2012–13, *SITUATION* – a space dedicated to her work at Sadie Coles HQ – hosted eight linked exhibitions. 2012 saw the publication of *After 2005 – Before 2012*, a publication on her work covering seven prolific years. The British Council's commission follows on from her major retrospective, *SITUATION Absolute Beach Man Rubble* at the Whitechapel Gallery (2013), and surveys of her work at Secession in Vienna (*NOB + Gelatin*, 2013–14) and at Tramway in Glasgow (2014).

Sarah Lucas is represented by Sadie Coles HQ, London; Gladstone Gallery, New York; Kurimanzutto, Mexico City; and CFA, Berlin.

## VISITING US

British Pavilion  
Giardini di Castello  
Venice 30122  
Vaporetto: Giardini

## OPENING TIMES

### GENERAL PUBLIC OPENING TIMES

9 May – 22 November, Closed Mondays  
Open: 10.00 – 18.00

## FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION

For press information, interview opportunities and images please contact:  
Chloe Kinsman or Kara Reaney at Pelham Communications  
T. +44 (0)20 8969 3959  
M. +44 (0)7824 697 795  
E. [chloe@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:chloe@pelhamcommunications.com)  
E. [kara@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:kara@pelhamcommunications.com)

## HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES

For high resolution downloadable images of work in *I SCREAM DADDIO* please go to: [www.britishcouncil-venice.org](http://www.britishcouncil-venice.org)

Please include the following credit line:

Sarah Lucas's British Council commission is at la Biennale di Venezia from 9 May until 22 November 2015. [www.britishcouncil.org/visualarts](http://www.britishcouncil.org/visualarts)

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Mary Doherty  
T +44 (0)207 389 3144  
E. [mary.doherty@britishcouncil.org](mailto:mary.doherty@britishcouncil.org)

## FOR THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

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## THE BRITISH COUNCIL AT THE VENICE BIENNALE

The British Council has commissioned artists to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale to celebrate the best of emerging and established British art since 1938. Artists representing Britain have included Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Ben Nicholson, Anthony Caro, Bridget Riley, Richard Long, Frank Auerbach, Howard Hodgkin, Barry Flanagan, Anish Kapoor, Richard Hamilton, Rachel Whiteread, Leon Kossoff, Gary Hume, Mark Wallinger, Chris Ofili, Gilbert & George, Tracey Emin, Steve McQueen, Mike Nelson and most recently Jeremy Deller in 2013.

The British Council appoints a committee of leading arts professionals from across the UK to select the British representation for the Venice Biennale every two years.

### THE COMMITTEE FOR 2015

Charles Darwent, Art Critic and Writer  
Lisa Le Feuvre, Head of Sculpture Studies, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds  
Hannah Firth, Director of Visual Arts, Chapter, Cardiff  
Margot Heller, Director, South London Gallery  
Francesco Manacorda, Artistic Director, Tate Liverpool  
Francis McKee, Director, Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow  
Gregor Muir, Executive Director, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London  
Polly Staple, Director, Chisenhale Gallery, London  
Chair: Andrea Rose, former Director Visual Arts, British Council, London

### THE BRITISH PAVILION IS MANAGED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

Commissioner: Emma Dexter  
Curator: Richard Riley  
Deputy Curator: Katrina Schwarz

## ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

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