

Issue 07 – Luca George

SOS / Sculptors on Sculpture is a series of weekly condensed interviews with early career contemporary sculptors.

Above a safety net of self-parody, Luca George walks across the tightrope of tragicomedy with a bag full of sculptures and a phone in his hand.

SOS: This is interview number seven in this series with contemporary sculptors, a reoccurring question throughout has been about the Covid-19 lockdown. How have you adapted to the lockdown? Has the confinement changed your approach to making at all?

LG: I'm writing these answers in the second week of May. There's been new information and guidance for the public to follow over the last few days, but it's been all over the place. I lost my job in March, which is also when I gave up my studio. I'm on universal credit and currently trying to work



'The Hermits Cave', 2020, Balsa wood and tartan paint, 70 x 50 x 15cm.

a few different things out for moving forward. My approach to making artwork hasn't changed much; I'm still putting whatever I've come up with on Instagram almost every day.

SOS: Scale plays an important part in your sculpture. Take for instance your recent show at Brockley Gardens, the ceiling was punctured with these small balsa wood facades of local London pubs adorned with bicycle lights. They functioned almost as models or maquettes. What is it that attracts you to the miniature?



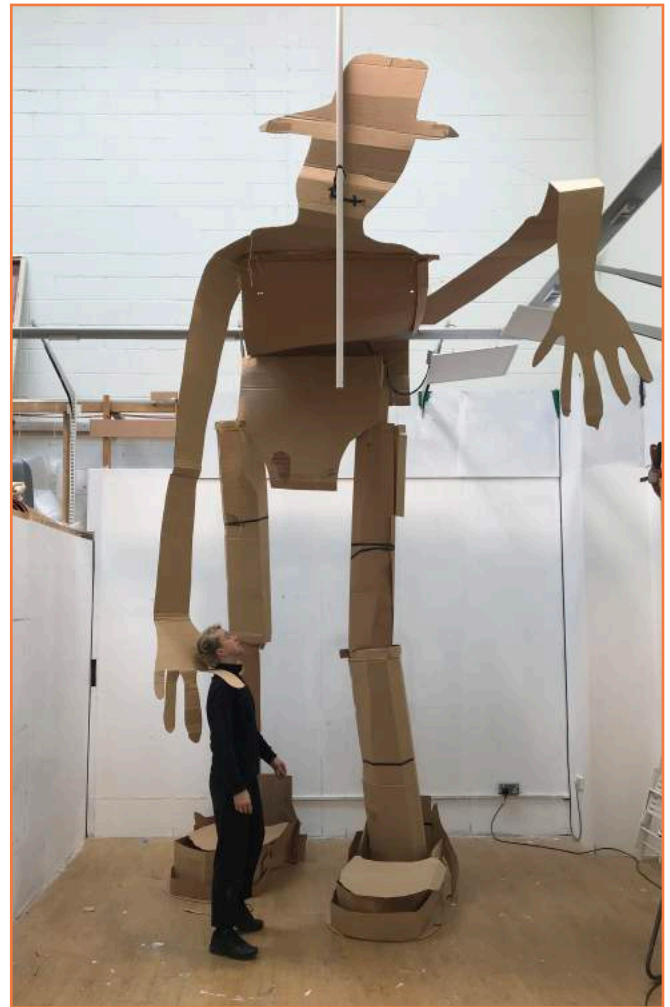
Performance of 'London and the Devil', 2020, Brockley Gardens, London.

LG: I like the way you describe them as puncturing the ceiling, as if they'd forced their way through, urging you in for one more drink. Miniatures are uncanny. Much more so than something like VR, I think. They re-orientate and refocus your line of sight without making you feel nauseous, (something VR doesn't seem to have completely mastered yet) which makes them convincing tools for storytelling. So I use them for performances, something to point at and divert attention away from me when the whole debasing act of performance art gets too much for everyone in the room. It's during these performances that the metamorphosis takes place and they turn into sculptures that I try and sell, swap, give away or live with. The other day I was planning to start work on a version of *La Boîte-en-valise*, I was going to fill it with sculptures I haven't been able to shift. Then I saw something on Twitter and decided to make one of those Boston Dynamics robot dogs instead, it's on the other side of the room staring at me right now. If anyone wants it then they can have it, it's terrifying.

Guest Question: You also craft your work from quite ubiquitous everyday materials such as cardboard. I uncovered this great interview with Eva Hesse and Cindy Hemser from 1970 and this comes from there. 'How do the materials relate to the content of your work?'



'Bedroom in Camberwell', 2020, Balsa wood, cardboard, household paint and enamel paint, 15 x 24 x 22 cm



'The Ticket Collector,' 2020, Cardboard, Dimensions variable.

LG: I don't have much of a conceptual attachment or loyalty to cardboard as a material, I use it because it's easy to shape and manipulate, plus it's free. Whenever I make video work I use low-res video because my laptop's past it. I can chop it up and move it around without the laptop sounding like it's going to take off. It's the same as that really, but the low-res video is cardboard and the laptop is my brain. Give me a new laptop and a new brain and who knows what I'd give you!? VR, probably.

If I'm really excited or motivated by something then it all gets a bit Hobby Space, Games Workshop, man in a shed, Airfix, Warhammer, you



name it, it's not a good look. I'll spend days or weeks on it using balsa wood, super glue, tweezers, a scalpel, enamel paint and a magnifying glass.

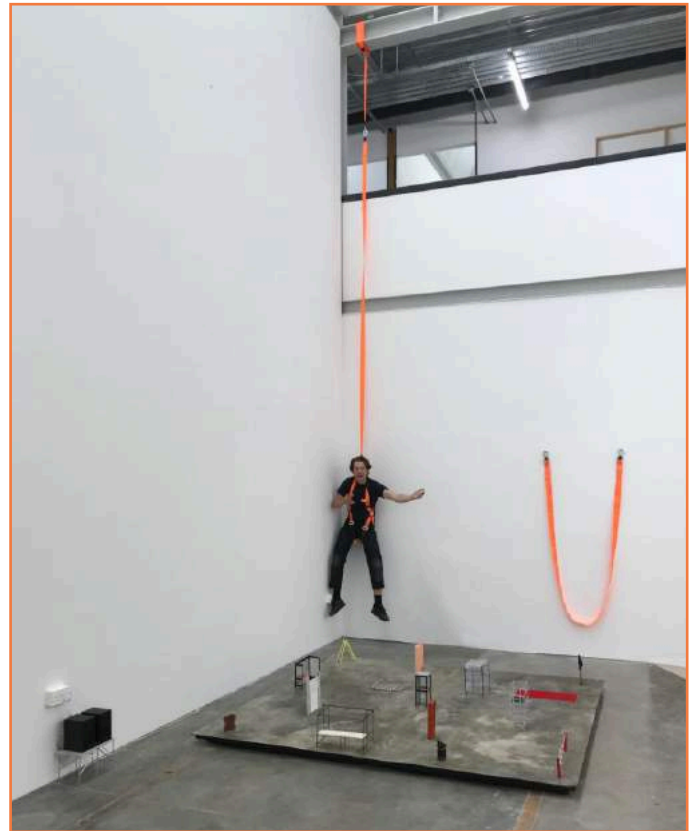
SOS: How important is humour to you in your work?

LG: When I first got to art school a student in the year above told me that "an artist who uses humour in their work is a desperate artist", before adding that he also believed we were living in a time where "irony no longer existed". Which is ironic, because I definitely remember laughing when I saw his degree show.

Art usually get's humour wrong because it points at things that comedy only needs to nod at. I've always found true comic moments are at their best when they're understated and subtle. Something I often have to remind myself when making new work. Maybe it's just my sense of humour but the funniest people I've ever met have usually been quite quiet and cunning. A good example of subtle humour is the double act. Next time you see one on TV or wherever focus on the person who isn't saying anything, if they're a comedy duo then they'll be doing something subtle with their face to keep the humour flowing. If they're not a comic duo, say they're a duo presenting The One Show, then again watch the person that isn't saying anything, they'll be mixing up nodding and smiling with blank and serious looks. That should make for a more entertaining viewing of The One Show, and life as you know it actually.

SOS: As an artist, how important are these ideas of quality and taste? Do you worry about them when you make art?

LG: The wild and judgemental eyes of quality and taste are beaming down on every artist; ready to roll up with contempt at whatever the



Performance of 'If There is Something', 2019, Royal College of Art Degree Show, South Kensington, London

artist produces. I try not to let them worry me too much. I know what I'm doing isn't everyone's cup of tea, and I can live with that, most of the time.

SOS: What's filling your time right now? Is there anything you're reading, watching or listening to that you would recommend?

LG: Apart from The One Show? I watched that 3hr film about The National Gallery the other day, right at the end there's these ballet dancers bouncing around, one of them knocks into a huge Titian painting and completely destroys it. That's not true, but it's still worth watching.

Interviewer: Josh Wright