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HAMMER PROJECTS: FRANCIS UPRITCHARD

On view at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, October 25, 2014 – March 1, 2015



Los Angeles— Born in New Plymouth, New Zealand and based in London, **Francis Upritchard** creates sculptural installations featuring archetypal figures—the psychic, the African, the nincompoop—hovering in a state of uncertainty. Modeled in polymer clay, the curious figures are rendered in a slightly unnerving scale, not quite human but large enough to look you in the eye with their only partially opened eyes and blank stares. The skin is painted monochromatically or with distinct gridded patterns, the tones ranging from sickly yellow to mossy green to calming blue, as if from an otherworldly tribe. Yet their handmade and hand-dyed garb suggest they might be characters from a range of past eras, from medieval knights and jesters to meditating hippies in the 1960s. For a recent exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery in London, Upritchard experimented with both form and material, creating a group of dinosaurs out of papier-mâché or an earthy matter drawn from rubber trees in Brazil called balata and displaying them on simple yet elegant fold-out tables produced by the Italian company Olivetti on

customized steel bases. For her Hammer Project, Upritchard will bring together the figures and the dinosaurs for the first time. Inhabiting the space like strange bedfellows from different times and places, the characters are not so much actors in a legible narrative or drama as they are complexly enigmatic, strangely absorbed in their own thoughts. Equally drawn to the history of figurative sculpture as to a wide range of craft and artisan traditions around the world—from ceramic techniques to glass blowing, enameling to welding—Upritchard pushes these practices in new directions, bringing them together to create a striking and original visual language of her own. This will be Upritchard's first solo exhibition on the west coast.

Hammer Projects: Francis Upritchard is organized by Hammer curator Anne Ellegood.

Biography

Francis Upritchard was born in 1976 in New Plymouth, New Zealand, and graduated from Canterbury University of Fine Arts in New Zealand in 1998. She has recently had solo exhibitions at The Whitechapel and Kate McGarry, London (2014), The Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin (2013), Anton Kern Gallery in New York (2013), Nottingham Contemporary (2012), and MIMOCA in Kagawa, Japan (2013) and Secession, Vienna (2011). Her only other solo museum exhibition in the United States, *A Long Wait*, took place in 2012 at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati. In 2009, she represented New Zealand at the 53rd Venice Biennale with her exhibition *Save Yourself*. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including *Freedom Farmers* at the Auckland City Gallery in New Zealand (2013), *Lilliput* at the New York High Line (2012), *Contact* at Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany (2012), *Bush of*

Ghosts: Nathan Mabry, Djordie Ozbolt and Francis Upritchard at Cherry and Martin in Los Angeles (2012), and many others. Upritchard currently lives and works in London.

Hammer Projects is a series of exhibitions focusing primarily on the work of emerging artists.

Hammer Projects is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Susan Bay Nimoy and Leonard Nimoy, Hope Warschaw and John Law, and Maurice Marciano.

Additional support is provided by Good Works Foundation and Laura Donnelley, the Decade Fund, and the David Teiger Curatorial Travel Fund.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum—a public arts unit of the University of California, Los Angeles—is dedicated to exploring the diversity of artistic expression through the ages. Its collections, exhibitions, and programs span the classic to the cutting-edge in art, architecture, and design, recognizing that artists play a crucial role in all aspects of culture and society.

The museum houses the Armand Hammer Collection of old master, impressionist, and postimpressionist paintings and the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection. The museum also houses the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts—comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present—and oversees the management of the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden on the UCLA campus. The Hammer's newest collection, the Hammer Contemporary Collection, is highlighted by works by artists such as Lari Pittman, Kara Walker, Ed Ruscha, Barbara Kruger, Mark Bradford, Richard Hawkins, and Llyn Foulkes, among many others.

The Hammer presents major single-artist and thematic exhibitions of historical and contemporary art. It also presents approximately ten Hammer Projects exhibitions each year, providing international and local artists with a laboratory-like environment to create new work or to present existing work in a new context.

As a cultural center, the Hammer offers a diverse array of free public programs throughout the year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances. These widely acclaimed public programs are presented in the Hammer's Billy Wilder Theater, which is also the home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's renowned cinemathèque.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Visit www.hammer.ucla.edu or call **310-443-7000** for current exhibition and program information.

ADMISSION TO ALL EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11am–8pm; Saturday & Sunday 11am–5pm. Closed Mondays, July 4, Thanksgiving, December 24, 25, 31, and January 1.

Location/Parking: The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood Village, three blocks east of the 405 Freeway's Wilshire exit. Parking is available under the Museum. Rate is \$3 for three hours with Museum validation. Bicycles park free and the Hammer is easily accessible via [public transportation](#).

Tours: For group tour reservations and information, call 310-443-7041.