

Liane Lang
Old School

Curated by Marcelle Joseph

11th November – 9th December 2017
Private View: Saturday, 11th November, 7.00 – 9.00pm

Drawing Schools, Eton College
Windsor, Berkshire SL4 6DU

Open by appointment
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The impossibility of leaving an indelible mark in a history as long and dense as that of Eton is symbolic of history overall. We draw in pencil onto the walls of our time and hope that future generations may still decipher the message.

- Liane Lang

Old School is a solo exhibition of new photographic and sculptural work made by Liane Lang while an artist in residence at Eton College in 2014. Lang was the first female artist to be awarded the James McLaren residency at Eton College and follows in the footsteps of other luminaries such as Hughie O'Donoghue RA and Norman Ackroyd CBE RA. For this show curated by Marcelle Joseph, Lang, in typical fashion, engaged in comprehensive historical research to excavate the stories buried beneath the façade of this illustrious boys' boarding school founded in 1440 by King Henry VI.

In the artist's own words, "Eton was unique to me for having been put to the same use in the same place for more than 500 years, a layering of grand political histories and small personal stories that felt too complex to unpick. The boys who study there also seemed aware of the weight of this history, and the desire to make a mark is inherent in many small acts -- none more so than the propensity to carve one's name into the walls and benches of the school, a tradition dating back centuries and leading to a palimpsest of inscriptions."

These marks were the catalyst for the sculptural works on display in this exhibition, bronze resin casts of the actual wooden beams and benches containing five centuries of student graffiti. These clandestine acts of vandalism are reminiscent of youth culture today - the recurrent action of attempting to stand out, make a mark and be remembered, but the title of the show, *Old School*, harkens back to an earlier era with connotations of nostalgia for the past.

In her research, Lang was especially struck by the Eton College Chapel and its original paintings depicting miracles of the Virgin Mary that were whitewashed over during the Reformation in 1560. Using charcoal, chalk, pigments and inks to overpaint photographs of the Chapel, Lang transformed the emotive interior of the Chapel into a space of the imagination, making references to the bomb which pulverized the great stained glass

window and the fires of many wars which left a mark there, including the iconoclastic battles of the Reformation that resulted in empty arches where once stood statues and bare stone walls where once hung paintings telling a popular medieval story about a mythical Empress. The existing chapel paintings still maintain the medieval closeness to King Henry's family patrons, the female saints St Winifred, St Catherine and St Elizabeth, adding a surprising element of feminine presence to this most masculine of institutions.

Lang's new body of work brings the history of this grand educational institution to the fore, celebrating it and attempting to decode it for generations of students to come.

An artist's book will accompany this exhibition and will include a text written by Sabina Andron, a graffiti expert and PhD candidate at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. If interested in viewing and buying the publication, please email Marcelle Joseph on marcelle@marcellejoseph.com. The texts will be available on the website: www.marcellejoseph.com.

Biography of the Artist

Liane Lang is a London-based artist who studied at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin and completed a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London followed by a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy Schools, London, where she graduated in 2006. She has exhibited widely both in the UK and internationally, including the Musée de Beaux Arts Calais, PS1 New York and Kunstverein Heidelberg. Lang won the Photofusion Award, the Tooth Travel Award at Goldsmiths College and the Cheneviere Prize at the Royal Academy Schools. She was recently shortlisted for the Cointreau Creative Crew and the Young Masters Art Prize. Earlier in the year, her work was on show at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and the Royal Overseas League in London. Lang is currently undertaking a residency at Expositive Madrid, and her work will be shown as part of the *From Life* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London from December 2017. Lang's work is held in numerous prestigious collections, such as Arts Council England, Royal Academy of Arts, the Saatchi Collection, Deutsche Bank, Kunstverein Bregenz, Ernst and Young and the Collection of the Kunstamt Spandau, Berlin.

Biography of the Curator

Marcelle Joseph is a London-based independent curator, writer and the director of Marcelle Joseph Projects, a nomadic curatorial platform she founded in 2011. Since then, Marcelle has produced and curated 29 exhibitions in the UK and the rest of Europe, featuring the work of over 175 international artists, ranging from the emerging to the super established. Marcelle's expertise is in early career artists based in the UK but she has also executive edited *Korean Art: The Power of Now* (Thames & Hudson, 2013), a lusciously-illustrated book surveying the contemporary art scene in South Korea. She also writes regular art reviews for FAD Magazine and collects artworks by female artists under the collecting partnership, GIRLPOWER Collection. Marcelle is currently a juror for the 2017-2019 Max Mara Art Prize for Women, a collaboration between the Whitechapel Gallery and the Collezione Maramotti. For more information, please see www.marcellejoseph.com.