

PRESS RELEASE

OF LIFE AND DEATH – NO MORE: THE PROBING ART OF DAVID MARRON

9th October to 21st November 2009. Presented by GV Art and Marina Wallace.

This is the first major show of the work by artist David Marron, which includes his works and installations, **Imaginary Shipwreck** (2005-2007), as well as a new twelve-figure installation, **Circular Ruin** (2007-2009).

In the rare space between the metaphorical and the literal, and between poignant icons of life and death, lies the work of artist David Marron. Literary and artistic references — including Dante, Goethe, Rembrandt and Delacroix — enrich Marron's work, whilst his part-time occupation as a paramedic underpins it, providing food for thought.

The life-size figures that Marron constructs out of wire and plaster are encrusted with objects such as seashells, beans, cutlery, crockery, pins, nails, candles, soap, mousetraps, rubber gloves, swords and tools. They function as collaged symbolic trophies that trace telling memories of life through the juxtaposition of fragments carefully arranged on what resemble human forms frozen in time. Marron's figures stand, sit and crouch, quietly calling for our attention, and refer to the parallel lives of the objects that surround us in life and of their strange relationship to death.

Reflecting upon the sights that present themselves when he is at work as a paramedic, he records his thoughts:

'Fragments of a life once led remain housed with the surrounding objects. Objects that have been displayed for sentiment, decoration, use or interest.'

Entering, as a paramedic, the space once inhabited by the person who was alive there and no longer is, and taking in the multitude of objects that silently populate the room, he writes:

'This object-audience regard the corpse with an impassive vacancy, their meaning lost to an uninterested world. Anchorless and hollow, once salient with personal significance, now insignificant and bewildered. Their relationship to one another is one reduced to proximity. Empty.'

It is the body of the deceased or of the ill-fated that Marron the paramedic takes care of — but the objects that surround the body are those that remain impressed in the mind of David Marron the artist. And it is objects that clothe the startling figures that he constructs. His figures carry many references, from anatomical illustrations, to archaeological findings in ancient burials. They recall the flayed bodies rendered by Renaissance artists, by 18th century wax modellers, by artists working in tandem with pioneering anatomists. However still and poignant in themselves, each figure modelled by Marron does not exist in isolation. He conceives them as part of a *tableau*. Some figures are contained within narrow frames that recall cabinets of

curiosity, complete with some of the relevant compulsory objects extracted from the worlds of *naturalia* and *artificialia*.

The figures in **Circular Ruin** belong to a 'collection' of symbolic human forms, to be displayed together, in the round, with a stringent plan that takes into account the geometry of the human mind, patterns drawn by nature and by the human hand. These are elements that create a sort of theatre of memory, or a *memento mori*, encrusted with the curious jewels of life. For this exhibition, **Circular Ruin**, on the ground floor of the gallery, is composed of eight figures, and large sheets of accomplished drawings complete with annotations. A plan of the larger scale installation, to be realised in a bigger space, is also on show.

Fundamental to Marron's work are what he calls his 'Notes'. These are careful visual annotations, accompanied by written text, that map his ideas from conception to the three-dimensional realisation. The notes are inseparable from the sculptures — they form an integral part of the installation. They come first as a work in themselves and are then arranged on the walls as a background to the solid figures, providing a key to the reading of the complex web of iconographic references.

Both **Circular Ruin** and **Imaginary Shipwreck** are enriched by Marron's notes, his sketches and his written annotations. In the case of **Imaginary Shipwreck**, the notes were taken at the National Gallery in London, in front of the painting by Rembrandt that inspired the whole work, the portrait of *Margareta de Geer* (1661). Marron was struck by the work of the great Dutch master at a time when his sensitivity to the subject of the fragility of old age was particularly alerted by a wave of illness in his family. As in **Circular Ruin**, life and its immanent fragility are always the motor for the creation of Marron's potent *tableaus*.

Marron recognises in some great art of the past a similar creative urge, and Rembrandt's *Margareta de Geer* becomes an icon of great intensity providing enough material that unfolds in a myriad of symbols

The rough physicality of life combined with the gentle presence of its most ephemeral elements form the basis of the visual record that Marron works on, constructing three-dimensional scenes that are almost *maquettes* of his complex visions of life and death and of life's fragility.

As a complete work, Marron's figures stand in a space that is pregnant with meaning but that, simultaneously, risks being, in his words, '*anchorless and hollow, once salient with personal significance, now insignificant and bewildered*'. Such is the space we all occupy; such is the theatre of our life. Such is also the space of the gallery where art reflects on life, staging meaningful scenes with objects that make their brief appearance and disappear without leaving a trace.

For further information, contact penny@gvart.co.uk

Tues to Fri 11 am to 7 pm and Saturdays 11 am to 4 pm

49 Chiltern Street
London W1U 6LY

David Marron's blog can be accessed via www.gvart.co.uk or directly http://www.gvart.co.uk/david_marron_blog.html

Editor's Notes

David Marron

David Marron (born 1972) is a London-based artist. David trained in fine art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, and currently divides his time between his art practice and his work as a paramedic. He has been represented by GV Art since 2007.

Marina Wallace

Prof. Marina Wallace, Director of Artakt, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts, London. She was co-director, with Prof. Martin Kemp, of the Universal Leonardo project (2001/08). Prof. Wallace is closely engaged with art and culture on many levels in her work as an art historian, writer, lecturer and curator. Her interests range from Renaissance to contemporary art, and art, science, music and performance. She has curated a number of groundbreaking exhibitions including *Seduced, Art and Sex from Antiquity to Now* (Barbican Art Gallery, London, 2007/8); *Spectacular Bodies: the Art and Science of the Human Body, from Leonardo to Now* (Hayward Gallery, 2000/01); *Head On: Art with the Brain in Mind* (Science Museum, London, 2002); and *Mendel: The Genius of Genetics* (Mendel Museum, Brno, 2002/03).

Prof. Wallace is on the editorial board of the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) Humanities; the advisory Board of the American Museum of Women in the Arts Washington (AMWAW), and is a member of the Scientific Committee of the contemporary art space, Hangar Bicocca, Milan. Her latest publication is *Acts of Seeing* (Zidane Press 2009); her forthcoming publications include *The Lives of Paintings. Journeys and stories of Seven Paintings by Leonardo da Vinci*, (Zidane Press 2009).

GV Art

GV Art represents a broad community of established and emerging artists. Working in a variety of disciplines, this diverse group share a common artistic and emotional vocabulary which is in sympathy with and helps mould the gallery's sensibility. Defined by neither ideology nor fashion, it demands only tolerance for the individual voice, interconnectivity between man and environment and fresh approaches to our understanding of the human condition.

www.gvart.co.uk