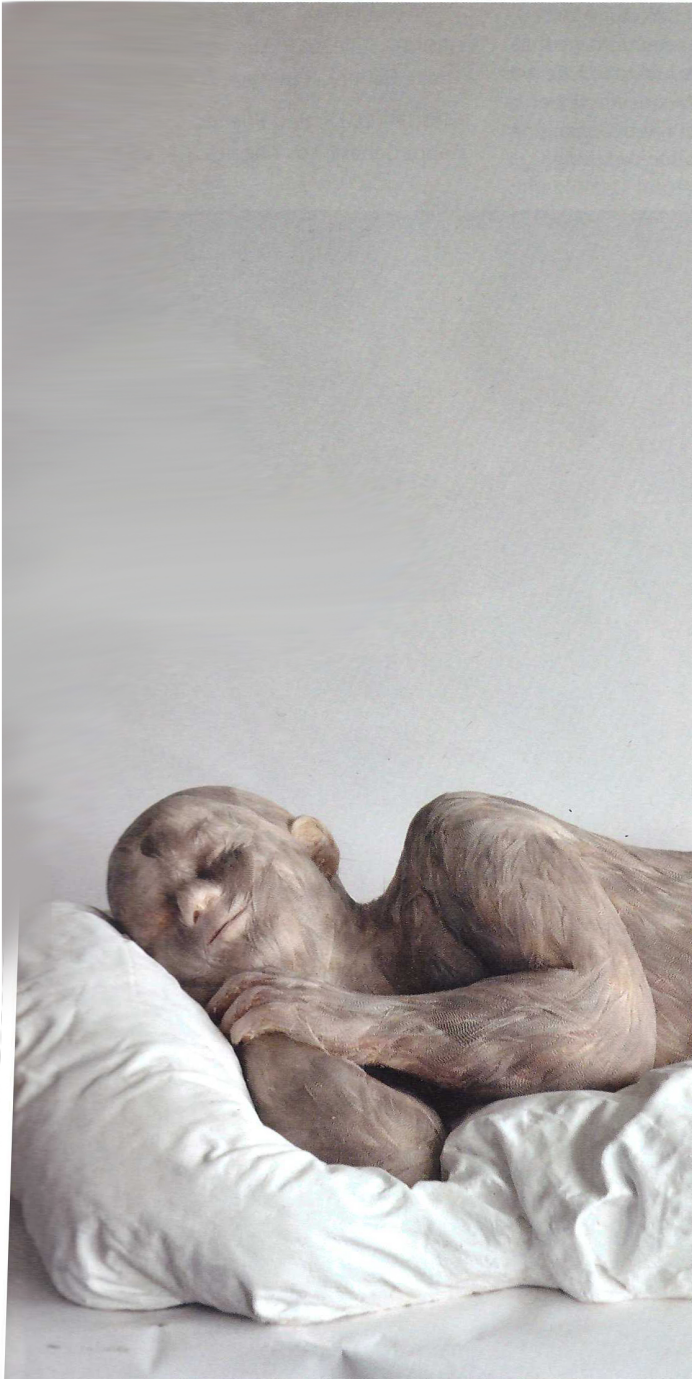


LUCY GLENDINNING

WHEN THE SKIN HURTS, REMOVE IT

lucyglendinning.co.uk // words by Justine Morrow



Darkness has crept in between your bones and settled, quietly dismembering any sense of light or love; it blows away happiness with the whisper of a frigid wind. Your mind reels and removes itself from reality because everything tastes like dust, everything feels like the sharp edge of a blade, but so removed that the gnawing pain is meaningless. The melancholia sweeps over the sky and blots out hope. It is a shadow, a cloying tired ghost, a hollow unremitting ache. It is a continual cycle of hovering anguish, an entrenched waiting as if the breath is held for an eternity. Have you felt it? Have you ever seen anything that so closely resembles your own internal emotional composition that for a moment you felt your pain had been transferred to another entity?

Flesh coloured, or a clinical bright white, her deflated bodies, skins that have been removed as if too heavy to bear any longer, her children in repose, or tightly wound into a foetal position brings these things to mind. Like Rilke poetry or a Clint Mansell sonata, Lucy Glendinning's work claws at the soul with its ruthless accuracy for executing the varied facets of human emotion. Her insightful work is arresting; there is no mistaking the affect her sculptures have on an audience.

The connective tissue of the physical body throughout Lucy's work is explicit, and it's no wonder. Growing up in England, her parents were doctors and her grandfathers surgeons. She spent much of her childhood surrounded by medical books, including those illustrating the anatomy. "I still find the diagrams and illustrations fascinating." And while she may not have followed in the footsteps of her family, her oeuvre shows a preoccupation with the human form. However, "As time has progressed the figures have become a vehicle to explore psychology and the human condition." Her sculptures emit an intense emotional quality; the sensation of being in the presence of something precious, but brutal is immensely powerful. "I would like the person to be drawn to the work, and I often craft for this and hopefully evoke an emotional response. There is an immediacy there, but understanding it sometimes takes a deeper examination and is, of course, always affected by the viewer's own perspective. I am hoping to create a question or a thought. I am not looking to answer questions, more to ask them."

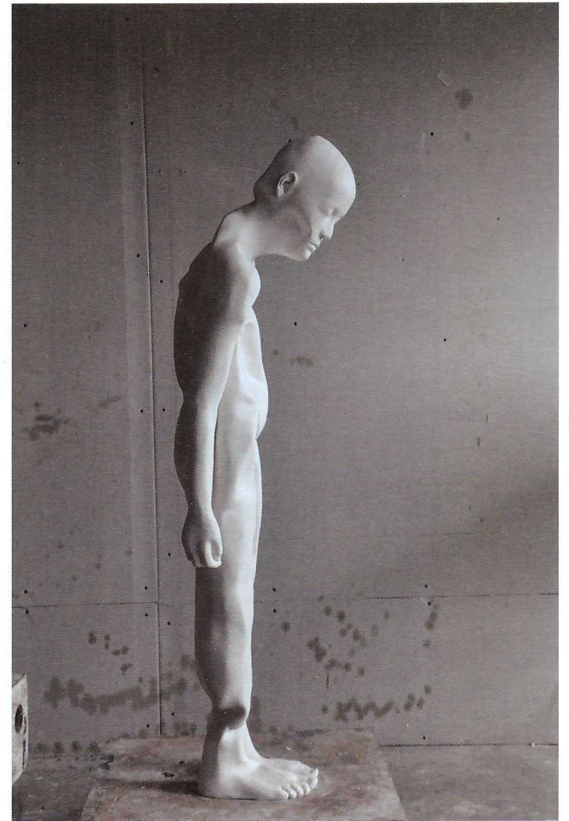
Her craftsmanship is unmitigated and her process absolutely supports this. Working for Elizabeth Frink in a bronze foundry after college, Lucy learned how to make moulds and castings with wax, which influences her work to this day. What perhaps also reinforces Lucy's sculptures is her continual devotion to experimentation and research. "I usually know which material I am going to use for a piece, but sometimes it changes as the work progresses. I experiment with materials a lot but always come back to the casting process. I am

opposite page
Fledgling, 2016-17
 Wax, jesmonite, duck feathers, and
 pigment, 104cm x 56cm x 26cm

top left & right
The Boy Who Wasn't Real II, 2017-18
 Jesmonite, jesso & steel,
 42cm x 46cm x 161cm

bottom
Feather Child I, 2010
 Jesmonite, timber, duck & pheasant
 feathers, 78cm x 61cm x 28cm

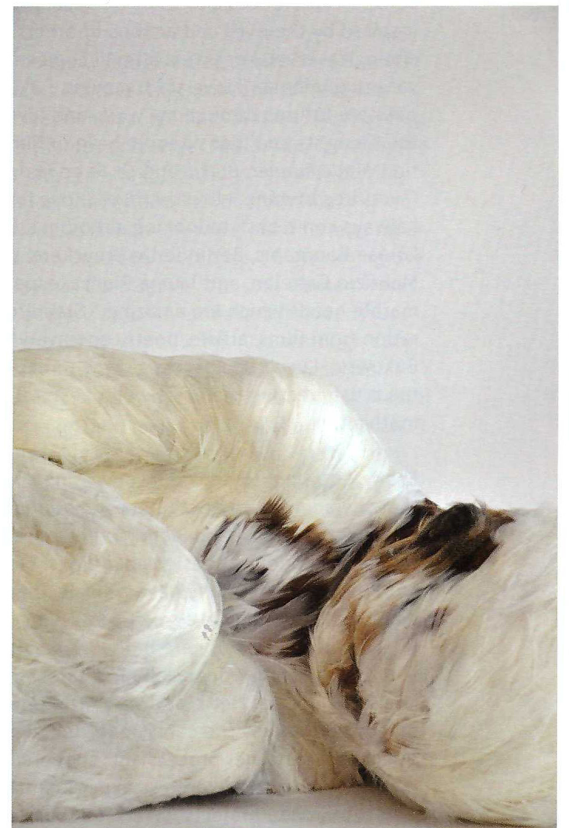
rested in surface and use
 it materials to realize ideas.
 ot of wax and rubber at the
 t and I often experiment with
 different materials and using
 it surfaces...I am currently
 at how to cast recycled plas-
 as not worked yet but when
 more time over the summer
 ping to be able to solve it."
 g in the studio, she produces
 that are pronounced in their
 nal strength, partly due to
 ightfulness and care in the
 of material and process.



"I AM
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Her eco-conscious efforts, the reusing of plastic bottles or the ecological conceptual underpinnings of a particular piece, are not a happenstance; Lucy is committed to exploring issues of the environment and the human relationship to it. "I think the advancement of science is fascinating and wonderful; it will be life changing for a lot of people, and will cure some of the most destructive diseases and illnesses. I think genetic manipulation will change humanity's future, and with the *Feather Child* series I am looking to ask the question: will we be able to resist enhancing our children? After we can cure diseases like cancers, will we 'improve' our species? In what ways will we do this and will that be for the better? Who will decide and who will have access to these 'improvements'? I think this is probably inevitable, but I want to encourage discussion about it. It could well produce an even larger divide between the haves and have-nots." She recognizes the various questions called into action by not only her sculptures, but by ongoing world events as well. They are symbiotic in being; the events, the objects, and even the questions become a circular dialectic discussion.

Lucy's ongoing inquiry is also part of her process. "I think I am influenced by my medical upbringing and like to research my work a bit like medical research, but without the scientific restrictions or the need for proof. I am interested in how and why people experience what they do, and the influence of our subconscious on our





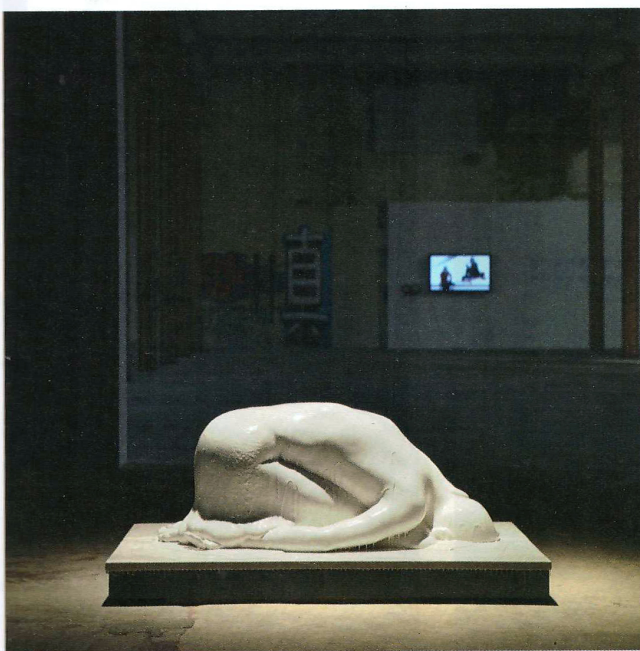
current experiences and what we see." While she is inspired by the lives and actions of others on a psychological level, her visual stimuli comes from a wide variety of media. "I love sci-fi movies. I like exploring possible futures through my work, and love to see the thoughts and ideas people have in films. The first *Blade Runner*, *Brazil*, and *Dr Strangelove* are old favourites of mine. I loved *Arrival*. I love lots of artists. I always come back to looking at Rodin, Kiki Smith, Louise Bourgeois, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Erwin Wurm, Maurizio Cattelan, and Jaume Plensa, especially his marble heads which are amazing." Gleaning inspiration from films, artists, poetry and even Charles Bukowski, Lucy's sculptures glow with depth because the artist creating them is a well of aspiration and motivation.

Easily, Lucy moves between conversing about artists that she admires, politics, and even her home life. "I live with my husband Mark Merer who is a landscape artist and also designs buildings. We have built studios and a house. We have a small company called Landhouse which is, in a small way, trying to change housing development here in the UK as it's currently very corporate and financially led, rarely involving any design or aesthetic, and very little environmental consideration." The congruence between Lucy's innate interests, her process and her personal life is harmonious. The relentless experimentation and well researched projects have set a foundation for an



The L
Jesmonite, wax, timber & guinea
36cm x

The Unkn
Wax, jesmonite, steel, guinea fc
goose feathers, 54cm x
Photo: Atelje Linslusen & Tr



top
Feather Child 5, 2012
 Duck feathers, wax, jesmonite and
 timber, 95cm x 60cm x 28cm

bottom
Folding Girl, 2010
 Silicone rubber, timber & jesmonite,
 115cm x 88cm x 46cm
 Photo: Claus Bach

output of enormous philosophical value. "I think that the arts is, by its nature, one of the most forward thinking of industries and should always be trying to lead the way."

Currently working on a solo show entitled *Only Human* in Paris at Galeria Da-End, these pieces explore what it means to be at the mercy of our most human tendencies. While evolution may have endowed us with opposable thumbs and larger brains, our actions and emotions can often fall short of our expectations. "I am exploring the animal within us and how that affects our decision making in the light of the current political climate; how we need to remember we are animals. As nature can be cruel, so can we." Considering the potent unveiling of her *Feather Child* series, the *Only Human* works will unfailingly bring the audience closer to these subdued issues in the hope of illuminating truth as a medicine. And although Lucy is incredibly busy her work is also progressing on a new series. "I am also continuing a research project on the visualization of mental illness, in particular depression, and how that affects our physical appearance...I am interviewing a group of people who suffer from depression to different extents, and exploring with them the differences in the ways they move and stand, and the way they feel their bodies change in different mental states."

Lucy Glendinning explores the depths of humanity in an effort to produce pieces that speak to her audience. As the bodies transform under her fingers, so too do our perceptions and actions. If there is undeniable truth in creation, it is that it can provoke change.