

Media Release

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Hirshhorn Presents

“Shana Lutker: *Le ‘NEW’ Monocle, Chapters 1–3*”

Oct. 29–Feb. 15, 2016

Artist Investigates Surrealists’ Fistfights



Shana Lutker (American, b. 1978, Northport, N.Y.; lives and works in Los Angeles) is featured in a new exhibition at the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. “Shana Lutker: *Le ‘NEW’ Monocle, Chapters 1–3*” focuses on stage set-like installations of sculptures based on historic fistfights involving surrealist artists.

Lutker explores the avant-garde milieu of Paris in the 1920s, a place and time in which radical artistic ideas occasionally met with physical violence and artists sometimes attacked one another to defend ideologies and honor. Employing strategies developed by

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the surrealists, she has made objects, such as a plush red-leather-and-chrome theater seat or a crinkled lead curtain, that refer to things either depicted in her research materials or encountered on her visits to the sites of the fights. She stages the sculptures in arrangements that underscore their roles as either props or symbolic actors in a performance.

“Shana Lutker melds her conceptual interests with an uncanny sculptural sensibility,” said Hirshhorn assistant curator Mika Yoshitake, who organized the exhibition. “She draws on dreams, memory and her understanding of history to produce objects that exert a powerful pull on the unconscious mind. All of her work, including her writings and performances, grows out of a process that emphasizes not only historical research but also her deep personal engagement with the stories she tells.”

Lutker’s sculptural installations are organized in chapters corresponding to those in a forthcoming book, *Le “NEW” Monocle*, which takes up the physical confrontations involving founding surrealist André Breton, founding dadaist Tristan Tzara, Max Ernst, Joan Miró and other artists, performers and writers. The exhibition includes three booklets containing the essays that form the first three chapters: “The Bearded Gas,” “Protestation!” and “Again Against, A Back, A Foot, A Wall.” Lutker is also presenting new “table-chairs” upon which she displays related objects and research images, as well as a selection of sculptures from the Hirshhorn’s collection.

Last fall, Lutker continued her inquiries as a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, investigating American artists’ involvement in surrealism and studying artworks addressing the violence of war and related materials in the collections of the Hirshhorn, the Archives of American Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. She is developing this material into a future chapter.

“Shana Lutker: *Le ‘NEW’ Monocle*, Chapters 1–3” is accompanied by three artist’s booklets. “Marvelous Objects: Surrealist Sculpture from Paris to New York,” a major exhibition devoted to three-dimensional works from the 1920s to the 1950s, runs concurrently. Related public programs will be announced.

For more information about the artist and the exhibition, visit hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/shana-lutker.

Photo caption: Shana Lutker, Installation view of “The Bearded Gas” at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, April 20–May 25, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photo credit: Robert Wedemeyer