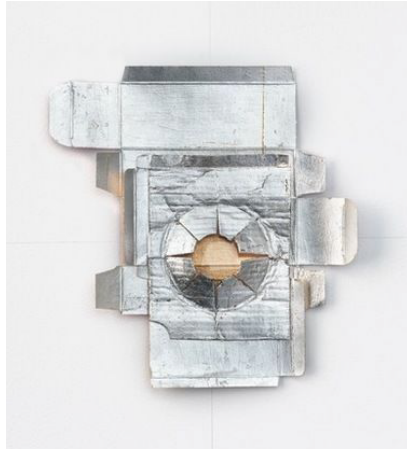


GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Rachel Whiteread: Master of the Miniature and the Monumental



Rachel Whiteread. Untitled (Amber), 2012. Gagosian Gallery

Meteorites, fossils, children's toys, a rubber glove, casts for making pills, a pair of paper shoes from Vietnam, a cast of the inside of a swimming cap, a piece of the Berlin Wall, a plastic, penis-shaped ashtray found in Egypt—these are among the eclectic smorgasbord of objects the British sculptor Rachel Whiteread has lovingly collected over the years, items that serve a similar function in her practice as her delicate works-on-paper.

The name “Rachel Whiteread” may call to mind big art—the monumental statement commissions she is best known for, such as her Trafalgar Square plinth, Holocaust memorial at the Judenplatz in Vienna, and the hotly debated installation, House (1993), that earned Whiteread the prestigious Turner Prize that year—but she also creates an extensive array of quiet, delicate drawings, paintings, collages, prints, and laser-cut images in wood. It is through these (and her trove of collected objects) that Whiteread plays with and explores ideas and forms. “The drawings are very much part of my thinking process,” she has said. “They’re not studies necessarily; I use them as a way of worrying through the particular aspect of something that I’m doing.”

Several of her layered collages—cardboard constructions mounted on note paper, painted with silver leaf, and furnished with celluloid “windows”—are currently on view at Gagosian Gallery in Geneva, alongside other recent sculptural works. These intricate, jewel-like works express one of Whiteread's central concerns: bringing form, presence, and monumentality to the forgotten or discarded. What appear to be fragments of waste cardboard packaging are here rendered fragile and precious. As in much of her large-scale work, in her works-on-paper Whiteread draws attention to texture and surface, and points to traces of human life. Whether turning squashed metal cans found on a road into formal prints, or collaging images of cardboard boxes onto graph paper, Whiteread gives space and aesthetic form to unremarkable objects and materials that would otherwise go unnoticed.