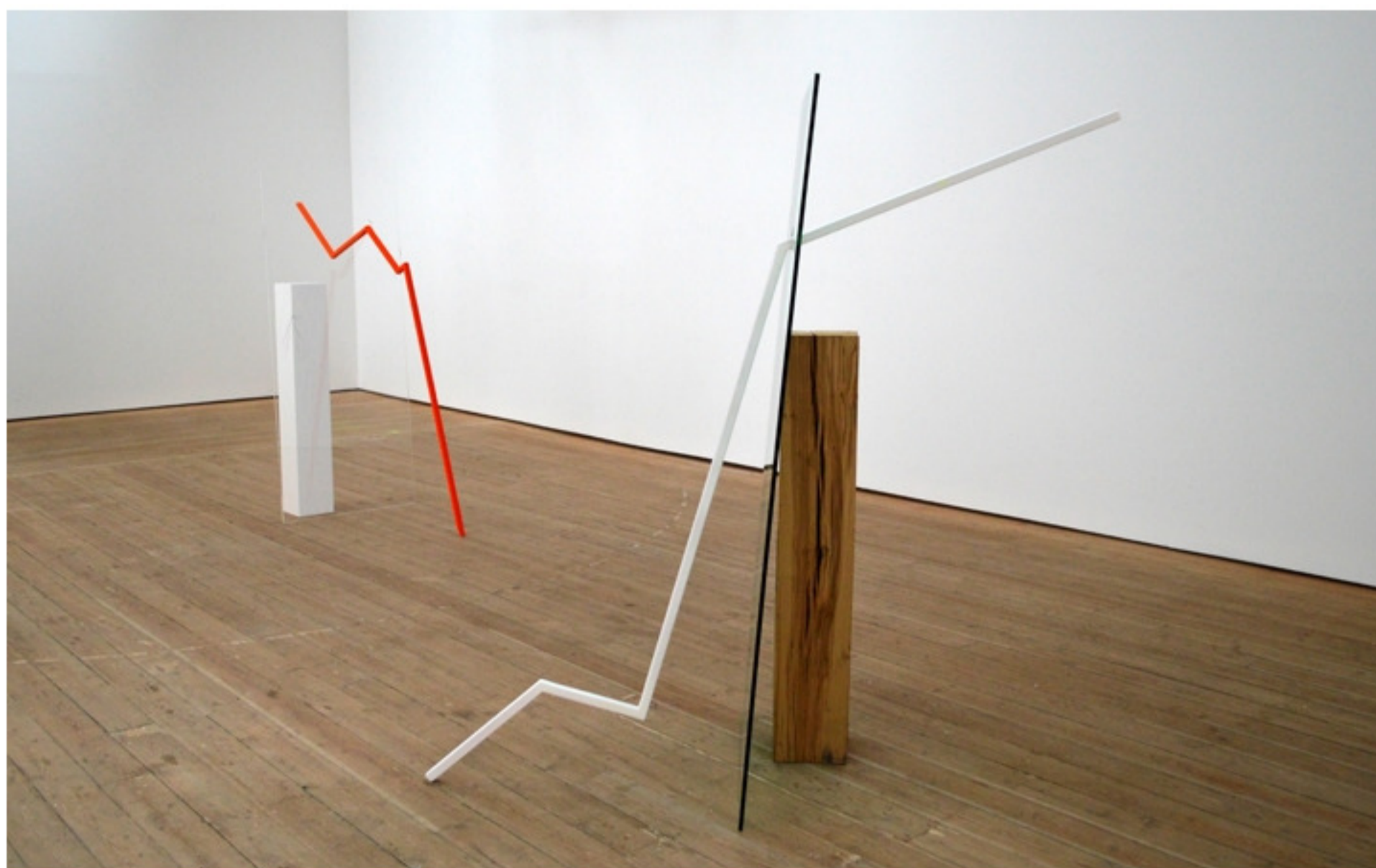


NEWS

In the frame ... An interview with Amy Stephens  
13 November 2012



The minimalist sculptural configurations of Amy Stephens play with colour, surface and form and have an inherent relationship to drawing. We caught up with the artist in the midst of her current exhibition at [Poppy Sebire Gallery](#) to find out more about her inspirations and working practice ...

**Q) When did you discover fine art and how did you become interested in sculpture?**

A) My earliest recollection of fine art was during a family holiday to Florence. I remember visiting the Uffizi Gallery and entering the Titian room where I was taken aback by the artist's use of ultramarine. I later went on to study Fine Art at the University of Reading where I spent the first two years of my BA as a painter. It was only during my third year, when I took part in an exchange programme with the University of Ottawa, that I became interested in sculpture. Ultimately I became more excited by free-standing objects and found it easier to express my ideas through assemblage.

**Q) Your recent sculptures have a strong relationship to drawing - cutting clean lines through the exhibition space. How did you develop this minimalist style and what are you looking to communicate to the viewer?**

A) I began developing a minimalist style during my MA at Chelsea College of Art and Design. At the start of each artwork I begin by loosely drawing my ideas and then sourcing a variety of different objects. A series of mini hybrids develop in the studio made up from eclectic mixtures of materials that eventually become pared down, until I feel confident with the work. Often the lines and sculptural configurations are made in situ and in direct relationship to the existing architecture. I am looking to connect the sparse and inherently structural surroundings in question and ultimately communicate a series of architectonic drawings that I see as three-dimensional drawings in the space.

**Q) How do you select the materials for your artworks?**

A) Over the last four years I have taken part in several international residencies where I have collected a large proportion of materials and objects. I select materials from those that adorn my studio and from previous configurations, enabling me to appropriate existing artworks in order to make new work and keep a continuous dialogue.

**Q) You currently have a solo exhibition at Poppy Sebire Gallery. How do your large-scale works interact with the architecture and environment of the gallery space?**

A) A series of tall sculptural assemblages interact with the gallery space and engage directly with the architecture, their dimensions are in part determined with the gallery drawings to hand. Therefore the scale and height of each sculptural configuration is built in direct relationship to the exhibition space. The main framework for each of the central structures consists of a large sheet of Perspex pierced by brightly flopped architectonic lines that brake through the quiet calm of the gallery space and confront the viewer with their soft angularity.

**Q) Do you utilise any unusual equipment or techniques in your creative process?**

A) I use a variety of processes but the technique that stands out the most is flocking. From a photograph, flock can be mistaken as a painted surface and so it is often only when the viewer encounters the three-dimensional work that they realise the surface is covered with material.

**Q) Where do you find your inspiration?**

A) I find that much of my inspiration comes from my immediate surroundings, which is why travel is the key to my work's development. A large influence on my recent work has been from my time in Iceland whilst on an artist's residency.

**Q) Do you have a piece of work which stands out in your mind as something you are exceptionally proud of or that is particularly important to you for emotional or sentimental reasons?**

A) My current interest lies in the appropriation of nature, so I would say 'Birch in Space'. One singular aesthetic form is made up of eight separate casts from a piece of birch tree, acquired during my time in Iceland. Stripped back to its essential form, this linear metal object glistens within the space making reference to a single mark on a blank page focusing our attention on the physical representation of nature.

**Q) Where and how do you like to relax and gain head space in between your studio time?**

A) The best place for me to relax and think is when travelling in search of new ideas.

**Q) Do you prefer to work alone or with a team of studio assistants?**

A) I enjoy working alone in my studio but I also love to collaborate with other artists as it allows me to expand my practice and gain insight into other peoples' creative processes.

**Q) What new projects do you have on the horizon?**

A) I am working on a series of new works for a solo exhibition opening next May at Minibar Artist Space, an artist run space in Stockholm. I am also developing ideas towards several site-specific works for a sculpture garden opening next summer.

**Q) Your current exhibition also includes a series of 2D artworks on paper. How important is selecting the right framing for the overall presentation of these works?**

A) Personally I view my framed works as objects and therefore the framing is critical to the work. For my current exhibition, John Jones has been inspirational in enhancing my 2D work and giving me the confidence to actually exhibit my works on paper. Their innovation has enabled me to form a dialogue between both my drawing and sculpture.

Our design team is delighted to have been framing Amy's 2D artworks for several years, including the works on paper featured in her current [solo show](#). We ensure that each piece is protected with archival acid-free materials to preserve the long-term visual appearance and financial value of the artist's work.

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