

Restless Nature

Amy Stephens

Oonagh Young is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by British artist Amy Stephens. *Restless Nature* presents work made during the artist's residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and in response to her time spent in Iceland (2009).

As her main characters, Stephens uses found, man-made and natural elements to create unique hybrid compositions. Hand hewn timber is used by the artist throughout the works and in one piece cast into brass, intrinsic to the specific architectural make-up of the gallery space. There is a strong sense of architecture and form as elegant outlines of geometric shapes display an affinity to drawing and awaken our fundamental instinct to critically engage with form and colour.

Flock fabric acts a surface material adorning singular lines of wood that cut through the space in horizontal, vertical and diagonal formations. Highly polished materials, in relation to the organic, offer the viewer a sensuous tactility hovering between abstraction and a subtle form of figuration. This formal minimalism enables her to create spatial territories forcing the viewer through and beyond the mini portals both defined and imbued by the artist.

The exhibition draws our attention to the delicate symbiosis between form and materials that have undergone a total metamorphosis. Using the Mid-Atlantic Ridge as a starting point, a divergent tectonic plate boundary located along the floor of the Atlantic Ocean, *Riding the Fault Line* is an example of her exploration into the themes of physicality, materiality and aesthetics whilst becoming simultaneously reliant on the natural habitats from which the elements originate. The physical process echoes the efforts taken to maintain our control over nature both in reality and in the space.

Amy Stephens demonstrates an understanding of sculpture as a fundamentally spatial conception. This new work touches on the recurring themes of Stephens' practice: the relationship between the natural world and the man-made, generating a shifting landscape against which narratives can begin to unfold. As the title suggests, her interest lies in the relentless possibilities created through the use of materials and in the appropriation of nature.

Amy Stephens received her MA from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London in 2008. Recent solo exhibitions include *Spatial Territories*, La Scatola Gallery, London (2011); *The Rise of the Wapiti*, Other Gallery, Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada (2010); Recent group exhibition include *Piece of Paper*, Madder139, London (2011); *Line*, Poppy Sebire, London (2011); *Common Logic*, IMT Gallery, London (2011); *No Soul For Sale - A Festival of Independents*, Tate Modern, London (2010); *Meet Pamela*, John Jones Project Space, London (2009); *195 Miles*, Project Space Leeds in collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2008).

Recently shortlisted for both the Threadneedle Prize and the Converse / Dazed Emerging Artists Award 2011, Amy Stephens has just completed a three month residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), Dublin. Stephens has work in several public and private collections, including the Zabłudowicz Collection. The artist lives and works in London.