

For immediate release

CAROL BOVE

The Plastic Unit

14 April – 30 May 2015

Private view: Monday 13 April, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with the artist: 10 AM



Untitled, 2014
Peacock feathers and UV filtering acrylic on linen, in four (4) parts
245.1 x 492.8 x 12.7 cm (96 ½ x 194 x 5 inches)

David Zwirner is pleased to present the gallery's first exhibition with Carol Bove. On view at our London location, it features recent works by the New York-based artist, known for her simple yet intricate assemblages of found and made objects.

The Plastic Unit groups together large-scale sculptures made from natural and industrial materials, including slickly manufactured stainless steel "glyphs," intricate metal curtains, I-beam structures, steel and concrete pedestals, shells, and peacock feathers. In line with Bove's broader practice, they are placed in careful relation both to one another and to the gallery space, with four works assigned to each room.

On the ground floor, *Second Cartesian Sculpture*—an expansive steel net—divides the front space into two equal fields, thus creating a see-through separation between the other sculptures. One of these, a steel I-beam column supporting a human-sized piece of petrified wood, adds a sense of indeterminable temporality to the installation, and as such reinforces Bove's understanding of sculpture as durational. Her concrete pedestal with brass cubes blurs the definitions of sculpture and base, and appears a self-conscious response to modernist display methods. Its title, *I, quartz pyx, who fling muck beds*, is one of the few sentences ever constructed to include all letters of the alphabet just once (with the license of substituting i for j, and u for v).

Four "crushed glyphs" in the adjacent room are presented on a low pedestal that covers most of the floor. In a departure from previous work, and in contrast to their rounded, white counterparts, the glyphs are brightly coloured and irregularly shaped, appearing flexible despite their steel materiality. Distanced from the viewer by the pedestal, they appear like formal exercises in artistic style, but their visual presence is contradicted by the title of the arrangement—*Self Talk*—that challenges the ability to approach works without preconceived notions or an inner voice. Bove posits her glyphs in dialogue with public sculpture or so-called pop art, where individual works' narratives often collude with their settings or remain obscure, thus making them appear out of place and even inappropriate. As a glyph typically refers to a symbol within a given context, for example a letter within the alphabet, Bove's sculptures appear like succinct fragments of a broader syllable that also takes into consideration the activity of creating the works.

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A white, tubular glyph is part of an arrangement on a wide pedestal in the upstairs gallery—the size of the curtain below it—which also comprises a shell and feather sculpture on its own pedestal, an I-beam with driftwood, and a silver curtain. Tens of thousands of small beads create a subtle pattern of triangles across the chains of the latter, but the intensely handcrafted work is almost invisible from some viewing perspectives, again drawing attention to shifting meanings and arbitrary interpretations.

The four sculptures in the neighbouring room are arranged directly on the floor, enabling viewers to walk amongst them and “look with the body,” as Bove puts it, rather than having to project oneself into a space, as demarcated by her pedestals. Like *Second Cartesian Sculpture*, a large steel structure called *Open Screen* divides space while maintaining open views of both sides, this time without the gridded net. Its geometric proportions contrast with *Circles*, a redwood burl through which Bove has inserted two steel pipes, mirroring the imprint of the physical support used to craft her concrete works. Another sculpture is an arrangement of steel I-beams that formed part of *Caterpillar* from 2013, the artist’s installation on the then unfinished part of the High Line park in New York. Titled *Cow Watched By Argus*, its shape can vaguely be seen as figurative, alluding to the young woman metamorphosed into a cow by Zeus in an attempt to hide a love affair from Hera. Still skeptical, the latter hired the hundred-eyed Argus to watch the animal, but he was killed on Zeus’s request. Hera subsequently took his eyes and sewed them onto the tail of her favorite bird, the peacock.

In the third floor gallery, Bove presents four canvases arranged together and covered entirely in peacock feathers, creating a continuous, almost dizzying composition. The feathers’ unique concurrence of ornament and function is encountered in some of Bove’s other sculptures on view in the exhibition, recalling the blurred boundaries between the pedestal and its object and the dual function of the I-beams as support and sculpture.

Born in 1971 in Geneva to American parents, **Carol Bove** was raised in Berkeley, California and studied at New York University.

In 2014, Bove debuted a new body of work alongside exhibition designs and sculptures by Italian architect Carlo Scarpa. *Carol Bove/Carlo Scarpa* is curated by the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, England and produced in collaboration with Museion, Bolzano, Italy and Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium. Coinciding with the Zwirner presentation in London, the show is on view at the Henry Moore Institute from 2 April through 12 July 2015. It was first hosted by Museion (November 2014 – March 2015) and will travel to Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens (October 2015 – January 2016).

Bove’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions that include The Museum of Modern Art, New York; High Line at the Rail Yards, New York; The Common Guild, Glasgow (all 2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2010); Horticultural Society of New York (2009); Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas (2006); Kunsthalle Zürich; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (both 2004); and Kunstverein Hamburg (2003). Major group exhibitions include Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012); 54th Venice Biennale (2011); and the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008).

Work by the artist is represented in permanent collections worldwide, including the Fonds Régional d’Art Contemporain (FRAC) Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkerque, France; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

For all press enquiries and to RSVP to the 13 April press preview, contact

Kim Donica +1 212 727 2070 kim@davidzwirner.com