

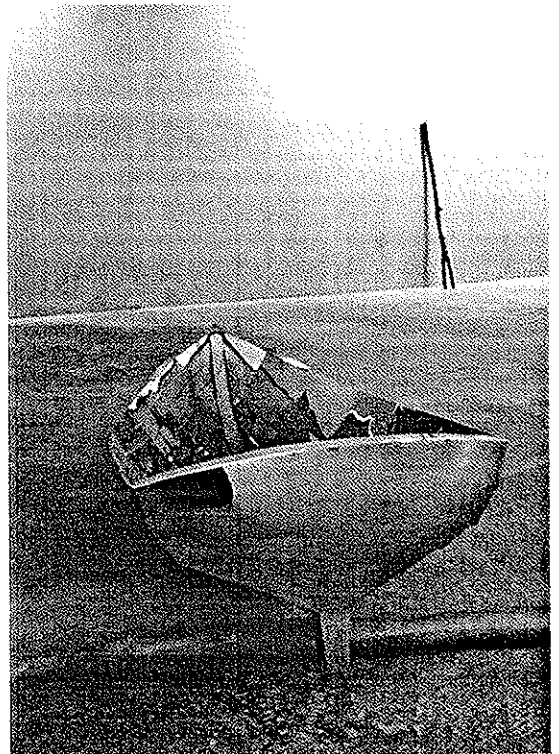
Kate Davis
Boat 2007
Prop 2008

Kate Davis: Lull

Fred London March 13 to May 4

The transferral of objects can be a subtle and difficult task; risking removing in transit some of the elements which inform them. Works included in 'lull' initially evolved in response to the landscape surrounding Grasmere where Kate Davis was artist in residence at the Wordsworth Trust between April and October 2007. Exhibited there as 'head-earthole', these works were guided partly by a psychosomatic response to the emotively erotic landscape Davis found herself in, one redolent of somnambulists and deep tracts of seemingly still water. Using corresponding sites, the head, the heart and the hole were worked into the fabric of a cottage, boathouse, cave and gallery enabling a conceptual 'bleed' between pieces which comprised drawings, photography, text, sculpture and installation. 'Lull' brings certain elements of Davis's residency to the fore, reworked but not necessarily revised.

Metonymy has always been present in Davis's work, generating paradoxically corporeal allusions to her physical absence in pieces such as *Aphrodite Kallipygos* (Aphrodite of the Beautiful Buttocks), 2007, a drawing made of minute punctures using various sizes of pin, which corresponds precisely to Davis's height. This piece is mounted unobtrusively opposite a gold-painted wall and is linked by title to it, suggesting that the Aphrodite emanates a transferable love; a love become burnished substance. It is *Boat*, 2007 (mirror-polished steel, bronze-cast prop), that draws the viewer into the space, however, past a small metallic paper photograph of *Eros*, 2007, a blue jeans-clad boy casting his tiny (and in life, needle-sized) arrow into the mouth of the cave in which Davis spent much time making notes and drawings. *Boat* rests at the end of the corridor, backed by the gold wall against which *Prop*, 2008, rests, tempting an immediate reading of the ensemble as a funerary chamber in which tools and objects are arranged for future metaphysical use. This reading of a pause in the evolution of process (termed lull) is enhanced by the space of the vessel which is designed to carry the body of a single female. The title of the exhibition, 'lull', reinforces this sensation of burgeoning momentum, reflected in a wall-mounted spinning target that builds and reduces speed, turning the three-toned, red-painted text of *head-earthole*, 2007, inscribed on its circumference into an optical illusion that could be read as spinning feathers or flowers, until the inscription slows and can briefly be deciphered again. Davis skilfully addresses this movement in her choice of other materials, however; *Prop*, which rests against the gold wall, is a bronze cast of the forked ash bough which kept the boathouse window open at Grasmere, a rough notch on its bark patinated differently from the rest of the object and the smooth cross cut at the top layered in gold leaf. The result is a small, ovoid glow, a more golden light than the wall itself, cast where a shadow should be at the top of the branch. This minute emanation implies the fact of firelight, which was present in the installation at Grasmere, and suggests a traceable but seemingly extinct experience of both heart and the landscape that generated it. *My dreams become your*



vision My vision becomes your dreams, 2007, inscribed in blue flowing text at the top left of the space, further enhances a mutable reading of the objects and drawings brought together in 'lull', distilled and removed from the surrounding in which they were created. The word 'lull' itself is written in the same text on a mirror, evocative of the process used to create religious artefacts using reflection to avoid looking directly at the image. In *What?*, 2007, a steel drawing on glass in the shape of an ink blot, the precision of applied filaments of hot metal by use of a template counteracts the intuited subconscious state of its creation. As with *Aphrodite Kallipygos*, whose intent and absence is generated through painstaking and precise removal, *What?* frustrates the incidental nature of the ink blot it depicts through specific and deliberate process.

'Lull' brings together work whose materials and intentions are shaped by experiential knowledge of the landscape surrounding Grasmere, in particular the water and waterlogged spaces of the dank cave and elevated boathouse used by Davis. The metonymic elements of the work, operating as trace, can be read as alluding to the contextualising mass of land and water left behind.

Rehoused at Fred (London), the far-reaching implications of these interlocked and complex works suggest an emphasis on those elements of Davis's practice stilled in a moment of equipoise. If 'lull' can be read as a system of mnemonics, an integrated body quieted in recollection, it is a luminous transferral both of artist and work. ■

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