

Amy Stephens

This Urban Silence

2011, Bronze, Oak, dimensions variable

Irish Museum of Modern Art: The Process Room

04.10.11 – 16.10.11

“The rarity of urban silence is an inspiration. Beyond the everyday of acoustic assaults, our lives are shrouded in pervasive visual, emotional, political and virtual noise. Spaces for contemplation, focus and reflection are an integral necessity to everyday existence. Though much less frequently encountered, these moments of quiet clarity resonate with sensuous intensity.”¹



As an artist in residence living and working in the grounds of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, you become more aware of the need for these ‘reflective’ spaces. As her main characters, Amy Stephens has cast pieces of wooden timber into solid bronze, intrinsic to the specific architectural make-up of the Process Room. Pared-down to a formal minimalism, these architectonic structures display an affinity to drawing and offer a poetic calm, a far cry from the bustling foundry. The mood is pensive, until noises from passers-by, or the low humming from the lighting above, break up the silence of the space.

This Urban Silence focuses our attention on the delicate symbiosis between form and materials that have undergone a total metamorphosis. The aesthetic of the bronze, in relation to the organic, offers the viewer a sensuous tactility hovering between abstraction and a subtle form of figuration. The work pivots around the physical tensions set up between contrasting elements offering multiple references that ensure the meaning is perpetually evolving and mutating. With each part of the structure strategically balanced, the piece demonstrates a commitment to process as the materials become both defined and imbued by the artist.

“As soon as sculpture departs from nature it becomes architecture.” The French writer Guillaume Apollinaire’s theory becomes relevant here as the artist moves further and further away from the real, moving the works into a plane of total abstraction. Here the collaborative relationship between the natural world and the man-made generates a shifting landscape against which narratives can begin to unfold and where the appropriation of nature can begin to transform the architectural space.

Upcoming or recent exhibitions by Amy Stephens include;

Spatial Territories, La Scatola Gallery, London (2011); *Piece of Paper*, Madder139, London (2011); *Line*, Poppy Sebire, London (2011); *The Rise of the Wapiti*, Other Gallery, Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada (2010); *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). Amy Stephens has recently been shortlisted for The Threadneedle Prize for Painting and Sculpture 2011. She has work in several public and private collections, including the Zabłudowicz Collection. The artist lives and works in London. Further information can be found at www.amystephens.co.uk.

¹ Karla Maria Rothstein, Critic

The **PROCESS ROOM** facilitates access to the on-going practice of artists currently resident at IMMA. The Artists’ Residency Programme is located in the studios adjacent to the main museum building where several studios are allocated to both national and international artists. The Process Room is used on a rotating basis by the artists on the ARP.

For more information about the Artists’ Residency Programme please contact the ARP Co-ordinator
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