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PRESS RELEASE

LUBNA CHOWDHARY

ERRATICS

10 September to 20 November 2021

Wednesday to Saturday 12:00–18:00 (or by appointment)

Lubna Chowdhary (b.1964, Tanzania) is highly acclaimed for her ceramic works, which subvert the traditional context and utility of the medium to address a longstanding preoccupation with urbanisation and material culture. Her sculptural practice has evolved from a sustained fascination with the fusion of binary cultural and artistic influences.

Her newly produced work for PEER, including wall-, floor-, and plinth-based pieces also traverse material, application, and process. A range of ceramic multi-part panels and arranged Tableaux combine industrial manufacturing technology such as water-jet cutting with highly developed hand-applied glaze techniques. These colourful and exquisitely executed works are presented alongside a selection of small, hand-built un-glazed sculptures. Chowdhary will also exhibit work in a range of new materials, which she has more recently started to work with. Three large wooden sculptures have been developed combining CNC (Computerised Numerical Control) with traditional craft skills, while two other works have been created in situ from easily obtainable and inexpensive industrial components and materials.

The three wooden sculptures will sit on the gallery floor and give the appearance of functionality. They are in part derived from Chowdhary's research into colonial period furniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection carried out during her ceramic fellowship residency there in 2017. She was fascinated by the hybridity and subtle code switching of British Victorian or Edwardian domestic structures and styles as interpreted by locally employed Indian craftsmen at the time. This ease of cultural use and misuse is echoed elsewhere in Chowdhary's work. These sculptures are fabricated using both traditional woodworking skills and state-of-the-art CNC production. As with the ceramic works, this combination of technology with manual process achieves the fine balance between perfection and individuality as created by master craftspeople.

Acquired cultural references from her western art school education such as a preoccupation with modernist serial modularity that often regarded excessive ornament as a crime, are mixed together with her personal cultural references as an Asian Muslim born in Tanzania who moved to England in the early 1970s. In Chowdhary's work both influences are ever-present in a push-and-pull dialogue that finds a fluent sense of resolution without being programmatic. A modernist purity of form duets seamlessly with a desire for exuberant colour and ornamentation.

Chowdhary's work has often been incorporated within architectural schemes for both public and private building projects and at different scales. The aperture between PEER's two gallery spaces has become the site for a strident sculptural intervention whose composition references Islamic architectural decoration on the one hand and geometric minimal or neo-geo painting on the other. The material she has employed is silver, foil-backed pipe insulation, easily purchased at any plumbers' merchants. Elsewhere in the gallery, she has created a wall-based sculpture using only nails and rope from a chandlers.

These works have evolved from experiments carried out during a three-month IASPIS residency in Stockholm that began in February 2020 but was curtailed after a few weeks. Without access to a ceramics studio, she became drawn to working in new ways with simple, modular materials found general hardware stores or trade suppliers, which offered the opportunity to focus on many of the core preoccupations of her practice.

The title of the exhibition, Erratics, refers to large rocks or boulders that have been displaced from their original geological context through glacial flows. While retaining their material integrity they have permanently settled in a new, alien context.



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Exhibition Tour

Lubna Chowdhary's exhibition has been initiated by PEER and is developed in partnership with MIMA, Middlesbrough, where it will be shown in an expanded presentation in 2022.

Exhibition Publication

A newly commissioned text by Dr Daniel Herrmann, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Projects at The National Gallery, London will be produced as a free brochure to accompany the exhibition.

Artist's interview film

A film by Alberto Balazs shot in the months leading up to Lubna Chowdhary's exhibition at PEER and including footage at her studio and at the during the production of the wooden sculpture will be viewable online and at PEER from 10 September.

Artist's Edition

The artist has generously produced two hand-glazed water-jet cut tiles, each in an edition of 15 to help support PEER's exhibition programme. Further information about pricing and images will be available soon. To register your interest, please email rosa@peeruk.org

Lubna Chowdhary (b.1964, Tanzania. Lives and works in London) received her BA from Manchester Metropolitan University in 1988, and MA from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1991. She received The Sir Eduardo Paolozzi Travel Award in 1990. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, most recently at Art Gallery New South Wales, Sydney (2020); Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2020); ICA Milano, Milan (2019); Kochi Biennale, Kochi (2018-2019); Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester (2018). Public collections that hold Chowdhary's work include Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham; Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; Leicester City Museum, Leicester; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Mead Gallery, Warwick; Nottingham Castle Museum, Nottingham; Oldham Art Gallery, Oldham; Poole Museum, Dorset. Chowdhary is represented by Jhaveri Contemporary.

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