



*Lucy Stein, Detail: Wet Room (2021), Hand-painted ceramic tiles, bath, sink, shower head, black acrylic mirror, water. Installation view, Wet Room, Spike Island, Bristol. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich. Photograph by Max McClure.*

## LUCY STEIN: WET ROOM

29 January – 9 May 2022

Ground floor gallery

De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea

[www.dlwp.com](http://www.dlwp.com)

Open: Wednesdays – Sundays, 10am – 5pm

FREE

*Wet Room* is a major solo exhibition by Cornwall-based artist Lucy Stein. Obsessive, unashamedly emotional and loaded with a strong psychological charge, Stein's work incorporates a heady mixture of styles and references. Weaving together personal experiences with feminist and psychoanalytic theory, mythology and religion, her drawings, paintings and installations draw upon the concept of the 'female gaze' to question the representation of women in art history. Since moving to St Just, Cornwall in 2015, Stein has become deeply involved in the history and folkloric traditions of the Cornish landscape.

The exhibition is inspired by the fougou: narrow Neolithic underground passages unique to West Cornwall that lead to womb-like chambers and have become sacred sites of worship. Echoing the ritual rebirthing ceremonies that are believed to have taken place within these uterine caverns, the exhibition centres around an installation comprising a bathtub and sink with running taps, surrounded by tiled walls that have been hand-painted with scenes relating to the artist's study of western esoteric traditions.

Surrounding this central installation is a series of new paintings and drawings made during Stein's second pregnancy and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, which reflect on a period of intensive domestic caregiving and anxiety. They combine Greek mythology, esoteric culture, and ecclesiastical and medieval imagery with vibrant tableaux that depict a wide range of western female archetypes. Through these works Stein brings in the notion of the numinous – a religious or spiritual quality – in an attempt to describe the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.

Stein has responded to the modernist history and coastal setting of De La Warr Pavilion to evoke the *genius loci* or spirit of this meeting point between land and water. The figures represented in each work face out to the sea through the windows, catching upon their tiled and painted surfaces the subtle shifts in light and shadow as the sun moves across the horizon, eclipsed by the monumental form of Beachy Head in the distance. A new tile-based work, made especially for De La Warr Pavilion, depicts the Greek goddess Persephone, queen of the underworld and goddess of springtime, who also gazes outwards. Her presence within the exhibition alludes to the original design of the Pavilion, which included a 26ft high sculpture of Persephone by artist Frank Dobson that was intended to stand in front of the building, a fold of cloth in hand as if preparing to enter the sea. Incomplete and lost when WWII broke out, Stein conjures and reconstructs the memory of Dobson's sculpture in the present.

Loaded with wittiness and humour, the works in *Wet Room* challenge the different clichés and stereotypes that have shaped the interpretations of esoteric culture and the female psyche for decades.

Lucy Stein: *Wet Room* is commissioned and produced by Spike Island in Bristol, where it is on display from 25 September 2021 to 16 January 2022.

### **About the artist**

Lucy Stein has been based in St. Just, Cornwall since 2015. She studied at The Glasgow School of Art, and later at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include *Thesmophoria* (including the performance lecture *Bride of Quiet*) Galerie Gregor Staiger Milan (2020); *Digitalis Purpurea (a re-introspective)*, Conceptual Fine Arts, Milan (online) (2020), £10.66, Palette Terre, Paris (2018); *Crying the Neck*, NICC Brussels (with Nina Royle) (2017); *On*

*Celticity* (organised with Paola Clerico), Rodeo Gallery, London (2016). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Futura, Prague (2020); Bonington Gallery, Nottingham (2019); Tate St Ives (2018); TULCA festival, Galway; Newlyn Gallery, Penzance (all 2017); Le Bourgeoise, London (2016); UKS Oslo (2015). In 2017 she co-organised *Fuck you wheres my Suger*, a two-day festival celebrating depression and hysteria at Cafe Oto in London with Mark Harwood. In 2016 she co-curated *NEO-PAGAN BITCH-WITCH!* at Evelyn Yard, London with France-Lise McGurn and in 2015 she organised the performance event *The Wise Wound* with Tate St Ives and Porthmeor studios.

**For press enquiries and images, please contact Sally Ann Lycett on [sally.ann.lycett@dlwp.com](mailto:sally.ann.lycett@dlwp.com)**

### **Notes to Editors:**


#### **About the De La Warr Pavilion**

The De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP) is a centre for arts and culture in an iconic modernist building by the sea, designed by refugee Erich Mendelsohn and émigré Serge Chermayeff. It opened in 1935 as the 'people's palace for art and culture' and now produces an innovative and integrated cultural programme of exhibitions and learning programmes as well as a diverse and popular programme of live music and comedy. Our current exhibitions are Alexi Marshall's *Cursebreakers* and Sharif Persaud's *Have You Ever Had*. Our upcoming live programme includes Wolf Alice, Sparks, Feeder, Macy Gray and Goldfrapp.

The Pavilion takes the lead in the development of cultural tourism and skills in the region and plays a central role in the cultural and economic growth in Sussex.

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*Wet Room* at Spike Island is part of the West of England Visual Arts Alliance programme, supported by Arts Council England.

**Spike Island** The logo for the West of England Visual Arts Alliance features the text 'West of England' stacked above 'Visual Arts Alliance'. A blue, hand-drawn style line loops around the text, starting from the 'W' in 'West', going up and over the 'o', then down and under the 'A' in 'Alliance', and finally looping back up to the 'W'.