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LUBAINA HIMID: BARRICADES

Preview: Thursday 31 October, 18:00-20:00
Exhibition: 1 November - 20 December 2024

Hollybush Gardens is pleased to present *Barricades*, a solo exhibition of new work by Lubaina Himid featuring overpainted objects and furniture, which have been integral to her practice for the past three decades, including found wooden drawers, doors, a table, a shelf and a set of oars, alongside a large-scale abstract painting and work on paper. The title of the exhibition refers to a barricade as a means of protection or escape, and also the impetus to 'make do and mend', to improvise or repurpose objects and structures close at hand in times of need.

Barricades includes a group of works which expand on Himid's ongoing *Men in Drawers* series, begun in 2014-15, in which found or discarded drawers are repurposed as supports for painted portraits of individual Black figures, and act as containers for lost and forgotten lives. Himid writes: 'The drawers tell the story of people in search of home who constantly have to move in order to find it and as a result leave traces of themselves behind each time they leave a particular place.'

Man in a Lipstick Drawer features a male figure in profile wearing an intricately patterned jacket, his facial features delineated by charcoal marks. In the triptych *Men in Drawers for Throwing Things*, Himid's anonymous protagonists appear on painted vessels in three elongated drawers with vividly coloured baseboards, including a long-handled teapot, an urn-shaped vase with a shuttlecock resting on a shelf above, and a tall jug containing a single British wildflower taken from a book of drawings illustrating the anatomy of plants.

In *The Architects*, a heavy drawing table with its top removed is suspended from the wall, projecting outwards into the gallery to reveal two painted drawers, becoming 'a moving puppet-theatre-like object in which the drawers move back and forth to enable a conversation between the protagonists'.

While Himid has previously painted on full length domestic doors removed from her home, or reclaimed from Georgian townhouses for *Five Conversations*, a commission for the High Line, New York (2019), here, a series of four roughly sawn and stripped half doors salvaged from a skip are hinged to the wall and hung in a row. Reminiscent of stable doors, the works have an improvisational quality and function as temporary blockades, reflecting on thresholds as a space of welcome and refusal.

In *Kitchen Door*, a grid of colourful and patterned ribbons are threaded from real and drawn hooks along the top of the door to form a makeshift window. In *Counting Room, Utility Room and Mucky Door*, the lower halves of the doors are drawn on and over painted with images of makeshift utensils with idiosyncratic functional qualities. Himid writes: 'The doors previously either closed off or opened up rooms and had the ability to fulfil both functions at once. Their contact with our bodies is peculiar in that we leave sweat, grease and in the case of small children, food all over them. We clean them but only in quite a perfunctory way, so even doors in private spaces carry evidence of movement with them for months at a time. We kick them and bang things against them without repainting or refurbishing so that these mildly violent encounters can leave their scars for years.'

Himid's diptych *The Greendales Bird Sellers* develops from her recent series of paintings of Street Sellers (2023), which depict lone vendors plying their particular wares. Two full length portraits of women facing one another wearing vibrantly coloured outfits, each holding a caged bird, are painted atop panelled wardrobe doors with glass handles; an elongated, linen canvas with cross hatch motifs occupies the space between them.

Another Broken Heart is a large-scale painting with an unprimed linen canvas appendage featuring a form reminiscent of a human heart, mixing palette or map, with a series of elliptical forms oscillating in the foreground. The work comprises multiple vertical and horizontal coloured chalk pastel lines, which together create a grid-like pattern, referencing weaving, tapestry and printed textiles.

Movement through and across bodies of water is a recurring theme throughout Himid's practice. Here, six wooden oars, some unusually long, with variously shaped blades, all smooth from years of immersion, are hung horizontally on the gallery wall. Perhaps used for racing, or on working vessels, their primary function was to move people in a boat from one place to another. The blades and shafts feature painted and drawn images and motifs that form part of Himid's visual lexicon, including a newt, cowry shells, domestic utensils, a surgical knot, lunar phases and an assortment of spinning tops, suggestive of motion and change.

Himid's overpainted objects, removed from their original context, assume new identities within the gallery space - she sets the scene for the viewer to interact, stepping in between dislocated doors, discovering hidden drawers and the patterned underside of an everyday shelf. She notes: 'The ability to make something that can be moved or which itself changes or triggers a reaction or shifts the perception of something else is at the heart of what I do.'

Lubaina Himid CBE RA (b. 1954, Zanzibar) lives and works in Preston, UK, and is Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. She is the winner of the 2017 Turner Prize, the 2023 Maria Lassnig Award, and the 2024 Suzanne Deal Booth | Flag Art Foundation Prize.

Himid has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally. Upcoming solo and two-person exhibitions include UCCA, Beijing; *Prompts*, Artspace Aotearoa, New Zealand; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge and *Nets for Night and Day*, MUDAM, Luxembourg, alongside a commission for *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Significant solo exhibitions include: *Barricades*, Hollybush Gardens, London (2024); *Make Do and Mend*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York and The Contemporary Austin, Texas (2024); *Street Sellers*, Greene Naftali, New York; *Plaited Time/Deep Water*, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; *What Does Love Sound Like?*, Glyndebourne, Lewes (2023); *So Many Dreams*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, (2022); *Water Has a Perfect Memory*, Hollybush Gardens, London (2022); *Lubaina Himid*, Tate Modern, London (2021); *Spotlights*, Tate Britain, London; *The Grab Test*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; *Lubaina Himid*, CAPC Bordeaux; *Work From Underneath*, New Museum, New York (all 2019); *Gifts to Kings*, MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan; *Our Kisses are Petals*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (all 2018); *The Truth Is Never Watertight*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; *Navigation Charts*, Spike Island, Bristol; and *Invisible Strategies*, Modern Art Oxford (all 2017).

Selected group exhibitions include: *Conversations*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2024); *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA; The Box, Plymouth and National Portrait Gallery, London (2024); *Entangled Pasts, 1768-now*, Royal Academy of Arts, London; *Women in Revolt!*, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh and Tate Britain, London (2024); *A Fine Toothed Comb*, HOME, Manchester; *A Tall Order! Rochdale Art Gallery in the 1980s*, Touchstones Rochdale; *Arcadia for All? Rethinking Landscape Painting Now*, The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Leeds; *Being and Belonging*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; *Divided Selves: Legacies, Memories, Belonging*, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; *Le Retour*, MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan; Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present*; *uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things*, Liverpool Biennial (all 2023); *Rewinding Internationalism, Scenes from the '90s*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands; *When We See Us*, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town; *In the Heart of Another Country*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; *Globalisto*, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole, Saint-Priest-en-Jarez; *Human Conditions of Clay*, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (all 2022); *Happy Mechanics*, Hollybush Gardens, London; *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 50s-Now*, Tate Britain, London; *Lubaina Himid - Lost Threads*, The British Textile Biennial, The Great Barn, Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham; *Mixing It Up: Painting Today*, Hayward Gallery, London; *Relations: Diaspora and Painting*, Esker Foundation, Calgary; *Invisible Narratives 2*, Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix, London; *Unsettled Objects*, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah (all 2021); Frieze Sculpture, London; *Risquons-Tout*, WIELS, Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels; *Slow Painting*, Hayward Touring UK travelling exhibition (all 2020); *En Plein Air*, The High Line, New York (2019-2020); Sharjah Biennial 14 (2019); Glasgow International (2018); Berlin Biennale (2018); *The Place is Here*, Nottingham Contemporary (2017); *Keywords*, Tate Liverpool; and *Burning Down the House*, Gwangju Biennale (all 2014).

Himid's work is held in museum and public collections internationally, including Tate, London, UK; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Guggenheim New York, USA; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; Kistefos Museum, Norway; Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Rennie Collection, Vancouver; MIMA, Middlesbrough; British Council Collection; Arts Council Collection; UK Government Art Collection; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; National Museums Liverpool; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; and Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, USA.

For press enquiries and further information, please contact: grace@hollybushgardens.co.uk

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm; or by appointment.