SPOTLIGHT

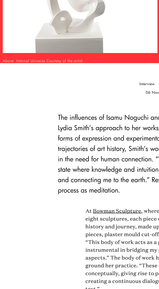
Spotlight artist Lydia Smith

Championed by Mica Bowman

ONES TO WATCH



Above: Lydia Smith Courtesy of the artist



Above: Internal Visionary Courtesy of the artist

Interview LYDIA SMITH
06 November 2024

The influences of Isamu Noguchi and Salvador Dalí intertwine in sculptor Lydia Smith's approach to her works, in their constant thirst for finding new forms of expression and experimentation. As well as drawing on the trajectories of art history, Smith's work is rooted in the physical body, and in the need for human connection. "When I sculpt in clay, I enter a flow state where knowledge and intuition guide the artwork's form, grounding and connecting me to the earth." Research is as important to the artist's process as meditation.

At Bowman Sculpture, where Smith is currently exhibiting eight sculptures, each piece of work also draws on its own history and journey, made up of the vestiges of previous pieces, plaster mould cut offs, dried clay, or digital pixels. "This body of work acts as a genesis project and has been instrumental in bridging my practice's physical and digital aspects." The body of work has helped Smith conceptually ground her practice, "These eight sculptures expand conceptually, giving rise to paintings and prints and creating a continuous dialogue between form, line, and text."

Smith's champion for The Wick is Mica Bowman. "I can't say I've worked with Lydia Smith before or even known her for years, but she has persistently appeared on my radar as a sculptor to watch. Her name has crossed my desk repeatedly, and about a year ago, I had the pleasure of meeting her when she visited the gallery. Although I primarily deal in 18th and 20th-century sculpture, I've been expanding the contemporary side of Bowman Sculpture, often focusing on more well-established artists like Massimiliano Pelletti and Emily Young.

Working with emerging artists is entirely different—a lot of work, but Lydia exemplifies the drive it takes to make it on your own. She's been creating and marketing her work independently, which is no small feat. I'm genuinely impressed by her self-starter attitude, but I also believe that artists need the support of galleries and of patrons. There simply isn't enough time or money to do it all solo.

That's partly why we've created our first graduate show: to give emerging talent from across London a solid start. Though Lydia isn't a recent graduate, she is an artist I feel strongly about supporting. Lydia's classical training allows her to sculpt in a realist style—a rare skill among contemporary artists. Like Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, she's able to sculpt classically but chooses abstraction and has done so in a unique and truly beautiful way."

Smith trained in sculpture at the University of the Arts London. Since graduating in 2017, she continued to hone her practice at ateliers in Greece, Spain and France. As well as working with the film industry and luxury brands, Smith represented Great Britain at the international Snow and Ice carving championships. She has also exhibited at Christie's, in 2023, as well as the Saatchi Gallery. Her notable works include four monumental sculptures for the Grounds of The Royal Masonic School for Girls.

"I find value in moments of intense focus in the studio, meaningful collaborations, and supporting others", Smith says. "For me, being an artist is a multifaceted journey, and the continuous expansion of my skills and knowledge feels like the most rewarding achievement of all."

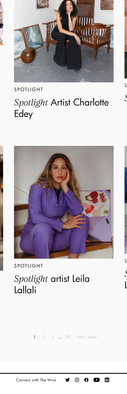
Her studio in Trafalgar Square is always "a dynamic place where new ideas take shape. Next year, I will be producing and exhibiting in several exhibitions and activations as part of a newly formed initiative called 'Fé Collective,' of which I am a co-founder. Fé is an artist collective that aims to create a space for female artists to flourish in today's art world, by addressing historical and contemporary barriers to entry into the market."

About the champion



Mica Bowman is the director of Bowman Sculpture.

> "Like Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, she's able to sculpt classically but chooses abstraction and has done so in a unique and truly beautiful way."
>
> *Mica Bowman*



Above: Lydia Smith with sculpture Foreign Body Courtesy of the artist

Artist Fact File

Place of Birth
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Education
The Midsomme School, University of the Arts London (UAL) Art Foundation, UAL Wimbledon College of Art: Technical Arts and Special Effects

Current exhibitions
Bowman Sculpture: inaugural Graduate Exhibition 30th October – 22nd November

Spiritual guides, Mentors
I listen to a lot of frequencies and motivational material, which helped me shift from working in the Film industry to becoming a full-time artist. I also have an incredibly supportive feedback loop of colleagues, friends, and family.

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lydiasmith.gallery

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