

LOUISE PARAMOR

PALACE OF THE REPUBLIC

ARTWORK LABELS

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Louise Paramor: Palace of the Republic

Palace of the Republic presents new paper sculptures and a range of plastic assemblages made over the past decade by the Melbourne artist Louise Paramor. Commissioned by the NGV especially for this exhibition, the new works employ the 'honeycomb' paper technique that Paramor first adopted in her *Lustgarten* series of 1999. During a one-year residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Paramor refined this technique through trial and error to produce freestanding and hanging paper objects that appeared to magically transform flat shapes into three-dimensional forms.

The starting point for Paramor's new works were the forms and colours of her recent *Boomtown* and *Supermodel* series of plastic sculptures, which can be seen in the adjacent room. As the artist notes, her approach brings a 'modernist funk' to the 'baroque sensibility' evident in her original paper sculptures. The resulting installation conveys Paramor's exuberant sense of play and experimentation with colour, volume and scale. The title of this exhibition and Paramor's new series refers to the now-demolished seat of the German Democratic Republic, a socialist beacon which was situated opposite the original *Lustgarten*, or 'pleasure garden', site on Museum Island in Berlin. The title not only links Paramor's new honeycomb paper series to her earlier *Lustgarten* series but also reflects a working-class utilitarianism, evident in the artist use of plastic objects, and suggests a dichotomy between grandeur and pragmatism.

Artist interview available at ngv.melbourne/essay

Palace of the Republic

2017

paper, steel, aluminium and plywood

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

A selection of sculptures made during the past decade by Melbourne contemporary artist Louise Paramor are assembled in this gallery. Constructed from found objects and plastic detritus collected from various sources, including hard rubbish piles and industrial waste centres, these works are presented in a number of distinct series distinguished by theme and scale. They range from the monumental *Tritonic Jam Session* sculpture, 2008, to the comparatively diminutive *Boomtown* series, 2016, which formed the starting point for *Palace of the Republic*, the artist's series of large-scale paper sculptures which can be seen in the adjacent gallery.

Exploiting the aesthetic and associative potential of plastic as a material, Paramor investigates fundamental principles of modernism in these sculptures while also making reference to the visual landscape of the contemporary world. She has commented: 'What makes these works distinctly of our time are the materials employed – industrial plastics, which are widely used in the manufacturing world. These plastics are especially tactile and often lurid in colour – characteristics which, not surprisingly, evoke an irresistible sense of play ... I have embraced the physicality of this "stuff" to create dynamic, anthropomorphic works that also offer viewers an opportunity for reflection on our wider built environment'.

Artist interview available at ngv.melbourne/essay

Industrial Jam Session

2007, remade 2017

plastic, steel, bolts

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

These three sculptures formed part of a group the artist made for the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award at Werribee Park, Melbourne, in 2007. The suite, employing industrial plastic objects, was a natural progression from her previous smaller, domestically scaled *Jam Sessions*. The complete work no longer exists because its parts were recycled by the artist to create *Top Shelf*, Paramor's winning entry in the McClelland Sculpture Survey & Award in 2010.

Jam Sessions

2006–07

plastic

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

Constructed from colourful discarded plastic objects that once had a domestic function, such as outdoor furniture, baby baths, garden ornaments and rubbish bins, *Jam Sessions* is the first body of plastic assemblage works that Louise Paramor made. In 2007 she exhibited these works on a public tennis court at Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne, as part of a three-day event curated by Jane O'Neill that paid homage to the German artist Martin Kippenberger whose 1997 installation *The happy end of Franz Kafka's America* similarly positioned a range of sculptures in an arena venue. This installation brings together a selection of the original seventy-eight pieces.

Studies for a Boomtown

2016

plastic, steel, wood

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

These individual assemblages constructed from found plastic objects are studies, or maquettes, for potential future large-scale sculptures. They reflect the artist's continuing interest in public art and the role it might play in the rapid expansion of our cities. Aspects of these works formed the reference point for her newest large-scale paper sculptures commissioned especially for this exhibition, and can be seen in the adjacent gallery.

Tritonic Jam Session

2008

plastic water barriers, sphere, pipe, bolts and pins

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

Tritonic Jam Session is one of two large assemblage pieces that Paramor produced in 2008. The heavy-duty plastic water barriers comprising the work, which are usually employed to demarcate traffic zones or restrict access in roadwork areas, here become modular units deployed in a playful take on minimalist sculpture, extending the artist's interest in experimenting with fundamental principles of modernism, such as form, colour and scale. This work was originally sited outdoors at Federation Square, not far from The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, during the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2008.

Supermodel

2014

plastic

Collection of the artist

Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne

Paramor's *Supermodel* series consists of thirty plastic assemblages which she has given human qualities. Using her usual repertoire of brightly coloured found plastic objects, the artist has created a flamboyant cast of characters each assigned a human name, such as Victoria, Uma, Maxine, Eric, Roberto or Bryan, suggesting a unique character trait and personality. Paramor has deliberately chosen to playfully present these small sculptures on long narrow platforms that suggest a fashion runway.

Stupa City

Astrobingo Planetarium

Diamond Restaurant Social Club

Big Gun Tower

Greenfield's State Emporium

New Gramophone House

Cineplex Elite

Hotel Panorama (maquette for
Panorama Station)

Dee Empressa Casino

Tantra Nightclub

Yellow Fort United Bank

2011
plastic

Collection of the artist; Courtesy Karen Woodbury Fine Arts, Melbourne.
McClelland Art Gallery; Geelong Gallery Geelong Gallery, Geelong
Purchased with funds generously provided by Geelong
Contemporary, 2017

2017.1

McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery, Langwarrin
Gift of Southern Way 2013

2013.35

The *Stupa City* series was inspired by a trip to Bodhgaya, the centre of Indian Buddhism, in the Indian state of Bihar. It features a range of unorthodox architectural propositions depicting a variety of institutions, such as a bank, a theatre, a nightclub, a casino and a planetarium. These colourful 'buildings' subtly echo the tower forms common in Buddhist architecture, in particular the stupa. One sculpture in this series, *Hotel Panorama*, was the working maquette for the artist's monumental public work *Panorama Station* that can now be seen on the Peninsula Link freeway in south-east Melbourne.