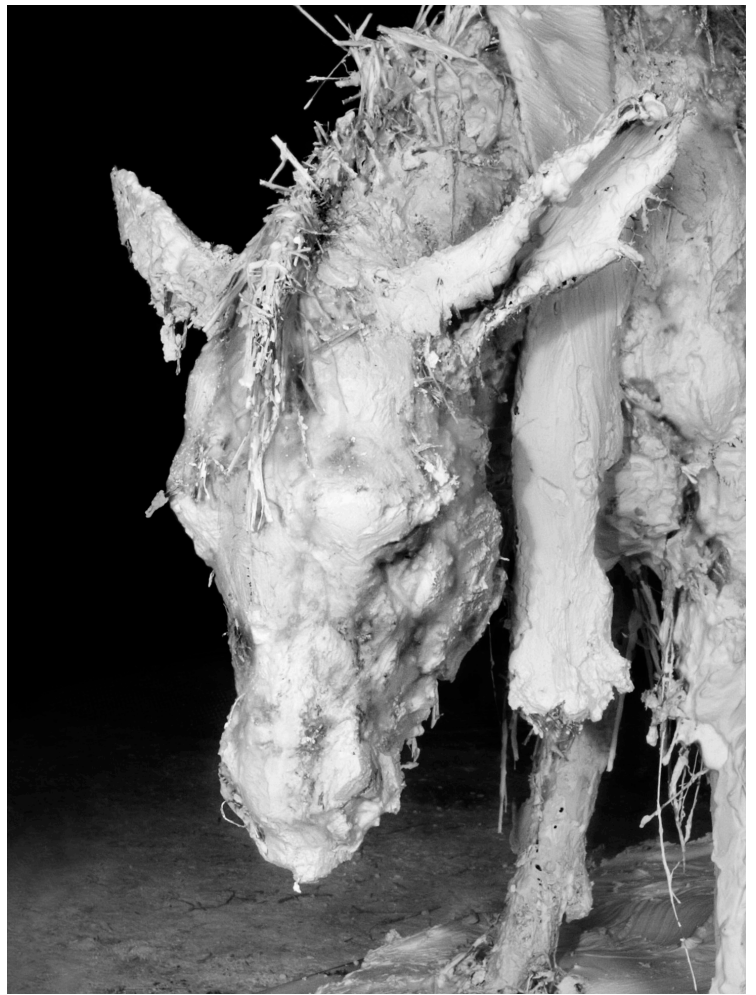


NICOLA HICKS

Aesop's Fables

14 October - 19 November 2011
Private View Thursday 13 October 6 - 8pm

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Aesop's Fables I (detail) 2011 Plaster 119.4 x 149.9 x 66 cm Edition 6 available in bronze

Aesop's pranksters, villains and modest heroes are apposite subjects for Hicks, whose work frequently balances the mythical and the anthropomorphic. This exceptional selection of new sculptures form a body of work surrounding contemporary themes, imbuing great energy and combining complex compositions with painstakingly detailed expressions.

It is important to recognise that Hicks is not interested in merely illustrating the fables, rather the works serve as a catalyst for her creative process, providing the foundation upon which she is able to express her own personal visual language. Furthermore, the lively narrative has enabled Hicks to continue her investigation into the effects of gravity on the physicality and assemblage of the works, whilst allowing her to pursue her chosen composition.

The raw-edged, tactile nature of these works epitomizes Hicks' delight in sculpting. Plaster is blended and contoured into natural forms creating aesthetic qualities rich with spontaneity and strength so as to capture the essence of the characters. This, combined with the large scale of the sculptures forces us to confront the realities of the fables.

Rather than depicting the resolution of each of the fables, the animals are frozen in their moments of decision. The expression of the transitory moment serves to evoke the innate sensibilities of her subjects. The foolish crow has not yet dropped his cheese, unaware that soon he will be hungry and mocked on his branch.

Hicks has looked to endow her subjects with the human mannerisms Aesop sought to attribute to each of the animals; from the bashful donkey to the cunning fox, she never shies away from depicting both the dark and beautiful.

"If someone has considered the study of the other animals to lack value, he ought to think the same thing about himself as well." Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*.

Through Hicks' vision and process Aesop's Fables are brought together seamlessly and the fluent artistry of the work serves to bring life to this cast of bestiary; the charming, gentle creatures typically depicted in today's children's tales are rendered in the form of the powerful caveats they were designed to be.

Hicks has also decided to include Aesop himself, the slave and author is poignantly portrayed as she imagines him, staring quietly on. Within this body of work, Hicks is not only exploring ideas of beauty but also of empathy. Camouflaged within mischievous humour is a refreshing hope that the humble could actually succeed over the proud.

Nicola Hicks was born in London in 1960. She studied at Chelsea School of Art and completed postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Art. Her distinctive animals, mythical creatures and people, have been exhibited internationally. In 1995 she was awarded an MBE for her contribution to the visual arts.

For further information and images please contact Ceri Stock on 020 7920 7777 or email ceri@flowersgalleries.com