

PRESS RELEASE

MAKING BEAUTY: ELPIDA HADZI-VASILEVA

**Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham Lakeside Arts
20 August – 30 October 2016**



Haruspex [detail], 2015 Pavilion of the Holy See, 56th Venice Biennale © the artist

The Djanogly Gallery is pleased to present the first major solo exhibition in the UK of Macedonian-born artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva. The exhibition features reconfigurations of two of the artist's seminal installations, *Haruspex* and *Fragility*, alongside new work produced during her year-long collaboration with UK medical research departments.

Working across sculpture, installation, video, photography and architectural intervention, her materials range from the ephemeral to the precious. Frequently using perishable materials, Hadzi-Vasileva transforms these seemingly unpromising materials into beautiful objects and ambitious environments that consider the historic, geographic and cultural contexts in which they are placed.

Haruspex (2015) has its UK premier at the Djanogly Gallery. The work, which was commissioned for the Vatican Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), responds to the scriptural text, 'In the Beginning... the Word became flesh'. True of her recent work, *Haruspex* is constructed from waste products from the meat industry. At the centre of the installation is a chalice-like form made from a cow's stomach. In constructing the work from animal flesh, the artist draws attention to the corporeality of the incarnation – when the word (God) was made flesh.

Inhabiting the first two gallery spaces is a restaging of the site-specific work *Fragility* (2015), which was first installed at Fabrica, a converted Regency church in Brighton. The work explores the phenomenon of near-death experiences, focusing upon the light seen and discussed by those effected. Hadzi-Vasileva employs the gallery architecture to route light through animal membrane - juxtaposing experience and materiality. *Fragility*, like much of Hadzi-Vasileva's work over the past decade, re-appropriates animal viscera. In this instance the artist uses pigs' caul fat, transforming it from a perishable waste product into a sublimely beautiful material via a chemical process akin to embalming. Here it is revealed as a delicate and vulnerable material – just like life itself.

Supported by an arts grant from the Wellcome Trust, Hadzi-Vasileva's collaboration with digestive disease specialists at the University College Hospital (London), University of East Anglia (Norwich) and University of Nottingham, has informed a series of new sculptural and sound works. Honing in on studies around regenerative medicine, these new works, which borrow models and techniques from innovative technology witnessed in labs and specialist hospital units, mine the metaphorical possibilities of scientific research.

Making Beauty has been curated by Neil Walker with the support of independent curator Gill Hedley, and the NIHR Nottingham Digestive Diseases Biomedical Research Unit.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Djanogly Gallery at Nottingham Lakeside Arts

The Djanogly Gallery opened in 1992 and now forms part of Nottingham Lakeside Arts, The University of Nottingham's public arts centre. It stages a year-round programme of 20th-century and contemporary art exhibitions complemented by a programme of public lectures, talks and participatory learning activities. In 2011 the gallery was refurbished, and the newly expanded spaces played host to a major LS Lowry exhibition that broke previous visitor records. Recent exhibitions have included: *In the Shadow of War* and *Lee Miller's War* (29 November 2014 - 22 February 2015); and *Elisabeth Frink: The Presence of Sculpture* (25 November 2015 – 28 February 2016).

Nottingham Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre. Venues include: the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles, and which was awarded the accolade of 'one of the top ten chamber halls in the UK' by Classical Music Magazine; the Djanogly Gallery; the University Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting visiting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance. There are also a range of studio spaces for devising and developing new work. NLA also runs a huge range of classes and workshops for children, families, young people and adults.

www.lakesidearts.org.uk

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva

A graduate of the Glasgow School of Art and the Royal College of Art, Elpida works site-specifically across sculpture, installation, video and sound, photography and architectural intervention. Central to her practice is a response to the particularities of place: its history, locale, environment and communities. The materials she chooses to work with are determined by the particularities of the commission she is undertaking. Other recent projects include: *Silentio Pathologia* (Pavilion of Macedonia, Venice Biennale, 2013); *Resuscitare*, National Trust, Mottisfont, Abbey (2013); *Witness of Virility* (Pied à Terre, London, 2011); *Reoccurring Undulation* (Towner, Eastbourne, 2011); *Inherent Beauty* (Public Room, Skopje, Macedonia, 2010); *Bad Hair Day* (Discovery Centre, Winchester, 2010); *Motectum* (Gloucester Cathedral, 2009); *Butterflies in the Stomach* (L'H du Siege, France, 2008) and *Epidermis* (Berwick Gymnasium, 2002).

www.elpihv.co.uk

EVENTS:

Lecture: Material Culture with Gill Hedley, Independent Curator (co-curator of 'Making Beauty')

Thursday 22 September 2016 6-7pm (followed by a drinks reception and opportunity to view the exhibition until 9pm)

Gill Hedley will discuss the work of Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva and her remarkable breadth of materials used to visceral effect in settings that range from cathedrals to restaurants, landscape gardens to the catwalk, working with Michelin-starred chefs and with surgeons. The talk will also look at her solo shows at the Venice Biennale representing Macedonia and, most recently, the Vatican.

Talks/Discussion: Testing the Intestines chaired by Giles Major (NIHR Academic Clinical Assistant Professor)

Monday 12 September 6-7pm

An opportunity to learn about some of the science that has informed Elpida's most recent art work from medical researchers at the Nottingham Digestive Diseases Centre QMC and their collaborators. Hear about new trials using cutting-edge technology to study gut function, and perhaps the answers to questions you were too embarrassed to ask.

Gallery Talk:

Wednesday 19 October 6-7pm

An opportunity to meet the artist and hear her talk about the 'Making Beauty' project in conversation with Richard Davey, writer and co-ordinating chaplain at NTU.

LISTINGS INFORMATION:

Exhibition Dates: Saturday 20 August 2016 – Sunday 30 October 2016

Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday 11am - 5pm; Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Address: University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

Admissions: Free

Events: For talks and events tickets please book online or call the Box Office on: 0115 846 7777

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