

Carpenter Center

LIZ

MAGGOR

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Liz Magor: BLOWOUT
January 31 – March 24, 2019
Levels 1 and 3

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
Harvard University
24 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Gallery Hours Tue–Sun, 12–5 pm
Free and Open to the Public

for the Visual Arts

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the repetition of sentiment; it's just repeated and repeated until it empties out. So, I have to make things a bit strange, so that they're familiar but then suddenly they're not. The purses operate that way. They're familiar, but they're also not. If you make them a bit to the left of themselves, it's hard to repeat that, because you're always uncertain about what it is.

Toolshed (Wood Stain), 2017
Wool, oil-based wood stain, and acrylic sheet
49 ½ x 23 x 9 ¾ in. (125.7 x 58.4 x 24.8 cm)

Toolshed (Marine Paint), 2017
Wool and acrylic sheet
48 x 27 x 8 in. (121.9 x 68.6 x 20.3 cm)

Freestyle (Pink Grommet), 2017
Wool, cellophane, and steel
90 ½ x 30 x 10 in. (229.9 x 76.2 x 25.4 cm)

All works courtesy of the artist and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Marcelle Alix, Paris; and Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto.



Freestyle (Pink Grommet), 2017
Wool, cellophane, and steel
90 ½ x 30 x 10 in. (229.9 x 76.2 x 25.4 cm)
Courtesy of the Artist and Andrew Kreps,
New York

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Below is a checklist along with excerpts from Liz Magor discussing her work with curators Dan Byers and Solveig Øvstebø during a studio visit in Vancouver in October 2018 to view the still-in-progress sculptures, many of which were completed on-site at the Carpenter Center during January 2019.

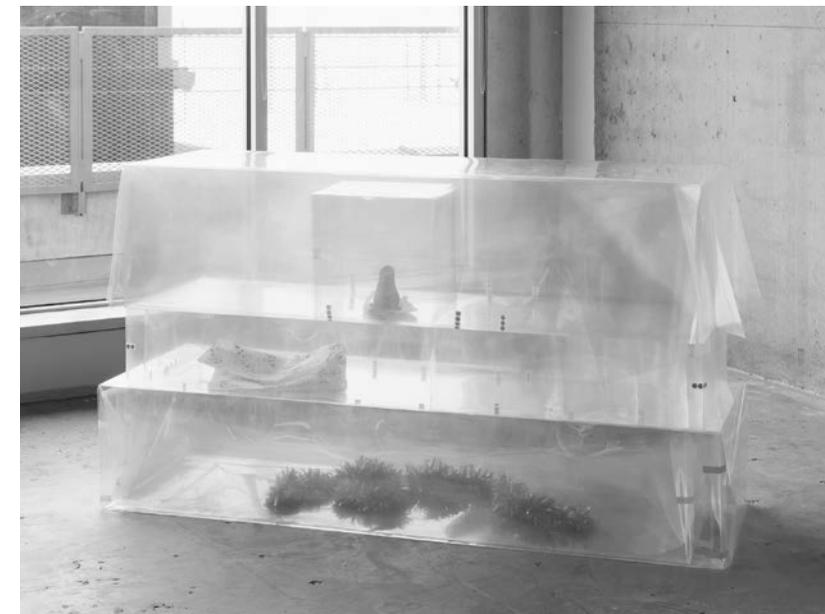
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Delivery (Red), 2018
Silicone rubber, twine, and garment bag
7 x 12 x 52 in. (17.8 x 30.5 x 132.1 cm)

Delivery (Brown), 2018
Silicone rubber, twine, and garment bag
10 ½ x 10 x 36 in. (26.7 x 25.4 x 91.4 cm)

Delivery (Siena), 2018
Silicone rubber, twine, and garment bag
11 x 10 x 32 in. (27.9 x 25.4 x 81.3 cm)

I knew that [these figures] were going to hold things because I started doing that in the work at Andrew Kreps Gallery in 2017. Here, I gave them a purpose. And I changed their faces and their figures to attend to that purpose.

Life is like a conveyor belt that's going along, taking us with it. It carries everything, not just our dreams and plans but our stuff; clothing, cars, various amusements. All the intense entanglements that we've concocted,



Seasonal, 2018
Polyester film, textiles,
paper, and stuffed toy
24 x 63 x 22 in.
(61 x 160 x 55.9 cm)
Photo: SITE Photography.
Courtesy of Catriona
Jeffries, Vancouver

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based on urgent and pertinent concerns, have a material component. And then, when the moment passes, everything goes with it. We forget what we cared about. We throw everything out. When I go to secondhand and vintage stores, what I see is the persistence of the materials, which lasts much longer than the ideas that spawned them. Maybe we've moved on, but our discarded things hang on to the dream like true believers.

Stuffies [stuffed animals] are supposed to be passive, our little love slaves, covered in tears and snot. They never go out. They just lie there. So, I put them into an active situation, wondering, can they still operate as sympathetic agents if they were more problematic? If they were a little scarier, a little uglier, a little less familiar?



Seasonal (detail), 2018
Polyester film, textiles, paper, and stuffed toy
24 x 63 x 22 in. (61 x 160 x 55.9 cm)
Photo: SITE Photography. Courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver

Seasonal, 2018
Polyester film, textiles, paper, and stuffed toy
24 x 63 x 22 in. (61 x 160 x 55.9 cm)
Private collection, Montréal, Québec

Closet (fur), 2018
Polyester film, paper, cardboard, and fur coats
Lids: 5 ½ x 53 x 33 in. (14 x 134.7 x 83.9 cm) each

Closet (jacket), 2018
Polyester film, paper, cardboard, fabric jacket, and stuffed toy
30 x 52 x 33 in. (76.2 x 132.1 x 83.8 cm)

Pet Co., 2018
Polyester film, textiles, paper, and rat skins
36 x 288 x 48 in. (91.4 x 731.5 x 121.9 cm)

For a couple of years, I've been cutting significant parts from stuffies in order to collage them into new hybrid configurations, so I have a pile of leftovers. In *Pet Co.*, there are about three-dozen Mylar boxes, some large, some small, some inside of others. I want them to be stacked and placed as though they are finished

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being used, empty, the good stuff taken away except for unwanted bits and pieces. Left behind, as a form of detritus, will be bits of wrapping paper, scraps of fabric, and bits of stuffies: eyes, ears, noses, tails, fluff, etc. Mixed in with all of this are the rat skins, which seem the same but maybe a bit duller in color. In other words, they are very discrete and not entirely noticeable. I think they relate to the two fur coats in *Closet (fur)*.

I've also sent the little stuffy hugging an angora sweater. More may come in my suitcase. But *Pet Co.* has migrated from being full of vignettes to being about the aftermath. The stuffy caring for the ripped sleeve in *Closet (jacket)*, the two or three anxious rubber guys, and the walrus on the top level of *Seasonal* will be the ongoing drama. The rest is post-drama.

Shoe World, 2018
32 pairs of secondhand shoes, 32 matboard shoeboxes, polyester film lids, plywood, and fabric
Three parts: 12 x 96 x 40 in. (30.5 x 243.8 x 101.6 cm) each

Before arriving at thirty-three pairs, I started with three. A long, slightly bizarre pair of women's boots with very pointed toes. Second, a pair of men's shoes, also long, size twelve maybe? The toes came out and then were truncated right at the tip. I started with that pair because they remind me of a pig's nose, which is this kind of truncated flat snout. When I saw those shoes I thought, if you were to buy these shoes, you may inadvertently be

turning yourself into a caricature. You might be inclined to buy them because of some fashion drive that's going on, but in fact, if another person isn't aware of the fashion, they'll simply see the shoes as a costume. And then the third pair is a furry pair of boots. I was thinking of plush animals.

This isn't a cynical project. This is really a very loving project. As I started with the exaggerated, comical shoes, I gradually started to see deeper into the soul of shoes. All of them are informed by some greater thing in their imagination, and how they appear in the real is a shadow of that. But the imagination is still present. Like the little plastic ballet slippers — they're imagining a real ballet slipper, I think, and all the cultural inflection that goes with ballet slippers. All of them are doing that, in a way.

Valet (pink), 2018
Polymerized gypsum, silicon rubber, and IKEA "Billy" bookcases
Purse: 1 ¾ x 7 ½ x 8 ½ in. (4.4 x 19.1 x 21.6 cm)
Platform: 25 x 11 ½ x 81 ¾ in. (63.5 x 29.2 x 207.6 cm)

Black Purse, 2018
Polymerized gypsum, silicon rubber, and IKEA "Lack" tables
Purse: 3 x 16 ¾ x 14 in. (7.6 x 42.5 x 35.6 cm)
Platform: 18 x 30 ¾ x 54 ¾ in. (45.7 x 78 x 139 cm)

Sentiment is different than sentimentality. Sentiment is feeling. And sentimentality is

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Opening reception
Wednesday, January 30, 6 – 8 pm

My garden is open, and the deer are everywhere and they eat everything. But they don't eat peonies and lavender, so I have peonies. Peonies will hold their great big ball of petals. And then all of a sudden, it just goes "blop," and it all drops down. I just happened to be standing there one day when suddenly a peony just dropped all this stuff. I've seen it more than once. It's a thing to watch for. I thought of its trajectory. You know, nothing, something, a huge something, and then nothing again. And so "blowout" is the very last moment, when there's no point in saving anything. There's a big promise in that: it means okay, no more hanging on. You think, "Oh, I'm going to be free, I'm gonna blow it all, I'm gonna put all my stuff on the street."

— Liz Magor

Liz Magor's (b. 1948) new body of work on display here, commissioned by the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, represents a critical juncture in the artist's practice. On Level 1 objects and architectures emerge from a dark-

ened space, contained within newly built gallery walls. Languages of transparency and enclosure frame those works. In the Sert Gallery, on Level 3, the white cube in that space acts to amplify the modes of display and bright lighting we expect to encounter in gallery and retail spaces.

While shopping in a thrift store in Berlin during her recent DAAD residency, Magor found three pairs of quizical, deeply evocative used shoes. She brought them back to Vancouver, and they spawned the work now on view on Level 3. She also began experimenting with a clear, stiff yet flexible Mylar material which is cut, folded, and tabbed to create transparent commercial packaging for clothing, stuffed animals, and other toys. With these works, Magor has pushed the qualities and capacities of these materials—as packaging, display, and even a kind of model housing. Throughout the exhibition, sculptures take advantage of the floor, ceiling, and existing architecture, and play between light and dark, and the realms of the home and store. Into these layered spaces, Magor introduces unsettling, animal/figurative sculptural "agents," (cast in rubber from recombined stuffed animal parts) together exploring conditions of weakness and strength, agency, the play between appearances and inner lives.

Liz Magor's sculpture quietly dramatizes the relationships that develop between objects. Often playing soft against hard, she pairs care with expo-

sure. Adhering to exacting processes of casting, fabrication, and hand-made techniques, Magor's work has created material expression for experiences of memory, addiction, gender roles, desire and consumption, interpersonal relationships, and the changing value of the objects that come in and out of our lives. Furniture, used textiles (blankets, upholstery, stuffed animals, clothing), accessories like gloves and stockings, and plastic and paper packaging all play important roles in her work. Rendered in a combination of sculpture techniques, in past works these soft elements have comingled with liquor bottles, cigarettes, and food, hard forces that shape our social and domestic lives.

While animated by a commitment to the telling detail and the specific conversations that occur between forms and textures, her works drill down into the tangled politics of time and history, and our often fugitive, subjective, and intimate encounters with these experiences.

Magor has said, "There's a limit to how many emotions we have, to how many relationships we can have with things or with people. The things that come into your purview are often very current. But your actions are very ancient. So, I'm not dealing with topics. I am dealing with form, and how it expresses, and with relationships."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Liz Magor lives and works in Vancouver. In 2017, her work was the subject of traveling survey at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, Migros Museum, Zurich, and MAMAC, Nice. Other recent solo exhibitions of her work include: Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac, Paris (2016), Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, Montreal (2016), the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2015), Peep-hole, Milan (2015), Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver (2014), and Triangle France, Marseilles (2013). In addition, she has had solo exhibitions at Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (2008), the Power Plant, Toronto (2003) and the Vancouver Art Gallery (2002). Magor participated in Documenta 8, Kassel (1987), and the 41st Venice Biennale, Venice (1984).

Liz Magor: BLOWOUT is co-organized by the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, and is co-curated by Dan Byers, John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Director of the Carpenter Center, and Solveig Øvstebø, Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Renaissance Society. The exhibition will be on view in Chicago April 27–June 23, 2019.

Exhibition support is provided by the Henry Moore Foundation and the

Canada Program, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Opening Reception
Wednesday, January 30, 6 – 8 pm
Level 1

Curatorial Walkthrough: Dan Byers
Friday, February 8, 12:30 pm
Level 1

Artist Talk: Liz Magor
Thursday, February 28, 6 pm
Lecture Hall, Level B

Bookshop Talk: Art Historian Dan Adler on Liz Magor's work and his recent book *Contemporary Sculpture and the Critique of Display Cultures: Tainted Goods* (Routledge, 2018)
Tuesday, March 12, 6 pm
Level 3

PUBLICATION

A publication featuring new texts by writer Sheila Heti, artist and critic Mitch Speed, and an interview with the artist by exhibition curators Dan Byers and Solveig Øvstebø will be available in May 2019.



Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Free and open to the public, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is the center for contemporary art and artists at Harvard University. Housed within Le Corbusier's only building in North America, the Carpenter Center was built in 1963 to accommodate the university's art and film studios alongside a dynamic exhibition program. Through exhibitions, public events, new commissions, publications, and residencies, the Carpenter Center is dedicated to artist-centered programming and building a vibrant community around contemporary art. This community is defined by an ethos of experimentation, diverse perspectives, and making connections across disciplines and fields. The Center's projects are enriched by the educational mission of a department of art and film education, and the cultural resources of a large research university.

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Daisy Nam, Assistant Director
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