

Liz Magor / *Whisper Glitter*, 2017 / Gypse polymérisé, tissu, sac plastique, bas nylon / 18x27x12cm / 5x30x8cm / 20x14x2cm / Courtesy de l'artiste et de Marcelle Alix, Paris  
© Photo : Justin Meekel / C : Marcelle Alix



**MAMAC**  
Musée d'art moderne  
et d'art contemporain

**LIZ MAGOR**

18 November 2017 - 13 May 2018

Place Yves Klein - Nice  
Everyday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Closed on Mondays  
[www.mamac-nice.org](http://www.mamac-nice.org)

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«[...] 'm looking for the things that are below the radar, they're unheralded, they're uncelebrated, they're ordinary. (...) So I am taking these overlooked objects and again I'm trying, as with the pets, I'm trying to find, identify, the quality or the condition of worthiness that made them be produced in the first place. And at some point someone purchased that thing for some quality that had worth. So I try to find that and pull that forward. And in that process I take them a little bit out of the ordinary but they're still in a sort of extra-ordinary. Which really is sort of the operation that surrealism undertakes: to take the real and shift it a bit into an uncanny space.»

Liz Magor, taken from the microsite dedicated to the exhibition Liz Magor. *Habitude* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (22 June to 5 September 2016).

For over 40 years, Liz Magor has been interrogating the 'infra-ordinary', the humble and mundane in everyday life, our society's compulsion to acquire, accumulate then forget, and our intimate relationship with objects. To discover her work is to enter a silent world peopled by familiar objects that appear to

carry the eloquence of their experience, the patina of wear and the mark of a recent past. «Appear», because her sculptural research lies precisely at the meeting-point between the real – with obsolete objects from day-to-day life – and the simulated, the illusionism of objects painstakingly elaborated in a mimetic relationship.

Liz Magor's singular oeuvre subverts the conceptual requirements of minimalism (serial work, use of non-traditional materials and abstract forms, deepening of notions of repetition and variation), through the ordinariness of her subjects, the refinement and sensuality of her work with materials, and the symbolic and emotional charge of the objects chosen.

Her attention to the ravages of time and signs of wear, and the preciousness of the "repairs" made to the objects – at variance with our compulsive appetite for the new and unalterable – also situates her within the tradition of care ethics. Developed in feminist circles, this current of thought anchored in the social and political sphere prioritises attentiveness to vulnerability and the act of caring over the process of domination and conquest that characterises Western society.

Occupying 1 200 sqm of the MAMAC and comprising some 50 works produced between 1989 and 2017, this retrospective is an opportunity to get the measure of

Magor's unique proposition and will offer a contemporary perspective on the museum's collections, based on the practice of diverting and appropriating the real.

Born in 1948 in Canada, Liz Magor lives and works in Vancouver. She is regarded as one of the foremost artists on the Canadian and international art scenes.

Liz Magor is represented by the following galleries: Marcelle Alix, Paris; Susan Hobbs, Toronto; Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver ; Andrew Kreps, New York.



*Formal I*, 2012. Silicone rubber, chair 81 × 61 × 81 cm LMGo062. Courtesy Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver

### SIMULACRUM OR REALITY?

Through her work, Liz Magor tries to go beyond the static nature of sculpture by exploring the boundary between the real and the simulacrum, subtly combining found objects, «mended» elements and works created in the studio. Sculptures imitating things like serviettes, clothes and dishes intermingle with actual objects – cigarettes, beer cans and bottles of drink – so that it is not clear what has come from the artist's studio and what has been manufactured. To achieve this, the artist uses the technique of polymerized gypsum casting, which reproduces the visual qualities of the mostly modest and familiar original materials.

«I spend hours creating objects which I used to find unaesthetic and insignificant (...).



*Sweet Airs*, 2016. Polymerized gypsum, plastic, fabric, paper 140 × 138 × 20 cm / Courtesy of the artiste and Marcelle Alix, Paris © Photo André Morin, le Crédac



Exhibition view Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 2017  
Liz Magor © the artist. Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography, Zurich. One Bedroom Apartment, 1996–2017. Polyester resin, furniture, household contents, dimensions variable.  
Courtesy Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto © Isaac Applebaum

What interests me is the influence of what is fashioned in the studio on what is simply found. By a mysterious phenomenon, found objects truly come to life when they are in the presence of the sculptural representation of something ordinary,» says the artist. The exhibition presents what could be the contents of a furniture warehouse. From this world in transition, born of the accumulation of real objects, issue all sorts of sculptural objects that also bear references to domesticity. A freshly laundered blanket hangs from a coat hanger, storage boxes are placed here and there, a cigarette lies on top of a jacket, as if the protagonist has just left. Liz Magor confronts us with the very ordinariness of the objects that accompany us in our daily lives, to better highlight their emotional, private and social charge.

## PIONEER CULTURE

Ever since her photographic series of the late 1980s (*Field Work*), her appropriation of iconic chairs from design history (1991), and her adaptations of historical reconstructions (*Bitumen*, 1993), Magor has continually revealed the complexity of the real and the multiple significations of objects, while at the same time exploring their anthropological and social charge. Alongside sleeping bags scattered on the ground (*Sleeping Bag 2*, 1998) are a pile of stones (*Chee-to*, 2000) and a tree trunk leaning against a wall (*Tent*, 1999), while snapshots of young people camping evoke the hippie counterculture of the past. Each of these elements is a reference

to untamed nature, in a falsely romantic vision. Through Magor's unique eye for the culture and history of her country, *Field Work* evokes the North American pioneer culture, while *Bitumen* addresses Quebec's Seven Years' War between the colonial empires of the 18th century. The artist depicts the colonial experience which, in an absurd way, combines dream and disaster.



*Field Work*, 1989. Silver gelatine prints, 10 pieces.  
55,9 cm x 71,1 cm. Private collection, Köln, Germany



*Banff Chair*, 1991. Steel base, soft polyurethane foam, synthetic fur, deerskin gloves. 76.2 x 121.9 x 88.9 cm. Collection of McMaster Museum of Art, and McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. © Images from the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal during their exhibition in 2016 by the photographer Richard-Max Tremblay.

With these many references to the domestic environment as well as to Canadian history and primitive nature, Magor raises the question of the fragility of identity and the desire for physical and emotional shelter. From the *Sleepers* series in the 1990s to her most recent creations made from blankets and cardboard, many of the artist's pieces question the notion of «refuge». All of these containers teeter between protective envelope and morbid membrane, recalling the material vulnerability of bodies and objects. Liz Magor contrasts mass production with other production methods: the technical skill of casting, the minutely detailed work involved in sewing or photo retouching.

## ADDITION OBJECTS

Her sculptures seem to spring into being by their shape and identified function, before confusion sets in as we find ourselves face to face with frozen interiors, parties abandoned for all time, animals, clothes and soft toys turned to stone. A cross between contemporary still lifes and *memento mori*, her sculptures speak of obsolescence and death - that of the objects and our own. Perception reinforced by the occasional and strange presence of animals, fixed between soft sleep and eternal rest. They also play on the register of absence and reminiscence, by sketching out possible histories and identities for the objects' former owners, their era and social class. Her vocabulary thus conjures up notions of difference, identity, mental conditioning and even anthropological questions.

From this allegorical domesticity explored by the artist, there emanates desire, lack, dependence (with «addictive» substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, chocolate and snack foods), the search for comfort or protection, and the pursuit of pageantry, as well as wear, neglect and abandonment. In this way, the spectre of our relationship with the world of objects and their affective familiarity is displayed in her work.

Between register of emotion and archeology of the future, its large «altars» (*Buck*, 2008 / *Soft Yellow*, 2015) or «altarpieces» (*Good Shepherd*, 2016) offer sociological evidence of human activity, memory capsules that would have gone through time.



*Buck (Jagermeister)*, 2008. Polymerized gypsum, liquor. 40 x 76 x 66 cm. LMG0015. Courtesy Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver © Photo: SITE Photography

**ASSOCIATED PROGRAMME**

**Wandering tours**

One Sunday every month at 11 a.m., artists, lecturers, historians, geographers and scientists take you on a wandering tour and share their unique take on the permanent collections and temporary exhibitions.

- On Sunday, 19 November psychoanalyst Franck Rollier will be giving a tour of the exhibition Liz Magor in the company of the artist, in partnership with the Association de la Cause freudienne Esterel-Côte d'Azur (ACF-ECA). The ACF-ECA's Art&Psychoanalyse («Art & Psychoanalysis») group organises meetings between the public and artists. The project involves visits to places where art is present, to find out what might be learnt from artists who, through their work, demonstrate a connection with reality that could teach us something. Tour in English, with translation.

- On Sunday, 10 December a guided tour will be given by MAMAC director and curator of the exhibition, Hélène Guenin.

Full program and dates available at [www.mamac-nice.org](http://www.mamac-nice.org) / Individual price €6  
Reservation [lelia.mori@ville-nice.fr](mailto:lelia.mori@ville-nice.fr)

**Tour and talk**

In early 2018, the special tour organised in partnership with the ACF-ECA will be expanded upon with a talk by psychoanalyst Franck Rollier and Art&Psychoanalyse coordinator Corinne Rebibo, followed by a discussion about Liz Magor's work and the relationship between art and psychoanalysis. Other encounters will follow. Dates to be confirmed.

**Guided exhibition tours**

- > Guided tours only on Fridays, at 3 p.m., in French from five people
- > Individual price: €6 (free for under-13s)
- > Group price (10-30 people): €82

**MAMAC**

Exhibition until May 13, 2018  
General commission Hélène Guenin, Director of MAMAC assisted by Laura Pippi-Détréy

The exhibition at MAMAC was conceived in close collaboration with the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, the Kunstverein in Hamburg and realized in partnership with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver.



*Carton II*, 2006. Polymerized gypsum, cigarettes, chewing gum, matches, lighters. Edition 1/2. 29,2 x 53,3 x 48,2 cm. Collection Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal © Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

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- > Guided tour for schoolchildren (by appointment)  
Single rate of €20 per class for schoolchildren  
Free for the schools of the Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur
- > **Pass Museums of Nice** offered to the inhabitants of the Metropole Nice Côte d'Azur on presentation of an identity document and proof of residence less than 3 months, giving free access to all municipal museums and galleries. Valid for 3 years.
- > **Individual ticket** €10: Access to all municipal museums and galleries for 24 hours.
- > **Group ticket** €8: by person: Access to all municipal museums and galleries for 24 hours for groups between 10 and 30 people.
- > **Free admission:** see the conditions on the museum's website



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