

Jake Harvey

STONE

28 June – 18 August 2012

In 2007 Harvey co-conceived and was Principal Investigator on the STONE Project. The four-year research project was funded by The Arts and Humanities Research Council and undertaken through the Edinburgh College of Art where he is Emeritus Professor of Sculpture. Culminating in a major publication - *STONE: A Legacy and Inspiration for Art*, (2011, Black Dog Publishing), it includes work by Atsuo Okamoto and Jessica Harrison, who also contributes an essay titled *Body and Stone*.

For his first solo exhibition in Art First's new space in Fitzrovia, Harvey has invited Okamoto and Harrison to exhibit in AF Projects, under the unifying title, STONE.

Harvey is a sculptor of elemental works. He carves granite, basalt, marble and limestone, imbuing the stillness of stone with a Zen-like quality and charged sensuality. Abstracted forms affixed to the wall form a dialogue with the floor and space-occupying sculptures.

In a new series of wall pieces created for this exhibition, small white marble sculptures, no larger than 30 cm in any direction, project from a white wall like discrete dream forms. They invite touch and contemplation, assuring the viewer of their existence in corporeal space.

Others pierced with holes possess a darker sonorous presence and are carved from mottled granites and basalts. With smooth polished surfaces, some are tactile and rounded, while others deploy a squared geometry. The small scale and feeling of floating on the wall, denies any sense of weight, while the slightly larger group, placed on a long shelf, introduces upright biomorphic forms that possess a sense of rootedness to the earth and an assertive elegance.

The work 'Chair' resembles a small, timeless throne hewn from Kilkenny blue limestone. Stool forms, and a carved stone 'bench' conceptually invite us to be seated. Combined with 'Rest' a sculpture inspired by head rests found throughout Africa and in China and Japan, these sculptures promote tranquility and meditation. Throughout his work, Harvey enjoys a formal fluency redolent with archeological and artifact references trawled from cultures around the world. Often the works retain the indexical mark of the maker, the trace of man, and imply an indeterminate use or function.

Photography, drawing and maquette-making inspired by forms and objects encountered through extensive travel, become precursors to the simplification and evolution of Harvey's sculptures. This reductive vision is evident in the small collaged drawings which reveal a mode of visual thinking characteristic of the work throughout this exhibition.

Jake Harvey studied sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art (1966 -72) and went on to become the Head of School of Sculpture for eleven years. He is currently Emeritus Professor of Sculpture and lives and works in Maxton near St Boswells in the Scottish Borders. He was elected RSA in 1989. His work can be found in public collections throughout Scotland, including Aberdeen Art Gallery, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries, the Hunterian Museum, Kelvingrove Museum, and the Fleming Collection, London, the Kulturtoget Collection, Sweden and the Eda Garden Museum in Tokyo.