

PRESS RELEASE

**Siobhán Hapaska**  
*Reclining Lion*

8 july – 20 september 2025

HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN is honoured to present *Reclining Lion*, the second solo exhibition at the gallery by the acclaimed Irish artist Siobhán Hapaska. This significant presentation will feature works from various points in her distinguished career, anchored by the major recent sculpture, *Reclining Lion* (2024). Through her singular artistic language, Hapaska continues to navigate the complexities of the contemporary world, offering objects that are as meticulously crafted as they are philosophically profound.

Siobhán Hapaska stands as one of the most vital makers in contemporary sculpture. Her practice is one of physical and intellectual rigour, a relentless investigation into materials and their capacity to articulate the tensions of the human condition. In a world saturated by fleeting images, Hapaska's commitment to the tangible, to the alchemical transformation of matter, is a radical act. In this, one might draw a parallel to the expanded practice of Joseph Beuys, who often spoke of the artist's role as that of a 'psychopompos'—a spiritual guide capable of moving between the material and the spiritual world. Hapaska, in her own distinct vernacular, crafts objects that perform a similar function, mediating between our physical world and the intangible realms of things past, technology, and emotion.

The centrepiece of this exhibition is the recent work, *Reclining Lion*, a powerful sculpture that follows a presentation at the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. Here, Hapaska confronts the weight of art history, reinterpreting the iconic marble lions from the Villa Medici in Rome. Her lion, however, is stripped of its classical grandiosity. Rendered in 3D and machine printed its form is attenuated, almost spectral, a ghost of its august ancestor. It is a work of profound ambiguity—at the same time powerful and vulnerable, ancient and futuristic.

Hapaska's act of re-making is a way of asking: what do these symbols of power mean to us now? How do we reconcile history with our fractured present? Her approach calls to mind the philosopher Gilles Deleuze's

concept of 'becoming', where an entity is always in a state of transformation. As Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "The self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities."<sup>[1]</sup> Hapaska's lion is precisely such a portal, caught between myth and reality, animal and machine, past and future.



Siobhán Hapaska, *Reclining Lion*, 2024

Hapaska's method of questioning symbols by transforming their substance is applied from a different angle in a *Twin Wall Piece* (2016). Here, she moves from reimagining a historical icon to deconstructing the very materials of classical tradition. It is a format she first developed in New York where she would gather dust from the city streets to fill the works. This act of capturing incidental traces of a place continues here, but with materials of a more elemental and historical weight.

The artist has mixed crushed marble—the dust of the classical tradition of making sculpture—mixed with the elemental residue of carbonised olive wood. Here, sculpture circles back to its most primal origins in drawing. As discussed by Rosalind Krauss, such materials push sculpture beyond simple form into the realm of the indexical mark. The charcoal and marble dust become raw pigments, echoing the materials of early man in cave paintings.

The resulting surface is a geological palimpsest where creation and destruction co-exist, grounding the exhibition in a fundamental inquiry into what sculpture is. It is at once a painting, a sculpture, and a core sample of the artist's transformative process.

A standalone in the space, forming a dialogue with the Lion is *Lung* (2007), a pivotal work first exhibited at the

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Camden Art Centre in London. A large, slim standing square form made of pristine neon orange lacquer painted wood with columns filled with loo-fas, *Lung* breathes. It externalises a fundamental, unconscious bodily function, transforming it into a open *Lung* speaks to a universal state of being—of life's fragility and its dependence on autonomous systems, both biological and technological. Hapaska's *Lung* disrupts the complicit silence surrounding the body, exposing the mechanics of life that we so often take for granted.

<sup>[1]</sup> 173 0: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible, Gilles Deleuze, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 275

### About the Artist

Siobhán Hapaska, born in Belfast in 1963, has forged a remarkable international career, establishing herself as a significant voice in contemporary sculpture. Her work is distinguished by its inclusion in prestigious exhibitions and major museum collections worldwide.

A pivotal early moment in Hapaska's career was her participation in the influential *documenta X* in Kassel, Germany, in 1997, curated by Catherine David. Another significant honor was representing Ireland at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001, solidifying her position on the global stage.

Hapaska's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at leading public institutions across Europe. Her first major solo show in London, *Saint Christopher's Legless*, was a critical success at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in 1995.

This was followed by presentations at the Camden Art Centre in London (2007), the John Hansard Gallery in Southampton (2019), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam (2015), Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall (2013), and most recently, "Medici Lion" at the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin (2023-2024).

Instrumental to her career have been solo presentations at leading commercial galleries, including the Kerlin Gallery in Dublin, Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Stockholm and Paris, and the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York. The significance of Hapaska's contributions to the field is further evidenced by her inclusion in a wide array of

group exhibitions. Her work has been featured in surveys of contemporary sculpture and thematic shows at institutions such as MoMA PS1 in New York, the Serpentine Gallery in London, and the Singapore Art Museum. She has also been a key figure in important surveys of British and Irish art, including the British Art Show.

Public collections holding her work include the Tate, The Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Arts Council of England, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, and the National Galleries of Scotland, among others.

This impressive exhibition history, spanning over three decades, highlights Siobhán Hapaska's unwavering dedication to pushing the boundaries of sculpture, a contribution recently celebrated by her inclusion in Phaidon's 2024 publication, *Great Women Sculptors*.



Phaidon Editors, 2024

Preview and opening on Saturday 5 July at 12 am.

For further information and images, please contact the gallery at [mail@hiddevanseggelen.com](mailto:mail@hiddevanseggelen.com)

The artist is available for an interview.