

J. Lynn Campbell

## **Soliloquy**

September 15 to October 7, 2018

Loop Gallery, Toronto ON

As J. Lynn Campbell worked on the pieces in this exhibition and considered possible titles, one word kept coming up: soliloquy. Exactly! For while the making of art may be a solo pursuit and reflection – it is no mere monologue.

The soliloquy, as a dramatic device, allows the thoughts and motives of its speaker to be known to the audience, and an exhibition – at its best – is similarly revelatory of the thoughts of the artist. For both the dramatist and the artist, an exploration of metaphor and material is the road toward meaning.

The most renowned of soliloquys is, of course, Hamlet's.

Its existential and political questions have rarely had more relevance than in our particular historic times. Campbell found that reflections on world events led to questions for which there are few obvious answers. And so, this work began in a context evocative of the tragically reflective Danish prince. Not knowing what she had to say, or how to say it.

Still, in the midst of uncertainty, action remains essential. While thought is never absent in making work or making sense of the world, Campbell found that her exploration of materials set thoughts on new trajectories and both thoughts and materials evolved as she worked.

Meaning is not simply found in the representations and metaphors of art, it is made. The artist takes up her chosen forms and shapes, combines and juxtaposes them, to invoke meaning for herself and for us. As viewers, we reflect on these intersections in our own meaning-making.

The works in this show address the fundamental fear and solace of the natural world – of which we are a part – and the oft-tragic beauty of our desire to make our place in it.

The layered imagery of **Unquiet Mind** is drawn from the shapes and surfaces of plants and bodies. The tree and skeletal imagery – a hand, a child – intersect with other patterns from the natural world. The imagery here, and in **Somewhere Between**, does not simply offer the beauty of our world, but its indifference as well.

Campbell also presents **Solipsism** – in all its seductive, if not admirable, appeal. Is this knit/woven leather, perched atop a wooden head, a glamorous headdress adorning a (quite literal) block head? Is it the foolish embellishment of an empty mind, or the restrained and terrified tangle of thoughts trying to escape – the quiet scream of a being unable to move, trapped by some enchantment?

Included in this show, an earlier **untitled** sculptural work – now titled **Circle of Time** – presents another enchanted head. This Basswood form is crowned with small cast-bronze antlers. I like to think that it stands in for us – a human form merged with the natural world that sustains it, drawing on it for strength and glamour, still fretfully hoping to master and shape it, until we ourselves must succumb – leaving our strange and beautiful monuments behind.

– Joyce Mason © 2018

## **Soliloquy**

### **List of Works**

#### **Unquiet Mind** (12.09.2018)

Giclée print on Hahnemuhle William Turner 310GSM 24.4mil Natural White, collage, acrylic paint, gouache, ink; 40 x 50 inches (101.5 x 127 cm) unframed

#### **Somewhere Between** (07.09.2018)

Giclée print on Hahnemuhle German Etching 319GSM 19.6mil Natural White, acrylic ink; 36 x 36 inches (unframed)

#### **Solipsism** (2015 – work in progress)

Vintage wooden hat form, black gesso, black leather lace, metal fasteners; dimensions variable

#### **Circle of Time** (01.10.2006)

Basswood, polycrylic finish, bronze casting with black patina; 15 x 12 x 12 inches

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