

GLADSTONE GALLERY

White, Michelle, "Sarah Lucas", *Modern Painters*, February 2009, pp.88



SARAH LUCAS

THE GOSS-MICHAEL FOUNDATION

This exhibition of sculpture and photography from 1994 to 2008 provided a brief look at Sarah Lucas's work in the context of a foundation set up in Dallas strictly to exhibit YBAs. The 14 works on view capture a moment when Lucas began to explore gendered ideas of disgust and lust by pairing the female figure, often through self-portraiture, with unlikely objects dripping in vulgar sexual connotation. Lucas's play with physical and material contradictions is most evident in *Chicken Knickers*, 1997. The now iconic photograph shows the torso of a female figure wearing a carcass of raw poultry. Positioned on her panties, the gaping orifice of the chicken's decapitation reads as a vaginal wound. The repulsion of the meaty place of violence is complicated by the body's associations with desire.

For anyone already familiar with Lucas's work, this domestically scaled, albeit comprehensive, presentation offered nothing new. But what resonated throughout was the work's refreshing deliberateness, and how Lucas's formal handling of dirty found materials differs from so much irreverent, trendy contemporary assemblage that seems to be swept off the floor with no criticality whatsoever. *We Do It with Love* (2005) is a tightly cropped photograph of a woman's breast. A crushed cigarette butt and a used match, pierced by a safety pin, hang from the delicate mesh of a lavender brassiere like a trashy nipple charm. Here, as in Lucas's other work, a careful composition of everyday detritus powerfully draws forth associative meaning and not only furthers a feminist dialogue, but offers a sophisticated alternative to the nonchalance of most current sculpture.

—MICHELLE WHITE