

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

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## Sarah Lucas "God is Dad"

February 5–March 14, 2005

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Sarah Lucas. Initially heralded amongst her peers in the 1990s as a key member of the movement of Young British Artists, she has developed a signature style addressing the raunchy underbelly of pop culture and gender dynamics. Using self-portraiture, found-object constructions, and collage, Lucas confronts the alternately grotesque and absurd euphemistic associations with the body and sex, humorously breaking down the camouflage of Puritanism, political correctness, and sexism from which these negative abstractions arise.

Mixing commonplace household items such as wire hangers, stockings, and buckets with the detritus of tabloid clippings and advertising fliers, Lucas creates makeshift sculpture that slyly deconstructs assumed linguistic and gender codes. While seemingly simple, if not crude, her arrangements of objects, be they fruit or fluorescent tubing, possess a sophistication in their method of recalling complex socio-sexual relationships while referencing art historical antecedents such as Surrealism, Arte Povera, and Minimalism. The bawdy tone consistent in both her sculpture and self-portraiture fights fire with fire, confronting the misogynistic tendencies of contemporary British culture. A careful balance of the blatant and the subtle, she ties lewd clichés and desultory slang to sculpture while exposing its linguistic meaninglessness. The pairing of humor, as evidenced in the titles of her work, and the rough-hewn aesthetic she favors not only matches in vulgarity the sexism she attacks, but serves to deflate the offense by holding a mirror to it.

For this exhibition, Lucas incorporates a pared-down vocabulary to create taut and thoughtful works meditating on themes that have always held her interest: the double bind faced by contemporary women, the messy intricacies of sex and love, and the rickety concepts of domesticity and religion. Using Victorian bed frames, stockings, and bald light bulbs, she evokes the untidiness of the body, the futility of the conventions used to frame and control it, and in the end, the pessimism that notions of monogamy and life-long commitment stir up in the contemporary mind. Because of the light touch Lucas applies through humor, the responses these evoke are never so cut and dried: By towing the lines of vulgarity and thoughtfulness her sculptures provoke questions about the mediation of base humanity in society, as much as they try to resolve the inherently tangled subjects she queries.

Born in London in 1962, Sarah Lucas studied at Goldsmiths College and became an integral part of the YBA movement. Since her inclusion in the seminal exhibition *Freeze*, in London in 1988, she has been exhibited internationally including solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1993; the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam; and Portikus, Frankfurt during 1996. She has also been included in numerous group shows and surveys such as *Brilliant* at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis in 1995 and *Sensation: Young British Artists in the Saatchi Collection* at the Royal Academy of Art in London and the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1997. In 2004, along with friends and fellow artists Angus Fairhurst and Damien Hirst, Lucas collaborated for the exhibition "Ina-Gadda-Da-Vida" at Tate Britain. "God is Dad" will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by art historian Linda Nochlin.

For further information contact the gallery by phone  
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