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RADIANT EARTH

Radiant Earth celebrates a decade of work, grounding and expressing love Laura Facey style. The Jamaican-based artist walks the earth lightly but delivers immense potency. Her sculptures, carved from massive cedar roots, mahogany and lignum vitae, are conceptually inspired by the alchemy of transformation - transformation that affects change personally and environmentally. In the process of confronting her own shadows, she has become what Jung referred to as the 'visionary artist', a conduit offering access to an inner terrain.

There is no more striking example of this transformative essence than in Facey's work, *Their Spirits Gone Before Them*, 2006, part of the exhibition now showing at the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London. Her canoe is densely packed with cast bodies of 1,357 slaves demonstrating an improbable case for survival. A human tragedy devoid of any humanism. The canoe is exhibited on a sea of sugar cane, whose segments appear to move the boat rhythmically. A boat laden with fear, broken dreams and anxiety. This work piques the audience to connect, to acknowledge and to begin healing those same devastating emotions within themselves. It evokes the victim, the perpetrator and the bystander in one's own psyche, and despite its obvious unease, remains a beautiful and courageous work of art.

Facey's sculpture exudes archetypal substructures. *Radiant Comb*, 2011 is a powerful vessel, a crucible, ripped open and channeling energy deep into the bowels of the earth, grounding a universal intelligence in the process. A structure which is simultaneously convex and concave it is reflective of an individual's take on life as being either half empty or half full.

Jose Manuel Noceda, the Cuban curator, remarked to Facey, that she was "... working with the memory of ancient materials and using them to recreate ceremony for the healing of the earth." Throughout, Facey's pre-occupation with the transformative power of healing, remains the focus.

Facey herself describes the work from the *Radiant Combs* exhibition as '...prayerful, combs for untangling, smoothing and transforming'. Does this mean Facey is contributing to the psychological untangling of the collective that defines the Jamaican psyche? Melinda Brown, curator of the exhibition, sees these sculptures as 'tuning forks'. *Radiant Red*, 2011, two giant red-sculptured combs of pigmented mahogany, could pass for a contemporary take on a Kalimba harp awaiting a cosmic hand to pluck a tune from its wooden picks.

The serene work of this exhibition is the installation, *Plumb Line*, 2010. The lignum vitae needles are fluid, as though they are being looked at through water from above. Hovering over them hangs a giant plumb bob, loaded with fecund female symmetry, floating and conducting the needles in a synchronized swim.

Hand of Love, has the refinement of the open palm in classical Indian dance, reminiscent of the hand of the famous *Winged Victory of Samothrace* in the Louvre. *Daughter of Comb*, 2011, a bronze piece, is redolent of the roots of mangrove pushing deep into the earth, still able to move and dance in the elements, still enjoying stability along with flexibility.

The journey of Laura Facey, the sculptor, lies deep within these roots, her metaphysical crucibles, depleted and replenished with each twist and turn of life, will continue to astonish for decades.

Anne Errey

RADIANT EARTH will be on view at The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London from 24th September through 4th October 2013

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LAURA FACEY

Photo by Melinda Brown