



MIMA PRESENTS LUBNA CHOWDHARY'S TAKE ON CONTEMPORARY ART-MAKING IN BRITAIN



Lubna Chowdhary photographed by Peter Kelleher

Lubna Chowdhary

Erratics

25 June – 9 October 2022

This summer, MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, stages the largest solo exhibition of Lubna Chowdhary's work to date at a key moment in her practice. Chowdhary's work demonstrates a skilled approach to making that references multiple cultures and times. Having worked as an artist for 35 years, Chowdhary has received significant public art commissions and this is her first large-scale museum exhibition. For MIMA, Chowdhary brings the ambition of her public art works and approaches to making into a gallery setting.

Showcasing recent developments in her practice, *Erratics* includes intricate wooden sculptures, colourful works created in ceramic and rope and an enormous new installation made from industrial building materials. Chowdhary's sculptural objects and installations combine industrial manufacturing technologies with highly developed hand-making techniques. Her works create dialogue between various visual languages and cultural references from Northern Europe and South Asia. Her work has been part of the Middlesbrough Collection, held by and cared for by MIMA, since the 1990s.

The title *Erratics* refers to large rocks or boulders that have been displaced from their original geological context through glacial flows. While retaining their material integrity they are permanently settled in a new, alien context. As an artist whose work encapsulates a sense of hybridity between different cultural references and experiences, Chowdhary feels affinity with this term. Chowdhary (b.1964, Tanzania) moved to Rochdale, UK aged five, from Tanzania, later travelling between the UK, Pakistan and India.

Chowdhary creates works that combine ancient making techniques and the latest technologies and hold tensions between extreme ornamentation and minimalist forms. She is drawn to moments of hybridity in art, design and architecture and fascinated by cultural artefacts and artworks that hold dialogue between cultural references.

Elinor Morgan, Artistic Director at MIMA, comments: '*Chowdhary is an important voice in British art; her work is singular, adept and joyful. She skilfully combines traditional craft production with the latest developments in industrial technologies to create beautiful artworks with echoes of many histories and tendrils into diverse disciplines.*

'MIMA's programme is deeply rooted in its context and Chowdhary's work connects with the histories of making, manufacture and migration that have shaped our location. This generous exhibition finds a fitting home in the Tees Valley, an area forged through industry which is emerging as a centre for digital innovation.

'We are excited to support Chowdhary at a critical moment in her practice to develop her largest exhibition to date. Built through collaboration with PEER, London, the exhibition draws on Chowdhary's expertise in responding to site and architecture and shares new developments in her work.'

Often working with materials found in urban environments, through her latest works Chowdhary builds on years of making architectural interventions in the public realm. At MIMA, she will create a six metre by six metre sculpture, made from silver lagging, a pre-made material used to cover insulation for pipework. This piece occupies MIMA's internal architecture and invites the viewer to think about the structures of the institution, both physical and conceptual.

Through her rope wall drawing *Clinch*, 2022, and *Bind 1*, 2021, Chowdhary coils industrial rope around ceramic discs to create an unconventional continuous line drawing. The ceramic discs are jet water cut into perfect circles and finished with a subtle hand-made glaze. Through these large-scale works, Chowdhary responds to the architecture of MIMA's gallery spaces.

Erratics 1, 2 and 3, 2021 are a series of three large wooden sculptures made by skilled makers at the Jan Hendzel Studio, UK, to digital designs developed by Chowdhary. The pieces grew from Chowdhary's research into hybrid decorative furniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which was made in the nineteenth century by craftspeople in India who worked to a brief of wealthy British colonisers. Chowdhary is fascinated by the subtle slippages in construction and functionality that occurred when European designs were translated by Indian makers. Echoing this cross-cultural collaboration Chowdhary tested out communicating through making and created an exchange between contexts and approaches, both highly specialised.

Lubna Chowdhary comments: *'During my first visit to MIMA – witnessing the curious sight of Middlesbrough's Transporter Bridge on the horizon – there was a sense of familiarity and of dialogue opening up. This setting felt like an invitation to draw on the language and iconography of heavy industry and to respond to my loyalty to industrial landscapes. MIMA's expansive space offers the opportunity to build ambitiously on previous creative developments with industrial materials. Through this project, I have been able to push forward the possibility of working with modular systems to create a new work of scale and power.'*

MIMA's exhibition is an expanded version of a presentation at PEER, London, 2021 and includes works co-commissioned with PEER.

MIMA is an artistic learning environment at the heart of the School of Arts & Creative Industries at Teesside University. As a cultural hub and creative resource, MIMA supports students from across a range of disciplines to apply skills to address the critical issues of our time.

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Notes to Editors:

About Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art – MIMA

MIMA connects art, people and ideas to enable creative lives and positively contribute to so-ciety. We are an international art gallery and museum. We commission, collect and re-think modern and contemporary art. As the artistic heart of the School of Arts & Creative Indus-tries at Teesside University, MIMA is dedicated to learning, research and innovation. Find out more at mima.art and tees.ac.uk/creativearts

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About the Artist

Chowdhary creates sculptural objects and site-specific artworks, working primarily with ceramics, wood and industrial materials. She attributes her dexterity to manual domestic processes learned during her childhood. Over the last two decades, Chowdhary has developed public and private architectural projects in different contexts as a means to test collaborative working and try out industrial making processes.

Combining the major stimuluses of her art school training, which was heavily influenced by twentieth century minimalism, and memories of travels in Pakistan and India, Chowdhary balances references and experiences in challenging and poised works. She interrupts the smooth and clear surfaces of her works with excessive ornamentation and high colour. She relates this technique of combining and contrast with code-switching, the practice of changing registers or tone adopted by those who move between cultural backgrounds.

Born in Tanzania, Chowdhary settled in the north of England in 1970. She has been shortlisted for the Jerwood Prize in Ceramics, the annual Freelands Foundation Award and has completed artist residencies at Camden Arts Centre, Victoria and Albert Museum London and IASPIS Stockholm. Chowdhary lives and works in London.

Chowdhary received her BA from Manchester Metropolitan University in 1988, and MA from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1991. She received The Sir Eduardo Paolozzi Travel Award in 1990. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, most re-cently at Art Gallery New South Wales, Sydney (2020); Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2020); ICA Milano, Milan (2019); Kochi Biennale, Kochi (2018-2019); Manchester Art Gallery, Man-chester (2018). Public collections that hold Chowdhary's work include Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham; Jameel Arts Cen-tre, Dubai; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; Leicester City Museum, Leicester; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Mead Gallery, Warwick; Nottingham Castle Museum, Nottingham; Oldham Art Gallery, Oldham; Poole Museum, Dorset, PEER London. Chowdhary is represented by Jhaveri Contemporary.