TRACEY EMIN
AT TURNER CONTEMPORARY

She Lay Down
Deep Beneath
The Sea
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This exhibition brings together an extraordinary body of new work by Tracey Emin, one of the UK’s best-known artists. Emin has shown extensively both in Britain and abroad but this is her first significant exhibition here at Turner Contemporary, Margate.

Tracey Emin’s life and work are inextricably linked to Margate. Emin grew up here and has remarked that “I realise how lucky I am coming from Margate. It’s a most romantic, sexy, fucking weird place to come from. I didn’t come from the suburbs”. Indeed whilst Emin’s previous works have drawn on her experiences of growing up in Margate, the work in this show is purposefully not Margate specific.

In 2010 Turner Contemporary commissioned Emin to make a neon work for the façade of Droit House, the small building adjacent to the new gallery. Emin created I Never Stopped Loving You, a work in pink neon, which served as a poetic love letter to her home town.

The themes of love, sex and eroticism feature in many of Emin’s works and are the main focus of this particular exhibition which includes embroidery, drawing, monoprints, painting, neon, tapestry and sculpture. Astonishingly the majority of the work has been made over the last eight months. The selection and installation of each of the three beautifully proportioned galleries at Turner Contemporary has been conceived to flow from the west gallery through to the north gallery. The atmosphere in each gallery is subtly different but provides a very distinct overview of Emin’s most recent practice.

She Lay Down Deep Beneath The Sea also includes a small selection of works on paper by Auguste Rodin and JMW Turner. All three artists are fascinated by the female form but from very different perspectives. These intense observational studies of women in their most vulnerable and simultaneously most powerful positions celebrate, in different guises, female sexuality.

Art historian and critic, William Feaver’s illuminating essay for this publication considers Emin’s practice alongside that of her historical peers whilst author Jeanette Winterson’s elegant prose takes a more personal perspective. In addition, Emin has contributed a poetic excerpt from her novel in progress ‘The Vanishing Lake’, all of which has contributed to make this beautiful publication, designed by Fuel in collaboration with Emin, an enduring reminder of this very special exhibition.

She Lay Down Deep Beneath The Sea could not have been realised without Tracey’s commitment and time. Energetic, enthusiastic and unbelievably focused, Emin has brought much creative drive to the development of this exhibition and has been a delight to work with. I would also like to thank her team and in particular Eimear O’Raw, Natasha Jarman, Alan Murrin, Joe Walsh, Tamsin Casswell and Haruhi Hayashi. Further thanks go to Kerry Ryan and Declan McMullan for the production and installation of works and Irene Bradbury at White Cube for her help and support.

The majority of the work is so new that it has come straight from the studio but a few of the works are already in collections and I am very grateful to those individuals for making their newly acquired works available for this exhibition. Tate kindly agreed to lend works by JMW Turner whilst the Rodin works have come from the Musée Rodin. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Warrell and Catherine Lampert for their input particularly regarding the selection of the Turner and Rodin works respectively.

Behind the scenes there have been months of planning and preparation. I would like to thank all my colleagues at Turner Contemporary and in particular Sarah Martin and Lauren A Wright who have worked on this exhibition and publication. Finally my thanks go to Tracey who has been a huge support to me personally and to Turner Contemporary over many years and whose passion for art is so very inspirational.

Foreword

Victoria Pomeroy