Lucy Sparrow: The Felt Lady

Description

Lucy Sparrow with her Diptyque felt candle

Diptyque x Lucy Sparrow Collaboration

Contemporary British artist Lucy Sparrow makes vast, immersive installations featuring hand-made felt objects that range from grocery store goods to full-scale replica works of art. Known colloquially as â??the felt ladyâ??, Sparrow has earned a widespread, global following in the past 10 years, because her exquisitely-crafted soft sculptures are as much a celebration of artisanal skill as they are a powerful commentary on wider societal issues, including the dissolution of community and the demise of local high streets.

Lucy Sparrowâ??s pop-up grocery story in LA

Born in Bath, England in 1986, Sparrowâ??s breakthrough came in 2014, when she created *The Cornershop,* in a derelict former shop in East London. Sparrow filled the disused shop space with more than 4,000 hand stitched and painted felt replicas of the snacks, drinks, and confectionary that would once have graced the walls of the store. The show was an instant commercial and critical success, with people queuing around the block to buy the individual items, and widespread media coverage singing Sparrowâ??s praises. Sparrow says, â??Not to sound dramatic but that is literally the time my life just went wooooshâ?¦ I literally never expected what would come out of cornershopâ?•.

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Buoyed up by the success of her first venture, Sparrow took on several more edgy, controversial subjects for her next few pop-up shops â?? in *The Warmongery,* 2015, she set up a fake armoury, with walls lined up with felt weapons including guns, knives, and explosives. Sparrow even gave buyers a felt firearm licence to take home with their purchase. Far from making light of extreme violence, Sparrow hoped her installation could â??disarmâ?? the weaponry that certain strands of society are drawn to, as well as asking what pushes people to acts of extreme violence. She said, â??the aim of Warmongery is to draw peopleâ??s attention to what drives a few individuals to stockpile weapons and to ask why people are growing up in a world where a tiny minority feel so stressed and frustrated that they want to kill people.â?•

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In the same year, Sparrow created *Madame Roxyâ??s Erotic Emporium,* a recreation of a sex shop replete with felt replicas of adult-themed objects. In recreating such taboo, underground items in felt, she asked viewers to approach these adult accessories with light-hearted humour, while removing any inherent qualities of threat that might be embodied within the real objects. The following year, in an about turn, Sparrow was asked by the BBC to recreate the Crown Jewels in felt to celebrate the Queenâ??s 90th birthday, demonstrating just how well-known her felt objects had by now become.

Lucy Sparrowâ??s Mcdonaldâ??s in Miami Art Week 2022

Since this time, Sparrow has gone on to develop a series of international pop-up projects, including *8 â??till Late,* 2017, a felt replica of a 24-hour shop in The Standard High Line hotel in New York City, which was, once again, a sellout success. More recently, Sparrow made the monumentally ambitious *Felt Art Imaginarium* at M WOODS museum in Beijing, China in 2019, a fake display room for which Sparrow made life-size replicas of some of the most famous artworks of all time, including Andy Warholâ??s soup cans, Damien Hirstâ??s shark, and Michelangeloâ??s David.

The fest fish counter at Delicatessen on the 6th, at Rockefeller Center.

Her aim in recreating these artworks with the soft, tactile medium of felt was to make these seemingly inaccessible works of art more approachable, human, and even fun, while also inviting viewers to marvel at her ingenuity with the seemingly humble fabric once associated with childrenâ??s toys and craft projects. Reflecting on the whirlwind nature of her success over the past decade, Sparrow observed, â??You have to just work hard and do as much as you possibly can.â?•

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