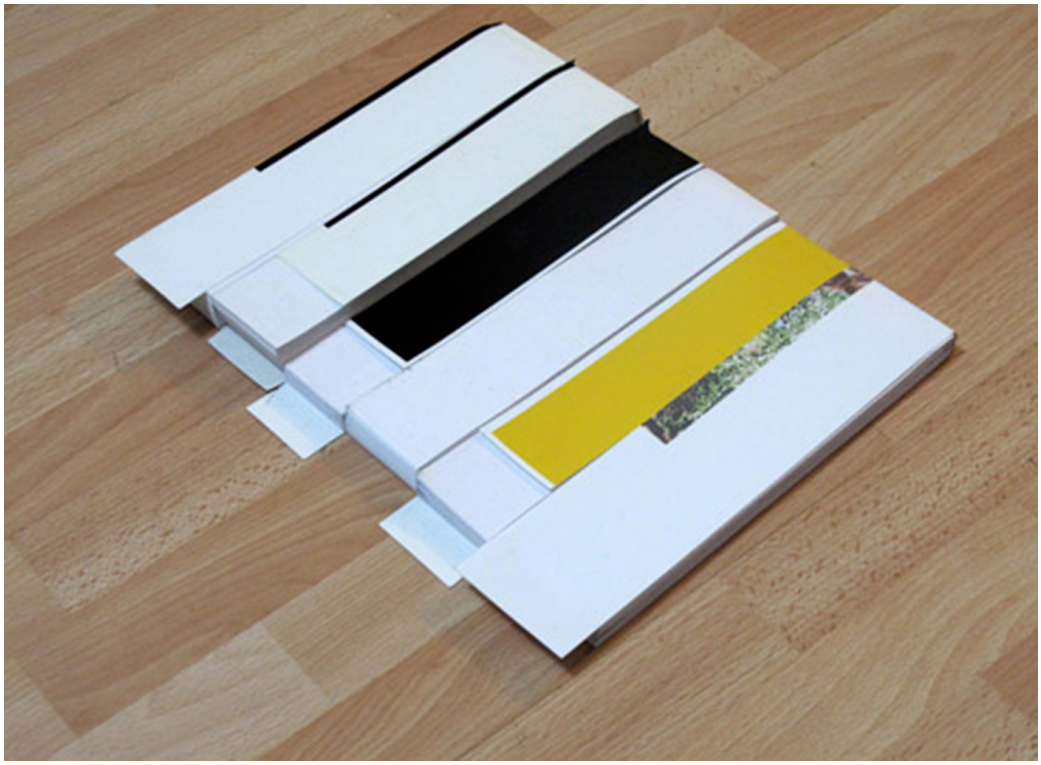
FLORENCE LOEWY
gallery / books

Press release

Sara MacKillop

Sara MacKillop
From 12 March 2011 to 30 April 2011
Opening date 12 March 2011



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Press Release

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Sara MacKillop's exhibition at the Florence Loewy bookshop wittily echoes the space’s function. At first sight, her work, shown in such a context – in the one-room gallery or side project next to the bookshop – formally gives the impression of a literal in situ project.
However, for those who don't know MacKillop's work, she always proceeds as such: working from the contemplation and then almost systematic but discrete dissection of old books or of obsolete and disused stationery.

The dismantling processes and creative displays invented by the artist turn books into mute and silent objects. MacKillop focuses on their material structure, deconstructing the unity, which they usually consist of. Any readable content has been taken away or is not rendered visible. Thus the artist highlights the potential plastic qualities of the books, leaving them as abstract forms and volumes.

This may sound like heresy in a shop dedicated to rare books! However, MacKillop is a book lover and collector herself. So what she does is on purpose, slightly playing with the immaterial dimension and with a kind of symbolic weight. As a matter of fact, the dense and meaningful object of a book resists its own form. Something romantic and some sort of symbolic weight remain with Books and Book Covers. The faded colours and the marks made by light inevitably place them in a temporal and psychological perspective, like a metaphorical witness of a disappearing memory or a void left by a memory. Books are complex cultural objects, considered as both common and individual props. And the artist perpetuates and implicitly makes denser, or re-enacts, the emotional relationship that a reader or collector establishes with it.

She borrows and adapts features from modernist art with a certain sense of humour and detachment. Her sculptural works, Diagonal File and Expanding File, evoke certain Minimalist sculptures such as Robert Morris' Wall Hanging (1969-1970) or Don Judd's Stacks. Most of MacKillop's production is organized through open?ended series and tend to eradicate free will. For instance, Typewriter and Books started in 2006 and are still in progress. The grouping of these sculptural and framed works underlines an internal or selfgenerated logic relying on a very simple system or a set of minimal and recurrent gestures.

A contradictory dynamics and a strange feeling animate the works. The very subjective decision of exploring a specific realm – old papers, objects and tools related to archives, administrative as well as knowledge classification – is ambiguously combined with the randomness of the found object and the use of its standardized, ready-made formal characteristics.

MacKillop's meticulous interventions consist mainly in displaying old book-related artefacts or obsolete stationery in an unusual and dysfunctional manner, as if she were disrupting the system she herself established. She recently appropriated an image taken from a found catalogue of rare books and blew it up so as to make most of the books appear their real size. This time the artist does not integrate an abstract and geometrical pattern, but a figurative one. However, she shifts and applies the same disruptive system to the image. Like a mass-produced pattern for a poster or wallpaper, the mechanical reproduction seems to suddenly fail. The upside-down shelves look like a printing mistake.

Caroline Soyez-Petithomme

Exhibition View

Legend : Exhibition view, Sara MacKillop, Florence Loewy, Paris, 2011 Photo © Aurélien Mole

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