

# ELISABETH· DAYNES



***Lucy Selfie, 2018***

Silicon, resin, glass, metal, yak hair  
130 x 70 x 110 cm  
Edition 2/2



© Delphine Crépin/Elisabeth Daynes

There she comes from our Origins brandishing a smartphone as if it were a trophy. I show her taking a selfie. Lucy Selfie then becomes a symbol of today, a symbol of our time. She is provocative but provoking with humor. She is making fun of us, mocking all of us who are glued to our screens like modern Narcissus creating tools to mirror ourselves in. Lucy Selfie is a universal vector going beyond art and science, addressing to everybody, awaking minds and questioning each and every one of us on the meaning of the tools the 21<sup>st</sup> century is handing.

Elisabeth Daynes  
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# ELISABETH·I DAYNES

Elisabeth Daynes' original work is a reflection on the challenges of the human figure and the body in our contemporary era.

Captivated by the work of hyperrealist artists such as John de Andrea, Elisabeth' s work seeks to represent individuals and their bodies, some lost in the depths of time, others adrift in the future. We are suddenly aware that tomorrow' s fashion may include blister-pack lips-to-order and living skin masks that one can take off and regenerate. Moving past today' s narcissism where the boundaries between the real and the virtual are increasingly permeable, Elisabeth breaks into the waiting-room of the future. This is a ready-to-wear offered to the next generations of the evolution hackers that we are. Virtual identities are there for the taking; avatars make it possible to transcend our human condition.

Time is a sort of raw material waiting to be shaped. Elisabeth' s post-humans are still human beings with blood circulating in their veins; but they are evolving, floating in time, blossoming, reimagining themselves. As they search for their identity, they break down the here-and- now and redesign it at will. From diversity we came and to diversity we shall return.

We are transported to another era; where some of us seeking eternal youth "shop" for new facial features while others lose themselves in what they could be or become. All share the conscious or sub-conscious obsessional quest for physical perfection and eternal youth with the realization that Time is their enemy and the Future harbors their ultimate destruction.

Elisabeth Daynes uses various formats, materials, and technologies to model, shape, and transform the structure of the skull itself, reclaiming the extraordinary time before flesh covers the bones to magnify the muscles of the face and expression.

## Selected past exhibitions:

- *Find yourself*, Loo & Lou Gallery, Paris, France, June 2020
- *Find yourself*, 863M Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA, October 2019
- Galerie du jour-Agnès b., Paris, France, June 2019
- ArtUp-Dupré & Dupré Gallery, Lille, France, February 2019
- Camera Camera-Dupré & Dupré Gallery, Hôtel Windsor, Nice, France, November 2018
- By Chatel Gallery, Paris, France, December 2017
- *Bouche B.*, Rotonde Mairie Xème, Paris, France, October 2016
- Carte blanche, Château Vargoz, Serignan, France, July 2016
- *Curieux face-à-face*, Dupré & Dupré Gallery, Béziers, France, January 2016
- *Humans*, Galerie Jean-François Cazeau, Paris, France, October 2015
- *La Vérité des visages*, Atelier Daynès, Paris, France, June 2015
- *Chair des origins*, Pole d' Art Contemporain, Dordogne, France, 2014

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*Elisabeth Daynes is a renowned paleo artist whose sculptures are exhibited in the most prestigious museums over the world: Field museum, Chicago; Perot Museum, Dallas; Gyeonggi-do Jeong Museum, Seoul; CosmoCaixa Science Museum, Barcelona; INAH, Mexico, Narodni Museum, Prague; Musée de l' Homme, Paris; ... For the past decade, she has been adding to her scientific reconstructions an original work crossed by a reflection on the challenges of the human figure and the body in our contemporary era.*

*From the early stages of her career as a plastic artist in theatre, she has been fascinated by the question of physical metamorphosis and the play with appearances. With a first exhibition dedicated to The Truth of Faces, she began a meditation on identity and incarnation that she will pursue in many other exhibitions such as Humans, Curieux face-à-face, Bouche B. Her highly praised Find Yourself display presented at Art up Lille in 2019 set off several other exhibitions at the Gallery du jour agnès b. in Paris, 836M Gallery in San Francisco and Loo & Lou gallery in Paris.*

*For Elisabeth Daynes, the face is a mysterious place, the opposite of a simple surface that could be treated as an ephemeral mask. Trash compiles discarded faces in a multicolored mound sprinkled with red mouths like flower petals that a distracted hand would have scattered. So many fleeting masks discarded by their owners already caught in other dreams of faces. Elisabeth questions us: Is the lifetime of a face now that of a flower?*

*Visages or Mirages? Versatile and volatile, these discarded masks attest for the extent of disturbing thirst for metamorphosis in our societies. While science is an invitation to always more promises, while rewriting oneself has become a planetary practice, Elisabeth Daynès warns on the limits and risks of this face fair. This would result in a ready-to-wear appearance where a face could be acquired like any other object, and then follow the fate of any object: be thrown away. However, asserts Elisabeth Daynes, the face is the opposite, it is the very place where emotions express themselves, where thoughts emerge, where the being is revealed. She expresses it with her so true, so vertiginously true, hyper realistic sculptures. She expresses it with The Curious absorbed in an intense face-to-face with a lost identity. She expresses it with this woman riveted to her mirror in search of her truth. She expresses it with this sculpture whose eyes are closed, the very figure of appeasement.*

*This poetics of the face is what is at stake in the artist' s work: celebration of the metaphysical power of a face in Identity, ode to the plant in a mesmerizing procession of Las Meninas, plaster series where the singularity of beings triumphs, effervescent bouquets of blooming mouths.*

*By focusing on a particular part of the body or of the face, by isolating and transfiguring it, Elisabeth Daynes creates surrealist fields where red lips bloom like puppies and tender pink breasts are transformed into unusual nurseries. Elisabeth Daynès sublimates the anatomical detail and poetically empowers it. This is the art of the detail, where the detail becomes the whole. The face can thus become a landscape for those who know how to look at it...*

Anne de Marnhac



**Selfie Culture Comes Under Scrutiny in  
*Find Yourself* at 836M Gallery  
San Francisco, CA**



Lucy taking a selfie at 836M Gallery; Image: Christine Cueto

French sculptor Elisabeth Daynès trains her eye on the ubiquity of the smart phone in shaping the way we see ourselves, others and society by applying wit, an ongoing fascination with paleoanthropology as well as her skills at hyper-realistic reconstruction to evoke the border between the true and the false in an exhibit that not only sits behind a cavernous window facing Montgomery Street in downtown San Francisco, but also offers in her words, “a window to a possible future”

*Find Yourself* is presented in conjunction with the Leaky Foundation and runs through February 6 at 836M Gallery in San Francisco; Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 12-6pm and every first Saturday from 12-6pm; Exhibit can also be visually accessed from the street when gallery is closed; more info at [www.836m.org](http://www.836m.org)

**November 13, 2019, San Francisco, CA** — In her West Coast debut, French sculptor Elisabeth Daynès tackles the ways in which our phones have become both a mirror and a camera, into which Narcissus-like we as a culture seem to have fallen. Using her skills at hyper-realistic reconstruction she conjures a witty and compelling 3-dimensional tableau that among other elements includes her take on Lucy, aka AL 288, the famous skeleton of the hominin *Australopithecus afarensis*—an important early fossil supporting the connection between expanding brain size and the ability to walk on two legs—clutching her own smart phone in order to capture a selfie.

“The smartphone,” says Daynès, “both enables and encourages us to become a specialist in the staging of oneself. And yes, in addition to being a camera, it is also a mirror and the mirror is the first booster of our vanity, the thing that makes us so conscious and concerned with appearance. At this point in its evolution, you can argue that the selfie has taken over and become a kind of dictator.”

Acknowledging that in a very real way the development and use of technology is what makes us human, she also notes, “We are hyper-developed in a hyper technological conquest—we are the most connected beings in the world with an augmented reality, but can we survive in the forest? We have “all the tools” (we need a tool for everything) and high-tech is everywhere, but if we do not put thought into it, what and where does it bring us?”

The exhibit itself is in the gallery, and the gallery faces the street with floor-to-ceiling and end-to-end windows and has been attracting pedestrians who often seem both flummoxed and fascinated by what they see. One gallery visitor noted that while standing outside and looking in before entering, “Someone came up to me and said, ‘Just FYI, they’ re not real – it took me three different times passing this window to figure that out!’ ”

“As soon as Julie Lepinard and I met Elisabeth and saw her work in Paris in 2018,” says gallery cofounder and curator Agnes Faure “we knew immediately we wanted to bring this immensely interesting work to San Francisco for her first solo exhibition in the US.”

And as gallery cofounder Lepinard notes, “We founded 836M six years ago with the idea of sharing our passion for the arts as a way to have a dialogue with the community. *Find Yourself* is a perfect realization of that goal and the gallery’ s mission.”



One is hyper-realistic sculpture, the other simply real: which is which?

Image: Christine Cueto



In using her hyper-realistic sculptural techniques, Daynès wants to throw light on our actual reality. “Hyper realistic sculptures are at the border between true and false. They disturb, question, and stimulate interrogation with their ordinary positions and situations. They are both perfect mirrors and projections of ourselves ... yet make us uncomfortable.”

Daynès points out that she is not against high technology, saying, “That would be a misinterpretation. My approach is different. It is much more of a reflection on the tool itself. Making a tool into an extension of the hand has always been a vital concern for humans, a matter of survival. But what is it about these tools that extend our hand today – what do they help us do? What do we need them for? What are the challenges?”

In the exhibit Daynès offers some fields of application. These include beauty via “Blister-pack-lips” and “Soul in the Shell” that offer up a scenario of facial shopping that includes ready-to-wear, tailored or customized looks, as well as connection in “The Disconnected” , a jarringly hyper-realistic sculpture of a man staring at his smartphone, his face-to-face relationship with the screen supplanting the world around him.

“Does the tool serve us or are we their serfs? Yes, more than ever, we must reflect on the meaning of the tools that the 21st century is proposing.”

It should be noted that starting in 1997, Lucy has appeared in Daynès’ work on several occasions, including the Luc Besson movie of the same name in 2014; Daynès got her first flip phone in 2000 and switched to an iPhone in 2010.



Shopping for faces inevitably means there will be a discard pile.

Image: Christine Cueto

**What:** *Find Yourself* – an exhibit by Elisabeth Daynès

**When:** Continuing through February 6

**Where:** 836 M Gallery

**Hours:** Tuesday through Friday 12-6pm & the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month

**Admission:** FREE

### **About 836M**

836M is an innovative, non-profit gallery that combines artistic excellence with philanthropic impact. The gallery—cofounded by Sébastien and Julie Lépinard along with curator Agnès Faure—pairs renowned artists and evocative themes to enthrall and inspire those who visit. Throughout the year, 836M offers a carefully curated selection of art, conversations and events to private and public audiences alike in a modern, contemporary and warm space. 836M's founders believe that by experiencing the arts together, we can share new ideas, create a community and broaden our social awareness. Housed in the middle of vibrant Jackson Square, 836M showcases artists who push boundaries and create astonishing art. The carefully curated exhibits and events are designed to reflect the scope of contemporary art and broaden social awareness. 836M is located at 836 Montgomery Street in San Francisco. More information [www.836m.org](http://www.836m.org)