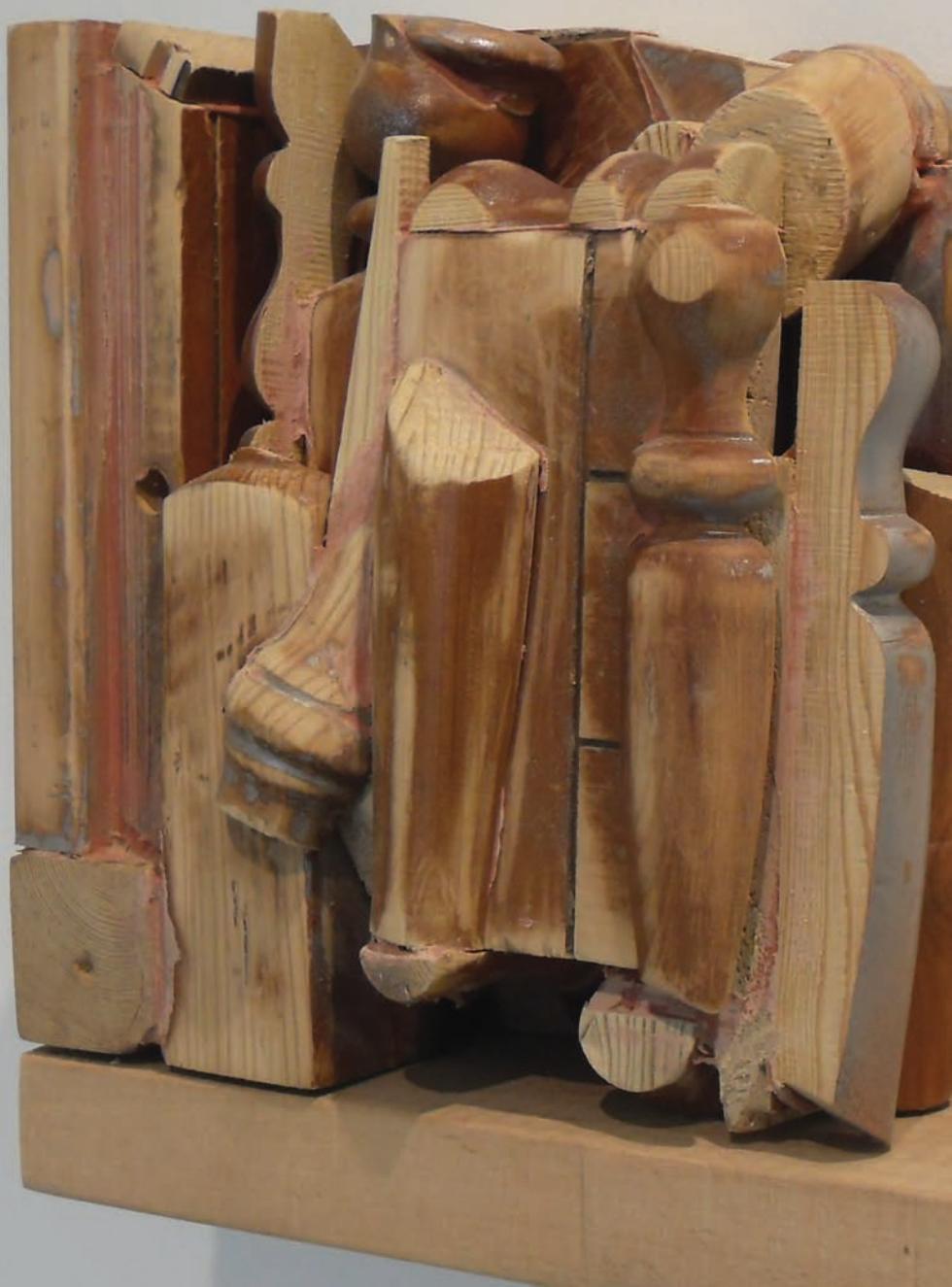


# Lewis Robinson

Redefining the Domestic





**Cover** - Table Shelf work - small wood table(cut up) - Wood/Pink grip - 2010  
Untitled (Block and table) - found table/ various wood / Pink grip - 2011



9x9x137 - small wooden table (cut up) - Grey primer/Pink grip - 2010

### Redefining the Domestic

There is a law of physics that goes something like this: matter cannot be destroyed, only changed. This concept is a way into understanding the recent work of sculptor Lewis Robinson, work that deals primarily with the materiality of objects, paralleling the flux and flow of the physical world.

Art can have a narrative or be concerned with form but more often than not the two are inextricably linked. In the recent past this artist's work told a story of loss and its memory, but always within the boundaries of his concern for materials, mass and surface. In making these earlier pieces he utilised found, domestic objects, changing them but still allowing them to be recognisable, and it is within these sculptures that we find the fledgling forms of the present work.

Over time, as the impetus for telling his story became less acute (although there is always some narrative in the work) Robinson found himself drawn to the process by which form can be changed. Whilst this element was always present in his work to some degree it has now come to the forefront. He calls this use of found objects 'Allotment technology', referring to the way allotment owners utilise whatever comes to hand, creating new functions for old and obsolete things. Although the work suggests an irreverence for traditional materials, the artist embraces its unpolished surfaces and makeshift construction, which he sees as entirely appropriate and characteristic of much contemporary art work produced post 9/11.

The most recent work is an exploration of shape-shifting. The modus operandi is simple and straightforward – nothing must be added and nothing taken away. Robinson has stated that he takes a perverse pleasure in taking old pieces of furniture, once valued both for their monetary worth and as a means by which individuals signified their identity, cutting them into pieces and re-assembling them - with surprising results. A transitional piece is clearly a table - but one leg appears pixelated and seems to flow through the table top. It is, in fact, two separate chairs, every last bit of them. This is Up and Under. A floor piece, a horizontal strip painted grey, made of numerous interlocking forms is entitled literally with its dimensions 9x9x137. This was morphed from another table – or was it a chest of drawers, or a chair? In one wall piece the ghosts of chair legs can be clearly seen, yet in other works the viewer would

be hard pressed to guess the object's origins. They fit the description of unheimlich; Freud's term for those familiar objects that return in dreams in a changed state, so that the dreamer both knows them but does not quite recognise them. The more common translation of unheimlich is 'uncanny', but better is the literal German translation, 'unhomely', an apt word for the familiar and domestic made unfamiliar, as in the work shown here. Yet beyond this strangeness there is rebuilding happening, a feeling of someone trying to make sense of it all, and make something new.

Whilst there is an obvious link and trajectory to artists working in a similar vein – Doris Salcedo, Mona Hatoum, Cornelia Parker, Bill Woodrow, Richard Wentworth and Rachel Whiteread for example, we need to turn again to physics before leaving this exploration of Lewis Robinson's work. The artist has acknowledged the influence of cosmology and within this the study of particle physics. It would appear that the more that is known about the physicality of objects the less solid and more transitory they are found to be. What are seen as solids are nothing of the kind. They are made of trillions of atoms - clusters of neutrons and positrons with electrons buzzing around them - with a vast amount of space in between. Electrons leap from one atom to another in a continuous interchange as matter erodes, melts, collapses and reforms - or even when it seems static. It is this fluid and dynamic transformation that Lewis Robinson seeks to convey.

So finally we might consider matter, the actual material that makes up the playful, transformed objects that we see in this exhibition, objects analogous and parallel to lived experience. Remember that matter cannot be destroyed, only changed, so it is humbling to think that the atoms that make up our world and the work in this exhibition, were present at the origins of the universe, created in the so-called 'big bang'. The Cosmos, Planet Earth, England, North Yorkshire, this gallery and these sculptures, are all made from matter endlessly transformed. And it is pure poetry to realise that this matter was once starlight.  
Josie Bland

*(Josie Bland is a well respected writer and teacher of critical and contextual studies, she has taught in various schools, colleges and until recently was a Senior lecturer in Critical and Contextual studies at Teesside University)*



Top left. Untitled (Up and under - work in progress) - 2011  
Top Right. What was, is no more - pine coffee table / pink grip - 2011  
Bottom Left. Table Shelf work - small wood table (cut up) - Wood/Pink grip - 2010  
Bottom Right. Spilt Milk - reconstructed dining table / Egg shell paint - 2011



### **Lewis Robinson -Biography**

Lewis studied at Loughborough College of Art, Hull College of Higher Education and University of Northumbria. Over the last thirty years as a practicing sculptor, he has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally in: France, Slovakia and the USA. He has been commissioned to produce public art work for a variety of locations in the North East of England and has work in private collections in the UK and abroad. He is currently a Senior lecturer in Fine art at Teesside University.

Lewis lives in North Yorkshire and has a studio in Loftus, East Cleveland.

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