

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**SHERRIE LEVINE****28 NOVEMBER 2012 – 5 FEBRUARY 2013
OPENING: TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 6-8PM**

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of new work by the American artist Sherrie Levine. This body of work continues to develop the themes of reproduction, seriality and commodification, which have become the hallmarks of the artist's practice over the past three decades. Levine has recurrently drawn on artistic antecedents to challenge the privileged status of originality which was established during the modernist era, positioning her as one of the most celebrated figures in the development of post-modernism.

In this exhibition a series of twelve bronze mirrors lines the walls of the gallery, accompanied by twelve pink glass skulls displayed in vitrines. Levine refers to the ready-made by elevating a functional object of our daily routine, the mirror, to the status of artwork. Moreover, by beautifully crafting the mirror in luminous bronze the artist transforms the mundane into the precious, raising the question of the commodification of art, and moving beyond her frequent practice of borrowing from previous artworks to incorporate a found object that is itself a mechanism of replication. The dimensions of the mirrors precisely reproduce those deployed by Levine in an earlier body of work which drew from iconic abstract paintings of early twentieth century. The mirrors accumulate accretions of the reflections momentarily captured in their glowing surfaces, as well as traces of Levine's earlier work and, in turn, the anterior abstract paintings to which those earlier works refer. The mirrors reproduce their counterparts while literally reproducing the image of the viewer. As in many of her previous works, the artist brings the viewer face to face with their own preconceived hierarchy of cultural values and assumptions of artistic worth. The notion of linear artistic progression is shattered by the iterated mirrors, since their reflective surfaces allow us to see what is both in front and behind. Each mirror imaginatively propels its viewer forward into the seemingly infinite progression of possible reproductions that the artist's practice engenders, whilst simultaneously pulling them backwards in a quest for the 'original' source or referent that underlines Levine's oeuvre.

Still life and vanitas paintings are 'quoted' in the twelve translucent pink skulls. Levine reconfigures an image of mortality as an object of desire by rendering the skulls in lustrous pink glass, playing with the associated meanings of material and image and, true to her early works, problematising straightforward interpretations. The elegant glass and mahogany vitrines in which the skulls are displayed seem to manifest the museum in microcosmic form. This suggests the complex relationship between Levine's works and the artworks they reference and, further, the network of artistic influences fostered by the advent of the museum. By emphasising the art historical imagery to which her own work refers, Levine makes visible the endless chain of referents made implicitly by all modernist artists. Echoing the sentiments of Rosalind Krauss in 'The Originality and the Avant-Garde,' Levine's work furthers post-modernist discourse by belying the fictitious status of avant-gardist originality.

Levine has stated, "I wanted to put a picture on top of a picture." This layered genealogy appears to propose a cumulative logic, however the artist's work produces a cycle of repetitions that increases beyond mathematical reasoning. By presenting twelve palpably identical versions of both the mirrors and the skulls Levine strips bare the visual differences between the works, paradoxically serving to increase the work's potential as markers of differentiation. The iterated objects oscillate between being experienced as a network and as individual objects. Within the exhibition they form a register of the viewer's varied thoughts and experiences as they move around the space. Levine combines serial reproduction with exquisitely crafted seductive materials to produce an exhibition that offers a forthright provocation of our notions of artistic value.

Sherrie Levine was born in Hazelton, Pennsylvania in 1947. She has held several solo exhibitions in major institutions in both the United States and Europe, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (1988), Kunsthalle Zürich (1991), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1991 and 2009), Philadelphia Museum of Art (1993), Portikus, Frankfurt (1994), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1995), South London Gallery (1996), MAMCO, Geneva (1996 and 1999), Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld (2010), and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2011). Levine divides her time between New York and Santa Fe.

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