



# Obelisk by F.O.A.M.

Laurence Lumley  
Rory Sherlock

14 November — 5 December 2020



## Obelisk

### F.O.A.M (Laurence Lumley and Rory Sherlock)

14 November – 5 December 2020

Opening reception: Saturday 14 November, 12–6pm

Closing event: Saturday 5 December

We are pleased to announce Obelisk, a site-specific, architectural-scale installation by F.O.A.M., a collaboration between Laurence Lumley and Rory Sherlock.

Obelisk presents the ongoing project of a monument yet to be built. When fully realised it will stand outside in the city, 14 metres tall and painted from top to bottom in reflective aluminium roof paint, blazing in the sun. For now, F.O.A.M. have transformed the gallery into a building-site for the obelisk under construction. Two full-sized segments of the whole, the base and the point, fill the space from floor to ceiling.

This is a strange kind of monument that emerges out of the hyper-systematized, highly wasteful and financially driven context of contemporary construction. While its form is reminiscent of an ancient, massive structure, somewhere between its namesake and a ziggurat, it is built – or rather slapped together – from the lightweight ‘junk’ materials of contemporary building. Crude, primitive, and incomplete, the fragments on display nonetheless have a kind of visceral beauty and an unsettling presence of their own.

‘Foil-backed lightweight foam – polyiso plastic trash. But there’s gonna be more and more of it about, and it’s everywhere already. So we’ve learnt to love it, and now we can relax.’ – F.O.A.M. (An Idea for a Monument, 2020)

As Covid-19 requires artists and galleries to examine not only their outputs but also their definitions of the term ‘exhibition’, San Mei and F.O.A.M. look to showcase Obelisk as a way of re-assessing ‘trash’. Acknowledging the significant lifespans of many of the ‘disposable’ materials that underlie the vast majority of architectural developments today, the show will include a digital public workshop and panel discussion. Participants in the former will post images of the trash materials in the hidden crevices of their homes onto a shared online drive, to then be projected into the space as a collective research tool.

In line with the design and construction methodology of F.O.A.M., Obelisk will be collectively ripped apart at the end of the exhibition and returned to a state of raw material, with as much as possible destined for re-use in future iterations of the obelisk, while any remaining salvaged fragments can be re-purposed as functional objects or sculptural pieces in their own right.

**San Mei Gallery** is an independent space for contemporary art in South London, committed to research-led, educational and collaborative exchanges. Operating with an artist-led approach, we support artists and curators to experiment with new ideas.