

Phantasmagoria

Audio guide

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HENRY MOORE
INSTITUTE

Stop 3.

Hi, I'm Isaac Lythgoe and I'm a sculptor and I live in Paris.

In *Phantasmagoria* I'm showing four works. *Why can't we remember the future?* – the sculpture stands around two metres tall and is made from a combination of materials. From the floor, a pair of high heels in black gloss are made from carved wood, set in these heels or wearing them a pair of crossed cow legs. The cow legs have adornments on the shins as if armour, and these are painted in high gloss, flip tone car paints. As we work up the legs at the top of the legs, a pair of horns appear in carved walnut. These horns also double as a very big croissant, and the walnut has a soft feel to it. Stood on top of what is effectively the pelvis of a rear pair of cow legs or a large pair of wings. The wings are a composite of carbon fibre.

I began the work with a very simple premise, which was a consideration of how blind we are to future events and how hard it is to predict. The work started from the title and a very simple thought experiment which place yourself tomorrow and you wake up and nothing that has ever been made by man exists. You exist, your memories exist. But the world is returned to a state that hasn't been seen for two hundred thousand years. And then try and assemble this sort of the knowledge of the world. Think about how complex and disparate that

knowledge is spread across the world, across all the people who've woken up without anything that has ever existed.

I wanted to make a work that felt conscious of how precarious knowledge is, and how detached we are from the making of the current world. How complex is the supply chain to make a croissant? And so I really wanted to make a work about a croissant. And this led me to rural France, where I spend a lot of time where I grew up partially, and the fields and the cattle and the grass and the supply chain for the wheat and the milk and the butter and from the shoes that felt like roads to the cow legs, to the wings, which are made out of cow stomach leather.

The four stomachs of a cow have four very distinct textures. They go from geodesic to something more like a wheat field. And I really wanted, when making, to have this feeling that there were fields up behind this main cow figure.

This is the end of Stop 3.

This is a transcript of an audio guide produced by Henry Moore Institute for the exhibition *Phantasmagoria*, on display from 15 May to 30 August 2026. For more information visit henry-moore.org/phantasmagoria