COLNAGHI

CHARLES LEDRAY
(b. 1960, Seattle)

BUTTONS, 2000-2002
130 human bone buttons
Dimensions variable

Provenance

The Artist.

Literature

C. LeDray and C. Gould, eds. *Charles LeDray, Sculpture 1989-2002*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 2002, p. 25, ill. (colour).

C. LeDray, J. Lingwood, J. Mergel, and A. D. Weinberg, eds. *Charles LeDray: Workworkworkworkwork*, Skira, 2010, pp. 134–135, pl. 82–83, p. 154 ill. (colour).

Craig F. Starr Gallery, *Charles Ledray: Works*, New Yotk, 2016, cat. no. 6 ill. (colour).

Exhibited

Philadelphia, Institute of Contemporary Art; The Arts Club of Chicago; San Francisco, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; Washington, Seattle Art Museum, *Charles LeDray, Sculpture 1989–2002*, May 11, 2002 – July 27, 2003.

Boston, Institute of Contemporary Art; New York, Whitney Museum of American Art; Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Charles LeDray: workworkworkworkwork*, July 16, 2010 - September 11, 2011.

Lugano, Sperone Westwater, *Untitled (Giotto's O),* November 30, 2012 – February 15, 2013.

New York, Craig F. Starr Gallery, *Charles LeDray Works*, September 9 – October 29, 2016.

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Buttons, 2000-2002 by Charles LeDray presents us with 130 buttons carved out of human bone by the artist, all in different shapes and sizes, and all unique. LeDray learnt to sew from his mother as a child, while clothing and related objects have always been an important component of his artistic expression. *Buttons* evokes the collective memories surrounding these everyday objects, which remain despite the passage of time. It recalls sewing boxes kept at home by generations of women and overflowing with unused buttons; it is also reminiscent of the innocent collections of small objects put together by children universally. To Alfred Kren, curator of *The Decay of Beauty. The Beauty of Decay*., the immediate association that springs to mind is the Holocaust and the heart-wrenching photographs of piles of shoes, suitcases, buttons.

LeDray conjures stories of human experience through a hand-made world in miniature. Comprised of scaled-down replicas of found or imagined everyday objects, the factual appearance of LeDray's work disguises the remarkable means of their creation – meticulously hand-crafted, sewn, cast, carved, and sculpted – the artist's attention to detail renders the work true to life. Mostly self-taught, although he briefly attended art school in his native Seattle, he works alone, unassisted by a studio and his labour-intensive sculptures can take years to complete. The work is rich with conceptual complexity and a multiplicity of associations (cultural, historical, and personal). The familiarity of the objects provokes a sense of collective memory, like souvenirs of the past, entailing both intimate and enigmatic narratives. LeDray's work is marked by artistic invention, masterful handling of technique, and an uncanny manipulation of scale.

Born in Seattle in 1960, Charles LeDray lives and works between New York City and the Hudson Valley. He has been recognised as one of the most remarkable contemporary American artists since he became the recipient of the "Prix de Rome" from the American Academy in Rome in 1997. In 2010, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston organised a comprehensive retrospective, which travelled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. From 2002–2003, LeDray was the subject of a survey exhibition organized by the ICA Philadelphia, which travelled to the Arts Club of Chicago, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco and the Seattle Art Museum. LeDray's work can be found in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.