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— SHOWstudio Shop
'Written in Soap: A Plinth Project'
Meekyoung Shin's newest work is unveiled

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A faint perfume lingered in the air yesterday evening when a new sculpture by Korean artist Meekyoung Shin was unveiled. The piece stands on the central plinth in Cavendish Square and recreates an equestrian statue of the notorious Duke of Cumberland which had previously resided in the same spot, but was removed in 1868. It is not however fabricated in bronze or marble as might be expected, but instead has been crafted entirely from soap. Now re invigorated, the piece demands all the majesty one could imagine of its original.

What is really interesting about this work and its positioning, is the attention it draws to a continued disparity in Eastern and Western art historical concerns. Here in the West, we place an emphasis on permanence. Our most treasured historical figures are immortalised in imperishable materials which have been endowed with an inherent superiority. In contrast, Eastern philosophy focuses on the transient, the ephemeral and the passing. Shin's use of soap allows her to give the appearance of permanence, in an impermanent material and in doing so examines and questions the implications of both. Where the sculpture stands in Cavendish Square unprotected from the elements, it will gradually fade and weather. What is usually a spectacle of grandeur and continued presence, is transformed into a study in disappearance. Shin cleverly toys with our experience of time. Even the most robust of statues diminish over hundreds of years, but here just one year will reveal the transformation of matter as it perishes, leaving a floral scent as it fades.

Meekyoung Shin's 'Written in Soap: A Plinth Project' opened yesterday and will remain in Cavendish Square over the next year. Its well worth a visit in this glorious weather.