

# Burning to Speak

Hester Reeve 2015

Thought Positions on Sculpture (Group Show)

Huddersfield Art Gallery 16/10/15 – 9/1/16

Curated by Rowan Bailey

The sculpture *Burning To Speak* was a quasi piece of furniture designed to hold-protect-proclaim a thought provoking sentence taken from Plato's Phaedrus:

There was a tradition in the temple of Dodana that oak first gave prophetic utterances. The men of old, far simpler than you sophisticated young men, deemed that if they heard the truth from even from rock or oak it was enough; whereas you seem not to consider whether a thing is or is not true but who the speaker is and from what country the tale comes.

This statement has an effect on my thinking analogous to that of a penknife to carving. Hard to fathom or explain in words, I can at least state that the sentence allows something outside the human and held in matter to 'speak' but, admittedly, only in terms of my responsiveness (since only humans have tongues and what is outside of human language can not be worded).



By taking on the form of a household utilitarian item, *Burning to Speak* aimed to link philosophical-artistic provocation to the mundane life-sphere; the sculpting of new potential for how we conceive of life and, following the quotation, how life might conceive us.

The trainer-candle holders are a common feature of my sculptural works, beside them is a hand made meteorite. Meteorites are often covered in what look like thumbprints, formed through the force of heat as they fall from outer space into Earth's atmosphere. The meteorite made for *Burning to Speak* is white, as if it may have had some role in the script's materialisation.



The piece deliberately problematised the viewer-artwork relationship. It aimed to communicate but only on the active interest of the viewer (i.e. to open the drawers to see if there was anything inside and then to have to want to piece the whole text together in order to literally be-hold the artwork). The letters forming the words were guarded by salt cellars.