

**18. Eloise Cato**

Eloise Cato, *Raw Artificial VI*, 2014.  
Charcoal and polyethylene, 54 x  
57 x 33cm.

Eloise Cato, *Raw Artificial VII*, 2014.  
Charcoal and polyethylene, 47 x  
48 x 24cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND M  
CONTEMPORARY, SYDNEY.

**18.****Eloise Cato**

Young Sydney artist **Eloise Cato** once saw her uncle hit by lightning. “Not directly,” she says, as though the fact it hit a telegraph pole before shooting out to his leg makes much of a difference. It is something she still dreams about.

Cato’s work tangles the difference between the shock and raw emotion we can feel as human beings with the physical evidence of destructive forces – both manmade and natural. The works are not flashy, but the unassuming surfaces hide the brute power and physicality that went into their construction. Some are made from pieces of burnt wood rescued from bushfire sites and dipped in shiny resin, while for others she squats for hours in front of the extruder in a plastics factory, shaping the hot plastic as it’s forced out of the machine, later painting the shapes and coating them in charcoal. The manmade appears natural and vice versa, but both have been forged from trauma.

Her interest in disasters is personal, she says. “These disasters represent my emotional state at some times ... I feel it [the threat of disasters] is the one thing I can’t control.”

M Contemporary co-director **Louise Rush** first saw Cato’s work at the National Art School graduate exhibition in Sydney in 2013. “It was completely different ... I hadn’t seen anything like it from either an established or an emerging artist,” Rush says. “And they were beautifully constructed, [with] an absolutely perfect finish to everything.”

The gallery then included her work in a group exhibition of emerging artists in 2014, selling all of her pieces, before offering her a solo exhibition in 2015. Last year she had a small solo at Chasm Gallery in Chippendale, Sydney. She has also exhibited her work as part of the Museum of Contemporary Art’s annual staff exhibition, which she curated in 2013 and 2014, significantly reshaping and expanding it last year.

*Jane O’Sullivan*

Eloise Cato will show with M Contemporary Gallery in Sydney from 14 February to 15 March 2015.

