



Julia Sutherland on Tracey Emin's second public art foray into the US

Roman Standard", which was created in 2005 and was Tracey Emin's first piece of public art, might come as a surprise to those familiar with her work. There's no trace here of the usual in-her-face approach; no scrawled messages; no personal detritus: this is a dignified and delicate work, so naturalistic that the bronze bird on top of the soaring pole has often been mistaken for a living creature.

The picture below shows the first incarnation of the piece, in Liverpool, UK; this time the pole will rise 13ft over New York's Petrosino Square. It bears a curious title for such a peaceful image – one that Emin has described as a symbol of "hope, faith and spirituality" – because the Roman standards were nothing if not bellicose, an integral

part of the language of warfare – and of the local identity of particular legions.

So it would seem that we're invited to take this airy, unambiguous creature as a rebuttal of both elements; peaceable rather than militaristic; inclusive and international rather than tribal.

Will it succeed in that ambitious aim? It will be the second public piece Emin has shown in New York City: last February the throbbing neon for which Times Square is famous was augmented, for a few minutes before midnight each night, by several of Emin's bright-red, heart-shaped and hand-scrawled messages of love. Sponsored by [redacted], a site on which contemporary artists can offer their works for sale in digital limited editions, it was a dramatic stunt much more in keeping with the Emin we know – especially because passers-by could win a free piece of digi-Emin by Tweeting a picture of themselves kissing in front of the red love hearts.

As far from the modest bird as one could get, perhaps. But the combination of the two extremes will help to further the spread of Emin's work across the US. New York gallery Lehmann Maupin has just opened a huge show (even the press release describes it as "sprawling") of more than 100 works, entitled *I Followed You to the Sun*, which include the whole rich range of Emin's practice, from bronze sculptures to embroideries, drawings to film.

Next, Emin hits a US institution for the first time, in December of this year, when the excellent Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami offers up her inaugural solo museum show in the US. Since MoCA Miami has a rich outreach programme to the local community, especially young people, Emin will be put in touch with a public that is likely to respond eagerly to some of her raunchier work.

Tracey Emin's 'Roman Standard' will be on display from May 10 to September 8 at Petrosino Square, New York City
www.lehmannmaupin.com
www.mocanomi.org

