

# Sarah Munro

b.1970

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Is *Blood Red Iteration #4* a prototype for a new product yet to be realised? Is it part of a futuristic vehicle designed to travel at supersonic speed or take us into deep space? With their sleek lines, sheer planes, hard edges, shapely contours and highly reflective surfaces, the objects or sculptural forms Sarah Munro creates have a decidedly 21st century aesthetic. They would be equally at home in an experimental design lab as in a contemporary art gallery. This association with industrial design environments and new design technologies provides an entry point for helping us understand Munro's work.

Before she began to create these three-dimensional sculptural works, Munro used to make large scale paintings that incorporated the use of three-dimensional modelling. Unsatisfied with the results of creating contours by hand, she looked into the latest computer design programmes to see how they might assist. Once inside CAD (computer aided design software, primarily used by architects, designers and engineers), Munro became fascinated by the way the software 'draws' light over a three-dimensional form, and how it allows her to invent ways for three-dimensional forms to interact with each other and the space that surrounds them.

If you thought that the contours and flat planes of *Blood Red Iteration #4* seemed 'programmed' or a little too perfect to be made by a human mind and a pair of hands, then you would be on the right track. Perhaps, as an acknowledgment of the field of 'artificial intelligence', which will no doubt play an increasing role in our lives, Munro has deliberately situated her artistic practice within a tight set of CAD parameters, accepting that the form of her art will be determined by the decisions she makes within those constraints. One key tool she works with is the ray tracing algorithm which simulates the fall of light and the properties of reflection, refraction and shadow. Even the work's title is indicative of her CAD working process – 'iteration', in this instance, refers to the repetition of an activity within a computer programme.

Munro's works could be described as 'futuristic minimalism', influenced and made possible by new industrial technologies and design. The minimalist aesthetic came to prominence in New York in the 1960s with the work of artists Donald Judd, Carl Andre and Richard Serra, who favoured the radical simplicity of industrial forms and materials and rejected the notion of content or subject matter in art. Munro shares their reductive aesthetic and preference for industrial materials: in her case, fibreglass and automotive car paint or lacquer. One aspect of her work that may not be immediately apparent to the viewer is the hours of manual labour that go into perfecting the lush colour and hyper-reflectivity of the work; technology is humanised.

## Robyn Pickens

### Galleries and museums:

[www.pageblackiegallery.co.nz](http://www.pageblackiegallery.co.nz)

[www.64zero3.com](http://www.64zero3.com)

### Web search:

Carl Andre

Donald Judd

Richard Serra

