

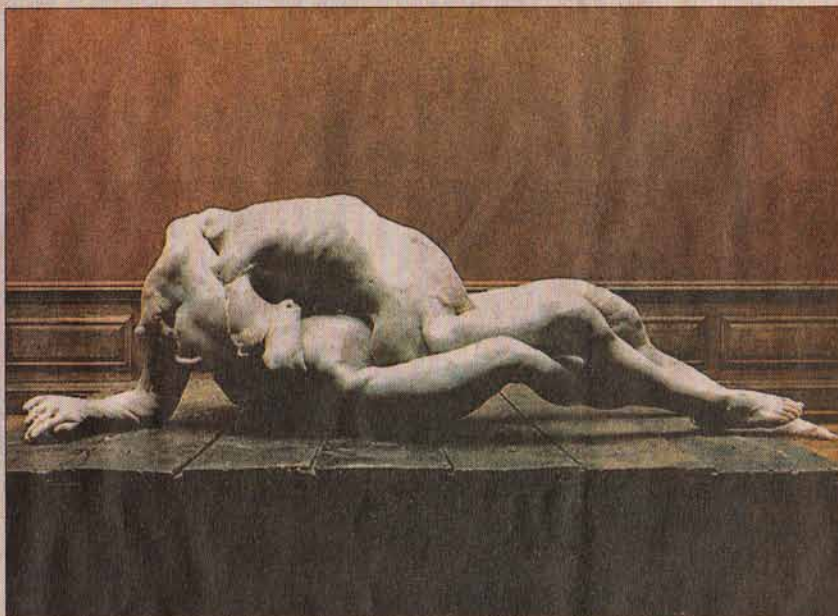
## Visual arts Jackie Wullschlager

### Berlinde de Bruyckere, Luca Giordano

Hauser & Wirth/Colnaghi, London W1

Luca Giordano died in 1705 in Naples, leaving a body of religious and mythological paintings influenced by Caravaggio's dynamic style but also, in their dazzling light and colour, anticipating the rococo. Berlinde de Bruyckere, born in Ghent in 1964, is one of the most gifted sculptors of her generation. Her work in wax, oil, iron, wool, horse hides and hair conveys an eerie naturalism, turning on deconstructions of the suffering human figure but veering towards abstraction. Detached from reality by their extreme distortions and fragmentation, her mostly headless figures carry great emotional charge yet no narrative content: "the figure as a whole is the mental state", she says. The flesh-as-meat theme echoes Francis Bacon; put de Bruyckere alongside Giordano however, and her debt to the baroque becomes plain.

Her new sculpture "We Are All Flesh", made in dialogue with Giordano's "St Bartholomew" and "Prometheus Unbound", where muscular, tortured bodies gleam against darkness, lies between the two canvases in Colnaghi's red room. De Bruyckere unites the two figures as a mass of flesh, sinews,



De Bruyckere's installation, 'We Are All Flesh', at Hauser & Wirth

Mike Bruce

limbs, torsos writhing in violent, sensual contortions. She paints the insides of her casts with wax and blue, green and red pigments so that the vessels of the body appear to bleed through to the translucent surface skin. "Crown of Thorns", a flesh-coloured tangle made from a cast of tree twigs and hung with electricity cables and nails, displayed in

an old glass taxidermy dome, and "Letzel", a scar-riddled hunk of meat cast from the bellies of horses and suspended from the ceiling, are as shocking, fragile, introverted: ragbag images of humanity caught between beauty and decay.  
[www.hauserwirth.com](http://www.hauserwirth.com), +44 (0)20 7287 2300, to May 2