

Trickster Figures: Sculpture and the Body



WE ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE¹

Jes Fernie

The story of sculpture begins with the body, through the making of monuments and statues. Signifiers of power and status, they established a closely guarded language of accepted norms concerning where sculpture should sit, how it should look, what it should be made of, what it should represent, and who gets to make it. The most conservative of disciplines, it became loaded with expectations around solidity, weight, scale and longevity which, even after decades of kneading and stretching and twisting (to paraphrase Rosalind Krauss)², continue to linger in contemporary discourse and art-making practice.

At this moment, in the early stages of the 21st century, seismic social, political and environmental shifts have created the foundation for new thinking around the body's relation to the world and to sculpture. There is a growing, visceral sense that our bodies are vulnerable and fragile things that exist within a crumbling ecosystem; that the binary approach we employ to create systems of knowledge is increasingly outmoded; and that the hierarchical structure we have created in which the human body is viewed as superior to – or separate from – other life forms and organisms is not only inaccurate but also deeply pernicious.

Trickster Figures: Sculpture and the Body brings together the work of eleven artists who are exploring this new configuration of the body's relation to the world. It shines a light on the potent slippages that are taking place between bodily systems, technology, humans, animals, identities and the environment, and acknowledges that the distinction between human and animal, man and woman, organism and machine is gradually eroding. It recognises that our bodies are entangled in the geopolitical landscape of contemporary life, or to put it another way, that our bodies are contaminated with the pollutants of 21st century extractive capitalism. Bodies are on the move, in search of scarce resources and viable climates. Desperation-driven migration is the result of a planetary polycrisis born of inequality, colonialism, precarity and cultural supremacy. This world of destabilised borders and breached boundaries has resulted in a situation in which everything opens onto everything else, and bodies are implicated.

*"...there is a sense that the sky is getting dark and the horizon is moving nearer – that I should be paying attention, because one day the distant ice shelf will come ripping through the tissue of my body – through every body – even if it appears, for now, that the bodies all around me are intact."*³

*"Precarity is the condition of our time. Precarity is the condition of being vulnerable to others... we are not in control, not even of ourselves."*⁴

We may be parched (metaphorically, morally, physically), but the artists in the exhibition insist on experimenting with categorial fluidity. They work with and beyond existing frameworks in order to invent new languages, new bodies, and new relations to the world. In many cases, the artwork is slippery and opaque – the artists convinced that beauty, glamour, seduction, compulsion, and things unknown and unspeakable should remain at its core. Craftsmanship, exquisite attention to detail, and abundant care is manifestly evident. There is also a marked sense of solidarity between the artists themselves – they recognise that solo bodies, including those of artists, are vulnerable and more able to

¹ Daisy Hildyard, *The Second Body*, Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017

² Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *October*, Vol. 8, Spring 1979

³ Daisy Hildyard, *The Second Body*, Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017

⁴ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, Princeton University Press, 2015

“...beauty gives you a fantastic, ‘impossible’ access to the inaccessible, to the withdrawn, open qualities of things, their mysterious reality.”⁵

Many of the artists in the exhibition identify as non-binary, neuro-divergent, Black, queer, or trans. While identity is in no way the sole driver in the work, it inevitably surfaces at key points, through the expression of expansive mind-bending world views, and a freeing up of the body to explore new connections to its environment through dance, movement, conceptual framing and material closeness. In an oblique, playful, sometimes disturbing way, much of the work asks if we can move beyond a system that categorises art and artists in binary terms (female / male; figurative / abstract; human / animal; able-bodied / disabled) to reach a more porous place that recognises the shifts, the seepage, the hybrid spaces, the unmoored places, the worlds that are newly forming. Perhaps in this moment, we can engineer a glitch in the planetary system of the visual art infrastructure that moves beyond ‘women only’ exhibition and book-making formats, to include a more fluid mix of practitioners who embrace instability, and lean into something that exists beyond language and gender.

“...one can only arrive at oneself thanks to change, to mutation, to hybridization.”⁷

flourish within a support structure. This care and solidarity is political – it expresses an awareness of the way bodies, in broader societal contexts, are treated, how they are described, impacted on, and controlled. This proximity and generosity of spirit can be extended to the rhizomatic ways that artworks in the exhibition overlap, connect with, and move through each other. Visitors are invited to dance on a sculpture while wearing another; look through a sculpture to view the work of another; sit with a sculpture and listen to another.

This grouping together of artists living predominantly in the UK inevitably leads to a discussion about the concept of ‘British sculpture’, a term tied to the 1980s, when a number of artists rose to prominence on an international stage. Rejecting the dematerialisation of art in its minimal and conceptual form as practised in the 1960s and 70s, these artists returned to the traditional materials and processes of the previous generation. Working in the politically tumultuous Thatcher years which spawned our post-industrial landscape and free-market economy, this loosely configured group that included Bill Woodrow, Alison Wilding, Barry Flanagan, Tony Cragg, and Shirazeh Houshiary, rejected abstraction in favour of figurative and metaphoric imagery. Often using the debris of contemporary life (including old sofas, clothes, shopping trolleys, tyres, and plastic toys) they considered ways that objects are assigned meaning, and played with colour, humour, and variegated forms of physicality. Seminal exhibitions were held at the Hayward Gallery and Serpentine Gallery in 1983 (*The Sculpture Show*), and twenty years later, in 2002, the Whitechapel Gallery staged an exhibition *Early One Morning* (a tribute to Anthony Caro’s eponymous sculpture of 1962) showing the work of five young UK based artists: Eva Rothschild, Gary Webb, Shahin Afrassiabi, Claire Barclay, and Jim Lambie. Notable for their sense of optimism about the future (this was, after all, the dawn of a new millennium), they experimented with three dimensional form primarily through the assemblage of found materials, often constructing the work on site, in the gallery space. There were a number of defining features of the works: they were explicitly non-figurative, it was hard to tell if they were sculptures or installations, they were made with whatever was to hand (synthetic plastic, bits of leather, buttons, lightbulbs, loudspeakers), and they were anti-monumental and curious about the relationship between the viewer and the work. Also evident was the artists’ interest in broader contemporary culture, as well as issues around consumerism, modernism and politics.

How does *Trickster Figures* extend this narrative? The most obvious ‘extension’ can be seen in the variegated character of the practitioners themselves, in terms of

geographical and cultural heritage, but also in terms of race and gender.⁸ In marked contrast to work in the Whitechapel exhibition twenty years previously, there is a foreboding about the future expressed in many of the works that is unnerving and strange. There is also little sense that these artists are interested in what they should or shouldn’t be using as materials, the choice is dictated by what the work itself appears to demand. So, bronze and copper sculptures sit alongside ones made of polystyrene, resin, plastic bags and body wash. Other previously upheld orthodoxies are ignored, toyed with, or embraced: a plinth is employed when it is useful, while other works sit directly on the floor (and in one case, the work *is* the floor), and the human figure is explicitly present in some works, while other works offer more elusive, abstract representations of the body. Some are stand-alone sculptures, while others are part of an installation made up of murals, groupings, and drawings. Some artists spend days finely crafting a work, while others outsource production or use ‘found’ objects. There is no ‘truth to materials’ diktat that establishes a clear relationship between the size and shape of an object and the inherent qualities – some works are stretched, painted, and moulded, while others retain their original material state. There is an urgent interest in process – how the works are made, and the political, ideological context in which they are situated. This inevitably extends to an awareness of the ethical issues relating to the use of other bodies, and the means of extraction employed in the sourcing of materials. Many of the artists seem interested in the idea that form is not an attribute that is necessarily fixed, but one that is malleable and even unstable. Broadly speaking, the artists extend their reach beyond the closed-loop system of art appraisal by form, to arrive at a place that is less shackled to historical norms and practices.

The provocation implicit in the subtitle of the exhibition (‘the next chapter in the story of British sculpture’) is perhaps evidence that the Trickster has entered the fray. It could be argued that there is now no such thing as ‘British sculpture’. The tech-enabled ease with which bodies move across the planet, combined with the ghostly, tendrilled workings of the internet, means that it is increasingly hard to align art with national characteristics or geographic specificity. Unlike artists working in the mid and late 20th century, who were predominantly born and lived in the UK, many of the artists in *Trickster Figures* were brought up far from UK shores, from São Paulo to Nancy and Ávila, and don’t consider themselves to be ‘British’ at all. This is an island whose people seem loath to confront the reality of their colonial past and whose identity is looking increasingly fragile on the world stage due to its ongoing campaign of xenophobia, misanthropy and cultural jingoism. With the fallout of Brexit, draconian anti-immigration rhetoric and policies, an ideological commitment to austerity, restrictions on freedom of expression, and growing calls for independence from Scotland, the concept of ‘Britishness’ is fraught, at best, and perhaps one that few artists are clamouring to be part of.

The historical or mythological ‘trickster’ is often defined as a character who disobeys rules and defies categories and conventions. But he (for he is almost always a he) is so much more: ‘Lord of the in-between’, the crossroad at the edge of town, the confounder of distinctions (between wrong / right, sacred / profane, young / old, living / dead, male / female), the mythic embodiment of ambiguity, an eternal state of mind. Trickster is also a truly global phenomenon, assuming a multitude of forms and characters, from west Africa’s *Legba*, to Native America’s *Wakdjunkaga*. Old Norse tales and Greek myths focus on the antics of *Loki* and *Hermes*. He is described as polytropic (‘turning many ways’) and often regarded as the creator of culture. He encourages embodied thinking and speaks freely

“I wonder if the trickster isn’t beckoning at the wilds beyond our fences, wanting us to dance between the binary.”⁹

5 Timothy Morton, *All Art is Ecological*, Penguin Books, 2018
6 Paul B Preciado, ‘I Am Falling in Love’, *Artforum*, 6 Oct 2022
7 Paul B Preciado, *An Apartment on Uranus*, Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2019

8 It should be noted that artists of Asian and African descent were making significant sculpture in the UK in this period – Kim Lim and David Medalla for example – but their names are largely absent from the British sculpture historical narrative – see Aindrea Emelife’s essay ‘A Personal Call for a More Expansive British Art’ published in *Revisiting Modern British Art*, edited by Jo Baring, Lund Humphries, 2022.
9 Dr Bayo Akomolafe, ‘on Slowing Down in Urgent Times’, *for the wild* podcast, episode 285, 2020

where language has been blocked. The academic and philosopher Donna Haraway refers to tricksters as ‘wild cards that reconfigure possible worlds’.¹⁰ The artists in this exhibition are doing just that, although here, trickster assumes a more elusive and fluid identity that befits the ambiguity that marks their character.

“...the myth asserts that the origins, liveliness, and durability of cultures require that there be space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on.”¹²

This letting go of old systems and categories is mirrored in the ways that artists and writers are currently experimenting with text and format in art criticism and writing. Developed over the last twenty years, this approach challenges conventional ideas about how art writing looks, sounds, and feels, where it is published, who writes and reads it, and whose voice is prioritised within it. It provides us with an alternative model of disseminating the thinking that takes place around contemporary art practice, and is ‘an attempt to attend to that which does not fit’.¹¹ While this experimental turn is gaining traction within the established core of the artworld, it is marginal feminist, queer, non-binary, anti-racist voices that originally sought to disrupt the nest with their embodied narratives. These writers move fluidly between genres such as theory, fiction and criticism to create playful, speculative, and politically astute contributions to the field. Many of the artists in *Trickster Figures* are interested in this new portal into the world of art. It felt apt, therefore, to invite artist and writer Francis Whorral-Campbell to contribute a text to this publication that builds on this genre. *The Cowboy*, written in the form of an on-line community message board in which a trickster carries out a series of fantastical, botched odd jobs that assume the character of the artworks in the exhibition, is a joyful, strange, sometimes troubling addition to our project. It casts the exhibition as a piece of fiction, using the language of 21st century communication, with its constructed identities, swagger and sloppy grammar. Like much of the work in the exhibition, it exists in the in-between, the glitch where new things are born.

The breadth of interests of these artists is evident in the ways that many of them situate and think through their work within the fictive worlds of literature, poetry, and film, as well as YouTube videos, popular science books, and political theory. In order to highlight this eclectic, expansive pool of influences we invited the artists to suggest books, podcasts, films or TV programmes to include in our bibliography at the back of this publication. Ranging from a book on the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, to an anime TV series about an alien parasite, and a children’s story about a west African trickster, they forge generous and generative conversations across disciplines, and tell apposite stories about the interests of a selection of artists working in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Although manifesting as a finite three-month exhibition, *Trickster Figures* is part of an ongoing, evolving project. It remains full of gaps and unstable propositions, but the hope is that it will resonate with, and draw sustenance from, other discourses and conversations within the field of sculpture and beyond.

The science fiction author Octavia Butler wasn’t able to finish her *Parable of the Trickster* before she died in 2006, but she did arrive at an epigram for the book which beautifully expresses the possibility of breaking through an impasse to arrive at something previously unexpressed. Her lines mirror the varying, magical, ways that the artists in *Trickster Figures* are able to reach beyond existing frameworks to imagine new worlds:

*There’s nothing new
under the sun,
but there are new suns.*

10 Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women, the Reinvention of Nature*, Free Association Books, 1991
11 Dominic Johnson, ‘The Carrier Bag Theory of Art History: experimental writing in, on and alongside feminist and queer art’, panel discussion *Association for Art History Conference 2022*
12 Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World*, The Canons, 1998

List of Works

Alice Channer

AC1 *Soft Sediment Deformation (Iron Bodies)*, 2023
Opal Pleated Ink Jet Prints on and in Heavy Crepe De Chine
Courtesy of the artist

AC2 *Planetary System (Kozar DGK63”)*, 2019
Kolzer DGK63” Horizontal System Vacuum Metallizing Carousel; Vacuum Metallized Spider Crab (Maja Brachydactyla) and Brown Crab (Cancer Pagurus) Shells on Stainless Steel Jigs
Courtesy of the artist and Konrad Fischer Galerie, Berlin and Düsseldorf

AC3 *Life Without Air (Lattice)*, 2022
Life Without Air (Atom), 2022
Life Without Air (Particle), 2022
Silk Cut Cigarette Ash; Stainless Steel Metal Microspheres 0.71- 0.88mm; Pencil and Water on and in Paper
Life Without Air (Crystal), 2022
Silk Cut Cigarette Ash; Stainless Steel Metal Microspheres 0.71–0.88mm; Polyethylene Microspheres 500–850µm; Pencil and Water on and in Paper
Courtesy of the artist and Large Glass, London

AC4 *The Colonization of Mars*, 2023
Mirror polished, welded and lazer-cut stainless steel; Accordion pleated hi-tech lamé; Polished Hematite
Courtesy of the artist

Ro Robertson

RR1 *Torso I*, 2021
Corten steel, jesmonite, marine paint and found objects (white vest, blue shorts, sports socks, mulch, box of matches)
Courtesy of the artist, Sigrid and Stephen Kirk and Maximillian William, London

RR2 *Torso II*, 2021
Corten steel, jesmonite, marine paint and found objects (white vest, white sports socks, seaweed, mulch and rocks)
Courtesy of Loewe Foundation, Madrid, Spain and Maximillian William, London

RR3 *Torso III*, 2022
Corten steel, oil paint, and found objects (white vest, sand, shell, white boxer shorts and rock)
Courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society

through a special partnership with the Henry Moore Foundation, supported by Cathy Wills, 2022

RR4 *Underscore I*, 2022
Gouache, graphite, granite, sandstone and red mud on paper

RR5 *Underscore II*, 2022
Gouache, graphite, granite, sandstone and red mud on paper

RR6 *Underscore III*, 2022
Gouache, graphite, granite, sandstone and red mud on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Maximillian William, London

Harold Offeh

HO1 *Body Landscape Memory. Symphonic Variations on an African Air, Op.63*, 2019
Video
Courtesy of the artist
Commissioned by Wysing Arts Centre

Saelia Aparicio

SA1 *prosthetics for invertebrates*, 2019

SA2 *Sweaty whirlpool*
Fish tank, trolley, magnetic stirrer, Jo Miller’s hat, Attua’s bra, pearl powder, Tai Shani’s wig

SA3 *Our lady of cleaning fluids*
Mouth blown glass, steel, cleaning products

SA4 *Night shift*
Steel, synthetic hair, electric components, fluorescent light

SA5 *I cannot change you so I must replace you*
Jesmonite, silicon masturbator, shoe, glass shelf

SA6 *Toetally fine*
Shoes, mouth blown glass, resin, ceramics, fairy liquid

SA7 *Clean cut*
Duster, epoxy resin, nail stickers, mouth blown glass, body wash, metal table

SA8 *prosthetics for invertebrates*
Ink and charcoal on wall

Courtesy of the artist

Nicolas Deshayes

- ND1

Gargouilles, 2021

Patinated bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Modern Art, London
- ND2

Boy and Swan, 2018

Cuckold's Point, 2018

La Toilette, 2018

Gossip Column, 2018

Grubber, 2018

Sugar Mile, 2018

Cast aluminium, stainless steel and water

Courtesy of the artist and Modern Art, London

Jesse Darling

- JD1

Present!, 2022

Steel, gloves, JD Sports bag

Courtesy of the artist and Arcadia Missa, London
- JD2

vers top, 2020

Steel

Courtesy of the artist and Arcadia Missa, London
- JD3

Study 4 Parenthood, 2018 / 2022

Boxing glove, pigment, cast jesmonite, raw steel

Courtesy of the artist and Arcadia Missa, London

Nnena Kalu

- NK1

Drawings, 2021–2022

Colorama and Fabriano paper rolls, acrylic paint pen, permanent marker, chalk pen, graphite, oil pastel, soft pastel, oil stick.

Courtesy of Nnena Kalu and ActionSpace
- Kalu works with ActionSpace, a leading organisation supporting the development of artists with learning disabilities

Joe Namy

- JN1

Disguise as Dancefloor, 2022

Sculpture, performance and research project

Courtesy of the artist. Soundtrack by Ahya Simone. With spectral floor traces by Emmilou Roessling, Zachary Nichol, Cristal Sabbagh

Vanessa da Silva

- VdS1

Uombee, (numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4), 2023

Polystyrene, resin, acrylic paint

Courtesy of the artist, Sapling Gallery, London and Pat Mague

Siobhán Hapaska

- SH1

Bird, 2016

Concrete cloth, fibreglass, stainless steel
- SH2

Touch, 2016

Concrete cloth, oak, synthetic fur, aluminium, steel, two-pack acrylic paint and lacquer
- SH3

the recent incarnation of two advanced souls, 2012

Aluminium, drop-forged scaffold fittings, olive trees, olive tree root balls, motors and various engineering components

Courtesy of the artist and Kerlin Gallery, Dublin

Kira Freije

- KF1

Fallen Woman, 2016

Steel, stainless steel, fabric, motor

Courtesy of the artist and The Approach, London
- KF2

dipping voices, on the side of the sun, 2022

Stainless steel, cast aluminium, sun bleached silk, cotton

Courtesy of James Freedman, London
- KF3

See the circling moon, 2022

Stainless steel, mouth-blown glass, coiled wire, lightbulb
- KF4

The Forgiver, 2022

Stainless steel, cast aluminium
- KF5

in the way of the wind, 2022

Stainless steel, sea weathered bottle, sun bleached silk, tapestry fragment.

Courtesy of the artist and The Approach, London

Alice Channer

Alice Channer is interested in ways that sculpture can move beyond a solid state towards one that is more fluid and vulnerable. In this work, a photograph of sandstone from the north Devon coastline is printed on fabric and subjected to an industrial pleating process; it combines the geological folding of rock, the digital stretching and distorting of an image, and the mechanical pleating of fabric. As Channer has said, ‘the distortions, disruptions and mutations can be quite violent. They create this surface which is textured – it has glitches and ruptures and stretches all over it, a lot like my own skin’. Made up of thirty panels, this monumental sculpture extends beyond human scale. As Jes Fernie says, ‘it brings human and geological scale in dialogue with each other in a way that is both seductive and alien’.



AC1 *Soft Sediment Deformation (Iron Bodies)*, 2023



AC1 *Soft Sediment Deformation (Iron Bodies)*, 2023

In this work Channer has taken a piece of industrial machinery used to spray household items and car parts with a fine aluminium covering and filled it with fragile crab shells. In contrast to her fabric sculpture nearby, this structure is designed around human proportions, to enable easy assemblage and swift movement through a factory floor. The combination of industrial processes and natural materials provides, Fernie suggests, 'a potentially unpalatable reflection on the strange, violent ways that we treat non-human bodies. In the catering industry, these crab shells are cleaned to remove the membrane base, then filled with crab meat from other crab bodies, ready for consumption by human bodies'. Channer herself has said, 'I worry sometimes that I've made things that are too toxic, painful and disgusting that will force people to turn away. Of course, they are beautiful too, but what does it mean to acknowledge that, or to keep being seduced? Is it enough to say I am being honest? Am I repeating violence?'



AC2 *Planetary System (Kozer DGK63)*, 2019

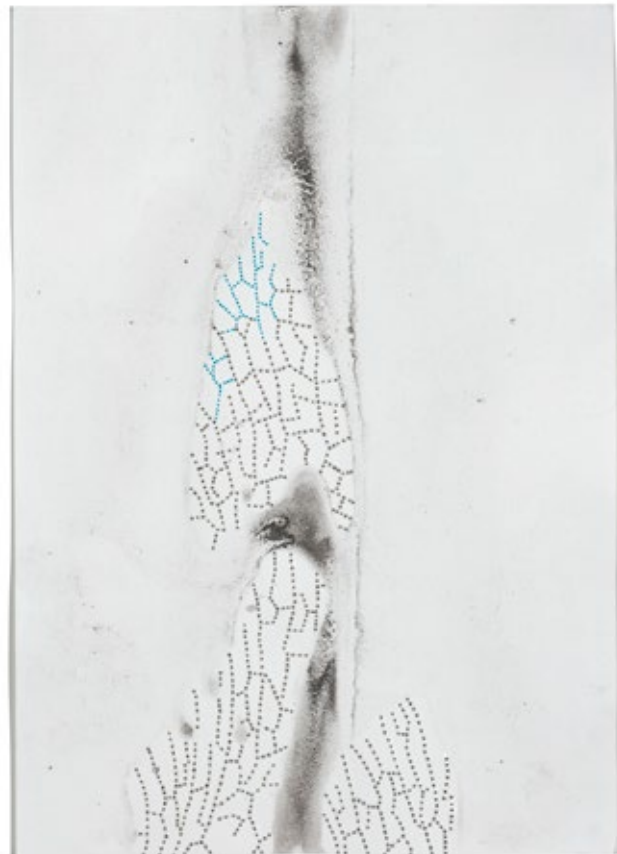
The soft, pleated fabric in this sculpture contains metal fibres. Nestled within the fabric are hematites, or iron oxide compounds, used widely in the Victorian era as mourning jewellery and found in large quantities on Mars.

Channer often works with rocks, crystals, shells and fossils, all geological bi-products created over huge stretches of time. Imbued with a sense of mysticism, they recall the Industrial Revolution when oils and petrochemicals were extracted from the land on a grand scale.

Both pieces are installed on gallery walls to evoke bracket fungi, found at the base of trees – another form of living matter. The sculpture's title refers to Elon Musk's extractive ambitions to colonise other parts of our solar system. Channer has said that 'The 21st century needs objects that are vulnerable, uncertain, other, alien.' And as Fernie suggests, 'There is seduction, softness and hardness built into this sculpture, as well as glamour and provocation.'



AC4 *The Colonization of Mars*, 2023



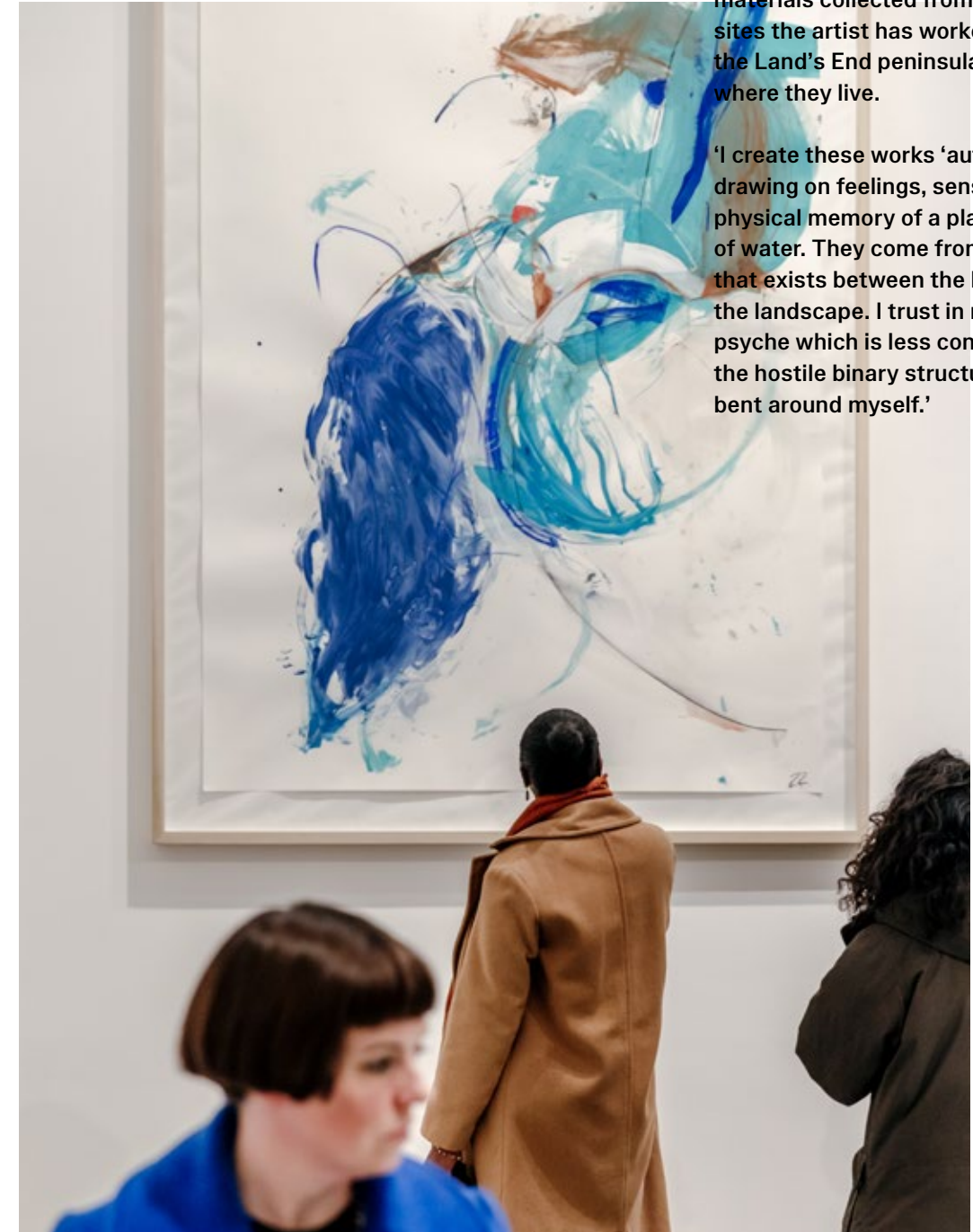
AC3 *Life Without Air (Particle)*, 2022

Cigarette ash, tiny steel balls, water and paper are brought together to form bruised and exhausted 'lungs'. These works on paper become sculptural objects as they curl and warp through water absorption and the application of materials. As Channer says, 'I'm interested in metal as an active agent, a kind of body with agency, rather than something to be shaped and sculpted and dominated.'

Ro Robertson

Robertson begins the process of making these drawings by putting paper directly onto their studio floor. Wearing only a pair of shorts, like the ones that have been incorporated into the nearby sculptures, marks are then made by body parts, as well as the shorts themselves. Sandstone, mud and granite are used in the process, materials collected from different sites the artist has worked at around the Land's End peninsula in Cornwall, where they live.

'I create these works 'automatically', drawing on feelings, sensations and physical memory of a place or an area of water. They come from somewhere that exists between the body and the landscape. I trust in my deeper psyche which is less constrained by the hostile binary structures I have bent around myself.'



RR5 *Underscore II*, 2022

Using materials and forms associated with traditional figurative sculpture (steel and monumentality) Robertson's sculptures include a more diverse, fluid range of subjects. *Torsos* presents an expanded understanding of the figure via a collective of abstract bodies. This 'body of bodies' is displayed in a tightly formed group so that one form is seen through the next and a singular view is denied.

Found objects are hidden in the crevices of the sculptures and soft, pliable items of underwear are presented in contrast to the weathered steel bodies. These items reference the 'Masquerade Laws' in the USA and UK which criminalised those who challenged gender norms in their choice of clothing. As Robertson says, 'Working in steel connects to working class masculinity and butchness. My family history is heavily linked with shipbuilding in Sunderland, the material of steel is part of our fabric as are the gendered roles that came with such graft.'

'There is a real satisfaction in creating space through a material that is so solid, and to play with fluidity and movement using something that is so heavy.'

- RR1 *Torso I*, 2021
- RR2 *Torso II*, 2021
- RR3 *Torso III*, 2022
- RR4 *Underscore I*, 2022
- RR5 *Underscore II*, 2022
- RR6 *Underscore III*, 2022





Harold Offeh

The reclining figure in the pastoral landscape is a common theme in the history of British sculpture and painting. In this video, Offeh plays with its almost exclusively white history by inserting Black bodies into the landscape.

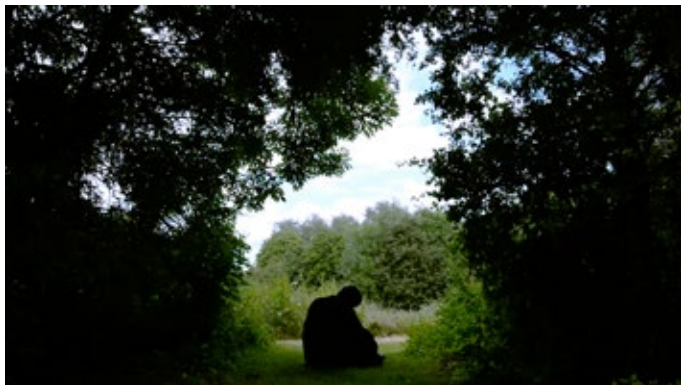
This work echoes a satirical piece by Scottish artist Bruce McLean, *Pose Work for Plinths* (1971) which poked fun at the perceived pomposity of well-known sculptors such as Henry Moore and Anthony Caro, and makes a direct reference to the posing of queer bodies of the 1980s Ballroom scene. Offeh says: 'I'm interested in the body as a primary tool of investigation and discovery, as well as the ways that histories and narratives are constructed.'

The artist performs with collaborators Ebun Sodipo and Samra Mayanja. The performance is set to the music of early 20th century Black British classical composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.



HO1 *Body Landscape Memory. Symphonic Variations on an African Air, Op.63*, 2019

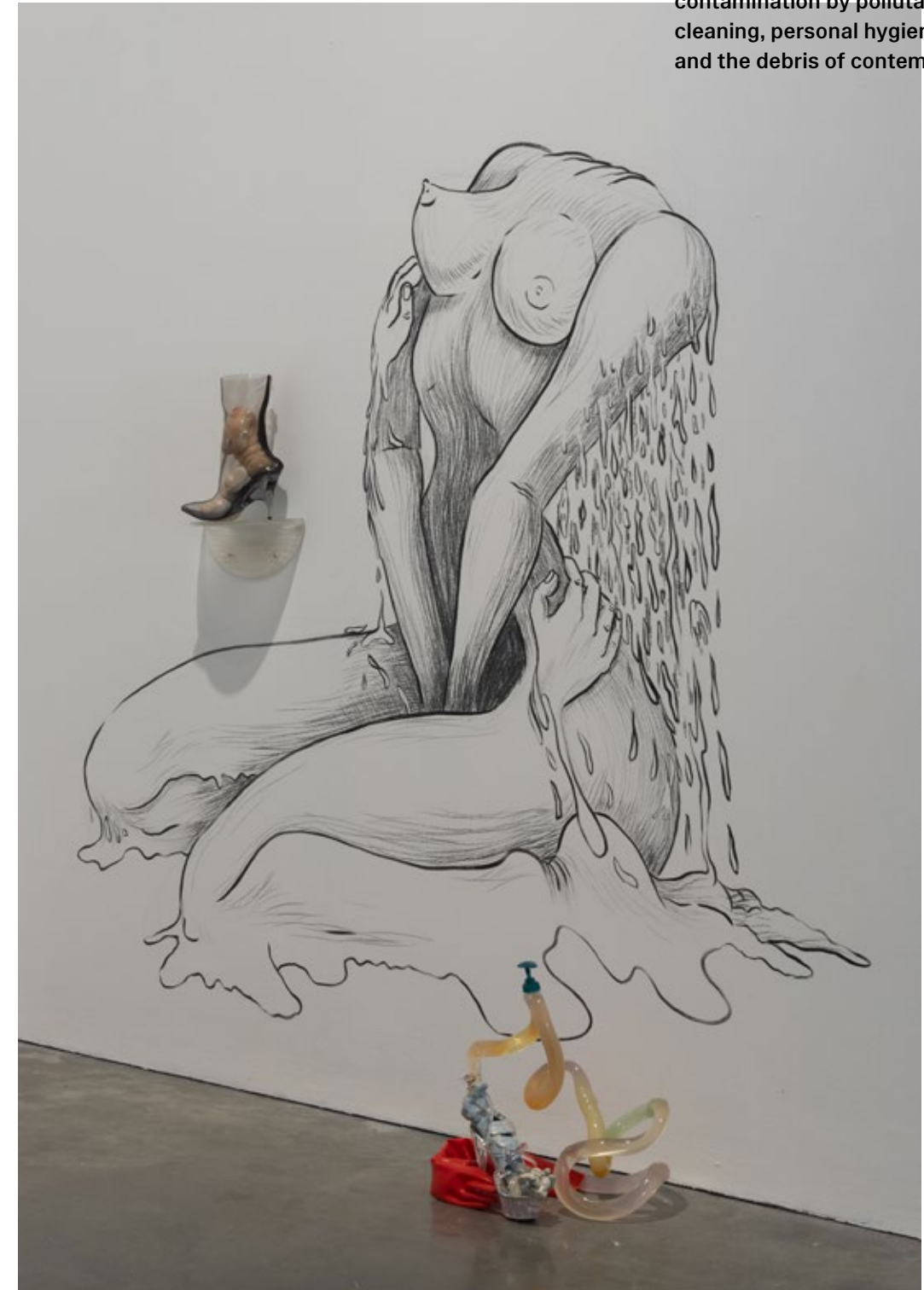




HO1 *Body Landscape Memory. Symphonic Variations on an African Air, Op.63, 2019*

Saelia Aparicio

The human body is a source of wonder and horror for Aparicio. Using a style inspired by comic books, cartoons and sci-fi novels, these works allude to bodies that are in a constant state of transformation, through growth, decay, fermentation and contamination by pollutants found in cleaning, personal hygiene products, and the debris of contemporary life.



SA1 *prosthetics for invertebrates, 2019*

SA2 *Sweaty whirlpool*

SA3 *Our lady of cleaning fluids*

- SA1 *prosthetics for invertebrates*, 2019
- SA2 *Sweaty whirlpool*
- SA3 *Our lady of cleaning fluids*
- SA4 *Night shift*
- SA5 *I cannot change you so I must replace you*
- SA6 *Toetally fine*
- SA7 *Clean cut*
- SA8 *prosthetics for invertebrates*



The artist writes that *prosthetics for invertebrates* is 'populated by hybrids of internal human organs, slugs and everyday objects that have drifted to the bottom of the sea... I tend to work with soft objects such as moulds, bags, shoes, balloons or gloves which I then contort. The forms are caught in-between resembling distorted emoji, organs and limbs.' Hollow shapes are used as containers that diffuse mixes of the most incongruous scents: whiffs of vinegar with sickly sweet synthetic apple or mystical lavender.

This work was last shown in 2019 at La Casa Encendida in Madrid. Since then, some elements have deteriorated beyond repair. 'The artist has added new details and reconstructed others; artworks, like bodies, live their own transformational lives.' Jes Fernie

Nicolas Deshayes



SA4 *Night shift*



ND2 *Sugar Mile*, 2018

ND2 *Boy and Swan*, 2018
Cuckold's Point, 2018
La Toilette, 2018
Gossip Column, 2018
Grubber, 2018
Sugar Mile, 2018



Much of Deshayes' sculpture references circulatory systems that keep bodies, buildings or cities functioning, including food intake and digestion, heating and waste management. For this work, he has cast expanding foam in aluminium to make strange intestinal or phallic fountains. As Jes Fernie says, 'These grotesque, joyful sculptures evoke leakage, contamination, bodily forms and processes that are usually hidden from view, either inside our bodies, behind walls and clothes, or underground.'

These *Gargouilles* refer to sculptural water features often found on Gothic cathedrals shaped in the form of grotesque or fantastical monsters. These bronze sculptures are roughly the size of a human head and represent soft, malleable, organic body parts such as hair follicles, belly buttons and fingernails, as well as slabs of meat and worn mattresses.

Deshayes relates his own body to the processes and materials he employs in his work: 'The materials I use are corporeal in that they are mined, quarried, exhumed, grown or digested from the earth's body before being refined industrially with varying degrees of sensuality.'



ND1 *Gargouilles*, 2021

Jesse Darling



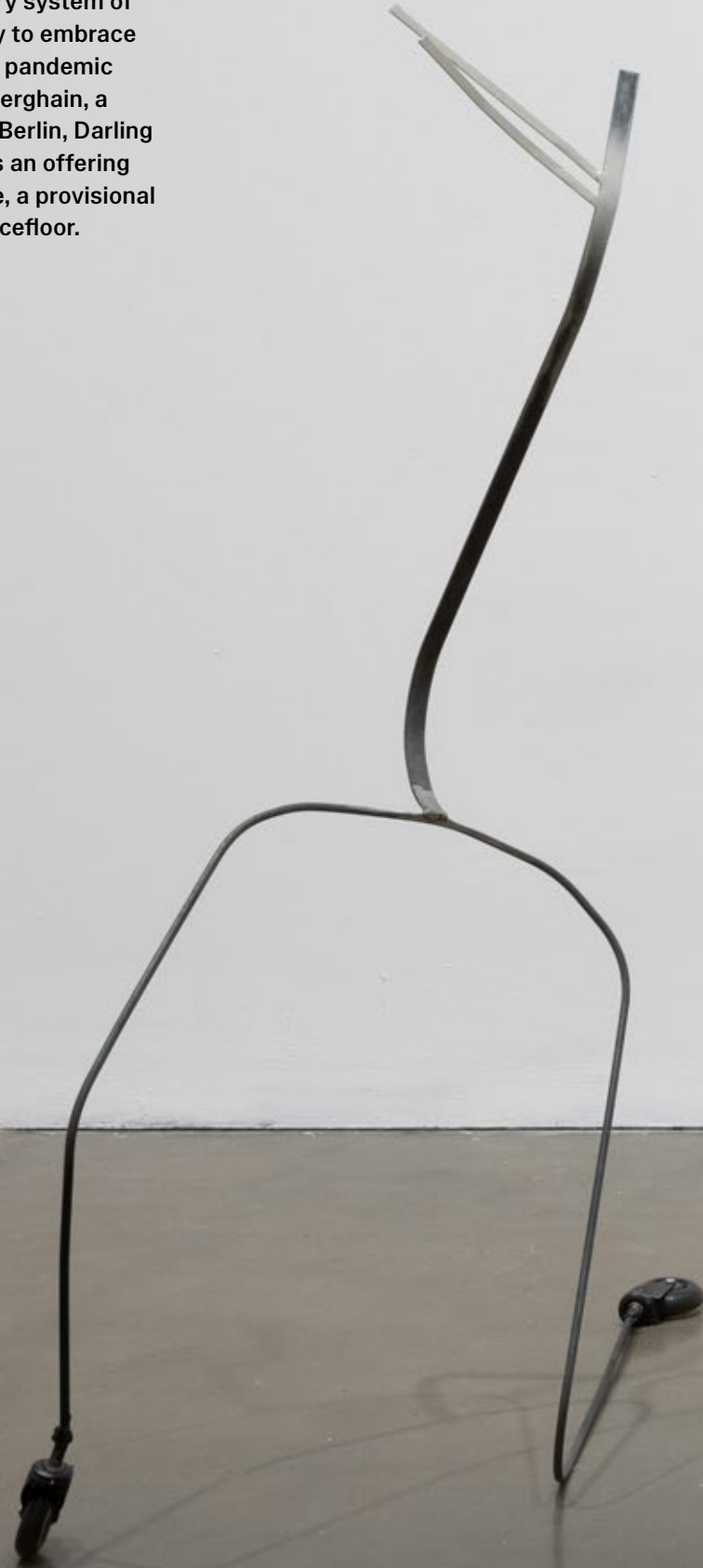
JD1 *Present!*, 2022

Made swiftly with materials that were to hand, this playful and improvised arrangement transforms a high street sports bag into a surrogate for the artist, through their shared 'JD' initials. Darling has described sculpture as 'mortal and vulnerable' and many of their works appear as dysfunctional, collapsed forms, or precarious figures that crawl on steel and aluminium limbs which are bent into contorted shapes.

'There is a sense of desperation and abject sadness in this exhausted, isolated body. But it has energy and conviction, hinting towards a moment of possible transformation. It can also be read as a critique of consumerism and the artist as brand; a continually available, potentially clown-like entity.' Jes Fernie

The artist refers to this sculpture, with no arms and wheels for feet, as 'something between a body and a piece of writing or a musical note.'

The title refers to the power dynamics of preferred sexual positions. Vers moves away from a binary system of domination and passivity to embrace both. Created during the pandemic for the empty space of Berghain, a historic gay nightclub in Berlin, Darling has said that this work is an offering to the spirits of the place, a provisional dancer for an empty dancefloor.



JD2 vers top, 2020



JD1 Present!, 2022

The constraints placed on our bodies by social and political forces is an on-going strand in Darling's work. Here, a boxing glove and piece of barbed wire protect the fragile body of an embryo, ambiguously evoking the sanctity (and difficulty) of parenthood and the family unit in contemporary society.

As the artist says, 'I'm interested in how children, motherhood and "the family" are deployed to create a particular rhetoric, which becomes a form of neoliberal privatisation... The family is figured as the threshold of the border, and the primary unit of private property. This accretion comes to function in the wider dereliction of what you could think of as community.'



JD3 Study 4 Parenthood, 2018 / 2022

Nnena Kalu

Kalu explores space, scale, texture and colour through repetitive and durational processes, constructing a dynamic relationship between her body and material form. These works on paper are a direct expression of the artist's physical movement. They are sculptural explorations of space dictated by the length and reach of Kalu's arms, as well as the size of the paper. In the making of these works, which are often produced in pairs, the second an echo of the first, a rhythm is built up and multiple layers constructed. Displayed here one on top of the other, as in the artist's studio, the material weight of each piece of paper becomes apparent, drawing our attention to the 'objectness' of the work.



NK1 Drawings, 2021–2022



Joe Namy

Disguise as Dancefloor centres on a custom dance floor made of copper tiles. Namy is interested in the healing properties of copper and other alchemical resonances, as well as the ways in which the metal transmits sound and keeps a trace of previous use through the echoes of hands and feet. This on-going project, which the artist describes as a performance space, a sculpture, and a research project in one, looks at the wide range of experiences that can unfold on a dance floor, from violence or solidarity to personal expression and collective stories. The project is also an exploration of the subversive role of bass and its effects on the body; as Namy says, the work offers 'extreme frequencies for extreme times'.



NK1 Drawings, 2021–2022



JN1 *Disguise as Dancefloor*, 2022





Vanessa da Silva



VdS1 *Uombee*, 2023



The four 'figures' presented here, situated at varying heights, suggest the construction of a family in perpetual movement. As Fernie says, 'These skeletal, organic sculptures seem to be neither human nor animal. Democratic and joyful in their resistance to definition, they are hybrid forms that exist beyond gender, age and body type. Like mycelium, they extend their tendrils into places unknown, in a continuous state of transformation.' 'I titled this series of wearable sculptures "Uombee"' says the artist. 'I wanted a name that produced a sound, a certain vibration with no real meaning so people can take it as they feel it. I see these works as living bodies that are animated through the interaction of the viewer.'



Siobhán Hapaska



SH1 *Bird*, 2016

SH2 *Touch*, 2016

These shrouded bodies suggest binary constructs: human / animal; organic / mechanical; figuration / abstraction. Made from concrete canvas and acrylic wall sheeting, materials often used to construct emergency shelters, they allude to homeless states, displacement and loneliness.

As Fernie writes, 'The works form an implicit critique of our dominance over the planet and reckless stewardship of its finite resources. But they are also enigmatic sculptures that speak of love and tenderness.'



Olive trees are signifiers of contested territory across the world, their ancient roots spanning generations of land ownership and systems of care. Here, two truncated olive trees, uprooted from their natural habitat, are encased in a metal frame in a horizontal position. Root balls from younger trees glide in tandem but in different directions along an aluminium 'causeway', passing each other but never meeting. As Jes Fernie says 'These young "bodies" are able to traverse long-established positions and in so doing, suggest flexible and hopeful futures.'

'There's a notion that in order to be free, you have to lose absolutely everything. The tree is a signifier of resilience. I feel a sense of love for these things because of their will to live.' Siobhán Hapaska



SH2 *Touch*, 2016

Kira Freije



KF1 *Fallen Woman*, 2016



The title of this work recalls the moralising term used widely in the Victorian era for women who were sexually active outside marriage. Here, a pair of disembodied legs inflate and deflate at the whim of a randomised motor in a way that could be seen as comical or tragic. 'Like much of Freije's work, *Fallen Woman* expresses complex, contradictory, human states and collective anxieties. This sculpture is at once funny, heartbreaking, and slightly terrifying.'

Jes Fernie



KF2 *dipping voices, on the side of the sun*, 2022

KF5 *in the way of the wind*, 2022



The pairing of incongruous materials such as white coiled plastic and welded metal creates a curious relationship to time. Here is an arena in which biblical stories nudge up against traditional processes and 20th-century inventions. ‘The lamp, atmospheric with an old-world aesthetic, is perhaps a guiding light that promises warmth and protection at the end of a long journey. Is the flying figure in freefall? This armour – does it provide protection or is it a form of imprisonment? An exhausted figure reclines on the floor, head and shoulders covered by a sunweathered shawl. Is this an ominous display of parched futures and unliveable lives? These absent, frail bodies suggest narratives that speak of unease, humility, and redemption.’ Jes Fernie

- KF2 *dipping voices, on the side of the sun*, 2022
KF3 *See the circling moon*, 2022
KF4 *The Forgiver*, 2022
KF5 *in the way of the wind*, 2022

Profile

‘The Cowboy’

Services:
▪ Gas / heating engineer
▪ Plumber
▪ Electrician

Location:
▪ Milton Keynes

Reviews (12)

This thread has been locked by the moderators of Woughton on the Green Community Message Board.

New comments cannot be posted.

lucyindisguise

*job: bathroom refit
rate: £250 per day (materials purchased separately)
date of job: Oct 2011
where did you find this trader: agent’s website
trader contact: mobile only, 07744209975 (no longer working)
rating: 1/5
hire again: NEVER*

Hello all,

I set up this profile to see if anyone else has had experiences with this tradesman?

My husband is pushing 70 now. I’m quite a bit younger but I thought a sit-down shower would be a good investment. We found this man online. He had no reviews but the price was reasonable. He was local and sounded friendly and knowledgeable on the phone so I thought I’d give him a shot. That was my first mistake. The boy turns up and quotes £500 for a two-day job. Cash only. This was much more than what he’d originally said, but he was here now so didn’t feel I could say no. The first day was fine. He took a look at the bathroom and went about his work.

Me and my husband were going away the next day, so left the cash out on the hall table for him when he’d finished. We get back from the Costa del Sol a week later and the money was gone along with our bathroom suite. In its place were these strange metal objects. Giant grey protrusions where our new sink, toilet and shower should be. The only way

I can describe them is that their shape and ribbed surface reminded me of earthworms. They were quite roughly finished, which now I think about it, was odd for something so obviously expensive to produce. My husband was a civil engineer for forty years and said they were probably cast iron because the one in the shower was already cracked near its base, probably from when he installed it. And it had scraped the ceiling. God knows how he got them inside, let alone plumbed them in.

That was the first thing that alerted us. We came home to the house gurgling, the heating on and carpet that was soaked through. And when we opened the upstairs bathroom door to water spouting from these worm heads. Once we’d got over the shock, obviously we were furious. We called his mobile, but it was disconnected. I think by then we knew. I tried ringing the number of his agency anyway and they’d never heard of him. I know you might be reading this thinking it was our fault for leaving the money, and I agree. I’ll never do that again. I doubt we’ll ever see him or £500 again. Don’t be like us, do your own checks. You can’t just go on trust when there’s jokers like him around, we were reminded of that the hard way. In any case if you come across JACK ALTRADE do not hire him. I wish I could give less than one star.

Ronaldo1998

*job: tiling
rate: £900 (didn’t pay)
date of job: Aug 2011
where did you find this trader: online search
trader contact: 07744209975
rating: 2/5
hire again: no*

I saw this first review and thought I’d come on here to say that I think I had the unhappy pleasure of working with the same guy. Although he went by a different name with us: Jean Ouaine. Unlike the first reviewer, it was payment upon completion, but we’ve still bee left out of pocket fixing what he left us with. At the time I thought it was just a misunderstanding, but if it is the same guy it puts it all in a different light.

We’d hired him to retile our kitchen floor. My girlfriend had picked out some tiles she liked and he said he’d purchase them as it would be cheaper. I would have preferred for us to have just bought them ourselves to be honest.

It happened exactly like “Lucy” experienced: we went away to a family wedding in Scotland and whil we were gone the bastard had covered our kitchen

floor in shiny copper tiles. Wall to wall, whole room like the fucking Cardiff Millennium Centre. You have to hand it to him, he did a very neat job – he's obviously a professional – but the mess he left. Dust and grease, even what looked likemud from outside, copper shows up every scratch and fingerprint unless its properly polished. And all these different footprints too, at least two sets, and some of them bare. Don't know what he thought he was doing laying a floor with no shoes o .

Come to think of it, the prints were actually very small, more like a woman or a child. Did he bring someone else into our home?? I didn't notice his feet but I do remember h e had quite delicate hands because I wondered if he was going to do it all by himself. Did't look capable, he was so slight and pale.

My girlfriend thought it was a mistake, but too many things just seemed off. There were all these cables in the corner: aux, hdmi, that kind of stuff. Not ours either. But if it was a practical joke, what kind of sick fuck does something like this?

Cathy&Heathcliff

job: landscaping
rate: N/A
date of job: Sep-Nov 2011
where did you find this trader: word of mouth
trader contact: N/A
rating: 3/5
hire again: N/A

I'm only just putting two and two together but maybe this was also your man? A couple of months ago I asked around my friends to see if anyone had a good recommendation for a landscaper/ gardener someone to help me with some trees on my property that had grown unmanageable but also with some of the general upkeep which is usually quite light heading into winter.

A woman in my Zumba class (I go to lovely Yasmin at the PureGym Winterhill) recommended a friend of her son. Jamaican boy, very sweet. He came around to look at the place and I don't know what I did but he took a shine either to me or the garden and said he would do it for free.

The first few weeks I didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. H was as diligent a worker as I've ever had especially considering I wasn't paying him (I did keep offering but he insisted). But as the days started to get shorter I'd be coming back from walking the dogs and just see him sat on one of the four tree stumps at the bottom of my garden looking away from the house. He'd still be there even after I'd eaten dinner.

I could see him from my kitchen window as I did the washing up. I often watched him until it was too dark to see and he disappeared into the dark night.

I started to see him reclining on the grass too during the day. Every time I looked up he would be in a different pose, always with his back to me and the house. What he was looking at I don't know. No sooner he'd get here than I'd see him propped on his elbows on the lawn in his peculiar manner. Once I went to check on him. He was wearing headphones from which was coming rousing classical music. Although I consider myself a bit of an amateur expert in that area I didn't recognise the composition.

It was shortly after that that he stopped coming. He just didn't turn up one day and it was as if he had completely vanished because my friend's son had not heard from him either. I later found out they'd met in AA which I have to say given all this now does not surprise me. I also wonder if he is alright in the head.

Jackthelad

job:
rate:
date of job:
where did you find this trader:
trader contact:
rating: 5/5
hire again:

HI SO IVE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE ON HERE SLANDERING MY GOOD NAME SO I THOUGHT ID JOIN THE PARTY AND DEFEND MYSELF. DONT BELIEVE WHAT THESE CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING ABOUT ME, I HAVE A LOT OF SATISFIED CLIENTS. ITS NOT MY FAULT THAT THOSE FEW WERE NOT HAPPY AFTERWARDS OR CHANGED THEIR MINDS WHEN ID COMPLETED THE JOB. EVERYONES A CRITIC AND YOURE ENTITLED TO YOUR OPINION BUT PEOPLE ALWAYS BLAME THE WORKMAN. IF YOURE A FAIR EMPLOYER ILL DO A FAIR JOB. YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. NOT JUST FINANCIALLY IF YOU CATCH MY DRAFT. IF YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP YOUR SIDE OF THE BARGAIN HIRE ME. DESPITE WHAT "LUCY" SAYS MY NUMBER IS STILL THE SAME.

foxyrenard

job: electrics
rate: £29 p/h
date of job: Dec 2011
where did you find this trader:
trader contact: as above

rating: 3/5
hire again: yes

hello all. Ive been following this thread witht interest, and Ive got to say, a few things are not stacking up for me. The claims made by the previous posters are quite outlandish. There's really no need for what is either a genuine misunderstanding, or huge exaggeration. I don't think people realise what a bad review can do to a persons career. To try and end this once and for all, Ive decided to set a trap. Or maybe it's better to say run a little experiment. Ill call the original number, hire the guy that answers (if anyone does) and report back here.

EDIT:
I phoned the mobile number in the first post, and a young man answered the phone. Very young by the sound of it, thought he was a woman until he showed up. Id planned a simple and small job: fittting a hanging light, which I let him pick out as (given the previous reviews) I was interested to see what hed bring. The lamp was a little unusual, but nothing crazy. Old-fashioned, but with a chic steampunk twist. Jack had obviously taken on board my notes, the orange blown glass bulb looks very tasteful against my accent wall. And he cable is a nice touch too, it really does look like its hanging there on a silver paper chain. In short, I was taken by Jack/Jean and his handiwork. Is he unconventional? Sure, but nothing to justify the kind of abuse thrown his way on this website.

Jackthelad

job:
rate:
date of job:
where did you find this trader:
trader contact:
rating: 5/5
hire again:

I DONT KNOW WHY YOU THINK YOU CAN SWEET TALK ME WITH A GOOD REVIEW. I DO NOT APPRECIATE YOU TRYING TO "SET A TTRAP" AS IF I WAS SOME ANIMAL. ITS CLEAR THAT YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO HELP BUT JUST WANT TO INSERT YOURSELF INTO THIS PSYCHODRAMA OF YOUR OWN MAKING. MEANWHILE I DON'T NEED YOUR PITY OR YOUR VALIDATION. I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE UP TO ALL ALONG AND YOU LET ME PLAY YOU NICELY. NO NEED TO PATTRONISE ME ON HERE. I DID MY JOB AND I DID IT WELL. LE ME REPEAT, PLEASE, ONLY CONTRACT MY SERVICES IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT MY WORK.

the_marlborough_man

job: electrician/plumber
rate: £27.99 per hour
date of job: May 2011; Jan 2012
where did you find this trader: local noticeboard
trader contact: jahandyman@gmail.com
rating: 1/5
hire again: I did, but hard to recommend

I'm adding my voice to the chorus, hoping I can clarify a few things. I found Jack's advert on the noticeboard by the Walnut Tree Tesco Express last year when I was looking for someone to fit aircon in the master bedroom.

Nothing to report from that occasion, except for the fact that when he was finished installing the unit, he placed a pair of my ex's tights over the vent at the top – to test the airflow, he said. Bit sus that he'd found them under the bed, but it did work, kicking away up there. So, when I needed the underfloor heating looking at last week, I called him out again. By this time my brother had told me about this forum and I'd been having a browse – it's not often that something like this happens round here. I was called away to answer a delivery, and when I came back, Jack was very quiet. I didn't think much of it at the time, it never occurred to me that he'd gone into my laptop, let alone that h would have been upset about some local gossip. But later, when he'd gone, I discovered a figure behind my bedroom door.

This person was fashioned out of steel wires and a plastic shopping bag I use for football practice Jack must have found in the wardrobe. He'd dumped my dirty kit out all over the floor and split the bag up the sides to use as the thing's 'torso'. It had a real air of desperation somehow, its wire legs bent up, knees together, and arms in the air reaching – for what? And the final touch (this was really unsettling): Jack had shoved my goalie gloves onto the ends of the two sticking-up wires to mimic hands. Its hands, appropriating the ghosts of my hands, I felt like the little guy was mocking me, waiting to spring up and catch me.

Maybe Jack just thought this was harmless fun, and I'm jumping to conclusions because of all the comments here – but do you think this is a warning? The fact he went through my clothes and made this perverted representation of me (???) sends shivers down my spine.

Ronaldo1998

But if it was a practical joke, what kind of sick fuck does something like this? Maybe he's ot very well...

I've been thinking over my earlier post, and I feel ashamed of how I handled myself. I didn't think what I wrote would start all these rumours. On reflection, I genuinely think what happened to me and my fiancé was a mistake. The lad was just naive, like I said, he was very young, and my post was agry and hasty. I later checked the invoice for the tiles and it seems like the suppliers set him the wrong ones and he just laid them without checking with us. I'm not sure about you marlborough man , but I think the most likely explanation is that your engieer read the forum and decided to play a trick on you.

foxyreynard

Maybe Jack just thought he was having some harmless fun, and I'm jumping to conclusions because of all the comments here – but do you think this is some kind of a warning?

hello Marlborough. Im sorry this happened to you! Yes, one thing I keep coming back to is whether we are all talking about the same guy? The very basic physical descriptions don match. Someone above mentions him being Jamaican, but the guy I hired was white and had an Easttern European/Polish accent? They all seem different ages too...

the_marlborough_man

hello Marlborough. Im sorry this happened to you!

Thanks Reynard. I think you're right, this is definitely something I've considered. And looking back over earlier reviews, I was also thinking – the guy who came out to me was really quite small, I'd say almost feminine. Something about the way he handled the tights too, this definitely wasn't his first time stretching out pantyhose. And someone else mentioned a girlish voice? Are we sure it's even a dude?

And what about the person on here commenting as Jack? Who are they? Could we trace their IP address and find out?

TheWorldIsNotEnough

*job: ?
rate: ?
date of job: 2012
where did you find this trader: N/A
trader contact: N/A
rating: /5
hire again: N/A*

I think I may know the man at the centre of all this...

I've a small holiday cottage down by the St Ives on the Cornish coast, and last summer a new family moved in next door. Since my wife's death I'd been spending a lot of time down there. I got to know the mother well, with her at home looking after the young kids. A more warm and friendly woman you couldn't hope to meet. And two beautiful children, very well behaved. Their father was some kind of craftsman? He had a white van in the drive, and a workshop where he spent most of his time. I think she was very lonely raising two kids like that, effectively single-handed.

Soon after they moved, she left him. He didn't put up much of a fight, didn't even want partial custody. After that he was alone in that house. I never saw him, just the constant noise of power tools. Considered reporting him to the council a few times, but I thought it was wise not to poke the bear, so to speak. I went back to work, and it became less of an issue.

A few months went by like this, until one day I was walking my dog along the strand (her kids loved that dog, that was her excuse for coming round, the kids want to see Edie) and I saw him down underneath the cliff, looking out to sea. He was only visible from the waist up, and my mind must have been playing tricks on me because just looking at his chest, I would have thought it was her profile. But he turned and stepped up from the pool where he was standing, and I saw the thick hair on his thighs, the strong muscles.

He was dressed in a white singlet and boxers, which were both dirty. For a second I thought he'd soiled himself, but the rusty stains on his shorts were just the orange lichen you find in this area. I put Edie on her lead, and kept walking. As I came to where the sand rises and you can look down into the sunken pools, I saw him again. He had covered his crotch in small boulders and was writhing under their weight.

His dance was magnetic, I couldn't tear myself away, crouched there like some Peeping Tom. I didn't want him to see me looking, such that when Edie set off a little avalanche, I let out a cry like a seagull to cover up the commotion. It was mortifying, how afraid I was of being discovered. I thought the jig was up, but we seemed to get away with it. The whole affair pulled me out of my stupor though, and I dragged Edie back up to the coastal path.

As we arrived at the steps to the road above, I saw a pile of crabs. Poor little blighters laid there all higgeldy piggeldy, blushed shells like crimped pasties. Their legs and claws were gone, and all the meat had been carefully extracted so when Edie

nosed one over onto its back, I could see inside the shallow cavity. I tugged her lead, but Edie's investigations had already exposed a bag tucked beneath the hollow carcasses – a black tool bag which I recognised.

This was last week, and I've seen him once or twice since, going into or leaving the workshop. I went down to the beach the next day, but the shells had vanished. Had the dirty boxers and singlet not been left on the front wall I'd have believed I imagined the whole thing. When I started Googling and found this forum I thought, could this be Jack? I hope there is an explanation for all this...

TheWorldIsNotEnough

I hope there is an explanation for all of this...

I woke up this morning, some time before dawn, to a loud bang from nextdoor. I went to investigate and, coming up to the house, I saw all the lights on, but no other sign of life. The rooms were empty of furniture; even the curtains had been taken down. I went round the side, calling out to see if anyone was there – and that's when I found that the garage door was wide open.

For the first time I could see into Jack's workshop. The concrete floor had been recently swept. A small pile of dust, metal shavings, chips of paint etc, danced in the draught. There were pale shadows on the wall where machinery or shelving had been ripped out, I can only guess to give Jack more space. For right in the middle of the room – carefully placed as if awaiting me – stood a large white box.

A thick pink stripe ran around the base, about a quarter of the way up, either side of a square logo and thick black text that read 'Kolzer'. Just above this, in the centre panel of the long rectangular side facing me, there was a round hatch with a little porthole, reminiscent of an industrial washing machine. The door was unlatched and slightly open, offering me a half-moon glimpse inside. I went to peer through the window, but temptation overruled my cautiousness, and I pulled on the handle. The door swung outward to reveal a drum, white and clean like the outside, as empty as the room in which it stood.

As I made to leave, my foot fell through something brittle, reaching the concrete with a sharp crack. I looked down and saw the corner of a crab shell, now in two pieces beneath my boot. The appearance of this carapace disturbed me, and the thought came into my head that I should walk down to the beach. Slowly, and with apprehension, I rounded the same

dune that me and Edie had crested a week ago. On the sand, looking out to sea, I found myself confronted by an odd contraption. It consisted of an open cylinder raised on a black metal frame. The supporting legs ended in red and white casters, like a big trolley, only the top reminded me of the rotisserie carousels they used to have in the Saxon Gate Sainsbury's. But instead of chicken, impaled on the stationary spits were metallic objects, cast in the same shining silver as the barrel. Some looked soft and smooth, while others reflected the moonlight off their roughly textured surface.

Tucked among the silver objects were other, copper-coloured forms. Closer inspection revealed these to be the same dimension and size, but with a matte finish. And then I realised: the crab shells. They looked raw and naked next to their plated companions; for I saw that the silver objects were also shells, even though they looked like they had been dipped in mercury.

There was something alchemical about the object: an esoteric recreation of the large hadron collider at Cern, sinking into the Cornish sand. Only its absurdist maker believed God was to be found not in atoms, but in crustaceans. I stood before a model of the universe, its intricate cogs and chains stilled so that one might recreate and study heretofore hidden patterns. Here was this total schema consisting of real objects and simulacra placeholders, whose appearance as one or the other was dictated by a series of obscure laws, meticulously planned but impenetrable to me. I grasped at the traces of another man's mind, unable to find the switch that, when pressed, would open up the entire mystery.

Moderators

AS OF 6 MARCH 2012 THIS FORUM IS NO LONGER ACCEPTING NEW POSTS. COMMENTS ON THIS THREAD HAVE BEEN LIMITED.

Several of the active accounts have been found in breach of the messageboard's terms. A single user is not permitted to have multiple accounts linked to the same email address, as a precaution against online harassment.

The affected accounts have been closed and users contacted.

Francis Whorrall-Campbell

Artist recommendations

We invited the artists in *Trickster Figures* to recommend books, podcasts, lectures, TV programmes and films that have influenced their approach to art-making. They forge generous and generative conversations across disciplines and tell apposite stories about the interests of a selection of artists working in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Alice Channer

Book

Svetlana Alexievich, *Chernobyl Prayer*, Penguin Books, 1997

Podcast

Daisy Hildyard, ‘War on the Air: Ecologies of Disaster’, *Emergence Magazine*, 2022

Ro Robertson

Books

Les Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, Firebrand Books, 1993

David Getsy, *Abstract Bodies Sixties Sculpture in the Expanded Field of Gender*, Yale University Press, 2015

Film

Man for a Day
Directed by Katerina Peters, 2012

Harold Offeh

Books

Taiye Selasi (author) and Tinuke Fagborun (illustrator), *Anansi and the Golden Pot*, Dorling Kindersley, 2022

Legacy Russell, *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*, Verso Books, 2020

Sharna Jackson and Zoé Whitley, *Black Artists Shaping the World*, Thames & Hudson, 2021

Saelia Aparicio

Book

Alanna Collen, *10% Human: How Your Body’s Microbes Hold the Key to Health and Happiness*, William Collins, 2015

TV series

Hitoshi Iwaaki, *Parasyte: the Maxim*, Anime series, Nippon TV, 2014–15

Nicolas Deshayes

Film

The Song of Styrene (Le chant du styrène)
Directed by Alain Resnais, 1957
(YouTube)

Jesse Darling

Books

Rupa Marya, *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*, Allen Lane, 2021

Renee Gladman, *Calamities*, Wave Books, 2016

Joe Namy

Video

Arabic music videos, Gani El Asmar, Etab
(YouTube)

Ballet

Triadic Ballet
Oskar Schlemmer
(YouTube)

Vanessa da Silva

Film

Lygia Clark, *Memory of the Body*
Directed by Mario Carneiro, 1984
(YouTube)

Book

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980

Kira Freije

Book

Vanessa Onwuemezi, *Dark Neighbourhood*, Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2021

Film

The Great Beauty
Directed by Paolo Sorrentino, 2013

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Trickster Figures: Sculpture and the Body* at MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, from 4 February to 7 May 2023. Curated by Jes Fernie.

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Inside front: Alice Channer, *Soft Sediment Deformation (Granite Bodies)*, 2020. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Beppe Giardino

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MK Gallery

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