

Exhibition Information

DCA THOMSON

***ARTISTS RESPOND TO THE DC THOMSON COMIC ARCHIVES:
RABIYA CHOUDHRY ROB CHURM CRAIG COULTHARD MALCY DUFF HIDEYUKI KATSUMATA SOFIA SITA***

Sat 3 December 2016 – Sun 19 February 2017

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate, Dundee, DD1 4DY

01382 909900 | Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open daily 10:00-18:00 | Open late Thu 20:00

Festive opening times:

Sat 24 and Sat 31 December: 10:00-16:30

Sun 25 and Mon 26 December: CLOSED

Sun 1 and Mon 2 January: CLOSED

Admission free | www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

Dundee Contemporary Arts is delighted to present *DCA Thomson*, featuring six contemporary artists' responses to the extensive archives of the renowned publishers DC Thomson. The exhibition has been programmed in partnership with DC Thomson to celebrate the 80th anniversary of *The Broons* and *Oor Wullie*.

The invited artists, Rabiya Choudhry, Rob Churm, Craig Coulthard, Malcy Duff, Hideyuki Katsumata and Sofia Sita, have each visited the DC Thomson archives and are exhibiting their own individual takes on the rich cultural history of our city's publishing. The exhibition features murals, prints, drawings, sculpture and video alongside archive material.

ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION

RABIYA CHOUDHRY

Edinburgh-based artist Rabiya Choudhry's work takes inspiration from childhood memories and subconscious dreams. She has created new work for the exhibition loosely based on her own family and inspired by DC Thomson's riotous comic strip *The Numskulls*, about a team of tiny human-like technicians who live inside people's heads and run their bodies and minds. Choudhry's own comic creation, *The Coconuts*, is the basis for a new pair of paintings in homage to *The Numskulls*. The paintings are titled *dream baby dream* and *houses for the holy*, in reference to songs by the bands Suicide and Led Zeppelin respectively.

Choudhry says of these "I wanted to make paintings that were loosely inspired by the comics of DC Thomson but to pursue my own work at the same time. I think that comics like the *Beano*, *Dandy*, *Sparky* etc are particularly rebellious in some parts and I feel a kinship with that spirit. Going to the archive was like visiting Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. I see the DC Thomson archive as great art and feel I am 67-70% *Beano* at heart."

In the last decade Choudhry has featured in numerous exhibitions including the Prague Biennale and Collective, Edinburgh alongside participating in community and educational art projects. Choudhry has previously shown work at DCA in the *Altered States of Paint* group exhibition in 2008.

ROB CHURM

Glasgow-based artist and musician Rob Churm is influenced by underground comics and zines, working with paper, ink, Biro and Tipp-Ex to create drawings, collages and prints. For this exhibition he has chosen to work with the *Jonah*

strips that appeared in the *Beano* in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which were notable for their ingenious storytelling and compressing elaborate action sequences into a one-page cartoon. Churm elaborates “Ken Reid’s *Jonah* is often considered his best work for DC Thomson and the strip evolved in its run to define the successes of the *Beano* at the beginning of the sixties. The combination of the chaos in the stories, the rich artwork, aspects of Reid’s personal life and the wider cultural context at the time of publication meant that *Jonah* was an extremely fertile starting point from which to explore the DC Thomson archive.”

The exhibition also features new and recent drawings for a future comic entitled *The Exhaustion Hook*. Churm describes them as “an ongoing comic book project that consists of one page gags and illustrated interviews, as well as longer cascading story lines. My plan is to use the comic book format as a structure to develop future work, collecting and overlapping various strips to form a short story cycle.”

Churm graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2001. His work was featured in DCA’s 2014 exhibition *Continue Without Losing Consciousness* with Raydale Dower and Tony Swain as part of GENERATION. In 2017, he will have a solo exhibition at the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow.

CRAIG COULTHARD

Craig Coulthard is an Edinburgh-based artist who works with ideas, events, film and objects. He describes the works he has made for the exhibition as “an attempt to balance romanticism and pragmatism - both in depictions and descriptions of military events and emotions, and in the expressions and execution inherent in commercial art.”

Coulthard was an avid reader of DC Thomson’s *Commando* comics and has created a series of drawings inspired by these for the exhibition. In these, he has altered the text to include real words spoken by a soldier from the acclaimed Great War Interviews carried out by the BBC in the 1960s, and information from the MOD website on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Trauma Risk Management (TRiM). He has also commissioned renowned *Commando* artist Ian Kennedy to make two new works: a short tutorial video on how to draw and paint explosions, and a new painting envisaging what the Leuchars Air Show of 2116 might have looked like. This work will be added later in the exhibition’s duration and will be displayed alongside a selection of Kennedy’s original cover art. Lastly, Coulthard has created a ‘stealth artwork’, which he hopes will “slip its way into the consciousness of Dundonian readers, via the medium of newspaper advertising”. This took the form of a drawing inserted into *The Courier* on Wed 30 November, with a follow-up explanatory feature on Thu 1 December.

Coulthard graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in 2002, and with a Masters in 2006. He has exhibited widely, including a new commission for Edinburgh Art Festival in 2014; *Forest Pitch* for the London 2012 Festival; the Athens Biennial, the Royal Scottish Academy and Bloomberg New Contemporaries.

MALCY DUFF

Artist, musician and cartoonist Malcy Duff has taken inspiration from *Oor Wullie* and *The Broons* and produced a brand new comic, *The Pineapple*, for the exhibition. The comic is part of a new sculptural installation titled *The Pineapple Reading Area*, inspired by Wullie's famous bucket. In Duff's hands, the bucket is translated into a white-painted wooden cube with the words 'plastic bucket' hand-drawn on each side, upon which visitors are encouraged to sit and read. He recalls "when I was a boy, I asked my mum to buy me a bucket to sit on", adding "it is always worth remembering: you can still travel, even if you stay sitting in a small room on a plastic bucket." *The Empty Car Park 2* reimagines a sequence from *The Pineapple* in which a group of schoolchildren peer into a cabinet containing a taxidermy owl and an air freshener. A selection of Duff's original drawings for *The Pineapple* are also on display.

Based in Edinburgh, Duff also performs readings from his comic books and creates live *comix*. He is co-founder of noise improvisation duo Usurper, with whom he has toured Britain, Europe and America, alongside creating the artwork for the duo's posters and album sleeves. Over the last 20 years, his often self-published comics have won him a cult following. Duff's work was recently on show at the OTO Project Space, London and has appeared in *Art Review* and *The Wire* magazines. A limited number of copies of *The Pineapple* will be available to buy in DCA Shop.

HIDEYUKI KATSUMATA

Hideyuki Katsumata is a Japanese artist based in Tokyo and a member of the Dennis the Menace fan club since the age of 20. Katsumata creates playful animations, paintings and prints influenced by folklore, manga and street art. His solo exhibition at DCA last year was one of our most popular to date, and during his visit to Dundee he revealed he had a fascination for DC Thomson's cartoon characters. For the exhibition, he is using characters from his imagination to converse with the DC Thomson universe. He states "when I was invited to Dundee last year, I checked out the Wikipedia page of Dundee and I found the name of cartoon publisher DC Thomson. I was so surprised, they published Dennis the Menace!!!! It's my teenage memory of punk rock!! I was so happy, I get to make work in the Dennis the Menace city!!"

Katsumata has hand-painted a mural in the gallery especially for the exhibition. He will also exhibit a series of new works on paper, in which he has painted

directly on to pages from *Beano* annuals, alongside a selection of recent drawings and paintings on paper.

Katsumata has been exhibiting in Japan since 2002 and has been included in group shows around the world. In 2015 he held his biggest solo exhibition to date, and his first in the UK, at DCA.

SOFIA SITA

Sofia Sita is an artist and illustrator based in Dundee, who has exhibited locally and in her home country of Italy. Her painting focuses on the relationship between humans and society, playing with the shape of the subjects illustrated.

Inspired by *The Broons*, Sita has created a new work celebrating *The Dundonians* – a happy and heterogeneous family of DCA visitors. Prior to the exhibition opening, Sita painted a mural outside the galleries and invited members of the public to take photographs of themselves and their self-defined ‘families’ in front of it. Participants could submit their photographs online using the hashtag #WeAreDundonians, a selection of which have been transformed into digital drawings and included in the exhibition as part of another mural. Sita states “with *The Dundonians*, I wanted to find a way to involve people and create their own family pictures and memories. The best part of any project is when people come to you and share their thoughts, good and bad.”

Sita graduated with a degree in Fine Arts in Milan and Editorial Illustration in Bologna, Italy. In the last year she has exhibited at the Roseangle Arts Cafe and at Macrobert Arts Centre, and has participated in numerous exhibitions and festivals in Italy.

DC THOMSON ARCHIVE MATERIAL

We are delighted to include a selection of artwork and objects in the exhibition on loan from the DC Thomson comic archives. Many of these are examples of the original DC Thomson cartoons that have inspired the artists in the exhibition. Items on display include original Malcolm Judge *Numskulls* panels, *Oor Wullie* and *The Broons* artwork by Dudley D. Watkins, *Jonah* panels by Ken Reid and *Commando* cover artwork by the aforementioned Ian Kennedy.

A colourful selection of merchandise and ‘covermounts’ (free gifts attached to the comics) can also be seen, including delights such as the *You’ve Been Menaced!* whoopee cushion and *Hoax Your Folks* Prank Pack. Long-time Dundee residents may recognise the large metal cut-out figures of Desperate Dan, Dennis the Menace, Gnasher, Minnie the Minx, Billy Whizz, Beryl the Peril and Roger the Dodger, which were previously used as signage in the Overgate shopping centre car park.

TALKS AND EVENTS

Book your place on 01382 909 900.
For more information visit
www.dca.org.uk

Meet the Artists

Fri 2 December 2016, 18:30 – 19:00
Galleries, Free but please book in advance.

An opportunity to hear from the exhibiting artists and Beth Bate, DCA Director, as they discuss the work on show in the galleries and the context of DC Thomson's rich archive.

After Party

Fri 2 December, 21:00 - late
Redd Function Suite, 3 Session Street, Free, drop-in.

Continue the evening with a set from Beat Club DJs at Redd. The non stop party rockin' Beat Club will be playing classic hip hop, heavy funk, raw soul and original breaks.

Senior Citizen Kane Tour and Workshop

Tue 6 December, 10:30 – 12:30
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

Aged 60+? Come along to our Senior Citizen Kane Gallery Tour and Workshop and join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a tour of the *DCA Thomson* exhibition before taking part in a creative workshop in our Activity Room.

Gallery Performances: Rob Churm and Malcy Duff

Thu 19 January, 19:00
Galleries, Free, drop-in.

Exhibiting artists Rob Churm and Malcy Duff have each devised one-off performances for the exhibition. Both artists are renowned for the absurdist humour in their visual art and their performances.

(((echo)))

Thu 9 February, 19:00
Galleries, Free, drop-in.

See our DCA Thomson exhibition through fresh eyes at this relaxed evening of presentations designed to provoke discussions about our exhibitions through talks by local artists.

Please email exhibitions@dca.org.uk by Fri 27 Jan if you are interested in proposing a response to the exhibition.

EXHIBITION SCREENING

Hue and Cry

Sat 21 January, 13:00
DCA Cinema

Hue and Cry was among the first British comedies after the war, and is generally considered the first of what are now remembered as the 'Ealing comedies'. The story of a group of East End kids who foil a gang of robbers who are using a children's comic to communicate their plans, the film borrows something of its premise from the popular children's story *Emil and the Detectives* (first filmed in Germany in 1931).

Apart from a memorable cameo from Alastair Sim as *The Trump's* eccentric author, the rest of the major parts are taken by the children, led by Harry Fowler as Joe, the fantasist whose daydreams become real.

Dir: Charles Crichton / UK / 1947 /
1h 22m / U

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Family Art Lab: Comic Inspirations

Sat 3 December 2016, 13:00-15:00
Activity Room. Free, but please book in advance. Suitable for ages 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

As part of our *DCA Thomson* exhibition, join returning artist, Hideyuki Katsumata and our team for a fun-filled workshop exploring the exhibition and creating new artworks inspired by comics and annuals.

Art Cart Adventures

Sat 17 December, Sat 7 January,
Sat 11 February, 13:00 – 15:00
Level 4, Free, drop-in.

Art Cart Adventures offer fun and active ways to explore the exhibition in our galleries! Create character badges and add speech bubbles to artworks!

Discovery Family Film Club: Hue and Cry Workshop

Sat 21 January, 12:00

Activity Room. Free with your *Hue and Cry* cinema ticket. Accompanying adults must also have a workshop ticket. Suitable for ages 5+.

Join us in the Activity Room to use printed letters and hand drawn illustrations to create your own comic!

Family Art Lab: Creating Comic Families

Sat 18 February, 13:00-15:00

Activity Room.

Free, but please book in advance.

Suitable for ages 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Join our artists to explore the artworks by Sofia Sita and Rabiya Choudry in our galleries, and think about how families are shown in popular TV shows like *The Simpsons* and in comics such as *The Broons*. We'll then create new comic families in 2D and 3D!

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop. Free, drop in.

DCA's Activity Room is a comfy, imaginative space for younger visitors and families. Have a go at DIY activities inspired by our exhibitions, browse our art library or just relax on the sofas and enjoy the view. Please note that children should be accompanied at all times in the Activity Room.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DCA would like to thank:

The artists
All at DC Thomson, in particular
Martin Lindsay, Rebecca Moncrieff
and David Powell
The Courier
DCA Installation Crew
Barry Robertson
#WeAreDundonians participants

NEXT EXHIBITION

MARK WALLINGER MARK

Sat 4 March - Sun 4 June 2017

DCA and The Fruitmarket Gallery are delighted to present Mark Wallinger's first exhibition in Scotland. Both parts of the exhibition focus on Wallinger's *id Paintings*, his most recent body of work – an ambitious series of large-scale Rorschach blot-like images created entirely by the artist's hands.

The *id Paintings* highlight identity as a recurring theme in Wallinger's work. Through selected films and sculptures shown alongside these paintings, DCA's exhibition explores mark-making, symmetry, mirroring and looping, whilst highlighting Wallinger's ongoing interest in psychoanalysis, wordplay and the passage of time.

Known for a practice as stylistically diverse as it is politically engaged, Mark Wallinger makes painting, sculpture, photography, film, installation, performance and public art. He has curated exhibitions and made ballets; he represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2001 and won the Turner Prize in 2007.

MARK WALLINGER MARK is a collaboration between Serlachius Museums, Mänttä, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh and Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee.