

SOON COME

Matthew Arthur Williams

Exhibition Notes | Sat 10 December 2022 - Sun 26 March 2023

DCA
Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4DY
01382 432444
Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open Tue - Sun 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 19:00
Admission free
www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

This exhibition debuts a new body of work by Glasgow-based artist Matthew Arthur Williams.

Throughout his career Williams' work has developed through close collaboration with others, creating projects that explore visibility, care, love, family, memory, representation and resistance. His work expands on traditional understandings of portraiture by concentrating on defying erasure, building an archive of subjects and shifting narratives considering what it means to be Black, to be queer, and to inhabit both urban and rural environments in different parts of the world.

Within his work, Williams' conceives of the archive as a living, breathing thing, and focuses more on bodies and voices than reports and records. First and foremost, he sees his own body as a vessel capable of carrying and articulating stories and histories of family members and loved ones who have gone before him. With this in mind, you will find photographic self-portraits greeting you at the entrance to each gallery - a subtle reminder of who is offering up the artworks and ideas on display.

This exhibition centres around a newly commissioned film and sound installation with accompanying photographic work, all developed using conversations, interviews and materials from both public and private histories, records and archives.

In all aspects of this work, Williams draws together a number of disparate places – particularly Stoke-on-Trent in England and Clarendon in Jamaica – which intimately connect to a far-reaching and complex conception of home for him. Jamaica is the place from which Williams' family travelled to settle in the UK in the 1950s and 60s. Stoke-on Trent is the area where his mother and maternal grandparents then lived, forming part of the rich and diverse communities who relocated there in the 20th century and worked in the local coal-mining, pottery, transport and hospitality industries.

The film and sound installation, split across two opposing screens in Gallery 2, offers up a kaleidoscopic sequence of landscapes, architectures, bodies and voices that bring these two far-flung places together. Images of landscapes touched in some way by human presence or industry are overlaid with different voices describing the movement of families and communities across vast distances. At one point we hear the artist's mother describe having to tell childhood friends in Jamaica one morning that she won't be going to school that day as she's leaving for England to join her parents. Intimate anecdotes such as this are blended with excerpts and footage from public records and broadcast media, deliberately complicating

these narratives and hinting at the impossibility of authoritatively archiving complex and ever-changing communities of people.

A sense of constant flux and movement permeates the work, and this is further amplified by the soundscape within the installation, built up with echoes, repetition and refrains, also using woodwind instruments to literally inject further breath into the atmosphere around these images and voices. Before looping back to the beginning, the film closes with a sunset and a song, *People Make the World Go Round*, performed by the Jamaican reggae band The Chosen Few.

The other images that appear in the show, contained within vitrines in Gallery 2 and on the walls and floor of Gallery 1, use Williams' careful photographic lens to further explore all of these places and the people connected to them.

These prints are displayed within different frames and structures: some are held formally in place on the walls, whilst others are much looser, remaining raw and somewhat untethered, with the paper potentially being subject to physical change as it settles into the surrounding environment over the course of the exhibition. The particular production techniques used within this element of the project are deliberately analogue in nature, with the artist carefully developing black and white film negatives in a darkroom onto fibre-based archival paper.

These delicate processes bear the marks of the artist's hand and body more readily than their digital counterparts, which we are all used to consuming at an accelerated rate through screens and monitors in our daily lives. In his work Williams refuses modes of rapid consumption in favour of slow and careful approaches to considered and responsible image making.

The overall title of the exhibition, *Soon Come*, is also a gentle invitation to slow down our thinking in fast-paced environments. In the West Indies, particularly in Jamaica, 'soon come' is an elusive sentiment that bypasses a specific idea of time or progress and instead embraces the unknown and ungraspable. For Williams, the meaning behind this phrase hints at both the immediate and the eternal: "It's multiplicitous. It's between now and never."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Matthew Arthur Williams is a visual and sound artist, photographer and DJ. Williams was born in London and now lives and works in Glasgow. He completed his BA at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2012.

His work has recently been exhibited at Jupiter Artland and Johnson Terrace Gardens as part of a commission for Edinburgh Art Festival (2021). He has further developed exhibition projects and commissions with the Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow (2022), Viborg Kunsthall (2021), Street Level Photoworks (2019) and Transmission Gallery (2017).

Recent close collaborations include ongoing work with Ajamu and Alberta Whittle, and Williams' research has recently been supported through programmes at CCA Glasgow, The Bothy Project, Hospitalfield and LUX Scotland.

ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My close family, and those rooted here and there: the Williams', Henrys, Johns, Nelsons, and the Greens. Those who make up the extended family near and far, and the many families who made countless amounts of sacrifices during some of the hardest times. Stoke-on-Trent. Cobridge Community Multicultural Centre, North Staffs Afro-Caribbean Association.

Monienne Stone, producer of *Caribbean Voices*, Donna Nugent, Maurice Williams, Amos Mullings, Stagga Lee, Sharon & Mike Dockery founders of the Blue Mountain Housing Association. Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, Media Archive of Central England, Chris Copp at the Staffordshire Record Office, and the Staffordshire Film Archive.

The incredible DCA staff and technical team. In particular Eoin Dara, Beth Bate, Kaylyn Hamlyn, Adrian Murray, Annis Fitzhugh, Sandra de Rycker, and Claire McVinnie. The talented wordsmiths of the publication, Nydia Swaby and Gabriella Gay, and designers Valerie Norris and Maeve Redmond. Street Level Photoworks, Lacuna Frames, The Bothy Project, Hospitalfield, CCA Glasgow.

With special thanks to Adam Lewis Jacob, Ainslie Roddick, Andrew Black, Ajamu Ikwe-Tyehimba, Akash Sharma, Alberta Whittle, Alex Misick, Alex Sarkisian, Annie Hazelwood, Camara Taylor, Cass Ezji, Charlotte Prodger, Christian Noelle Charles, Emilia Muller-Ginorio, Emmie McClusky, Jamie Crewe, Katie Bruce, Lachlan Young, Lisette May Monroe, Margaret Salmon, Richy Carey, Rowan Markson, Sabrina Henry, Sean Campbell, Tako Taal, Thulani Rachia, & so many more wonderful people I cannot name in one go.

NEW PUBLICATION & EDITION

We are publishing a new book in spring 2023 as part of this project, also titled *Soon Come*, containing newly commissioned writing on Williams' practice by Gabriella Gay and Nydia A. Swaby, alongside an introduction by DCA's Head of Exhibitions, Eoin Dara. From early spring, copies of the book will be available to read in the Information Space.

To launch the book, there will be a special In Conversation event with Williams, Gay and Swaby; please see the Talks and Events section of these notes for more information.

In addition, Williams has been working with DCA's Print Studio team to develop a new limited-edition print which can be viewed in our Editions Space and purchased online and in DCA Shop.

INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a video interview with the artist, alongside the reading materials listed below that have been influential to their thinking.

READING LIST

Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return*, 2011

Gargi Bhattacharyya, Adam Elliott-Cooper, Sita Balani et al., *Empire's Endgame: Racism and the British State*, 2021

Nadine El-Enany, *(B)ordering Britain: Law, race and empire*, 2020

Peter Fryer, *Black People in the British Empire*, 1988

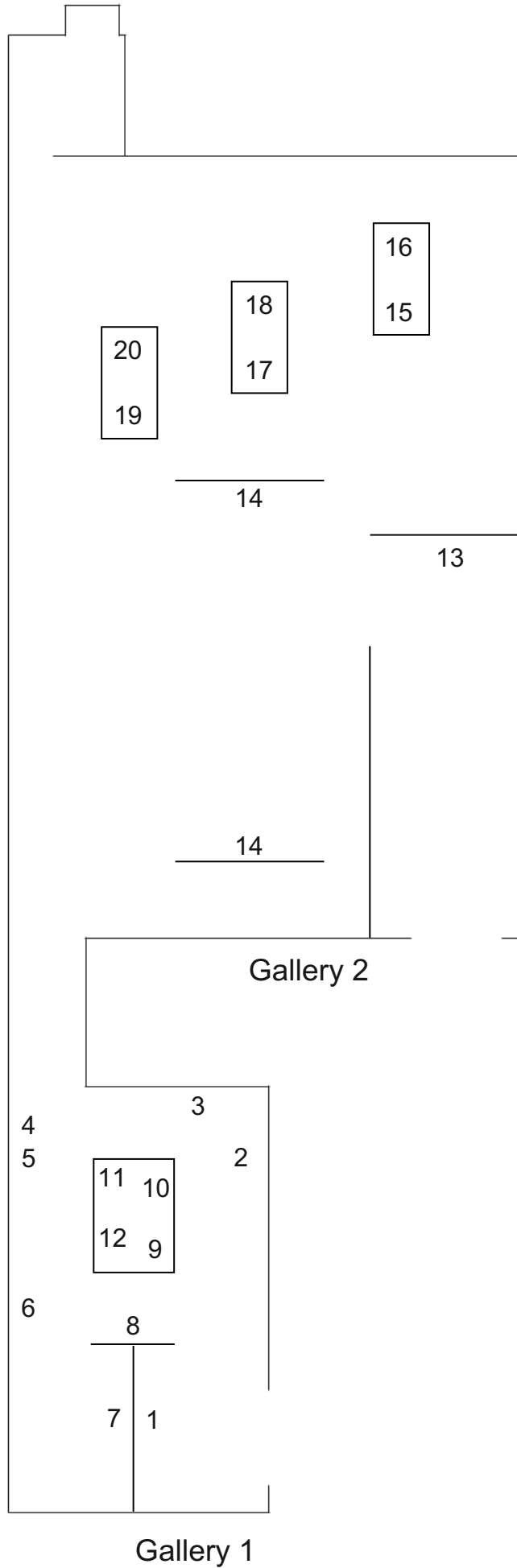
Jackie Kay, *Why Don't You Stop Talking*, 2003

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Unreal & the Real: Selected Stories Volume 1: Where on Earth*, 2012

Andrea Levy, *The Long Song*, 2010

Sam Selvon, *Foreday Morning: Selected Prose 1946-1986*, 1989

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN



GALLERY 1

1. *Untitled I*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
2. *Q. Henry*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
3. *we share a common saying*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
4. *view from above I*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
5. *Six Towns*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
6. *A. Henry*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
7. *Untitled III*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
8. *Ain't it Funny*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
9. *Five Years*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
10. *Demolition man*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
11. *Longport*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022

12. *To Let*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022

GALLERY 2

13. *Untitled II*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
14. *Soon Come*
Two-channel film, sound installation, 20 minutes 25 seconds; 2022
15. *Plumes*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
16. *On the church steps*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
17. *View from above II*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
18. *Trent Canal I*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
19. *Hustler*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022
20. *Congregation*
Photographic print on fibre-based archival paper; 2022

TALKS AND EVENTS

In the Evening There is Feeling: Reading Jackie Kay

Thu 12 January, 18:00-19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Led by DCA's Exhibitions team, *In the Evening There is Feeling* is DCA's reading group. It takes its name from Gertrude Stein's 1914 book *Tender Buttons* and focuses, in an informal and welcoming way, on feminist and queer texts from the worlds of art and literature.

For this session as part of Matthew Arthur Williams' exhibition at DCA, we will be considering one of the artist's selected books – *Why Don't You Stop Talking* written by Jackie Kay, who served as Scotland's Makar from 2016-2021. This collection of short stories written in 2003 builds a tender and tiny cosmos of queer fiction.

These small masterpieces cover a great deal of emotional and narrative terrain, from an immaculate observation of the female face to the bewilderment of the elderly; from silent hidden love to a lifetime reminiscence of an immigrant's England, these stories are warm and tender, frightening and funny. Kay sees the extraordinary in everyday life, and lights it up with humour and generosity in a way that is uniquely her own.

Digital copies of selected excerpts from the book will be sent out to all participants upon booking a place.

In the Evening There is Feeling: Listening to Joni Mitchell

Thu 26 January, 18:00-19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

For our Winter season as part of Matthew Arthur Williams' exhibition in the galleries, instead of just thinking about writers and poets, we will be also considering musicians who have been influential to the artist. We will be listening instead of reading.

This session will focus on the legendary Canadian folk singer and songwriter Joni Mitchell - in particular Williams' favourite song *Chinese Café/Unchained Melody* from Mitchell's 1982 album *Wild Things Run Fast*. Over the course of this event, we will spend some time listening closely together to excerpts from this and other albums, discussing elements of her extraordinarily eclectic career.

You can listen to excerpts from Mitchell's discography on albumism.com and stream it in full on platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube.

**In the Evening There is Feeling:
Listening to Tracy Chapman**

Thu 9 February, 18:00-19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

This session will focus on the work of American singer and songwriter Tracy Chapman. Over the course of this event, we will spend some time listening closely together to excerpts of Chapman's work, especially her Grammy-winning debut album from 1989, which includes the singles *Fast Car*, *Talkin' 'bout a Revolution* and *Baby Can I Hold You*.

You can listen to Chapman's eponymous album on YouTube and stream more of her work on many online platforms.

**Live Described Exhibition Tour
with Juliana Capes**

Thu 23 February, 18:00-19:30

Galleries

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

We have invited artist and visual describer Juliana Capes to host a live described tour of the exhibition. With more than 15 years' experience providing audio descriptions and interpretation for galleries across Scotland, Capes has developed a poetic and emotional describing style which expands on and illuminates artworks in new ways, particularly for audiences who are blind, have low vision, or sensory impairments.

The tour will move through the galleries, offering visual descriptions of a selection of the artworks on display and Capes will spend time elaborating on the exhibition to encourage slow looking, listening, and contemplation.

This event is open to all visitors wishing to experience our galleries in a new light. Guide dogs are always welcome in our galleries. If you require any further assistance, please contact our visitor services team.

Juliana Capes is a visual artist with a rich multidisciplinary practice. She exhibits regularly, recently including the Alchemy Film Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival, Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and Fruitmarket Gallery.

Capes is also a Visual Describer who specialises in visual art, and has trained and consulted many of Scotland's leading art organisations. Capes has been Lead Artist on the National Galleries of Scotland's Visual Impairment Programme since 2002, where she rethinks access to visual art. As well as 20 years of professional experience in the field of participatory practice, disability and arts accessibility, Capes has lived experience of neurodiversity and disability, as a dyspraxic artist and the parent carer of two children who also have dyspraxia and learning disabilities.

Matthew Arthur Williams in conversation with Gabriella Gay and Nydia A. Swaby

Wed 15 March, 18:00-19:00

Galleries

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join artist Matthew Arthur Williams, poet and scholar Gabriella Gay, and writer and curator Nydia A. Swaby for a conversation to mark the launch of our new publication, *Soon Come*, as part of Williams' exhibition at DCA. Contained within the pages of this new book is not only Williams' work, but also newly commissioned texts and poetry by Gay and Swaby.

Gabriella Gay is a Trinidad born page-stage poet, artist, teacher, researcher and creative producer based in Staffordshire. She is regularly commissioned to perform, write, organise events and facilitate workshops for a wide range of organisations include the BBC, the NHS and the National Theatre. Underlying all of Gabriella's written, performed, and socially engaged work, is the power of building strong connections and community. As a creative producer, she is well known for creating collaborative work for herself and other artists.

Nydia A. Swaby is a Black feminist practice-based researcher, writer, and curator. Her practice engages archives, auto/ethnography, photography, the moving image, and the imagination to curate programmes and visual narratives, write research and performance texts

that explore the gendered, diasporic, and affective dimensions of Black being and becoming.

Director's Tour

Thu 23 March, 18:00-19:00

Galleries

Free, but ticketed

Please book in advance

Join our Director, Beth Bate, on the last week of the exhibition for a guided walk through the gallery spaces where she will be talking about DCA's close work with artists to develop exhibitions such as this in our galleries.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

These films have been selected by Matthew Arthur Williams to accompany his exhibition at DCA

Only Yesterday

Mon 23 January, 19:45

Cinema

Please see website to book

Based on Hotaru Okamoto and Yuko Tone's manga of the same name, *Only Yesterday* is Isao Takahata's breathtakingly beautiful and devastatingly moving second Studio Ghibli feature, first released in Japan in 1991.

Set in 1982, the film follows Taeko Okajima, a 27-year-old Japanese office worker, who travels to the countryside and reminisces about her childhood in Tokyo and what life could have been. Memories flood back of her younger years: the first immature stirrings of romance, the onset of puberty, and the frustrations of mathematics and boys. In lyrical switches between the present and the past, Taeko contemplates the arc of her life, and wonders if she has been true to the dreams of her childhood self.

Only Yesterday stands out as a mature and sophisticated gem among Studio Ghibli's vast catalogue.

Dir: Isao Takahata
Japan / OV with English Subtitles /
1991 / 1h 59m / PG

Handsworth Songs

Tue 21 February, 20:00

Cinema

Please see website to book

John Akomfrah and the Black Audio Film Collective's acclaimed film-essay *Handsworth Songs* highlights, examines and responds to the 1985 riots in London and Birmingham's Handsworth district that erupted in reaction to the repressive policing of Black communities.

Interweaving archival photographs, newsreel clips, and home footage, the film is both an exploration of documentary aesthetics and a broad meditation of social and cultural oppression through Britain's intertwined narratives of racism and economic decline. *Handsworth Songs* experiments visually, but also aurally, and features a mosaic-like soundtrack influenced by reggae, punk and the post-industrial noise movement.

The documentary, which was produced for Channel 4's Britain: *The Lie of the Land* series, went on to win seven international awards including the BFI John Grierson Award for Best Documentary and has become an influential touchstone for experimental essayistic filmmaking.

Dir: John Akomfrah
UK / 1986 / 59m / 15+

Meantime

Tues 14 March, 19:30

Cinema

Please see website to book

Best known as a pivotal work in the early careers of Gary Oldman and Tim Roth, both of whom are extraordinary in two roles that contrast wildly in their dramatic tenor, *Meantime* is Mike Leigh's slow-burning depiction of economic degradation in Thatcher's England.

The film follows the downtrodden Pollock family, who live in a flat in London's East End. Of the household, only Mavis works, while her husband, Frank, and their two grown sons, Mark and Colin, live on the dole and stew in their boredom and bitterness.

Intensifying the Pollocks' resentment is an infuriating contrast: Mavis's sister, Barbara lives with her husband, John, in the comparatively posh suburbs.

Informed by Leigh's now trademark improvisational process and propelled by the lurching rhythms of its Beckett-like dialogue, *Meantime* is an unrelenting, often blisteringly funny look at life on the dole.

Dir: Mike Leigh

UK / 1983 / 1hr 42m / 15

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Create Space

From Sun 11 December

Tue – Sun, 11:00-18:00

Free, drop in

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times

DCA Create Space is a flexible, comfortable and imaginative space; a space in which people of all ages can see, think, make and do together. The space includes displays, child-safe materials and art activity sheets inspired by Matthew Arthur Williams' exhibition.

You can try DIY art making activities including creating urban and rural vistas with collage, chalk skylines and exploring sound pictures. Our lovely art library for children is there for you to browse and the Play Box has safe play for very wee ones.

Family Art Labs

Sat 28 January, Sat 18 February,

Sat 18 March, 11:00-13:00

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book a ticket for each person attending

Suitable for all ages 3+

Family Art Labs offer relaxed time and space to get making as a family, with creative activities and techniques introduced by local artists. Stay as long as you like or leave when you need to, these sessions are completely flexible.

Each date will have a new theme or technique to explore. Inspired by the exhibition in DCA galleries, you can expect lots of different materials with sound as a key feature. We have lots of creative ideas and projects to finish on the day or to take home.

Messy Play for 0-3s

New dates for 2023 will be posted on our website. Please check www.dca.org.uk

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book a ticket for both the wee one and the carer who is attending. Suitable for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers accompanied by a grown up.

Join our Art at the Start team for messy, sensory and creative sessions for little ones. Sessions will respond to the exhibition with activities designed to engage our youngest visitors together with their big people.

You can expect an art activity, a sensory play activity and lots of ideas for things to do at home or out and about. Each session will be led by an art therapist and an artist tutor as part of *Art at the Start*, our joint programme with the University of Dundee.

Sound Play Drop in Sessions

Sat 10 December, Sat 14 January,
Sat 11 February and Sat 11 March
14:00-16:00

Create Space

Free, but ticketed

Please book a ticket for each person attending

Join the Sound Play team for some hands-on experimenting with digital tools for creative sound and image making. Sound Play are a team who create multi-sensory, audio-visual playgrounds where sound, animation and interactive technology collide. They design for people of all backgrounds and abilities, so their work is accessible to everyone. Come along for a rich audio/visual experience and tips on low-cost kit you can use at home.

DCA Makes for the Winter Holidays

Free, online

Please check our website for details

To keep the creativity flowing through the school holidays you can be inspired by our free online Activity Sheets and Monday Makes, for both indoors and outdoors artworks.

Monday Makes are step by step photo-guides or videos created by artists on our team and inspired by the exhibition themes or techniques used by the artist. Our Art Activity Sheets are quicker, fun ideas and templates to copy or download and make at home.

FOR YOUNG ARTISTS AND STUDENTS

Soon Come: Create a Soundscape Workshop

Sat 25 February

11:00-16:00 with a break for lunch

Tickets £5

Suitable for ages 12+

Under 16s to be accompanied by an
adult

In our Create a Soundscape Workshop, we will be using a range of recording devices and online tools for playing with sound to create a collaborative soundscape. We'll take inspiration from works in the exhibition, *Soon Come*, and the act of experiencing what you can see but cannot touch.

Please wear warm clothes, as we may venture out of DCA. Everyone will receive a final copy of the sound piece we make. This session will be led by local artist David Scott.

Please bring a packed lunch with you to the workshop, otherwise Jute Café Bar have great options and there are a number of shops close by.

JUST ASK

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

LARGE PRINT, AUDIO & BRAILLE

Large print, audio and Braille versions of this leaflet are available, please ask a Visitor Assistant for more information.

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. Share your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

SUPPORT DCA

Our exhibitions are always free to access, but DCA is a charity and donations are welcome and appreciated. You can tap to donate at one of the contactless points in our building or donate online at www.dca.org.uk/donate. Thank you for your support!