

this mess is kept afloat

Kate V Robertson

Sat 9 December 2017 — 25 February 2018

Exhibition Notes

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

152 Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4DY

Tel. 01382 432444

Admission free

www.dca.org.uk

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

Holiday closure dates:

Mon 25 & Tue 26 December
Mon 1 & Tue 2 January

INTRODUCTION

This Mess is Kept Afloat is a major installation of new sculptural work by Kate V Robertson that draws our attention not only to the walls but to the floor, ceiling and windows of our most expansive gallery space at DCA.

Robertson is known for creating environments and displays that often transform and shift over time. Rigorously exploring her chosen materials and the ways in which they can change, she revels in the physical characteristics of the objects she creates, testing structural qualities to their limits to uncover what lies at their material core. Ideas of instability, dysfunction, waste and decay pervade her work, particularly in relation to how we experience these sensations in urban environments.

Exploring the sculptural and sensory possibilities contained within her carefully chosen materials, Robertson invites visitors not only to look but to touch, feel, smell and perhaps even contribute to the destruction of some of these artworks. All of the objects created for this exhibition have been moulded, cast, constructed, or ground down by hand; allowing substances such as concrete, rubber, metal, polystyrene, resin, paper and eggshell to manifest in new and unexpected ways.

This physical process of material investigation mirrors her interest in revealing the ways in which our accelerating digitised society is sustained. Robertson's use of rectangular shapes across different planes, playing with the appearance of depth often created by optical illusions and geometric designs, specifically references the flatness and groundlessness of our increasingly screen-based lives. In these new works she conceptually drills down into these slick facades to expose the ubiquitous cracks and fissures that lie just below the surface.

This Mess is Kept Afloat disrupts the ways in which we engage with sculpture, deliberately muddying the waters of the pristine white cube gallery by drawing in and amplifying certain aspects of the outside world. Robertson combines ideas of the external and internal in this project to create a conceptually intricate and sensually rich experience for anyone venturing across the threshold of the space.

The exhibition takes its title from *Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy*, a prescient text from 2010 by artist Hito Steyerl in which she calls for an art that examines the politics of its own production. Steyerl describes the field of contemporary art as a problematic space of "wild contradiction" and "crooked manipulation" but also as a vital site of "commonality, movement, energy and desire." Robertson is an artist operating with a keen understanding of these possibilities and limitations; she does not shy away from grappling with said wild contradictions. Instead, as Darren Jones notes in his thoughtful new text published in the book that accompanies this exhibition, Robertson creates "vessels of the utmost precision and empathy" that carry these immensely complex questions and concerns to new places.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kate V Robertson (b. 1980, Edinburgh) is based in Glasgow, having studied at Glasgow School of Art, graduating in 2003 and completing a MFA there in 2009. Recent exhibitions of her work and projects include: *Object(hood)*, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh 2017; *Semper Vigilantes*, OBJECT / A, Manchester 2016; *Semper Solum*, Oxford House, as part of Glasgow International 2016; *Adaptive Expectations*, BALTIC 39, Newcastle, 2016; *In Progress*, Patricia Fleming Projects, 2014. She has participated in residencies at Hospitalfield, Arbroath; Eastside Projects, Birmingham; CCA, Glasgow; and Chateau de Sacy, France. She is represented by Patricia Fleming Projects, Glasgow.

Robertson has also undertaken several public art commissions, including *converse* for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. After co-curating and designing the exhibition *Reclaimed: the Second Life of Sculpture*, for Glasgow International 2014, she is currently researching new models of commissioning and collecting sculpture, funded by the Henry Moore Foundation.

COMPANION EXHIBITION

As well as *This Mess is Kept Afloat*, an exhibition of new work by English artist Andrew Lacon titled *Fragments*, is in Gallery 1.

We hope you enjoy both of these exhibitions this winter at DCA.

FIND OUT MORE

Please visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about our current exhibitions. Here you'll find video interviews with Robertson and Lacon talking about their work, alongside a selection of books chosen by the artists relating to their research and practice.

NEW PUBLICATIONS & EDITIONS

We have worked with Robertson and Lacon to produce two new publications and limited edition prints as part of our winter season in the galleries.

The publications, *This Mess is Kept Afloat* and *Fragments*, are available to buy in DCA Shop priced £8 each, or £14 for both. A limited number of copies signed by the artists are also available.

For more information about the editions please visit DCA Shop or contact Sandra De Rycker at sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk

TALKS AND EVENTS

Book your place on 01382 432444.
For more information visit
www.dca.org.uk

Meet the Artist

Fri 8 December, 18:30 – 19:00
Galleries
Free, but please book in advance

Join Eoin Dara, Head of Exhibitions at DCA, in conversation with artists Kate V Robertson and Andrew Lacon for an introduction to, and discussion about their respective exhibitions.

Exhibition Tours

Daily at 11:00 and 15:00
Gallery Entrance
Free, drop-in

Interested in knowing more about the works on show? Then join our friendly Visitor Assistants on a daily guided tour of the exhibitions.

Senior Citizen Kane Gallery Tour and Workshop

Tue 23 January, 10:30 – 12:00
Galleries and Activity Room
Free, but please book in advance

Join us to explore Kate V Robertson and Andrew Lacon's exhibitions with the Learning team and our friendly Visitor Assistants. There will then be the chance to take part in a creative workshop, making work inspired by the exhibition. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be on hand to fuel creativity and chat.

An Evening with Sculpture Placement Group

Wed 24 January, 18:00 – 19:00
Activity Room
Free, but please book in advance

Join Kate V Robertson and her colleagues Martin Craig and Michelle Emery-Barker from Sculpture Placement Group for an intimate conversation exploring new ways of prolonging the life span of sculptures in 2018.

Sculpture Placement Group research and pursue ways of improving economic conditions for artists with sculptural practices, as well as testing alternative models for the circulation and acquisition of object works. They consult directly with artists, arts organisations, academic institutions and community groups to encourage sustainable working within the visual arts sector and facilitate engagement with sculptural practice.

As part of their ongoing research they have recently compiled a Stored Sculpture Inventory to demonstrate the wealth of sculptural works languishing in storage across Scotland, the UK and internationally. This inventory will act as a basis for several upcoming projects and future research outputs.

For Glasgow International 2018 Sculpture Placement Group will present *Sculpture Showroom*; an adoption service for sculptures on the brink of destruction.

Echo + Moira Jeffrey

Thu 8 February, 18:00 – 19:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

Echo is an evening event of multidisciplinary presentations in response to Robertson's and Lacon's exhibitions, with invited guest Moira Jeffrey, who will respond to the exhibitions.

Jeffrey is a Glasgow-based writer, university teacher and art critic, whose book projects and catalogue essays have focussed on contemporary art practice for the last two decades. Her personal writing projects examine the relationship between lived experience and fictional methods to explore voice, authority and authenticity in written and spoken text.

In advance of this response, there will be further opportunities for other voices to present ideas. If you would like to share your creative response to the work on show, please submit a short proposal (no more than 300 words) to exhibitions@dca.org.uk by Mon 29 January 2018.

Curator's Tour

Wed 21 February, 18:00 – 19:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

On the last week of the exhibition, join our Head of Exhibitions Eoin Dara for a guided tour through the gallery spaces where he'll be talking about the development of these new works by Robertson and Lacon for DCA's galleries.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENING

For every exhibition in our galleries, we offer artists the chance to choose a film to screen alongside their work. Kate V Robertson has chosen *Playtime* to coincide with this exhibition.

Playtime

Sun 28 January, 15:00

Cinema

Considered by many to be a masterpiece, *Playtime* is a perfectly orchestrated city symphony, shot on 70mm on a huge constructed set of concrete, glass and steel. Now diligently restored in line with Jacques Tati's perfectionist approach, audiences can once again enjoy the expansive scope of the filmmaker's vision. Our protagonist, Monsieur Hulot, finds himself in a reimagined modernist Paris, navigating endless corridors, slippery floors, sinking chairs, sliding doors and misleading reflections in a high-tech corporate labyrinth where organised chaos reigns and Hulot sticks out as a misaligned cog in the machinery of modern life.

"I love the visual choreography and style of Tati's *Playtime* - with its coordinated and synchronised action. Stylish and slapstick, it beautifully accentuates the absurdity and pitfalls of modern urban life. I particularly like the use of windows, doors and screens as framing devices."

Kate V Robertson

Dir: Jacques Tati

France 1967 / 2h4m / French with English subtitles / PG

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Art Cart Adventures

Sat 6 and Sat 20 January, Sat 3 and
Sat 24 February, 13:00 – 15:00

Level 4

Free, drop in activity

Fun for all ages, Art Cart offers fun, active ways of connecting with themes in our exhibitions and methods used by the artists on show. Join our Art Cart artist and try things like making rubbings, creating jigsaws and making sculptures from everyday objects and materials.

Talking Art: Mini Art School

Thu 25 January and Thu 22 February
18:00 – 20:00

Galleries and Activity Room

Suitable for ages 11+

£5, please book in advance

Join our friendly Learning team staff to spend quality time looking at and talking about artworks, sketching, and making artworks in response to the exhibitions. These sessions are for any young people aged 11+ years who are interested in art – there will be more following throughout the year with opportunities to make and display artwork.

Family Art Lab:

Explore Kate V Robertson's
This Mess is Kept Afloat

Sat 27 January, 13:00 – 15:00

Activity Room

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

Free, but please book in advance

Join our Learning team artist tutors to explore Kate V Robertson's exhibition. You will visit the exhibition, chat about what you see, create your own art together and experiment with colour, collage, jigsaws and casting shapes. Great fun for all ages, but we do need accompanying adults to stay and join in.

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop - do phone ahead to check if you are making a special trip.

Children must be accompanied at all times.

Free, drop in

DCA Activity Room is a wee gem; a comfortable and imaginative space right next to the gallery designed for younger visitors and family groups to pop in and enjoy on a visit. You can have a go at DIY art activities, browse our excellent children's art library and make connections with the artists and their work in the exhibition. Take your artwork home, leave it on display or photograph and share it online using #helloDCA or #DCAmakes

With thanks to support from the Northwood Trust.

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Shonky: the Aesthetics of Awkwardness

Guest curated by John Walter
Sat 10 March – Sun 27 May 2018

We're thrilled to be bringing the Hayward Curatorial Open to Scotland for the first time, staging a major group project curated by artist John Walter in our galleries at DCA.

This exhibition aims to explore the nature of visual awkwardness through the work of artists and architects Arakawa and Gins, Cosima von Bonin, Niki de Saint Phalle, Benedict Drew, Justin Favela, Duggie Fields, Louise Fishman, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Kate Lepper, Andrew Logan, Plastique Fantastique, Jacolby Satterwhite, Tim Spooner and John Walter.

Shonky is the fourth in Hayward Touring's series of Curatorial Open exhibitions, working in partnership with DCA, the MAC, Belfast and Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre to choose and develop this ambitious proposal. This is an initiative that places collaboration at its heart, whilst aiming to nurture curatorial talent and to expand the parameters of the contemporary curatorial landscape.

JUST ASK

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

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

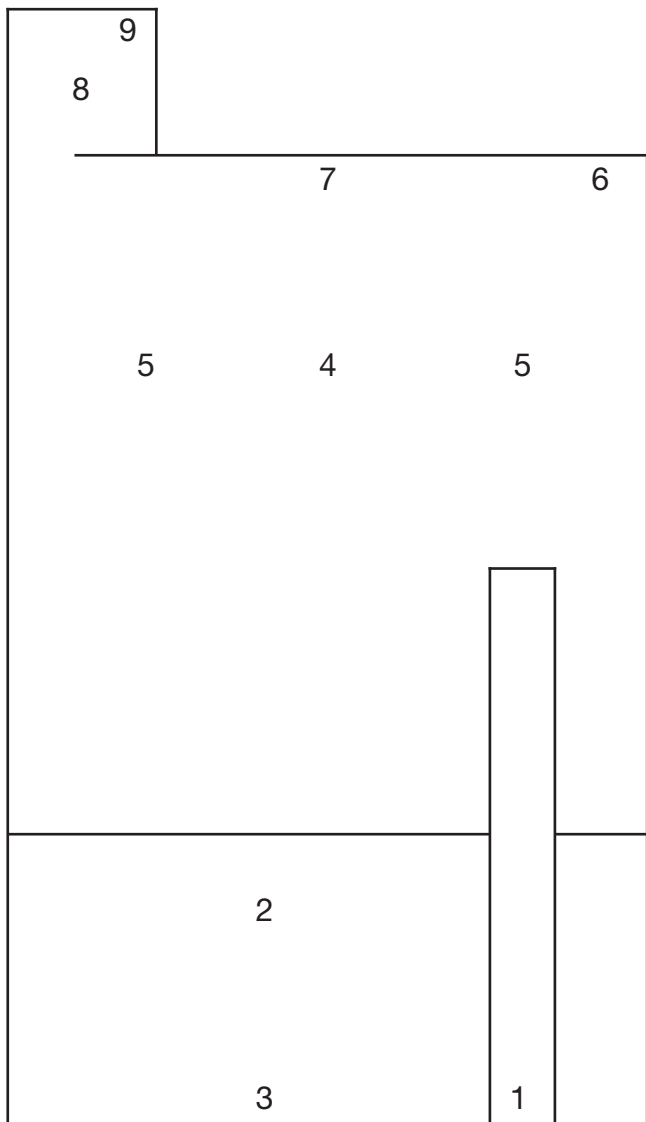
Please note DCA will be closed on Mon 25 and Tue 26 December, and Mon 1 and Tue 2 January.

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**.

Interested to know what's coming up in DCA Galleries? Pick up one of our Exhibitions brochures to find out what's happening in our future programme.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION



Gallery 2

1. *Tread*
2017
tyres

2. *Restore*
2017
cast concrete

3. *Ad Infinitum*
2017
newsprint, billboard paper

4. *Stratas*
2017
cast resin

5. *Shifts*
2017
blackened steel, perforated steel,
mesh

6. *Latent Waste*
2017
unexposed colour photographs,
polystyrene, motor

7. *Extra*
2017
resin

8. *Terra Bits*
2017
crushed eggshells

9. *Untitled*
2017
MDF, emulsion, glass, sky

Please be careful when moving around the space as some surfaces within the installation may be uneven.

Please do not walk on the work in stiletto or pointed heels.