

CITY DOME

Katie Schwab

The Seeing Hands

8 October 2022 – 5 March 2023

The Seeing Hands is a new large scale, interactive exhibition by London based artist Katie Schwab.

Katie is an artist who works with installation, textile, furniture and moving image to explore personal and social histories of craft, design and education. With an interest in early-mid twentieth-century design and craft, the artist's practice is emphatically hands-on, collaborative and participatory. The installation presented at Collective draws on a number of design reference points, from Collective's architecture, to children's furniture, educational resources and equipment. The adaptable sculptures have been produced through collaborations with different makers and, in the most part, made with remnants and recycled materials.

The works in *The Seeing Hands* reference a number of architectural details found across the Collective site, such as the brick work, pillars and coloured glass. Katie has also drawn from *The Tactile Workshops*, a book by Italian artist, designer and educator Bruno Munari (1907-98), which suggests making a haptic library for children. He believed that a catalogue of materials with different compositional and surface qualities would stimulate opportunities for engagement and education. All elements of this exhibition give children and adults tools

for expression and communication, allowing them to manipulate the space to explore different forms of learning and play.

Munari's influence is directly felt in the design of 'Tactile Library' found on the large curved painted wall in the City Dome. The wall painting, also echoing the patterns of the City Dome's brickwork, is produced from pots of paint leftover from previous gallery exhibitions and studio work. The library consists of a selection of materials displayed on a shelving system designed and fabricated by furniture maker Simon Worthington. The shelf design echoes the brickwork found in the City Dome and is made from reclaimed Iroko timber, which still holds the scratches and markings from its former life as school science desks. The brackets are made from ash, beech and Douglas fir offcuts from Simon's workshop. You are welcome to experiment freely with these materials; to move, re-group, stack; to play with different colour combinations, scales and textures and explore their limitless possibilities.

In the centre of the City Dome is a large five-screened concertinaed structure, which invites different ways to interact and play. Designed by Katie and built by Scott Associates Sculpture and Design Ltd., Glasgow, the forms, colours and materials of this sculpture have been defined by

a patchwork of leftover materials. The structure has been designed to crawl through, weave on and look through, and has been informed by the multifunctional children's *Boardrobe* (1991), produced by former Memphis designers Daniel Weil and Gerard Taylor. The piece also nods to a 19th century stitched leporello workbook produced by US Kindergarten teacher trainer Ella Steigelman.

The colourful wool and foam shapes reference *Baby-Lonia* (1973), a set of educational sculptures produced by Italian avant-garde collective Studio 65. The original work scaled up traditional wooden building blocks into coated polyurethane shapes, which children could use to construct their own environments. At Collective, these forms are made from end of roll melange wools produced in Bradford by Abbotsford Textiles, and were upholstered by Izzy Thomas. The colourful Eurocrates can be used both for seating and for holding and moving materials.

Katie has also collaborated with designer Maeve Redmond to produce a tactile resource which asks: How many textures can you create using these papers? This will be available soon from the Collective website.

COLLECTIVE

The Seeing Hands, 2022

Broadcloth (seconds), leftover MDF, leftover CLS, leftover Valchromat, netting, ribbon, ceramic tiles, steel, magnets, meranti

Leftover emulsion paint from Collective, Katie Schwab's studio, Modern Painters, New Decorators and Talbot Rice Gallery

Abbotsford end of roll melange wool, foam, velcro, thread

Eurocrates, Abbotsford end of roll melange wool, foam, MDF

Tactile Library, designed by Simon Worthington, 2022

Reclaimed iroko, ash, oak and Douglas fir offcuts

Cork, ceramic, rubber, lino

Tactile Hangings, designed by Maeve Redmond, 2022

Paper, envelope, treasury tags

Katie Schwab

Katie participated in Collective's Satellites Programme for emergent artists in 2015 and since then has exhibited widely. She was shortlisted for the 2019 Max Mara Art Prize for Women and participated in British Art Show 9 (2021-2022). She has produced interactive installations and projects for Tate Britain, Tate St Ives, BALTIC, Arnolfini and Serpentine Galleries, inviting families to play and create.

Recent exhibitions include *small wares*, Vleeshal, Middelburg, The Netherlands (2021); *Another Crossing, Artists Revisit the Mayflower Voyage*, Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA, USA & *The Box*, Plymouth, UK (2021-22); *A Working Building*, The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth (2019); *Making the Bed, Laying the Table*, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Glasgow (2016) and *Together in a Room*, Collective, Edinburgh (2016). *Katie Schwab: Sample Book*, edited by Clare Molloy and designed by Åbäke, is forthcoming.

Special thanks:

Katie Brennan, Siobhan Carroll, Peder Clark, Kit Craig, Dan Griffiths, Marie-Anne McQuay, Maeve Redmond, Izzy Thomas, Simon Worthington, Bluecoat (Linny Venables, Gina Tsang, Sophie Jones-Davies, Adam Smythe and the install team), Scott Associates Sculpture and Design, Talbot Rice Gallery, Modern Painters, New Decorators.

Learning at Collective

People of all ages are welcome to drop-in to play, look and gather in the exhibition with facilitated sessions during our regular Friday drop-in Play sessions. Schools, nursery or community groups are welcome to contact Collective to book time to experience the exhibition.

Play and learning is a core concern in Collective's programme. Since opening the Observatory in 2018, we have been exploring our site and exhibition programme with local families and groups using loose parts play theory. Through trails, play weekends and regular drop-in sessions, we work with artists and groups to create opportunities for creative learning through play, something which has taken on greater importance since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please contact mail@collective-edinburgh.art for further information on bringing a group to visit *The Seeing Hands*.

Please check Collective's website for information on quiet times to visit the exhibition.

This artwork is a joint commission in partnership with Bluecoat (Liverpool).