



MEDIA INFORMATION

## Material Environments

Curated by Ben Roberts, Artists' Research Centre  
4 May – 8 July 2018

Phoebe Cummings  
Keith Harrison  
Serena Korda  
Harold Offeh  
Joanna Piotrowska

During *Material Environments* The Tetley will become a site not just for the display of artwork but of live production, experiment, making and participation. Five artists have been invited to work across the gallery's spaces, to experiment with ideas of physical and psychological transformation. The resulting works, which engage with subjects ranging from social media, botany and chemical science to architecture and music, will grow and evolve over the course of the exhibition, operating as installations, workshops or laboratories. Taking as its starting point an interest in the process of artistic research and production; *Material Environments* makes this visible for the audience to see, experience and be involved in.

*Material Environments* departs from an experience of art based on the environments in which we usually find it – paintings in a gallery and performance in a theatre – towards an understanding of art as something which actively defines our environment.

Radio 4 Woman's Hour Craft Prize Winner 2017, **Phoebe Cummings**, will create new work continuing her research into baroque ceramic decoration, where lush landscapes and impossible assemblages of plants, animals and humans thrive. Cummings will create a huge, new immersive environment filling the central Leeds Beckett Atrium with delicate, organic sculptures drawn from historical designs and made in unfired clay. Cummings will begin this painstaking work before the exhibition opens and continue during the first few weeks. Visitors will be able to enter the humid environment created in the atrium, walk amongst Cummings' delicate creations and see the artist at work. Over the course of the exhibition the clay will dry out and degrade, and in the end the works will be destroyed, returned to the earth that they came from.

**Keith Harrison's** work is often made in response to the sites where it is encountered, both embracing their history and challenging their use. Previous works have involved flying cars through a forest and endangering the entire ceramics collection of the V&A Museum as part of his residency there. For *Material Environments* Harrison has been invited to develop a new work, spanning the gallery's interior spaces, responding to the industrial heritage of The Tetley building. The work will evolve over the course of the exhibition and The Tetley Weekender: Experiments Workshop on the 19 & 20 May 2018.

**Serena Korda** will continue her research into the relationship between acoustics, emotional states and the paranormal through a new series of soundworks entitled *Clairaudience*. Clairaudience literally translates as 'clear hearing' and is the psychic ability to hear things in the spirit world, also known as psychic hearing. This new work will take as its starting point a series of field recordings made in Todmorden, a town with a rich paranormal and extraterrestrial history, to explore how we might hear things that aren't

necessarily there. Korda will also create her own 'glass harp' assembled from glassware collected on her journey around Todmorden and from donations by the public. The playing of glasses has a rich history, with Mozart writing musical pieces for the glass harmonica, but it has also been associated with causing madness and hysteria for its players and listeners.

'Realness' is a queer colloquialism that relates to the inhabiting or construction of identity through performance, offering a strategy for multiple identities in both physical and virtual contexts. For *Material Environments* **Harold Offeh** is proposing the formation of a live archive entitled *The Real Thing: Towards an Authentic Live Archive*. Audiences will be able to engage with the project through artefacts, images, actions, performances and workshops that seek to collect, edit and present an evolving archive of material sources. This concept has been a reoccurring concern for Offeh, exploring the importance of live and direct experiences in the activation of historical material. *The Real Thing: Towards an Authentic Live Archive* is concerned with ideas of reality, realness and authenticity, concepts which have taken on new meanings in our increasingly mediated lives, where the internet and social media re-enforce our subject positions, and knowledge and certainties are shaped by peoples' feelings and emotions.

**Joanna Piotrowska's** photographic series *Shelter* sees her visiting people's homes and inviting them to create constructions, dens and habitations from the furniture within their living spaces. The resulting works are narrative, poignant and personal. The constructions reflect their creator's inner life, their history and state of mind, transforming space and material into something deeply personal. Shown in the context of galleries that were once offices of The Tetley brewery, the work speaks to mutability of architecture and the psychology which informs the perception of our surroundings.



## ENDS

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## EVENTS

### **Material Environments Press View**

3 May 2018, 2pm

A chance to interview curators and artists. Email [millie.carroll@thetetley.org](mailto:millie.carroll@thetetley.org) to register your interest.

### **The Tetley Weekender: Experiments Workshop**

18 – 20 May 2018

The Tetley Weekender is our annual micro-festival that takes its inspiration from our current exhibition with activities for all the family, artist-led events and talks, plus great food and drink. It's a great introduction to everything we do at The Tetley.

The Experiments Workshop will form the centrepiece of the *Material Environments* exhibition and this year's Weekender. The exhibiting artists will use the gallery as a site for

workshops, performance and experimentation, publicly testing ideas and materials as part of their work. Culminating during the Experiments Workshop, the resulting performances, discussions, mistakes and surprises will be presented over the Weekender and recorded and live streamed at [thisistomorrow.info](http://thisistomorrow.info) and subsequently on the ARC website.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

### **The Tetley**

The Tetley is a centre for contemporary art in the heart of Leeds' South Bank. Housed in the 1931 headquarters of the Joshua Tetley & Son brewery, The Tetley opened in 2013 as a gallery with a learning studio, work spaces for the creative industries, restaurant and bar. Described by the London Evening Standard as "the heart and soul of Leeds' art scene" The Tetley's programme of exhibitions, residencies and events aim to inspire and bring audiences closer to art and artists, support the production of new work and develop artists' practice. The Tetley is supported by Arts Council England, Carlsberg UK and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Gallery opening hours: Daily 10am – 5pm, Wednesday 10am – 8pm. Admission is FREE.  
[thetetley.org](http://thetetley.org) / [@The\\_Tetley](https://www.instagram.com/The_Tetley) / [facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds](https://www.facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds) The Tetley, Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ

### **Guest Curator: Ben Roberts**

Ben Roberts is Director of the Artists' Research Centre (ARC) and Associate Curator at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. Previously he was Curator of Education and Public Programmes at Modern Art Oxford (2014-16) and Curator of Public Programmes at Camden Arts Centre (2004 – 2013). He founded ARC in 2016 to support interdisciplinary creative research and production: connecting artists, researchers and arts audiences. ARC runs a programme of artists' research fellowships, projects and writing programmes in collaboration with galleries and universities across the UK. ARC is supported by Arts Council England.

[artistsresearchcentre.org.uk](http://artistsresearchcentre.org.uk) / [@The\\_AR\\_C](https://www.instagram.com/The_AR_C) / [@artistsreseachcentre](https://www.instagram.com/artistsreseachcentre)

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### **Phoebe Cummings**

Phoebe Cummings studied at the University of Brighton and completed an MA at the Royal College of Art in 2005. She has undertaken a number of artist residencies, in the UK, USA and Greenland, including a three-month Arts/Industry residency at the Kohler Co. factory, Wisconsin (2008) and six months as ceramics artist-in-residence at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2010). Cummings won the Radio 4 Woman's Hour Craft Prize (2017) and the British Ceramics Biennial Award (2011). Recent exhibitions have included a commission to make work for Swept Away at the Museum of Arts & Design, New York in 2012 and a solo show at the University of Hawaii Art Gallery, Honolulu (2013). She was awarded the second ceramics fellowship at Camden Arts Centre, London (2012 – 2013) and is currently based in Stafford, U.K.

### **Serena Korda**

Serena Korda is currently Norma Lipman/BALTIC fellow in Ceramic Sculpture at Newcastle University. Korda currently has a solo exhibition Missing Time (until 28 May 2018) at BALTIC, Gateshead and her work and selection of the ceramics collection Daughters of Necessity: Serena Korda & Wakefield's Ceramics (until 5 July) is at The Hepworth Wakefield. Recent exhibitions include Hold Fast Stand Sure, I Scream a Revolution, GSA Gallery, Glasgow International (2016), Jug Choir performance at Supernormal (2016), public

art commission for Haverfordwest Black Diamond (2015), Aping the Beast, Camden Arts Centre, Grundy Art Gallery and The Arnolfini (2011), Laid to Rest, Dirt: The Filthy Reality of Everyday Life, Wellcome Collection, London (2011), W.A.M.A The Work as Movement Archive (2012), Spaces for the Imagination, Turner Contemporary, Margate (2011) and The Library of Secrets, New Art Gallery Walsall; Whitstable Biennale (2008/2009).

### **Joanna Piotrowska**

Born 1985, lives and works between London and Warsaw. She studied Photography at the Royal College of Art in London and Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. Her photographic practice focuses on familial structures and their relationship to the wider systems—including politics, economics, social, and cultural life. The artist uses her surroundings to show the anxiety and psychological tension of the domestic space - rather as a document of a performance than a documentary image. In 2014 she published her first monograph book *Frowst*, published by MACK Books, London.

### **Keith Harrison**

Keith Harrison was born in West Bromwich in the Black Country and grew up in Birmingham. Keith studied at Cardiff and completed an MA at the Royal College of Art in 2002.

Since 2002 Keith has been involved in a series of process-based live public experiments that investigate the direct physical transformation of clay from a raw state using industrial and domestic electrical systems. In addition, large-scale works have been realised for public galleries and Museums including the V&A, Jerwood Space, Camden Arts Centre and mima, Middlesbrough which take on the given space to produce site-specific time-based works. Keith has undertaken residencies previously at KHOJ, New Delhi in 2003 and at Burton Museum & Art Gallery in 2002. Since 2002, Keith has been part-time Senior Lecturer at Bath School of Art and Design and Visiting Lecturer at a number of Art Schools in the UK and Europe.

### **Harold Offeh**

Harold Offeh is an artist working in a range of media including performance, video, photography, learning and social arts practice in a career spanning 20 years. He has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally. In 2017 he exhibited as part of *Untitled: art on the conditions of our time* at New Art Exchange in Nottingham, UK and *Tous, des sangs-mêlés* at MAC VAL, Museum of Contemporary Art in Val de Marne, France. In 2017 he's been Open House residency artist at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge and a summer artist in residence at Wysing Arts Centre. In 2018, forthcoming projects include, a major commission for *Nuit Blanche 2018* in Toronto, Canada and a performance for the re-opening exhibition, *Actions: The Image of The World Can Be Different*, Kettle's Yard. He studied Critical Fine Art Practice at The University of Brighton and did MA Fine Art at the Royal College of Art. He lives in Cambridge and works in London and Leeds, UK where he is currently a Reader in Fine Art and Leeds Beckett University.