

UNBUILD: a site of possibility

22 September – 10 December 2023

This inaugural exhibition at Drawing Room's new home is an exploration of the ways in which buildings affect us – physically and psychologically – and how they are transformed through use. The selected artists use expanded forms of drawing to consider the impact of buildings on our bodies, our minds, our memories and our dreams. The richly varied work of Jessie Brennan, Ian Kiaer, Tanoa Sasraku, Emily Speed and Do Ho Suh proposes a range of physical, emotional and political responses to buildings, as places and ideas. In addition to paper, ink and graphite, unconventional processes challenge and widen the definition of drawing, and offer us several paths to explore.

Jessie Brennan

Jessie Brennan's work is focused on sites, situations and the role of artists in fostering solidarities with working-class communities and their right to the city. Her commission, *To Agitate, Still*, is the outcome of the artist developing connections with both Drawing Room's team and with neighbours living on the Setchell Estate.



To Agitate, Still. 2023. Handmade paper, daffodil, cotton and sisal, made in collaboration with Mandy Brannan, with thanks to residents of Setchell Estate. Dimensions variable, 21.5 x 14cm each. Courtesy the artist

An additional outcome of Brennan's work with us is a commitment from Drawing Room to offer our new Community Studio to local residents for community-organised activities, which will be facilitated by our Neighbourhood Connectors project. Brennan intends for the legacy of her time with residents to contribute towards informing Drawing Room's governance, to become a more inclusive organisation whose arts and culture provision serves more diverse audiences.

Ian Kiaer

Ian Kiaer references the approaches and theories of architects he admires, who have resisted dominant ideologies and challenged conventions of how space is occupied and experienced. This new installation by Kiaer responds to the gallery and uses reclaimed materials and those associated with the building trade, which bear scratches, scuffs and dust as markers of everyday use and the passage of time. They are reminiscent of the abrasions and residues bodies accumulate as they occupy spaces. Kiaer has utilised found materials for over two decades to explore the unseen histories and relationships between material things. By salvaging and combining discarded elements, Kiaer reminds us how physical objects speak to things imagined, thought, dreamt and touched.



Endnote limb, yellow sag. 2023. Perspex, acrylic, gell and pencil on paper, polyethylene, LED lighting and fan. Dimensions variable. Courtesy Alison Jacques

Emily Speed

Emily Speed is interested in the body and its relationship to architecture. This new commission for *UNBUILD* explores how we occupy our body and how the buildings we occupy define us. *Fossa* erases the distinction between body and building to draw attention to the built environment in relation to systems of power; a leg becomes structural support and fingers emerge from the tightly woven innards to clutch the structure's own edges, barely holding things together. Speed's work reminds us that buildings are manifestations of the people and societies that construct them, highlighting that capitalism, patriarchy and our colonial past are embodied in the fabric of our built environment.



Fossa. 2023. Plywood, plaster, sand, goat hair, pearl glue, natural pigments, fired stoneware, fir branch, dowel, linen, cotton, wadding, magnets, crayon on paper, and wire. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist

Tanoa Sasraku

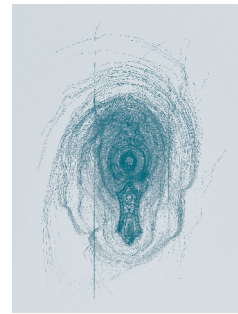
For many, the lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic meant our relationships with the spaces we inhabit became more heightened than ever. *A Tower to Say Goodbye* was made over the course of several months in which Sasraku occupied a disused postal sorting office and is a coming together of how the building marked her and how she marked it. The artist's commitment to paper, stitching and pattern is inspired by watching her Ghanaian father, a couturier, selecting fabrics with an emotional resonance, cutting patterns and bringing the two together in garment-form. The spectrum of pink employed in *A Tower to Say Goodbye* also speaks to the mood of a year spent diving into romantic memory during the Covid-19 lockdown. This period presented a marked shift in the artist's frame of reference for her works as, rather than longing for the expanses of the British rural as she had done before, she found herself longing for the life of the city in which she lives.



A Tower to Say Goodbye. 2021. Newsprint, soft pastel, fixative, polyester thread, linen thread, and PVA glue. 401 x 260cm. Collection of Lorenzo Legarda Leviste and Fahad Mayet

Do Ho Suh

Drawing underpins the varied work of Do Ho Suh and the themes it explores are inspired by his itinerant life. Born in Seoul, Korea, Suh moved to the US as a young man; he uses his art to investigate the fallibility of memory and to find ways to reconnect with the sensory experiences of his past. Working with delicate materials that contrast with the solidity of architecture, Suh's work explores themes of relocation and absence through the concept of home, informed by his experience of migration and the buildings he once inhabited. The entwined and meandering lines that distinguish his drawings in thread and ink represent a visual mapping of movement and touch through space. The selected drawings are made in collaboration with architectural modelling software and robotic renderings, a process that grapples with the artist's experience of personal displacement.



ScaledBehaviour_drawing (HomeWithinHome_elevation_F_01). 2023. 99 x 87cm

ScaledBehaviour_drawing (HomeWithinHome_isometric_E_01). 2023. 98 x 88cm

ScaledBehaviour_drawing (doorknob_elevation_40-E-01). 2022. 67 x 48cm

ScaledBehaviour_drawing (doorknob_elevation_40_D_01_overlay). 2022. 42 x 61.5cm

ScaledBehaviour_drawing (doorknob_elevation_48-H-01). 2022. 67 x 47cm

ScaledBehaviour_drawing (doorknob_elevation_16_H_01). 2023. 67.5 x 48cm

All robot, pen on paper
©Do Ho Suh