

Related events

Artist Performances

Hedwig Houben *Personal Matters and Public Affairs*

Friday 30 September, 8pm

Free, no need to book

Hedwig Houben's sculptural performance examines the position and status of the 'thing' and the individual when they are removed from their private space. Houben and a replica plasticine portrait perform with 'the Other', which takes the shape of a car in a 1:1 scale plasticine model.

Hedwig Houben *Imitator Being Made*

Thursday 3 November, 6.30pm

Free, booking advised

A performance featuring three characters, 'the Made', 'the Being' and 'the Imitator'. In its discussion of the relationships between these three characters, the work considers issues of power, collaboration and dependency. How much do authenticity and originality really matter? Don't we all learn through copying others?

Spike Island

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Visitor Information

Gallery open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm
(during exhibitions only).

Admission to the gallery is free.

Spike Island Café open Monday to Friday,
8.30am–5pm, Saturday and Sunday, 10am–5pm.

Spike Island aims to be a fully accessible building.

During the exhibition, four invited guests take on the role of 'performer'. Free, no need to book

Thursday 20 October, around 3pm

Five Possible Lectures on Six Possibilities for a Sculpture performed by artist Colin Higginson

Wednesday 9 November, around 3pm

Personal Matters and Public Affairs performed by assistant curator Lizzie Watson

Wednesday 16 November, around 2pm

The Good, The Bad, The Happy, The Sad performed by collector Rupert Bathurst

Thursday 8 December, around 3pm

Personal Matters and Public Affairs performed by Spike Island visitor Phil Saunders

UWE/Art in the City Talk

Hedwig Houben

Wednesday 2 November, 6.30–8pm

£6/£4 concessions

Arncliffe, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA

Hedwig Houben discusses her practice and current solo exhibition at Spike Island.

Hedwig Houben's exhibition is supported by the Mondriaan Fund and Outset. Following the exhibition *Imitator Being Made* will be gifted to the permanent collection of the Plymouth City Art Gallery and Museum, which is developing a new contemporary art space. This is part of an initiative by Outset Contemporary Art Fund to benefit museum collections across the South West of England.



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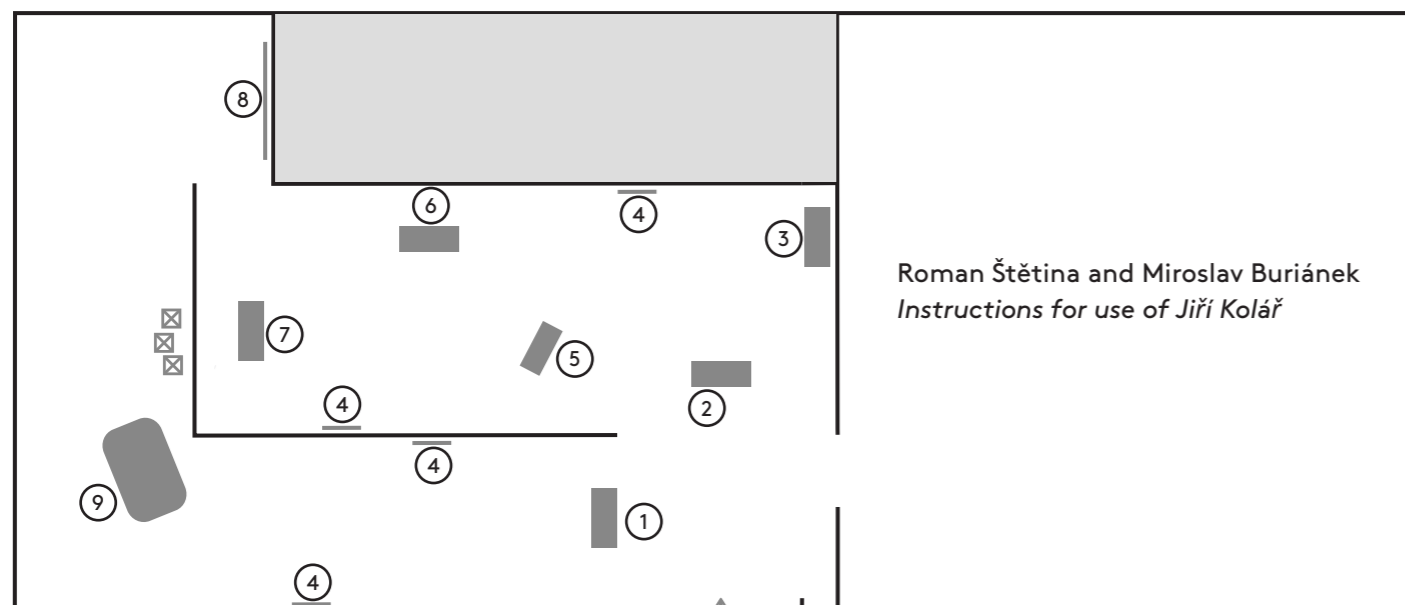
outset.

Exhibition Guide

Others and I Hedwig Houben

1 October to 11 December 2016

Spike Island



- ① Hand-drawn scripts (2012-2015) graphite and crayon on paper
- ② *The Hand, the Eye, It and the Foot* (2015) plasticine
- ③ *The Collector and its Host* (2015) Installation activated by the Spike Island team, wooden modular shelf system, plaster
- ④ *Imitator Being Made* (2015) Video lecture performance, 20 min
The Hand, the Eye, It and the Foot (2015) Video lecture performance, 25 min
The Good, the Bad, the Happy, the Sad (2014) Video lecture performance, 19 min
Five Possible Lectures on Six Possibilities for a Sculpture (2012) Video performance lecture 25 min
- ⑤ *The Good, the Bad, the Happy, the Sad* (2014) Handwoven carpet, plasticine, wood
- ⑥ *Five Possible Lectures on Six Possibilities for a Sculpture* (2012) plasticine
- ⑦ *Imitator Being Made* (2015) plaster

- ⑧ *Personal Matters and Public Affairs* performed by Hedwig Houben (2015)
Personal Matters and Public Affairs performed by the mother-in-law Florentien Schevers (2015)
Personal Matters and Public Affairs performed by the neighbour Lodewijk Reys (2015)
Personal Matters and Public Affairs performed by the gallerist Laurie Cluitmans (2015)
Video lecture performance, ±25 min each
- ⑨ *Personal Matters and Public Affairs* (2015) plasticine, wood

Artist Edition

Hedwig Houben Publication and Collector's edition

Limited edition of six illustrated scripts
Edition of 40 + 5 AP
£20 (inc. VAT)

Limited edition (5) sets of six illustrated scripts each including a unique drawing by Hedwig Houben of *The Good and The Bad* sculptures in the purchaser's living room.
Edition of 5
£500 (inc. VAT)

Dutch artist Hedwig Houben makes work that is difficult to categorise: *Others and I*, her first solo exhibition in the UK, is made of key works from the last five years that encompass sculptural objects, scripts, multiple performances and drawings. In these she foregrounds acts of making and talking about art, revealing the questions she asks of her own identity, activity and process and of the nature of the work of art.

At the heart of her works lies an expanding cast of 'characters', including the Good and the Bad sculptures, the Hand, the Eye, the Foot, It, the Being, the Made, the Imitator and so on. While each takes the form of an object, Houben personifies them – giving to each attitudes, ideas and points of view – and positions them in relation to each other. The characters often recur across a number of works, in which their relationships shift, suggesting that they are not fixed entities but rather, dependent upon context. Houben has described her work as an attempt to understand how the process of making works 'relates to the structures that we create together within society – rules, assumptions, expectations.'

The illustrated scripts displayed in the vitrine to the left of the entrance are written in the form of an artist's lecture, ostensibly introducing and explaining her work. This straightforward approach quickly breaks down; in *The Good, the Bad, the Happy, the Sad* (2014) the lecture is handed over to the two objects on show, which, we are told, represent good and bad sculpture – even though on the surface, any difference between them is slight. It is the artist who continues to speak, taking on the parts of the two characters, staging a conversation between them as a child might play with inanimate objects. There is similar confusion in *Five Possible Lectures on Six Possibilities for a Sculpture* (2012), in which the Hedwig Houben of the present moment begins to speak about the Hedwig Houben of the past as if a separate person. The 'I' of *Personal Matters and Public Affairs* (2015) signifies both the artist/performer and a plasticine self-portrait. Identity and language collapse into uncertainty and expectation is subverted. This is further complicated by the fact that for this exhibition Houben has invited a number of others – a collector, an artist based in the studios here, a staff member and a visitor – to activate her scripts,

taking on the role of the performer.

Houben has said of her work, 'I'm interested in why we make the things we make and what that tells us about ourselves. Talking about the process of making is actually talking about decision-making and its consequences, about what is behind the façade or what happens before a work is made public. This includes desires, manipulation, knowledge, nonsense, naivety, facts, assumptions, moods etc.'

Her performances typically involve the delivery of a memorised script while the artist is engaged with some kind of physical making activity. In *Imitator Being Made* she grinds down the plaster head on the table in front of her; in *Five Possible Lectures on Six Possibilities for a Sculpture* she works into the material on the table in front of her with enough effort that she becomes short of breath. This interaction of thinking and making, of presenting logical or mental processes and practices that are intertwined with more intuitive, physical activities asserts that the two cannot be isolated, but rather, feed into and from each other.

Throughout the exhibition *The Collector and its Host* (2015) will be reinstalled every day by the gallery invigilators. The Host is an ever-changing character embodied by the institution showing Houben's work and through this work, something of its own nature is put on display. The Spike Island team will make daily decisions about where in the gallery it should be located and how it appears and sporadically talk to visitors about their work and how it affects the exhibition – be it an invigilator, the finance manager or the caretaker.