

Related events

In Conversation: Giles Round and Lucia Pietroiusti

Thursday 4 May, 6.30–8pm

£5/£3 (free for Spike Associates)

Booking advised

Giles Round discusses his work with Lucia Pietroiusti, Public Programmes Curator at the Serpentine Galleries.

Exhibition Tour

Led by Carmen Juliá, curator

Saturday 6 May, 2–3pm

Free, no need to book

Carmen Juliá, Spike Island curator, leads a tour of Giles Round's exhibition, with a focus on ideas of design and functionality, appropriation and collaboration.

Performance: Alex Cecchetti

Saturday 3 June, 6.30–7.30pm

Free, booking advised

As part of his exhibition, Giles Round has invited performance artist, poet and choreographer Alex Cecchetti to present a new work in the galleries.

Spike Island

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 [Facebook.com/Spikeland](https://www.facebook.com/Spikeland)

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Visitor Information

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

Admission to the gallery is free.

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

Spike Island aims to be a fully accessible building.

I am Making Art

Free, booking advised

These monthly activity sessions are led by artists and take place in the Spike Island Café.

Talking Objects

Saturday 6 May, 2–6pm

Taking influence from Giles Round's exhibition, create fictions for objects in this fun workshop led by Bristol-based performance artist Tom Marshman.

Theatrical Type

Saturday 3 June, 2–6pm

Artist Monique Jivram leads a session inspired by the theatrical qualities of Giles Round's exhibition. Using simple typography and untraditional drawing techniques, create your own individual placard and explore what we choose to communicate with others and consider how we edit ourselves.

Book for events online at www.spikeisland.org.uk, call 0117 929 2266 or visit reception.

Thank you

Giles Round would like to thank all the artists in the exhibition, Lucia Pietroiusti, Ian Round, Bristol Old Vic Company at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, and Centro Studi Poltronova, Florence.



Exhibition Guide

They bow. Curtain. No applause. Giles Round

8 April to 18 June 2017

Spike Island

For his exhibition at Spike Island, Giles Round draws on his professional experience as an exhibition designer to theatricalise the standard systems of display employed by galleries and museums. Invoking questions of affect in relation to exhibition making, *They Bow. Curtain. No Applause.*¹ conjures up a changing mood between melancholy and angst punctuated by the use of theatrical procedures that see the works shifting position every week. Blurring the boundaries between the roles of artist and curator, Round has invited artists Alex Cecchetti, Maria Loboda and Cally Spooner to show their work alongside his own. Similarly, the author Evan Calder Williams contributes to the exhibition with his essay *lightend & then thondre / snowed & rayne*, a rumination on the relationship between weather conditions and the passing of time.

Inspired by the Italian architecture group Superstudio and, in particular, their *Passiflora* lamp (1968), the exhibition adopts a pop aesthetic where the artificial and the natural engage in a 'playful game of illusion'², lending an unusual visibility to the functional elements that form the basis of exhibition display. As such, interpretation, climate control, gallery furniture, lighting and signage are absurdly exaggerated from their usual supportive roles to become the main protagonists. By shifting the attention from content to context, Round reveals how, in providing a highly codified type of setting for the experience of art, exhibition spaces are as much a deliberate construction as any artwork.

1 The title of the exhibition is taken from the stage annotations of the play *The Elephant Calf or The provability of any and every contention* (1926) by German author Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956). Originally, the play formed the penultimate scene of Brecht's full-length play *Man Equals Man*, but by the end of 1926 the author had separated it to an appendix to the published text. A play within a play, *The Elephant Calf* is set in the British colonial India and it sees its protagonist, the soldier Jeremiah Jip, playing Pal Jacky, the elephant calf on trial for the murder of his mother (who, in a surreal turn of events, is in rude health on the stage, and even called as a witness). The play's farcical denouement is critiqued by 'audience members' – in fact, part of the cast – who storm the stage and insist on having their money back, with the threat of menaces to come if the cast don't accede.

2 *Passiflora*, Centro Studi Poltronova, www.centrostudipoltronova.it/tag/passiflora/

Upon entering the gallery the visitor is faced with a series of wayfinding signs pointing in different directions, and thus confusing the way that one should go. Hanging opposite, the interpretation text, written by the artist, steers away from the neutral tone that characterises institutional use of language, and incorporates emotion, speculation and fiction. In the outer perimeter, wrapping around the external walls of Gallery One is *THE ANTI-CLIMAX CLIMAX* (2017), a text by Cally Spooner, performed by Round, that guides visitors around the galleries. Spooner and Round have worked together on several occasions, with Round often designing the sets of Spooner's films such as in *And You Were Wonderful, On Stage* (the film) (2015)³. Around the corner, an intermittent ERCO flood light acts as a wayfinding sign and directs the viewer towards *The colour of two year old white emulsion* (2017) where visitors are invited to recline and read Evan Calder Williams' essay.

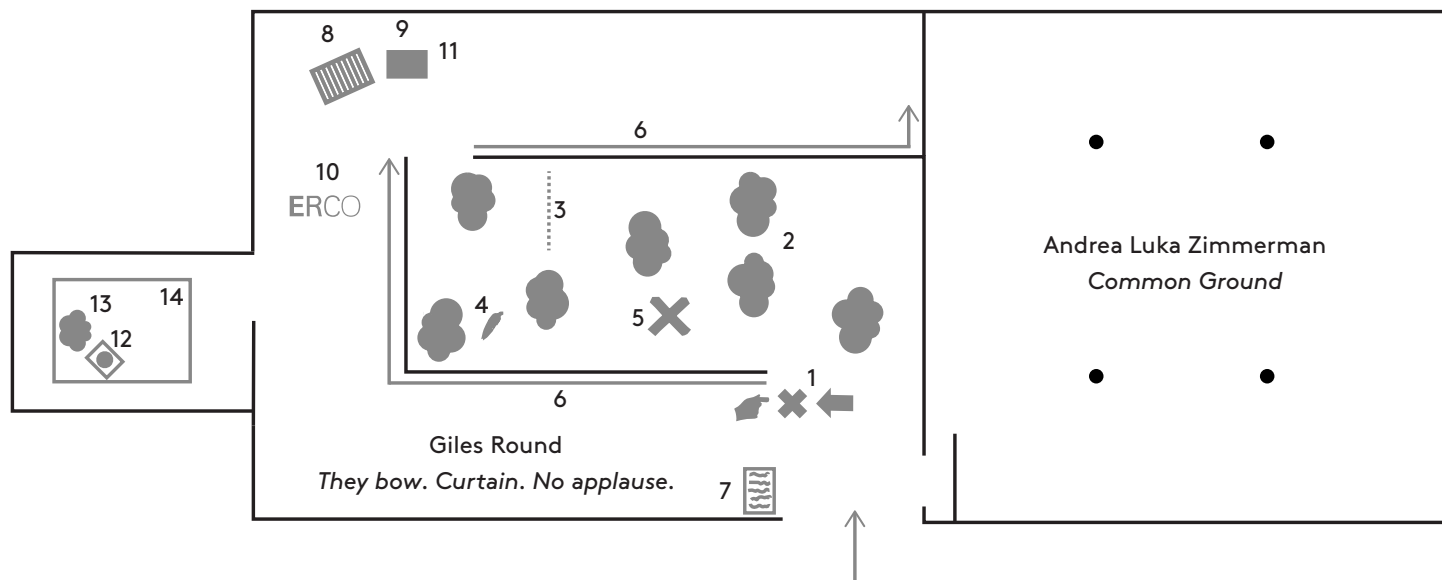
In Gallery One, the track lighting system is reconfigured to mimic nature in the work *Display & Brightness, Night Shift* (2017). A set of seven clouds made of mild steel suspended from rigging, the work incorporates the track and flood lights made by the German lighting company ERCO, a lighting system that is ubiquitous in galleries and museums. Powder coated with the same RAL colour used by ERCO, the work reacts to daylight. Rather than maintaining constant lux levels, it fluctuates as the day unfolds, leading to toxic overexposure on a sunny day. Similarly, as the evening progresses, the lights gradually fade until they automatically go to sleep. Acting as a backdrop curtain is *The scene, seen from the side, acid bright raking light, cracks* (2017), a chain curtain that depicts the image of a building façade. The works, much like scenery flats, are raised and lowered via a system of pulleys. Overnight, the position is altered to a pattern of different set configurations or to meet the needs of local theatre groups who have been invited to use the space to rehearse.

Hanging alongside Round's works is Maria Loboda's *Witch's Ladder* (2014), a sisal rope with Lady Amherst pheasant feathers woven into it.

3 This work was commissioned by the Stedelijk Museum and EMPAC and was exhibited at Spike Island in April 2015.

Each feather corresponds to the spells proffered by a witch, who later hides the rope under the bed of the person she wants to cast a spell on, or else in a secret hiding place, where the rope cannot be discovered. As with much of Loboda's work, *Witch's Ladder* points at a tradition of esotericism and mystery cults, an engagement with history and artefact which often leads to the re-contextualisation of objects charged with latent significances, while at the same time, establishing new associations through the coexistence of various layers of meaning.

Elsewhere in the gallery, the sound of a storm rumbles and reverberates. This is Round's interpretation of the climate control system for maintaining the standard temperature and relative humidity necessary to preserve artworks. *A storm (atmosphere)* (2017) is a Foley recorded at the Bristol Old Vic using the theatre's rain and wind machines, thunder sheet and thunder run. Dating back to the eighteenth century, the thunder run consists of a wooden channel built above the auditorium. Running wooden balls recreate the sound of thunder and make the theatre vibrate, as Round writes in the interpretation text, 'Space itself is being performed. Replayed it transposes, through the reproduction of everyday sound effects, one building onto another'. The boundaries between artwork and building, object and architecture become permeable.



- 1 *They bow. Curtain. No applause.* (wayfinding) (2017)
Glazed stoneware and powder coated steel
- 2 *Display & Brightness, Night Shift* (lighting) (2017)
Powder coated mild steel, ERCO track lighting and rigging
- 3 *The scene, seen from the side, acid bright raking light, cracks* (build) (2017)
Anodised aluminium chain screen, steel and rigging
- 4 Maria Loboda
Witch's Ladder (2014)
Sisal rope, Lady Amherst pheasant feathers
- 5 *They bow. Curtain. No applause.* (rehearsals programme) (2017)
Giles Round offers the gallery to local theatre groups as a rehearsal space

Alex Cecchetti
As part of his exhibition, Giles Round has invited performance artist, poet and choreographer Alex Cecchetti to present a new work in the galleries (see related events.)
- 6 A text by Cally Spooner, performed by Giles Round *THE ANTI-CLIMAX CLIMAX* (2017)
Matt Emulsion
- 7 *They bow. Curtain. No applause.* (interpretation) (2017)
Letterpress print on paper, Twergi newspaper support, hemp cord and steel fixing
- 8 *The colour of two year old white emulsion* (furniture) (2017)
Powder coated mild steel, casters, physiotherapy foam rollers and oil stained plywood
- 9 *The colour of two year old white emulsion* (container) (2017)
Utz plastic containers and dolly
- 10 *The colour of two year old white emulsion* (wayfinding) (2017)
Preprogrammed ERCO flood light
White (RAL 9002) Position 1072661000
- 11 Evan Calder Williams
lightend & then thondre / snowed & rayne (2017)
Letterpress print on paper
4pp. 200x160mm
ISBN 978-0-9574490-5-3
Printed by Letterpress Collective, Bristol
Edition of 3000
- 12 *A storm* (atmosphere) (2017)
Double sided 12" dubplate of a Foley performance, stereo
Duration 22mins 77secs
Performed by Richard Hinton, Brian Moseley, Shelley Stott and David Yapp at Bristol Old Vic on 15 March 2017. Recorded by Tom Hobbs. Mixed by Brian Moseley
- 13 Superstudio *Passiflora* (1968)
Laser-cut and heat-formed Perspex
- 14 *Untitled* (2016)
100% wool woven kelim

Giles Round was born in 1976. He works across disciplines and engages with a variety of materials, processes and collaborators to address the relationship between art, design and functionality. His work is populated with citation and appropriation and, over the last decade, he has built an extensive catalogue of references to early and late modernist manifestations with a particular focus on the design object. Round's recent exhibitions include *We live in the office*, RIBA, London (2016); *Ljubljana, 1955*, Galerija Jakopič, Ljubljana (2015); *AGAIN! SORRY! AGAIN! SORRY!*, Young Team HQ, London (2015); *The Grantchester Pottery paints the stage*, Jerwood Visual Arts, London (2015); *Untitled 1943/44, (SORRY!)*, SPACE: Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada (2014-15); *The Influence of Furniture on Love*, Wysing Farmhouse, Cambridgeshire (2014) and *Commons Room*, Grizedale Arts at APAP, Anyang Art Park, Korea (2014).

Alex Cecchetti (1977-2014) was an artist, a poet and a choreographer. Difficult to classify, his work can be considered as the art of the un-representable. Tactile and poetic, aesthetic and materialistic, it creates mental and physical environments which exist inside and outside our continuum. The artist died for the first time in 2014 for unknown reasons. He continues to produce new works, present new performances and publish new poems. Cecchetti's work has been exhibited widely including: Kunstraum, London (2015); Contemporary Art Centre (CAC); Vilnius, Lithuania (2012); and Jue de Paume, Paris (2011). He has performed at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017), Serpentine Galleries, London (2015) and MAXXI Museum, Rome (2012).

Maria Loboda was born in 1979 in Krakow, Poland. Her work engages with historical aspects related to esotericism, mystery cults and mythology. Intrigue, fiction, and archaeological research coexist in sculptures and installations where objects charged with latent significances are arranged together to trigger new associations and meanings. Loboda has had solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2017), Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius, Lithuania (2017), The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto (2016) and the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2013). Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including Taipei Biennial (2014), DOCUMENTA 13 (2012), and the Athens Biennial (2009).

Cally Spooner was born in 1983 in Ascot, England. Spooner's work comprises media installations,

writing and live performances as means to consider the dissolving boundaries between personal expression and market agendas. In her work she incorporates theory, philosophers, current affairs and pop cultural figures to produce plotless novellas, disjunctive theatre plays, looping monologues and musical arrangements to stage the movement and behaviour of speech. Spooner has presented her work at venues including New Museum, New York (2016), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016), Spike Island, Bristol (2015), Kunstverein Bielefelder, Bielefeld (2015) and Tate Modern, London (2014). Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including Aspen Art Museum and REDCAT, Los Angeles (2015).

Evan Calder Williams is the author of *Roman Letters, Combined and Uneven Apocalypse*, and, forthcoming this spring, *Shard Cinema* and *The Grid Aflame*. His writing has appeared in *Film Quarterly*, *Third Rail Quarterly*, *The Journal of American Studies*, *The Italianist*, *WdW Review*, *Mute*, *The New Inquiry*, *Tabakalera*, *La Furia Umana*, and *World Picture*, among other publications. He is part of the editorial collective of *Viewpoint Magazine* and is a founding member of the moving image research and production collective Thirteen Black Cats. He has presented films, performance, and text works at the Serpentine Gallery, the Whitney Museum, Images Festival, Artists Space, mumok, Swiss Institute, and the Montreal International Festival du Nouveau Cinéma.

Superstudio (1967-1978) was founded in Florence by architects Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris and Alessandro Poli (from 1970 to 1972). Active until 1978, the group was a major part of the Radical architecture movement of the late 1960s. The experimental activity of Superstudio began before the members had defined themselves as a group with the participation of Adolfo Natalini in the 1966 exhibition *Superarchitettura*, organised together with Branzi, Morozzi, Corretti and Deganello (who would later become Archizoom). In 1967, Natalini established three categories of future research: architecture of the monument, architecture of the image and technomorphic architecture. Soon, Superstudio became known for its conceptual architecture works, most notably the 1969 *Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization*.

Spike Island