

Related events

Saturday 9 July, 2pm

Tour of *Structure & Material* with Hannah James, artist based at Spike Island

Tuesday 19 July, 6pm

Structure & Material artist Claire Barclay in conversation with Spike Island curator Marie-Anne McQuay

Saturday 6 August, 2pm

Tour of *Faded Paper* and *Structure & Material* with Suzanne Mooney, artist based at Spike Island

Saturday 13 August, 10am–4pm

Hands on materials masterclass with fine art fabricators Plenderleith Scantlebury, inspired by the forms, textures and substances of *Structure & Material*

Tuesday 16 August, 6pm

Structure & Material artist Becky Beasley in conversation with Laura McLean-Ferris, editor of *Art Review*

Tuesday 30 August, 6pm

Artist Sara MacKillop in conversation with Spike Island director Helen Legg

Saturday 3 September, 2pm

Tour of *the speed and eagerness of meaning* with Peter Bobby, artist based at Spike Island

For more information on these events please see the brochure or visit www.spikeisland.org.uk

Spike Island

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Visitor Information

Gallery open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am–5pm (during exhibitions only)

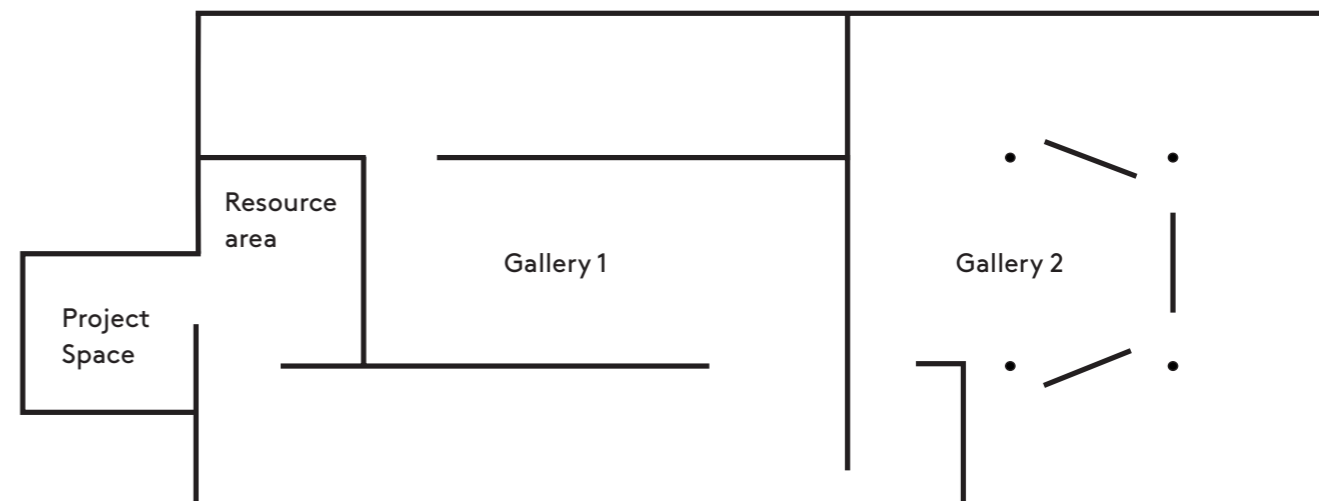
Admission to the galleries is free.

Café open Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm

Saturday and Sunday, 11am–5pm

Spike Island aims to be a fully accessible building. There are three Blue Badge parking spaces outside the main entrance.

Exhibition Guide



Gallery 1
Structure & Material
Claire Barclay
Becky Beasley
Karla Black

Gallery 2
Richard T. Walker
the speed and eagerness
of meaning

Project Space
Sara MacKillop
Faded Paper



Structure & Material is an Arts Council Collection exhibition from the Southbank Centre, London.



Spike Island

Structure & Material

Claire Barclay
Becky Beasley
Karla Black

Spike Island presents *Structure & Material*, a new touring exhibition of work drawn from the Arts Council Collection. The Arts Council Collection supports artists in the UK through the purchase and display of their work. Since it was founded in 1946, the Collection's acquisitions policy has always been characterised by a spirit of risk taking, combined with an informed appraisal of current practice. As a consequence, the Arts Council Collection is now the largest national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art in the world.

Structure & Material brings together for the first time the work of artists Claire Barclay, Becky Beasley and Karla Black. Working across diverse media and techniques, the artists share a commitment to exploring the properties of their chosen materials, utilising unlikely sculptural elements such as cosmetics, sugar paper, blackboard paint, brass hinges and tapestry to distinctive effect. Intuitively and instinctively Barclay, Beasley and Black investigate their tactile qualities, their associations, their potential uses and misuses. As a result, seemingly insubstantial or prosaic individual parts come together in poetic forms, both beautiful and unsettlingly strange.

Each artist has her own distinctive understanding of the meanings we attach to such objects and images. Barclay's installations and prints intersect the worlds of art, craft and design with deliberate ambiguity, whilst the mysterious forms of Beasley's photographic studies and three dimensional structures nod obliquely to the human form. In turn, Black's carefully constructed sculptures lean further towards abstraction, suspending pigment in mid air and sweeping it across the surface of the floor as if attempting to capture pure colour and light.

The images and objects of *Structure & Material* invite close study and contemplation. They do not offer up easy explanations yet they are directly referential, pointing at times to the histories of craft and design in Barclay's structures, to the biographical details and literature from which Beasley's works and titles emerge, and to the

natural elements as seen in the glimpses of sky and ground in Black's constructions. As a whole, the works reference experiences, perceptions and sensations that cannot be captured by language alone, but through which we also understand the world.

A free illustrated booklet, featuring an essay by Katrina Brown, is available from reception.

Claire Barclay (1968) lives and works in Glasgow where she received an MFA from the Glasgow School of Art in 1993. She is represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. Recent solo shows include *Shadow Spans* (2010), the Bloomberg Commission at Whitechapel, London, *Openwide* (2009) at The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, and at Camden Arts Centre (2008). Group exhibitions include *Material Intelligence* (2009), Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, and *Group* (2008) at doggerfisher, Edinburgh.

Becky Beasley (1975) lives and works in St. Leonards on Sea and is represented by Laura Bartlett Gallery, London. In 2010 her exhibition, *8th May 1904, Kingston*, took place at Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston and her first live work, *13 Pieces, 17 Feet*, was presented at the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at MNMN, Monaco (2010), MACBA, Barcelona (2009) and Kunsthalle Bern (2009). She was shortlisted for the MaxMara Art Prize for Women 2009–2011 and is currently participating in the *British Art Show 7: In the Days of the Comet*. Her recent books, published in collaboration with Laura Bartlett Gallery, are *American Letter* (2007) and *Thomas Bernard Malamud* (2009).

Karla Black (1972) lives and works in Glasgow where she received an MFA from the Glasgow School of Art in 2004. She is represented by Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne. Recent solo exhibitions include *Ten Sculptures* (2010), Kunsthalle Nuremburg, and *Karla Black* (2009) at Modern Art Oxford. Black is representing Scotland at this year's Venice Biennale and has recently been nominated for the Turner Prize 2011 alongside Martin Boyce, George Shaw and Hilary Lloyd.

An Arts Council Collection exhibition curated by Katrina Brown and Caroline Douglas in collaboration with Spike Island

Richard T. Walker the speed and eagerness of meaning

Richard T. Walker's work mines the gap between experience and our ability to articulate it. The images within the exhibition were shot amidst the sublime vistas of the American West. In the possibility of foreverness and the speed and eagerness of meaning, both 2011, Walker makes use of an iconic image that emerged in the nineteenth century, that of the isolated figure contemplating the landscape. This motif has often been used to symbolise a fault line between culture and nature and Walker's adoption of it suggests an interest in the romantic tradition. Here the division is between language and experience; we hear a tape player click on at the beginning of the piece and the voice that emanates from it begins to describe the process of experience being translated into language. The monologue talks of the mind's habitual processes, of naming, categorising and ordering and how through this something is lost. This text is repeated, each time becoming less audible as the artist walks into the landscape; the spoken word operates as a mantra. The tape player is placed in the landscape, in a futile attempt to fuse word and image. The use of this machine, a now outmoded analogue technology, corresponds with the artist's use of slide projectors in other works. As semi-obsolete technologies they exemplify the failure of any attempt to represent: in this respect they echo our own failed efforts. Giving up on language, Walker ends with a wistful ballad, played out as the sun sets. A twenty first century romantic, Walker combines sincerity with gentle humour, asking serious questions about linguistic and conceptual frameworks and perception, through a veil of absurdity.

Richard T. Walker received his MA from Goldsmiths College in 2005 and his BA from Bath Spa University. He is currently based in San Francisco. He has exhibited at institutions such as the Temporare Kunsthalle, Berlin, De Appel, Amsterdam, and LAXART, Los Angeles. His work was recently included in the group exhibition *Embodying* (2011) at the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center and features in the current exhibition, *Big Picture*, at K21 in Düsseldorf.

Sara MacKillop Faded Paper

Sara MacKillop's quiet work is made from everyday items such as records, jigsaw puzzles, remnants of old wallpaper and felt tip pens. She selects objects that are inexpensive, unremarkable and only just obsolete; typically small in scale, they usually fit to the hand. These objects are reconfigured through stacking, intertwining or their precise placement in a space, often in ways that suggest an idle engagement, a kind of sculptural distraction. The artist's reworking of them leads to forms that echo modernist aesthetics, yet the impoverished quality of her materials creates a melancholy feel, a sense of something lost.

For Spike Island MacKillop has retrieved eight sheets of sugar paper originally used as backing for institutional notice boards. Wherever signs were once attached to the backing papers, the area they covered has retained its colour; where the paper was exposed to light, colour has faded, creating a series of abstract patterns. Hung according to the conventions of a painting exhibition, the works recall Colour Field painting, a high point of avant-garde practice in the 1940s and 1950s.

Integral to the exhibition is a book the artist has produced to document, as closely as possible, the papers as they were at the beginning of the show. Exposed once again to light in the project space, the works will continue to fade. The publication therefore becomes the only record of the papers as they were; the distance between the work and its representation will continue to grow over time.

Sara MacKillop received her MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2001 and solo exhibitions include *Similar Variance* (2010) at Dundee Contemporary Art; *Addendum* (2010) at Salle de Bains, Lyon, and *50 Envelope Windows* (2008) at Whitechapel Project Space, London. She was selected for EAST International in 2003 and 2007, and group shows include *Working Things Out* (2007) at Spike Island, Bristol, and *The Page* (2010) at Kimmerich Gallery, New York. MacKillop's artist's books include *Arrows* (2010), *Mirrors* (2010), and *32 Photocopied Pages* (2009), all published by Blue Feint, London.