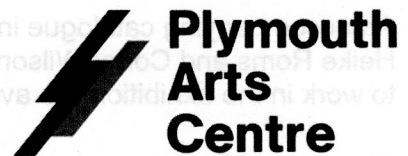


# MATERIALS OF RESISTANCE

## CLARE THORNTON

1 December–20 January



*Materials of Resistance* brings together new work made by artist Clare Thornton since her relocation to Plymouth in 2015, alongside pieces previously shown in exhibitions across the UK over the last seven years.

Starting in the Window Gallery, we find the work *The Dandy & The Mute*. It is a set of wax casts taken from an acanthus leaf mould used in the construction of Bristol's Old Vic Theatre. Thornton describes the sculpture as having 'a restrained flourish, a guarded flamboyance' which rings true for a number of pieces in *Materials of Resistance*. These contradictory impulses, these impulsive tensions, point us towards the two historical figures who have served as the exhibition's underlying inspiration: Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Nancy Cunard. Their trailblazing creativity has emboldened Thornton to take risks with the new works. Black and white photographs of these compelling women (which can be seen in the exhibition's catalogue) present their arms adorned with decorative jewellery and bodies striking dynamic poses. Moving up the stairs to the first floor, having made use of the now embellished — embangled — handrails, we begin to find references to these two avant-garde characters.

New ceramic, print, and photographic works all take the show's title and draw on an art deco palette reminiscent of the 1920s. Thornton has been working with technicians at Plymouth University and Plymouth College of Art to produce these most recent pieces, using specialist ceramics facilities and a large, rarely used, woodblock wallpaper press. Photographs taken during production introduce one of Thornton's numerous collaborators, dancer Laura Dannequin, who is interacting with the heavy printing equipment. A video of the wallpaper press in action can be seen on the ground floor.

In the rear gallery the whole space has been given over to another of Thornton's collaborations, *The Italic I*. For this multi-faceted project, Thornton has investigated artistic collaboration and labour with writer-artist Emma Cocker. Breaking a fall into still images, the duo expose otherwise invisible moments of a (un)controllable action. This three channel video installation and the publication shown in the vitrine at the front of the building are two recent iterations of *The Italic I* project.

Alongside her most recent work the artist is also re-presenting existing pieces for re-interpretation. An image of the artist draped over an industrial roll of fabric finds new meaning hanging alongside her block printed length of paper: does she now appear physically drained by her labours? And can we see a figure depicted in the wallpaper print teetering on the point of a stumble to the floor? An acrylic door created for a performance installation at the Red Lodge Museum in Bristol originally housed a seemingly endless falling length of red ribbon now acts as a frame for a diaphanous new print on silk. The door is a portal to new ideas and possibilities.

The print on silk recalls Thornton's longstanding relationship with fabric; a proficient seamstress, she has often worked with cloth and malleable materials. In the second work titled *The Dandy & The Mute*, the delicate fabric dangles between the two floors of the building. The sensuous fabric shrouds a circus hoop and the cloth performs as it catches the gentlest of breezes.

An accompanying catalogue includes texts by Emma Cocker, Phil Owen, Natalie Raven, Heike Roms and Conor Wilson. The catalogue, a limited edition print and sculptures relating to work in the exhibition are available to purchase from the front desk.

*Materials of Resistance* is curated by Ben Borthwick, Vickie Fear, and Lucy Rollins. It is part of Plymouth Arts Centre's ongoing programme of exhibitions by PAC Home members.

*Materials of Resistance* has been made possible with generous support from The Elephant Trust and Arts Council England. Thanks also to Plymouth College of Art and Plymouth University (Artist in Residence, Fine Arts) for supporting production of new work.

**Clare Thornton** (b. 1970, Birmingham) is an interdisciplinary artist and educator based at KARST in Plymouth. She has shown her work extensively as a solo artist through residencies and exhibitions at Galleri GUN (Oslo) and Kurant Visningsrom (Tromsø), Oriol Myrddin (Carmarthen), and University of Bristol Theatre Collection. Her on-going cross-disciplinary collaborations with Emma Cocker, Jan Steinum (Norway) and the Performance Re-enactment Society, which she co-founded in 2007 for investigating the problems and potential of performance and its documents, have been presented at Arnolfini, Spike Island (Bristol), South London Gallery and FlatTimeHouse, (London), and Gagosian Gallery (NY).

#### **EVENTS:**

##### **PAC To The Future: Lunchtime talk with Jacob Walker**

**Wed 6 Dec, 1pm, Free and open to all, no booking required**

Ages 8 and above.

Jacob is a recent graduate from the Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production course at Plymouth College of Art. He will introduce the short experimental film he and fellow graduate Ben Mellor-Heslop produced about the fabrication of a work in the exhibition.

##### **Bringing In Baby: To The Gallery**

**Tuesday 12 December, 11am–12 noon**

Adults and under 1s. £2 includes a hot drink.

Drop in for a guided tour of the exhibition with our visual arts team and your little ones. After exploring the artwork in the galleries all are welcome to relax in the comfort of the cafe and meet other parents with a passion for culture over a coffee.

##### **Conor Wilson: PAC Home Talk**

**Wed 13 Dec, 6pm, £3/ Free for PAC Home Members**

Conor is course leader for MA Ceramics at Bath School of Art & Design. He has recently completed an AHRC funded, practice-based PhD at the Royal College of Art, entitled '*Writing Making: Object as Body, Language and Material*'.

##### **Vickie Fear: Lunchtime Talk**

**Wed 10 Jan, 1pm, Free**

Plymouth-based contemporary art Producer Vickie Fear discusses how artists in the regions are navigating a challenging landscape of little or no pay by building peer networks and self-initiating opportunities. Vickie is co-curator of *Materials of Resistance*.

##### **Monika Rycerz: Lunchtime Talk**

**Wed 17 Jan, 1pm, Free**

Monika is a Plymouth based printmaker. She is also Printmaking Workshop Co-ordinator in the department for Painting, Drawing and Printmaking at Plymouth College of Art where she helped Clare Thornton produce new work using a large wallpaper block press.



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