

# Bloom

Keith Harrison

**Bloom** is an Arts Council and Henry Moore Foundation commission for God's House Tower, Southampton, November 2019 - January 2020.

## Project Outline:

**Bloom** resulted from an invitation to respond to the theme of *Beside The Sea* for God's House Towers's 2019 - 2020 Exhibition Programme. A commissioned, site-specific installation, Harrison drew inspiration from the sights and sounds of passing container ships, viewed from the roof of God's House Tower, Southampton and the 17th century painting *Night Blooming Cereus* by Philip Reinagle and Abraham Pether, which was on show downstairs, at the Barker-Mill Collections gallery.

Extending his experimentation with matter and sound from recent projects, Harrison took his material cues from the painting and the plumes of dust created in ***Ecstatic Material*** 2019. In the painting a large, blossoming cactus flower is painted by Philip Reinagle on top of a moonlight scene by Abraham Pether, a clock in the painting reads midnight. These elements informed Harrison's methodology and choice of materials: cactus powder to represent the plant and speakers representing the clock.

**Bloom** consisted of stacks of locally-sourced plastic storage boxes retro-fitted with subwoofer drivers, contained in a custom-built steel and perspex structure, the same dimensions as a shipping container. Harrison used cacti powder, speakers, turntable and a uniquely pressed vinyl recording of ships foghorns recorded from the roof of God's House Tower, which was played hourly and the vibration of the foghorn recording activated the raw cactus powder into clouds or blooms. Over the 3 months that **Bloom** was installed, staff at the gallery took responsibility for playing the foghorn recording each hour, developing a welcome sense of ownership over the project. These hourly sounds reverberated through the building into the gallery below, gently vibrating the painting that inspired the project, forging connections between past and present through sound and matter.

