

## Upper Gallery

### 1. **Eve Mutso**, *loop*, 2018

20-minute performance, canvas, graphite powder, aerial straps, sound, video documentation

'*loop* is about defying gravity, while remaining intensely physical – tracing a new kind of movement. My aerial straps are used as a partner in the dance, and also as a kind of restriction: allowing me to push my choreography and movement practice further, taking the weight off my feet. I like the minimal look and feel of this work – it's just 3 and a half teaspoons of graphite powder used for each performance.'

'In the performing arts, no performance is ever the same. I'm interested in emphasising the sheer beauty of repetition. With everything we do, it remains. We all leave something behind. I didn't want to buy new materials or commission new music – I wanted to use what was already there, in the world, and create something new with it.'

– Eve Mutso

### 2. **Rachel Sussman**, *The Oldest Living Things in the World Deep Timeline*, 2004–14

'I research, work with biologists, and travel the world to photograph continuously living organisms 2,000 years old and older. The photographs are images of the past in the living present, portraits of individuals meant to forge a personal connection to a time frame well outside our temporal comfort zone.'

– Rachel Sussman

### 3. **Tania Kovats**, *Atlantic, Indian, Pacific*, 2015; *All the Islands of All the Seas*, 2016; *Two hundred and eighty two*, 2009

'The main focus of my work is how art mediates and communicates our experience of what we call Nature. I think of Nature as a set of interconnected processes and systems rather than things or places. My work starts from subjective experiences and perceptions, it is an exploration of the self. The space of particular landscapes help me access a sense of self.'

– Tania Kovats

### 4. **Eline McGeorge**, *On Joined Flight Lines I, II, III*, 2018; *Companion Species*, *Emergency Weave*, 2015; *Seed Capsules*, 2015

'Artistic imagination and political imagination have some of the same capacities, I think, and can mutually engage and inform each other. [My works] merge questions about extraction and growth ideologies, speciesism and gender discrimination into a network to think within. As part of this thinking, my work has always contained many hybrid figures; hybrids between humans, nature, animals, architecture and machines, as well as real and fictional characters.'

– Eline McGeorge

### 6. **Lucy Kimbell**, *Air Pollution Toile*, 2018

'Rather than seeking simply to visualise data, the wallpaper translates across different aspects of air pollution, linking data gathering and data representation, production of and exposure to pollutants, internal and external, and public health and everyday life. Its inventive graphic language uses traditions associated with 'toile de Jouy' fabrics to bring into view contemporary realities and political issues.'

– Lucy Kimbell

## Piper Gallery

### 8. **Michael Pawlyn of Exploration Architecture**

'If biomimicry increasingly shapes the built environment – and I feel it must – then, over the next few decades, we can create cities that are healthy for their occupants and regenerative to their hinterlands, buildings that use a fraction of the resources and are a pleasure to work or live in, and infrastructure that becomes integrated with natural systems. Thousands of years of human culture can continue to flourish only if we can learn to live in balance with the biosphere.'

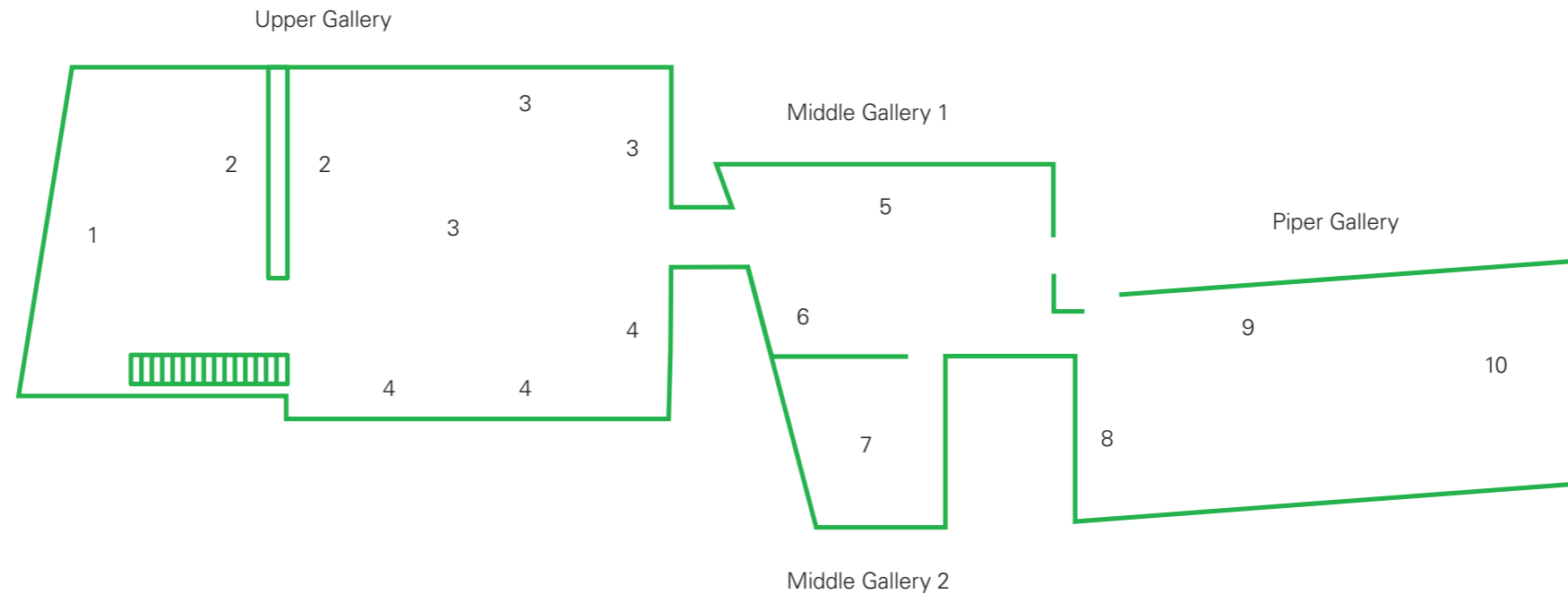
– Michael Pawlyn

### 10. **Make Play**, 2018

The energy, laughter and chatter that emerge during each session seems testament to the authenticity of our self-led, co-learning approach which respects all as capable, curious, co-creators and celebrates play as an innately human endeavour which can be at its richest when it occurs inter-generationally.'

'As each session comes to a close we can't help but notice that we never finish where we started and there is always something more to do, try and learn. Everyone starts to wonder what next week and its new small world will hold in store for us. For me as practitioner, I am enthused to see how our offer and philosophy may unfold to develop, connect and inform the wider Modern Art Oxford programme, building far reaching connections with our communities and the families that form them.'

– Bethany Mitchell, Lead Practitioner



## Middle Gallery 1

### 5. **Andy Owen**, *Whole Milk*, 2018

'A holistic approach embracing all aspects of the system – good animal welfare, care for the local ecology and wider environmental issues while converting 'waste' into high quality consumer products – provides a potential blueprint for sustainable management of the land and food production... As consumers we must become active participants in the system, improving our understanding and changing our eating habits and attitudes to allow sustainable farming initiatives to grow and have an impact.'

– Andy Owen

## Middle Gallery 2

### 7. **How Nature Builds**, *Continuing Bodies*, 2018

'During this project, I have engaged with a completely new medium for me, mycelium, which is a fascinating living material that I have learned how to mould, manipulate and translate into an art work. The material was so interesting that I began new enquiries into mushrooms through philosophy of science texts, and embarked on new areas of research I otherwise may not have engaged with. I have also learnt immensely about the process of group collaborative projects in a supportive environment.'

– Katalina Caliendo, How Nature Builds group participant

### 9. **Tania Kovats**, *REEF* prototype, 2018

'The coral most useful for the restoration of reefs are the pioneering corals of stag horn and elk horn coral. These large and tree-like corals form the first line of defence in a coral reef and establish relatively rapidly. This is the coral I am taking as the starting point for the sculptural language for REEF. The sculptures of REEF will have attachment points for elk and stag horn coral that have been developed in underwater nurseries that can be secured to the sculptural elements.'

– Tania Kovats

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# EXHIBITION NOTES

## MODERN ART OXFORD

In the adjacent room a video projection shows *Continuing Bodies* (2018), a robust lung-shaped sculpture created using mycellium, the vegetative fibrous structure of fungus, which is being pioneered by biofabrication platform Ecovative as a sustainable building material that is grown rather than manufactured. The sculpture is now permanently located in Wytham Woods, one of the most researched woodlands on the planet.

**"The great asset that biology offers is aeons of evolutionary refinement... At its best, biomimicry is a synthesis of the human potential for innovation coupled with the best that biology can offer. This synthesis exceeds the power of either alone... For [scientist] Janine Benyus biomimicry is 'the conscious emulation of nature's genius.'"**  
– Michael Pawlyn of Exploration Architecture

The works on display in the final gallery space explore new ways to use existing resources, showing future-facing methods from art, design and architecture. Acting like a public studio it includes pioneering architectural biomimicry prototypes and new uses for organic materials, as well as celebrating future generations with creative sessions for the youngest people in Oxford.

A powerful display of biomimicry architecture and designs by Michael Pawlyn of Exploration Architecture ranges from a desert theatre based on the biological processes of camel nostrils, to a model of a pavilion that could be grown in seawater using electro deposition of natural minerals. These projects are feasible innovations that extrapolate from adaptations in nature to create ecological architecture. Artist Tania Kovats displays, for the first time, her prototype for an artificial coral reef section, that could be sited in the ocean to become a feasible destination for divers to keep them away from the over-exposed natural reefs.

This third space encourages positive recognition of our interdependent relationships with both the natural world and each other, as this is what will generate future possibilities. Over half of this large gallery is dedicated to hands-on learning activities, discussions and workshops. Instead of dwelling inactively in worrying about environmental damage people cause, this concluding space of the exhibition suggests that we may re-orientate how we perceive human ingenuity and our own behaviour.

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**Rachel Sussman.** *Llaira # 0308-2B31 (2,000 + years old; Atacama Desert, Chile)*, 2008.  
Image © Rachel Sussman  
**Tania Kovats.** *Atlantic*, 2015. Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. Copyright Chris Foster / Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester.

▶ Michael Pawlyn, *Biomimicry in Architecture*, second edition, RIBA Publishing, 2016, p.2



## Future Knowledge

- ▲ A mechanical clock being built to keep time for 10,000 years. Originally conceived by Danny Hillis in 1986, it is a project of the Long Now Foundation.
- Eline McGeorge, *As Spaces Folds Companions Meet* – Eline McGeorge, London, 2017, p.169

Using montage and weaving to suggest visual journeys across time and space, Eline McGeorge explores environmental change through the concept of the Biomat, a protector of nature from Norwegian futuristic sci-fi, which for the artist

Rachel Sussman's epic timeline is wrapped around the dividing wall in the Upper Gallery. It features her 10-year international project of photographing living things that are over 2,000 years old. In this iteration, the timeline begins 750 million years ago, highlights multiple events and eras, then concludes with a reference to the 10,000 year *Clock of the Long Now*, a conceptual design project being created to influence how people conceive of their capacity for long-term thinking. Her intuitive arrangement of the timeline appears linear yet nods to the multiple ways humans have articulated time in an attempt to understand it: from the invention of macro-scale sun and moon calendars to help predict large natural cycles, to the global scale of geological concepts of deep time, and mechanical clock time for focusing our actions on more immediate planning and coordinating industrious activity. Tania Kovats' work also moves from macro to micro-scale, with sculptures of the interconnected oceans – the largest expanse of the planet – to the small scale of tree rings holding within them climactic information.

Time, in relation to living things, is a key concept within the artists' works exhibited in this first gallery. The exhibition opens with dancer Eve Mutso presenting documentation of her aerial performance *loop*; deliberate physical movements of one individual making time and impact as she touches the ground.

All four artists in the Upper Gallery have created ambitious works that invite re-conceptions of how we understand our relationship to the global systems of climate change. This opening address asserts that art is a form of knowing that is intensely experiential, embodied and reflective, with an intention of heightening visitors' sensibilities towards the environment and their place within it.

Climate change makes clear that we have a powerful influence on the Earth. Our actions effect the complex systems of interconnections and adaptations of living organisms of the planet: This relatively recent anthropogenic change – humans' impact on the environment – brings with it an uneasy sense of responsibility. Rather than the predictable, linear future we have grown up to believe in, it points to the new conception that our actions shape multiple future possibilities, which is not easy for us to imagine. Art and design engaged with climate change is often interdisciplinary in character, bringing together many types of knowledge into new imaginative forms. The works presented in *Future Knowledge* are located across three gallery spaces: the first shows work that expresses ideas of living systems across multiple time frames, the second displays projects of near-future initiatives, and the third invites your engagement through viewing pioneering prototypes and playing with organic materials.

**"Art can generate many types of imaginings and solidarities, closing the gap on 'remoteness' in relation to how we think about environmental issues."**  
– Tania Kovats



**Eve Mutso**, *loop*, 2018. Commissioned by The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh. Photo: David Grinly

**"The best art and science projects enhance and extend each other, bringing some things new to both; they are not simply about making research pretty, or making art works using scientific tools."**  
– Rachel Sussman

Moving into the Middle Gallery visitors will see newly commissioned art projects that are closer to home, which aim to deepen understanding of environmental innovations. Each focuses on biological and material changes that have occurred in the short term, which this exhibition classes as the last five years.

Inspired by 18th century toile design, known for its complex patterns most often showing pastoral scenes, the images on Lucy Kimbell's wallpaper are day-to-day family-related activities involved in the production and consumption of air pollution. A wallpaper sample book is displayed to show how key pollutants would trigger specific colour changes in the wallpaper over five years. This digitally printed wallpaper plays with ideas of interiority; domestic interiors and internal organ damage, for example, beginning within the processes that create air pollution as we care for our families. In this same space artist Andy Owen's conceptual artwork *Whole Milk* (2018) takes a fresh look at innovations in farming domesticated livestock, drawn from his research into ethical milk production in Oxfordshire, which demonstrates a way beyond the brutal methods of industrial milk production.

embodies the conflict that can exist between 'human interests' and nature. *Companion Species*, *Emergency Weave* (2015) combines practical emergency blankets with digital images of tree roots and human figures, whilst hundreds of small spherical *Seed Capsules* (2015) containing bio-diverse seeds embedded in clay soil suggest environmental activism. *On Joined Flight Lines* (2018) commemorates the ongoing history of extinction through watercolour figures painted lightly on delicate fabric that has been torn apart and stitched back together in a cycle of damage and repair.