Exhibition


Things made from non-biodegradable materials and the human inclination to collect possessions contradict the concept of tempus edax rerum, time as devourer of all things. Today, issues of sustainability are at the forefront of discussions about consumer practices, environmental concerns and social inequality. However, we continue to rely on and desire cheap disposable commodities, fossil fuels and plastic packaging. This exhibition presents artworks that contribute to the discussion about consumption and also express sense of urgency for action. The artworks challenge the values championed in consumer culture.

The exhibition Still Life: Things Devouring Time focuses on the visual representation of vanitas, symbolic objects that warn against excess and the shortness of time. It explores how those ideas inform the practice of contemporary artists, working in diverse media, who respond to consumer culture and the social, environmental and sustainability issues it produces today.

The evolution and enduring relevance of the genre of still life is highlighted in this exhibition by the variety of contemporary art displayed alongside Still Life with Drinking Horn by Willem Kalf, an example of Dutch still life painting from the 17th century. The show includes photographs and objects by Nicole Keeley, Caroline McCarthy, Simon Ward and Dawn Woolley.
Exhibition Images (courtesy of the University of Leeds)

Dawn Woolley, *Memorials (banana and strawberries)* 2016, [photographic prints mounted on MDF board with balloons].
Nicole Keeley, *Tide Mark*, 2017, [photographs].

Caroline McCarthy, *Vanitas*, 2007, [canvas, bin bag and metal brackets].

Still Life: Things Devouring Time

An exhibition exploring consumerism through historical & contemporary still life artworks

21 November 2018 — 23 March 2019

library.leeds.ac.uk/galleries
New art exhibition explores consumer culture, sustainability and still life - University of Leeds news

Nicole Keeley, Tide Mark (detail), 2017. Digital photographic prints, framed: 387 x 508 x 33 mm. © The artist.

Images are downloadable from this Google Drive (please note captions and credits in the Word file in the folder).

Press previews will be available on 20 November. Dr Katie Herrington, exhibition curator, will be available for interview. Please contact Laura Beare, Marketing & Galleries Assistant Manager, on L.J.Beare@leeds.ac.uk or 0113 343 9267.

Opening Reception: Tuesday, 20 November 2018, 6-8pm. Free, all welcome.

A new exhibition at The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds, explores the notion of consumerism through the lens of historical and contemporary still life artworks.


Dr Katie Herrington, the University’s Art Curator, said:

“Still life is an enduring genre in which objects take centre stage. It became an important element of a burgeoning art market in the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century. It allowed painters to rapidly reflect the transformation in the culture around them, and therefore the paintings communicate a
shifting relation to consumption – as consumer culture changed, the type of objects in the paintings also changed.”

The exhibition builds on this historical exploration of consumerisation by displaying the still life works of four contemporary artists. Each artist refreshes this historical genre, for instance ‘Ghost in the Machine’ by Simon Ward replaces the book, used in some Dutch still life to symbolise knowledge and intelligence, with a kindle.

Another element the contemporary still life artworks focus on is the issue of environmental pollution. Contemporary consumer society is characterised by an overabundance of plastic material. Nicole Keeley’s ‘Tide Mark’ photographs remind us that these consumer habits are extremely detrimental to the planet we live on.

Dawn Woolley, exhibiting artist and exhibition co-curator, said:

"Dutch vanitas paintings warn their viewers of the damage to the soul that greed, excess and waste may cause. Today, vanitas might warn us about irreversible environmental consequences, caused by our unsustainable consumer habits. Indelible stains on the soul are replaced by materials that do not biodegrade. The artworks in this exhibition contain contradictions, unexpected use of materials and unusual combinations of objects to challenge the values championed in consumer culture. Objects are given centre stage in order to foreground the wasteful, destructive consequences of our insatiable appetite for things."

Still Life: Things Devouring Time opens on Wednesday 21 November at The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery and runs until 23 March 2019. Entry is free. For more details and opening times, visit https://library.leeds.ac.uk/galleries

Works on display include:

Dawn Woolley, Memorials series (detail), 2016. Digital photographic prints mounted on MDF board and balloons, each work: 700 x 700mm. © The artist.
Further information

Images are downloadable from this Google Drive (please note captions and credits in the Word file in the folder).

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ADMISSION/ HOURS:

13.00 - 17.00, Monday

10.00 - 17.00, Tuesday - Saturday

Admission: FREE

VENUE INFORMATION:

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Parkinson Building, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT
http://library.leeds.ac.uk/galleries
Exhibition Catalogue

An accompanying exhibition catalogue will be available to purchase. The catalogue is edited by Dr Katie Herrington and Dr Dawn Woolley, and features an essay from Dr Sergio Fava.

The Artists

Dawn Woolley

Dawn Woolley completed an MA in Photography (2008) and PhD by project in Fine Art (2017) at the Royal College of Art.


Caroline McCarthy

Caroline McCarthy was born in Dublin and studied at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin; and Goldsmiths College, London.

Her work has been exhibited widely, with solo shows including Green on Red, Dublin; Gimpel Fils, London; Hoet Bekaert, Ghent; Parker’s Box Gallery, New York; Limerick City Art Gallery; Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin; Gasworks, London; Void Gallery, Derry; and Bugdahn und Kaim, Dusseldorf.

Simon Ward

Simon Ward was born in London and studied at Nottingham Trent University and the Royal College of Art, London.

His worked has been exhibited in group shows including Natur Blink, The Koppel Project, London; Café Society, Seoul Museum, Seoul; Hidden, Royal College of Art, London; Phoenix Gallery, Brighton Photo Fringe. Brighton; Iconoclasts, Curated by Katie Heller. Lloyds Club, London; Wild Things, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Wales

Nicole Keeley

Following a BTEC diploma in photography at City College Norwich, Keeley gained her Bachelor of Arts degree at Anglia Ruskin University.

She currently works as a commercial photographer to fund her experimental artistic practice. She has exhibited work at the Free Range exhibition, Truman Brewery, Cambridge.
The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery is an accredited art museum at the heart of the University of Leeds campus, refurbished in 2008 with funds from the Audrey & Stanley Burton Charitable Trust. The Gallery offers both a programme of temporary exhibitions and a display of selected treasures from the University Art Collection, in its main gallery. An Education Room houses the University’s collection of drawings and works on paper, while also offering space for private study, research and teaching.

University of Leeds

The University of Leeds is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK, with more than 33,000 students from more than 150 different countries, and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities.

We are a top ten university for research and impact power in the UK, according to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, and are in the top 100 of the QS World University Rankings 2019. Additionally, the University was awarded a Gold rating by the Government’s Teaching Excellence Framework in 2017, recognising its ‘consistently outstanding’ teaching and learning provision. Twenty-six of our academics have been awarded National Teaching Fellowships – more than any other institution in England, Northern Ireland and Wales – reflecting the excellence of our teaching. www.leeds.ac.uk

Exhibition Reviews

NATHALIE TOLMIE-THOMSON - Culture Vulture 11th February 2019

‘Still Life: Things Devouring Time at the Stanley Burton Gallery [sic] proved an education. Still life is an artistic genre I’d previously not really appreciated, but this ongoing exhibition’s powerful message about consumerism knocked me for six.’

ROBERT KILNER - Culture Vulture 8th February 2019

‘As I left the gallery, the litter, and bulging wheelie bins on the paths looked different, more appealing than when I came in. It was as if art really was overflowing out into the street.’
Yorkshire Evening Post 13th Dec 2018.
Visitor Comments

‘An interesting mix of art. Some of which is awe inspiring, but some of which I find insulting [Bin bag - ‘Vanitas’ in Still Life exhibition]’

The Gryphon 30th Nov 2018.
‘Nice space. Well curated exhibition’

‘Still Life: Illuminating and thought provoking - amazing to see everyday objects transformed into art’

‘Never encountered such a dense stimulation in an exhibition’

‘Caroline McCarthy's work is beautiful with a sense of stillness’

‘I found the exhibition very interesting and thought provoking. I love this gallery - I am really glad we have it in Leeds!’

Talks / Group Visits
The exhibition launch event was one of the gallery’s most popular launches with approximately 123 visitors. Throughout the duration the exhibition received 3487 visitors including 216 event participants. Events included:

- Friends of The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, preview and curator’s introductory talk, 20th November 2018.
- Expanding communities of Sustainable Practice symposium organised by Leeds Arts University, 16th November 2018.
- Interdisciplinary Food Waste Research workshop organised by the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council, 28th February 2019.

Poster Campaign
In addition to the gallery-based exhibition, Still Life: Things Devouring Time takes artwork outside the Gallery, to the general public. Reproductions of artworks are exhibited in the form of posters in commercial advertising spaces around the city of Leeds. This display of contemporary still life art interrupts the promotion of consumerism that usually occupies advertising spaces. Instead, commenting on consumer culture and sustainability, including pollution and homelessness.

This part of the project was supported by a grant from the Lipmann-Miliband Trust.


Sculptures by Participants of the National Saturday Art and Design Club workshop, The University of Leeds, 19th January 2019.

Sculptures by Participants of a workshop at The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, 9th February 2019
Workshops

Workshop Outline
The objects in Relics resemble devotional artefacts and ceremonial figures: totems, votive candles, and janus-figures. They allude to objects used in worship by a range of faiths that are preserved and exhibited in museum collections. Woolley’s relics suggest that commodities are also powerful objects to be worshipped by consumers. The commodities from which they are made show their branding and are named with human qualities such as strength and beauty. Those advertising statements suggest that a particular attribute will be transferred to the consumer when the product is used. However, the objects in this artwork do not belong in a museum, they are not preserved due to their cultural significance but due to their non-biodegradable materials. Once recognised in this way the objects reveal themselves as waste products that are routinely discarded in today’s society.

During the workshop participants will produce sculptures that explore the ideas behind the Relics series and other artworks in the exhibition Still Life: Things Devouring Time. The sculptures could be fetishes that warn against waste, or totem figures that celebrate the things that are valued by in our society. Participants will explore their world through objects and will present their ideas using sculptural assemblage techniques. The objects will be professionally photographed by Woolley and each participant will receive a photograph.
The poster produced as a result of the workshop and displayed around commercial advertising spaces in Leeds will be on display in Summerset House from 8th - 16th June 2019, as part of the National Art and Design Club summer exhibition.
Workshop Sculptures and Social Media Posts

consumer_relics
University of Leeds

Recycled Relic Sculpture made by a member of the @solartoutreach National Art and Design Saturday Club @lulagalleries #recycledrelics #recycledsculpture #waste包装ing #stillslife #StillLifeSABG

February 16

add a comment...

consumer_relics
University of Leeds

Recycled Relic Sculpture by Ian Cameron @lulagalleries #whiteheadwrapped #recycledsculpture #recycledrelics #plasticwaste #plasticpollution #stillslife #StillLifeSABG

Bw

February 28

add a comment...

Liked by marcieattle and 21 others
Sculptures by member of the National Art and Design Saturday Club, Recycled Relics Workshop, 19th January 2019.
Sculpture by Ian Cameron, Recycled Relics Workshop, 9th February 2019.
Climate Change Insect by Louise Dwyer, Recycled Relics Workshop, 9th February 2019.