

HUMBER STREET GALLERY

EXHIBITION GUIDE
GALLERY 1 & 2

FRANCES DISLEY

THE CUCUMBER FELL IN THE SAND

13 JULY – 29 SEPTEMBER 2019

In collaboration with Gregory Herbert, FoodSketz (Alison Clare & Cat Smith) and CBS Gallery & Studios (Joseph Hulme, Liam Peacock & Theo Vass).

Frances Disley is interested in moments of connection and the joy of doing and learning, with *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand* the artist has invited collaborators and the public to share in her vision. Inspired by the philosophies of renowned American architect, systems theorist and inventor Buckminster Fuller (b. 1885 – d. 1983) as well as research into Hull's food heritage and current trends around self-care and self-betterment, the two galleries form distinct environments.

In Gallery 1 Disley has designed a habitat based around comfort and consumption, where every aspect is interlinked. Soft furnishings are dyed with natural pigments such as turmeric, nettle and avocado pite and filled with scented soft furnishings as an invitation to spend time and relax with the artwork. A new publication by FoodSketz is available to browse and hand-made scents are dispersed throughout the space from a series of rotating platforms. In this space you are encouraged to pay attention to what makes you feel good and why, with artwork that stimulates all the senses beyond just the visual.

In Gallery 2 Gregory Herbert's hydroponic growing systems invite us to consider the future of food production, and alongside this a proliferation of plant life reminds us of our interdependence with the natural world. Disley has created a variety of planting structures that function as backdrops that delineate the space, which visitors are invited to interact with, aiding the growth that will take place throughout the exhibition. A programme of workshops will take place centered around a structure created by Joseph Hulme, Liam Peacock & Theo Vass of CBS Gallery & Studios, who have designed a special table and stool based on the specific needs of the artists and visitors.

This exhibition considers how we live now and proposes positive possibilities for the future with ecological uncertainty in mind, acknowledging that comfort, joy and culture are essential if we are to thrive.

The Cucumber Fell in the Sand

ESSAY BY ORLA FOSTER

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is easier said than done. While the healing power of plants is well-documented, and nobody *deliberately* sets out to eat a multi-pack of strawberry laces for dinner, in the smog and commotion of everyday life it can be difficult to take pause long enough to look after yourself. Fortunately, with *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand*, Frances Disley brings the natural world directly to Humber Street Gallery, in an installation celebrating the environment as a stimulus for creativity and health.

Developed alongside artists Gregory Herbert, Joseph Hulme, Liam Peacock & Theo Vass of CBS Gallery & Studios and Alison Claire & Cat Smith of FoodSketz, the exhibition moves away from art as abstraction and looks instead at how it can be adapted to celebrate our intrinsic connection with nature. Ideas surrounding fitness, meditation and wellbeing all come to the fore, with the gallery operating as a haven for a kind of art designed to stimulate the senses, rather than an unintelligible message beamed down from a plinth.

Taking cues from Buckminster Fuller, an American architect whose experimental designs challenged how people interacted with their environment, the artists have galvanised the space using sculpture, textiles, and plant life to create a whole ecosystem within the walls of the gallery. The work is collaborative, constructive, a synergy of different practices and cross-disciplinary wisdom. Everyone who enters is invited to take part — even if that just means sprinkling some seeds into the soil-filled pockets of one of the paintings.

This synergy is apparent at every level of *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand*. Its colourways are plucked from activewear catalogues, their luminous hues translating the adrenaline-soaked ambience of the gym onto canvas. The supple texture of yoga mats is incorporated into garden planters, and large metallic drapes alongside reflectors in rose gold not only illuminate the space but also radiate light right back to the plants. These are not arbitrary sculptural forms but objects with a practical purpose, each of which is symbiotically connected to the other elements within the exhibition.

Over the years, Disley has been exploring ways to filter out what she perceives as the indulgence of artistic practice, and its inaccessibility. Frustrated by the stable, "finished" quality of painting, she began to question how she could activate her work, unleash its kinetic potential and share with others the joy she felt creating it. She sensed a gulf between the studio's hotbed of inspiration and the more muted experience of the gallery visitor, shuffling between compositions, catalogue in hand. Likewise, the long-suffering gallery invigilator, consigned to squirm on a stool for hours on end, or pace from wall to wall until finally, blue with boredom, they finish the shift counting up the individual fibres on their jeans. This is exactly the kind of gallery experience which *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand* sets out to disrupt.

Gallery 1 is for peaceful meditation, a place to inhale perfumed drifts of natural oils and essences, to sprawl on cushions tinted with turmeric and avocado pits. It tests out the idea that gallery infrastructure can be more to visitors than simply an observation deck. In Gallery 2, a pathway of plant pots guides you into a custom-built biosphere, brimming with vegetation. Paintings and sculpture are flanked by complex water filtration systems developed by Gregory Herbert to sustain vegetables, flowers and herbs. In the centre, a substantial workshop table and stools, custom-built by CBS Gallery & Studios, accentuate the importance of the communal workspace as a prompt for people to experiment and develop ideas together. This philosophy is shared by FoodSketz, a food-centred collaboration between artists Alison Claire and Cat Smith, whose publication highlights how the sharing of recipes and tutorials can be deployed as a radical social tool.

The work is also a subtle nod to Hull's own history as a centre of food production, thanks to industry pioneers such as Joseph Rank who, in the nineteenth century, developed a mechanical flour mill that transformed his entire industry. Hull itself has long been receptive to food innovations as a result of all the different influences passing through its port. But on a less intimidating scale, this part of the exhibition advocates finding a better, happier quality of life by taking stock of the resources available to you.

Disley is influenced by the therapeutic effect that art, and even individual objects, can have on mood, whether it's the calming fragrance of a geranium leaf, or the smooth, time-whittled surface of a pebble clasped in your palm. The show's title is deliberately tactile, inviting you to taste the texture of grit against cool green flesh. These are sensory experiences, however, that can't simply be articulated in words. For this exhibition, and its accompanying events programme, the key is to be in the moment.

Defining one's own version of self-care is a topic that has emerged in Disley's previous collaborations too. In Liverpool, where the artist is based, her project *Relax & Repeat* shunned the bossy, Goop-y orthodoxy of the wellbeing industry by asking participants to curate their own soothing scents and meditation routines, while *RRR (Release Re-energise Restore)* merged painting with choreography and techno for a totally interactive installation whose composition was only complete when people danced in front of it. But rather than being paraded as high art, the workout was slipped by sleight of hand into the dance programme of a community centre in Bootle. It worked, even the most suspicious and frog-marched husbands came away feeling invigorated.

Disley is nonetheless troubled by the implicit elitism of self-care as a culture, with all its endangered kelp and promises of dewy skin. That tiny white tub of cold cream is cold comfort if it costs more than your rent; one might also bristle at the suggestion that a corrective is needed, that something about your lifestyle is unsavoury and wants rooting out. But in this show, peace of mind lies just beneath the surface, it is about letting goodness take root. *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand* proposes a gentler alternative to wellness culture, reminding its visitors of all the untrumpeted miracles already to be found in nature, and in this calm space, they too can be quietly enjoyed. What could be more pure, honest and good than a homegrown tomato the size of your head?

The exhibition is intended as a catalyst for visitors and practitioners alike to participate in workshops where they can share different experiences and skills. FoodSketz will host the event, *Kneading Dough*, an opportunity to talk about anxiety and depression while making a vegan flatbread, while other sessions demonstrate how to forage, how to make meals from discarded produce, how to turn a pallid garden into an eruption of colour using seasonal flowers and crops. This is art at its most practical, radiating an optimism and sense of purpose which places the enrichment and nourishment of the viewer above all else. Perhaps you didn't think, when you arrived today, that you would end up being part of the work. *The Cucumber Fell in the Sand* invites you to pull up a cushion and do just that.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Orla Foster (b. 1987) is a writer based in Sheffield. She has previously written for The Double Negative, Corridor8 and Bido Lito. Her forthcoming publication *Lovely Little Nutmegs* will be released in July 2019.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FRANCES DISLEY is based in Liverpool at The Royal Standard and recently a Liverpool Biennial Associate Artist, exhibiting at Baltic 39, Newcastle "We are where we are" and Suttie Arts Space Grampian Hospital Arts Trust, Aberdeen "Mustard Blanket". Recent projects and exhibitions include "Activation: 01" with Fallen Angels Dance Theatre at The Turnpike, Leigh, "RRR", live interactive performance/dance/workout/installation and single channel video, part of At the Library, commissioned by Sefton Libraries, Netherton Activity Centre, Liverpool (2018); "R&R", performative workshop series commissioned by Sefton Libraries, Bootle Library (2018); "Abacus", Bluecoat, Liverpool (2017); "SWAP Editions Edition 1 – ADHOC", launched at Castor Projects, London (2017); "ART VAN" event part of Site Gallery's public programme, Endcliffe Park, Sheffield (2017); performance "Charcoal Heather / Therma Sphere Max" St Nicholas Church (Liverpool Biennial Light Night Presentation), Liverpool & REC ROOM, Houston, Texas (2017); Liverpool Biennial Arriva Bus commission (2016), Liverpool Biennial Associate Artists exhibition, Liverpool (2016); "HERE", Glasgow International, Glasgow (2016); performance Roll Fix Slip, Bluecoat Performance Space, Liverpool, UK (2015); SSSS, White Wizard, Liverpool, UK (2015); Exchange Rates, a collaboration with Patte Loper, Schema Projects, New York, USA (2015). Other group shows include SCOUSE HOUSE,

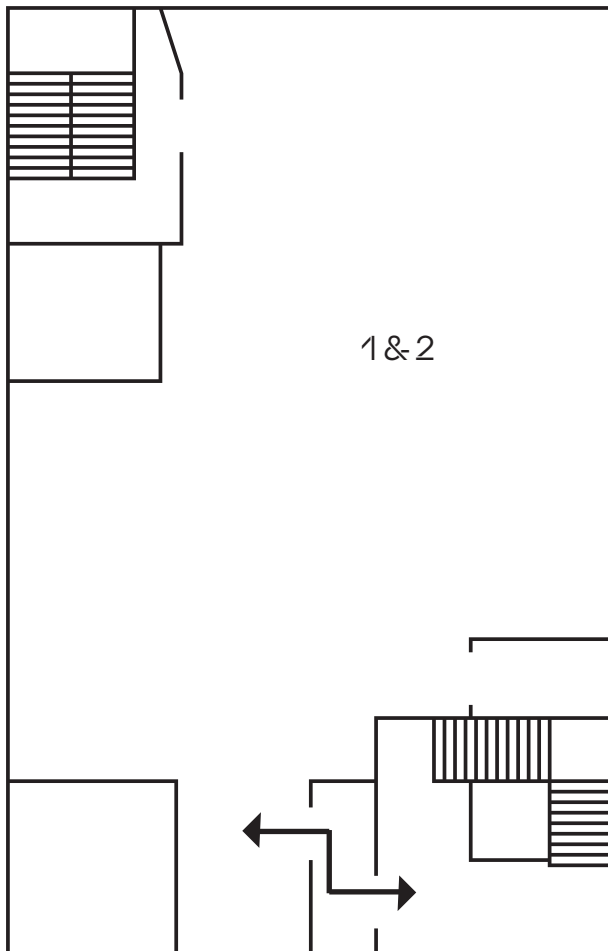
Syson Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2015); Art Copenhagen (with Paper Gallery), Copenhagen, Denmark (2015).

GREGORY HERBERT (B. 1990, Birmingham, UK) Lives and works in Liverpool, Herbert is a former Director of The Royal Standard and currently studying MA Fine Art at Manchester Metropolitan University. Herberts recent exhibitions include; 'Oikos Logos' Enclave lab, London (2018) Collaborative show with Hannah Rowan and Matthew Verdon 'Mesocosm' The Trophy Room, Liverpool (Solo Show, 2018) 'Building your potential ecosystem, Part 1: who are you potential ecosystem partners?' A Collaborative project with Matthew Verdon, Serf, Leeds (2017) 'Phase-shift' Montreal, Canada (2017) Coventry Biennial, Coventry (2017) Herbert co-curates a project entitled 'The Offy' with Linný Venables which looks at selling merch to sustain an artistic practice.

FOODSKETZ (est. 2015) is a Liverpool and London based collaboration between Cat Smith & Alison Clare with a focus on food and drink as a tool for conversation, collaboration & community. Food has potential to be object, subject, facilitator or bystander, as a tool. Food has a culture, a geography and a history. Smith and Clare both work as chefs and since 2015 have taken part in residencies at TASC Studio Kitchen, Bergen and Mobile Autonomy, Antwerp. In 2018 FoodSketz collaborated with Maya Chowdhry on 'What's Eating Our Reality?' at Lancaster Arts.

CBS GALLERY & STUDIOS, established in 2015 by artists Joseph Hulme, Liam Peacock & Theo Vass is an exhibition space, workshop and studios based in Liverpool. It functions as a social workspace for emerging artists and hosts regular events programmed by the three directors Hulme, Peacock and Vass, studio group and wider artistic community.

WORK DETAILS, GALLERY 1



1. Frances Disley

Idea for a Holo Programme, 2019

Various fabrics, wadding, natural dyes: avocado pits (pink), black beans (blue), nettles (brown), cumin seeds, coriander seeds, caraway seeds, citrus peel, cinnamon bark, lime leaves, allspice seeds, cloves, bleach, scent machines, hydrosols, mdf
Dimensions variable

Cushions and blankets made by the artist and coloured with natural dyes are filled with scented plants and herbs. Squeeze them and sniff to release the scents.

Scent machines are mounted on the gallery walls automatically releasing a mixture of perfume oils and essential oils, while atomisers containing hydrosols created by the artist can be found on the lazy susans and activated by you. These will change throughout the exhibition and will contain scents such as rhubarb, garden mint, lemon grass, rose oxide, cucumber, bergamot, labdanum, sweet birch, cumin, nerodil, aphermate, lavender, frankinsense and orris.

All of these works can be touched so take some time to relax in the space, using all your senses.

2. Alison Clare & Cat Smith of FoodSketz
FoodSketz: A Manual
 Publication

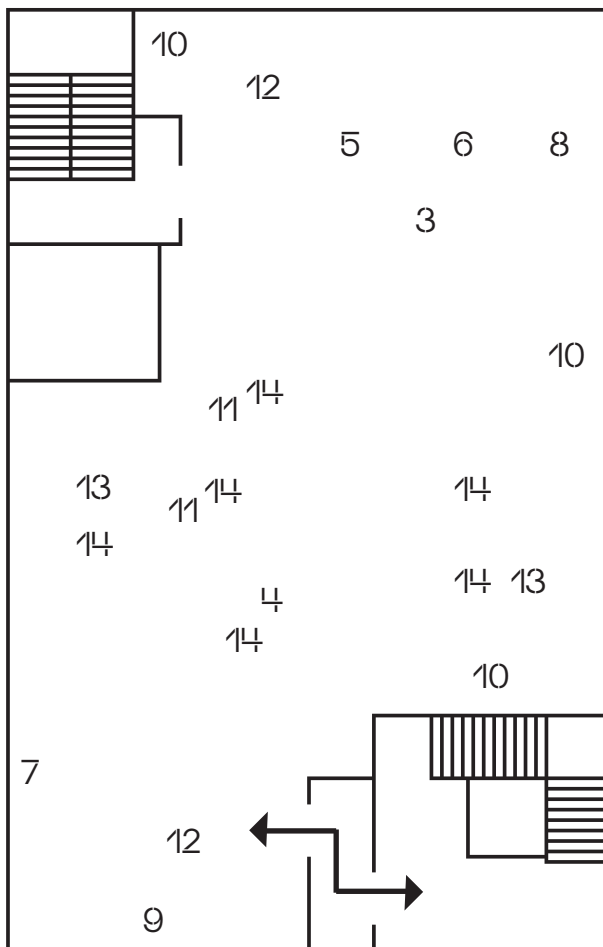
A graphic novel by FoodSketz documenting how we eat, cook and share our love of food and one another, through comics, drawings and recipes.

Copies of FoodSketz: A Manual are available to browse while you relax in the installation, and they are also available to buy at the front desk if you would like to take one away with you.

3. CBS Gallery & Studios: Joseph Hulme, Liam Peacock, Theo Vass
Workshop Table and Stools, 2019
 MDF, pine, ash, avocado stone dye, plaster, resin, castors / Joseph's stool – hand carved MDF / Liam's Stool – plaster, resin, waste studio woodchips, MDF, pine / Theo's Stool – MDF, Resin, Cyanotype
 Dimensions variable

This table will be used for the workshops taking place during the exhibition, in the meantime feel free to take a seat.

WORK DETAILS, GALLERY 2



4. Frances Disley
Epic Lux, 2019
 Plastic, paint, plants (various: see labels)
 Dimensions variable

5. Frances Disley
Gya Transform, 2019
 Plaster, turmeric, coloured gravel, plants (various: see labels)
 Dimensions variable

6. Frances Disley
Collection TN, 2019
 Plastic guttering, paint, plastic chair, fabric, natural dyes, plants, MDF trough with castors, gravel
 Dimensions variable

Feel free to take a seat in the centre of this work

7. Frances Disley
Essential AIR, 2019
 White tarpaulin, paint, soil, plants, MDF trough, gravel
 215 x 240 cm x 15 cm

8. Frances Disley
NSW, 2019
 Frances Disley
 Black tarpaulin, paint, soil, plants, MDF trough, gravel
 77 x 300 cm x 15 cm

9. Frances Disley
I See You, 2019
 Plastic frame, plastic foil
 149 x 100 x 49 cm

10. Frances Disley
My Favourite Outfit, 2019
Multiple parts
Plastic foil, paint, photostands, fixings
6 of 210 x 194 cm

11. Frances Disley
Head to Toe, 2019
Multiple parts
Plastic frame, fibreglass bandage, yoga mats, tape
Dimensions variable

12. Frances Disley
Hypercool, 2019
Multiple parts
Plastic milk cartons, climbing rope, MDF trough, castors
Dimensions variable

There are labels for each of the plants that explain what they are and what they are used for, if you look closely. Some of the plants are scented and you are welcome to touch them.

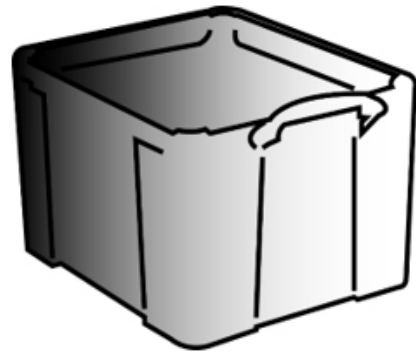
13. Gregory Herbert
Floral Being, 2019
Radishes, chard, beetroot, plastic piping, copper piping, water pump, earthenware ceramic lamp shade and LED full spectrum grow bulbs, pond, reeds, algae and soil, plastic boxes, compost, extraction fans, TV monitor and single channel video (4 Minutes).

We as humans are not independent, we are collaborators. The neurotransmitters in our brain communicate with our 'Gut Flora' in our gastrointestinal tract, creating a collective intelligence. 'Floral being' is a practical experiment that explores methods of food production whilst using symbiotic and mutualistic relationships as inspiration to create a collective intelligence. These relationships have occurred without humans for millennia but 'Floral being' will attempt to intertwine our stories to the Earth and highlight deeply entangled ecological relationships with other species and non-human entities. This systems purpose is to not just create food for our consumption but to build a system where coexistence is at the forefront.

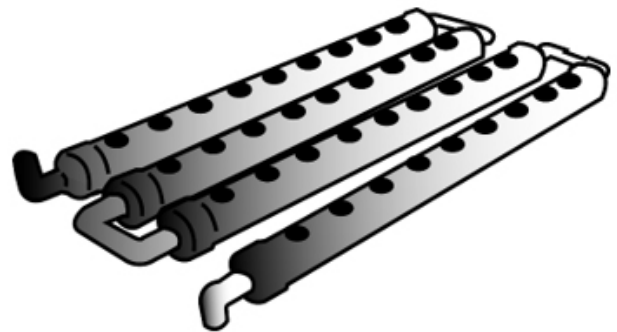
The Wetlands
The Wetlands is a filtration system that acts like the kidneys. The functions of the 'The Wetlands' includes water filtration, water storage, processing of carbon and other nutrients.



Growth
Growth absorbs all the nutrients from the fertiliser in order to grow a variety of vegetables hydroponically.



Algae Bioreactor
The Algae bioreactor will cultivate micro algae called Chlorella. Traditionally algae would be cultivated for biomass production and wastewater management. The Chlorella will be used for fertiliser in the hydroponic system and also for processing CO₂, which algae can convert to O₂ in high quantities.



14. Gregory Herbert
Lichens, 2019
Earthenware Ceramic, Glaze, Light fitting, 4 Channel LED Bulb, Winches
Dimensions variable

GLOSSARY

SYMBIOTICALLY: In a way that involves two types of animal or plant, that each provide the conditions necessary for the other to continue to exist.

HYDROPONIC(S): The cultivation of plants by placing the roots in liquid nutrient solutions rather than in soil; soilless growth of plants.

HYDROSOLS: A colloidal suspension in water; organic particles are suspended but not dissolved.

PERMACULTURE: A system of cultivation intended to maintain permanent agriculture or horticulture by relying on renewable resources and a self-sustaining ecosystem.

INTERDEPENDENT: Mutually dependent; depending on each other.

SYSTEMS THEORY: An approach to industrial relations which likens the enterprise to an organism with interdependent parts, each with its own specific function and interrelated responsibilities.

HSG SHOP

FoodSketz: A Manual is a graphic novel by FoodSketz documenting how we eat, cook and share our love of food and one another, through comics, drawings and recipes.

As two artists who regularly navigate full time employment alongside our practice, the book is an opportunity to collate works created whilst working; an extension of our often temporary practice as well as records of friendship and the importance of self-care.

The book has been created in collaboration with Frances Disley, for the show *The Cumber Fell in the Sand* for Humber Street Gallery, with contributions from CBS Gallery, Gregory Herbert and others.

RELATED EVENTS

PRESERVING YOUR SURPLUS
Sat 20 July
12–4pm
Free, no booking required

RECIPE COMIC MAKING
Sat 27 July
1–4pm
Free, booking required

DISCUSSION FORUM
Thu 1 August
6–8pm
Free, booking required

PERMACULTURE WORKSHOP
Sat 17 August
1–4pm
Free, booking required

MAKE YOUR OWN PLANTS
Sat 7 September
1–4pm
Free, booking required

KNEADING DOUGH
Sat 21 September
1–4pm
Free, booking required

ABOUT US

Humber Street Gallery is an Absolutely Cultured project, bringing a vibrant, high-quality contemporary art space to Hull. The gallery's free programme of exhibitions is supported by a series of talks, performances, screenings and workshops.

Absolutely Cultured puts culture at the heart of Hull's ambition and aspirations, commissioning and producing a programme of events and projects which are ambitious, surprising and imaginative. In addition to the gallery and our broader cultural events, we continue to develop our world-class volunteer programme, to deliver initiatives to support the cultural sector and to offer access to creative learning opportunities.

OPENING TIMES

GALLERY & CAFÉ

Mon: Closed

Tue – Sun: 10:00 – 18:00

First Thu of the Month: Until 20:00

(During Exhibitions)

CONTACT US

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