

Resource Room 2011
Mixed media (film edited by Sam Gunn)
450 x 450 x 250cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

Darbyshire was commissioned by the Art aids Foundation to create a work for a group show for Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona about AIDS and HIV entitled *You Are Not Alone*. Challenged to create a resource room to contextualise the exhibition, Darbyshire chose to create a typical 1980s waiting room, with uncomfortable office chairs and stark strip lighting. The screens enclosing the room feature Andrex posters from the same era, overlaid with slogans and text used in the AIDS awareness campaigns of that period. To add to the uncomfortable nature of the surroundings, the film builds on the Andrex association, as people with HIV related illnesses and AIDS deliver personal testimonies holding wriggling Labrador puppies. Corporate advertising and public information films inhabit the same arena.

An Exhibition for Modern Living 2011
Mixed media
450 x 360 x 250cm
Courtesy the Zabłudowicz Collection

Originally created for the British Art Show 7, this work takes as its starting point the landmark 1949 exhibition of the same name at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The 1949 exhibition showcased the best of modern 'design for living' in a series of specially designed rooms that celebrated innovative design and mass produced items that would enable good design to be available to everyone. Darbyshire's contemporary equivalent draws you into an environment of carefully selected and placed furniture and objects, many of which are based on iconic designs of the past. There is a formal order to these objects too, with repeated motifs such as the Union Jack, religious statues and the hourglass tam-tam stool. You are entering a curated space, but on closer inspection the objects that surround you are items that over the years have been reproduced and re-worked so extensively that they have lost their individuality and power to inspire. Kitsch replaces spiritual, generic replaces unique.

Elis 2010/15
Digitally printed vinyl on wooden frame
450 x 450 x 250cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

Elis originally occupied the entire 50m exterior of Herald St gallery in an area of London swamped by pre-Olympic regeneration projects (the ancient Greek city-state of Elis is where the Olympic Games were allegedly founded). Reflecting on *Blades House* and *Palac*, it employs the colour scheme and language adopted by property developers to announce a jazzy new mix-use development. Stock images of aspirational living are overlaid with buzzwords promising a 'sanctuary', 'flexible living' and a 'lifelong learning zone'.

Entrance Hall

CAPTCHA No. 40 and No. 41– Doryphoros and Dyson 2015
Multiwall polycarbonate and stainless steel armature
70 x 70 x 220cm 70 x 70 x 180 cm

Darbyshire originally trained as a fine artist and sculptor at The Slade School of Fine Art and then at The Royal Academy Schools. Recently he has built on his explorations into unravelling the symbolism attached to objects and sculpture through the creation of classical and contemporary sculptural forms using 21st century techniques. Utilising industrial prototyping and 3D digital printing, Darbyshire creates layers of hand-cut, multi-coloured polycarbonate that are then assembled layer upon layer to create monumental sculptural forms.

Doryphoros and *Dyson* take the place of traditional bronze and marble figurative sculpture on either side of the grand stone staircase, set against the backdrop of casts from the Parthenon frieze given by George IV to decorate Manchester's very own temple to culture. Darbyshire strips out the symbolic power attached to the classical and everyday object through his combination of experimental processes and traditional methods. Referencing their digital origins, the colours in these two works replicate the fade from the Photoshop Colourwheel to create objects that almost seem to evaporate into air.

Ground Floor Atrium

Le Chant du Rossignol 2008
Film (edited by Sam Gunn)
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

Playing with the narrative of man versus machine, Darbyshire draws on Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale *The Nightingale* which was set to music by Igor Stravinsky as *Le Chant du Rossignol* in 1917. Andersen tells the tale of a nightingale brought to a Chinese emperor who sang so sweetly that tears came to the emperor's eyes and touched his heart. The emperor of Japan then sent a gift of a mechanical nightingale covered in jewels and ribbons, but the real and the mechanised bird couldn't perform together, so the living bird was banished. The real nightingale sang in its own natural way, but the artificial bird sang only waltzes, which it repeated over and over. The film was commissioned for Sadlers Wells and features visuals spliced from contemporary films focussing on natural movement through dance, which are mashed together with science fiction cinema about artificial intelligence or man becoming machine. Tensions around the fear of the machine are brought to the fore and it raises questions around the value we place on the technological or machine made over the human or man-made.

Events

Saturday 26 September 2 – 3:30 pm

Free, drop-in event
Tour of the exhibition with Matthew Darbyshire and the artists Simon Martin and Scott King, who will replicate the art school model of critiquing each piece of work.

Manchester Art Gallery

Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3JL
0161 235 8888

Open: Monday to Sunday 10am–5pm, Thursday 10am–9pm
manchesterartgallery.org

Friday 16 October 1pm
Author Ned Beaman has been commissioned by Manchester Literature Festival to respond to the exhibition. Ned will perform his new work of fiction and discuss the creative process in conversation with Matthew Darbyshire.
Tickets are free but booking is advised
Book on 0843 208 0500 or at <http://www.manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk>

Thursday 22 October, 6 – 8 pm
Matthew Darbyshire in conversation with Lisa Le Feuvre, curator, writer and Head of Sculpture Studies at The Henry Moore Institute.
Tickets are free but booking is advised
Book through eventbrite.co.uk/e/matthew-darbyshire-and-lisa-le-feuvre-in-conversation-tickets-18902186950

Wednesday 11 November, 1.15 - 1.45pm
Join curator, Fiona Corridan for a free lunch-time tour of the exhibition
Free, drop-in event

A full colour exhibition publication, with images of each artwork and a pull-out section of the frieze *How Darbyshire Sees Us* is available in the Gallery Shop at a special exhibition price of £19.95 (normally £24.95).

Manchester Art Gallery
Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3JL
manchesterartgallery.org

Matthew Darbyshire

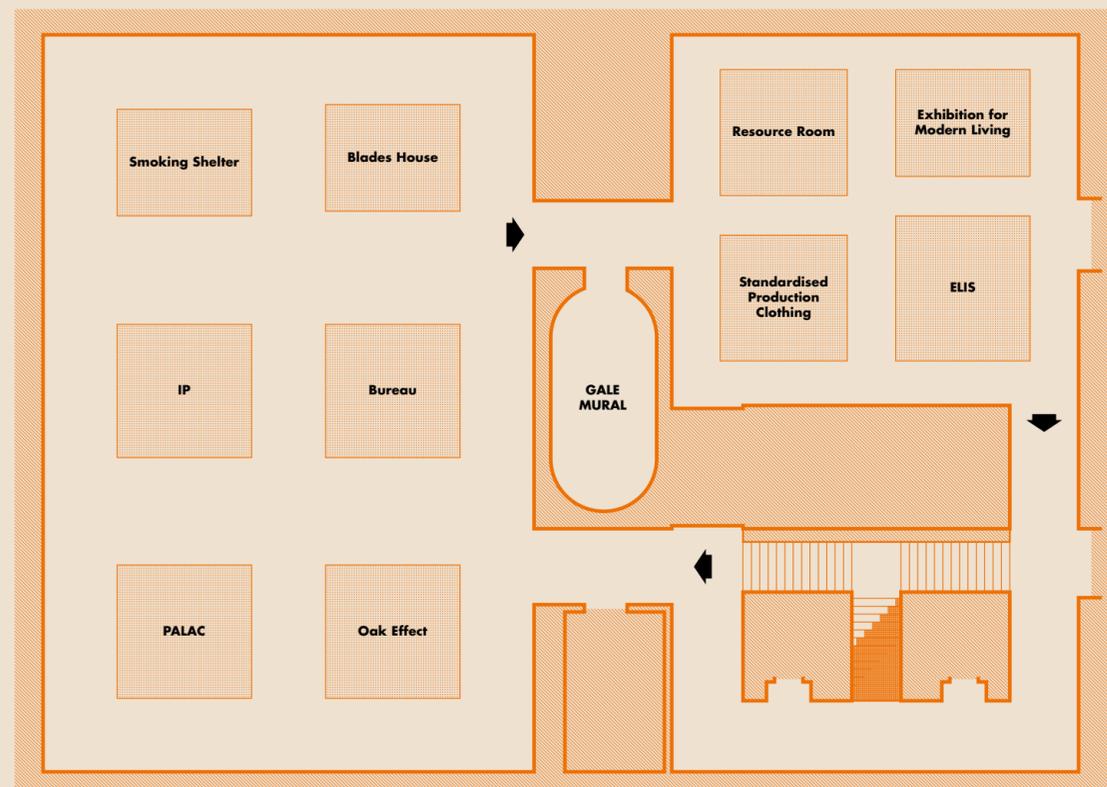
An Exhibition for Modern Living



Cover illustration by Adam Galle

25 September – 10 January 2016

floor plan of exhibition



Ground Floor Entrance Hall Captcha No. 40
Doryphoros and No. 41 Dyson

Ground Floor Atrium
Le Chant du Rossignol

Introduction

An Exhibition for Modern Living draws together works from the past seven years by British artist Matthew Darbyshire. It includes ten of his sculptural environments, two new sculptures for the entrance hall, a film work in the ground floor atrium and a new cartoon frieze made in collaboration with illustrator Adam Gale.

Darbyshire's work examines the language of design and sculpture and how it relates to the way we live. He also explores ideas around collecting, not only how institutions such as Manchester Art Gallery collect, but also the meanings embedded in the objects we acquire and the way they are arranged for the home, high street, hotel or office.

The exhibition's title is taken from Darbyshire's 2011 artwork, which in turn was inspired by the landmark exhibition of the same name held at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1949. The original, conceived when

America was trying to re-build itself after World War II, set out to instil hope and aspiration by democratising good design. It aimed to enable everyone to access the best and most beautifully designed objects to furnish their new homes and modern lifestyles.

Here, nearly 70 years on, in the throes of a digital era and with seismic shifts in the world's economies, Darbyshire's contemporary equivalent presents more warning than promise, more anxiety than optimism. Although his environments are placed in the galleries in a grid-like formation reminiscent of the room sets of 1949, Darbyshire's convey a paradoxical sense of clutter and emptiness in place of the expected refinement and calm.

Darbyshire's works are often presented as single installations. This is the first time that he has shown so many of his works side by side.

Oak Effect 2012/2015

Wooden artefacts from Manchester City Galleries' collection and artificial wooden supports
450 x 450 x 250cm
Courtesy the artist and Manchester City Galleries

Originally commissioned by Bloomberg, London for Tyne and Wear Museums Trust, *Oak Effect* has been re-worked for Manchester utilising wooden furniture, sculpture and artefacts from the gallery's collection. These unique, hand-made objects are displayed in a housing made entirely of oak effect flat pack furniture, which is now as universally common as wood itself. Through combining non-specific and mass-produced plastic wood with its real wood ancestry, Darbyshire's aim is for the work to "hopefully yield some potent tensions and complexities not just between the historic pieces themselves, but between their worldly status and that of the generic flat-pack furniture".

Palac 2009/15

Mixed media (film edited by Sam Gunn)
450 x 450 x 300cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

Palac was originally commissioned for *Altermodern*: Fourth Triennial at Tate Britain and was then re-worked for Zamek Uzadowski, Warsaw. Darbyshire imagines the Stalinist Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw being given a 21st century 'facelift' using the visual motifs and colour schemes employed by architect Will Alsop for the now defunct arts centre The Public in West Bromwich. Originally created at the height of New Labour's government, it addresses the state's tendency to link arts investment with social regeneration as a remedy for society's ills. The monumental statuary, emblematic of the totalitarian Soviet regime, is obscured by the bright pink, yellow and shiny surfaces so prevalent in 21st century buildings which have more in common with shopping centres and advertising than arts and culture.

Bureau 2013/15

Various works in plaster from Darbyshire's *Deposition Model* series 2013 – ongoing, alongside mass produced Windsor Chairs, CNC lathed polystyrene sculptures and hand-carved chalk elements
450 x 450 x 300cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

The selection of figures and objects in *Bureau* are all familiar subjects, chosen for their symbolic connotations: the Hercules symbolises power, the radiator necessity, the water cooler corporate blandness and the cats domesticity. The Windsor chairs, acting as pedestals for the cats, are a design classic, each one from a different century dating from the 18th Century to the recently updated injection-moulded version. The fabrication methods for each of the sculptures moves between the designed, machined, hand-made and cast. Darbyshire wanted to work from the same materials used in industrial prototyping technologies to create these crude and slightly pixelated representations, which reference digital design and 3D printing. Some of the forms, such as the seated nude and cats are machine-cut from polystyrene, whilst the everyday objects have been classically cast in plaster, their original polystyrene moulds having been destroyed in the process.

IP 2013/15

Mixed media
450 x 450 x 300cm
Courtesy the artist and Artist Pension Trust

Originally commissioned for a project at the Hoog Catharijne shopping mall in Utrecht, *IP* comprises a special collection of objects, eight of which were sourced from the shops and public areas of the Hoog Catharijne. Nine objects of similar scales to one another are laid out in a formal grid. They are all elevated physically on plinths and at a scale that suggests heroic or classical sculpture. The grid is then disrupted by a team of droid-like yoga mannequins. One is sitting on an oversized dog cage, found outside the mall's security office. The cage represents the degree of surveillance and security we've become accustomed to whilst we spend, rest or play. The wooden chair was discovered by Darbyshire in Manchester Art Gallery's stores. A 21st century replica of a 19th century chair, it is reminiscent of a church pew and refers to the anachronistic, multi-faith, spiritual centre located in the shopping mall, an environment aiming to encourage entrepreneurialism and financial gain rather than spiritual enlightenment.

Blades House 2007/14

Mixed media (film edited by Sam Gunn)
450 x 360 x 250cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

This is a re-working of an early installation commissioned by Gasworks, London which saw Darbyshire recreate the layout of a nearby ex-council flat in an area that was undergoing gentrification. Reminiscent of a show apartment in a new development, it is furnished with a range of desirable objects to create an environment that reflects a certain kind of lifestyle – one that a young, style conscious bachelor might aspire to. From the Brompton bike to the Murakami print and the mass-produced version of the Arne Jacobson designed Egg chair, Darbyshire's environment highlights the way our desires are directed by consumer society. Building on the sense of aspiration, the film shown on the large, wall mounted flat-screen TV, features spliced footage of movies that tell rags-to-riches stories.

Smoking Shelter 2012

(made in collaboration with Rupert Ackroyd)
Sandstone, steel, harled concrete, oak, perspex and paint
450 x 450 x 500cm
Courtesy the Zabłudowicz Collection

Conceived for the exhibition installation *T-Rooms* at Tramway, Glasgow and later shown at the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, *Smoking Shelter* incorporates the art nouveau motifs employed by the father of the 'Glasgow Style' Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The sculpture highlights the ways in which our social surroundings in cities and suburbs are increasingly designed, organised and constructed in generic ways by city councils and developers rather than architects or artists.

How Darbyshire Sees Us 2015

(made in collaboration with Adam Gale)
Digitally printed wallpaper on plywood structure
1400 x 250cm
Courtesy the artist and Herald St, London

This wallpaper frieze replicates Saul Steinberg's New Yorker style illustrations for the original 1949 *Exhibition for Modern Living* publication and wallpaper entitled *How Steinberg Sees Us*. Contemporary illustrator Adam Gale has produced a cityscape depicting architecture relevant to Darbyshire's practice over the past decade, with cut-out cross-sections that reveal his sculptures and installations. The frieze is replicated as a gatefold pull-out in the publication produced for Darbyshire's exhibition.

Standardised Production Clothing, Versions 1–10 2009

Various fabrics
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the Zabłudowicz Collection

Following a series of back surgeries to repair a herniated disc in 2005, Darbyshire was left with staples in his lower back that prevented him from wearing his regular clothing. Rather than wear the standard-issue hospital gown, he created his own one-piece suit inspired by Russian Constructivist Alexander Rodchenko's grey felt Production Clothing from the 1920s, but replicating his own uniform at that time of a Ralph Lauren shirt and Levi 501s. He extended the range to include another nine outfits all using the same template, but choosing fabrics to represent different social stereotypes, from the wool pinstripe uniform for the executive to Harris Tweed for the outdoor lover and dip-dye for the former hippy.