

PRESS RELEASE



**Olivia Bax
Handrailing**

**Opening:
14 September 2024**

**Exhibition:
15 September –
10 November 2024**

Topping Off, 2024

Steel, chicken wire, polystyrene,
cardboard, epoxy clay, plaster, paper,
PVA, household paint
Sculpture: 83 x 53 x 80 cm
Table: 85 x 125 x 65 cm

The New Art Centre and Sid Motion Gallery are delighted to announce a collaborative exhibition, 'Handrailing' a solo exhibition by Olivia Bax presented at the New Art Centre, Roche Court Sculpture Park.

In this new series, Olivia Bax explores the relationship between material and form in response to the New Art Centre's gallery space. It is an apt setting for Olivia Bax's ongoing interest in the linear and the solid, the interior and the exterior.

Olivia Bax welds metal armatures, which act as both an inner support and as an active component. She makes her own paper pulp material to cover a mantle over the linear structure. The material is made from found newspaper, mixed together with discarded household paint to create a coloured paste. The application of the pulp is important in both colouring the work and giving the surface its texture. Bax reveals her hand - smearing, moulding and pressing the material into the surface of the works. The title of the exhibition 'Handrailing' suggests this manual process. 'Handrailing' is a term used in rock climbing or orienteering to move through or along a space. This resonates with Bax in her process of making and taking a work from one

PRESS RELEASE

stage to the next. In *Great Catch*, 2024 tent hooks are used to move the eye around the sculpture, adorning and highlighting the form.

As well as tent hooks, she inserts domestic utensils: funnels, tea strainers, drains into sculptures furthering ideas of function and perceived action. These items serve as anchor points of familiarity in otherwise invented forms.

In The Orangery a large sculpture serves as an introduction to the exhibition: *Monkey Cups*, 2018. This work captures balance and poise – each section providing the weight and support needed to hold the next section. This seminal work started a lengthy investigation by the artist into containment and support; the work's title is borrowed from a vessel-like plant; the sculpture's internal space opens up revealing more space to explore.

In the most recently finished works, *Great Catch* and *Funhole*, 2024, Bax has considered the theatrical nature of being able to view the works in the gallery from the outside. She was intrigued by how the glass windows of the gallery at the New Art Centre splice the landscape and mark a boundary between inside and outside.

Bax comments: *"The huge glass front means that the sculptures on show are presenting themselves to the landscape. The sculptures are colourful stages; they have portals cut into them: offering hidden spaces to the viewer who interacts with the work from the inside."*



The Gallery, Roche Court Sculpture Park

PRESS RELEASE

In the studio, she constantly questions how to expose the insides of her sculptures. *Meander Scar*, 2021 was made from slicing open a previous site-specific work. Steel sections were added to support the exposed cavities and an additional funnel was added to make a free standing, autonomous sculpture. *Meander Scar* refers to a geological feature formed by the remnants of a meandering water channel. Like the land we inhabit, the sculpture shows signs of movement, change and evolution. *Topping Off*, 2024, a pruning term to encourage growth, was also made by cutting and reworking a sculpture; the clear cut left visible and exposed.

Topping Off sits on a table which mimics her studio bench. Bax worked as a studio assistant to Anthony Caro in her twenties and shares his ethos of allowing sculpture to sit directly on the ground. Caro made work from 1966 onwards called 'Table Sculptures' which were not models for larger works, but sculptures made to examine their own space and place. She is interested in how a table can stage an art object but retains its domestic and other connotations; and how it can alter our perception of scale.

"I try and reverse my own process, making the work the wrong way round"

Olivia Bax, Handrailing September 2024



Monkey Cups, 2018

Steel, chicken wire, newspaper, PVA, household paint, plaster 240 x 212 x 146 cm

A text by the previous Head of Collections at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, and newly appointed Director of Gainsborough's House, Calvin Winner will accompany the exhibition

PRESS RELEASE

Notes to Editors:

About Olivia Bax:

Olivia Bax (b. 1988, Singapore) lives and works in London. She acquired a BA Fine Art at Byam Shaw School of Art, London (2007-2010) and an MFA Sculpture at Slade School of Fine Art, London (2014-2016). She is the recipient of The Mark Tanner Sculpture Award (2019/20) and Kenneth Armitage Young Sculptor Prize (2016). She has recently been exhibited at Holtermann Fine Art, London (2024); BoLee and Workman, Bruton (2024); Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre (2023-24); Southbank Centre, London (2023); Hatch, Paris (2023); Lustwarande, Platform for Contemporary Sculpture, Tilburg (2023); L21, Mallorca (2022) and Ribot Gallery, Milan (2019/20). Bax's work was acquired by the 2020-21 UK Arts Council Collection; her work is also in the Ingram Collection and Tremenheere Sculpture Park. In 2024, Bax curated a major institutional exhibition called These Mad Hybrids which situates a series of unknown ceramic sculptures made by John Hoyland (1934-2011) in dialogue with a spectacular, international, assembly of contemporary sculpture. The show opened at the Royal West of England Academy (RWA) in Bristol (February-May 2024) and tours to Sheffield Museums (2025).

About the New Art Centre:

The New Art Centre was established in London in 1958.

In 1994, the gallery moved from London to Roche Court, East Winterslow in Wiltshire.

The New Art Centre, Roche Court Sculpture Park is set in the Wiltshire countryside near Salisbury. Works of art and sculpture are sited in the woodland, park and gardens.

Contemporary painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics and textiles are exhibited in award-winning spaces: the Gallery, Artists' House and Design House. All were designed by the architect Stephen Marshall.

The Roche Court Gallery project was awarded the RIBA Stephen Lawrence Award in 1999, as well as AIA, three Civic Trust awards for The Gallery, Artists' House and Design House.

From the outset, the New Art Centre has been interested in education, and is home to the Roche Court Educational Trust. The Trust works locally with teachers, children, young people and specialist groups to develop confidence and oracy skills by looking, thinking and speaking about art.

About Sid Motion Gallery:

Sid Motion Gallery brings a range of vibrant artists working within different media to the fore – often showcasing them for the first time and offering emerging artists exposure to an international audience. To date, the gallery has hosted over 70 physical exhibitions, pop-up exhibitions, exhibitions in virtual reality and exhibitions online. Sid Motion Gallery opened in 2016 in a former betting shop in Kings Cross. In 2019 the gallery relocated to a larger space in South East London. With high ceilings and abundant natural light, the new space allows us to bring artworks into focus and create thoughtful juxtapositions. Sid Motion is a co-director of the London Gallery Weekend, and a Trustee/Director of Southwark Park Galleries.

PRESS RELEASE



The Gallery and Orangery at Roche Court Sculpture Park



Roche Court Sculpture Park