

PRESS RELEASE - HANDS IN THE DIGIT(AL) AGE

Hands in the Digit(al) Age is an exhibition that is centred around the hand and the artist's relationship to it. The show is an interactive online (digital) exhibition created by Molly Stredwick and co-curated by Molly Stredwick, Elliot Martin and Stella Pearce with texts by Elliot Martin. It will be accessible from mollystredwick.com at **8pm on Saturday 16th May**. The show contains artwork by: Martín Del Busto, Hollie Page, Kate Jackson, Molly Stredwick, D'arcy Darilmaz, Alice Worne, Mollie Balshaw, Alexander Yates, Matthew Challenger, Hepzibah Lyon, Matt Hawkins, Elsa June Rouy, Stella Pearce, Lucy Rose Cunningham, Hannah Whyte, Leon Barnard, ASAP Broccilli, Rafaella Leto Lazarou, Alfie Rouy, Abbie Taskis, Aimee Bannister, Firas El Hallak, Liza Radlov, Krista Brand, Freddie Wise, Tristan Brokenshire, Alena.

This show explores the hand and the artist's relationship to it. What do we mean by this? Simply put: the hand as the tool of creation and the hand as object of art.

The first aspect is that of the hand-as-tool. When we refer to an artwork, we implicitly refer to the artist's hand. This statement can be interrogated and tell us about the hand as a method of creation. It most obviously refers to the primary tool of most (but certainly not all) artists - their hands. It makes us consider how hands take whatever is in the artist's head and express it, or do violence to it and deform it, when the brush hits the canvas, for example. But the hand might also be read analogically - as in, "she had a hand in it". Here we are no longer referring to the hand as such, instead we mean the influence of the artist on the art - the fact that the artist in some way conceptualises or moves, deforms, molds, transforms and transfers in order to create. This isn't necessarily pointing to the intention of the artist, merely that there has been an artist in the process of creation.

The second aspect of the hand-artist relationship is the hand as the subject of the art itself. The multivarious meanings the hand can and have are exploited by the artists in the exhibition. The hand can be a gentle, kind, reassuring hand (Leon Barnard) or a violent hand: the fist is both a symbol of malicious violence but also a symbol of just anger in the face of violence - raised as a sign of defiance. The ludic hand (Hollie Page); the playful hand, an object of fun and excitement (both innocent and sexual). The hand as mask (Matt Hawkins); a way to hide, distract and misdirect.

Further, there are meanings to be found in the hand's relation to the eye (Raffaella Leto Lazarou). This is a relationship at the heart of art and its histories; a relation mentioned in Henri Focillon's essay 'In Praise of Hands', and which has a whole chapter dedicated to it in Deleuze's book on painting. Finally, of course, our relationship to the hand at the present - often one of fear and mistrust, of repeated washing and protective covering (Martin Del Busto and Firas El Hallak). All of these meanings are explored and more, and they all show a relationship of the hand and the artist.