

Dwellings

Exhibition explores the birdhouse as a metaphor for sanctuary and nature



Image credit: Computer Room

31 August–1 September 2024

South London Gallery

65-67 Peckham Road

London SE5 8UH

Dwellings is a new group exhibition taking place at South London Gallery that invited artists and designers to unpack 'what it means to build a house for a bird.'

Presenting an eclectic selection of 22 objects and images, made by a glass maker, ceramicist, architect, photographer and many more, the series displays the idiosyncratic ideas of each individual, ranging from practical solutions to abstract and expressive responses.

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Showcasing shared themes of sanctuary and exploring our relationship with nature, notable projects include an investigation into efforts to rewild a bird of prey, a birdhouse collaborative constructed at a distance by two designers in different countries and a piece inspired by female fertility figurines.

Conceived in collaboration between ComputerRoom (a curatorial and design studio) and Ollie Olanipekun, founder of Flock Together, the exhibition will be presented in the Orozco Garden and Clore Studio at South London Gallery.

Participating artists and designers:

Moe Asari, George Baggaley, Freya Bolton, Charlie Boyden, Benedict Brink, Jesse Butterfield, Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad, Oliver Hawkes, Charlie Humble-Thomas, By Jamps, Miranda Keys, Rio Kobayashi, Langa Langa, Andu Masebo & Dan O'Connell, Issi Nanabeyin, Jaclyn Pappalardo, Andrew Pierce Scott, Daniel Schofield, Tessa Silva, Steph Sommet, Natalia Triantafylli, Gray Wielebinski.

Highlights



Portrait of Andu Masebo; stockpile of wood. Portrait credit: Ollie-Adegboye

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Andu Masebo & Dan O'Connell

Andu Masebo is a product designer from London with a background in carpentry, metalwork and ceramics. His experience rooted in the practicalities of making things has informed a practice engaged with the way objects come to be, the conditions under which things are produced and the wider systems that dictate their context beyond their production.

Working at a distance, this collaboration between Andu and his uncle, Dan O'Connell, a trained carpenter based in Ireland, was realised without a single conversation taking place. Material was sent back and forth between the two countries as each person slowly intervened in order for it to eventually take the form of a birdhouse. Mirroring their close yet geographically distant relationship, the intuitive process of making the birdhouse was left unspoken but always felt.

Jesse Crabtree Butterfield

Jesse Crabtree Butterfield is a designer and researcher whose practice focuses on exploring how landscapes (places, people, ecologies, materials) produce and realise our material world.

Jesse's project 'Bird Metropolis' takes cues from skyscrapers and modernist architecture yet is notably organic and tree-like in form, creating space for eight nests. The piece is informed by research around the house sparrow, the most widely distributed wild bird on the planet that is also a flexible nester residing in trees, cacti, cliffs, architectural elements, street lights, and many more.

Issi Nanabeyin

Issi Nanabeyin is an artist trained in architecture. Issi's work builds diasporic identities into drawings and sculptures that express the encounters and entanglements of 'British' and Black heritage.

Issi's piece is an unfolded replica of a weaverbird's nest. Through drawing, the work analyses its spatial composition—from its orientation to the wind and the direction it faces the sun, to the layers of structure including the outer shell, lower lining, threshold, and insulation. It also examines the design of the antechamber, which is crafted to prevent unwanted guests. By unfolding the bird's nest, these details are made visible and prompt us to consider them in relation to our own 'nests'.

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Studio shot courtesy Moe Asari

Moe Asari

Moe is a designer and visual artist with a research-based practice. Her work consists of site responsive, experiential installations and designed objects which explore the material quality of connection between place and multi-cultural identity.

Her site specific project 'Interspecies Border - Asking the Black Kite' explores themes of interspecies borders in relation to efforts to rewild a bird of prey, the Black Kite, to Millingerwaard, a nature reserve in The Netherlands.

Daniel Schofield

Based between London and Copenhagen, Daniel Schofield is trained in graphic design and carpentry.

For the exhibition, Daniel is arguing that it's strange to cut down a tree – a natural home for a bird – to create planks of wood for a birdhouse. To get around this man-made problem, he's using cork. While still made from a tree, the material is highly renewable and can be harvested every eight years without chopping down a tree.

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Portrait of Tessa Silva. Photographer credit: to be confirmed

Tessa Silva

Tessa Silva is a British-Brazilian artist based in London who is interested in the impact of materials on society and what they can reveal anthropologically.

Her contribution references talismans in astrological magic which have been compared to birdhouses as precious objects built as places for spirits to willingly reside. In this context the free spirit is the bird, invited to take shelter in the dwelling, which acts as a bridge in our ecosystem between their realm and ours. The voluptuous form of the dwelling is hand carved from British elm to loosely reference the ancient curvy forms of female fertility figurines that represent motherhood and abundance.

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Notes to editors

For further information please contact Isabelle Bucklow via isabelle@zetteler.co.uk.

Key dates

Private view: Friday 30 August 6pm–9pm

Exhibition: 31 August–1 September

Location

Orozco Garden and Clore Gallery of South London Gallery.
65 Peckham Rd,
London SE5 8UH

ComputerRoom

Computer Room is a research-oriented design and curatorial studio comprised of Andu Masebo, Charlie Humble-Thomas & Jesse Butterfield.

Meeting in 2019 at the Royal College of Art, the three shared a common interest in underrepresented themes within material culture. In the past their research has looked into the impact of producing objects and mapping the social structures that support them.

With each member having their own personal practice, their collective work brings different perspectives and ways of making things together under one roof. Their studio workshop is based in Hoxton in London, UK.

@computer__room

Flock Together

Flock Together started life as a Birdwatching collective in 2020 and quickly became the driving force behind a global outdoors movement, with marginalised groups taking up space in nature.

flocktogether.world

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South London Gallery

The South London Gallery (SLG) was founded in the 19th century by philanthropist William Rossiter to 'bring art to the people of south London'. Today the gallery comprises its original site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate, and two permanent gardens.

The SLG has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free education programme includes a peer-led young people's forum; family workshops; artist-led projects and commissions on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

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