

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE

Eloise Hawser: By the deep, by the mark
Part of the Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series
31 January – 22 April 2018
Terrace Rooms, South Wing
Free



From feats of engineering to forces of nature, Eloise Hawser explores connections between hidden flows of the city's subterranean structures and the circulation in our bodies, with works including never-seen-before modern medical equipment and original multidisciplinary artworks by Hawser

Somerset House is delighted to announce a major exhibition by Somerset House Studios artist Eloise Hawser. The show will be the first of its kind to examine connections between civil engineering and cutting-edge medical imaging devices, never before seen in an exhibition context. During her residency at Somerset House Studios, Hawser has taken inspiration from the site's history and influential position on the river, adding a site-specific element to the work. Visitors are offered an insight into Hawser's unique creative practice as well as hidden elements of Somerset House's and London's social and engineering history, which has impacted on individual bodies and the community as a whole.

The exhibition will chart relationships between extraordinary feats of civil engineering and the intricate inner workings of the human body. A collection of multidisciplinary elements, brought together by Eloise Hawser through research and original works, comprises of sculptures, collage, video simulations, sound art installations, archival imagery and fully functional medical imaging 'phantoms'. This will be the first time phantoms, a crucial part of modern medical practice, will be shown in a creative setting. Phantoms are specially designed objects used to test medical imaging equipment such as X-Rays, MRI and CT scanners in place of a human. In keeping with Hawser's interest in object functionality, the phantoms can take many shapes, but their purpose is to mimic human tissue and bodily functions. A highlight of the show will include an innovative sculptural piece, which places disparate phantom objects together to create a human form, suggesting the human body as an extension of the engineering systems that support life in the city. Hawser has drawn on many different industries to bring together objects which, once taken out of their original utilitarian context and placed within an artistic setting, allow other stories to come to the fore.

Eloise Hawser: By the deep, by the mark is based on two years of extensive research by the artist and draws upon Somerset House's close relationship with the Thames and the Embankment. The title of the exhibition *By the deep, by the mark* refers to the historic ways of measuring depths of water by hand using a weighted line. This method was used to calculate the depths of the Thames, including the tidal region adjoining Somerset House. The exhibition features archival images, showing how the river once flowed right into the building.

Hawser charts how improved understanding of our bodies and health has also affected advances in civil engineering, such as the 19th-century cholera epidemic leading to Joseph Bazalgette's ground-breaking sewer system and the contemporary Thames Tideway 'Super Sewer' project. With these modernisations, our health was better protected, highlighted in a sculpture made through a mixture of industrial processes, showing the transition between the two sewer systems, and in a series of images developed by the artist linking medical imaging of the body with the flow of the river.

Hawser further explores how these engineering developments have re-evaluated our relationship with the river and demonstrates its move from an industrial route to a place for leisure. A new multi-screen video piece will immerse visitors in a digital boat trip down the Thames accompanied by an original sound art installation.

By drawing together two seemingly unrelated areas of research, Hawser's work suggests a correlation between preserving the communal body (through civil engineering) and individual bodies (through modern medicine) against the urban environment. By reanimating the past and mapping the present, Hawser will present both of these industries as the result of our fear of pollution and disease and the desire for control and knowledge of our bodies.

Marie McPartlin, Director of Somerset House Studios, said:

"A year on from the launch of Somerset House Studios, we're delighted to announce the first large-scale exhibition from a resident artist at Somerset House. The culmination of a lengthy research project into urban space and unusual collections supported by the Studios, the exhibition traverses engineering, mapping and technologies old and new. Reflecting Somerset House's vision to be a centre of imagination and creation, Eloise Hawser: By the deep, by the mark manifests our dedication to supporting the most exciting artists working today to make their most ambitious projects yet and presenting them as part of our programme"

Eloise Hawser: By the deep, by the mark will be the second exhibition in the Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series, an ongoing partnership with the leading law firm to present a wide range of free exhibitions reflecting the broad interests of both organisations. This exhibition is also supported by the Port of London Authority, with help from HR Wallingford.

Ends

For press enquiries, please contact:

Victoria Heald, Press Officer on press@somersethouse.org.uk / 0207 845 4624

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Dates: 31 January – 22 April 2018

Times: Monday, Tuesday, Saturday & Sundays 10.00-18.00 (last admission 17.00), Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 11.00-20.00 (last admission 19.00)

Tickets: Free available at www.somersethouse.org.uk

Address: Terrace Rooms, Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somersethouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook: www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

Hashtag: #EloiseHawser

About Somerset House

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th-century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming, and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries.

Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. In October 2016, Somerset House launched Somerset House Studios, a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. The Studios provide a platform for new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. Somerset House is also one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.4 million visitors every year. www.somersethouse.org.uk

About Charles Russell Speechlys

The construction and infrastructure practice at Charles Russell Speechlys works with clients in the UK and throughout the world. Our experience in the construction sector is broad and deep and our way of working is collaborative; ultimately construction is all about collaborative endeavour.

Our firm is based in 11 locations across the UK, Europe, Asia and the Middle East and through each of these locations clients are able to access the full range of the firm's skills and expertise across the full spectrum of business and personal needs. This gives us a wider perspective, clear insight and a strongly commercial long-term view. It has made us a leader in the world of dynamic growth and family businesses and major corporates and institutions find our more considered and personal approach a refreshing alternative to conventional business law firms.