

Poor Things opens on Saturday at Fruitmarket

Poor Things will open at Fruitmarket on Saturday 4 March 2023 and running until 21 May.

Linda Aloysius, Eric Bainbridge, Jonathan Baldock, Simeon Barclay, Joseph Buckley, Beagles and Ramsay, Chila Burman, Andrew Cooper, Jamie Cooper, Penny Goring, Brian Griffiths, Emma Hart, Lee Holden, Dean Kenning, Josie K0, Rosie McGinn, Rebecca Moss, Janette Parris, Anne Ryan, Aled Simons, Laura Yuile.

Poor Things is an exhibition that has come out of conversations about art and social class that artists Emma Hart and Dean Kenning have had together as friends, and with the Fruitmarket, a free public space for art. The exhibition features sculptures from a cross-generational selection of artists from all around the UK. It is hoped it will ignite conversations about class through sculpture.

“When talking together in front of our work we’ve come to recognise that often the decisions that manifest in our sculptures around subject matter, materials and methods harbour questions about social class. For example, we both often relinquish aesthetic control, as we prioritise what the work does rather than how it looks. We have discovered that we both interpret this focus on doing as stemming from an anxiety about the nature of aesthetic composition, both associating it with middle class traits of privilege, control, the luxury of time on your hands and tasteful decor. We want to think of our own sculptures not as a careful arrangement of colours, textures and forms, but as machines or present tense things

that are full of life – things which can speak to us about our world and leave a dent in someone else's, generating in the mind of the viewer something more than aesthetic appreciation. We are hoping for reactions like joy, pity, laughter or embarrassment which are importantly not dependent on the audience having a great knowledge of art. There are other strategies within our work that we think could be triggers for a discussion around class. These include manual production, liveness, entertainment, the use of everyday objects and materials, dumb humour, and a popular visual graphic vocabulary of figures and gestures. We are not saying that these are fixed markers of identity, or labels of exclusively 'working class' ways of working, but that the decisions we make have the potential to ignite discussions about class.

"Further to that, we believe that sculpture itself in its thingness – the way it occupies the same ground as the viewer and often makes use of ordinary stuff – and its relation both to manual construction and common forms of making and craft, offers a particularly powerful means by which to question how class impacts on and is expressed through artistic practice. This leads us to wonder: how do other artists' sculptures speak to and broaden class experiences and understandings? Also, how do class factors intersect with questions of race, gender and sexuality which might be manifested in artists' works? We approach the exhibition not with fixed ideas about how each work addresses class, but as a way of finding things out and hopefully, in this way, broadening the conversation around art and class" **Emma Hart and Dean Kenning**

Fiona Bradley, Director, Fruitmarket, added, "I am excited about this exhibition, and am looking forward to seeing the work of these artists come together with each other and our audience. At the Fruitmarket, we invite artists to take risks, to experiment, to frame questions rather than provide answers; and we support audiences to think and look alongside artists. We value art as an agent of disruption and change, and look to

art and artists to bring new perspectives to bear on current issues and debates. I am hoping that the sculptures in Poor Things will make room for some new thinking”

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Rosie McGinn with her work Oblivion, part of Poor Things at the Fruitmarket PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography
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Emma Hart and Dean Kenning with Linda Aloysius work which forms part of Poor Things at the Fruitmarket, PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk 07702 246823



Emma Hart with her work Spoiler part of Poor Things at the

Fruitmarket
PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography



Chila Kumari Singh Burman with her work Eat Me Now, part of Poor Things at the Fruitmarket, Edinburgh
PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography



Dean Kenning with his work Renaissance Man at the Poor Things exhibition at the Fruitmarket
PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography



Dean Kenning and Emma Hart with Jamie Cooper's work, Nomnom at the Poor Things exhibition at the Fruitmarket, Edinburgh
PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography



A visitor looks at Brian Griiffiths, The Body and Ground (Or Your Brittle Smile) in the Poor Things exhibition at the Fruitmarket

PHOTO Neil Hanna Photography