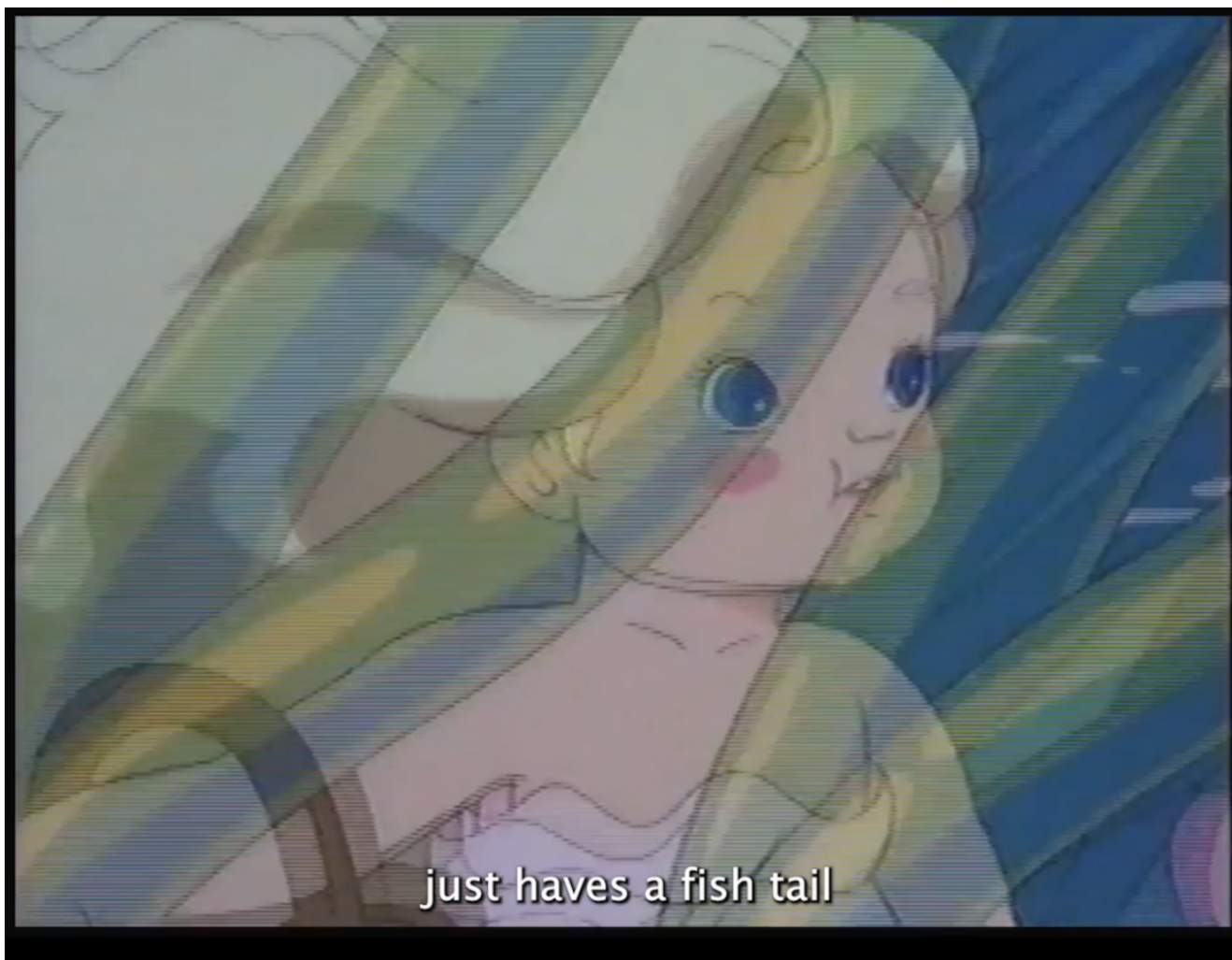


At Collective – two autumn exhibitions

Collective on Calton Hill has two new exhibitions for Autumn which run until 23 December: *asweetsea* by U.S. artist Liza Sylvestre, and *John by Satellites* artist Thomas Abercromby.

Both of these revolve around the moving image, and explore diverse themes encompassing language, access, family, social mobility, memory and communication.

In Sylvestre's first solo exhibition in Scotland, *asweetsea* explores what it means to communicate. As an artist who is deaf, and whose child and partner are both hearing, Sylvestre seeks to locate where her disability lives within their family structure. Comprising a moving image work and series of related drawings (originally commissioned as part of *Liza Sylvestre | asweetsea* at John Hansard Gallery (2022), and now shown in Collective's City Dome Gallery), Sylvestre's exhibition investigates the complicated edges of distinctions. What does hearing mean? What does deafness mean? What does disability mean? Where do these things begin and end?



Liza Sylvestre, *asweetsea*, video still, 2022. Courtesy of the artist

In *asweetsea*, Sylvestre has collaborated with her 6-year-old child to reimagine an animated cartoon from the artist's own childhood. Sylvestre's fond memories of the 1985 animated TV special, *Sweet Sea*, evolved at a time when she had a very different sensory makeup. Now, as her hearing child relays their experience of the film, Sylvestre reworks the animated material to fit their description. Captioned extracts of conversations between parent and child convey both the sound and the intimacy of their interaction. Vividly coloured and shimmering with undersea motion, their remake engages generational experiences of disability, interdependence, sensory memory, communication, and time.

To accompany the film, Collective will also show three of Sylvestre's *Parts* drawings. These large scale works on paper

are built up in layers of overlapping detailed line drawings, reminiscent of the language of instruction manuals. Fragments of illustrations for the assembly and use of cochlear implants combine with details of toys and building blocks from Lego construction guides. The structure of language and communication within a family is made visible as an investigation of overlapping systems. Sylvestre's work invites us to consider the role of description in creating access, and a related online work brings additional layers of imagery, sound, access and interpretation.

Titled in homage to the artist's father, John is a new commission by Glaswegian artist and curator Thomas Abercromby presented as part of Collective's Satellites programme. Centred around a film installation of the same name, Abercromby has collaborated with an all-working-class cast and crew to explore the intricate ties between family, grief and the multifaceted layers of social class. John raises the question: how do we navigate spaces not designed for us?

The film juxtaposes childhood paintings made by Abercromby's late father with opulent gallery interiors, and painterly images of peripheral urban landscapes of the artist's youth. These are seamlessly intertwined with behind-the-scenes moments that expose the subjectivity of the cast and crew themselves, and the work that has gone into the production of John. The film not only challenges traditional artistic norms but also invites audiences to confront and reflect upon the spaces and narratives that are often left uncharted in the art world.

Director of Collective, Sorchá Carey, said: "For Collective's Autumn programme, we are excited to share two such extraordinary moving image works. In both Liza and Thomas' exhibitions, the personal and the political meet – inviting us to find greater connection with one another."

The works exhibited at Collective as part of asweetsea were

originally commissioned for Liza Sylvestre | asweetsea, curated by Sarah Hayden at John Hansard Gallery (2022), as part of an AHRC Fellowship project called Voices in the Gallery.

Collective's winter opening hours run until Saturday 23 December. During this time, Collective will be open: Wednesday-Sunday, 10am to 4pm.

collective-edinburgh.art



Thomas Abercromby, John, video still, 2023. Courtesy of the artist. Photo Daniel Hughes. Featured Julia Lau and Nevil Jose