

# You're Never Done

Curated by Thomas Abercromby and Holly Takenzire

Fri 11–Sun 27 June 2021

Open Daily 12:00–18:00

**Adelita Husni-Bey | Gabecare (Rachel Adams & Tessa Lynch) | Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S) | Harriet Rose Morley | Tara Marshall-Tierney**

*You're Never Done* is a group exhibition featuring work by local and international artists exploring invisible narratives of labour within our cities.

The exhibition was originally inspired by Glasgow's public washhouses, known as 'Steamies', and the wages for housework movement, which was a grassroots women's network who campaigned for recognition and payment for all care work in domestic settings and beyond. Conceived of pre-Covid, the project was to take the form of an active, collaborative space where people and artists could gather to address the gendered division of labour and visibility within working-class communities.

Run by the City Council, Steamies provided washing facilities for industrialised communities across Glasgow. Steamies were constructed for women to carry out domestic work in order to provide washing facilities after a public outcry for sanitation reform in the city. Within these public spaces, women carried out physically demanding unwaged domestic work that went unseen within wider society. While these intimately familiar architectures exploited women's labour, they provided a valuable social space that supported conversation, community building and solidarity. The Steamie is used within the context of this exhibition as a historical reference to the ways in which women's labour has gone and continues to go unseen, while at the same time mimicking the valuable social space they provided by supporting a network of women artists and women in the North of Glasgow.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we are still sadly unable to gather at this time in the ways we initially imagined. However, we believe the exhibition has even more relevance to the current times we live in. The sudden shift in the working practices of many people and the recontextualisation of what we consider "essential work" has provided a critical opportunity to recognise that the world's economies and the maintenance of our daily lives are built on the invisible and often unpaid labour of women.

Presenting work by Adelita Husni-Bey, Gabecare (Rachel Adams & Tessa Lynch) Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S), Harriet Rose Morley and Tara Marshall-Tierney, *You're Never Done* transforms the disused Springburn Museum into a platform that encourages the public to see, hear and question the gendered division of labour through a variety of different mediums such as sound, film, archive, installation and sculpture.

The exhibition takes its name from the rhymed couplet: 'Man may work from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done.' This idiom implies that we have long been aware of how our capitalist patriarchal society exploits the labour of women, yet we still choose to ignore it. *You're Never Done* attempts to make this labour visible while at the same time exploring and discovering new ways in which we may collectively value and reimagine the fruits of our labour.

In the pink room, **Gabecare** (Rachel Adams & Tessa Lynch) have produced new sculptural works including several mirrored cabinets and two oversized fabric cleaning product packets. Household tasks can play on the mind and become overwhelming. Reflecting this, Gabecare's sculptures play with the scale of domestic objects, shrinking them down or blowing them out of proportion to bring out the irrationality, humour, and endlessness of everyday labour. Gabecare is a collaborative art project which investigates the domestic mess of 21st-century living through art and design objects.

Exploring Marxist feminist scholar Silvia Federici's text *In Praise of the Dancing Body*, which explores the ways in which capitalism alienates us from our bodies, **Glasgow Open Dance School** (G.O.D.S) has created *I want to show you a body* – an instructional audio work that can be activated in movement by visitors to the exhibition. Drawing from a wide constellation of practices, propositions, exercises and perspectives, the instructional audio played through MP3s encourages an exploration of what the body can do, its capacities, its languages and its articulations, re-defining our relationship to space, our environment and each other.

In 2010 **Adelita Husni-Bey** produced *Gestures of Labour*, a silent video filmed in Kampung, Jakarta. These broad urban areas are occupied by newly arrived migrants who organise themselves into small, informal cooperatives to deal with basic needs such as work, housing and schooling. The film concentrates exclusively on the repetitiveness of the gestures of the migrants' hands, which hypnotically mark out the rhythm of the film. *Gestures of Labour* explores the domestic spaces where goods are made while making visible the connection between capitalism, class, race and the demand for 'unskilled' migrant labour.

Meanwhile in the blue room, incorporating the Springburn Maiden statues that once stood on the community's much loved but now-demolished public halls, **Harriet Rose Morley's** installation *Handle with Care* explores notions of care within archives. This installation politicises these figures, which are simply classified as "architectural salvage" by cultural institutions that have deemed them not worthy enough to be collected or cared for in any museological context. However, for the local community, these objects are held in high regard, revered for their beauty, and considered valuable artefacts relating to local histories in the area.

The artist has chosen to display these maidens in their present state of decay and disrepair, and in doing so charge them with new meaning that speaks to the forgotten histories of women's work in post-industrial working class communities. These histories, much like these statues, have not been visible or valued in Scotland to date. The installation supports these objects and gives visitors the opportunity to reflect on Springburn's industrial history through the iconography present in both the installation and the sculptures.

Also in the blue room is **Tara Marshall-Tierney's** work, *Splendid is the noise of women gathered over yonder*, a 7-channel audio work recorded entirely over Zoom. Using the tradition of Hebridean 'waulking songs' sung by women as they worked, *Splendid is the noise* explores how communal activities are digitally adapted, with the new phenomenon of virtual choirs.

Since 2019, Marshall-Tierney has been engaging with community choirs in Glasgow North, looking at the similarities between their singing and waulking songs – the act of song undertaken whilst ‘waulking cloth’, a practice involving a group of women rhythmically beating newly-woven tweed against a surface to soften it. This work would use the rhythm of the song to collectively harmonise their hand movements.

In *Splendid is the noise*, waulking songs are sung by remote voices, moving in and out of different singing techniques producing a soundscape that incorporates muted mics, digital delays and background noise. The endurance of the song mimics the ways in which women have supported and continue to support each other. The result is at times disconnected, even uncomfortable, but harmonises into an impressive act of collective unity and intensity while at the same time demonstrating the power of voice in times of crisis.

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#### **A Note on the Venue:**

**The Springburn Library and Museum** was originally built as a gift by Andrew Carnegie in 1904 and was the first independent community museum in Glasgow. It told the story of the rise, decline and rebirth of the industrial community of Springburn and highlighted the importance of railway manufacturing to the area and its place in the global context. It closed its doors in 2003 and was subsequently changed into a private office space but has gone unused since. We have purposely kept the two gallery spaces different to demonstrate the creative potential and the need for community owned cultural spaces within such areas like Glasgow North.

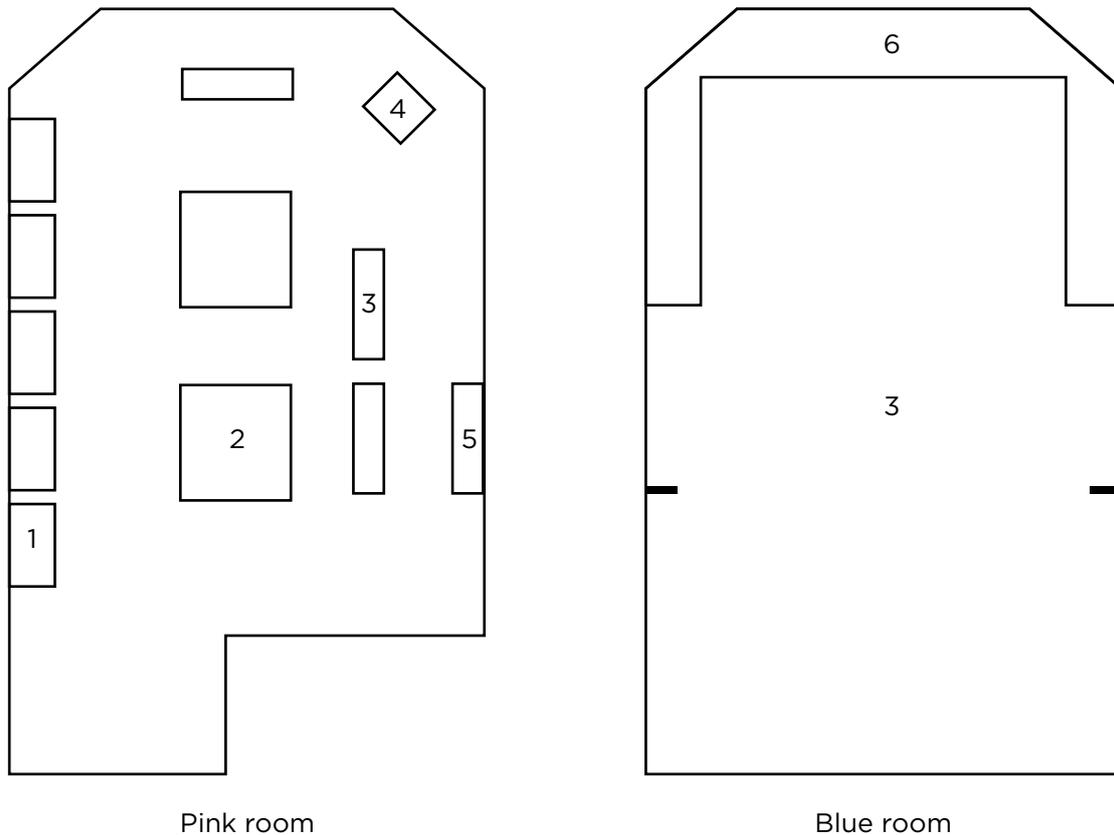
#### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank everyone involved in making this show possible, for their patience, understanding and their solidarity during such difficult times.

With special thanks to the local community groups and organisations such as Springburn Academy, Springburn Women’s Group, Springburn Community Council, Barmulloch Community Development Company and New Rhythms for Glasgow that have given us so much of their time; all the participating artists; the technicians and fabricators (Mark McQueen, Kyalo Searle-Mbullu, Kate Morgan, Ross Zajac and Robert Wilson); and conservationist Steph De Roemer. We also wish to thank those who have provided us with both pastoral and professional support in the development of this project: Eoin Dara, Adrian Murray, Stephen Kay and David Gordon.

Finally, sincere thanks to our partners: Laveronica Arte Contemporanea, Glasgow International, NG Homes, Glasgow City Heritage Trust, Necessity, Jobs and Business Glasgow, and Stroom Den Haag.

## Gallery plan & work titles



- 1. Gabecare (Rachel Adams & Tessa Lynch) *Wipe Clean* 2021.** Etched mirror cabinet and doll house furniture. Individual works titled as follows, moving clockwise from door: *The Kitchen Sink*, *Under the Stairs*, *Too Many Cooks*, *Maintenance and Housework*.
- 2. Gabecare (Rachel Adams & Tessa Lynch) *Packets (Carbolic) & (Reckitt's Crown Blue)* 2021.** Digitally printed fabric on tiles.
- 3. Harriet Rose Morley *Handle with Care* 2020 - ongoing.** Plated wooden benches, plinths and Springburn Maiden Statues.
- 4. Adelita Husni-Bey *Gestures of Labour* 2010.** Silent video, S8 transferred to DVD, 5min 39sec. Courtesy of the artist and Laveronica Arte Contemporanea.
- 5. Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S) *I want to show you a body* 2021.** Single channel audio work, 26min 53sec. Voices: Letitia Pleiades, Tamima Lerkins and Romany Dear.
- 6. Tara Marshall-Tierney *Splendid is the noise of women gathered over yonder* 2021.** 7-channel audio work, 16min 44sec [In two parts: 8min 9sec and 8min 13sec each]. Voices: Jess Carnegie, Rosa Farber, Faye Gosling, Tara Marshall-Tierney, Olivia McHugh, Rosie Trevill and Ruby Zajac.