

Ways of perceiving

ADDA4023A

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Tondo

This exhibition intends to explore how material processes can cultivate ecological awareness and mindful making. Drawing on the pedagogical framework of Paulo Freire, it foregrounds learning through doing, positioning crafts as both critical and environmental practise. Developed in collaboration with three artists, Tondo also engages the ethos of the Norwegian folk school model, emphasising simplicity, locality, and material authenticity.

The exhibition design reinforces this approach. Installed in the Reading Room, individual alcoves frame each artist's work, while a central circular plinth brings these practises into dialogue. The spatial arrangement encourages a gradual attentive movement through the room, echoing the exhibitions focus on process, rhythm, and cyclical thinking. Natural light further shapes the experience, allowing the atmosphere to shift over time and heightening awareness of material and environment. Designed by Henry Holtam of Dewsbury in classic Italian style the library was opened in 1887 by William Gladstone, holding research material about Wales and Swansea and the Dylan Thomas collection. The library was closed in 2007 and is now used for conference, music and dance performance, glass events and exhibition. The 86ft diameter and 25ft high at the centre of the dome creates outstanding acoustics, wooden panelling and sectional alcoves create a dramatic ambience these factors led the curative decision to host at this educational setting.



Fig 1: Reading Room.

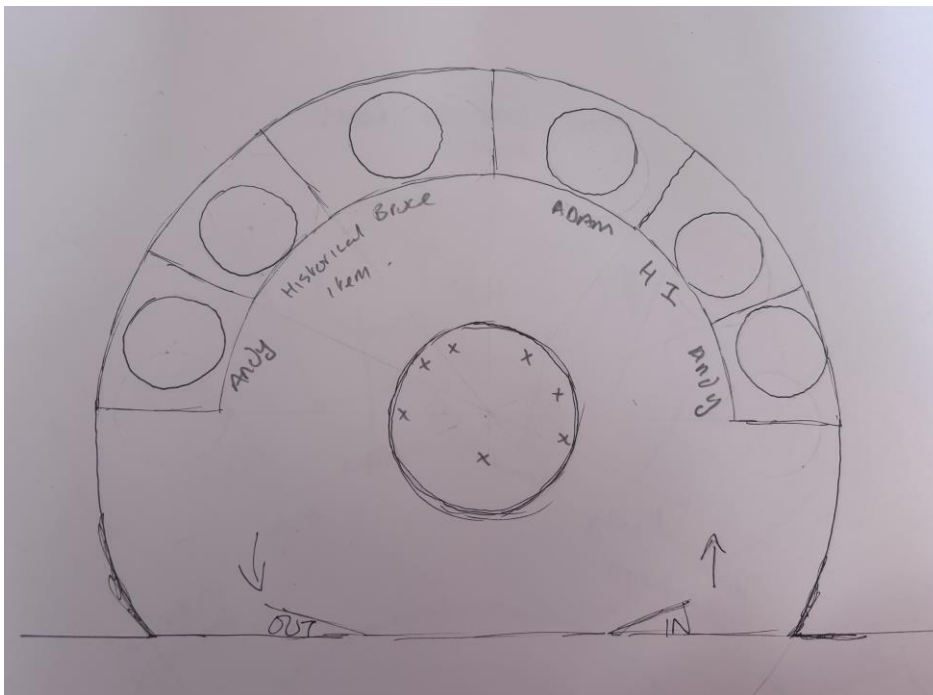


Fig 2: Exhibition map. *(rework this) *

Dorodango a Japanese practise that has roots in everyday play and craft

traditions reflecting broader cultural values such as patience, care and attentiveness to material. Socially it can be linked to ideas of mindfulness and simplicity often

associated with Japanese aesthetics. Politically and environmentally the use of natural local materials highlights a minimal impact and sustainable approach to making. Almost forgotten until a revival was started by Fumio Kayo in 1999 to study the psychology of Children's play. In the context of contemporary concerns around sustainability and industrial production, Dorodango reintroduces a direct, material connection to the land and traditional artisanry. This approach has been brought into contemporary practise by Bruce Gardener a maker and author who has explored Dorodango extensively, he adapts the traditional method into contemporary art context. His work emphasises the meditative act of forming spheres through repetition, time and tactile engagement. Rather than prioritising aesthetic outcomes, Gardner values making as a reflective and ritualistic process. The carefully layered, dried, and polished surfaces highlight process over product, where time and attention become central. The resulting smooth, reflective forms contrast with the rawness of the material, creating a tension between control and nature. Similarly, Adam Buick is a ceramicist whose work is deeply rooted in landscape and geology. He Sources his own clay directly from the earth, embedding a strong connection between material and place. His vessels keep traces of their origin highlighting natural textures and imperfection. Unlike Gardner's process-focused practise, Buicks work often results in functional object such as pots and containers, though they still carry conceptual weight. His ceramics focus upon material authenticity and function, transforming raw clay into vessels while preserving its natural identity. By firing his work in ways that keep natural colour variations, he reinforces a respect for the materials origins. These vessels function not only as containers of space, but as carriers of environmental history. In contrast, Andy Goldsworthy works directly with natural materials such as leaves, stones and ice. His work is often temporary, emphasising change, decay, and the relationship between human intervention and natural processes. Unlike the controlled forming and preservation seen in Dorodango or Buicks ceramics, Goldsworthy's work embraces ephemerality, allowing materials to shift, deteriorate, and return to the environment. This focus on impermanence highlights the fragility of natural systems and encourages reflection on sustainability and the impact of human activity. By connecting traditional practises with contemporary artists such as Gardener and Buick this exhibition shows how material-based approaches can communicate

deeper environmental and educational themes. Through the lens of theorists such as Paulo Freire, alongside the experiential learning ethos of the folk high school movement developed by N.F.S Grundtvig, these works can be understood not just as objects but as processes of learning, reflection, and ecological connection.



Fig 3: Bruce Gardener *Hikaru dorodango* (2017)



Fig 4: Adam Buick *Moon Jar* (2011)



Fig 5: Andy Goldsworthy *Rowan leaves and Hole* (1987)

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