

## **Groundwork**

**Acme Early Career Programme exhibition at Kupfer**

**Kupfer, 3 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4HF**

**PV: Thursday 14 November, 6-9pm**

**Exhibition continues until 30 November**

**Monday - Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday 2-6pm**

*Groundwork* marks the culmination of a year-long residency as part of Acme's Early Career Programme, featuring the works of Sam Meredith, Anouk Verviers, Joseph Ijoyemi, and Anna Malicka. Spanning three levels of Kupfer, the exhibition presents site-specific interventions that respond to the building's architecture, rooting each artist's practice in a shared space while carving out distinct identities—reflecting their experience of sharing a studio over the past year.

Groundwork evokes ideas of beginnings, foundations, and the often-unseen labour that underpins the creative process. It symbolises roots planted for future growth, acknowledging the acts of making, collaboration, and personal development that propel artistic practice. In this exhibition, groundwork becomes a metaphor for artistic origins and a tangible exploration of materials, bodies, and social histories, embodying acts of creation that influence and are influenced by each artist's labour.

Drawing from his background in both fabrication and fine art, Sam Meredith integrates sculptural and archival elements, blurring personal and professional realms. Within his ground-floor installation, *Bread & Butter*—a large wooden structure that is part bed frame, part storage unit—suggests the layered nature of domesticity and creative labour central to his practice. Infused with a cohesive yellow palette, Meredith's works—*Noggin Shelf*, *Spreadsheet (Reflect & Clarify)*, and *Bowtie*—evoke textures of daily life, with objects and forms drawn from routine and work environments. Together, they playfully imply that being an artist is inseparable from the hidden labour of everyday existence. In drawing from shared spaces and daily environments, Meredith's work highlights the collective and individual efforts that sustain creative life.

Anouk Verviers' video installation *We Gather at Dawn (I Have Discharged You from Our Care)* in the basement extends the idea of groundwork to the body, exploring the resilience and resistance of women living with endometriosis. Through a feminist science-fiction lens, Verviers invites us into a dystopian world where a group of chronically ill women create, dismantle, and rebuild columns from cob—a traditional blend of clay, sand, and hay, mixed by their own stomping feet. Their labour, marked by cycles of construction and deconstruction, is both a rejection of societal demands for productivity and a ritual of kinship. Verviers' pavilions—delicate structures of plywood, survival blankets, and insulation—stand precariously in this space, pointing to the fragility of the body while evoking the quiet defiance inherent in working against its limitations. Here, groundwork represents collective survival, where physical labour challenges bodily limitations and embraces mutual care.

On the first floor, Joseph Ijoyemi's installation *Echo* engages with groundwork as a return to origins, weaving together themes of cultural memory, migration, and identity. Through the use of Nigerian newspapers—collected since 2020—he incorporates archival materials as symbols of cultural continuity, each paper acting as a bridge to his heritage. Ijoyemi blends past and present, merging Nigerian and British cultural elements, while exploring the resilience of the African diaspora. His *Circulate* sculptures, cast from original alumbro metal salvaged from the Cutty Sark boat, and sound performance *Fragments*, capturing the rhythms of traditional craft processes, create a space where storytelling, fiction, and sound experimentation intersect. For Ijoyemi, groundwork is both a literal and metaphorical return to his roots, anchoring his practice in cultural histories that inform his present while welcoming new narratives for the future.

Anna Malicka's installation *bby yellow 105, gonster junction*, occupies the other side of the first floor, redefining groundwork as an inquiry into space. Using fibre embroidery on unexpected surfaces like plywood, Malicka disrupts traditional associations of craft with femininity, domesticity, and invisibility. Her work reimagines domestic labour, layering the room with stitching and construction to examine how space is occupied, controlled, and transformed.

Responding directly to the gallery's architecture, Malicka obscures windows with plywood and wraps the gallery's boiler—which she likens to fungi that invade and decay wood in domestic spaces—in thread to create a sculptural form. This intervention exposes hidden layers of control and questions the very foundations of space and ownership, blurring the line between ornamentation and occupation.

Together, the artists explore how laying foundations is a continuous act of building upon past experiences while forging new paths forward. In conversation with one another, they create a shared space of collective resilience, where the act of establishing foundations becomes a collaborative force, nurturing both individual expression and the evolution of their creative practices.

Written by Nastia Svarevska

## **Acme's Early Career Programme**

Acme's Early Career Programme provides artists in their first five years of professional practice with a variety of support structures, including a bursary, rent-relief studio space, professional development, mentoring and exhibition opportunities. Award recipients work in a large, shared studio to encourage peer support and critical dialogue.

## **About Acme**

London-based charity Acme has been supporting artists in need since 1972. Over this time, we have provided thousands of artists at all stages of career with affordable studios, work/live space and a programme of artist support through residencies and awards. We support the development and production of art by reducing the practical challenges that artists face, increasing their ability to take creative risks. Acme is the single largest provider of permanent affordable artist studios in England, supporting over 800 individual artists across 15 buildings in Greater London each year.

[acme.org.uk/](http://acme.org.uk/) @acme.art

## **About Kupfer**

Kupfer is a project space, which functions as a platform for exhibitions and residencies. Opened in 2017, Kupfer has showcased the work of nearly 80 artists from different generations and geographies with a focus on those who are currently underrepresented in the London art circuit.

[kupfer.co/](http://kupfer.co/) @kupferproject

***Kupfer***

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