

Related Event

Zoë Paul

Table Conversations

Saturday 16 June 2018, 2pm–3.30pm

Free, booking advised

Join artist Zoë Paul in a table conversation, discussing the processes of making.

Book online at www.spikeisland.org.uk, call 0117 929 2266 or visit reception.

Spike Island

133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UX

Tel. 0117 929 2266

www.spikeisland.org.uk

admin@spikeisland.org.uk

 Facebook.com/SpikelIsland

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 @SpikelIsland

Visitor Information

Gallery open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm
(during exhibitions only).

Admission to the gallery is free.

Café open Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm
Saturday and Sunday, 10am–5pm.

Spike Island aims to be a fully accessible building.



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**ARTS COUNCIL
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Exhibition Guide

Zoë Paul

La Perma-Perla

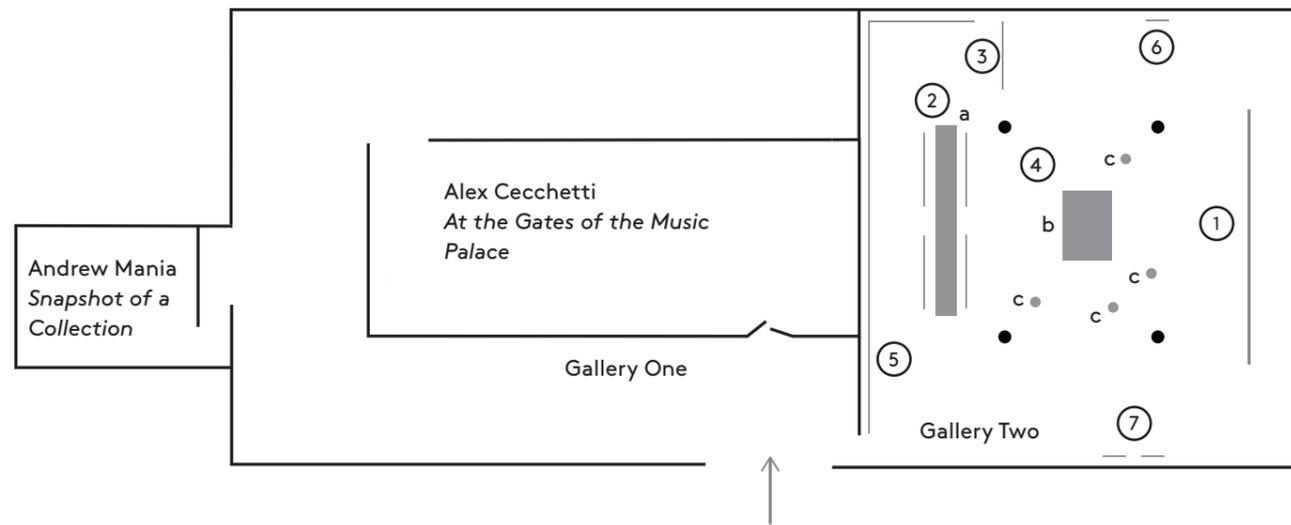
Kraal Emporium

5 May to 8 July 2018

Zoë Paul's exhibition is supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and Arts Council England.

Herbs for the tea are supplied in-kind by Daphnis and Chloé.

Spike Island



- ① Land of the Lotus Eaters (2018)
Clay, porcelain, steel, brass and silver
- ② Perma-Perla Kraal Emporium (2018)
 - a Table and benches
Marble, scaffold planks, concrete, plastic
- ③ Perma-Perla Kraal Emporium (2018)
Robes
Cotton, leather cord and metal eyelets
- ④ Sebil (2018)
 - b Water fountain
Glazed ceramic, water, concrete, pump
 - c Teapot heads and cups
Glazed ceramic, Penny Royal Mint tea, concrete, marble
Please note: the tea is not suitable for women who are pregnant.
- ⑤ Wall paintings
Paint, RAL 8008 and BS18E53 and mixed clay
- ⑥ Mazeuvie (Series 1.1) (2012)
Wool on found fridge grill
- ⑦ Tenir (2013)
Wool on found fridge grills

Land of the Lotus Eaters is an eight and a half metre-long beaded curtain – the largest Zoë Paul has made to date. Installed in the dimly lit temple-like gallery space, as if it were a devotional icon painting, it draws you into a place of contemplation. Paul sculpts interlinking figurative forms into the curtain by arranging thousands of handmade clay beads which have been raku-fired at different temperatures to create varying tones of grey, terracotta and porcelain blue. A dramatic material metamorphosis takes place through the rolling and arranging of the clay, becoming an image.

The title alludes to the 'land of the lotus-eaters' in the ancient Greek epic poem *The Odyssey* by Homer. The lotus-eaters are a people encountered by Odysseus on his journey, who live on an island and survive on lotus flowers. Since the lotuses are so delicious and intoxicating, those members of Odysseus' crew who eat them lose their desire to return home, preferring to remain on the island forever enjoying the food of the land. Spending long summers on the islands remains an important part of Greek culture and the lotus-eaters are emblematic of an alternative to modernity's constant drive for progress.

The mythological scene presented here is not purely an image of the past. Seen through the lens of our digital era, the strings and beads create a visual effect akin to a hologram. The contours of bodies ripple across the surface with figures coming into view or disappearing when viewed from different angles or from behind.

Perma-Perla Kraal Emporium, a long industrial style marble banqueting table – after which the exhibition is titled – is positioned opposite to the curtain where you are invited to sit, wear a specially made robe and join in the making of clay beads, while enjoying herbal tea served from ceramic head-shaped teapots. The anthropomorphised forms of the pots with their long, straight noses and arched brows, are abstracted from predominantly red and black clay jugs used in Greek symposia (meaning a drink together). The work creates a space of conversation through the act of bead rolling, intended as a simple act to occupy the hands, freeing the mind for discussion.

Paul's interest in creating scenarios for social exchange runs deep in her work. A square fountain with a four-faced head stands in the centre of the gallery, looking out towards the four columns. The water fountain references the long standing traditions of communities meeting around fountains in village squares to gossip and tell stories. Here, running water is an analogy for gossip – running ubiquitously under the surface.

Zoë Paul often works with simple materials and techniques – weaving, ceramics and drawing – used throughout centuries and still sourced and crafted with very little technology. Her ongoing interest in craft traditions seeks out a continuum between the organic and the social – how the making of physical things can give insights into the way we interact with others.

As a counterpoint to the craft traditions she works with, Paul is interested in how advances in technology affect social rituals. Her wool tapestries, woven across discarded refrigerator grills, are inspired by the arrival of domestic electrical appliances in the Mediterranean climate of her youth. Prior to this modernisation, the act of eating with others had been a much more social occasion. Here, the grills are presented either side of the *Land of the Lotus Eaters* – a work which is about bringing people together – as a reminder of the things that can divide us.

Zoë Paul

Zoë Paul studied at Camberwell College of Art followed by the Royal College of Art. Paul grew up between the Greek island of Kithira and Oxford, and currently lives and works in Athens.

Paul's recent group exhibitions include *Unorthodox* at the Jewish Museum, New York (2016), and *The Equilibrists* at the New Museum, New York and the DESTE Foundation, Athens (2016).