Lana Locke | PhD exhibition: The Feral

The Cookhouse, Chelsea College of Arts, 16 John Islip Street, London SW1P 4JU Private view: Wednesday 13 December 5-8pm

Open: Thursday 14 - Friday 15 December 12-6pm; Saturday 16 December 12-4pm



To mark the end of Lana Locke's PhD on *The feral, the art object and the social*, she will create a sprawling installation of objects, images and videos in Chelsea College of Arts' Cookhouse Gallery that make flesh the practice-based nature of her research.

Here, the practice becomes entangled in an unruly relation with the space: scratched, seeping forms evoking bodily organs, liquids and waste do not rest within the contours of a body, but act as infectious elements, moving through the environment, speaking to a social body uncontained by the gallery. Clay tower blocks and burnt out metal plants germinate amongst the husks of Locke's external and internal installations and protests of the last four years, rejecting gentrification, as she seeks to reclaim the social within the material.

Locke's conception of the feral scavenges (physically, socially and metaphorically) in the gap between defined spaces, and draws out the political promise of the indeterminate state of being neither wild nor civilised. Originating as a retaliation against the former British Lord Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's labelling of a 'feral underclass' in the 2011 London riots, she seeks to unfix the feral from this uncivilised, abject position. Her practice resists the 'civilising' borders of the spheres of display it interpenetrates. However, like the feral, it does not attack the boundaries directly: it is furtive; it must creep over, under and through the boundaries to survive.

The Cookhouse space is treated as a physical manifestation of the academic framework of an arts PhD, and the institutional rigidity, regulation, and political and economic pressures the practice has sought to gnaw away at when confronted by this structure. Yet as Locke equates the temporary installation of art objects in the space to the status of squatters passing through, the days of her own squatting period of doctoral study have reached their end, its contingent permissions and protection withdrawing. As her practice has poked into, picked at, and soaked through any porosity and permeability of boundaries, inside and outside of the rules of the University, that might allow her to leach it for a little more supply (of workshop access, of materials, of knowledge), so must she now move on.