

# Betwixt

## beyond Fitzrovia Chapel

### 1. Susan Hughes

**May the Hills and the Heights Have You, video, 8 min 46 sec, 2023**

Hughes uses her Irish traditional fiddle playing as a bartering tool, an access point - a way to gain trust, have relationships, avoid small talk and hear stories. It has led her to islands, fjords and glens, places at the edge of land and sea that have fed the conceptual and visual content of her artistic practice.

**May the Hills and the Heights Have You** is part of an ongoing body of work centred around Teelin, Donegal, an area where a high density of fiddle music and supernatural lore live amongst sodden mountainsides. For the past twenty years, Hughes has repeatedly returned to this part of northwest Ireland to learn tunes and, more recently, to obsessively search for Áine, the girl who, legend has it, disappeared into a hillside. In this video, synthetic ambient music and distorted field recordings contrast with the raw beauty of voices from the Donegal Gaeltacht (Irish speaking region). Cnoc Áine (Áine's Hill) takes centre stage through a range of dramatic visual, audio and graphic storytelling techniques.

### 2. Kedisha Coakley

**Horticultural Appropriation, bronze, velvet, wood pallets and organic material, 2023**

Coakley explores ways in which personal and collective narratives can be transmitted through material artefacts. These bronze specimens explore the relationship between trade – in fruit, flowers and seeds – and empire. In the 17th and 18th centuries, mango, cotton, breadfruit, pineapple, coconut, sponge mushroom, persimmon, passion fruit and lychee sourced from 'far-off lands' became emblems of affluence, social standing and the allure of the unknown. By casting these objects in bronze, Coakley emphasises the legacy of imperialism, with accompanying shipping crates nodding to the long journeys undertaken to possess tropical plants. By shedding light on the historical contexts of collecting natural and cultural artefacts, Coakley challenges ideas of the 'exotic' and invites visitors to reflect on intersections of the environment, wealth accumulation and history.

**Horticultural Appropriation** brings together a body of work including **A Still Life in Transit of Pineapple, Cotton, and Breadfruit, with Dhuka, Tulips and Further Specimens on Velvet**, commissioned by Millenium Gallery Sheffield and **Mi Waan go a Country go look Mango** commissioned Bloc Projects, Henry Moore Fund and Arts Council England.

### 3. Thulani Rachia

**obuyile, garments and performance, 2024**

This installation is part of an ongoing project that centres on a collection of melodies composed by the artist as he adjusted and settled into different cities around the world. The seven-day structure of **obuyile** is inspired by acclaimed nineteenth century freedom fighter Frederick Douglass, who taught himself a hymn from home on a fiddle over a week-long period whilst he was campaigning across the UK for the abolition of slavery. **obuyile** draws on the healing potential of sound and uses an active dialogue between architecture, trauma, dreaming and composition to express the brutality of inherent violent histories in urban built environments.

On Saturday 17 February, experience a live performance of **usuku owesikhombisa (day 7)** from Rachia's original composition (commissioned for Edinburgh Art Festival 2021). In this piece, rest features as a composition device which literally and symbolically enacts moments of pause within **obuyile**. Rachia creates 'architecture for sanctuary' through garments which encompass the performers and melodies. The motifs and colour act as notations of a dream Rachia had which inspired this project.

Cellists: Simone Seales, Hoda Jahanpour, Jay Émme, Abigail Muvuma

Rehearsal director: Simone Seales

Transcriber and co-musical arranger: Taner Kemirtlek

Garment architecture print design: Thulani Rachia

Garment architecture construction: Asia Przytarska

Print design vector: Christian Noelle Charles

Production support: Zoë Charlery and Taner Kemirtlek

Thank you: Mkulu obuyile, The Rachia family, Adebusola Ramsay, Ima Jackson, Lisa Williams, Talbot Rice Gallery, Freelands Foundation.

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## Floorplan

1. Susan Hughes
2. Kedisha Coakley
3. Thulani Rachia

