

Sea

25 May - 2 September 2018



New site-responsive installations by Jodie Carey unveiled this May

The Foundling Museum presents a new series of site-responsive installations by British artist Jodie Carey, commissioned by the Museum for display in the exhibition gallery and among the historic Collection.

Carey's response to the history of the Foundling Hospital has been to create a series of striking works that explore themes of love, loss and trace. Imbued with a sense of remembrance, these sculptures encourage visitors to reflect on the thousands of children who passed through the Foundling Hospital from the 1740s – 1950s, and the fragility of human life and relationships. Her recent work has explored themes of mortality and memory through combining monumental scale with vulnerable materials, using techniques that result in the act of creation remaining visible.

Drawing inspiration from the eighteenth-century fabric tokens left by mothers with their babies at the Foundling Hospital as a means of identification, *Sea* is a large-scale installation for Museum's exhibition gallery. *Sea* is formed of hundreds of swatches of fabric that have been dipped in liquid clay and fired to create delicate, white ceramic fragments that cover the gallery floor. During the firing process, the fabric burns away leaving only a trace of its weave and pattern, echoing the fragility of the textile tokens which are one of the few remaining and tangible

connections between each mother and her child. The mothers' intense feelings of separation and loss find a visual analogy in Carey's vast ceramic outpouring. However, despite its overwhelming scale, Sea asks the viewer to recognise the detail of each unique cast and to see each as a small memorial and an act of remembrance.

Among the Museum's historic Collection on the first floor, two monumental works explore ideas of memory and time. *Found* is formed of 18 life-size, totemic sculptures that crowd the Anteroom, each cast from the void left by rolls of fabric buried in soil. *Found* creates an environment that feels both natural and sacred, and suggestive of a ruin or archaeological find. The poured plaster bears traces of the land in which the sculptures were cast – centuries of soil, stones and plant roots. This earth-bound process resonates with the elemental nature of the Foundling Hospital narrative of love, loss, hope and survival. In casting bolts of fabric, Carey references the significant role that cloth played in the Hospital's story – as emblems of hope for the mothers, methods of identification for the institution, and routes of employment for the children – while final marks made by the artist using tailors chalk, are suggestive of storytelling.

Cord, displayed in the Foyer, is a delicate and slender bronze sculpture that stands floor to ceiling. Cast in bronze from cord buried in the earth, the sculpture appears both fragile and brittle, its contorted appearance belying its material strength. Referencing not only the bond between mother and child, but also the relationship between institution and foundling, *Cord* seeks to make visible the fragility of relationships so fundamental to human existence, and questions whether such bonds can ever be broken.

Kathleen Palmer, Curator: Exhibitions & Displays, said: 'We are delighted with this thoughtful and touching new work by Jodie Carey which so deeply resonates with the histories we tell. The Foundling Museum's commissions from contemporary artists spark new and revealing conversations between the past and the present, changing and deepening how we and our visitors understand the Foundling Hospital story.'

Jodie Carey said: 'I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to make new work for the Foundling Museum. It is a deeply moving museum, and a challenging and emotional space to respond to. I am honoured to be part of its extraordinary history.'

These commissions form part of the Museum's 2018 programme of

exhibitions, displays and events to mark the centenary of female suffrage, by celebrating women's contribution to British society, culture and philanthropy from the 1720s to the present day.

Press Enquiries

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Notes to Editors

Jodie Carey studied at Goldsmiths College, completing an MA in sculpture at The Royal College of Art in 2007. Solo exhibitions include *Earthcasts*, Edel Assanti, London, 2017; *Dark night by daylight*, Hå gamle prestegard, Norway, 2014; and *Solomon's Knot*, The New Art Gallery Walsall, 2012. Recent group shows include *The London Open*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2015; *Eros and Freud*, The Freud Museum, London, 2014 and *Death: A Self Portrait* at The Wellcome Collection, London, 2012.

The Foundling Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity and first public art gallery, and through a dynamic programme of exhibitions and events celebrates the ways in which artists of all disciplines have helped improve children's lives for over 275 years.

The Foundling Hospital, which continues today as the children's charity Coram, was established in 1739 by the philanthropist Captain Thomas Coram, as 'a hospital for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children'. Instrumental in helping Coram realise his vision were the artist William Hogarth, who encouraged leading artists of the day to donate work, and the composer George Frederic Handel, who gave annual benefit concerts of his *Messiah*. In doing so, they created London's first public art gallery and set the template for the way in which the arts can support philanthropy.

Coram has been creating better chances for children since 1739. They help children and young people today through their pioneering work in adoption, parenting support, housing support, alcohol and drug education, creative therapies and championing legal rights in the UK and overseas. coram.org.uk

Visitor Information

The Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ
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foundlingmuseum.org.uk

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 17:00, Sunday 11:00 - 17:00, Monday closed
Admission: £11 adults / £8.25 concessions (incl Gift Aid), free for children and Foundling Friends

Tube and train: Russell Square, King's Cross St Pancras and Euston