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Anne Tallentire (b. County Armagh, Northern Ireland) has lived and work in London since the 1980s. She has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally and is Professor Emerita at Central St Martins, London (where she taught from the early 1990s to 2014). In 2018, Tallentire was a recipient of the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Award for Artists.

Anne Tallentire: Material Distance is organised in partnership with MAC, Belfast and Hollybush Gardens, London, supported by Henry Moore Foundation. A publication will be produced in conjunction with the exhibition, including new texts and extensive photography throughout. To be published in January 2023.

Anne Tallentire

Material Distance

8 October 2022 to 14 January 2023

Anne Tallentire encourages us to think again about the spaces and environments that we occupy. *Material Distance* highlights everyday materials, systems and structures, bringing into focus the specific qualities of the Gallery's spaces and location. Tallentire adapts her work to its locality through sightlines between buildings and by referring to neighbouring architectural space. Throughout the exhibition Tallentire asks significant questions about the built environment and the ongoing inadequacies of social housing and its societal impact.

Stairwell

Within her practice, Tallentire often makes multiple versions of her works, adapting them to new locations and contexts. The exhibition starts at the top of the stairwell with the second iteration of the work *Outermost* (2019–ongoing). Along with its accompanying notes, (*Outermost notes*, designed by Steffi Orazi), *Outermost 2* (2022) tracks a series of walks undertaken by Tallentire through various housing estates in Southampton (Northam, Holyrood, Millbrook, and Wyndham Court). The work proposes the need to consider the living environments that architects and planners provide, and how inhabitants negotiate conditions of daily life in imaginative ways. The work itself is made from screws and coloured index tags arranged to map locations which are then described in the accompanying notes.

Situated across the landing, the *Outermost notes* are made to be distributed and taken away by visitors. They include a number of eleven-word texts about various locations, seen through the speculative lens of the artist (in dialogue with co-walker and guide, Nadia Thondrayen). These observations draw attention to the innovative ways by which people find agency in their lived environment. By paying attention to these details we can become better informed about housing needs and urban infrastructure, learning to advocate for improved living environments and conditions.

Gallery 2

Upon entering Gallery 2, visitors encounter *Lag III* (2001) and *Interspacings 01, 04* and *06* (2021–2022). These works use grid insulation boards, (and in the case of *Interspacings*, the addition of construction tape). In sculptural terms, Tallentire is interested in the hyper-modernity of these materials. In *Lag III*, the work switches between a sense of usefulness and uselessness. Placed in a way that creates an awkward delineation of the space, the boards are stripped of their original function

and instead their formal aesthetic qualities are laid bare. Conversely, the *Interspacings* works comprise assembled sections of insulation board cut down to the dimensions of specific items of furniture, such as beds, chairs and sinks. Sourced from institutions associated with confinement, these works reflect restrictions embedded in the fabric of daily life.

The floor work *Slide* (2019) uses construction materials, specifically offcuts from previous works, for their formal and material qualities. The use of polystyrene, tarpaulin, gaffer tape, MDF and laminate leftovers, continues Tallentire's interest in repurposing materials. Using processes of chance, assemblage and reassemblage, the object's original use becomes secondary, with the focus instead drawn to the object's materiality.

At the far end of Gallery 2 is the new wall work *Lintel* (2022) made specifically for this exhibition. It is based on a technical drawing of a small window lintel on the Millbrook Estate, sourced from Southampton City Council's Archives. The work plays with scale and placement, drawing attention to the specificity of this hidden structural architectural element.

Tucked away in the fabric of the Gallery floor itself is the new work *Flux* (2022). Comprising an iPhone recording taken by Tallentire on one of her site visits to the Gallery, *Flux* shows the repeated zig-zagging of people across the public square outside the gallery. Skateboarders, alongside revelers embarking on a night out, inhabit and pass through the square from one side to the other. They take ownership of the space, demarcating it through their everyday actions.

The everyday actions of Tallentire herself are reflected in the two wall works, *The word fragment implies* and *The question arises here...*, (taken from a larger series made by the artist throughout the lockdown periods of 2020–2021). These works utilise floor plans of the artist's home in London, a 1970s

housing block. Tallentire superimposed the dimensions of paragraphs from books that she was reading at the time onto these plans. These superimpositions render the floor plans themselves unreadable, and propose alternative arrangements of space. During the various periods of 'confinement' that many people experienced during the Covid lockdowns of the last couple of years, we were all (in varying ways) made to think about how the spaces we live in need to accommodate untested conditions. It was one of the most notable recent moments where we have all reflected on how our use and understanding of space can be reimagined and repurposed.

Next to these drawings are two works: *Material Condition: Part I* (2018), and *Setting Out 4* (2022). *Material Condition: Part I* responds to contemporary emergency architecture. In the construction of this work, materials such as tarpaulin and wood – typically used in the construction of temporary dwellings built frequently at speed on sites of humanitarian need – are layered, folded, and stacked. The title provokes questions regarding legality and the responsibility of governments to provide permanent shelter for all.

Setting Out 4 transposes what is conventionally horizontal, to the vertical plane of a wall. String used in the construction industry to transfer architectural drawings onto the ground, forms a line drawing referencing a floor plan of a home on the Wyndham Court estate in central Southampton. Paper markers on the string demarcate lengths corresponding to the circumference and architectural characteristics of each room. Measurements and proportions are translated and made relatable through Tallentire's thoughtful depiction of this iconic building.

Gallery 3

On entering Gallery 3, the work *Grasp* (2018) can be seen on the far side. This is a work made from the leftover components from the production of *Area* (2022) – the large scale work that surrounds it. Tallentire improvises and assembles discarded elements from other works, highlighting their potential for revealing the processes and procedure that largely go unseen. *Area* itself was first made for an exhibition in Austria in 2019. The laminated coloured panels replicate the dimensions and colour of furniture and detritus that Tallentire discovered in a communal area of a large housing complex in Graz. This collection of household objects was created by people bringing personal items from their private homes into the common area for shared use. Both of these works are accompanied by *List* (2021) – an inventory of all the items that are referenced in *Area*, including details such as the object descriptions and industry colour names.

Barker-Mill Gallery

This is there (2022) spans both Gallery 3 and Barker Mill Gallery and takes as its starting point a building visible from the John Hansard Gallery. Once a department store, and currently part of the University, the building faces on to the same public square. *This is there* finds its form through marks (small red dots) that signify the sightline from one of the newly installed classroom spaces through to the far side of Barker-Mill Gallery. Alongside, *Look over 2* is a floor work made from tape and string which demarcate (to scale) floor plans for the conversion of office buildings to residential accommodation. The reference to restrictive and inhumane building practices is clear, raising many important and timely issues relating to housing, affordability, urban infrastructure and the need for us all to advocate for improved living environments.