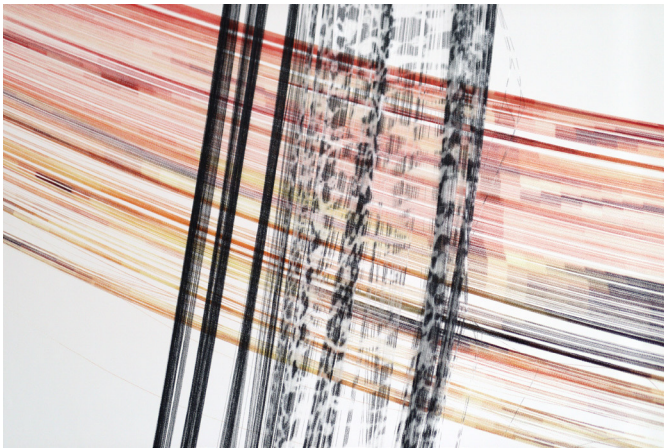




Fabienne Hess: *Softly Swaying*

The fabric of community: a scattering of silk-prints



The Swiss Church in London presents *Softly Swaying*, an exhibition by artist Fabienne Hess, exploring the themes of community and gift-exchange through silk prints.

Suspended from a pink rope that stretches across the church, the prints float in mid-air. They appear immaterial, like amorphous two-dimensional slices. They question the spatial dimensions around them as they not only lack depth, but are also transparent and blending into the walls of the building.

The photographs printed onto the hangings depict gifts exchanged in the community at the church. Gift exchange within a group offers equilibrium and coherence, a kind of anarchist stability. Hess saw the church's community not as one coherent unit, but as a number of partially overlapping groups. Her installation, which consists of over a dozen differently shaped prints, reflects this free-flowing complexity.

The airiness of the silk hangings is the result of Hess removing threads one by one, until the

cloth barely holds itself together as a single piece of fabric. In the process, the rectangular geometry of both the printed photograph and the weave of the fabric is partially dissolved. The undoing reveals the skeletal network of threads that make up the fabric.

The gifts photographed include objects such as cheese-toasties grilled for people affected by homelessness and tangerines brought to a potluck lunch of the church's Mother's Group. Hess also captures the intangible gifts she saw, like time, attention and care, through details, such as the careful covering of hard-boiled eggs used to keep their warmth.

By unravelling the fabric, Hess has reduced the printed photographs to individual lines. These structural lines mirror the bonds that arise from the practice of gift circulation. Hess's work explores the idea that fabric, like community, offers shelter and belonging; that both are held together by the inter-dependence of separate elements. The fragility of the work, its threadbare structure, also reflects the precarious state of communities in an era of austerity and upheaval.

Address

Swiss Church in London, 79 Endell Street,
London WC2H 9DY

Launch Reception

Friday 12th May 2023, 6-8pm

Opening times

Saturday 13th May, 12-5 pm

Sunday 14th May, 12-5 pm

About Fabienne Hess

Fabienne Hess is a Swiss-born, London-based artist. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2012 and has since shown her work, among other places, at Art Night, French Riviera, London; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; Baltic, Newcastle; Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh; Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam; Museum Tinguely, Basel and Dakar Biennale. She has been awarded a fellowship by Artangel, published an artist book with Common Editions and has received commissions from LUX artists' moving image, the BBC and the University of Edinburgh.

www.fabiennehess.com

Instagram: @fabienne_hess

About the Swiss Church art's programme

Located on Endell Street, Covent Garden, The Swiss Church in London runs a yearly Art Programme of contemporary art exhibitions, installations, performances, an Artist-in-Residence opportunity and music events.

Throughout its history, the Swiss Church has looked to engage parishioners and cultural visitors in a dialogue between art and faith. This is to ensure the Church's continued relevance within an increasingly secular society, as well as fulfilling the community's desire to grant artists creative freedom to work within the building.

Media information

art@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

References

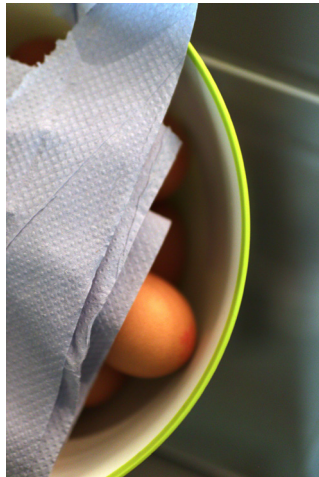
Weaving as Metaphor and Model for Political Thought
by Arthur C. Danto.

The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property
by Lewis Hyde

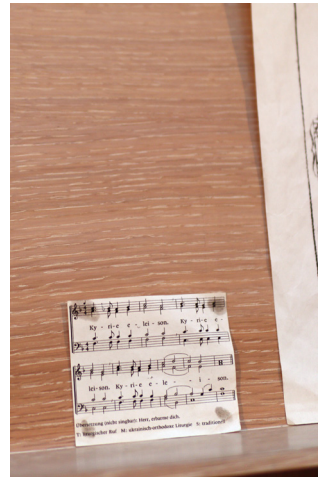
All images courtesy of Fabienne Hess.



Gift_1, Daffodils and cookies, brought to the breakfast for people affected by homelessness.



Gift_2, Hard boiled eggs, covered to keep their warmth.



Gift_3, *Kyrie eleison*, sung by the congregation during every Sunday service. Music notation pictured on the organ's music stand.



Gift_4, A blob of blu tack, found in the church's archive in a box that contained neatly stacked photographs that were shown in an exhibition about the history of the church.



Gift_4, A bowl of peanut butter and someone taking a snack during a cooking session of the Mother's Group.



Gift_5, Marbled endpapers from a book that records past donations. Also from the archive.