

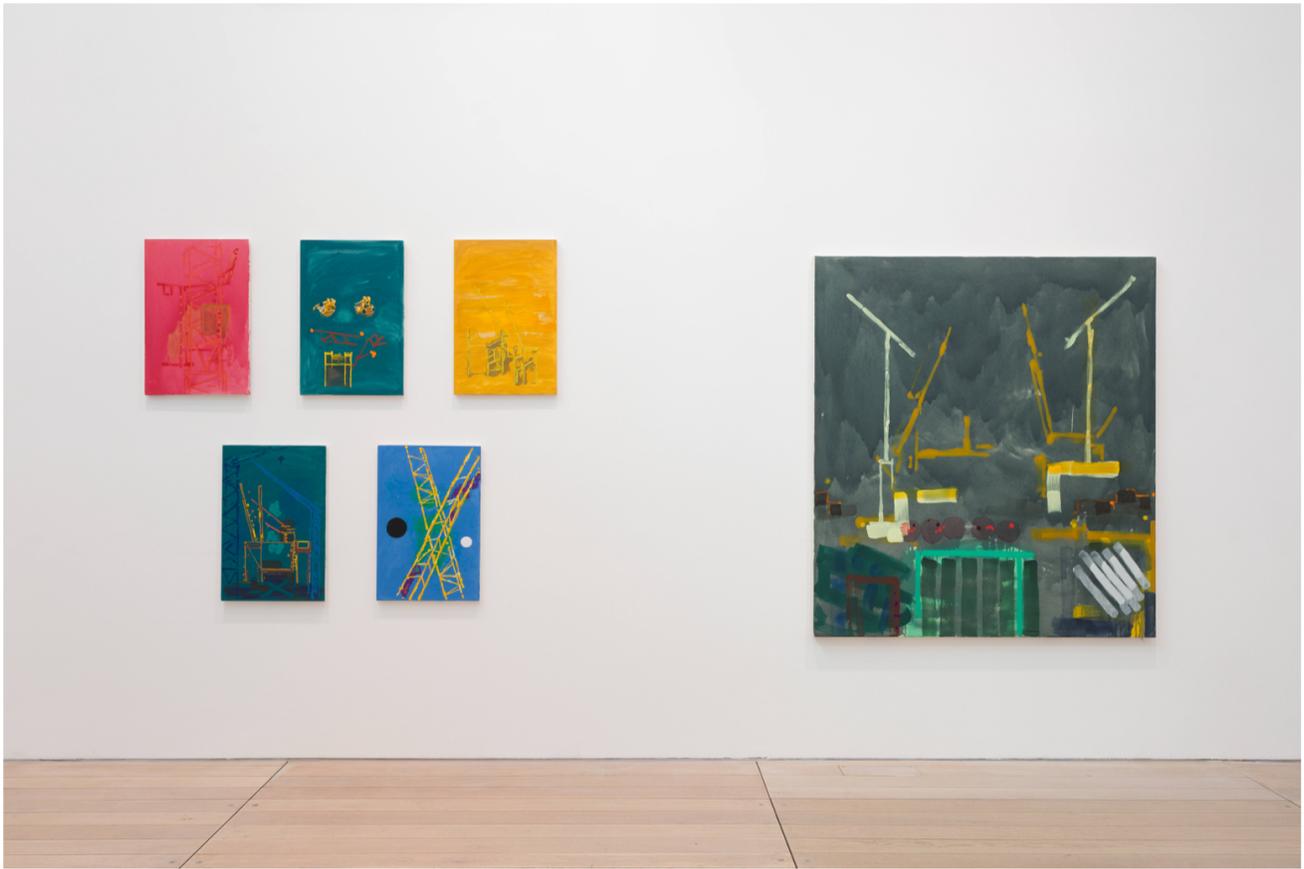
# Christina Mackie: Material Reality

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Christina Mackie, *The Judges II*, 2011-12. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

*Material Reality* at CCA Goldsmiths is an artistic exploration of metamorphosis: the physical capacity of a substance, being or system to transform into something wholly other. Throughout the exhibition, Christina Mackie focuses on the potentialities of matter itself, or rather, the infinite possibilities of becoming. Time is an essential ingredient in this alchemy; within its unfolding, pigments dissolve and merge to create a painting, and clay fuses with glaze to shape a sculpture. Everything, in Mackie's world, that is tangible for the human senses is perpetually in flux. As the title suggests, *Material Reality* thus explores the elemental constituents of the physical world, and the forces and powers which transform and reshape reality in temporal, geological, chemical, or artistic terms.



Christina Mackie, Dissolve, 1985-2025. Installation view: Christina Mackie, Material Reality. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

Across the gallery space, this metamorphosis forms the core conceptual thread. Yet transformation occurs not only within the artworks but within the context of the building itself. Goldsmiths CCA once functioned as a Victorian waterworks and pumping station. Today, its history and architecture quietly resonate with the exhibition's focus on transformation and adaptation. Within this space, Mackie's works reveal matter in motion and the deep-time processes that shape it. Pigments melt, minerals settle, and objects shift between the made and the found, the geological and the digital. Themes of dissolution, classification, life, and mortality recur, highlighting the tension between fragility and persistence. Invisible forces become legible, and erosion, sedimentation, and environmental pressure are rendered in perceptible form, inviting reflection on how matter evolves over time and space.



Christina Mackie, *The Judges II*, 2011-12. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

Mackie's installation *The Judges II* (2011–12) opens the exhibition, emphasising process and the quiet thrill of discovery. Handmade trestle tables hold an assortment of ceramics, loose pigment, watercolours, ink drawings, monitors, books and photographs of stones and fruit. The installation merges the intimate atmosphere of the artist's studio with both the scientific quality of a laboratory and the stagecraft of an art exhibition. Inks bleed across paper, objects coexist in deliberate randomness, and the display functions as a kind of open archive. Inspired by Mackie's visit to an extinct volcano in New South Wales, Australia, the work traces eruptive terrains, mineral formations, and other geological forces that shape matter across deep time. Encountering the installation feels both playful and instructive, a process of discovery where form and meaning emerge at a gradual pace.



Christina Mackie, *Powder People*, 2018-26. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

*Powder People* (2018) is presented in a darkened gallery with riveted metal walls and a former life as a water tank. Mysterious, fluorescent piles of coloured objects are placed around the floor while colourful animations are projected across the walls, seeming to document the process of the objects' making. The effect merges physical and digital realms, creating a hypnotic space that feels like an alchemist's workshop. The digital animations resemble alchemical vessels and scientific apparatus, but they are, in fact, abstracted particle forms used to model the behaviour of people moving in crowds.



Christina Mackie, *Powder People*, 2018-26. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

Following this train of thought, a representational relationship forms between the particles and individual human beings. The work therefore operates as a political metaphor whereby the passage of the simulated particles symbolises the pressures and power dynamics of social life, drifting in computational currents that quantify invisible forms of governance. The Powder People named in the title become data points, dispersed and aggregated under unseen forces.



Christina Mackie, *Dissolve*, 1985-2025. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris

In the final room. *Dissolve* (1985–2025) explores metamorphosis through painting, film and sculpture. The installation brings together early and recent works, arranged according to material weight and the degree of visual transformation. Pigments swell, fade, and bleed, enacting a slow choreography of decay and regeneration. Film sequences of shifting weather, industrial structures, and eroding landscapes echo this theme, revealing the impermanence of both natural and human systems. Here, transformation is perceptual as well as material: viewers witness form emerge, dissolve, and reconfigure. The room emphasises the cyclical nature of change: inevitable yet generative, producing new aesthetic and conceptual forms from the remnants of the old.



Christina Mackie, *The Judges II*, 2011-12. Installation view: Christina Mackie, *Material Reality*. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

*Material Reality* conjures a sense of alchemical wonder, where matter, time, and perception interlace. Pigments, particles, and minerals shift and dissolve, revealing forces beyond human control. Yet the exhibition also acknowledges multiple possibilities of becoming as a celebration of potentiality. Just as matter transforms under pressure, so too can humans act, adapt, and reshape themselves and the systems they create. In this sense, Mackie's show functions as a political metaphor. It reflects on the subtle ways power systems attempt to organise, govern and constrain life, while documenting the inevitable persistence of transformation, adaptation, and creativity – the magic of change, the fluidity of existence, and the enduring potential for matter, life, and society to continuously reinvent themselves.



Christina Mackie, Powder People, 2018-26. Installation view: Christina Mackie, Material Reality. Courtesy Goldsmiths CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.

*Dr Paula Zambrano, Curator of Programmes, the Contemporary Art Society*

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Goldsmiths CCA

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