



Studio Voltaire *elsewhere*: NNENA KALU

Offsite at 30 Old Burlington Street, Mayfair, London W1S 3AR

**21 February–28 March 2020
Wednesday–Saturday, 10am–6pm**

Nnena Kalu explores space, scale, texture and colour through repetitive and durational sculptural processes. Her works begin with collections of small, compact 'cocoons' of textiles, thread, and paper, which have been tightly packed in cellophane and tape. With an emphasis on colour and volume, spheres of material have been systematically bound together around a series of armatures constructed from timber and plastic tubing. These structures establish a foundation from which Kalu has built energetic and complex installations.

Periods of live installation have come to form an established aspect of Kalu's practice. Correspondingly, for this new commission Kalu will periodically work in situ at the gallery during the exhibition. Over time, Kalu will continue to add to the dense clusters and layers of her sculptures. Continuously in production, her works reflect the duration, rhythm and process of their making, transforming and accentuating the formal qualities of her everyday materials.

Kalu's tactile acts expand a dialogue between performance and sculpture, movement and space, and her installations are an extension or expression of her physical actions. The sheer weight of reshaped matter –wrapped, woven, and layered– is a visual inscription of Kalu's durational process. Her works are a potent materialisation of artistic labour, and centre an important relationship between the body and material form.

Vigorous and sprawling, Kalu's installations disorganise delimitations of her works as objects, structures or landscapes. Her sculptures cover, extrude into and occupy space: they overwhelm freestanding and suspended structures to create their own, improbable architectures. However, if Kalu's practice of gathering together materials places emphasis on the aggregative qualities of her work, the resulting sculptures – as traces of her methodologies – equally deconstruct material. Cylinders of translucent plastic and reams of black cassette tape are unspooled in order to bind and be re-bound. In this way, each solid form is in fact an immense unravelled line: a winding trail given substance and volume.

Presented in partnership with ActionSpace.

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About Nnena Kalu

Nnena Kalu (b. 1966, Glasgow) lives and works in London. This exhibition is presented in partnership with ActionSpace, a leading organisation supporting the development of artists with learning disabilities, which has been based at Studio Voltaire since 1999. Kalu is an important member of Studio Voltaire's artistic community, and her work has previously been exhibited as part of group exhibitions in 2012 and 2015.

Recent exhibitions include: *Nnena Kalu: Wrapping*, Humber Street Gallery, Hull (2019); *TUBE LINES*, Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, London (2019); *Spectrum Arts Prize*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2018); *Glasgow International*, Project Ability, Glasgow (2018); *Spring Syllabus*, J Hammond Projects, London (2018); *Watch This Space*, Wandsworth Arts Fringe, London (2017); *Radical Craft: Alternative Ways of Making*, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (2017); *Capharnaum*, Theatre de Liege, Le Madmusee, Liege (2016); *Studio Voltaire OPEN*, Selected by Cory Arcangel and Hanne Mugaas, Studio Voltaire, London (2015); *Dizziness of Freedom*, Bermondsey Project, London (2014); *The Trouble with Painting Today*, Pump House Gallery, London (2014); *Epiphanies! Secrets of Outsider Art*, St Pancras Hospital, London (2014); *Side by Side*, Southbank Centre, London (2013); *SV12 Member's Show*, Selected by Jenni Lomax and Mike Nelson, Studio Voltaire, London (2012).

About Studio Voltaire *elsewhere*

Taking place in locations across London, this site-specific programme comes at a time when our permanent home in Clapham is closed to the public whilst undergoing a transformative £2.4 million redevelopment. Nnena Kalu, Dawn Mellor, Phyllida Barlow and Monster Chetwynd are creating new work for this series. Each artist has a special relationship with Studio Voltaire and this programme celebrates a number of important commissions in our institution's history, reflecting our track record of supporting artists at key stages in their careers.