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Liza Sylvestre

asweetsea

21 Oct — 23 Dec 2023

American artist Liza Sylvestre's first solo exhibition in Scotland, *asweetsea*, explores what it means to communicate.

As an artist who is deaf, and whose child and partner are both hearing, Sylvestre seeks to locate where her disability lives within their family structure. Comprising a moving image work and a series of related drawings, Sylvestre's exhibition investigates the complicated edges of distinctions. What does hearing mean? What does deafness mean? What does disability mean? Where do these things begin and end?

In *asweetsea*, Sylvestre has collaborated with her 6-year-old child to reimagine an animated cartoon from the artist's own childhood. Sylvestre's fond memories of the 1985 animated TV special, *Sweet Sea*, evolved at a time when she had a very different sensory makeup. Now, as her hearing child relays their experience of the film, Sylvestre reworks the animated material to fit their description. Captioned extracts of conversations between parent and child convey both the sound and the intimacy of their interaction. Vividly coloured and shimmering with undersea

motion, their remake engages generational experiences of disability, interdependence, sensory memory, communication, and time.

To accompany the film, *Collective* is also showing three of Sylvestre's *Parts* drawings. These large scale works on paper are built up in layers of overlapping detailed line drawings, reminiscent of the language of instruction manuals. Fragments of illustrations for the assembly and use of cochlear implants combine with details of toys and building blocks from Lego construction guides. The structure of language and communication within a family is made visible as an investigation of overlapping systems.

The works exhibited at *Collective* were originally commissioned for Liza Sylvestre | *asweetsea*, curated by Sarah Hayden at John Hansard Gallery (2022), as part of an AHRC Fellowship project called *Voices in the Gallery*.

The works in this show can be accessed in multiple ways. The videos include open captions in English and integrated verbal descriptions.

Liza Sylvestre

Liza Sylvestre is a transdisciplinary artist and a Research Assistant Professor within the College of Fine and Applied Arts at University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, where she has co-founded the initiative Crip*—Cripistemology and the Arts (Crip*).

Her work has been shown internationally at venues including the Plains Art Museum (Fargo), Weisman Art Museum (Minneapolis), Roots & Culture (Chicago), Soap Factory (Minneapolis), Soo Visual Arts Center (Minneapolis), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton, UK), ARGOS (Brussels), MMK (Frankfurt, Germany), MIT List Visual Arts Center (Cambridge), *Collective* (Edinburgh, Scotland), and Marta Herford (Herford, Germany).

COLLECTIVE

CITY DOME

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Liza Sylvestre
asweetsea

List of works

City Dome Gallery

1. *asweetsea*, 2022
Video, 12 mins 51 secs

2. Parts 8B, 64, 7, 12G, 19, 12K, 2022
Ink on tracing paper

3. Parts H, 13, 63, 2022
Ink on tracing paper

4. Parts 7, 60R, 18, DB, 9, HZ, 2022

Library (City Observatory)

5. *asweetsea_excerpt_captions_with_sound*, 2022
Video, 7 mins 04 secs

