

# Adrián Balseca



Sat 16 May – Sun 2 August 2026





Motorists will be  
**Overlooking a Good Thing**  
 if they neglect to obtain a copy of the  
**Michelin Guide to the British Isles.**  
 Everything you want to know about anywhere you want to go is fully set out in this handy volume

Little John Day  
 Had lost his way  
 And didn't know how to find it;  
 Now he takes on his ride  
 A new Michelin Guide,  
 And, like me, he is always behind it.

NOTE.—In view of the enormous number of recent libel actions, I hereby do solemnly declare that the said "JOHN DAY" is as unknown to me as "LITTLE BO-PEEP."

The British Guide can be obtained from the Michelin Touring Office on receipt of 6d. in stamps to cover postage, packing, etc., or a copy can be procured from any Michelin Stockist.

MICHELIN TYRE CO., LTD.,  
 81, FULHAM ROAD, CHELSEA, LONDON, S.W.

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 "Bibendum," London.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

*In the Forest Ruins* is a major exhibition of newly commissioned print, sculpture, and moving image works by Ecuadorian artist Adrián Balseca, marking his first presentation in Scotland at Dundee Contemporary Arts. The project extends his long-term research into the global consequences of colonialism and the capitalist logic of resource extraction in Latin America, examining how these forces continue to shape environmental, political, and social realities.

Drawing on archival research and botanical collections, Balseca makes artworks that expose the intertwined histories of land exploitation, labour, and industry. Collaborating with DCA's Print Studio, he has reworked historic marketing materials from Michelin Tyre Company PLC to produce a new series of works that bring these complex histories to light, drawing on the connections between rubber taken from the Amazon and the company's links to Dundee.

Balseca positions himself as a contemporary artist/anthropologist who sets out to examine the behaviours of a multi-national company. His interventions focus our gaze onto corporate structures to dissect the actions, myths and rituals of global capitalism. This approach reflects the framework developed by French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Raw and the Cooked*, which analyses the myths of South American Indigenous communities and argues that the preparation of food functions as a form of language, revealing a society's structure by unpacking the relationship between nature and culture. Balseca applies this framework to rubber production: latex harvested from *Hevea brasiliensis* (rubber trees) becomes industrialised into tyres, tracing a trajectory from 'nature' to 'culture'. This process reflects a broader history of colonialism, linking South America, source of natural rubber, to European intellectual and industrial systems, including both French imperial expansion and British colonial plantation networks in Southeast Asia.

In works made from carved rubber car mats, overlaid printed imagery, embossing and collage, Balseca uses dark humour to unravel the narratives that obscure the violence of rubber extraction, revealing the embedded histories hidden beneath European economic and political expansion. The exhibition maps how this approach developed globally, shaping what economists Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen describe as the 'Imperial Mode of Living', a model sustained by the unequal exploitation of ecosystems and labour. Balseca visualises this expansion through an installation of prints, derived from the first *Michelin Guide to The British Isles*, its pages re-envisioned as adhesive insect traps that symbolically capture and control nature within a rigid grid of classification and power.



Chontacuros (*Rhynchophorus palmarum*), a traditional Amazonian palm weevil dish from the Amazon region, served in a Maito preparation on a bijao leaf (*Calathea lutea*); Puyo, Ecuador. Photograph by Adrián Balseca.

Across the exhibition, corporate mythologies are shown to evolve to reflect changing societal ideas, from celebrating colonial expansion to promoting environmental responsibility, revealing how such narratives adapt while underlying structures persist. In doing so, Balseca challenges the perceived divide between nature and culture, exposing it as unstable and continuously reshaped by political, scientific, and economic forces. This critique culminates in sculptural works that extend the exhibition's central metaphor of consumption. Referencing Michelin's dual identity in tyre production and gastronomy, Balseca serves up a giant anthropomorphic tyre sculpture on an enormous rubber banana leaf: a blackened, unappetising parody of a baked weevil, overcooked in a 'primitive' vessel. This dish, prepared for corporate giants by Indigenous communities, is positioned behind a planter designed to resemble a car garage ramp; within it, a nursery of equatorial plants. Together, they construct a striking scene that captures the violence and absurdity of extractive capitalism, wherein nature, labour, and culture are consumed, commodified, and repackaged through systems of exchange that are sustained, literally inflated, by the labour of the audience.

## GLOSSARY

**Anthropologist:** someone who scientifically studies humans and their customs, beliefs, and relationships.

**Anthropomorphic:** the idea that an animal, a god, or an object has feelings or characteristics like those of a human being.

**Colonialism:** the practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

**Claude Lévi-Strauss:** (1908-2009) a Belgian-born French anthropologist and ethnologist best known for developing structuralism, the idea that all cultures are shaped by deep, universal patterns in human thinking.

**Michelin or General Company of the Michelin Enterprises P.L.S:** is a French multinational tyre manufacturer also notable for its red and green travel guides, its roadmaps, the Michelin stars that the Red Guide awards to restaurants for their cooking, and for its company mascot Bibendum, colloquially known as the Michelin Man.

**Environmentalism:** a political and ethical movement that seeks to improve and protect the quality of the natural environment through changes to environmentally harmful human activities.

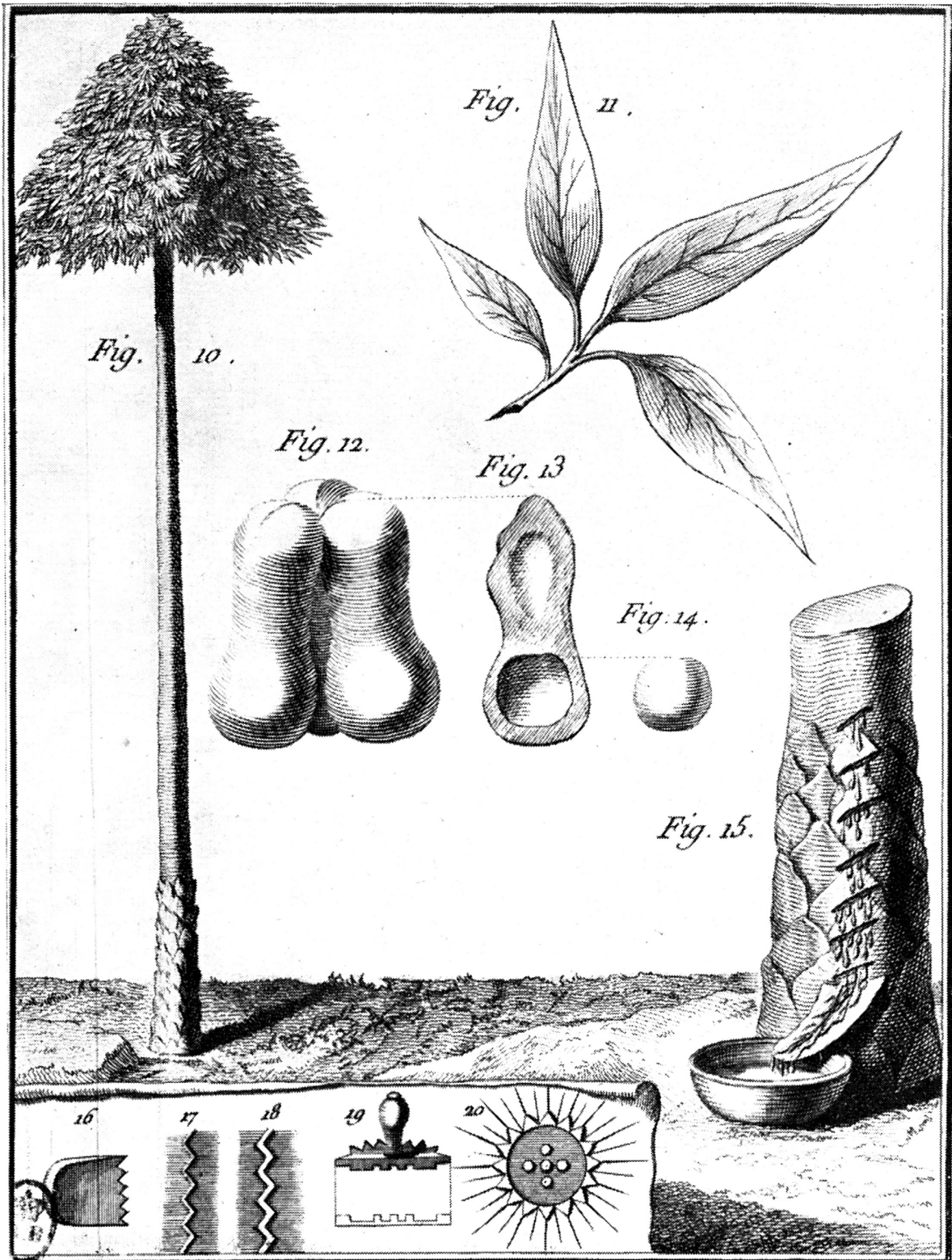
**Extraction:** the process of removing or obtaining something from somewhere, especially from under a surface or from inside something else.

**Gastronomic:** relating to the practice of cooking or eating good food.

**Indigenous:** relating to the people inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists.

**Mythology:** a collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

**Ulrich Brand, Markus Wissen and the 'Imperial Mode of Living':** this concept developed by the German Economists sets out the idea that the lifestyle of the global north is Imperial in nature and that everyday life in this region is made possible by shaping social relations and society–nature relations elsewhere.



L' " ARBRE SERINGUE " , OU ARBRE A CAOUTCHOUC

(voir pl. XI et XII).

First botanical drawing of the *cauchoq*-rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) by François Fresneau, commissioned by the French scientist Charles Marie de La Condamine, *L' " Arbre seringue " , ou arbre à caoutchouc*, 1751.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Adrián Balseca (b. 1989, Quito), lives and works in Quito, Ecuador. His work seeks to activate strategies of representation, narration, and/or interaction to evidence the ecosystemic specificities of particular territories. Through his artistic research, he examines diverse socio-environmental agendas within extractivist dynamics, exploring their relationship with the processes of formation of modern nation-states in Latin America. Each proposal investigates how the colonial legacy continues to shape models of exploitation of nature and territory, addressing environmental issues in a global context.

Recent exhibitions include: *Preludio. Intención poética* (MACBA, Barcelona, 2024); *Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene* (Nasher Museum of Art, Duke, 2024); *55 Festival Internacional de Cine Visions Du Réel* (Nyon, 2024); *Critical Landscapes: Selected Works from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection* (MCA Denver, Denver, 2024); *ROUTING RUBBER* (New York, 2024); *The genetically altered seed breaks the rhythm of an earthly music- Encounters over Several Plants* (Tate Modern, London, 2022); *Who Tells a Tale Adds a Tail: Latin America and Contemporary Art* (Denver Art Museum, Denver, 2022); *34ª Bienal de São Paulo: Faz escuro mas eu canto* (Pabellón Ciccillo Matarazzo, São Paulo, 2021); among others.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Adrián Balseca and DCA would like to thank:

Tractor Tyres Direct (Graeme Kirk); University of Dundee Botanic Garden (Steven Douglas, Richard Rossi); DJCAD, University of Dundee (Desireé Coral, Killian Dunne, Rob Jackson); Dundee Local History Centre (Erin Farley); The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum (Julie McCombie); Delfina Foundation (Gilleán Dickiet); Felipe Troya, Talles Lopes, Renato Vargas, Paula Proaño Mesías and David Jara.

## ALLERGEN NOTICE

Please be aware that the exhibition contains artworks made with rubber and latex. If you have any concerns, please notify a Visitor Assistant.

## INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a filmed interview with Adrián Balseca alongside a selection of reading materials listed below, chosen by the artist to connect to the exhibition.

You will also find a filmed interview with, and reading material selected by, Francis Dosoo to accompany his exhibition *Portrait of Dorothy Gale* in Gallery 1.

## READING LIST

*Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*, Timothy Morton, 2016.

*Making Kin: Plant Series* (anthology), Catalina Imizcoz (Editor), 2025.

*One Hundred Years of Michelin Man*, Olivier Darmon, 1997.

*The Artist as Ecologist: Contemporary Art and the Environment*, Filipa Ramos, Lund Humphries, 2026.

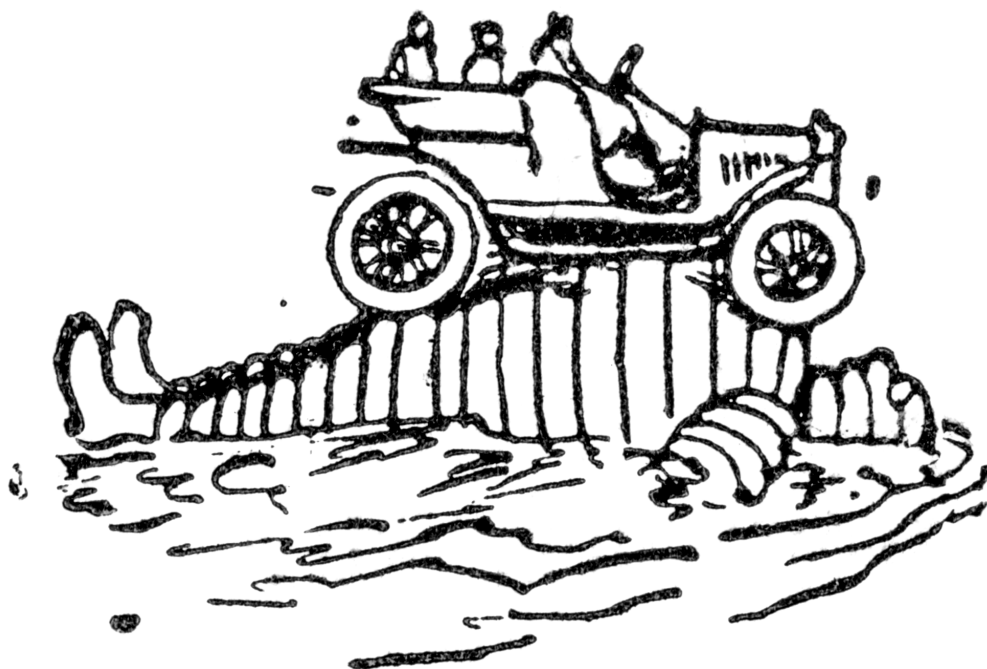


Illustration for the STEAMSHIP COMMUNICATION, STRANRAER-LARNE, included in the first edition of the *Michelin Guide to the British Isles* (Larne and Stranraer Steamship Joint Committee), by Marius Rossillon “O’Galop”, 1911.

## TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information and to book tickets visit [www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk)

### Exhibition Tours

Thu 28 May, 18:00 – 19:00

Thu 25 June, 11:00 – 12:00

Thu 23 July, 14:00 – 15:00

Galleries

Please book in advance

Donate What You Can, £0–£8

Join us for a slow-looking tour of the exhibition with DCA's Head of Exhibitions, Dan Brown. This guided tour will encourage a thoughtful and unhurried engagement with the artworks, providing space to explore the themes, processes and practices of Adrián Balseca in Gallery 2 and Francis Dosoo in Gallery 1.

Brown will offer insights into the works, highlighting connections, context and the artists' approaches, while giving participants the time to reflect and respond at their own pace.

### Story Telling and History, Michelin and Dundee with Dr Erin Farley

Thu 9 July, 18:00 – 19:00

Gallery 2

Please book in advance

Donate What You Can, £0–£8

Join us for a special evening with historian and storyteller Dr Erin Farley. Farley will explore strands from the complex history of Michelin and other industries in Dundee, interwoven with responses from local tradition and

folklore to the themes presented in Adrián Balseca's exhibition.

In the exhibition, Balseca further develops his longstanding interest in capitalist extractivism. Drawing connections between the Amazon Basin and Dundee, the work examines the legacies of extraction, reflects on the financialization of nature, and challenges us to reconsider our understanding of the world as living matter.

Dr Erin Farley is a local historian and storyteller based in Dundee. She is the Library & Information Officer for Dundee Libraries' Local History Centre, which holds a large and varied collection of books and archival material about the city's history and culture. Erin is the author of *Angus Folk Tales* (2021), editor of *Lighthouse Lives* (2026) and co-editor with Siobhan Tolland of *In One Woman's Life: Essays Celebrating Mary Brooksbank* (2022).

## ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

Whenever possible, we invite artists to select a film to screen in DCA cinema as part of our exhibition events programme. With films chosen to expand on and complement the exhibition, we hope audiences enjoy the chance to consider themes explored by artists in a different way.

The following films have been selected by Adrián Balseca. Please see our website for prices and to book tickets.

### **Toroboro: The Name of the Plants**

Mon 15 June, 18:00

Cinema

25 years after a renowned ethnobotanical study in the Ecuadorian Amazon region inhabited by the Waorani, the central figures involved reunite. Members of the community talk about the genocidal colonisation of their people since the arrival of Christian missionaries. The main threats to their survival are now the oil and timber industries. Winner of multiple awards at documentary film festivals.

Director: Manolo Sarmiento / Ecuador / Brazil / 2024 / 1h 43m / certificate tbc / Spanish with English subtitles

### **Embrace of the Serpent**

Sun 26 July, 15:00

Cinema

*Embrace of the Serpent* is a stunning black and white odyssey that garnered universal acclaim and won several awards upon its release a decade ago and was Columbia's first nomination for Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars. Among its fans was Mark Kermode who said he was "utterly mesmerized, captivated and transported" by the film.

The film tells the epic story of the first contact and, eventually, life-transcending friendship, between Karamakate, an Amazonian shaman, last survivor of his people, and two scientists that, over the course of 40 years, travel through the Amazon in search of a sacred plant that can heal them. Inspired by the journals of the first explorers of the Colombian Amazon, Theodor Koch-Grunberg and Richard Evans Schultes.

Director: Ciro Guerra / Colombia / Mexico / Venezuela / Argentina / Spain / Netherlands / 2015 / 2h 05m / 12A / Spanish, Portuguese, Ocaina, Cubeo, Minika, Ticuna, Wanano, German, Catalan, Latin and English, with English subtitles

## FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

### **Create Space**

Tue – Sun, 11:00 – 18:00

Free, drop in. Children must always be accompanied by an adult

Create Space is a flexible, comfortable and imaginative space; a space in which people of all ages can see, think, make and do, filled with DIY art making activities inspired by our exhibitions.

You can pick up a Follow and Find trail in the galleries to help you explore the artwork, then make your own artwork inspired by the exhibitions in both galleries.

Create Space is occasionally closed for workshops: please check the Family Calendar on our website for full opening hours before visiting.

If Create Space is closed, you can find a selection of activity sheets and materials on our Art Cart which is in the Information Space.

### **Bring a Baby Gallery Tours**

Tue 19 May, 14:00 – 14:30

Fri 12 June, 11:30 – 12:30

Galleries

Free, drop-in for adults with infants under 3 years old

Join us for a relaxed gallery tour for caregivers with babies in buggies or wee ones under 3 years old. We will move around the exhibitions slowly with time for questions and chat, led by DCA's Learning team.

### **Family Art Lab:**

**Adrián Balseca and Francis Dosoo**

Sun 24 May, 11:00 – 13:00

Sun 21 June, 11:00 – 13:00

Sun 26 July, 11:00 – 13:00

Please book an individual ticket for everyone who is coming along, adults and children. Suitable for ages 3+ accompanied by an adult.

Donate What You Can: £0–£8

Family Art Labs, held in Create Space, offer relaxed time and space to get making as a family, with creative activities and techniques presented by local artists.

You can expect a gallery visit and art activities such as rubber tyre printing, drawing and projecting a scene on the overhead projector and making 'transforming' collages inspired by film characters from *The Wizard of Oz*.

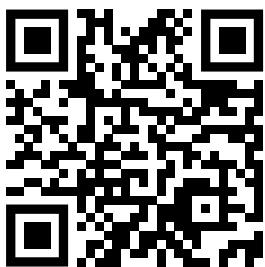
## AUDIO DESCRIPTIONS

Listen to audio descriptions written by artist and visual describer Juliana Capes as she describes key works in the exhibition.

With more than 15 years' experience providing audio descriptions and interpretation for galleries across Scotland, Capes has developed a poetic and emotional describing style which expands on and illuminates artworks in new ways, particularly for audiences who are blind, have low vision or sensory impairments.

This audio tour will move through the exhibition, offering visual descriptions of selected artworks on display. Capes will spend time elaborating on the exhibition to encourage slow looking, listening and contemplation.

The tour is accessible on your own device through the Bloomberg Connects app and DCA's SoundCloud which you can access by scanning the QR code below.



## LARGE PRINT, EASY READ AND AUDIO GUIDES

Large Print, Easy Read and audio versions of this leaflet are available, please ask a Visitor Assistant for more information.

The Easy Read guide is an accessible, illustrated introduction to the artists' themes and ideas in the exhibition.

## BLOOMBERG CONNECTS

The Bloomberg Connects app is available for download from Google Play, the App Store, and via the QR codes at the entrances to our galleries. On it, alongside our content you'll find free digital guides to cultural organisations around the world.

Offering a new way to explore our exhibitions programme, the app allows you to listen to our exhibition notes, watch artist interviews, and find out what's on.

Please see our website and the Bloomberg Connects app for further details. For assistance locating these recordings, please speak to one of our Visitor Assistants.

## JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions, or provide an introduction to the exhibition.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting [www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk) or by following us on Facebook, BlueSky and Instagram. Share your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

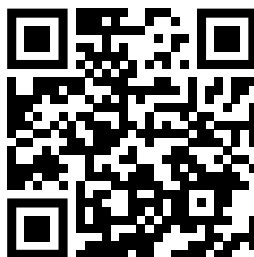
## SUPPORTED GROUP VISITS

If you are part of, or support, a group based in Tayside and would like to come to DCA for a supported exhibition visit or art making session, get in touch with our Learning team at [learning@dca.org.uk](mailto:learning@dca.org.uk)

Alternatively, speak to a member of our team at DCA Box Office or phone on 01382 213610.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Filling in our short exhibition survey helps us to understand our audiences and their thoughts about the exhibition. To fill in the survey, speak to a Visitor Assistant or scan the QR code below.



## SUPPORT DCA

Our exhibitions are always free to access, but DCA is a charity and donations are welcome and appreciated.

You can tap to donate at one of the contactless points in our building or donate online at [dca.org.uk/support/donate-to-dca](http://dca.org.uk/support/donate-to-dca)

Thank you for your support!





This leaflet is printed on recycled paper. DCA is proud to be an Active Member of the Gallery Climate Coalition: for more information about our work to reduce carbon emissions, visit our website.