

## ENERGY HOUSE PARTY 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Welcome to the Energy House Party - a one-night only showcase of artworks by artists in residence Mishka Henner and Emily Speed.

The two residencies are hosted by the University of Salford Art Collection and Energy House 2.0, in partnership with Castlefield Gallery, Manchester and Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool. Each artist was granted 18 months to explore and respond to the Energy House 2.0 facility – a unique and world-leading energy efficiency lab featuring full-sized new build houses inside environmentally controllable chambers. The artists explored the lab’s research around climate, energy, net zero and the future of housing, as well as engaging with wider staff and facilities across campus.

Both artists fully embraced this unique opportunity producing a wide body of research and work, drawing inspiration from the processes, materials, discoveries and expertise of the Energy House 2.0 team, as well as wider research into issues spanning climate change, weather systems, science, technology, design, architecture, and contemporary domestic life. A selection of work made during the residencies is on display here in the research houses for one night only. This is the first exhibit of its kind at the facility, ahead of a final showcase at Castlefield Gallery in May 2025. Together, the artists explore some of the most urgent issues of our times, offering a new perspective on Energy House 2.0 research and considering the future of how we might live.

Also on display is a digital presentation of photographic works by McCoy Wynne, who undertook a pilot residency at Energy House 1 in 2020/21, in partnership with Open Eye Gallery. *Are You Living Comfortably?* explores retrofitting a Victorian terrace - imagining the Energy House 1 as a real home.

Professor Richard Fitton, Director of Energy House Labs, explains: *“Our artist-in-residence programme has grown from strength to strength in the past few years. This scheme aims to take some of the building science work done at Energy House 2.0 and create groundbreaking artworks – we see this as a positive impact to the work we do, engaging the public in ways that we simply could not have done beforehand.”*

The Energy House Party event is presented by the University of Salford Art Collection and Philanthropy teams, and celebrates three years of the Friends of Energy House initiative.

### Exhibition Invitation: Energy House 2.0: Mishka Henner and Emily Speed

**Castlefield Gallery Manchester Preview Thursday 1 May, exhibition runs 4 May – 20 July 2025**

Castlefield Gallery invite you to the preview of Energy House 2.0: Mishka Henner and Emily Speed, showcasing new work from their 18 month residencies. To attend the VIP preview between 5-6pm please email [ryan@castlefieldgallery.co.uk](mailto:ryan@castlefieldgallery.co.uk). Public preview 6-8pm, no booking required.



*The Energy House 2.0 Artist Residencies are hosted in partnership with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool and Castlefield Gallery, Manchester. Both residencies have been made possible through funding from the Friends of Energy House 2.0 Community.*

## **Emily Speed**

Emily Speed is an artist who works across media including drawing, sculpture, performance and installation. She is interested in ‘the relationship between people and buildings,’ and ‘exploring the body and its relationship to architecture’. The idea of shelter and habitation are at the core of much of her work. She considers how a person is shaped by the buildings they have occupied, and how a person also occupies their own psychological space. Many of her works fuse ideas and images around the human body, fashion, clothing, interior design and architecture.

In the kitchen and hallway, she has placed ceramic coat hooks which morph into fingers. These are deliberately ambiguous: they might be beckoning, helping, or offending. She considers how we navigate our homes and lives through our fingertips – from intimate touches and making things by hand - to flipping switches, pushing buttons, or scrolling on screens. In the living room, a disembodied leg and trousers take the place of the curtain and pole. Their semi-transparent material is too revealing to be useful as a garment or curtain – a comment on the cycles of fast-fashion consumer culture in clothing and home interiors which favour trends over practicality.

Upstairs, a finger sculpture, the size of a small child, waits on the landing whilst elongated fabric fingers wrap the master bed. They might offer an intimate hug or embrace, or else be pressing, binding or trapping. Emily plays with scale in her work- these oversized sculptures are both peculiar and disturbing. She asks us to consider the scales of domestic spaces and how we inhabit them - and how this has changed over time and will continue to evolve in new builds.

Further works around the house (a ceramic soap dish; framed drawings) explore these themes further. An uncanny layering takes place – our bodies wrapped in our clothing, surrounded by soft furnishings and other people, surrounded by the house and the chamber itself – until the line between person and place begins to blur. Emily’s work opens up questions around how we live now, and how we might choose to live in the future.

*Emily Speed is based in the North West and exhibits across the UK and internationally. Recent exhibitions include solo show Flatland at Tate Liverpool (2022) and group shows at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, and the Drawing Room, London.*

## **McCoy Wynne**

Stephanie Wynne and Stephen McCoy collaborate on photographic projects which explore architecture, people, and places. They were selected as the pilot artists-in-residence at Energy House 1 in 2020/21, in collaboration with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool.

The artists undertook regular visits to the unique research facility, which houses a full-sized, brick built Victorian terraced house inside an environmentally controllable chamber. Observing and recording a live research project into energy-efficient retrofitting, the artists sought to interpret the research and experiments taking place, and to reveal processes not normally visible to the public.

Drawing on their own background as commercial property photographers - well used to documenting empty houses for sale - the artists edited their images to ‘reimagine the house as a home’, adding garden views and everyday domestic objects amid the scientific cables, sensors and equipment. The works are presented here in a publication which mimics luxury estate agent booklets; and a series of digital images which used the labs’ thermal cameras to capture cool and warm tones.

## Mishka Henner

Mishka Henner is interested in making art that ‘challenges conventional perspectives and encourages viewers to reconsider their relationship with the world, technology, and the consequences of human activities’. During his residency, Henner described how he felt that the spectre of the climate catastrophe ‘haunted’ the research facility. He created several bodies of work which centre the spectacle and horror of rapid climate change, imagining the dystopian futures that can (and have) become reality, and which the world-leading research at Energy House 2.0 is helping to avoid.

Throughout the house, generic home-interior prints have been replaced with new works, which draw from both traditional paintings from art history as well as contemporary press photographs of current events. Some depict scenes of wildfires and devastation, others add incongruous use of technology to historical scenes. Upstairs, one of these images adorns a print-on-demand fleece blanket, showing an anonymous businessman calmly observing the unfolding apocalyptic scene.

Drawing on a range of sources, they serve as a kind of collective re-imagining of our history, present and possible futures, and open up a number of critical questions: *What is the impact of our growing reliance on technology, and what role will it play in our future? How safe are our own homes and lives from climate change induced flood, fire and devastation?*

Upstairs, an ominous booming soundtrack echoes from the second bedroom. Live data is drawn from the *Blitzortung* website – a map of real-time thunder and lightning strikes around the world from a global network of 10,000 sensors. Each time lightning strikes, a custom graphic score interprets and translates the data into percussive sounds - from thunder-like drumrolls on a timpani drum to sudden crashes on a gong.

The ‘perpetual performance’ draws a direct connection between the listener’s own body – as we both hear and feel the soundwaves – and the vast planetary scale of changing weather systems. Not only do lightning strikes increase due to climate change (as atmospheric conditions and weather patterns alter) but they hasten its progress: contributing to wildfires, environmental degradation, and infrastructure damage. Channelling or ‘conducting’ vast amounts of data into one place, *The Conductor* serves as a homage to Energy House: both continuously capture, record, interpret, explore this data about our changing world, and help us to understand it in different ways.

A live performance of *The Conductor* first took place at Sounds From the Other City Festival 2024, hosted at the University’s Acoustics Laboratories. Find out more on our video in the chamber.

*Mishka Henner was born in Belgium and lives in Greater Manchester. He has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Centre Pompidou Metz, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*

Find out more about our residencies: [artcollection.salford.ac.uk/artist-residencies/](https://artcollection.salford.ac.uk/artist-residencies/)