



Photo: Andy Ford

01



Photo: Sarah Packer

02

Three handtufted rugs by Katie Schwab took centre stage in her installation *A Working Building*, shown at The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, 31 January–30 March 2019. Visitors took the opportunity to lounge on the floor-mounted works at the artist's invitation. The show was the result of Schwab's 18-month stint as Designer in Residence—which concluded in March—at Plymouth College of Art during which she was able to access the college's various making facilities.

Her relationship to the southwest of England, its inhabitants and landscapes feed into Schwab's practice, and her placement in Plymouth allowed her to 'unpack' a body of research and ideas formulated during an earlier residency in Cornwall. The previous year, while in St Ives, Schwab was surrounded by the activity of sewing and dying in a live-work space shared with textile designers; she also studied the output of the Crysède textile works which operated in the town between 1925

and 1939. The wood-block printed silks produced there were based on paintings and prints of local views by one of the factory directors, Alec Walker. Schwab reinterpreted Crysède's modernist fabric designs for the rugs—improvising abstract shapes using Axminster yarns in a limited palette of colours sourced from Yorkshire. 'The availability of yarns changed regularly, so ordering specific colours through written correspondence was quite difficult, and I was never sure exactly what

was going to arrive' Schwab says. 'On the first rug, I used mainly block colours and regularly unpicked and corrected the pattern. By the third, I had worked out how to use the gun in a more fluid, direct manner, and began mixing and blending as I ran out of yarns. I enjoyed the fast free-flow that tufting allows in comparison to weaving on the loom; it's like embroidery but at a different speed and scale.'

www.plymouthart.ac.uk
www.katieschwab.com



Photo: Sarah Packer

03

01-02 *A Working Building*, Katie Schwab, 2019, The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth

03 Katie Schwab, using the tufting gun at Plymouth College of Art

cover

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