

## PRESS RELEASE

# More with Less

## *Reimagining Architecture for a Changing World*

**22 April – 10 September 2023**

Farrell Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RD

Admission Free

@FarrellCentre #MoreWithLess

[www.farrellcentre.org.uk](http://www.farrellcentre.org.uk)



***More with Less: Reimagining Architecture for a Changing World***, the inaugural exhibition at the Farrell Centre, Newcastle, offers new visions for architecture in the face of the climate emergency. In the new, light-filled galleries, four architectural practices and collaborators, each selected for their innovative approaches, have created installations that pose challenging questions around how architecture might be rethought, remade, and reimagined in response to our rapidly changing world and the urgent need to reach net zero.

The exhibition opening date, Saturday 22 April, marks Earth Day, an annual celebration raising awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations.

Sustainability is now part of the thinking behind nearly every building project, but this is not enough. We need to find new ways to dramatically reduce the built environment's carbon-footprint without compromising architecture's ambitions and potential to bring about important social, cultural, and technological transformation. Where Mies van der Rohe's maxim '*less is more*' defined architecture in the middle part of the twentieth century, today we must find ways of doing '*more with less*'.

The starting point for Glasgow studio **Dress for the Weather's** installation is insulation: a crucial material, which, though hidden from sight, has a major role in making new and existing buildings more energy efficient. For *More with Less*, the team have created a series of environments to enable visitors to explore insulation's thermal and experiential qualities, highlighting the possibilities of this mundane yet transformative material.

**McCloy + Muchemwa** present '*A place at the table*' – exploring our relationship to nature and architecture's role in mediating it. The installation sees a dramatic swathe of landscape emerge from a meeting table around which visitors are invited to sit and converse. By giving

nature a literal place at the table, this installation encourages us to see architecture and nature as part of the same world we inhabit.

In their installation '*Luxurious Thrift*', **Office S&M** propose that to create comfortable buildings, we need to grow to love uncomfortable architecture. A series of interventions within the gallery will add a veneer to ordinary elements, such as doors and windows, questioning the assumptions that govern how we think about and use architectural spaces. The project offers a vivid illustrating of how energy efficiency adaptations to existing buildings can not only be functional but bring joy and delight.

The **Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment (HBBE)** at **Newcastle University** is creating '*The Living Room*' – a soft, cosy, snug internal space with thick sculpted walls. The structure itself is grown from fungal mycelium, sawdust, and wool. This innovative technique uses organic, locally available waste materials and microbial processes to radically reduce the environmental impact of construction, while asking us to reconsider the relationship between the built and natural environments.

Together, the four installations in *More with Less* aim to challenge the ways we conceive, make and experience architecture. They offer visions for architecture that are open, experimental, inclusive and, above all, optimistic, celebrating architecture's potential to help us adapt in a rapidly changing world.

The exhibition has been developed through a process of collaborative dialogue between the architects, exhibition curators, Farrell Centre director, **Owen Hopkins**, and assistant curator, **Lorna Burn**, together with Newcastle-based fabricators **Raskl**, and Glasgow-based graphic designers **Studio Ilka**.

**Owen Hopkins, Director of the Farrell Centre, said:**

"*More with Less* aims to demonstrate how sustainability is not just a question of materials, of swapping a carbon-intensive material for a better one, but something that requires fundamentally new ways of thinking about architecture. We are delighted to present the Farrell Centre's inaugural exhibition which offers new ways of creating and engaging with architecture while reaffirming its central importance to us as individuals, as a society, and for our planet."

**For further information, images, and interviews, please contact:**  
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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### Visitor information:

#### **More with Less: Reimagining Architecture for a Changing World**

Farrell Centre, The Sir Terry Farrell Building, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RD

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### **The Exhibition**

Curators: Owen Hopkins, Director of the Farrell Centre, and Lorna Burn, Assistant Curator, Farrell Centre.

Fabrication: Raskl [www.raskl.co.uk](http://www.raskl.co.uk)

Graphic design: Studio Ilka [www.ilka.studio](http://www.ilka.studio)

**The Architects** (please see more information about each practice at the end of the release)

### **Dress for the Weather / [www.dressfortheweather.co.uk](http://www.dressfortheweather.co.uk)**

Dress for the Weather design buildings, interiors and objects that are responsive to their locality, experimenting with materials to connect craft, ecology and construction. The practice was founded in 2009 by Andy Campbell and Matt McKenna who have led the studio to become an established, alternative model of architectural practice regarded as one of 25 'Disruptor Practices' by the *Architects' Journal* in 2020. The practice was also listed in the *Architects' Journal* '40 under 40' list, a "showcase of the nation's next generation of boundary-pushing designers and innovators".

### **McCloy + Muchemwa / [www.mccloymuchemwa.com](http://www.mccloymuchemwa.com)**

McCloy + Muchemwa is the design and architecture studio of Steve McCloy and Bongani Muchemwa. With roots in Africa and now London-based, the studio's work demonstrates an inventive exploration into design thinking. They have been named in the *Architects' Journal* '40 under 40' and featured in *Wallpaper\** magazine's survey of the next generation of ten London practices. They are committed to making affordable, understandable, and evocative work – architecture, interiors, objects and landscapes.

### **Office S&M / [www.officesandm.com](http://www.officesandm.com)**

Co-founded by Catrina Stewart and Hugh McEwen in 2013, Office S&M is an award-winning architecture practice with a varied portfolio. The studio has gained recognition for its inventive approach, participatory practice, collaboration, and experimentation with materials and colour to create drama. Office S&M has developed extensive experience in town centre and

placemaking projects, gained through involvement in every round of the GLA Outer London Fund, and working with one-third of the London boroughs. Civic work includes high streets, community centres and markets.

### **The Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment (HBBE) at the School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape, Newcastle University / [www.bbe.ac.uk](http://www.bbe.ac.uk)**

HBBE is a research collaboration which brings together bio-scientists from Northumbria University and architects, designers and engineers from Newcastle University, funded by Research England. The HBBE's vision is to make built environments which are life-sustaining and sustained by life. *'The Living Room'* draws from Jane Scott's work developing living textiles with Ben Bridgens' research on sustainable construction.

### **Events**

A dynamic programme of events accompanies the exhibition and will be added to Farrell Centre website as confirmed. Please check the website for full listings:

[www.farrellcentre.org.uk](http://www.farrellcentre.org.uk)

### **The Farrell Centre**

The Farrell Centre – a new centre for architecture and cities in Newcastle, UK – will open to the public on **Saturday 22 April 2023**.

Instigated by renowned architect-planner Sir Terry Farrell, and forming part of Newcastle University's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, the Farrell Centre is located in a four storey Victorian building in central Newcastle that has been transformed in a £4.6 million building project; its mission is to widen the debate around the crucial roles that architecture and planning play in ways that are engaging, innovative and challenging.

The Farrell Centre will be admission free and combines a public gallery, research hub, and community space, offering a variety of experiences for visitors of all ages. The centre's programme will be wide-ranging and inclusive: temporary exhibitions, public talks and debates, workshops and activities for schools, young people, community groups, events for built environment professionals, as well as publications, podcasts and other digital projects.

### **Newcastle University**

Newcastle University, UK, is a thriving international community of more than 28,000 students from over 130 countries worldwide. As a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities in the UK, Newcastle has a world-class reputation for research excellence in the fields of medicine, science and engineering, social sciences and the humanities. Its academics are sharply focused on responding to the major challenges facing society today. Research and teaching are world-leading in areas as diverse as health, culture, technology and the environment.

Newcastle is committed to providing students with excellent, research-led teaching delivered by dedicated and passionate teachers. Newcastle University is ranked 122nd in the QS World Ranking 2023 and joint 139th in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2022. Newcastle University is ranked first in the UK and eighth in the world for sustainable development in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022.

### **Architect's Biographies (more information in their own words)**

**Dress for the Weather** / [www.dressfortheweather.co.uk](http://www.dressfortheweather.co.uk)

Dress for the Weather design buildings, interiors and objects that are responsive to their locality. In order to do this, we also experiment with materials to connect craft, ecology and construction. We conduct research into existing buildings, imagine new architectural typologies and we walk and tour the city as a social practice in architecture.

The practice was founded in 2009 by Andy Campbell and Matt McKenna who have led the studio to become an established, alternative model of architectural practice regarded as one of 25 'Disruptor Practices' by the *Architects' Journal* in 2020. This list highlighted "smaller practices and networks who are challenging the norms of traditional practice in their drive to work in a more sustainable manner". The practice was also listed in the *Architects' Journal* '40 under 40' list, a "showcase of the nation's next generation of boundary-pushing designers and innovators".

**Matt McKenna** is also active within the wider profession, supporting and writing for advocacy bodies, such as the Scottish Ecological Design Association, relating to architecture and the built environment. Matt is also a judge for the *Architect's Journal* awards – a peer review process which awards the best buildings in the UK. Matt has significant experience with traditional tenement buildings including both architectural alterations and research into the characteristics and design that defines the building typology. He produced the award winning "Energy Snapshot Report" for South Seeds, which explored a series of environmental improvements to traditional tenement buildings in Govanhill.

**Andy Campbell's** work as an educator in architecture schools has developed alongside the practice. After initially tutoring at University of Strathclyde he has since taught at Newcastle University and Glasgow School of Art. At Newcastle he ran an "Experimental Architecture" studio with Professor Rachel Armstrong and at GSA he tutored large scale housing and masterplanning projects in Stage 4. Andy is now Year 1 Leader at University of Strathclyde delivering lectures, tutorials and small-scale construction projects with students of architecture.

**McCloy + Muchemwa** / [www.mccloymuchemwa.com](http://www.mccloymuchemwa.com)

McCloy + Muchemwa is the design and architecture studio of Steve McCloy and Bongani Muchemwa. With our roots in Africa and now London-based, our studio's work demonstrates an inventive exploration into design thinking. As keen collaborators, we enjoy the

opportunities for teaming-up with other organisations to tackle all manner of public projects... and preconceptions!

We have been named in the *Architects' Journal* '40 under 40', and featured in *Wallpaper\** magazine's survey of the next generation of ten London practices. Our work is founded on a deep respect for the artistic process, for us each project should be as bespoke as it is innovative. We are committed to making affordable, understandable and evocative work – architecture, interiors, objects and landscapes.

**Steve McCloy** is a fully qualified UK registered architect with experience across a variety of sectors from public installations and private homes to civic buildings, polar research stations, and sustainable urban developments. He is also published as a researcher / author and has contributed to numerous books and articles including *Inhabitable Infrastructures: Science fiction or urban future?* by CJ Lim (2017) and *Once Upon A China* by CJ Lim + Steve McCloy (2021). He is a regular critic at leading architecture schools in the UK and is a practice mentor for postgraduate students at the Royal College of Art, he also sits on the steering group for Project Office – delivering socially conscious 'live projects' in collaboration with students from Leeds Beckett University and local community groups. Steve has exhibited work at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, and was nominated for the RIBA President's Bronze and Silver Medals.

**Bongani Muchemwa** is a fully qualified UK registered architect (BA Hons MARCH ARB) with significant experience at some of the UK's most high profile architectural practices. He has won numerous awards for design excellence and had his writing published. His work with film and animation has been widely celebrated, including at Magma Film Festival in Sicily. Bongani has exhibited work at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, and was nominated for the RIBA President's Bronze Medal. Bongani is a lecturer + studio tutor for architecture at the University of Westminster, technology tutor at The Bartlett, UCL and a Practice Mentor at the Royal College of Art. He is also a trustee of the Wakefield-based arts charity Beam.

**Office S&M** / [www.officesandm.com](http://www.officesandm.com)

Co-founded by Catrina Stewart and Hugh McEwen in 2013, Office S&M is an award-winning architecture practice with a varied portfolio. The studio has gained recognition for its inventive approach, participatory practice, collaboration, and experimentation with materials and colour to create drama.

Office S&M has developed extensive experience in town centre and placemaking projects, gained through involvement in every round of the GLA Outer London Fund, and working with one-third of the London boroughs. Civic work includes high streets, community centres and markets, incorporating the practice's co-design process to build local capacity.

The practice's accolades include: winning *Building Design's* Young Architect of the Year Award (2020); inclusion in the *Architects' Journal* '40 under 40' – a showcase of architecture's brightest up-and-coming talent (2020) and the Architecture Foundation's *New Architects 4*

publication (2021); and selection as a Rising Star *by RIBA Journal* (2019). The partners sit on the Hackney Design Review Panel, Newham Design Review Panel, Design Council Expert Panel, and Essex Quality Review Panel.

**Catrina Stewart** co-founded Office S&M with Hugh McEwen in 2013. She specialises in community engagement and co-design, which fits perfectly with her passion for public and educational projects. Her award-winning residential, workspace and retail projects are often created with ethical materials and sustainable methods; she combines this design prowess with a sound knowledge of planning and regulatory standards to produce buildings on sensitive sites.

Catrina's work on the BAFTA-recognised, handmade computer game *Lumino City*, and in the family toymaking business, are a testament to her inventiveness and sense of joy in the design process.

As a recognised leader in her field, Catrina has been appointed to the Hackney Design Review Panel, and as a Design Council Expert where she advises the government and local authorities on the values and benefits of good design. She is also an external examiner at Arts University Bournemouth, and has lectured internationally including, the Royal Academy of Arts, the V&A, UCL and Cambridge University.

**Hugh McEwen** co-founded Office S&M with Catrina Stewart in 2013. Prior to this he worked for a number of architectural practices that specialise in housing, where he honed his skills in the sector. He brings this experience to Office S&M, where he has delivered a number of widely-published houses and has more recently led on multi-unit housing schemes in London and Kent.

Hugh's role includes leading on collaboration and contacts with architectural teams; overseeing compliance and best practice in housing design; and providing policy advice on infill housing around London. He also works on projects and engagement that cross between private and public realms, such as high street regeneration and market renovations. He has written for *Building Design*, *Blueprint*, and the *Architectural Review*, and his drawings have been exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Show. Hugh's expertise has led to his selection for the Newham Design Review Panel, the Essex Quality Review Panel, and he was named as a winner of the 2019 *RIBA Journal* Rising Stars for his work at Office S&M.

**The Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment (HBBE) at the School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape, Newcastle University / [www.bbe.ac.uk](http://www.bbe.ac.uk)**

HBBE is a research collaboration which brings together bio-scientists from Northumbria University and architects, designers and engineers from Newcastle University, funded by Research England. The HBBE's vision is to make built environments which are life-sustaining and sustained by life. *'The Living Room'* brings together Jane Scott's work developing living textiles with Ben Bridgens' research on sustainable construction.

**For *More for Less*, five researchers from HBBE, Jane Scott, Ben Bridgens, Dilan Ozkan, Romy Kaiser and Armand Agraviador have created ‘*The Living Room*’.**

**Jane Scott** is a Newcastle University Academic Track Fellow in the Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment where she has established the Living Textiles Research Group. Her research is located at the intersection of textiles, architecture, and biology; exploring the potential to design with biology using textile fabrication processes. Jane’s research is collaborative and interdisciplinary. Her work in Living Textiles questions materials and construction processes in contemporary architecture. As a knit specialist she is developing a new generation of biohybrid textile systems that operate across scales to produce low impact alternative materials for building and manufacturing. Before joining Newcastle University, Jane was an academic at The University of Leeds and held a Visiting Research Fellowship in Biomimicry at Central Saint Martins. She completed her PhD on Programmable Knitting at the Textiles Futures Research Centre at Central Saint Martins. Her work is exhibited internationally most recently in the Saint Etienne Design Biennale, and the London Design Festival, and she has presented research at MIT, the Pompidou Centre, the Design Museum, and the Microsoft Research Centre, Cambridge.

**Ben Bridgens** is a Senior Lecturer in Architectural Technology in the School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape at Newcastle University, and a founding member of the Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment. Ben works at the interface of structural engineering, architecture and design, critically examining ‘sustainable’ technologies and considering the potential of low-tech, traditional approaches for construction and operation of the built environment. Collaborations with product designers, artists and architects have enabled Ben to apply his technical expertise in material testing and characterisation, material ageing, responsive materials and lightweight tensile structures to broader questions of sustainable design, the circular economy and our relationship with the natural world.

**Dilan Ozkan** is an architect and researcher who focuses on working with living systems. She aims to bring multidisciplinary and innovative approaches to architectural production by discovering new material systems. Dilan completed an architectural design masters at Pratt Institute in New York, where she was speculating for the near-future built environment scenarios. Currently, she is a PhD student at Newcastle University and investigating the digital fabrication of non-linear materials over fungi. During her PhD, she formed a study group called Mycology for Architecture to collaborate with other disciplines and share knowledge about fungi.

**Romy Kaiser** is a bio-designer and researcher with focus on biomaterials, textile thinking and fibre-based bio fabrication methods. Currently she is PhD Candidate at the Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment, Newcastle (UK) working as part of the Living Construction and Living Textiles Group. Romy’s research is investigating the scaffolding potential of knitted textiles for mycelium growth contributing to the field of bio fabrication and the scale-up of ‘Biological Engineered Living Materials’ (Bio-ELMs) in the Built Environment.



**Armand Agraviador** is a researcher and architectural designer with expertise in building information modelling, computational design, and prototyping. He has worked in several architectural practices across a range of project scales and has since pursued research through visual programming and digital fabrication.

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