

EMBARGOED UNTIL 05/06/25 09:00 AM

aspex portsmouth

In Touch, In Ruin: Major exhibition merging art and future technologies opens this Summer



Image: Close-up detail of artwork by Harry Payne.

This summer, Aspex Portsmouth invites audiences to step into *In Touch, In Ruin*, an immersive new exhibition that merges cutting-edge technology and experimental art to explore themes of memory, placemaking, and local heritage.

In this exhibition, local heritage is echoed through whispers, dreams and refractions of light. Three emerging visual artists delve into the archives of The Mary Rose, a sunken warship that has been resurfaced and is now preserved in a public museum. This experience has culminated in an exploration of kinetic and interactive approaches to heritage, interrogating how stories unravel depending on who they are held by, how they are preserved and to whom they are addressed.

"Silt: which shapes and undermines continents; which demolishes as it builds; which is simultaneous accretion and erosion; neither progress nor decay."

Graham Swift, *Waterland*

By closely studying preserved objects in a museum setting, the artists have used that as inspiration to create new works that respond to ideas of intangible heritage, preservation, boundaries, sustainability, and embodiment. These intersect through and within boundaries that are formed and broken within the limitations of human handling, questioning whether heritage can ever be presented without transformation. In using new technologies, the artists have found ways to demystify heritage and the medium; making history more accessible and embodied, and presenting technology as a resource that is embedded in the natural world.

Hannah Buckingham imagines a bed of silt; a shipwreck that becomes a queer ruin. This immersive dreamscape gathers textiles, beeswax, sound and projection, to bridge the gap between bodies in a Mary Rose fiction of queer desire. Viewers will be invited to rest their head in another's place, to merge with the artwork in an intimate interaction of physical touch and sensorial experience.

Harry Payne uses ceramics to facilitate a technological investigation into how memories decay and offers a way to activate them through the human hand. Payne's experience of visiting the museum at an early age formed the basis for his commission, whereby what he remembers and what is now lost of that initial experience is recollected in fragments and morphed perspectives.

James Wylie is fascinated by the remains of the shipwreck being a resource for local wildlife. Exploring how historical wreckages and ruin become a vital lifeline for the natural world, critiquing the human need to resurrect the ship, as the 'artefact' turns from a man-made object into a source of food, shelter and sanctuary for marine life.

Through sensory-driven "memory installations" the artists animate collected histories; lost stories, secrets, and lingering messages, woven into objects that reimagine our relationship with the past. Engaging in new technologies, their practices revive archives with intimate, physical resonance, inviting audiences to feel heritage rather than simply observe it.



Image credit: Play Office, a future-focused creative hub in Portsmouth's Historic Quarter.

Over the past year, the artists have worked closely with producer Thomas Buckley and a host of creative practitioners working at the intersection of art and technology, as part of the *Resonate* programme, an initiative supporting emerging artists in Portsmouth through developmental opportunities and access to advanced creative technologies. Through hands-on exploration of digital tools and including digital sculpting, 3D scanning, and projection mapping, the artists have expanded their technical skills to interrogate how physical and digital worlds can intersect within their practices.

Producer Thomas Buckley said:

"I hope Resonate creates a space for Portsmouth to lead nationally as an empathetic, creative and experimental city. Exploring how its unique heritage can be shared and inspire people to connect with both the city's culture and one another. By focusing on new technologies I hope we can create a sense of wonder about shared memory, where interactive and immersive works highlight our humanity and kinship."

In Touch, In Ruin opens at Aspex Portsmouth on 25 July and is free to visit.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

In Touch, In Ruin, Hannah Buckingham, Harry Payne, James Wylie

Exhibition: 25 July – 12 October 2025

Preview: Thursday 24 July 2025 (Networking 5.30pm–6pm/All welcome 6pm – 8pm)

Tickets on Eventbrite: bit.ly/3Hj0srr

Address:

Aspex Portsmouth, The Vulcan Building, Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, PO1 3BF

Opening times:

Wednesday – Sunday and Bank Holidays, 11am – 4pm / Closed Monday & Tuesday

Further information:

www.aspexportsmouth.org.uk

Instagram: [@aspexportsmouth](https://www.instagram.com/aspexportsmouth)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/aspexportsmouth

About Resonate

Resonate collaborates with emerging artists in Portsmouth, fostering exciting new work at the intersection of local heritage and cutting-edge technologies. By providing access to new XR systems and creative tools, the programme nurtures the development of experimental work that pushes artistic boundaries.

About Play Office

Play Office is a collaboration between [Sustainable Conservation Trust](#) and [Thomas Buckley](#). The studio aims to explore local heritage as inspiration for placemaking and artistic works. Play Office is an incubation space for creatives to develop dynamic, future focused, responsive practices.

About Aspex Portsmouth

Aspex brings new art and ideas to the heart of Portsmouth. Our mission is to cultivate art and creativity, rooted in community. We believe that in bringing joy, art broadens minds, facilitates learning, connects and nurtures our communities and stimulates radical imagining.

We create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience contemporary visual art – from looking and discussing, to making and curating. We achieve this by delivering an exciting and varied programme of exhibitions, off-site projects and participation events.

For all press enquiries, please contact:

Kirstie Banks, Marketing & Communications Manager, Aspex Portsmouth

kirstie@aspex.org.uk

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Thomas
Buckley

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