

Night Café is pleased to announce *Arm Swinging Anonymity*, a solo exhibition of sculptural works by Ellie Pearch. The exhibition runs from 12 November 2026 to 16 January 2027 at Night Cafe, 162 New Cavendish Street.

The stride lengthens, arms swing freely, and the body seems to expand, taking up space it is rarely offered. Alone and anonymous in the crowd, the walker is nonetheless making a gesture of joy. We tend to think of the city's intimacies as fleeting exchanges between strangers, a glance held, arms brushing. Ellie Pearch finds another kind, one that needs no one else at all, living in the stride itself. A gesture that is both invisible and performative, fusing body and city.

The city asks us to move through it efficiently. We take the same routes at the same hours, tap the same cards and follow the same signs, our steps settle into a pattern as repeatable as the tiles underfoot. In these shared, anonymous spaces intimacy has been streamlined and we are asked to make ourselves as smooth and standardised as the surfaces around us. Against this rhythm, the swinging arm is the one movement the commute does not ask for, and the body makes it anyway.

What the swinging arm connotes is not the one we might expect. Pearch understands this feeling as erotic, in a sense far broader than sex. It is the deep satisfaction of feeling fully alive in one's own body, and the quiet power that comes with it. This feeling carries a particular charge for women, one Pearch knows in herself and has noticed in others walking alone.

In her work, the city acts as a second skin. Pressed into us by habit and quietly marked by our bodies that pass through it. Our impressions are residues of the lives we lead in places we do not quite call home. Her materials are drawn from the surfaces of London itself, from Underground stations and construction sites. Many of these surfaces sit between us and what lies beneath. Pearch reworks them by hand until they hold the feelings buried there.

Four works carry this through the exhibition, each made from a different surface of the city. *Arm Swinging Anonymity* is composed of twenty-eight panels that, as a whole, create a tile mural evoking those often found in Underground stations. Each tile is hand-poured, the material setting into a mould the way habit sets into the body. Yet the fragments do not sit flat, they are parts gathering into a whole that will not quite hold still. They are displaced and rippled, giving the wall a sense of movement and expansion. Pearch suggests the swirling motif as a journey, with a dandelion seed reminiscent of the swinging arm gesture. The seed is small and seemingly insignificant, one of billions, but beautiful, expansive, and bursting full of potential energy.

The architecture of the city is never neutral. Many original Underground stations built in the 1930s were designed around the nuclear family and the commuting husband, offering little to the woman travelling alone. Newer stations at busy intersections, with their open walkways and abundance of eyes, allow for a sense of safety alongside self-expression, letting the body

loosen in spaces of standardisation. *Arm Swinging Anonymity* imagines a motif that celebrates this newfound freedom. The fragmentary components explode outwards, mirroring the feeling of joyful expansion.

*Waited so long* is a bench of steel rebar, its ends fitted with protective caps. Rebar is the city's skeleton, the framework poured over with concrete and never meant to be seen. Ellie brings these hidden bones to the surface to form the ruin of a bench, suggesting that the time for sitting is long ago. A sculpture commemorating the distant memory of rest, stillness, and waiting is two-faced; suggesting the joy of becoming un-stuck and gaining momentum but also the landscape of hyper-productivity encouraged by city culture. In relation to the dandelion seed motif, the yellow safety caps appear like buds growing upwards, renewing and replacing old structures.

In *The Search 0.1*, a panel of window glass is set into a door of shuttering ply, the temporary board used to screen off construction sites. Furthering her kiln-slumping practice, the glass takes on a grid pattern and swells at one point as if pulling us into a vortex, not simply behind the door but somewhere 'beyond.' The door recalls those in stations marked as off limits, inviting curiosity while forbidding in the same breath. Pearch's practice finds metaphors for digital exchange in our physical surroundings. Here, an unfulfilled process of scrolling, searching, and staring is placed in the material world, turning this habit into something mysterious and worthy of scrutiny.

The curtain, *Archangel*, follows this juxtaposition of transparency and temporality. It is made from blue debris fabric, a semi-transparent material hung around scaffolding as a catch-all for the street. A curtain is a threshold in the most literal sense. Its semi-transparency makes it figurative as well, another surface between the street and what lies beneath it. Onto the fabric Pearch has applied aluminium repair tape forming the shape of walking feet. They appear to float above the ground and have an almost angelic quality. The trace of someone walking left on a material that is made to be taken down. A melodramatic title reflects the hubristic feeling of flying and metamorphosis recorded in the writings of women walkers for centuries.

The modern city is built for movement, it is smooth, efficient, and easy to read. It does not ask a body to move freely and joyfully or take up space. The expanded erotic appears all the same. Pearch takes the city's own standardised materials and reworks them by hand on to the small traces and impressions we leave behind. The result has an archaeological quality as though each work had been both made and uncovered. The show rests on the tension of its title name, an expressive gesture made in an indifferent crowd. Pearch's practice mirrors this in mass-produced materials handled with care. The exhibition gathers what remains of us in the places we only pass through.