

**Sarah Rose**

# **Torpor**

14<sup>th</sup> June – 7<sup>th</sup> September

TRAMWAY ▲



Glasgow based artist Sarah Rose's practice spans sculpture, sound and installation to create works which explore ecological and environmental narratives. Rose is interested in the material residues of our everyday lives and how these impact our environment, often working with waste materials, by-products or found objects. She removes these materials from circulation, transforming them into artworks through alchemic and experimental processes. The title refers to the phenomenon of summer torpor—a state of dormancy or slowed activity that some animals enter during high temperatures or resource scarcity—inviting reflection on energy conservation and resistance to constant productivity.

The exhibition incorporates the basic elements of glass, heat and light to explore themes of power, energy, information, connection and environmental precarity. Responding to the question 'What might a feminist energy system look like?', Rose has created propositions for alternative, mutualistic energy systems that might provide sufficient energy for care and well-being rather than profit. The works also critique ideas of Petro-masculinity, a term coined by political scientist Cara Daggett describing the relationship between fossil fuel systems, masculinity, and political power, which often opposes climate action.

*Torpor* traces the ways in which glass and light form part of our networks, from fibre optic cables to the reflective glass used to illuminate road networks. Rose has taken industrial glass out of road production, hand-moulding it into fragile, organic forms. Many of these forms reference quietly productive, invisible or nocturnal ecosystems, such as flowers that bloom at night for nocturnal pollinators. The form of a flower has been extruded into elongated sculptures suspended through the space to resemble streams of light, and a series of canvases depicts moths. Covered in reflective glass beads, these works are fleetingly illuminated from certain vantage points, like cats-eyes in headlights.

Glass is both fragile and resilient, beautiful, and functional, and Rose celebrates these inherent contradictions, juxtapositions, and tensions across the exhibition, integrating re-purposed industrial glass alongside hand-crafted forms. Plant and animal forms such as a fox, a duck, and a magpie, depicted in a state of torpor, contrast with mass produced glass forms such as fish tanks and a revolving door. The latter reflects the symbolism of glass and transparency in corporate architecture, which often masks a lack of transparency.

A new audio work powered by photovoltaic glass in the gallery windows, a developing technology, powers an immersive nocturnal soundscape played across car radio speakers. Solar energy also powers a light-sensitive, kinetic sculpture - a 3D printed Oxe-eye daisy, a favorite pollinator of moths. The sculpture blooms during the day and closes its petals at night to indicate when energy can be harnessed, its rhythm shifting across the span of the exhibition. Rose has also been working with University of Glasgow to explore the use of organic bioluminescence in liquids for medical imaging. Presented here inside tanks within a re-purposed server storage unit, the liquid glows softly when activated by light.

Rose also harnesses solar energy to power kinetic sculptures and prototype animal habitats. These functional prototypes are sited in The Hidden Gardens and include a maternity box for bats and decommissioned glass insulators from electricity pylons repurposed as bird feeders to then encourage moth habitats. Through these works, Rose foregrounds the energy labour of other living beings i.e. bats and moths, and their relationship with maintaining human and non-human habitats.

The Orkney Islands have been a constant source of inspiration for Rose's work, following an exhibition research trip to the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) there, a centre focused on wave and tidal power development. Other influences include Pollok Free State, an anti-road movement in the 1990s, which was one of Britain's biggest ecological movements. The working-class protest opposed the building of the M77 through Pollok Park, local to Tramway, and its impact on habitat loss and biodiversity. Another major source for Rose's research is the New York Co-op Wind Turbine. A wind turbine was installed as part of a housing co-op in New York City which won a law case against a major energy corporation in the 1970s.

This research informs Rose's artworks at Tramway which incorporate prototype renewable systems to propose feminist and interspecies alternatives to our current energy systems, addressing the ways in which small-scale and local actions can influence change. *Torpor* references these important community-driven histories which helped usher in subsequent revolutionary, advances toward cogeneration, conservation, and green and renewable energy production.

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*Scottish and Southern Electrical Network Transmission* - who donated decommissioned electric pylon insulators as part of their extensive grid investment programme for 2030 towards a clean energy transition.

*Polysolar* - who loaned the four solar panels used in the exhibition.

*Allglass* - who donated recycled glass road beads.

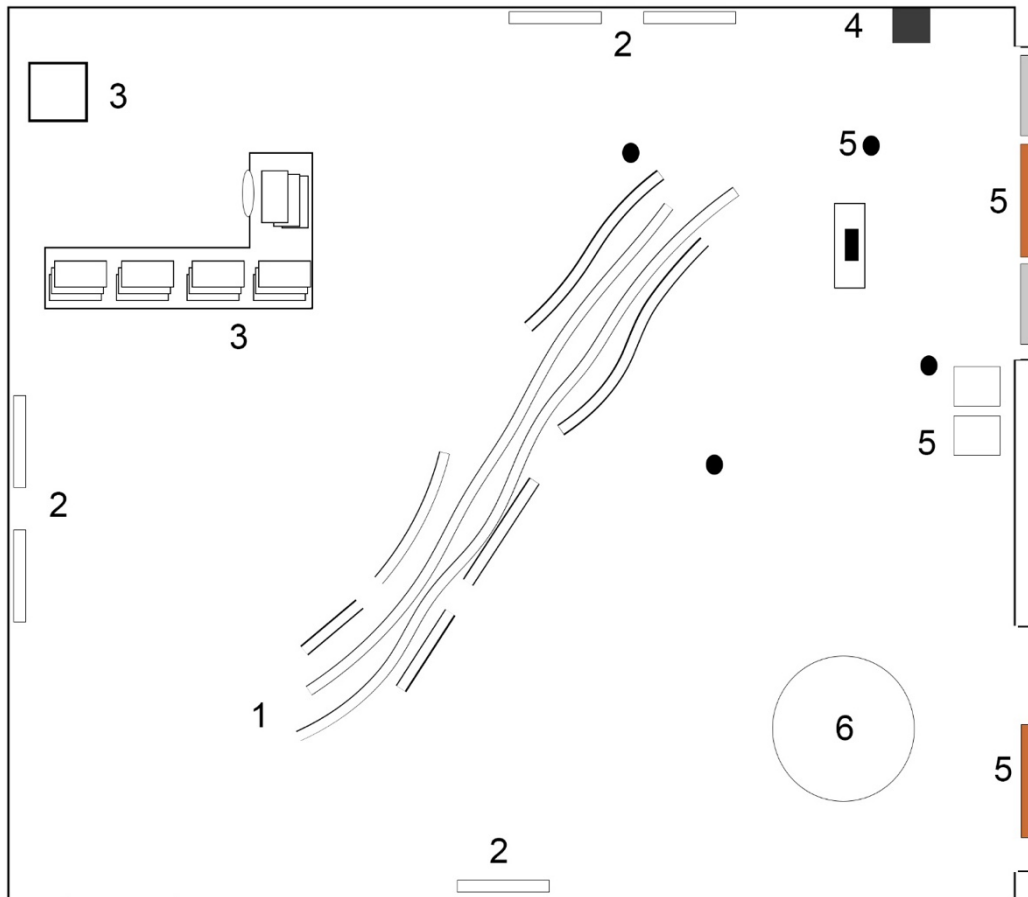
*University of Glasgow* - who supplied the photovoltaic liquid (light absorbing dye).

Torpor adapts a solar sound system from Hannan Jones' work '*Surface, Bounce and Cycles*', commissioned by EAF (2022)

*With thanks to:*

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## TORPOR MAP



1. **Roadside Flowers**, extruded ceramic stoneware, road glass, acrylic paint, 2025.

2. **Ignitions**, Road glass, canvas, board, acrylic screen print, 2025

3. **Torpor**, Fish tank shelving, used fish tanks, washing machine drum made into a fire pit (found object), road glass, photovoltaic light absorbing dye **Withholding and not, with holding and not**, photovoltaic light absorbing dye, server rack, used fish tanks, lasers, 2025

4. **Diurnes**, ply, wood, ceramic tile, black exterior paint, solar powered temperature sensor, 2025

5. **Daylight Drive**, Nocturnal sounds made of recordings, ultra sonic recordings and electromagnetic recordings, car stereo, aluminium clamp frames, Arduino, circuitry, converter, car batteries, photovoltaic solar panel windows, used fish tank, retort stands, 2025

6. **Night Air**, Aluminium revolving door frame, 2025

**Outside - The Hidden Gardens** (turn to the right when leaving the Tramway building)

**Diurnes**, ply, black paint

**Bloom**, seed for birds to create moth habitat: yarrow, white campion, oxeye daisy, nyger seed, fruit carrier