

Sperling, Enhuberstr. 6, 80333 Munich, Germany
+49 89 54849747, mail@sperling-munich.com
www.sperling-munich.com

Triangle reshapes the O of my mouth

by Anousha Payne

in collaboration with Ushara (expanded opera and sound)

with concrete poetry by Kitty Doherty

May 16 – July 4, 2026

Sperling is pleased to present the second exhibition by Anousha Payne in Munich, developed in close collaboration with Ushara (sound and opening performance). Building on her first presentation at Sperling's old gallery location – where paper-pulp casts of her own body and ceramic animal heads formed a playful narrative supported by a four channel sound piece – Payne continues to expand her practice through challenging processes. Her work lives between sculpture, storytelling, and embodied experience, tracing the shifts between the human and the non-human, the domestic and the mythological.

At the centre of the exhibition is the figure of the moth. For Payne, the moth is not simply a symbol of attraction or fragility, but a creature that moves across thresholds – between interior and exterior, private and public, constraint and escape. It becomes a speculative figure of transformation: a body that passes through walls, that inhabits and exceeds the architecture of the home. The house itself appears here not merely as a physical structure, but as a psychological and political one – an extension of patriarchal limits, a site in which domestic labour, memory, and identity are inscribed and contested.

This ecology of the home is rendered through an interplay of sculptural elements, text, and sound. Wax circles punctuate the space like traces or imprints – marks that evoke the repeated impact of wings against a surface, preserving movement. The use of batik, with its etymological root in “writing in wax,” further layers the exhibition with questions of inscription, inheritance, and material memory. Associated with domestic clothing and intergenerational intimacy, batik here also carries the weight of its colonial trajectories, embedding the work within broader histories of exchange and displacement.

Payne's narrative follows a protagonist increasingly enclosed within the walls of her home, accompanied and gradually transformed – by the presence of the moth. This transformation is not framed as disappearance, but as an expansion of the body: a leaking, multiplying form that extends beyond itself. The figure of the moth/woman resonates with what Virginia Woolf once described in *The Death of the Moth* as the intensity of life condensed in a small, flickering being – an energy that persists even at the threshold of dissolution. In Payne's work, this fragile vitality is reimagined as a force of resistance: the capacity to move, to mark, to transform within and against enclosing structures.

At the same time, Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch* sharpens this perspective by tracing how mechanisms of control and persecution have historically disciplined and enclosed female bodies. Within this context, transformation does not appear as a passive dissolution but as a potential refusal: a way of exceeding the structures that seek to contain it. The moth, then, emerges not only as a figure of fragility, but as a quiet strategy of escape – a being that inhabits confinement while simultaneously eroding its limits.

These concerns are extended through Ushara's sound work and live performance, which activate the exhibition as a temporal and affective environment. Composed of field recordings, organ, cello, and voice, the sound piece inhabits the house as a shifting presence, embodying the psychological states of its protagonist. During the opening

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weekend, Ushara will present an expanded one-woman opera in four acts, combining reinterpretations of Johann Sebastian Bach and Hildegard von Bingen with original compositions. The performance unfolds as a movement through solitude, fragmentation, and renewal, echoing the exhibition's exploration of interiority and transformation.

Kitty Doherty's concrete poetry, from which the exhibition takes its title, operates both alongside and within the works. Language here becomes material – fragmented, spatialised, and reconfigured. Together, these elements form a layered environment in which narrative, material, and sound continuously intersect.

Payne's practice resists fixed meanings, instead proposing an open, associative field in which personal experience, fiction, and myth converge. The moth, as it moves through this field, is neither purely symbolic nor purely real. It is a companion, a double, a figure of escape and entanglement – tracing a path through the walls of the house and beyond.

Anousha Payne (b. 1991 in Southampton, UK) holds a BFA from Camberwell School of Art. Recent exhibitions and projects include her residency at Cité des Arts, Paris (2025-26), Murmurations at Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul (2025), curated by Anlam de Coster; a sculpture commission for York Art Gallery, UK (2025); The Small Things / From the Lowest Land with Sonja Ferlov Mancoba at Newchild, Antwerp (2024); A faint glow, a stone and a shark's tooth at Sperling, Munich (2024); the group shows Threads at Arnolfini, Bristol (2023); New Ancients at Guts Gallery, London (2023); solo shows in New York with Deli Gallery (Tender Mooring, 2023) and Stellarhighway (2022, Thick mud, slowly oozing); as well as important exhibitions in London: Tangled toes twisted ears (with Laila Tara H) at Public Gallery (2022); As she laughs (with Anna Perach) at Cooke Latham (2021); and here she dwells at Indigo Plus Madder (2020).

Ushara is a London-based sonic performance artist and trained soprano working across opera, composition, and experimental theatre. She holds an MA from the Royal College of Art, where she developed an interdisciplinary practice centred on expanded vocal techniques, sound, and performance. Working with voice, pipe organ, cello, field recordings, and poetic text, Ushara creates immersive sonic environments that merge mutated operatic forms with embodied performance. Her practice investigates themes of womanhood, identity, and trauma through narrative structures, positioning the voice as both instrument and archive. As an interdisciplinary artist, sound and performance sit at the core of her work, incorporating the body, experimental vocalisation, and site-responsive composition to explore the boundaries between music, theatre, and ritual. Ushara is currently the Soprano in Residence at Brompton Cemetery and a recipient of the In Motion programme by Sound and Music, through which she is developing a new work for organ and voice that expands contemporary operatic practice. Her work has been presented internationally at institutions including IRCAM in Paris and Eavesdropping UK, London Design Week; alongside exhibitions and performances across galleries and experimental music platforms.

Kitty Doherty is a concrete poet, writer, artist and researcher whose work centres around language. She creates concrete poetry and socially engaged pieces that explore articulatory and epistemic marginalisation, intermediality and hierarchy, gendered sound, and the role language plays in social and cultural constructions. She has been Editor-in-Chief for the Berlin-based literary journal *FUReview* since 2024. Her first concrete poetry collection, *I make you make me sing*, was published in 2023 by Paper View Independent Publishing. She is currently completing her MA in literature at Freie Universität Berlin, where she is researching concrete poetry and chronic pain. Her work has appeared in journals such as The Visual Poetry Times and aurapoesiavisual, turned into a poem-object for Oo Press, and featured in exhibitions across Berlin and Istanbul.