

The Fruitmarket opens on Wednesday

theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2021/07/the-fruitmarket-opens-on-wednesday

Phyllis Stephen

July 5, 2021

After a refurbishment costing £4.3 million The Fruitmarket opens on Wednesday with a new exhibition by Turner nominated artist Karla Black which takes over the exhibition spaces, both old and new.

There is a new double height space created by the gallery taking over the former nightclub next door, while all the other parts of the building have been made lighter, airier and all round better. The former nightclub redesigned by architects Reiach and Hall looks nothing like the reds and blacks of the former Buster Browns, as it has been taken back to the bare bricks and the former industrial use from decades ago.

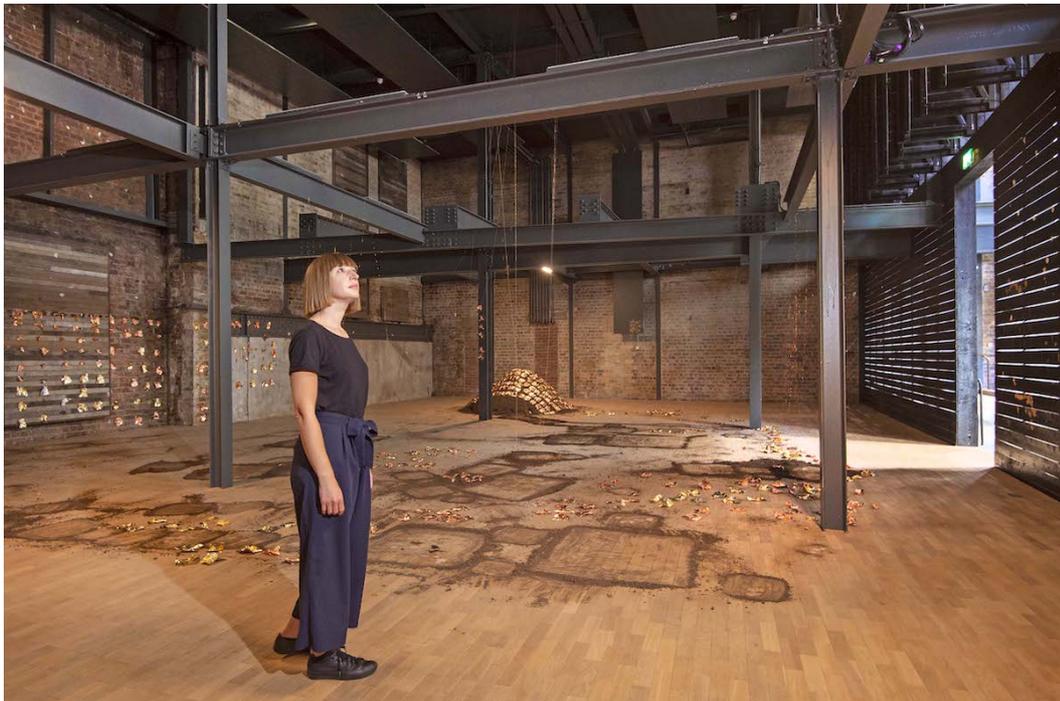
There is a new space for learning, an information room which is bigger than before, the café and bookshop are bigger and brighter and a new simple staircase makes all the difference to accessibility.



Susie Gladwin gets a sneak preview of the new gallery space at Fruitmarket in Edinburgh – the first cultural institution to launch in the UK since the arrival of the pandemic which opens on Wednesday 7 July 2021 Neil Hanna Photography www.neilhannaphotography.co.uk 07702 246823

The upper floor is airy and will lend itself to use as a theatre or performance space in the future, but for now, and in the opening exhibition, the space is pink, very pink. Artist Karla Black has covered the floor in pink powder strewn randomly with spools of sewing thread. The pink floor reflects all around the space which will be different in all lights and at all times of the day. Black previously worked with the gallery making a solo presentation to Scotland in Venice at the 54th International Biennale in 2011, and in the downstairs exhibition space *Karla Black sculptures* is a retrospective showing at least one of the large pieces which was shown in Venice. This is the first collaboration in Scotland inviting Black to “force a raw creative moment” into the Fruitmarket’s pristine new gallery spaces, reimagining the retrospective.

A selection of sculpture made since 2001 will fill the ground floor galleries with standing, hanging and low-lying volumes and planes. They are constructed from and worked on with some of Black’s signature materials – cardboard, sugar paper, polystyrene, polythene, cellophane, sellotape, glass, mirror, net, Vaseline, plaster powder, powder paint, medicines, cosmetics and thread. Works – some large and some small – are installed in the gallery spaces, brick walls, gallery windows and across floors



Fiona Bradley, the Fruitmarket's Director, said, "We are open! We can't wait to welcome everyone to the new spaces, and to one of Karla Black's most ambitious and beautiful exhibitions to date. Our redevelopment breathes new life into our building, and to another of Edinburgh's great old warehouse spaces, which many of our visitors will remember fondly from its most recent past as a nightclub. We're looking forward to working with artists and in partnership with other cultural organisations locally, nationally and internationally to help audiences experience the wide-ranging generosity and inspiration of the artistic imagination."

Neil Gillespie, Director, Reiach & Hall Architects, commented, "The original galleries are seen as a series of white spaces, abstract and precise. Surfaces are smooth and continuous while detail and material expression are suppressed. The palette in the warehouse, by contrast, is dark and sensual. It is a space that relishes the directness and crudeness of the existing steel frame, the strength and texture of the brick

walls and the industrial timber floor. The mood is intense, almost visceral. As an ensemble they offer the artist, curator and their audience remarkable contrasting and complementary spaces for art and performance.”

The Fruitmarket is also the first Scottish cultural institution to be included on the **Bloomberg Connects** cultural app, joining more than twenty other cultural institutions around the globe. The app is available to download from Google Play or the App Store and makes the Fruitmarket accessible either onsite or offsite through photo, audio and video features. It offers insight into the exhibition programme, the recent building project and the history of the Fruitmarket. <https://www.bloombergconnects.org>