

# HOWE



*Susanna's Howling Liver, Delivered Unto the Organ of Healing  
2023, Crypt Gallery, St. Pancras, London*

# ABOUT

Kate Howe (she/they) (b. 1971) is an American artist and writer living and working in London. Howe holds degrees in Painting from the Royal College of Art, in Art History from Arizona State University, and in Technical Theater from Foothill College. She is the founding director and artist-in-residence at RuptureXIBIT (+Studio), an experimental exhibition space in London.

Howe's work resists complicity with historical precedent. They respond to the canonical record by viewing historical works through forensic anthropology's lens, engaging with these works as cold-case crime scenes from which they gather evidence, re-contextualize these works, and resurrect their ghosts, opening paths for new histories to arise.

# STATEMENT

Running through all my work are the seams of things being healed from rupture, the scar of having been brought back together, pregnant and uneven, forever imprinted with what came before, continuously repositioned in potentiality and future-facing.

I am transmitting, this thing is on. Ghosts rise, the moment trembles: it is the past, present and the future. In the Rupture, everything broke, hierarchies dissolved, boundaries, guidelines, everything spilled out into one, the same, and nothing.

If everything is broken, time is broken, too. My studio is an anomaly in the space-time continuum, a machine, a spaceship, a star-gate. If time is broken, she is standing with me, and it's still happening to her: our Susanna. There are others, and if this is the Rupture, I'm ready for some guidance.

The first protectress I found was Eiko Matsuda, and I sainted her. She is our patron saint, the patron saint of women +NBX who dare to name themselves in their work: I made this. The patron saint of risk. We pray: please, let our work be our work, and let us not be mistaken for our work, though we are our work and our work is of us. Please, let us dare to risk. She is Eiko Matsuda. She died in obscurity in 2011 for the crime of making something new, something risky. She was erased.

I protest! I protest. I unerase. I resurrect. I connect. I imbue. I tattoo. I make a totemic, a ritual, I place her with the work: a golden prayer that the story can go differently next time. A black memory, memory, from erasure, from Eiko, from her ghost, from all of their ghosts, from the ghost over every woman depicted in every rape in every museum.

Capitulate or resist, this is the work.





*Susanna's Howling Liver, delivered unto the Organ of Healing, 2023. Kraft paper, stitching, lights, Divine and Memory Totemics, hand hammered brass bowl, scented candle, rocks, bones and stones from the river Thames (Southbank Pier), kneeling cushions, brass tealights. Various dimensions. Site Specific installation for Subterranean Organ, Curated by Daisy Wang and Celeste VivLy at the Crypt Gallery, St. Pancras, London. Installation view entrance.*



*Susanna's Howling Liver, delivered unto the Organ of Healing (detail installation view)*  
Hands: Sylvia Flatau, Sadie Wight, Ellen Wight, Tom Wight, Sharon Owenga, Olivia England, Ben Coleman, Guy Shoham



*Susanna's howling liver, delivered unto the Organ of Healing - a writing*

The Crypt under St. Pancras Church has two mouths: deep red metal double doors, pierced with patterned holes, allowing it to draw and expel breath. While the church stands, silent and full of aspiration, the secret life of the below breathes like a bellows.

A body, then, built, like mine, of essentially interconnected parts. It has organs of function like mine does. Organs of storage, of transformation, of process, of restoration, of production and of dormancy. I try not to connect my own dysfunctional pancreas, struggling to heal itself to the church above - it is impossible.

In the deep recesses of the Crypt lies a room with stairs to the "other" mouth, this space, I decide, is a vital organ, one that we all possess, but are unsure how to activate. It is an appendix, an extra-long coccyx, it may not be vestigial after all.

I think of the recent scans of my own enigmatic organs - Technicolor, stained, uniquely visible. One set of doctors tells me finally there is no cancer. Another tells me "Worry is the disease of the pancreas." The liver, I learn, is the only organ capable of truly healing to the point of actual regeneration. Also, the Liver is associated with anger. Anger and Regeneration.

A white-hot flame erupts in me. Lokadhi says white-hot anger is the anger of obliteration, its reach remorseless in its totality. I recognize it. The pillar of my spine is built of this same insistent substance.





The sound of the roofers using a blow torch above my head in my studio reinforces this: a furnace of purpose, producing energy, obliterating, transforming, destroying, and from that chaos: something new? A space left cleansed, cauterized, no longer white hot and howling, but able to breathe once more? Kali? Are you in there with Eiko? Are you bringing all of us Susannas together, plotting a path to and through the Rupture, healing us all? Dare I hope? Maybe only in this space, I do. In a paralleled fiction willed into truth.

An organ then. A dormant organ, an organ we all possess: an organ of healing, with its mouth sucking in the air of the corporeal world and bathing the loss below with possibility.

I think of Tampaksiring in Bali, of emergency trips to the Tirta Empul temple for rites of purification, to shake off the night terrors of my child, of offerings made and left, of reaching, reaching, so close to

love and falling, again, so humanly short of it.

A bath, then, a cleansing of worry my pancreas needs: injected straight into the vein, bypassing the trouble, dunked under the water, hands passing over the head, flowers and cigarettes and candy wrapped in plastic offered up in woven grass boats laden with incense. A bath where it is safe to bathe.

Eiko will hold the polarities of possibility and despair. Leave them with your shoes at the temple stairs.







[Please click here to watch a short film of the installation, opening and ritual performance.](#)



Performers of *Transmission*, a live interactive ritual of humming and compassionate touch:  
Janet McCunn, Lizzie Cardozo, Garance Paule Querleu, Alexa Chow, Olivia England, Doireann Gillan and Kate Howe.







Performers L to R: Olivia England, Alexa Chow, Janet McCunn, Doireann Gillan, Kate Howe, Lizzi Cardozo, Garance Paule Querleu.

On 17 April, seven people who identify as woman or non-binary came together in the Organ of Healing, along with an audience of about forty people inside. Each performer chose a stone from the bowl, and performed a ritual of humming and compassionate touch which we spread into the audience. This act focused on not rushing past the hurt to the healing, but honoring the hurt as a necessary part of healing. We were sorry to miss out two of our number, Suzanne Osbourne and Ellen Wight were unable to join us for the final performance.

[See and hear a portion of the performance here.](#)



An evening of intimate readings from within the organ. This 90-minute performance was a sharing of the intimate kernels which tie me to my work. Never published or shared publicly, this late evening reading session was an exploration in weaving different aspects of my writing practice and text into my work.



"You held my attention this evening in a way that usually only happens when I'm actively focused on something like painting or learning an instrument - I was completely held. It felt a privilege to listen to you. You're one of the few people whose words I want to bottle, like liquid gold...A rare talent." - Lara Davies, painter.

***Supernova is Sad will be available to watch at Kate's Vimeo Channel  
1 May, 2023.***

*Mudlark*  
By Kate Howe

Read during the performance *Supernova is Sad*  
18 April, 2023  
London

It's not how I pictured it, collecting bits of you.

...the morning stretching out endlessly,  
Jeans rolled, cuffed at the calf, toes turning white in the prickly, broken-bottled sand, sun on my shoulders  
Squatting down  
The rough rolling away under the tips of my fingers  
Revealing a small, white bowl on a broken stem

A piece of something, you see  
I wanted to find pieces of me  
And maybe pieces of you

I watch a lot of detective stories  
I save my television up so that when my body dissolves around me  
And I reconstitute in my confused and sweaty sheets  
And there is no escape  
And we've traveled beyond drugs, drawing, noticing, and breathing  
To a place where the only escape is complete surrender to the balm of the puzzle.

Something that can, and will be made clear: motive, means, opportunity.

I live on a diet of Scandi noir true-crime reenactment, supplemented with staples of the diet: *Killing Eve*, *Slow Horses*, *Mind Hunter*, *Happy Valley*.

"Have you gone to see anything interesting," people ask me through the zoom, mentioning names of galleries I'll never



remember, and names of artists and friends I love and long to see.

Yes. I have seen something interesting lately.

I have seen all of Ozark in one week. I have seen the inside of my body light up like a reactor warning of imminent core melt down. I have seen through the thick glass of Instagram all that I want to rest my eyeballs on.

"What are you reading?" She asks me. In this particular pocket of the world, she is important, and so, therefore is my answer. She is someone who will care what I am reading, this may inform her decision to help me keep my studio open.

Well.

Sitting next to my bed is *Passion* by Annie Arneaux. And "The Story of Art without Men" by Katy Hessel. Which I pre-ordered and intend to read. I'm a fan. But this kind of reading requires a clarity of mind – a desire to stretch and grow. And while I want to be plastic and elastic and fantastic at all hours of the day, sometimes (here's a little secret) I don't have the capacity to grow.

In fact, in those moments, I am actively trying to collapse in on myself, to disappear into a world where complex problems have answers,

eventually. Where there is someone out there who cares enough to sink their teeth in and really search. Bosch says "Everyone counts or nobody does," but American television says all kinds of things that aren't true. It warned us we might Make America Great Again and we were lucky enough to leave before that happened.

I heard they are still working on that, over there, in the land before time, in Gilead, in the schools where my children no longer have to practice Active Shooter Drills.

So what have I read? Well, Killing Eve and the Handmaid's Tale and the Vestments all of the Slow Horses novels because I've finished all of the Bosch novels. That's what I've read.

And Love me Tender by Constance Debre, but that's a secret, so I can't write about it yet. I can't write about the fact that I'm unsure if my desire to shave my head comes from a desire to finally reject the male gaze or if it's just because my hair is heavy and sometimes, it makes my neck hurt or if its because I'm a they or a Kate because I'm tired of all that comes with being a woman. And I'm not really sure why I have all this hair in the first place. I don't know what its function is. I've deployed it in several ways, but none of them seem fit for purpose.

It does keep the top of my head warm.

So when it becomes clear that we will make a performance in this space, I decide it will be raw, like me. I ready, fire, aim. I say yes, and then I say, what are we doing? But its only me who can answer that, so on we go. Where can I find pieces of us?

In the Thames, that's what my minor from Arizona State University in Forensic Anthropology tells me, and somewhere that actual, scientific knowledge has blended with scenes from Taboo and Carnival Row and Peaky Blinders, and so I check the tide tables. 4:20 is the low tide the day of the performance.

I am late, the water is coming back up. It won't do to find store bought stones, not for me, not for you. I pretend I have the luxury of a black cab. I ask him to drive, quickly, toward the river and then along it toward the Millennium bridge, so I can see how high the water is. If the water is high, we will continue on to Euston. If I can see sand, he must take me to it.

He does this without question. Am I, indeed, inside one of my stories? The water is high, and then I see the corner where the sand has heaped: I know there's a catchment of treasure there, I know pieces of me and you and her and all the lost and forgottens are there, churned and dumped.

We make a plan, my cabbie and me, and across the waterloo bridge he goes, turning in a hundred circles to get me back to the base of the steps at Southbank, the very steps I sprinted up an hour and a half ago on my way to find the cushions, the candles, the tealights.

The back of my mind says I could just grab a handful of pebbles at a garden center. But Richard Serra is pulling on me, and the heavy, smooth Basalt stones from the Roaring Fork River in the Colorado Rocky Mountains where I used to live demand to be respected. There's no basalt in the Thames. The roaring fork holds raw ingredients, as old as the earth and maybe only touched by a few.





The stone and pipe and clay and brick body of the Thames is built of memories, lost, forgotten, put through the rinse cycle of time, beaten, re-shaped, collected, rejected, lost, found, recycled, and dumped again into the uncaring wash of this ancient and unforgiving river as it rises and falls, carrying industry out to the world, insisting progress looks like technology, encrusting us in progress.

I make it, sweaty, to the Embankment pier on the Southbank side. And it's padlocked. Fuck it. Over the fence I go, in one smooth and confident movement, as though I could call forth my body, sleek and fast and sure of five years ago to deploy in moments of need. I walk with what I hope is a mixture of surety, knowingness and hope that should I be questioned, my clumsy American accent will out me as a clueless tourist, though I know I've lived here long enough that this is becoming increasingly unlikely. Besides. It's not like I didn't notice the padlock.

There is a woman on the floating pier, dressed in black, watching me. I can hear the static on the radio. The only problem with being held up is that it would have, probably, some consequences on the performance.

But I know you are lying there, in the sand. I know I will find a bit of the dinner plate you ate off of, and maybe a bone or two, but surely some pieces of you, worn smooth, cut sharp, unsure, too full of darkness, to clear, to green, to brick-like.

I walk with speedy purpose under the pier to the concrete protuberance, the body connecting the ramp to the shore. Behind here, I know I will find what I'm looking for. When the water is high, as it rushes inland, all the silent treasures of the Thames, bottle caps and broken plates and Roman coins and lost iPhones, they all get caught in here, cycled recycled, trapped and shaped by the cage of their relentless and helpless position, until something changes.

Today, I am that change. I plunge my hands into the pile, I've hurried here to have twenty minutes of silence and careful noticing, switching gears from running errands to choosing that which might resonate for you who I have yet to meet in the time it took to leap the fence. I look at the guard in black. I hear her radio squawk. I don't have time to take my shoes off and cut my feet on the mixed in broken beer bottles from this morning and those that haven't quite turned to sea-glass yet.

But I do have time to search for you. To feel you, one by one, slide into the crook of my palm, to find the unique shape, to see your body, your fear, your desire, your ambition, to free you from the corner of daily tumult and transport you.

Jonathan said that all artists are liars  
And that I am intensification machine

So I pour you into a hammered brass bowl and know that all I can do is hover in the potentiality. The sound of fingers sifting through the stones in the crypt is the same as the sound of my own fingers at the pier. But I see G. hesitate, her hand over a dark black stone. She chooses an amber-colored one, a pretty stone. She says her impulse was to reach for the black one, but she skipped it because she feels she is not supposed to be full of darkness.

"Do you have darkness in you?" I ask  
She looks at me, her eyes a pool of nothing but black, dilated open in the darkness of the silent and secret organ.  
"Yes" she whispers.

"Then reach for what is truly you, all of you, darkness included."

I don't think we can see our power until we are willing to see all of ourselves.

There is darkness there

There is no should there

There is how it is, inescapably

And if we want it to be different, I think we need people to stop hurrying us down the corridor of healing, "This way to forgiveness!"

Yes, it's terribly important, I'm not arguing that with you. We need to get to forgiveness. But we don't get there by skipping over what is.

Time doesn't work that way, and neither do I. And neither do you. G. Reaches back into the bowl. She takes her stone, black as the shadow I pulled it from, and holds it in her palm away from her body as though to bring it closer would mean absorbing it wholly into her self, or it absorbing her.

Neither happens. She curls her fingers around the stone, she looks at me. "I feel it" she whispers in the dark as the cello, warming up down the hall begins to search for its haunting voice.

"It's you." I say back. "Don't let anyone take your darkness from you."

I want to say stand in the power of your fear, but I don't know if she will know what I mean.

Stand.

In.

The.

Power.

Of.

Your.

FEAR.

STAND

In the POWER OF YOUR FEAR!

Stand in the power of your fear,  
and know you are complete.



# HOWE



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