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HOOKED: HOW TOURING EXHIBITIONS ARE TAILORED TO LOCAL CONTEXTS

Initially conceived in London, Science Gallery Atlanta's inaugural exhibition HOOKED demonstrates how the Network touring programme prioritises tailoring shows to local contexts and collaboration with communities

WHO?

- ▶ Floyd Hall
- ▶ Science Gallery Atlanta
- ▶ Science Gallery London

WHAT?

As an international network, each Science Gallery benefits from mutual support in delivering their programming, being one of these outcomes the touring exhibitions. Originally developed in London in 2018, HOOKED became Science Gallery Atlanta's inaugural show, on view until September 2022. As exhibitions exist in a particular spatial and time context, the Network allows gallery locations to build upon curatorial work from the previous iteration to adapt and extend its narrative and themes.

In the case of HOOKED, Science Gallery Atlanta Interim Director Floyd Hall worked in collaboration with Hannah Redler-Hawes, Curator of the Science Gallery London's show. 'I really looked at this moment as the continuation of a curatorial conversation that Hannah started a few years ago when HOOKED first premiered,' Hall remarked, highlighting how the model also gives a unique opportunity to curators to extend their research in a new context and within the Network.

Through its four major themes—Euphoria, Speed of Life, Beyond Control, and Harm to Hope—, Atlanta's HOOKED examines the world's most common addictions through some of the works that were part of London's exhibition. From Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos' installation *Sisyphus* (2016) investigating our emotional search to recharge our out-of-battery devices to Kypros Kyprianou's sound installation *No Change* (2018), challenging how we interact with gambling slot machines, these projects exemplify the global burden of addiction and challenge the stigmas associated with it, considering addiction as a health issue we are all susceptible to. The touring shows across the network become an opportunity for artists to engage with Science Gallery's international audiences and to revisit their works in new contexts.

Atlanta and the United States, however, grapple with a different set of laws, social norms, and geographical differences from the UK, which influences how the narrative of addiction might play out. 'What artists could help update the narrative, and what could they bring to this conversation?' questioned Redler-Hawes and Hall during their curatorial process.



A mediator and a visitor walk through Marina Skye's installation *Trashy Fashion*, 2022 (Jenna Heaton, 2022).

The key to the Network's touring exhibitions model is that each Science Gallery tailors the shows to its local context. For HOOKED, Science Gallery Atlanta commissioned several artists to develop new works responding to Atlanta's context with addiction. These include Fabian Williams' installation *Watch For the Hook* addressing the US opioid epidemic, William Massey's sculpture *We're All Searching for Rest* reflecting on the communal support during recovery, and Marina Skye's *Trashy Fashion* questioning our relationship with the economy of convenience and materiality.

In the three-channel video installation *Addictive Stories*, Atlanta's Lead Mediator, Shaina Khan, presents her collaborative work with the Grady Trauma Project, a group of researchers from Emory University School of Medicine studying civilian trauma. In the form of a personal documentary, three Atlanta residents shared their stories of addiction and how they are now pursuing recovery. By putting a human face on trauma, the films aim to destigmatize addiction, showing how recovery takes many forms and reminding the viewers that everyone can be prone to this health condition.

'While acknowledging the similarities across cultures that still ring true, it was important to try to capture the differences between Atlanta and London, and I think the new commissions in this show do that', Floyd Hall says. With HOOKED, 'we get to understand addiction as a very human journey, while also acknowledging the city's connection to Hip-Hop, highlighting local individuals with lived experiences and amplifying a range of Atlanta-based artists'.

HOOKED is one of the examples of exhibitions touring across the Network. BLOOD, originally curated in Dublin in 2014, was later exhibited in London and Melbourne in 2017; ILLUSION, conceived in Dublin in 2013, was Venice's opening show in 2020, and PERFECTION, initially designed in Melbourne in 2018, was subsequently shown in Dublin in 2019.

WHAT THEY SAID?

'I looked at this moment as the continuation of a curatorial conversation that Hannah Redler-Hawes started a few years ago when HOOKED first premiered. I wondered, "What's artists could help update this narrative and what could they bring to this conversation?". Atlanta—and the United States, in a greater context—is grappling with a different set of laws, social norms, and geography differences than the UK, which also affects how the narrative of addiction might play out. It was important to try to capture those differences, while also acknowledging the similarities across cultures that still ring true, and I think the new art in this show does that. (...) We get to understand addiction as a very human journey, while also acknowledging Atlanta's connection to Hip-Hop, highlighting local individuals with lived experiences, and amplifying a range of artists whose work spans from sculpture to installation to video work.'

— Floyd Hall, Co-curator of HOOKED and Interim Director of Science Gallery Atlanta



William Massey, *We're All Searching for Rest*, 2022, installation view at Science Gallery Atlanta. (Jenna Heaton, 2022)



Fabian Williams and Dr Mara Schenker, *Watch For the Hook*, 2022, installation view at Science Gallery Atlanta. (Jenna Heaton, 2022)

WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS AND IMPACTS?

- ▶ Interdisciplinary collaboration
- ▶ Growth of an internationally connected creative platform
- ▶ Inspiring creativity
- ▶ Engagement with real research



Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos, *Sisyphus*, 2016. Installation view at Science Gallery Atlanta (Jenna Heaton, 2022)



Mark King, *The Antagonist*, 2022. Installation view at Science Gallery Atlanta (Jenna Heaton, 2022)

LINKS

Learn more about HOOKED

<https://www.atlanta.sciencegallery.com/hooked>

Compiled by: Ana Prendes, Science Gallery International 2022