

palmer gallery

Exhibition 14

CARDBOARD HOUSE

06.03.26 - 18.04.26

Private View:
Thursday 5th March, 6-8pm

Levi de Jong
Ali Glover
Zayd Menk
Zachary Merle

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Palmer Gallery is pleased to announce *Cardboard House*, a tribute exhibition to the late Sir Terry Farrell, one of the UK's most influential postmodern architects, who passed away late last year. Opening on the evening of March 5th, the exhibition coincides with the launch of Lisson Grove Galleries: a new network of neighbouring spaces including Lisson Gallery, The Showroom, The Bomb Factory, and Patrick Heide Contemporary Art. Lisson Grove – and more specifically Hatton Street – is an area synonymous with Sir Terry Farrell. In the 1980s, he transformed the former Spitfire manufacturing site that now houses Palmer Gallery into a mixed-use complex of studios, homes, and workspaces. For more than four decades he lived above the site in a penthouse at the top of the Old Aeroworks. Today, his architectural practice continues to operate just two doors from the gallery.

Farrell was predominantly known as a postmodern architect who rejected modernist austerity in favour of greater artistic expression. He was often described as counter-cultural, defined by an instinct to test and re-frame architectural norms, resisting the functionalism of late modernism which sought to remove context and reduce architecture to a singular, purified form. In its place, Farrell championed buildings that were playful, symbolic, and stylistically hybrid, shaped by historical layering and a sense of place. From the exuberant TV-AM studios in Camden Lock, crowned with rooftop egg-cups, to the surrealist geometry of the Cosmic House in Holland Park, his work approached art, architecture, and urbanism as one interconnected system. Major civic commissions such as the MI6 headquarters in Vauxhall, the reimagining of Charing Cross Station, and regeneration projects from Newcastle Quayside to the Greenwich Peninsula demonstrated his conviction that architecture and urbanism were inseparable, and shaped the life of the city.

The exhibition title, *Cardboard House*, references Farrell's assertion that even a cardboard house could last forever if people were motivated to care for it. The phrase encapsulates his belief that, rather than material permanence, buildings can be sustained through collective responsibility and shared use.



Sir Terry Farrell (1938-2025)

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Farrell's MI6 headquarters in London

It similarly reflects his childlike impulse to build, and a sense that creation can be playful and provisional, treating creativity as an unfixed, iterative process which can be continuously worked and reimagined over time. This ethos is embodied in the Palmer building itself, which has evolved from an industrial site producing tyres for military aircraft, to a mixed-use office and residential complex, and now to its current guise as a contemporary art gallery; a living example of Farrell's vision of architecture as layered, adaptable, and sustained through care and use.

In this spirit, *Cardboard House* positions Farrell's legacy as a point of departure, bringing together emerging contemporary voices whose practices engage architecture, material systems, and the poetics of infrastructure. Through diverse media, Zayd Menk, Ali Glover, Zachary Merle, and Levi de Jong investigate the ways we inhabit and interpret space, from kinetic sculpture and site-specific installations, to archival image transfers and industrial abstraction. Opening alongside the launch of Lisson Grove Galleries, the exhibition marks a shared moment of attention to place, reflecting on how architecture and art intersect not only in monumental landmarks, but in the everyday spaces we move through, while acknowledging Farrell's enduring impact on Lisson Grove and the wider cultural landscape.

Zayd Menk creates installations and interactive sculptures made from electronic waste and salvaged materials, exploring modern technology as a hyperobject. For *Cardboard House*, he presents *Nomad*, a 2.4-meter kinetic sculpture powered by a washing machine motor, which rotates continuously throughout the exhibition. The work reflects on our precarious relationship with shelter, infrastructure, and technology, with its exposed systems echoing Farrell's playful experimentation with structure and urbanism. Menk's interest in modular forms and visible construction recalls some of Farrell's early experimental projects, which foregrounded utilitarian technology, and revealed the hidden mechanics of construction that are typically made invisible.

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Ali Glover creates site-specific interventions that explore how architecture shapes perception and social behaviour. Using discarded and cast materials, he layers objects, light, and sound to reveal overlooked infrastructures and transitional moments, inviting reflection on urban systems and the poetic potential of built environments. For *Cardboard House*, he employs sublimation printing to transfer photographic images of clouds directly onto fabric, which engage with the gallery's cupboard spaces. These images were captured during his daily walks through London, reflecting on the city's evolving skyline and the role of architecture in placemaking. Simultaneously, a soundscape overlays the subtle rhythm of Glover's footsteps over pebbles, evoking the shoreline of London and the quiet, reflective moments of urban solitude.

Zachary Merle works with family photographic archives, transforming them into layered, textured surfaces that explore memory, loss, and the instability of recollection. Using solvent and image transfer techniques, he repeats, fragments, and distorts figures and motifs, incorporating textile scraps, padded canvases, and irregular wooden grid frames stacked to create quasi-architectural, wall-based images. His archival imagery often retains a sense of timelessness, generating a tension between past and present that reflects his own experiences of memory loss due to epilepsy. As such, Merle's practice echoes Farrell's architecture, layering history with the new and exploring how structures carry memory, narrative, and human experience across time.

Finally, **Levi de Jong** transforms construction materials – namely bitumen, rubber, silicone sealant, and enamel – into sculptural forms that explore labour, identity, and cultural history. His multilayered, tactile works bear the marks of construction and repair, revealing the aesthetics and labour embedded in everyday materials. For *Cardboard House*, his candlestick series repurposes off-cuts from his larger bitumen flag paintings, mounted on rusted aluminium, highlighting a practice of recycling and reuse. In particular, De Jong's work resonates with Farrell's attention to materiality and structure, and the capacity for architecture and the built environment to carry memory, narrative, and human experience.

Together, the works in *Cardboard House* extend Farrell's legacy into contemporary artistic practice, echoing his curiosity for layering, adaptability, and a sense of playfulness that defined his architecture. The exhibition reveals how architecture and space can hold memory, and where provisional forms and ideas – and indeed the city itself – can become a canvas for creative endeavour. As the spirit of Farrell's vision endures through the life of the Palmer building, the show reflects on how architecture and art intersect in both monumental landmarks and the everyday, celebrating the city and particularly Lisson Grove as a shared, generative space.



Levi De Jong, Flag: Valour, 2024, industrial oil-based enamel, staples, bitumen torch down, and silicon, 201 x 204 cm



Zayd Menk, Nomad, 2025, detail shot

About Palmer Gallery

Founded by Lucas Giles and Will Hainsworth in 2024, Palmer Gallery is a space dedicated to identifying and developing the strongest emerging artistic talent of today. The gallery programme focuses on cross-disciplinary artists working across painting, sculpture, video, performance, light and sound installation, creating an immersive exhibition space. This multi-sensory approach embraces a holistic view of contemporary art while championing an institutional dedication to framing and contextualising complex artistic practices. Palmer Gallery's core mission is to allow artists to express themselves and thrive in an open, supportive and experimental environment; fostering a culture of creative freedom and connection among the gallery's artists and the wider community. The gallery is situated in London's Lisson Grove, in a 1000 ft² former-factory built in the 1920's by the Palmer Tyre Company, who produced parts for the Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster Bombers during The Second World War.

Contact Us

For further press information and high-res images please email: contact@palmergallery.co.uk

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