

Hear Now, 2023

Emma Hart

Sustainable GRP fortified with iron.

Commissioned by UCL, for UCL East, One Pool Street, Stratford.

Open to the public, 9.00 - 18.00 Mon - Sat.

*It struck me after a period of consultation with heads of UCL East departments, that the building needed to let in the outside. That my artwork could help let you know, when you are standing in the atrium, where exactly you are standing - namely East London - and who has stood there before you. So I began to research East London with my personal interest glasses on - my big up the working class women glasses.*

*Hear Now* gives a visual shout-out to the working class women of the East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS). Established in 1914, the ELFS amplified their voices to improve living conditions and campaign to win all women the vote in 1928. From 1918, only women aged over 30 with property rights could vote. Working class women remained excluded.

Due to high levels of illiteracy in east London, the ELFS realised speech was vital to their cause. Led by Sylvia Pankhurst, they offered public speaking lessons so women could project their voices in protest. *Hear Now* captures the duality of life for the ELFS women, moving daily between domestic and political roles. I imagine their constant switching of tools; putting down a frying pan and picking up a megaphone.

Megaphones often appear in my work as a way to represent the working class voice. Here, they have been cast from a series of megaphones and frying pans that I made in clay. I wanted to play with the formal nature of the architecture, with columns holding wobbly stacks of frying pans, from which spill the megaphones to rally around and encircle the building, forming a defiant chorus of women.