

Amalia Pica

Private & Confidential

20 September 2019 – 2 February 2020

The New Art Gallery Walsall is proud to present a major exhibition by British/Argentinian artist Amalia Pica. The exhibition explores the material culture of bureaucracy and presents new work alongside an earlier installation, *Joy in Paperwork: The Archive*, 2016, shown here in its entirety for the first time in the UK.

Materials and motifs such as shredded paper, rubber stamps, office furniture and stationery are repurposed to produce works that playfully parody and subvert bureaucratic systems and procedures. Despite the introduction of new technologies, these systems often rely on archaic processes: stamping a booklet such as a passport or filing paper.

Joy in Paperwork, is a large series of A4 drawings that incorporate bureaucratic stamps from all over the world. Repeated imprints of texts such as “PAID”, “COPY”, “RECEIVED” and “PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL” create abstract images that begin as an attempt to subvert the grid and sometimes fall into figuration, suggesting playful escapism. The work arose from the artist’s struggle to gain British citizenship and the year-long restriction on her travel

that the naturalisation process imposed. Rubber stamps were sent to Pica by family and friends during this period, a time when the artist was also required to gather substantial paperwork and evidence in support of her application.

Ear-like sculptures made from shredded paper waste from the Gallery’s offices allude to the act of eavesdropping and the paranoid spirit behind the destruction of confidential documents. The paper that was shredded to protect information now becomes the surface of the sculptures; its most visible layer. Into the mix, the artist has added confetti as a small act of joyful subversion.

Alongside her sculptures the artist uses utilitarian objects, asking us to reconsider the blandness of office material culture in a more pleasurable light. Conferencing tables on wheels sourced from an office furniture company in Walsall are configured into geometric shapes and re-employed as creative objects to be used for performances. For these performances, Pica has invited local dance students to work in the Gallery space for the duration of the exhibition.

In one of the galleries, Pica has created an installation inspired by the security patterns found inside certain envelopes that are produced to conceal the sensitive information of the letter inside. Entering the room, the viewer becomes enclosed in the envelope. Amplified shapes lifted from these security patterns and made from engraved and painted wood form individual wall-mounted sculptures. Drawing attention to these patterns, Pica creates something monumental from dull formality, inviting us to find joy in the most inhospitable of environments that we have invented for ourselves.

Zoë Lippett
Exhibitions and Artists’ Projects Curator
The New Art Gallery Walsall

Amalia Pica (b. 1978) was born in Neuquén, Argentina, she lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include *While Inside*, Herald St, London (2019); *please open hurry*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (2018); *(un)heard*, Cc Foundation, Shanghai (2018); and *ears to speak of*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2017). She has participated in many group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Public commissions include *Semaphores*, King’s Cross, London and *Sipping Colors*, De Pijp Station, Amsterdam. Her work is held in public collections including Tate, London; Guggenheim, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Fundação de Serralves, Porto and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Cover: Amalia Pica, *Joy in Paperwork: The Archive* (detail), 2016
Inside: Amalia Pica, *Insider*, Security Envelope Pattern, 2019

Events

7 November 2019, 6.15pm

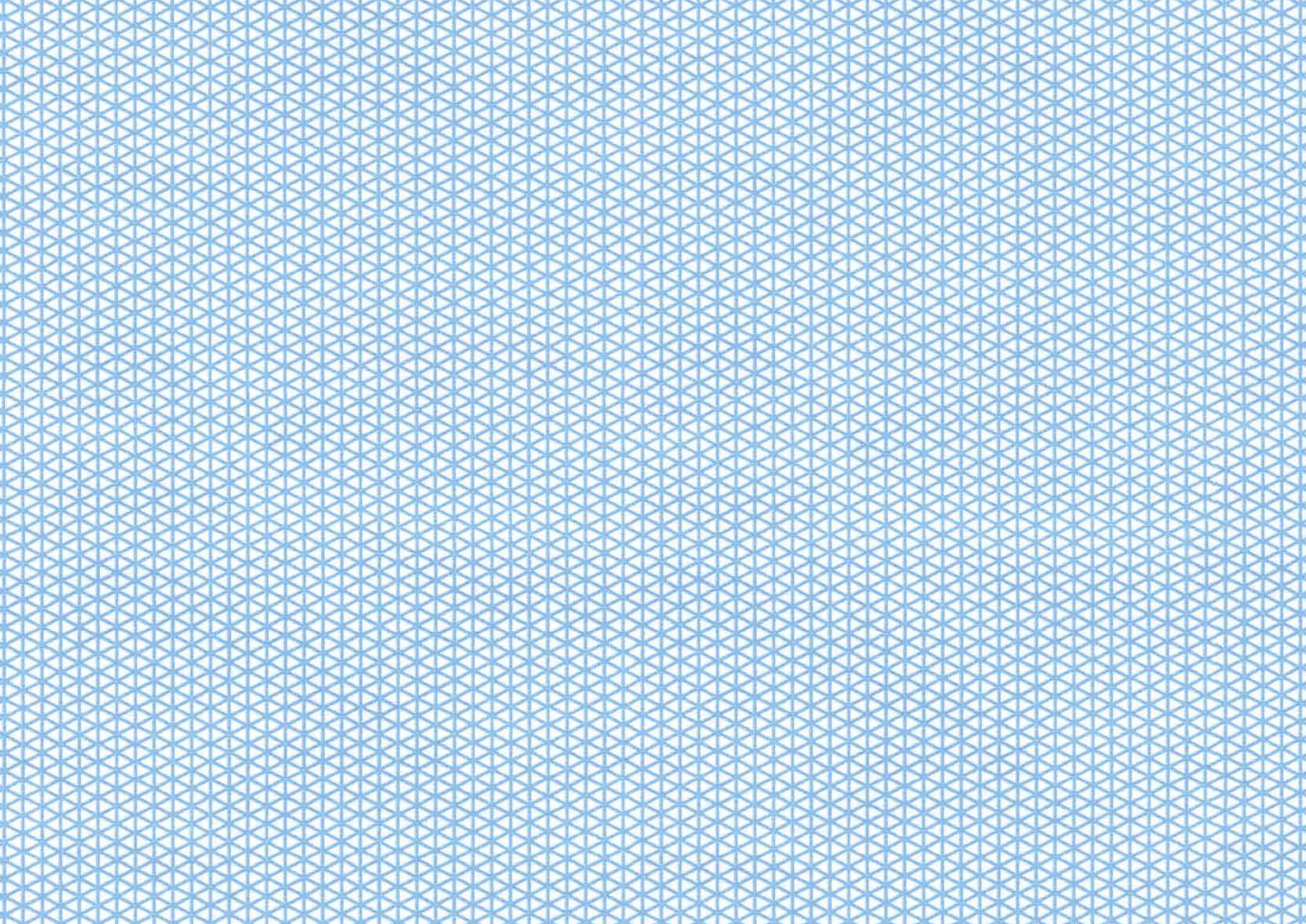
A performance by contemporary dance students from Walsall College in response to the exhibition.

1 February 2020, 2pm

Join artist Amalia Pica and curator, Zoë Lippett, for a talk about the exhibition together with a screening of the performance.

Publication

Joy in Paperwork, a new publication by Amalia Pica, is available to purchase from the Gallery Shop.





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