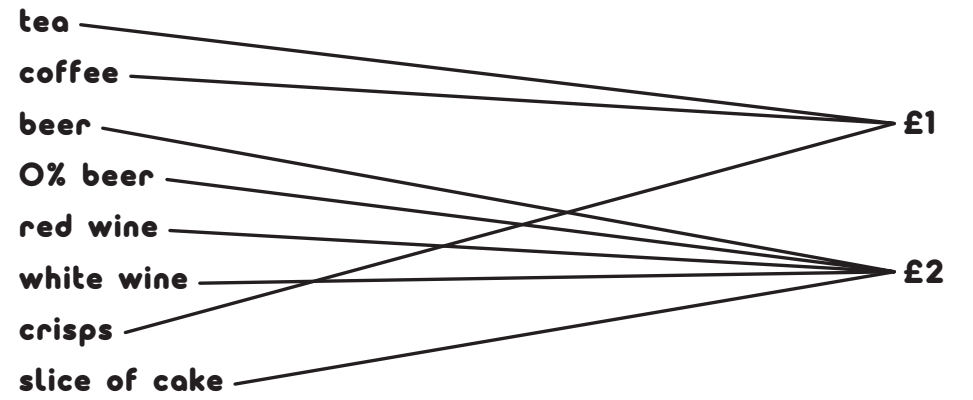


menu



opening up

text by marlie mul with a footnote by frank wasser

Form Study (Opening Up), is a series of prints that I recently developed as formal research into the use of unconventionally shaped printing plates in the photogravure technique, a technique that I have been enjoying exploring already for a while. This is coupled with methods of folding, curling, or peeling the printed paper into three-dimensional configurations. In these works, two separate sheets of paper are positioned together, with one sheet partly curled back, allowing the prints to combine into various graphic formations. The sheets are typically printed with more than one plate simultaneously, which is part of the fun as it requires particular accuracy throughout the printing process.

The foundation for these prints are photographs that I take routinely throughout the process when making sculptural works in the studio—photos that are not necessarily meant for publishing, but that serve to document the relatively slow and precise process of the techniques that I use, as a way to record the formal choices made, to be able to look back and analyse the making process at a later stage—forms of study in themselves. Here, as prints, the imagery is rendered almost ornamental, reminiscent of the historical aesthetics associated with photogravure.

During the opening weekend, tables and chairs will be arranged both inside and outside the gallery, temporarily transforming the space into a functioning café. This gesture is a deliberate nod to HERMANY (2019–present), an ongoing project through which I embrace more collaborative ways of working—often sparked by a certain enthusiasm I host other artists in the form of exhibitions, concerts, performances, fashion shows, and most recently, an evening bistro that was run out of my basement for the duration of a month. In a similar spirit, the presence of tables, chairs, crockery, and a menu of consumable items serve as the essential ingredients of a café—shifting the gallery’s use and reshaping how the space is experienced.

The pricing in *Opening Up* is categorised into a different value bracket of either £1 or £2. The categorisation of the items is fictitiously¹ defined according to their “temporal weight”, reflecting not only differences in association, cultural significance, and consumer expectation, but also the duration and lingering impact of the item might have on overall

experience. Each item on the menu captures a unique relationship with time: Items priced at £1 are typically associated with quick consumption and fleeting satisfaction—they are familiar, accessible, and leave little lasting impression. In contrast, items priced at £2 tend to carry deeper associations, whether through tradition, ritual, or perceived sophistication. They may take longer to consume, resonate longer, remain more vividly in memory, or be expected to deliver a more layered experience. Tea and cake transport us into memory, coffee anchors us in the fleeting present, while crisps flicker briefly before vanishing into the void.

Tea (£1) = A soft expansion of time; calm, reflective and continuous—turning a page into the past. Tea + Cake (total £3) = A moment of intentional pause; quiet celebration and shared presence—sitting between pages. Coffee (£1) = A compression of time; sharp, immediate, and forward-facing—turning a page into the future. Beer (£2) = A blurring of time; sociable and slow at first, but prone to disorientation—hovering between pages. Wine + Beer (total £4) = A distortion or elongation of time; social, sensory, and immersive—folding time back on itself. Beer + Crisps (total £3) = An engineered shortcut to escape; time blurs and slips—the skipping of pages.

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1. How? Sipping while writing. A series of incidental meditations on flavours? No. The mouth opens up, to speak? Yes and no. Opens to let in and to let out. How? And what of this text? Is it being held? Spoken? Printed? Or on a screen? Is there nowhere to sit? Is anybody sitting here? What function should this text serve? Are you being served? It could (this text) suggest, as in, start like this: No sugar. No Milk. Or like this: You might enter the café, a space where time albeit regulated (opening hours) twists, folds, and unravels. The menu would stretch before you, perforated by bursts of steam in the air: £1, £2. Not prices, but markers of temporal space. A cup of tea, a slice of cake, a breath—it’s not sufficient sustenance, but a map of moments, defined not by taste but by their duration. Do you want a cup of tea? Does the item itself carry weight, or is it the quiet pull of perception that grounds you in its orbit? What are the associations? Folded napkins. To whom are these questions being asked? And dear reader, who are you? Start again: Tea, Coffee, Crisps. The fictional value of which could change considerably in the coming weeks. Tangent: Convenience: “The whole point of straws, I had thought, was that you did not have to set down the slice of pizza to suck a dose of Coke while reading a paperback,” writes Nicholson Baker in *The Mezzanine*, a book which formally determined the form of this brief intervention. In this fleeting gesture, time is compressed relative to thought as consumption, embedded within a series of seemingly insignificant actions. Back here, time doesn’t stretch; it collapses into the present, urgent and unfinished. A later thought on crisps (in particular salt and vinegar) the mouth is made clairvoyant. You know? A flash, watering, a momentary distraction in anticipation of something and then gone. Time is suspended, forgotten. Try again. Something like this: Time, perhaps, might only be understood in what slips away unnoticed, in what is lost and then only momentarily retrieved in the quiet spaces we cannot hold. Is this sufficient? Are you finished?