

# Chimeras Elliot Bottle

1 May - 26 July 2025

**OPENING: WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL  
6 - 10 PM**

**Schillerstrasse 70, 10627 Berlin**

**Gallery Weekend opening times:  
2 - 4 May, 1 - 6 pm & by appointment**

## Tea Time

Only at somewhere near 3pm did the girl finally clock that learning to read that face could be worth her time. Could it, though, suffice to memorise the shapes of those hands that told the important times, and just those? There weren't enough numbers for a full day anyway, she thought, and her telling would need to be quick, to make it back from the back wall of the classroom in time to go unnoticed. These split seconds would need to be just short enough, too, to read the clock before the hands could move, waving goodbye behind the school gates. She found, also, that looking at the clock made it slow down its changing; moving less and less in every interval. Quickening the speed with which she twisted over her shoulder, she would find the little red riding hoods still stiller than ever, despite her bluffing and waiting and bluffing. She imagined them taking one step forward, or diagonally in L shapes, or in dashed lines straight across the board. The bell would sweep all the pieces away and she would be back in front of the clock. She would practice moving the hands around their centre, trying to keep them in time with one another, but stumbling whenever they met. She could not remember what arrangement she had left on the wooden clock at home, but hoped it would be time for tea.

## Wish

Learning to swim was sacrificed to fighting and sinking components, dunking them under in a race to choose the least mouse-eaten weapon. Struck at diagonals, they sufficed until one fling was too far from the pool's ledge for rescue; each mission bringing more dead leaves onto the water's surface. That same survival, adventure kept within four walls, was what the boy created, sitting inside the kitchen cupboards, with the sky, sea and earth waiting for him in a tin of blue, green and brown. The shaft of light through the open door made drawing easier, but still he chose to sit inside the cupboard, to take this chance before it was filled again with pots and pans and cobwebs. It was hard work but he was fueled by the anticipation of his pride; the same feeling he had bringing home his star-lantern for the Christmas parade. The cobwebs of glue remained between the spikes of the star and between the webs of his fingers, from holding so carefully each fold of scrap photocopy paper, after dribbling the PVA across the desk and onto his home-school diary. You could read the text of a staff planning meeting when you held the lantern up to the light, which frustrated him, but in his head it was just like the one he remembered.

## **Breadcrumbs**

On a day in half-term holidays, the top blue drawer was emptied; its contents piled with those from the bottom of washing baskets into one big heap. With crossed legs, the siblings would race to reconnect long-lost friends and relatives, for the remuneration of two pence per pair. Plain socks were scrutinised in detail: their stitching, heels, sizes and signs of wear compared in search for gold. Favourite socks with no toes were folded carefully to cover their thread-bare patches, as were baby socks fit for nothing but the making of stuffed puppets on another rainy day.

The numbers were matched by the slides of a finger across the kitchen table, and built into towers, augmented by oxidising coins found in gaps between car seats and in window-sill pots. Poured into a pouch, the fruits of these labours would be traded for packs of sticker hearts in the fronts of magazines full of advice for life and other freebies.

## Twist and Turn

Dotted lines are followed lightly by a pencil selected carefully for the job. The lines that make eyes and A's and you's get thicker as lead is crushed under the determination of a gripped hand onto the thin page of an exercise book. On the cover are red spaces in the shapes of prehistoric creatures, where stickers stopped time and sun from bleaching the entire surface pink. A rock on a chair goes too far and the hand slips, striking grey lightning down the page of repeated letters. Carefully now, with his nose to the desk, the boy takes three dinosaurs over the line, one after the next, back and forth in turns to ensure the distances they run leave them with legs, still, to stand on. Swept together, the rubbings form a blue, yellow and orange mountain; insurmountable until pushed around to make stars, hearts and smiley faces.

*words by Isabella Bottle*