

Robert Cervera - Hiddenware

14 Oct 2025 - 15 Apr 2026

SPACE Ilford, 10 Oakfield Rd, IG1 1ZJ

We spend so much of our lives online via our smartphones, computers, televisions, and gaming consoles, but do we ever consider the vast physical infrastructures that underpin our digital experiences? The miles of undersea cables, the massive data centres, the mountains of cooling circuits, concrete and metal. In *Hiddenware*, artist Robert Cervera seeks to make visible this hidden materiality, inviting us to reconsider our relationship to the virtual world. Robert worked with local video gamers and musicians to co-create audiovisual performances, culminating in an exhibition that bridges sculpture, video, music and live streaming in the gallery.

Imagine taking a gaming session out of a dim-lit bedroom and into the middle of an art exhibition – with an added live soundtrack produced by an instrument made out of PC liquid cooling tubes. For *Hiddenware*, artist Robert has been working with local gamers and musicians to create audiovisual performances in which the music reacts to what's happening on the screen.

Robert Cervera is a London-based interdisciplinary artist born in Barcelona. He studied music at the Professional Conservatoire in Badalona (Spain) and graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Sculpture in 2014. His work includes sculpture, installation, video and music, with a strong interest in materiality and our relation to it. He also builds tube structures that can be played as instruments. The sounds they produce form the basis of musical compositions, music coding and live performances.

Book your school visit on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. No more than 30 students per visit, 2 visits per day, for up to 90 minutes. Visits can start from 10am – please book with Daniel Picone, daniel@spacestudios.org.uk.

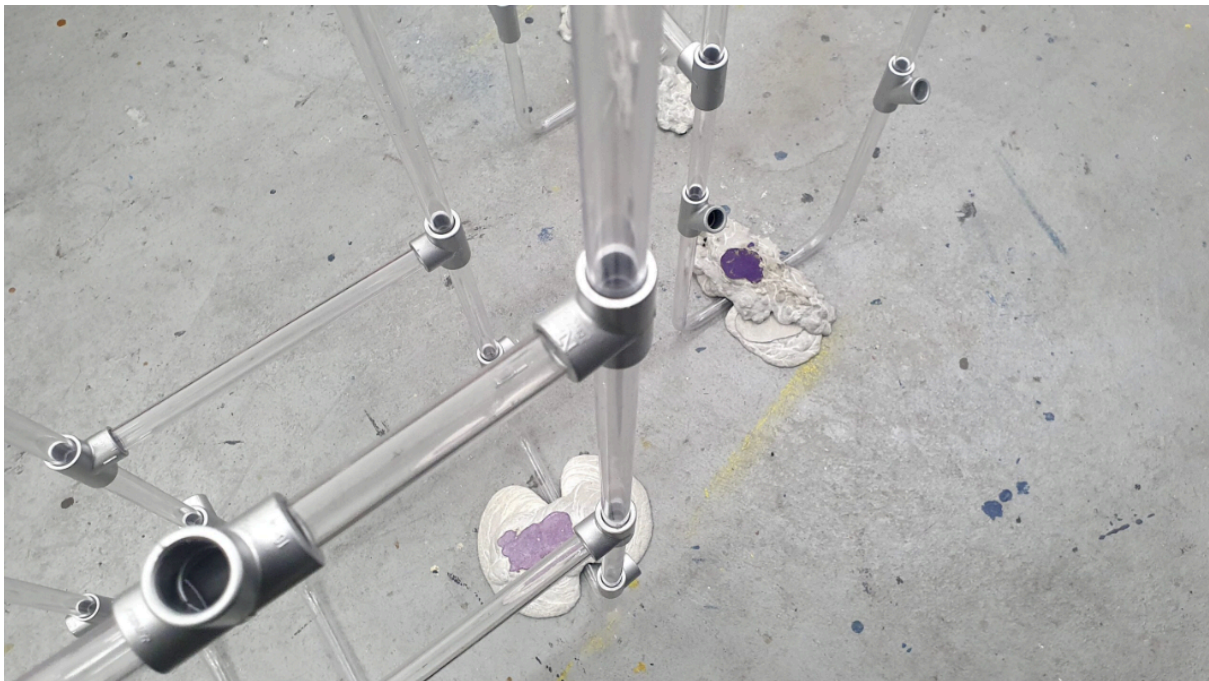
For teachers:

[Robert Cervera talks about Hiddenware](#)

Materials and processes

*Paying attention to materials is a way to engage with the world, and to understand how the world relates to us and how we relate to the world. **Robert Cervera***

Robert makes sculpture, music, video installation and performance and describes his art practice as “messy”. His background is as a musician. The sculptures on display at SPACE Ilford are can be played as an instrument. He uses raised floor tiles - a fake floor. The same as would be used in data centres. Neat on the surface and messy underneath where all the cables are kept.



Things to think about:

Materiality What materials can be used to make a sculpture? Collect materials from everyday life to make a sculpture. Think about the textures of what you use - is it soft, hard, bumpy, coarse, jagged, slimy? How does what you choose help to describe an idea or create a story? Sound and music are an important part of how to experience Robert's art works. What sounds could you use in your art work? What is it like when you close your eyes and can only hear and touch the sculpture?

Making the invisible visible Can you make a 3D picture that has a hidden element? It can be beneath a fold or tucked into a pocket. Why is it hidden away? Is it important that it can be found? Who gets to see the elements that are secret?

Play on words The title of the exhibition *Hiddenware* is a play on words. It's not hardware and not software. What is hidden in the digital world? Can you compose a new word that is made up from at least two words that you connect together. Write a definition for your new word.

Textures and materials If you designed an artwork or a story using the starting point "neat on the surface and messy underneath", what materials would you use? What would the textures feel like? What words would you use to describe the object? How can something be neat and messy at the same time?

Digital life The exhibition is about showing the "invisible stuff that sustains our digital life". What do you think Robert means when he describes a digital life? What do we prioritise as a society? (what is important to you?)
Think about issues that affect you - in the world, in your community or in your school? For instance, data centres use resources and energy that contributes to climate change. How can we make these issues visible through art?



Useful words:

Access, Audiovisual, Awareness, Coding, Community, Concrete, Connection, Control, Cultural, Data, Device, Ecology, Enclosure, Environment, Gamer, Hidden, Hydropower, Infrastructure, Instrument, Invisibility, Location, Materiality, Participatory, Perforated, Resources, Sculpture, Secrecy, Signal, Sustainable, Tubes, User-friendly, Virtual, Visible

Artists to look at:

John Cage, Olafur Eliasson, Jenny Holzer, Haroon Mirza, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Monica Ross, Sarah Sze, They Are Here