

FUTURE NOW

— AESTHETICA ART PRIZE 2023 —

125 CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS



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Aesthetica Art Prize 2023
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This collection is a compilation of the winners and finalists from the Aesthetica Art Prize submitted in 2022, organised by *Aesthetica Magazine*.

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Foreword

The impact that art has on society is profound. It's transformational and invites conversations that challenge the status quo. Art offers hope and solutions to problems that are bigger than any one individual or country. Art is a way to make sense of the here and now at this critical juncture in history.

Our world is changing at cataclysmic speed, from the all-encompassing nature of technology to the climate emergency, alongside the residual legacies of colonialism. We live in complicated times, and it doesn't seem to be getting any easier. "Progress" is an interesting word. Its use was first recorded in the 1590s, from the Latin for "moving forward or onward in space." From c.1600, records show its figurative use, as "to move towards something better; advance." The verb became obsolete in British English in the 18th century, and it was then reintegrated in the early 19th century, adopted from American English.

If we look back at history and consider this word in its global context, we see classism, colonialism, gender inequality and enslavement. The world is rife with injustice. There is still so much reckoning that needs to happen to grasp the impact of 400 years of trauma. Progress has such implied meaning in the sense of something "advancing," but my question is: how about what is left behind? What is the value of that? The reference here is centred on our digital landscape. Even Einstein said, "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity," before the internet was invented.

This world of augmented and virtual reality, constant connections, instant access, the metaverse, NFTs, phone, selfies and satellites, is loud and intrusive. The concepts of HG Wells and George Orwell novels have become the future we are living in. What does it mean? In *New Scientist* (December 2022), *Magnetic Tape: The Surprisingly Retro Way Big Tech Stores Your Data*, we learned that the data we produce minute after minute and day after day – back-ups of emails, photos, TikTok videos – is all amassed on magnetic tape. It's not 1980s cassettes but digital tapes of zeros and ones. The problem is that we will eventually run out of space, so scientists are working on nanotechnology, which will create glass plates that can hold all this information. It is unbelievable. The impact of digital will stand the test of time.

However, the convenience of digital means that, as a working mother, I can do everything that I need to do from my phone. The grocery shop, club bookings, paying bills and organising childcare – you name it, and I can do it with my thumb. It is possible for me to fit more in at an alarming rate. My mother, grandmother and the line of women before them didn't have this access, but what is the downside to the convenience? I cram in everything I can. Each and every moment is taken up with something. Time to think or be off-screen is now limited. We need to keep ourselves in check. Our humanity is what binds us together. Right now, no matter who or where you are in the world, we are all here together on planet Earth. This is our time. Every memory is like a piece of stardust – it's so precious. Our connections are strong; they transcend borders and solidify shared experiences. Relationships make us feel compassion, love, hatred, aggression. They allow us to explore new places and investigate our identity as individuals.

History books are lined with injustice. We see this play out in new ways with the devastating effects of

the climate crisis and war. It is imperative that we change perceptions and deepen empathy to reclaim space. Every day we can reach new heights of understanding. We have the power to incite change.

This year's Aesthetica Art Prize brings together 21 shortlisted and 104 longlisted artists who offer creativity as a form of expression, with projects spanning the boundaries of genre – from painting, photography and sculpture to installation, mixed-media and video. These works survey the ethics of representation, mass digitisation, globalisation, diaspora and the fragility of our planet. This publication takes the temperature of the current world and offers a new set of solutions to contemporary problems.

Today's biggest issues are addressed in the shortlist. For example, Lavinia Keller's *NFMe* discloses the invisible impact of technology with a sensitivity that invites viewers to rethink ownership and identity. The work sits between analogue and digital, dedicated to capturing the audience's emotions, which outlast the rapid pace of contemporary media culture. Larry Achiampong's film projects dissect ideas surrounding cross-cultural and digital identity, class and gender. His work examines his communal and personal heritage – in particular, the intersection of popular culture and the residues of colonialism. Constructions of "the self" are analysed by splicing audible and visual materials from personal and interpersonal archives, offering multiple perspectives that reveal the deeply entrenched inequalities in society. Elsewhere, Becky Probert uses the camera as a conduit to question the vastness of outer space. *Invisible Planets* was created through a close-up photographic exploration within the immediate environment to reflect how particles that make up the cosmos are echoed across the smallest and largest scales.

This year's Prize is about humanity and the components that define life in the 21st century. Each artist brings us insight and reflection. This book is a meditation on the present and serves as a guide to today's most engaging practitioners. The jury includes: artist, lecturer and Autograph curator Bindi Vora; The Art House's Damon Jackson-Waldock; photographer Hannah Starkey; curator and Jerwood Project Director Harriet Cooper; Luke Kemp, Co-Head of Barbican; Mariama Attah, curator at Open Eye Gallery; producer, commissioner and artist Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf; Chisenhale Gallery's curator Olivia Aherne; Sophie Bownes, New Contemporaries; artist Sutapa Biswas; and artist Yukako Tanaka. Aesthetica Art Prize alumni achieve global success, from leading biennials and cultural institutions to residences, publications and must-see exhibitions. Many have won or been nominated for prestigious awards, including Prix Elysée, FOAM Talent, the Jarman Award, Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize and Sony World Photography Awards.

This year's Aesthetica Art Prize and Future Now publication coincide with the 20th anniversary of *Aesthetica Magazine*. Aesthetica is a powerhouse of ideas and innovation across multiple platforms. The magazine has changed the possibilities for independent publishing. Now, it is a trusted voice at the centre of global conversations on art, design and photography. The organisation is renowned for championing talent with the Aesthetica Awards, including the Art Prize, BAFTA-Qualifying Film Festival and Creative Writing Award. I have so much sentiment around this anniversary. I look back at the young woman I was, and I can't believe it was me who did all this. It was never easy. It's still not easy. We produce some very large events and publish six magazines and two books per year. We stand firm in the art world because we are bold, different and never afraid to speak our minds. I grew up running this company. It has been the adventure of a lifetime, and I feel honoured to have done what I love most for the past 20 years.

This anthology is the litmus test of our times. Unite and join together through the power of art. Experience groundbreaking ideas that transform, challenge and imagine a future with boundless possibilities.

Cherie Federico
Editor, Aesthetica Magazine

Collisions of Art History, Science and Technology: In Conversation with Ori Gersht

London-based, Israel-born artist Ori Gersht (b. 1967) is best known for destroying painstakingly recreated versions of classical paintings on camera. Fruit explodes and flowers shatter in slow-motion videos, inviting conversation around digitalisation, reality and virtual spaces. Gersht is interested in time periods involving revolutions – the scientific, industrial and digital – which he posits as the crossroads that define photography. Throughout his career, he has observed relationships between history, memory and landscape. Gersht often adopts a poetic, metaphorical approach to explore the difficulties of representing violent events or histories. The resulting imagery is uncannily beautiful; viewers are drawn in before being confronted with darker and more complex themes. Selected projects include an exploration of his own family's experiences during the Holocaust, and a series of post-conflict landscapes in Bosnia. Gersht has exhibited at Guggenheim, New York; the Hirshorn Museum, Washington D.C.; Imperial War Museum, London; Getty Center, Los Angeles; Science Museum, London; and numerous other locations worldwide.

A: You are best known for responding to 17th century still life paintings, including those of Jan Brueghel the Elder. What drew you to this genre, and what is the significance of flowers?

OG: We all have an immediate connection with flowers. We connect them to Valentine's Day but also to memorials and graves – they relate to such a broad range of our emotional experiences. From the very early days until now, flowers have performed a significant role in visual art. There are so many ideas that can be played out very subtly through their use: historical, political and ideological questions. All this can be hidden behind their delicate, formal beauty. Jan Brueghel the Elder's (1568-1625) paintings were some of the first of their kind. They mark a transitional moment when painters stopped including native wildflowers in their work. Instead, all the flowers were cultivated – they would not have existed without human intervention, as they never grew – naturally – in the same place together. It is a movement away from the "real," as species from across the world started to arrive in Europe. In this way, Brueghel is already asking questions about nature and human intervention. I'm exploring similar issues but in the digital age.

A: Your practice is deeply rooted in photographic history and pivotal moments that changed visual culture forever. Can you discuss the time periods that have inspired you the most?

OG: I tend to look at three revolutions in my work: the scientific, the industrial and the digital. Crossroads that really define photography. Each one of them was a leap that changed our understanding of the world. Magnifying lenses were invented during the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries. This was the moment Galileo started to look at the celestial skies – he was able to produce drawings

of the moon that challenged perceptions. People believed the moon was a perfect spherical body, but Galileo's observations enabled us to see craters. We could look through a microscope and see organisms invisible to the naked eye. The lens became an extension of human vision, giving us access to the large and the small. I think about this moment as one where space is compressed. The Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) is another such period – steam engines and factories began to exceed our biological pace. Photographic chemistry was invented in the 19th century, altering our notion of linear time by freezing a moment. Now, we are in the Digital Revolution, which I see as a complete collapse of time and space.

A: Time and speed are frequently explored in your work. Your projects have documented bullets hitting pomegranates at 1,600 frames per second. Where does this interest in time come from?

OG: My interest in time – and in photography – probably derives from my own sense of mortality. Photography can harvest time, turning the present into something eternal. It records moments in transition. Like Schrödinger's cat, these paradoxical scenarios exist – simultaneously – in two states: holding together and falling apart. I record events that occur in the folds of time, taking place at an enormous speed that our mind can't process. These "phantom" events can be considered metaphysical since they occur outside of human perception. However, with the aid of new photographic technologies, such moments are becoming visible. The question is: if we are unable to experience something, does it exist? What does it mean to witness an event that can be captured by the camera, but not seen by the eye?

A: Can you discuss the socio-political meanings that flowers manifest in your work?

OG: My *Blow Up* (2007-2008) photographs are based on paintings featuring the three colours of the French flag: red, white and blue. On first glance, the original 19th century works by Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904) seem comfortable and quite bourgeois. However, looking deeper, there's a nationalistic discourse invested in them. *Blow Up* takes this subject matter and colour palette, transforming them into a series of explosions, with all the political implications that brings. *Fragile Land* (2018) is based on flowers on the verge of extinction in Israel: Cyclamen, Iris Atropurpurea and the Madonna Lily. You could say the plants are playing a part in the tension and political conflict. People are supposed to protect the flowers to protect the land: where they grow is a place everyone respects. This is a moment where nature does something extraordinary, connecting us to a location and encouraging us to look beyond the desire for nationalistic ownership. In *On Reflection* (2014), I was thinking about glass breaking as an act of cultural violation. I kept in mind the horrific scenes from Kristallnacht on 9 November 1938, when Nazi sympathisers went out into the streets of Germany to smash shop windows and burn Jewish books.

A: What does the process of putting together – and destroying – one of your pieces look like?

OG: *On Reflection* (2014) took close to 18 months to see through. With the help of my studio team, we used synthetic materials – plastic, paper and silk – to recreate Brueghel's bouquets, replicating the original painting as closely as possible. Then, I put mirrors in front of them; what we ended up looking at was a reflection. I used two cameras stood beside each other, each with a different focal point. One captured the "virtual space" (the reflection), and the other recorded "reality" (the material of the glass). Finally, after all this elaborate effort, I destroyed the piece in a flash. The act of destruction is fundamental to my practice. The idea is to turn it on its head – for demolition to become an act of creation. This dialectical relationship is integral. I am attempting to turn moments of obliteration into new possibilities.

A: The current proliferation of deep-fakes and filters means it's getting harder to tell what's real online. How does your practice fit into the conversation surrounding ideas of authenticity?

OG: I find the question of what is real is very interesting, since the notion of reality is fluid. Before the invention of the microscope or telescope, we didn't know about microorganisms or the appearance of stars. These new optical technologies expanded and shaped our existence. I am still attempting to document events that rest outside our mandated experiences of the world. I do it simply and directly – using a camera, or what I call a "witnessing tool." My recent work *Fields and Visions* uses AI software to help enlarge low resolution images. It creates a hybrid realism: one that is partly optical, partly digital.

A: Your most recent series, *Another World* and *Fields and Visions*, incorporate artificial intelligence. What is the inspiration behind these works? Why did you choose to add "computer vision?"

OG: I have returned to the botanical themes that occupied me for the last decade. Inspiration derived from Swiss naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), who travelled to Suriname in the 17th century to study its native tropical plants. The project also draws on American painter Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904), who toured the Amazon in the 19th century in search of hummingbirds and exotic orchids. Both artists returned with souvenirs from the regions, and subsequent drawings depict new species of floral and fauna previously unknown to American and European audiences. In doing so, they expanded scientific and cultural knowledge, fusing fact and fiction to build a mysterious world that ignited imaginations. For *Another World* and *Fields and Visions*, I reproduced the same locations in my studio. I made the images at a very low resolution because I wanted to fill the gaps using artificial intelligence software. I enlarged small photographs to a massive size, inviting the computer to use its acquired knowledge to imagine the lost information. These images are no longer faithful depictions of physical matter but hybrids. They present a shift in the discourse of authentic photographic vision, redefining what we mean by "realism."

A: Discussions of AI image generators, avatars, the metaverse and NFTs have dominated headlines over the past few years. Are we still living in the Digital Revolution? Or are we entering a new era?

OG: We are still living in the revolution. Everything around us is unstable: rapid changes, continuous transitions, social and political paradigm shifts. The Digital Revolution is throwing everything up in the air. This is very scary, but simultaneously it is an exciting moment. There is no doubt that a new era is ahead. It could be that we are coming to the end of the optical era, with volumetric captures and virtual experiences that are starting to provide more and more possibilities. We have been striving to create lifelike representations of the world for centuries: first through the medium of painting, then photography, film and now virtual hyperrealism. Step by step, we are getting closer. At the same time, we are losing ground and distancing ourselves from visceral experiences. That's why paintings are particularly attractive right now; they connect us with our bodies and the physical world. Painting remains like a lifebuoy, to some extent keeping the tangible presence of art above water. Yet, I believe virtual art will become a dominant force in the years to come. Notions of reality and truth will have to evolve and find new forms.

Ori Gersht earned his MFA in photography from the Royal College of Art in London. He gained critical success with an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and has a professorship at the University for the Creative Arts in Rochester in Kent, England. His works have been exhibited at major institutions, including the Guggenheim, New York, and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Ecologies of Creativity: New Artistic Approaches to Environmentalism

The earliest calculations of the greenhouse effect date back to 1896, but it was in the mid-20th century that scientists raised concerns. "At the rate we are currently adding carbon dioxide to our atmosphere (six billion tons a year), within the next few decades the heat balance of the atmosphere could be altered enough to produce marked changes in the climate – changes which we might have no means of controlling," said Nobel Prize winning chemist Glenn T. Seaborg in 1966. Since the 1980s, there has been broad consensus on the human-made causes of global warming amongst the scientific community, but this has not prevented self-styled sceptics, invested in the status quo, from disputing the findings.

Sadly, climate change denial still exists. Oil company ExxonMobil, for example, pushed its own propagandist climate "research" in a deliberate campaign to mislead the public as to the severity of the situation. In 2015, *Inside Climate News* analysed four decades of Exxon's engagements with the science – using evidence that included previously unseen internal files and interviews with former employees – to conclude that the company had "manufactured doubt about the scientific consensus that its own scientists had confirmed." Recent headlines draw attention to Andrew Tate, who goaded Greta Thunberg on Twitter with his luxury car collection, boasting about driving up emissions. Elsewhere, in February 2023, Tony Abbott, a former Australian Prime Minister, joined a climate sceptic group that suggest rising carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will have a positive impact. This "business as usual" attitude perpetuates daily life, from flying several times a year to driving 4x4s in urban areas – preventing systematic change for the climate. Short-haul city breaks, cheap burgers and fast fashion are articulated as consumer choices. Yet, in reality, these decisions are determined by infrastructure design. The planned expansion of Heathrow airport or global trade laws that allow for the mass production of beef fed on grain grown in deforested areas of the Amazon are just two examples. These current policies, which shape how individuals behave and companies operate, are ultimately decided by political administrations and global economies.

Governments boast their commitment to net zero carbon, but their slow response in making it a reality proves otherwise. "For 25 years, countless people have come to the UN climate conferences begging our world leaders to stop emissions and clearly that has not worked, as emissions are continuing to rise," Greta Thunberg said in her 2018 speech to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "So, I will not beg the world leaders to care for our future. I will instead let them know change is coming whether they like it or not." Companies understand this appetite for change. Brands across the world have turned to "greenwashing" – using the language of sustainability without real substance. The paper straws McDonald's introduced in 2019 turned out to be non-recyclable. In 2020, Ryanair announced themselves as Europe's "lowest emissions airline," a false claim that was later banned by the Advertising Standards Authority. Similarly,

H&M's Loop initiative claimed to allow customers to see their clothes recycled in real-time, but the recycled material used was as low as 20%. For impactful change, there needs to be a shift away from mass production and wasteful manufacturing that is hidden behind the guise of sustainability.

The endless cycle of news reports on the climate crisis met by inaction and empty, performative gestures has resulted in eco-anxiety – a phenomenon afflicting more than half of young people globally, according to a study in *The Lancet* in 2021. Three quarters of the 10,000 16-25-year-olds surveyed – based in Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Portugal, the UK and the USA – agreed that "the future is frightening." Part of this fear derives from a sense of powerlessness towards existential threats to the planet. Small acts, such as cycling everywhere, turning down the thermostat and avoiding plastic bags, can feel redundant in a world that is not set up to support the regeneration of fragile environments. However, change occurs simultaneously at different scales. Even if one person cutting out red meat won't singlehandedly end deforestation for beef production overnight, it is important. One individual's carbon footprint is reduced by 27 kilograms for every kilogram of beef they renounce. These actions spur a wider cultural shift in consciousness that determines the "Overton window," a term that describes how political ideas can move from unthinkable to popular policy within public discourse.

The climate emergency is the inescapable backdrop to all artistic creation today, a prism through which everything else is filtered. As Aesthetica Art Prize alumnus Noémie Goudal (b. 1984) told *Aesthetica* in 2021, "although I'm not trying to talk about climate change directly, I'm aware that – because we are so concerned about it – if you look at a landscape it's the first thing that comes to mind. It's almost like now there are no other readings." Evidence of artists' commitment to environmentalism is growing. Culture Declares Emergency is a movement of arts organisations and artists committed to climate action – including Jerwood, Royal Court Theatre and spoken word artist Zena Edwards. The company, which launched in London in 2019, has now grown to 10 hubs across the world. There is a rising number of master's degrees that specialise in art and environmentalism, like Goldsmiths' MA in Art and Ecology.

In galleries, exhibitions focused on the environment have risen. London's Barbican Centre's landmark exhibition *Our Time on Earth* (2022) "carved out a space to build a constructive way forward and to spotlight the ingenuity of art, design and culture to do that." The show's co-curator Caroline Till had previously told *Aesthetica* in April 2021, "it's important to have awareness of the scale of the issue but it can be paralysing." These spaces offer an supportive environment for discussions on change, and the tendency is growing. A new show opening June 2023 at Hayward Gallery is *Dear Earth: Art and Hope in a Time of Crisis*, "inspired by artist Otobong Nkanga's suggestion that 'caring is a form of resistance.'"

Many artists in this year's Aesthetica Art Prize are addressing environmental challenges head-on. They are adopting innovative methods that reflect upon technologies and topics unique to our age. Longlisted artist Michael McLaughlin photographs sleek, minimalist views of the land and industrial architecture in Japan's northernmost coastal base, the Port of Wakkanai. In *Blue Silo Hokkaido* (2020), a bright blue holding tank fills the frame, whilst *Three Trees Hokkaido* (2020) offers a sparsely populated view. The distancing effect encourages meditation on the beauty of nature and human intrusion into it, in a similar way to Edward Burtynsky's *Anthropocene* (2018), whose almost graphic aerial perspectives document the impact of transportation systems on the landscape. Another longlisted artist, Niklas Hlawatsch, employs a 19th century photographic technique – the aluminium ambrotype – in *Krafla II* (2022) to examine climate impacts. His work echoes *Burnt Memory* (2019), a series of tintypes by Gideon Mendel and Jonathan Pierredon of items recovered from wildfires, including binoculars, a camera and a wine bottle. The historic processing of these objects allows them to be seen in retrospect, like archaeologists from the

future. Hlawausch's ambrotypes of electric dams and networks of pipes position symbols of energy consumption in the past, inviting speculation on how these might appear to unborn predecessors.

Art provides a license for thought experiments that reveal humanity's profoundest fears. In shortlisted artist Jacob Talbot's *Nurture; Nature* (2022), viewers confront a terrifying yet oddly tantalising post-apocalyptic future, where humans are extinct and nature has reclaimed the Earth. Shortlisted artist Gareth Phillips uses the deconstructed form of the photobook in *Caligo* (2022-2023) to present a narrative where a small number of humans have escaped the climate catastrophe and seek asylum on another planet, a utopian environment reminiscent of Eden. These works might seem like science-fiction but, increasingly, this is becoming normalised. NASA and private companies like SpaceX are researching the practicalities of space colonisation but remain distracted from finding solutions to living within Earth's resources.

Politically charged works – from Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* (1936) to Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) – are an invitation to look violence and trauma in the face. In 2023, the public is saturated with images on social media and news platforms. They are desensitised and no longer accepting of an essentialising western gaze, which transforms suffering into a kind of "poverty porn" destined for consumption. Contemporary approaches avoid this, as exemplified by the artists in this year's *Aesthetica* Art Prize. Recent *Aesthetica* interviewees Richard Mosse and Mandy Barker use aesthetic attraction as a tool to convey harsh realities. In film *Broken Spectre*, Mosse's satellite imaging portrays the devastation of Amazonian deforestation in hot pink hues, whilst Barker's mesmerising compositions, such as *Lost at Sea* (2016), illuminate plastic debris against black backdrops in a way that recalls stained glass windows.

Like Mosse and Barker, *Aesthetica* Art Prize finalists also ground their work in science and data. For example, shortlisted artist Rosie Sherwood's *The Seagrass Walk* (2022) was funded by the Natural Environmental Research Council and supported by Plymouth University, City Council and the Ocean Conservation Trust. However, the work transcends academia, sparking unsettling contradictions. It is this ambiguity that Mosse defines in a 2022 interview with *Aesthetica* as "the tension between art and documentary, science and the imagination, beauty and tragedy." Visualising unseen perspectives is more than a method to direct attention; environmental issues are recontextualised, highlighting alternative possibilities for the future. "For too long, the climate fight has been limited to scientists and policy experts," writes Mary Annaïse Heglar in a 2021 piece for *The Nation*, entitled *To Build a Beautiful World, You First Have to Imagine It*. "When I survey the field, it's clear that what we desperately need is more artists."

Environmentally concerned practitioners inspire individuals to demand and enact change. Humanity must adapt to limit biodiversity loss, lower carbon emissions and increase the likelihood of our species' survival. This will only come about by seeking solutions and embracing different methods of existence. When asked about *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2021), Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg said, "An artwork won't save pollinators. I'm experimenting instead with how art can be used to give people agency to do something amidst the ecological crisis we have created, not just feel a sense of panic and loss." Art provides that sense of possibility and purpose. The finalists in this year's *Aesthetica* Art Prize are a testament to the idea that dreams and determination will pull society from its quagmire so we can begin to build a new world.

Rachel Segal Hamilton is a freelance writer and editor, specialising in photography and visual culture, working for various art magazines, book publishers, national press, awards, agencies and brands. Since 2018, she has been Contributing Editor for the *Royal Photographic Society Journal*, a regular contributor to *Aesthetica*, and the author of *Unseen London* and *Love Story*, published by Hoxton Mini Press.

Family, Migration and Identity: In Conversation with Maryam Wahid

Maryam Wahid (b. 1995) uses photography to convey her identity as a British Pakistani Muslim woman. The artist's expansive body of work looks at womanhood, memory and migration – as well as notions of home and belonging – drawing on a deeply rooted family history to do so. The experiences of South Asian migrants within the UK are central to her practice. Since graduating with a BA in Photography in 2018, Wahid has won many prestigious awards, including accolades from Format Festival, Photoworks and The Magenta Foundation. She was awarded Portrait of Britain 2018 and 2021 by *British Journal of Photography*, and, in 2020, featured on BBC's *Great British Photography Challenge* with Rankin. Her work has been commissioned by *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times*, amongst others. Wahid was invited to be on the selection panel for *Hold Still* (2020) with The Princess of Wales, an ambitious community project that created a unique collective portrait of the UK during lockdown. More recently, she was the lead artist for Creative Connections – a project by National Portrait Gallery and Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. Her latest project, *Zaibunnisa* (2019-2020), which was commissioned by Midlands Art Centre, is showing at Bradford's Impressions Gallery from April until June 2023. *Zaibunnisa* refers to Wahid's mother's birth name prior to emigrating from Pakistan to the UK in the 1980s. The images depict her journey to Lahore in 2019. This was Wahid's first trip to the country and her mother's first visit in 20 years.

A: Your identity as a British Pakistani Muslim woman is key to your practice, with many works rooted in the experiences of South Asian immigrants living in the UK. Why is it important to use the medium of photography to bring these conversations and narratives to the fore right now?

MW: Although I was born and raised in England to parents who migrated from Pakistan, I visited my motherland for the first time in 2019 when I was 24 years old. Before then, the only things that had connected me to my Pakistani heritage were stories, memories and family photographs passed down through the generations. It was beyond special to discover these pictures and to experience the power of holding a portrait of my grandmother, whom I never met. Looking at the image, I felt like I belonged somewhere. I could resonate with her face; it was captured before I was born, but somehow it told me about myself. That feeling is so empowering. It has given me confidence and hope in life. I believe that photography has the power to do this for individuals – and communities – who might feel the same way.

A: Family history is important, as demonstrated in the series *Archives Locating Home* (2018). Why did you choose to re-publish photo album images in this way? What do archival pictures do?

MW: I believe that photography is illuminating. It is expressive and can reflect many complex stories and

feelings. When I start a project, I often use archive imagery to understand the story that I'm about to tell. If I feel that I need to obscure some parts of the narrative to create ambiguity, I will do so through signs, symbols or manipulation – like covering relatives' eyes, for example. In the series *Archives Locating Home*, I used snapshots taken from a family album to deconstruct my own British and Pakistani heritage. By adding ephemera such as the wallpaper layered behind these photographs, I'm embedding my mother's history of pre- and post- migration to Britain into the work. These include details from her marriage, children and lifestyle. I like to use textures and objects – including wallpaper, frames and mirrors – to evoke feelings of nostalgia, and to foster a greater understanding of the history of South Asians across Britain.

A: In 2019, you travelled to Lahore with your mother, who emigrated from Pakistan to the UK in 1982 for an arranged marriage. It was your first time in the city, and her first visit in nearly 20 years. Series *Zaibunnisa* (2019–2020) documents this shared experience; it will be showing at Format Festival and Impressions Gallery. Can you tell us about this trip, and the outputs made whilst there?

MW: It all started with my family album. I spent time pondering photographs of my grandparents who lived and died in Pakistan. My mum grew up there and moved to Birmingham at the age of 18 in 1982 to marry my father, who had migrated to the UK when he was six years old. I was born in 1995 and grew up in Birmingham. I always felt like it was my home, but a part of me felt that home was where my ancestors were. There was so much depth to my history to be uncovered: who I am and where my family had come from. With that feeling in my heart, I embarked on a journey in 2019 to visit Lahore, my motherland, for the very first time. Joining me was my mother, whose family and friends live in Pakistan and who, I believe, are my direct connection to the country. In *Zaibunnisa*, I explore notions of home and belonging through my family photo album and the pictures I took on my trip. This body of work is multi-layered, drawing on the conversations I had with my family and friends in Pakistan; the effects of having grandparents living in another country; and imagining what my alternate life could have looked like if my family didn't move to England. Not only did this experience create *Zaibunnisa*, but it has played a pivotal part in my life story.

A: *Zaibunnisa* means "the beauty of women." It refers to your mother's birth name, and womanhood is a recurring theme. Was there a specific moment when you decided to study these experiences?

MW: As a woman, there are many times when one feels the need to reclaim their own identity. I grew up around inspiring female role models but felt that the mass media didn't empower these experiences – particularly not those from the South Asian diaspora. That's why I needed to start my explorations with the woman that shaped me: my mother. My self-portrait collection *Women from the Pakistani Diaspora* is one such example. It looks at my mother's identity as an 18-year-old, showcasing outfits she wore over 35 years ago. To make this body of work, I visited places around Birmingham that were significant to her life as a young migrant woman in Britain. Those from the Pakistani diaspora who relocated to the UK were very often the hardworking wives, daughters, mothers and grandmothers of people who had migrated from cities, towns and small villages in Pakistan. These individuals came to the UK to work in key industrial sectors and set up businesses that contributed towards the healthy economy of their new-found nation. My series recognises the achievements of these people and their role as the backbone of a community that transformed inner-city Britain. In 2019, I was selected to carry out research and development for *Transforming Narratives*: a project that aimed to establish Birmingham as a global centre for contemporary arts from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The resulting series *Ek Aurat Ka Safar* – meaning *A Woman's Journey* in Urdu – was also inspired by my upbringing. I interviewed women of all ages, ethnic

backgrounds, religions and social classes in Pakistan to collect an accurate representation of life today.

A: In 2022, you collaborated with National Portrait Gallery and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum on a portraiture project involving students from Coventry – the 2023 UK City of Culture. The pictures of young people were displayed alongside paintings from major collections, each celebrating "notable" individuals from the city like Philip Larkin and George Eliot. Can you tell us more about the project? Why is it significant to see the next generation portrayed in this way?

MW: It is extremely important to empower the next generation and let them be in control of their own narrative. That's why I examined self-portraiture with students from Coventry. The greatest gift to give to young people is to equip them with the skills to be self-confident. For the Herbert Art Gallery, the students and I selected works that depicted inspirational people connected with the city today, which included portraits recently acquired for the National Portrait Gallery's permanent collection: Rankin's photo of comedian Guz Khan, and Charlotte Hadden's images of politicians Zarah Sultana and Taiwo Owatemi.

A: You graduated with a BA in Photography from Birmingham City University in 2018. How does this experience inform your practice now? Do you have any hopes for the future of arts education?

MW: Initially, I focused on fashion and documentary photography at university, which was how my degree was taught. However, in my final year, visiting lecturers like Kate Peters influenced me to create more conceptual work. My projects are chapters of my life, so I often draw on my training in the projects I create to tell my story. Going forward, I hope for a more gender bias-free and diverse arts education landscape.

A: Are there any photographers who you are inspired by right now, or who have been particularly influential over the years? And what do you want your viewers to take away from your artwork?

MW: Inspiration can come from many places – from conversations, films, creative direction, painting and books. To name some of the photographers I hugely admire and respect: Shirin Neshat, Shadi Ghadirian, Amak Mahmoodian and Hassan Hajjaj. In my work, I want viewers to contemplate on the importance of everyday things, and the meaning of those who shape our lives and existence. This includes the families that we are born into, the loved ones we lose along the way, as well as the stories that are left untold.

A: In 2021, you were awarded Portrait of Britain by *British Journal of Photography* for Halima Jabeen in her front garden. You have won accolades from Format Festival and The Magenta Foundation, and been a judge for The New Art Gallery Walsall and National Portrait Gallery. Have these awards impacted your career? What advice would you give to the artists reading this book?

MW: The awards I have won have supported my practice incredibly, and each accolade has encouraged me to keep telling my story. I'm always humbled to receive prizes in today's vast arts landscape. I want my work to be a legacy and to live on for eternity. I would advise artists to always be themselves and to stay true to their practice. When you believe in your work, that's when you can show others what it means.

Maryam Wahid graduated in 2018 with a BA in Photography. Since then, the artist has won many prestigious accolades and was awarded Portrait of Britain 2018 and 2021 by British Journal of Photography. In 2020, Wahid featured on BBC's *Great British Photography Challenge* with Rankin. Her work has been commissioned by *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *The Telegraph* and Wellcome Collection.

Contemporary Portraiture: A Record of The Truth?

The urge to create portraits is innate. For 5,000 years, the likeness of individuals has been illustrated in paint, either from the perspective of the sitter or artist. Yet, these personal depictions serve a multitude of functions, from indicating wealth and importance to symbolising social morals. Paintings and sculptures of people have also been synonymous with periods of great creative innovation throughout history, from Judith Jans Leyster's (1609-1660) Dutch Golden Age studies to the Impressionist works of Édouard Manet (1832-1883) and Frida Kahlo's (1907-1954) Surrealist self-portraits. Even today, these portrayals continue to evoke admiration and wonder. Ten million people queue up each year to catch a glimpse of Leonardo da Vinci's Renaissance masterpiece *The Mona Lisa* (1503), which has been displayed at the Louvre since 1797. Elsewhere, in February 2023, Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1665) took centre stage during an exhibition at Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, which sold out in a matter of days.

In 1834, William Henry Fox Talbot changed the limits of visual representation forever. The scientist invented a method of fixing and developing pictures with light and chemistry on paper, sparking the start of photography. "One advantage of the discovery of the photographic art will be that it will enable us to introduce into our pictures a multitude of minute details which add to the truth and reality of the representation," reflected the British inventor in *The Pencil of Nature* (1844-1846). Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre went one step further in 1839, establishing the first commercially successful photographic process. The daguerreotype, which sealed a picture on a sheet of highly polished silver-plated copper, was incredibly time consuming and expensive, but it sparked a revolution in image-making for the masses. The impact was immeasurable, "giving people ... the ability to preserve, not merely imagine, their collective history," as Ryan P. Smith writes in the 2018 *Smithson Magazine* article *How Daguerreotype Photography Reflected a Changing America*. By 1840, portrait studios opened in cities across the world and, in 1854, Britain's Royal Photography Society hosted the first *International Photography Exhibition*. The annual showcase is now the longest running in the world, with artists such as Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), Edward Steichen (1879-1973) and Paul Strand (1890-1976) sharing boundary-pushing projects. In the same year as the first show, André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri patented his *carte de visite* in Paris. Ten of these pocket-sized prints could fit on one glass plate during the developing stage, cutting costs down considerably. The diminutive portrayals were a western trend that peaked in the 1860s.

The growing popularity of the photographic medium signified a clear desire amongst everyday people to easily produce true-to-life representations. In 1900, Kodak invented the Box Brownie – the first in a succession of cameras – and amateur photographers began to fill homemade albums with informal snaps of family and friends. These collections were typically only seen by inner circles, making the prints

more intimate and authentic than previous portraiture. By the end of the 20th century, the first commercial camera phone was released in Japan. These early devices were expensive and produced low-quality images, but in 2007, the iPhone revolutionised the way people thought about photography. Anything could quickly be documented, saved and shared. As a result, in 2023, *Photutorial* reported that 92.5% of photographs are now taken with a smartphone, with 1.3 billion images shared daily on Instagram alone.

The decreasing cost of these technologies paired with the rise of social media networks, such as Facebook in 2004 and Instagram in 2010, testify to an unwavering desire to document people. Although photography's indexical link with reality makes it the ideal medium for portraiture, its modern-day application amplifies the tension between public and private shots. In 2013, the term "selfie" was named word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries, and over 82% of young adults have uploaded a personal photo online, according to a 2022 *Photutorial* report. These images have become an extension of self in the digital realm, enhancing everything from social grids to dating profiles. Yet, the position of photography as a symbol of unparalleled truth – recording likeness as it appears in front of the camera – no longer stands. Virtual appearances have become vastly different to real life with the rise of easily accessible digital editing tools. In 2023, *The Guardian* reported that social media triggers body image issues and mental distress in young people, with 80% of the 18-21 year olds surveyed stating that they dislike how they look. Users can choose to airbrush blemishes and enhance physical attributes, presenting a version of themselves that is beyond reality. In today's world, photography can make various different "truths" in a single image.

Many present-day photographers, including artists in the Aesthetica Art Prize 2023, trace the complex history of portraiture, reflecting on how it reinforces ingrained stereotypes and borrowing from established tropes to undercut misconceptions. Frederic Aranda's study of Ian McKellen in *Camp* (2017) positions the openly gay actor in magisterial robes and with the unsmiling authority of a 16th century king. However, it also points to the artifice at work. McKellen draws on his staged, rich surroundings to bolster his position but, unlike art historical compositions of royals, Aranda's studio is just in view – unmasking this process in action. Another image, *Vogue House*, which was longlisted for the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize in 2022, gathers LGBTQ+ individuals from around the world for a "family portrait." The opulent surroundings suggest a formal depiction of a royal dynasty, such as the shots of King Charles and his close family that Buckingham Palace released in October 2022. Yet, Aranda's tableau is full of celebration, colour and vigour, as 30 people pose in vibrant clothes and express their individuality.

These works feed into a new wave of portraiture, broadening and diversifying mainstream representations. Tyler Mitchell, Nadine Ijewere and Prince Gyasi, for example, experiment with the boundaries of fine art and fashion to positively represent Black people, communities and culture. "I always envisioned people that looked like me, my friends and family, one day having a place in fashion," Ijewere told *Vogue* back in 2021, when she was opening a solo show at the prestigious C/O Berlin's Amerika Haus. The daughter of Jamaican and Nigerian immigrants, Ijewere grew up in London in the 1990s, where she saw multiculturalism in action in her neighbourhood but not in popular culture. "I want to continue celebrating beauty and help to reshape what has been the 'beauty ideal,'" she added. Like Aranda, these creatives continue to make space for diverse subjects, portraying authentic representations that have been overlooked or hidden from mainstream platforms. Images simultaneously adopt and reimagine visual symbolism, utilising bastions of influence but also demonstrating how they operate. Mitchell's regal portrait of Beyoncé for *American Vogue* in 2018 was the first cover shot by a Black photographer. The singer poses against uneven fabric and even holds the material up to form a make-shift background – echoing the mechanics of an image.

Elsewhere, Kristina Varaksina recalibrates concepts of power and beauty in *Self Portrait, Queen*, which

conjures up visions of majesty through its name alone. The artist sits naked at a desk in a bare room, dressed only in a plastic netting neckpiece, resembling Queen Elizabeth I's ruffs. The self-portrait also suggests the need to shape one's own destiny in an act of freedom and control. Similarly, Elisa Miller's carefully staged, cinematic compositions feature women who transform into 18th century French aristocrats. This historical metamorphosis is familiar to duo Cooper & Gorfer, who have drawn on various periods of art history, such as 17th century Dutch Masters and dramatic 19th century Biblical scenes. The pair subvert the ways women have been represented. "We are interested in the catalogue of poses that inspired art, and we twist them," Cooper shared within the February / March 2023 issue of *Aesthetica*. "We've been playing with the male gaze through the female gaze." These artists allude to the social structures that shape individual lives, showing how photographs have been manufactured for specific purposes across the centuries.

Julia Fullerton-Batten's *Contortion* does something similar, minus the art historical references. Staged and richly coloured subjects are placed in retro and luxurious yet unidentifiable surroundings. A troupe of young women display extraordinary strength and agility, rotating into different positions whilst on chairs, in bathrooms and on top of pianos. Fullerton-Batten made this series during the Covid-19 lockdowns and told *Glorious* in 2022 that the collection was inspired by the desire to show off the "fluid artistry needed to create a serpentine dance of the human body." The collection embodies the claustrophobia of quarantine, but also quite literally twists traditional poses of women across art history, empowering the subjects.

Other artists featured in the *Aesthetica* Art Prize toy with these concerns less overtly, producing images that initially seem to document daily moments. Chrissy Lush's *Hold Me Tight* series is rooted in the present-day, picking out contemporary fashions and poses. Conceptual portraits like *Bubblegum* (2022) consider the role of the subliminal in an individual's behaviour and how it manifests itself physically, unless disturbed. For Lush, that rupture came with middle age, when she left the double-edged years of feminine youth and beauty, and their accompanying advantages and limitations. Karen Navarro also plays with the formal constraints of photography by splicing, fragmenting and rearranging compositions of people. *Segmented* (2022) fuses elements of collage and sculpture to investigate the intersection between belonging, race and representation. The Argentinian-born, Houston-based practitioner draws on her experience as an immigrant and a descendent of Indigenous Peoples, which has informed how she sees "identity as a social and cultural construct." Navarro's series also highlights the hierarchies of power that the medium has always operated within, working to "fight invisibility and define ourselves against the normative that dictates this world." The artist's interest in the formal properties of images is a desire to critique the dominant gaze.

In this way, it is not surprising that the most compelling contemporary photographic portraits are emerging from those who have traditionally been marginalised. Shifts in portraiture are part of a wider concern with power and its redistribution, beyond the white, wealthy, western men who have dominated this form and so much more. As bell hooks put it in her 1990 essay, *marginality as a site of resistance*: "[marginality] is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance." Artists in year's *Aesthetica* Art Prize demonstrate that portraiture is evolving. By making work with fresh perspectives, personal experiences and authentic representations, they are challenging the status quo to capture the diversity of the human experience.

Diane Smyth is a freelance journalist who contributes to publications such as *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The FT Weekend Magazine*, *Creative Review*, *The Calvert Journal*, *Aperture*, *FOAM*, *IMA*, *Aesthetica* and *Apollo Magazine*. Prior to going freelance, she wrote and edited at *BJP* for 15 years. She has also curated exhibitions for institutions including The Photographers' Gallery and Lianzhou Foto Festival.

Stepping into Art: Installations for Change

What does the future of art and curation look like? Interactive experiences and installations have become central to many galleries' programmes in recent years. They blur the boundaries between reality and the digital realm to investigate urgent themes that are shaping the world today. In 2023, Refik Anadol reimaged MoMA's, New York, collection of almost 200,000 artworks with AI, whilst David Hockney transformed the newly opened Lightroom, London, into a homage to the beauty of nature. These shows draw significant attention, fusing art and technology to transport viewers to unimaginable environments. Luke Kemp is Co-Head of Barbican Immersive at Barbican Centre, London. His team has developed some of the most challenging and successful exhibitions in the institution's history, from *AI: More than Human* (2019) to *Our Time on Earth* (2022). Kemp has previously worked with international organisations on programming, including for the Venice Biennale and The Armory Art Fair. The practitioner champions multidisciplinary and mixed-reality approaches to the medium, reframing understandings of familiar subjects and breaking barriers to explore some of the most pressing topics in the contemporary world.

A: You're the Acting Co-Head of Barbican Immersive, a team that develops experiential exhibitions, inviting audiences to engage, process and identify urgent issues that are shaping contemporary society. Can you discuss what your position looks like on a typical day-to-day basis?

LK: We are a small but dedicated team that manage new projects and a roster of exhibitions that tour internationally. There is a lot of variety, which keeps things exciting and engaging, but also fresh and unexpected. One aspect is negotiating the shows with potential hosts, partners and collaborators. We often adapt and adjust the content, reframing parts for different audiences and locations. I also work closely with my colleague, Patrick Moran, who leads the department with me. We plan the logistics to achieve artists' ideas, and we also consider how showcases contribute to the wider purpose and values of the Barbican. The team is also focused on finding opportunities to connect with new audiences, especially those who may not normally frequent cultural or don't always find elements of programming that speak to them. Each installation is seen as a potential entry point for engagement into a broader topic.

A: In what ways does the approach of Barbican Immersive differ from traditional forms of curation?

LK: Exhibitions usually involve pulling on a collection or existing artworks to investigate an artist, topic or movement. These shows often expand on the canon of specific disciplines, offering new ideas and different perspectives. The Barbican, which is owned by the City of London Corporation, is different to many public institutions because it doesn't have a collection. This offers a lot of flexibility for the Immersive team. We speak of our work as digital and technology first, but it is very much our medium and not our

message. We want to produce something that feels like it is part of a bigger dialogue, both on the street and in cultural, media and academic spheres. This can range from artificial intelligence to the climate emergency. Nothing is off limits. New commissions can see an academic or scientist paired with a media design studio or technologist, combining their skills to give ideas an immediacy that may not be achieved through the original research. One such example is *The World Beneath Our Feet*, which saw environmental writer and activist George Monbiot collaborate with London-based creative studio Holition. The piece, which was commissioned for *Our Time On Earth* (2022), draws on research from Monbiot's book *Regenesis: Feeding the World Without Devouring the Planet* to highlight the relationship between humans and soil.

A: *Our Time on Earth* (2022) harnessed technology and creativity to connect people to the natural world in new ways. How effective are interactive installations at spreading crucial messages of activism beyond the gallery? Are viewers empowered to make positive, tangible change?

LK: These works can be used to counter misinformation, or even illustrate the possibilities that lie ahead. Individuals need to feel included in the conversation that is enlivened by the show or artwork, so they have the agency to reflect and share their own ideas and opinions. This can be achieved through interactive engagement, or by creating stories that resonate with the public and their everyday lives. In *Our Time on Earth*, for example, I worked alongside guest curator FranklinTill to make "the invisible visible" and reveal the natural world in ways that invoked a sense of connection and care. It was important to invite visitors into a space that felt welcoming, emphasising our shared responsibility to the planet rather than focusing on the horrors of the climate emergency, which are seen in the endless news cycles and online.

A: Can you talk to us about a stand-out research project that you've showcased at the Barbican?

LK: *The Symbiocene*, which was on view at *Our Time On Earth*, asked: how can urban environments in 2024 benefit from indigenous technologies and local knowledge? This commission saw exchanges between designer Julia Watson, sustainability engineer Smith Mordak, Buro Happold and representatives from Indigenous groups: the Khasi people from India, the Ma'dan from Iraq and the Subak – a community of farmers in Bali. Traditional technologies for irrigation, root bridge building and reed island came to the fore, offering different ways to address the climate emergency. They set up a *Smart Oath of Understanding (SMOU)*, blending the oral traditions of the communities with the contractual framework of the west, ensuring indigenous designs and ownership were protected. Tangible 3D projected models joined workshop videos and a recording of the *SMOU* in the final display, revealing every aspect of the collaboration.

A: Over the last decade, immersive installations have captured the imagination of audiences. Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Rooms* at Tate Modern, for example, has had multiple extensions, visitor numbers of over 390,000 and thousands of images shared online. Why are these shows so popular?

LK: These sensory exhibitions use escapism to remind attendees of the wonder of life, which is especially pertinent in an age filled with economic, environment and social crises. Individuals seek this hopeful feeling – a state of mind that is arguably more accessible through interactive experiences because of its immediacy and directness. Sharing images on social media plays a big part in this, as there is an element of documenting this unique event, but also connecting with others. On the other hand, huge audiences and appeal can mean limited time to see the show as it was intended. Artists, curators and galleries have a responsibility to ensure the popularity of the exhibition doesn't hamper an encounter and the message.

A: In the book *Installation Art as Experience of Self, in Space and Time* (2021), editor Sylvie Coëllier writes: "One of the key aims of installation art was to demonstrate the blending of disciplines, to the point where genres per se would become meaningless as a way of providing discourse or a way of judging a work." Do you agree with this statement? How would you define this type of art?

LK: These installation projects have an immediacy that dissolves definitions of time and space. In some ways, the form and medium should take a backseat, as this allows room for individuals to embark on an emotional journey through the specific environment, narrative or message. There needs to be an emphasis on enquiry to push the imagination to different places, creating a space for new types of thinking.

A: We are looking at images constantly: on billboards, social media, TV and – in the era of smart-watches – even on our wrists. Screens are omnipresent. How are immersive projects different from what we experience in daily life? Can they provide a sense of calm, or do they add to the noise?

LK: Both. It is worth questioning the constant presence screens and images have in a lot of people's lives, but often they are incredibly functional and serve a purpose, from shopping and fitness to education. In experiential art, however, they transform into something more. Screens become collaborators or portals to new worlds, unveiling something extraordinary. Yet, images are just the start. Visuals are layered with other multisensorial elements, or removed altogether, such as Autechre's concert at the Barbican Centre in 2022. The performance was in complete darkness – heightening other senses. This type of multisensory thinking moves beyond optics, championing accessibility to include a broader diversity of audiences.

A: What is next for experiential art? Can you discuss any projects you're currently working on?

LK: The multidisciplinary and mixed-reality approach will become ever more present, with the boundaries of disciplines merging further through unexpected collaborations. We'll move beyond gallery walls, reaching everyday environments – from the high street to homes. One example is the Cultural Institute of Radical Contemporary Arts (CIRCA) screen, which brings art to the heart of Piccadilly, London. Yoko Ono, Patti Smith and David Hockney are amongst the artists who have been involved since its launch in 2020. Another is *Nexus Presents: Gorillaz x Google* – a location-specific, real-time performance from 2022. We're expanding outside of the Barbican Centre by exploring opportunities across the City of London as part of the Destination City initiative – an arts and culture programme that will broaden leisure opportunities.

A: You're a jury member for this year's Aesthetica Art Prize. How do you engage with a new piece? What interests you? What do you – as the viewer – like to take away from different artworks?

LK: I'm looking for something that is intriguing and utilises a sense of fun, whether through humour or playfulness. There is often an expectation that art must be incredibly serious, especially when the piece is addressing an important or urgent topic, like biodiversity loss or the climate emergency. Artists that prioritise joy over gloom often draw viewers in and hold their attention for longer, creating a lasting impact.

Luke Kemp is Co-Head of Barbican Immersive at Barbican Centre, London. His team has developed some of the most challenging and successful exhibitions in the institution's history, from *AI: More than Human* (2019) to *Our Time on Earth* (2022). Kemp has previously worked with international organisations on programming, including for the Venice Biennale and The Armory Art Fair, amongst others.

FUTURE NOW

THE AESTHETICA ART PRIZE

ARTISTS 2023

ARTISTS' FILM

ADA COTTON & ETIENNE JOSEPH

africanstreetstyle.co.uk

@adacotton | @de_archive



Jeffrey Lennon is the founder of African Street Style London and a cultural programmer. Ada Cotton is a Franco-Rwandese writer and visual artist interested in experimental storytelling. Etienne Joseph is the founder of Decolonising the Archive (DTA), an organisation that explores African-centred archival methodologies. The trio's shared interest in the representation of the African diaspora produced *Progress (1968)*, an immersive visual and sonic experience invoking notions of time, struggle and spirituality. The film captures rare perspectives of global political shifts whilst considering African futures and precolonial pasts.



Still from *Progress (1968)* (detail), (2019). 23 min. 19 sec. Artists: Ada Cotton, Etienne Joseph. Creative Producers: Jeffrey Lennon, Etienne Joseph.





Still from *Progress (1968)* (detail), (2019). Single-channel digital video. 23 min. 19 sec.
Artists: Ada Cotton, Etienne Joseph. Creative Producers: Jeffrey Lennon, Etienne Joseph.

ARTISTS' FILM

DEBI CORNWALL

debicornwall.com

@debicornwall @



Debi Cornwall is a conceptual documentary artist who returned to visual expression after a 12-year career as a civil rights lawyer. Her practice marries dark humour and structural critique, employing still and moving images, testimony and archival materials to investigate the staging and performance of power. *Pineland/Hollywood* challenges audiences to distinguish fact and fiction, to consider how films are consumed and, in turn, how they are reflected in real life. How Hollywood tells stories is interrogated, pushing viewers to the edge of their seats. The documentary provides wider commentary on how society is indoctrinated with violence.



Debi Cornwall, *Smoke Bomb* (detail). From the series *Necessary Fictions* (2020). 91.4cm x 121.9cm.



Debi Cornwall, *Old Town (Before the Battle)* (detail). From the series *Necessary Fictions* (2020). 121.9cm x 91.4cm.



ARTISTS' FILM

HOPE STRICKLAND



hopestrickland.com

@hopestrickland



Hope Strickland, Still from
I'll Be Back!, (2022). 10 min. 58 sec.

Hope Strickland is an artist-filmmaker and researcher from Manchester, UK. Her practice is concerned with Maroon Ecologies and fosters ancestral connections across disparate landscapes. *I'll Be Back!* documents the story of rebel slave François Mackandal. In 1758, Mackandal was condemned to be burned at the stake, not only for crimes but for his radical powers of metamorphosis. Filmed in archives and museums across the UK, *I'll Be Back!* looks at a series of collections that hold objects of colonial violence. The film examines institutional practices and reconsiders the distance between myth, history and systemic power.



Hope Strickland, Still from
I'll Be Back!, (2022). 10 min. 58 sec.



Hope Strickland, Still from
I'll Be Back!, (2022). 10 min. 58 sec.

ARTISTS' FILM

JOANNA PENSO

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Multidisciplinary artist and producer Joanna Penso works across audio, digital drawing and video to investigate human interactions in different contexts. Everyday settings, from public transport to dinner tables, are punctuated with recordings of intimate bodily sounds. *Digestion Symphony*, for example, features the diverse cast eating a meal to the beat of a metronome. The strangers move and chew to the beat, whilst contact microphones pick up the noises beneath their skin. The experimental sound-led film surveys the percussion of the body, amplifying the juxtaposition of daily exchanges: familiar, new and humorous, yet uncomfortable.



Joanna Penso, *-Home*, (2022). Sound and projection installation made in collaboration with poet Maliha Haider. 3m x 3m x 3m.




Joanna Penso, Still from *Digestion Symphony*, (2022). Single-channel film. 23 min. 23 sec. Photo: Alberto Romano.



ARTISTS' FILM

JOOYEON LEE

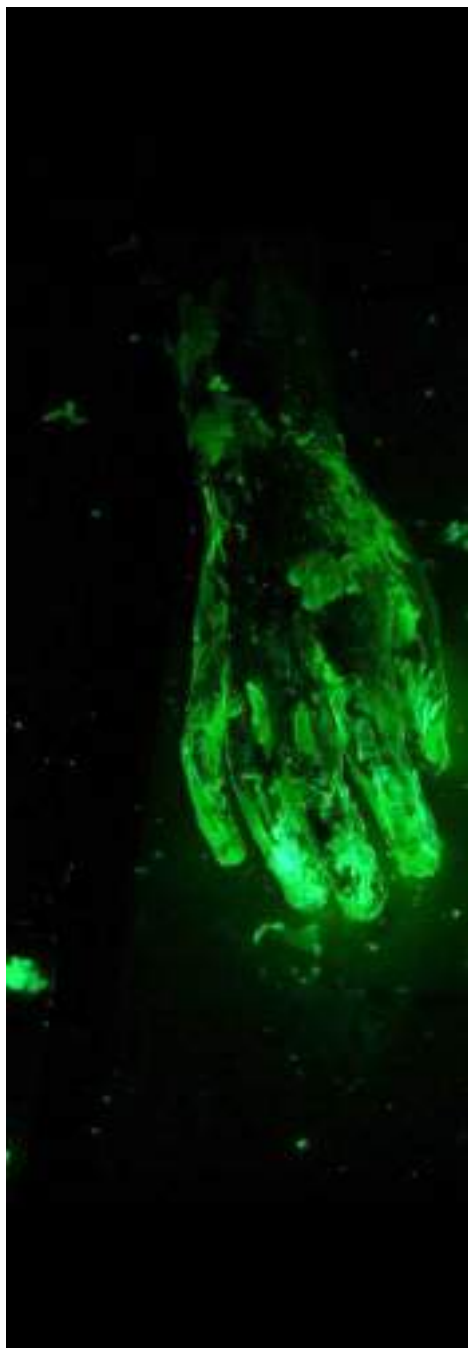
jooyeonlee.info

@pittamnoonmool 

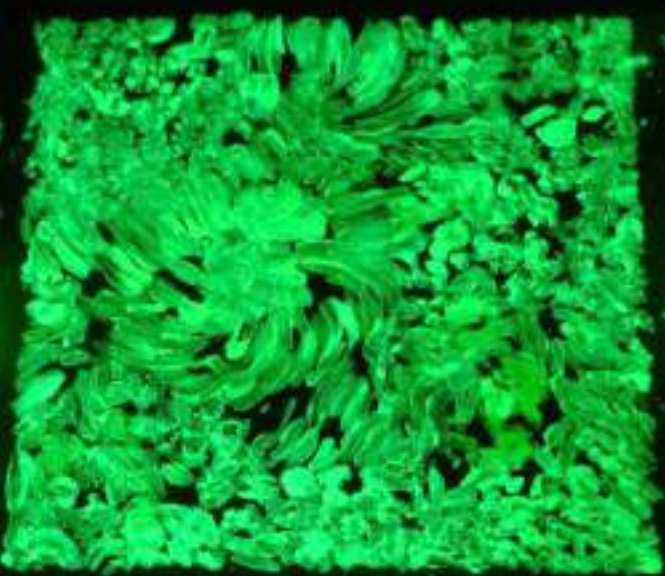
"Loneliness is an outcome of the social state we live in, where the majority of people have to dwell in the highest form of late-capitalism," states Jooyeon Lee. This notion informs the artist's practice. She documents the social and political influences of seclusion through drawing, installation, moving-image and writing. The London-based filmmaker, originally from South Korea, has developed an analytical, cinematic language to navigate labour precarity and women's bodies. In *Fortune Teller*, the working conditions of South Korean aircrews are compared to the Radium Girls in the 1920s, who died following radiation poisoning.



Jooyeon Lee, *Fortune Teller* (detail), (2022).
Single-channel video. 24 min. 50 sec.



Jooyeon Lee, *Fortune Teller*, (2022).
Single-channel video. 24 min. 50 sec.



ARTISTS' FILM

LARRY ACHIAMPONG



larryachiampong.co.uk

Instagram: [@larryachiampong](https://www.instagram.com/larryachiampong)

Larry Achiampong is a BAFTA longlisted (2023) and Jarman Award (2021) nominated artist, filmmaker and musician. His projects employ archival material, film, live performance and still imagery to explore ideas surrounding class, gender, cross-cultural and digital identity. Achiampong's work examines his communal and personal heritage – in particular, the intersection between popular culture and the residues of colonialism. These investigations survey constructions of "the self" through splicing audible and visual materials, offering multiple perspectives that reveal the entrenched inequalities in contemporary society.



Larry Achiampong, Still from *Wayfinder*, (2022). Single-channel 4K colour film. 83 min. Courtesy the artist and Copperfield London.



Larry Achiampong, Still from *Wayfinder*, (2022). Single-channel 4K colour film. 83 min. Courtesy the artist and Copperfield London.



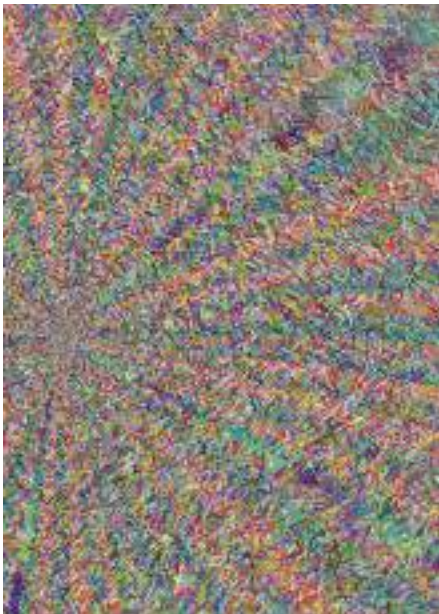
ARTISTS' FILM

LAURA DE DECKER

lauradedecker.com

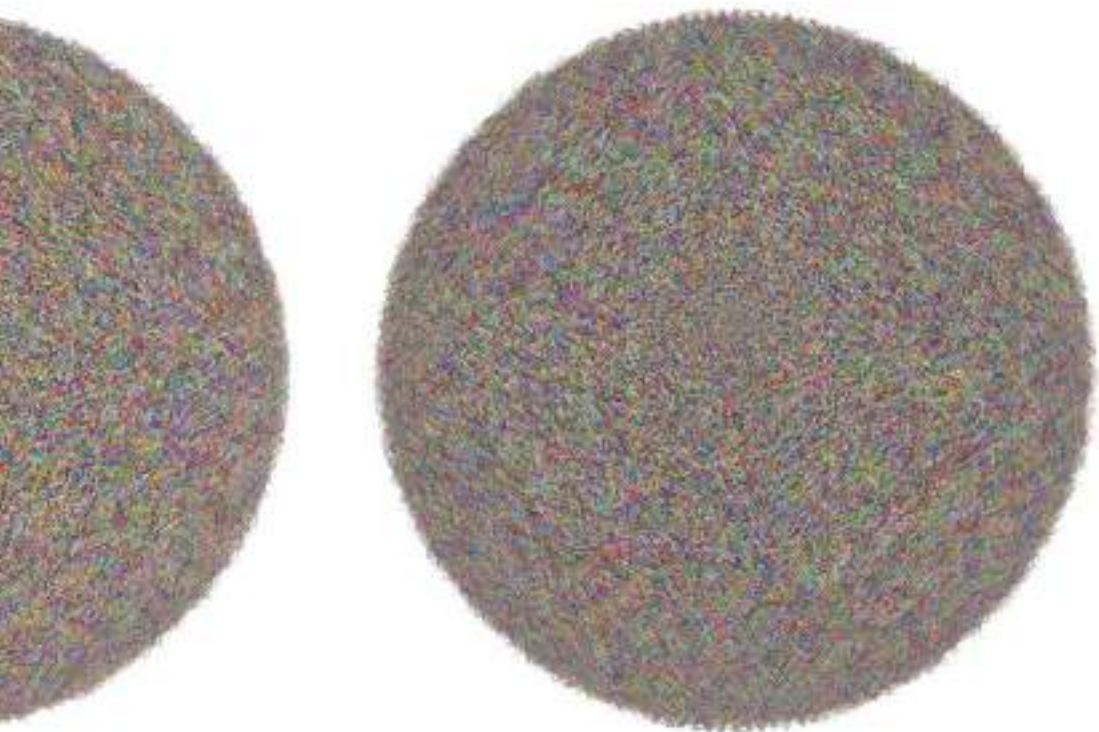
@dedeckerrose 

Canadian visual artist Laura De Decker develops computer programs to construct abstract images, videos and virtual three dimensional artworks. She draws on quantum physics and mathematics, producing *Random Fur Balls* through human-generated and random data. Repeating sequences are used to present information from an alternative view, translating time-based limitations of video into geometric compositions. In the experimental work *Peinture Noire*, a source video of Herménégilde Chiasson is framed by two adjacent panels. These merge elements of the footage into otherworldly scenes, defying typical constraints of film.



Laura De Decker, *Random Fur Balls* (detail), (2021).
Inkjet print. 41 cm x 107 cm. Pseudo-random data.






Laura De Decker, *Random Fur Balls* (detail), (2021). Inkjet print. 41 cm x 107cm.
Quantum optical beam splitter random data and Big Bell Test human-generated data.

ARTISTS' FILM

LISA ROGGENBUCK

lisaroggenbuck.com

@lisaroggenbuck 

Sixty two percent of women feel negatively about their appearance, according to a 2020 study by the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee in Britain. This statistic is reflected in Lisa Roggenbuck's practice, which deals with the impact of western beauty standards perpetuated by popular culture, social media and the fashion industry. *Body Talk* depicts a face as it is painted with a slippery ointment. A derogatory anthem rings out, describing the figure's disconnection from their body. In *Aesthetic Labour*, pastel hues allude to the privilege given to caucasian bodies, whilst repeating patterns represent the removal of individuality.



Lisa Roggenbuck, *Body Talk*, (2019). Single-channel video. 4 min. 56 sec.



Lisa Roggenbuck, *Body Talk*, (2019). Single-channel video. 4 min. 56 sec.



ARTISTS' FILM

MARYAM TAFAKORY

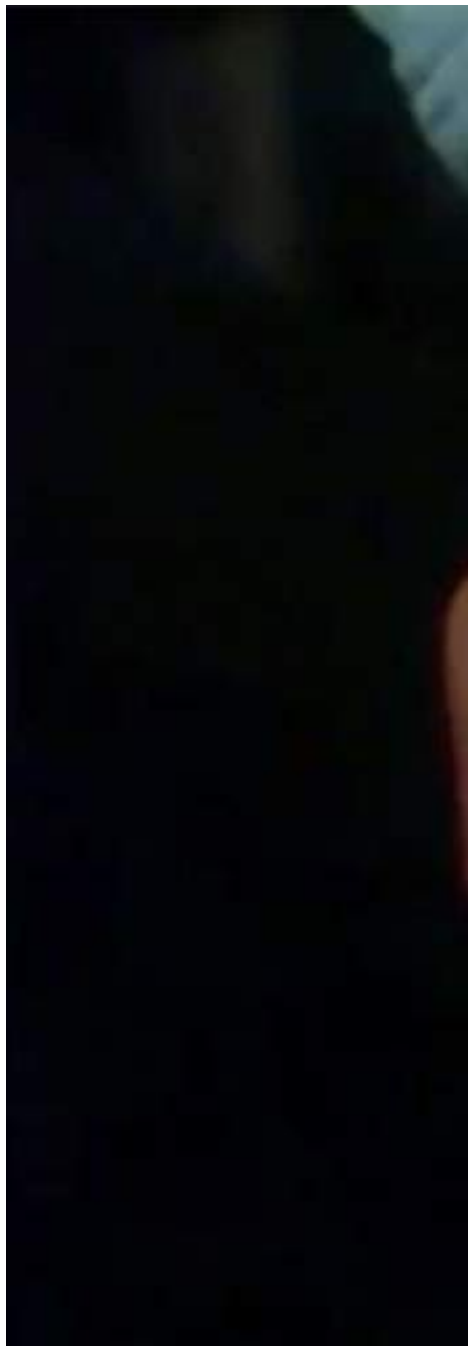
maryamtafakory.com

@maryamtafakory @

Documentary, found material, performance and poetry are stitched together in Maryam Tafakory's filmic collages. The mixed-media artist, born in Iran and based between Shiraz and London, combines images and words to depict themes of erasure, secrecy and the violence of invisible regulatory bodies. Research-based projects examine what is regarded as trivial, excessive or unscientific, taking experiences that are neglected and transforming them into moving-image works. Tafakory has an ongoing body of video essays in dialogue with post-revolution Iranian cinema, contributing a new perspective based on archival and found materials.



Maryam Tafakory, Still from *Nazarbazi*, (2022). Single-channel video. 19 min.




Maryam Tafakory, Still from *Nazarbazi*, (2022). Single-channel video. 19 min.



ARTISTS' FILM

OLUWASEUN OLAYIWOLA

@itsamule 

Oluwaseun (Seun) Olayiwola is a choreographer, critic, dancer and poet based in London. Over the past four years, he's been developing a hybrid choreo-poetic practice that unpicks his multilayered identity as a queer Nigerian-American man. "It's always strange to say Nigerian and queer in the same sentence," the artist says. "That tension is where my practice thrives." Dance film *Stay* is a collaboration with artist Sam Williams, unpicking themes of grief, desire and the Black body. The subject of the piece toes the diminishing line between states of ecstatic pleasure and unrelenting sorrow, investigating the dimensions of intimacy.



Oluwaseun Olayiwola, Still from *the great thing is not having a mind* (2019). Dancer: Amit algi.



Oluwaseun Olayiwola, Still from *Stay* (detail), (2022). Single-channel video. 17 min.



ARTISTS' FILM

SIMON ROBSON

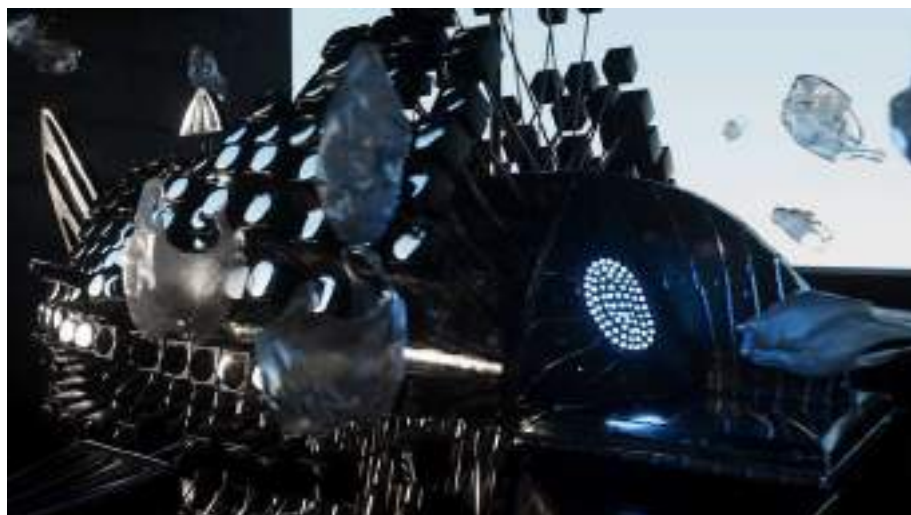
northboysouth.com/film

[@northboysouth](https://www.instagram.com/northboysouth)

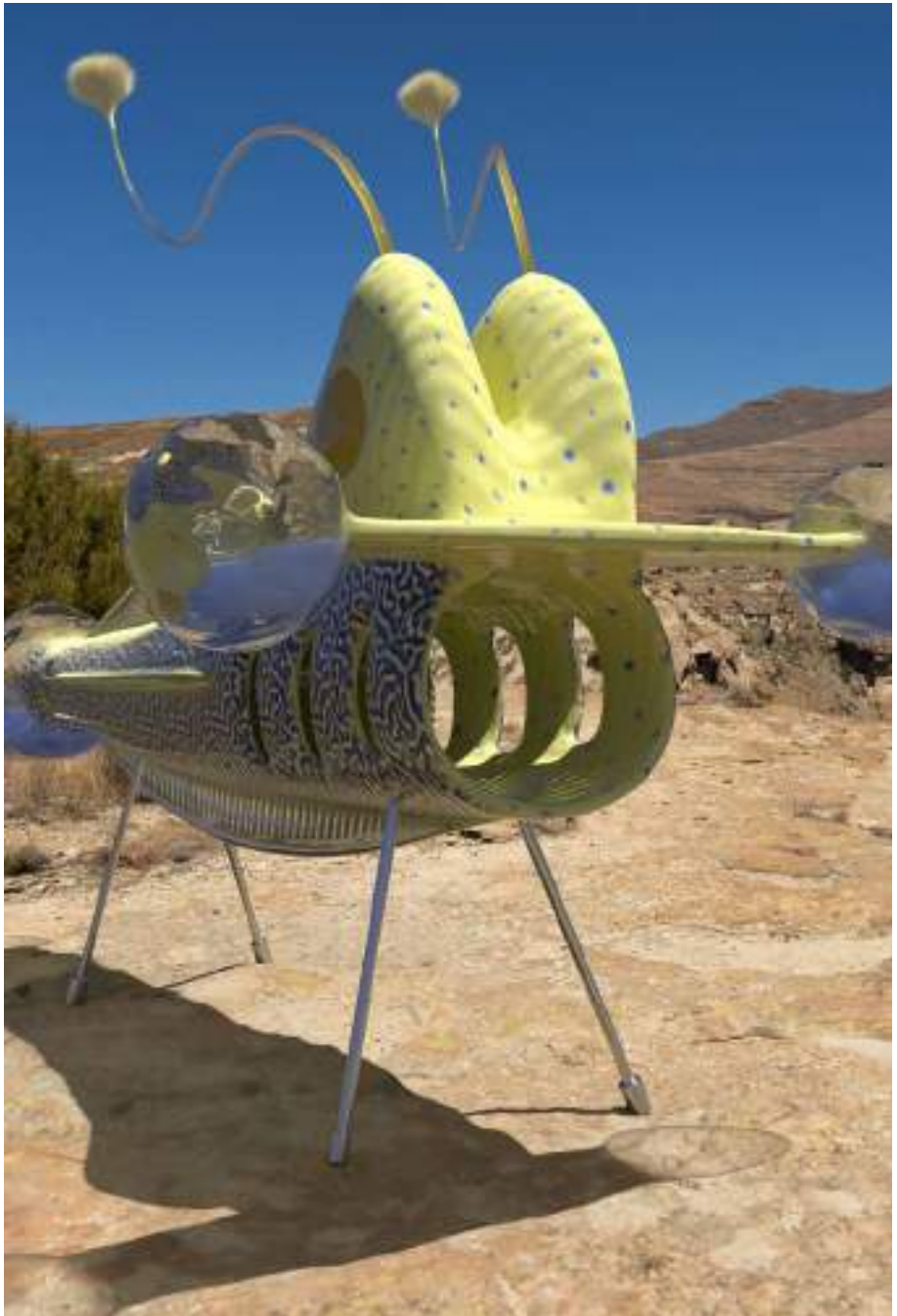
Abstract, metaphor-laden narratives are Simon Robson's signature, brought to life using high-end 3D software and organic in-camera moving-image techniques. Robson is a Sydney-based fine artist, practicing in CGI, live-action filmmaking, digital sculpture and drawing. Robson makes work that is "in service of issues that concern mankind and nature as a whole" – shedding light on humanitarian and ecological issues. Work such as *Ghost in the Machine* employs a Brutalist and technological aesthetic to mirror the urgency of the subjects. This is an evolved approach, stemming from earlier techniques, such as paint on glass and papercraft.



Simon Robson, *Jet Head*, (2021).
Digital sculpture. 18cm x 32cm.



Simon Robson, *Ghost in The Machine*, (2022).
Digital film. 22cm x 22cm. 2 min. 2 sec.



Simon Robson, *Desert Gill Fish*, (2020).
Digital sculpture. 26cm x 32cm.

ARTISTS' FILM

STEPH TARI ODU



bornbyariver.com

@oxdu_ @

Steph Tari Odu is an artist and filmmaker from south London. Their work broadly engages with the relationships we have with our environment, and the everyday acts of faith that build us as people. *The Language* is an exploration of the emerging ballroom community in Barcelona, examining themes of representation and belonging. Odu worked with a local cast and crew, including Barcelona-based Gorgeous Jayce Gucci of the House of Gucci and Black British artist, Jay Jay Revlon, the UK father of the House of Revlon and Barcelona resident. *The Language* is a celebration of queerness, identity, the body and movement.



Steph Tari Odu, Still from *The Language*, (detail) (2022). Single-channel video, 9 min.



Steph Tari Odu, Still from *The Language*, (2022). Single-channel video, 9 min.




ARTISTS' FILM

VALENTINA FERRANDES

FINALIST

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@valentina.ferran 

Valentina Ferrandes is a London-based, southern Italian visual artist and media designer. In her works, she blends a technology-driven approach to image-making with archaeological findings, archival found footage, documentary and electronic music. She creates poetic narrative strategies to investigate potential new worlds between past and present. The script for *Daaphne* was written by AI GPT-3, prompted with excerpts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Artificial intelligence and CGI propel the ancient Greek myth, *Apollo and Daphne*, into the present-day, evoking the never ending struggle between humanity, nature and technology.



Valentina Ferrandes, *Aurea*, (2023). Animation. 3 min.



Valentina Ferrandes, *Daaphne*, (2022). Animation. 10 min.



DIGITAL ART

BRIGITTA ZICS

brigittazics.com

The Huminifier presents versions of the human form altered by flaws in a machine algorithm. Brigitta Zics is interested in the agency of computer algorithms in artistic processes and how engagement with machine learning impacts the human experience. "What makes us human?" is a question reflected in the evolving series of portraits that increasingly distort the face. In one, freckled skin blooms with magenta and teal dots, whilst one eye vanishes into the figure's cheek in another, the iris barely visible. The artist views these images as representative of a new form of identity, one that transcends the physical boundaries of being human.



Brigitta Zics, *Huminifier 6* (detail), (2022). Digital image series.



Brigitta Zics, *Huminifier 1* (detail), (2022). Digital image series.



DIGITAL ART

FILIP CUSTIC

filipcusic.com

@filipcusic @

"I feel that, as humans, we're in continuous transformation." Spanish artist Filip Cusic works across photography, performance and video to address themes around the body, identity and technology. For example, video loop *overthinking myself* examines the impact of digital technologies on our conscience and sense of self. Mirrors and screens are recurring features, referencing the current obsession with image and selfie culture. Mathematic symbols and scientific allusions are also drawn upon in Cusic's creative process. Throughout, the artist focuses on how technological objects can help celebrate human beings' diverse identities.



Filip Cusic, *overthinking myself*, (2020).
4.5K video loop. 1 min. 12 sec.




Filip Cusic, *hypermetaconnected*, (2022). Giclée print.
Hahnemühle museum etching. 350 gr. 101.6 cm x 81.3 cm.



DIGITAL ART

LYNDSAY MARTIN

lyndsaymartin.com

@lyndsaymartinart 

Digital art series *Heirlooms* investigates how domestic environments are impacted by patterns of emotional behaviour. An assemblage of objects and actions offer a glimpse of a complex relationship, leaving space for viewers to apply their own thoughts. In her wider practice, London-based artist Lyndsay Martin combines film, found objects and photography to record emotional landscapes and the potential of interpersonal connections. The Gothic sensibility and notions of time leave narratives and protagonists to fade away, whilst suppressed feelings, such as rage, grief and desire, come to the fore in richly symbolic compositions.



Lyndsay Martin, *Heirlooms Print 5*, (2022). Digital art. Giclee Hahnemuhle photo rag fine art print. 308gsm. 29.7cm x 42cm.



Lyndsay Martin, *Heirlooms Print 1 (detail)*, (2022). Digital Art. Giclee Hahnemuhle photo rag fine art print. 308gsm. 29.7cm x 42cm.




Lydsay Martin, *Heirlooms Print 4* (2022). Digital Art.
Giclee Hahnemuhle photo rag fine art print. 308gsm. 29.7cm x 42cm.

DIGITAL ART

MASARY STUDIOS

masarystudios.com

@masary_studios 

MASARY Studios is a transdisciplinary collective reconsidering environments through site-specific installations that use sound, light, interactivity and performance. Based in Boston, their work explores experiences of interactivity beyond the immediate, interweaving real time feedback with layers of latent, generative expressions. *Memory / Diffusion* investigates the Studio's interest in cultivating these levels beyond the momentary by creating work that develops memories that aggregate, grow and change through time at a site. *Say What You Will* reflects this ethos, inviting audiences to interact with the art and influence its visual expression.



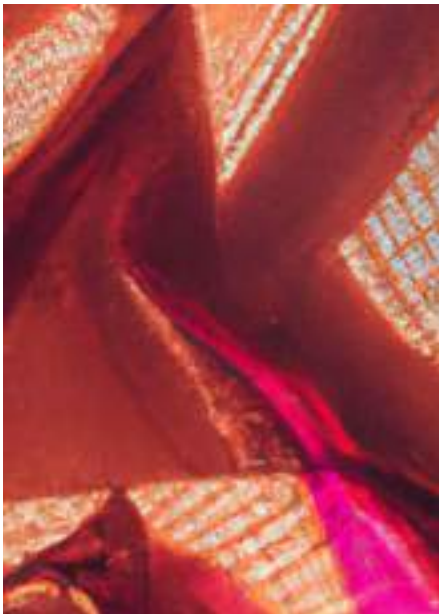
MASARY Studios, *Memory / Diffusion* (detail), (2022). LED panels, custom software, light, acrylic, metal. 915cm x 1220cm x 18cm. Photo: Aram Boghosian.



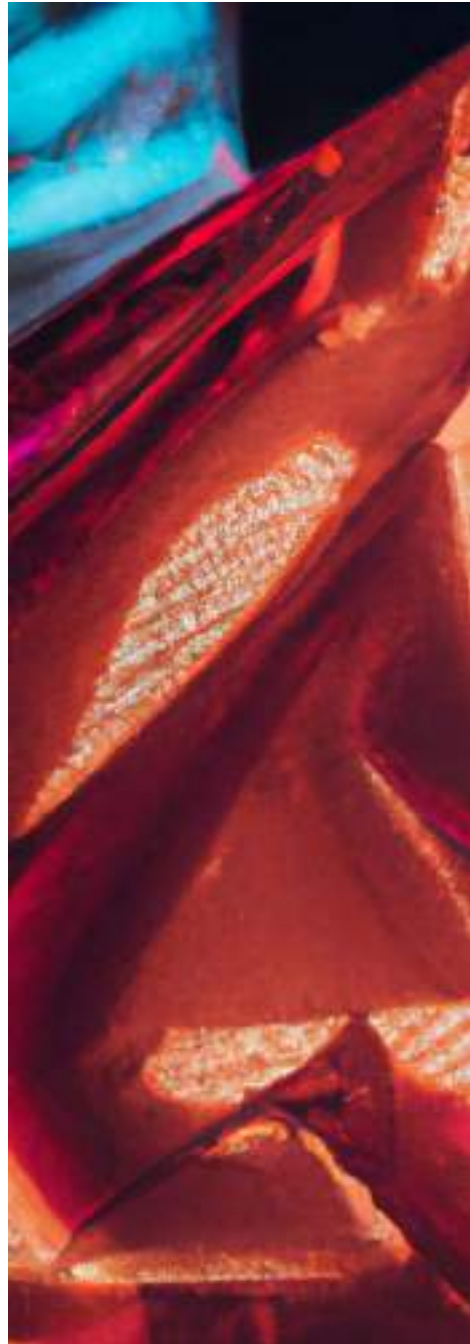


MASARY Studios, *Say What You Will* (detail), (2021). Fabric, custom software, projected video, sound, acrylic. Dimensions site-specific. Photo: Aram Boghosian.

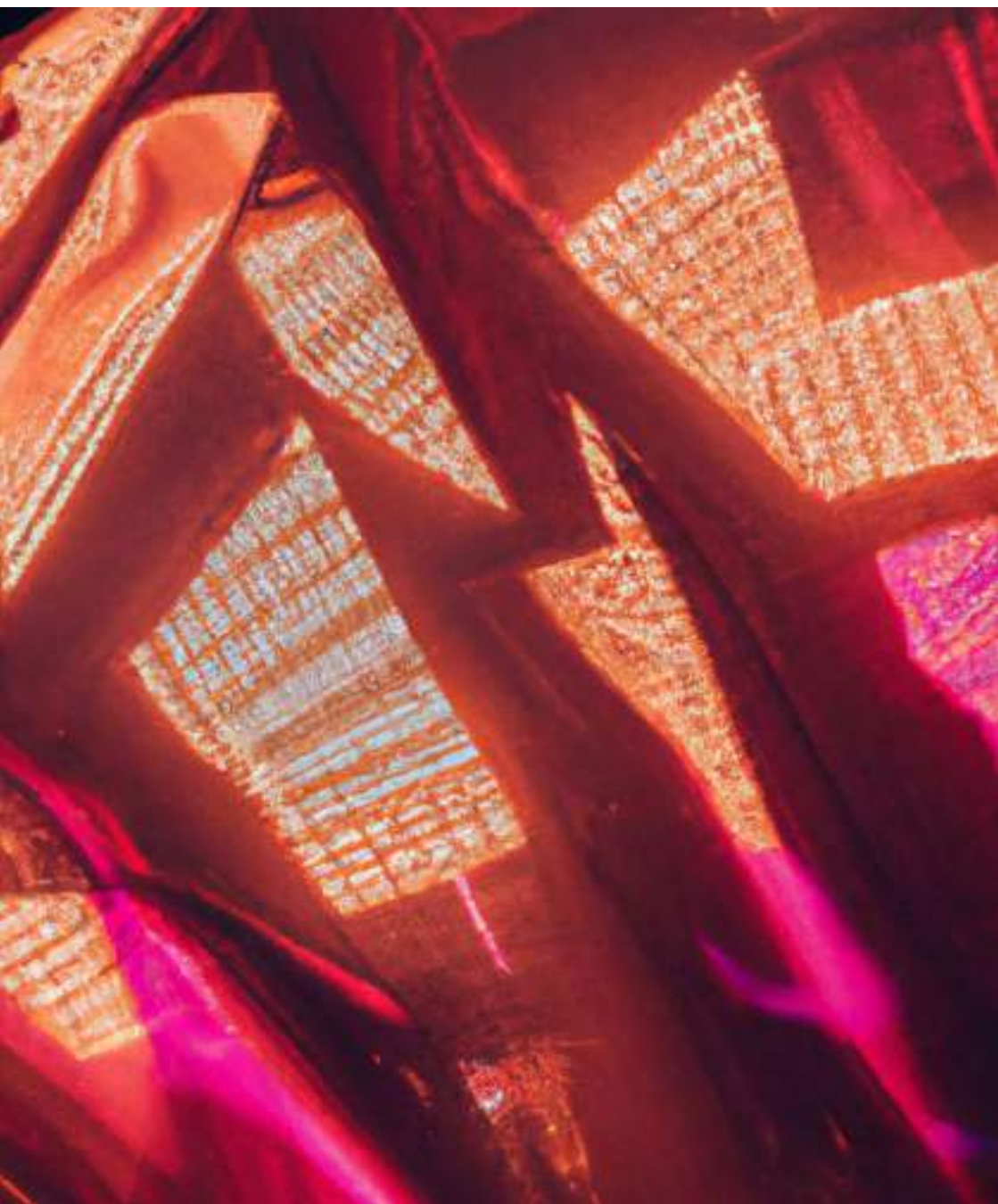
Multidisciplinary artist NJ transforms code and raw data into painterly materials, transcending the boundaries of the artificial and organic. NJ's latest series, *Change Climate Change*, features bright blue, purple, red and yellow, which meld together and transfix the viewer. The surface of these digital paintings, such as *Disappearing World* and *Wild Fire*, undulate and draw in the eye, as if in a constant state of transformation. The closer viewers look, the more is revealed. The British contemporary practitioner works under a unique acronym of anonymity, preferring the attention to be on the meaning and power of the artwork they produce.



NJ, *Disappearing World* (detail), (2022).
Mixed-media on canvas, 90cm x 90cm x 3cm.



NJ, *Disappearing World*, (2022).
Mixed-media on canvas, 90cm x 90cm x 3cm.



DIGITAL ART

SONIA LEVESQUE

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@hello_levesque

AI&I is a record of Sonia Levesque's first year working with artificial intelligence. Co-created with a blend of tools, including GPT-3, AWS Polly and DALL-E, the immersive virtual experience takes the form of audiovisual, text and outpainted artworks. These artefacts document the dawn of a new era for art and machine learning. They are gathered together on a 3D floating vessel in New Art City, a digital gallery space. The XR specialist, who is based in Dover, is dedicated to blending traditional techniques with emerging technologies. It's an approach characterised by curiosity, experimentation and the pursuit of "truth, freedom and play."



Sonia Levesque, Still from *XX & Essays From The Crown* (detail), (2023). 39.4cm x 22.9cm on aluminium.



Sonia Levesque, Still from *AI&I Virtual Space, New Art City* (detail), (2021-2023). VR coordinates 32, 16, -363.



ZIYAO LIN

ziyaolin.net

@ziyao0 @

"Human existence is becoming more and more instrumentalised and alienated," writes designer and illustrator Ziyao Lin. *Limit Situation* is set against a busy modern-day backdrop, defined by the information explosion on the internet, an accelerated pace of life and the impact of consumerism. Here, digital sculpture, VR and images come together to construct an experience of existential self-examination. Each face on a dice marked 1-6 leads to a symbolic situation, which can be experienced in VR scenes. "The abstract digital space is like a boundless region of the mind, and the six paradoxes reflect a human dilemma that is difficult to escape."


Ziyao Lin, *Limit Situation* (detail), (2022). VR scene experience.Ziyao Lin, *Limit Situation* (detail), (2022). VR scene experience.



INSTALLATION

BEA LAST

bealast.com

@bea-last-artist 



Bea Last, *The Red Bags* (interior), (2022). Repurposed canvas, bamboo, bullet holes. Dimensions variable.

Based in Scotland, UK, Bea Last's creative practice is process led. Currently, she is surveying drawing in its broadest sense. Last has created sculptural drawing installations using salvaged, recycled materials and found objects, such as plastics, fabric, iron and wood. Installations are created or reinvented depending on location, space and environment. *The Red Bags* is both a reaction to and a statement about issues affecting society at large, such as war, displacement and the climate crisis. There is a contrast between fragility and strength, which is simultaneously monumental and delicate. Last's projects look at what it is to be human.



Bea Last, *The Red Bags*, (2022). Repurposed canvas, bamboo, bullet holes. Dimensions variable.



Bea Last, *The Red Bags*, (2022). Repurposed canvas, bamboo, bullet holes. Dimensions variable.

INSTALLATION

CARO WILLIAMS

carowilliams.com

@carowilliamsartist



Caro Williams, *Lark Song*, (2021). Metal song notes created from lark song recordings (soundtrack), ribbon. 20m x 15m x 17.5m.

Metal notes are created from lark song recordings in *In The White Dawn*, an installation inspired by poetry and interactions with the natural world. Caro Williams is London-based installation and mixed-media artist who works with symbols, sound, language and place. The artist draws inspiration from everyday experiences – including film clips, lines from poems, sounds – and transforms them into new materials through digital manipulation and sculptural installations. This process of translation is akin to a poem in the viewer's mind, suspended in a surreal reality where meaning is ambiguous: at once familiar and out of reach.



Caro Williams, *Cues for a Poem*, (2022). Poem, mirror steel. 110cm x 120cm x 25cm.




Caro Williams, *In The White Down*, (2022). Metal song notes created from lark song recordings (soundtrack), ribbon. Dimensions variable.

INSTALLATION

CAROLINE BURRAWAY

cburraway.co.uk

[@carolineburraway](https://www.instagram.com/carolineburraway) 

An estimated 27.1 million people are refugees across the world. Multidisciplinary artist Caroline Burraway has been responding to the crisis since 2015, gathering research from refugee camps in Europe to produce mixed-media installations, large-scale drawings and sculptures that highlight the severity of the humanitarian emergency. *Ungrievable Lives* is a harrowing display, depicting 13 children's dresses made from discarded lifejackets: symbols of unknown individuals' lives, stories and backgrounds. Burraway looks to provoke a humane response to the issues of displacement and dispossession in our compassion-fatigued world.



Caroline Burraway, *Afghan woman, Moria Refugee Camp*, (2021). Charcoal drawing. 225cm x 152cm.



Caroline Burraway, *Ungrievable Lives*, (2021). Installation view, Wigmore Hall, London. 175cm x 450cm x 50cm.



INSTALLATION

COMPUTATIONAL DESIGN AND VISUALIZATION LAB

cdv.dei.uc.pt/

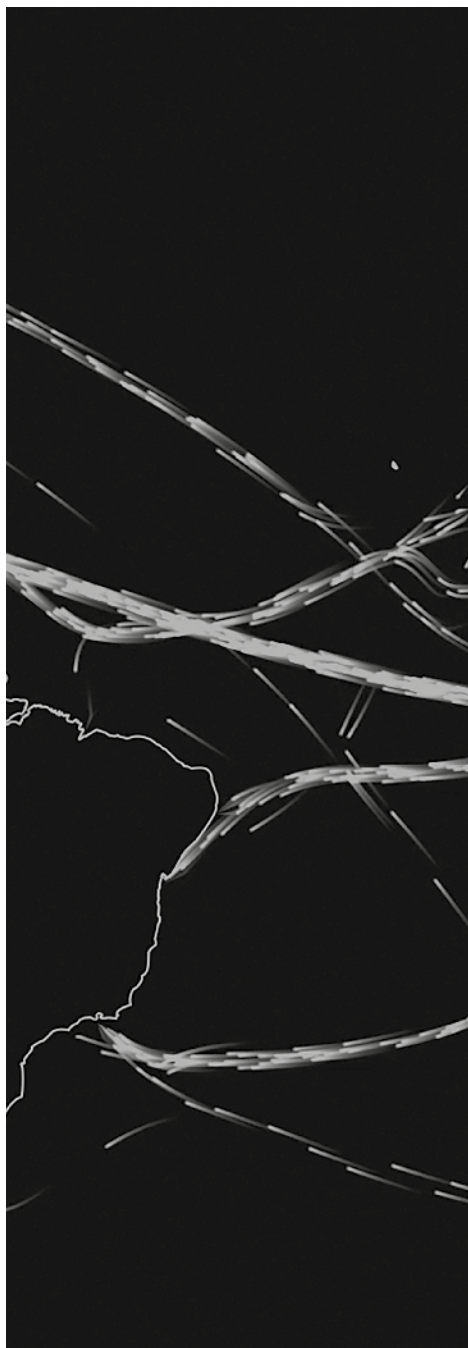
@cdv.lab @



The Middle Passage is a collection of visualisation artefacts that provide a deeper understanding of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The work considers history across the centuries as well as the magnitude and continued legacy of colonialism. These graphics were created from data extracted from the Transatlantic Slave Trade database, which contains information about over 36,000 slave raids. *The Middle Passage* was developed by researchers of the CDV Lab from the Centre for Informatics and Systems of the University of Coimbra, Portugal. They focus on intersections of creativity, computational design and information visualisation.

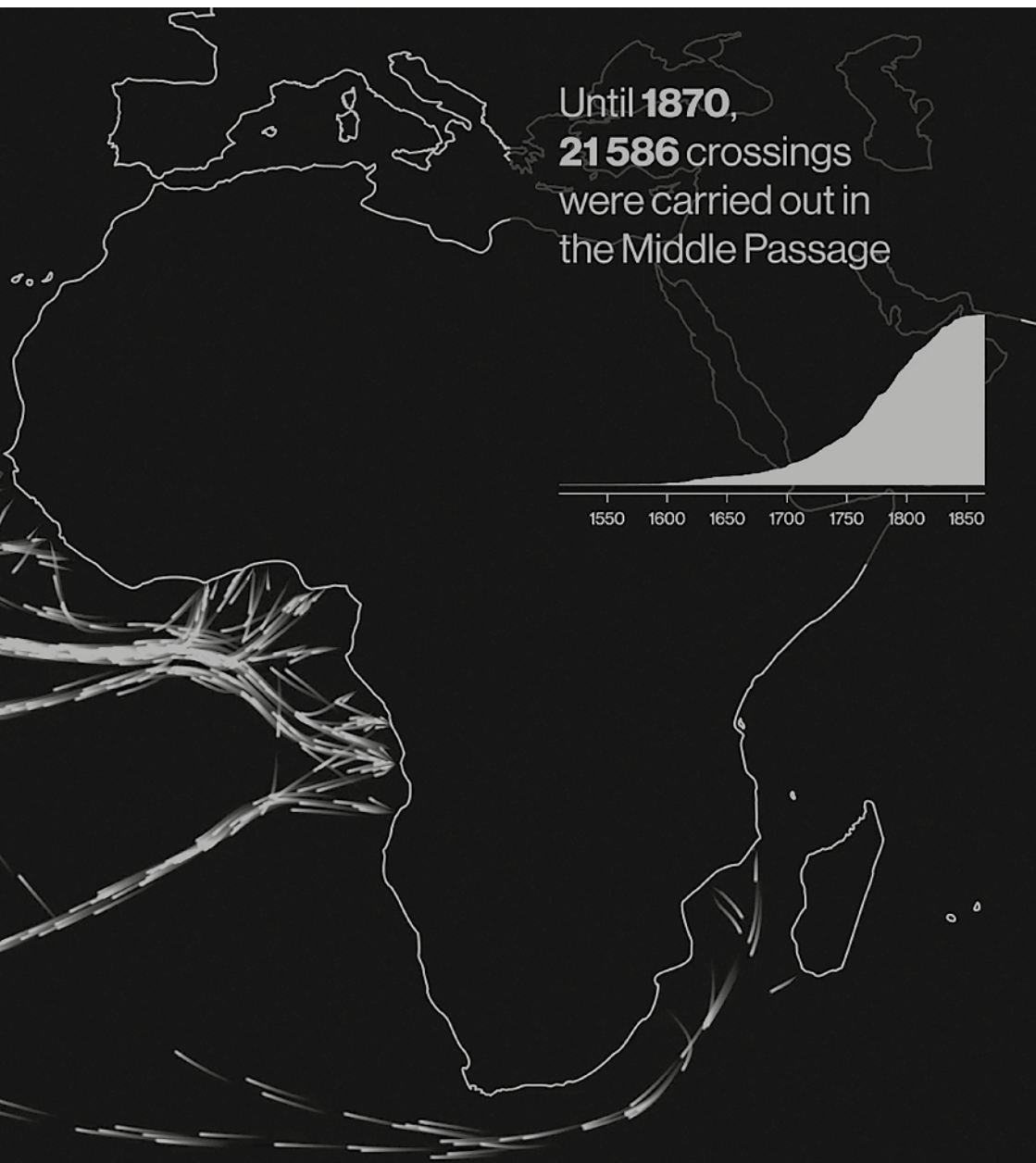
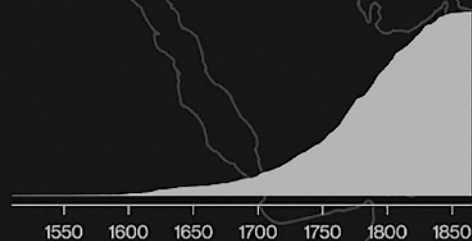


Tiago Martins, João Correia and Sérgio Rebelo, *Portraits of No One*, (2019-2020). Interactive installation. Photo: José Paulo Ruas/DGPC.



Computational Design and Visualisation Lab, Still from *The Middle Passage*, (2020). 6 min, 4 sec.

Until **1870**,
21 586 crossings
were carried out in
the Middle Passage



INSTALLATION

DJENEBA ADUAYOM

djeneba-aduayom.com

[@djeneba.aduayom](https://www.instagram.com/djeneba.aduayom)

There are more qualities that connect individuals than divide them. This observation is at the core of Djeneba Aduayom's expression. The multidisciplinary conceptual artist draws on her background as a professional dancer, incorporating photography and performance into her imagery. The series *Atmospheric Perspective* fuses these mediums, in which projections create a feeling of immersion, highlighting underlying universal connections between humanity and nature. These images are dreamlike, layering elements of abstraction and surrealism to reflect Aduayom's personal exploration of the worlds residing within her imagination.



Djeneba Aduayom, *Atmospheric Perspective*, (2022).
Photography. 20cm x 25cm. Courtesy of Galerie Number 8.



Djeneba Aduayom, *Atmospheric Perspective*, (2022).
Photography. 20cm x 25cm. Courtesy of Galerie Number 8.



Djeneba Aduayom, *Atmospheric Perspective* (detail), (2022).
Photography, 20cm x 25cm. Courtesy of Galerie Number 8.

INSTALLATION

ELISA ARTESERO

elisaartesero.com

@ElisaArtesero @

"I have a strong desire to capture the intangible, to experience the physicality of light and shadow." Elisa Artesero uses light and text in spatial environments to address themes of transience, the nature of happiness and hope. The UK-based artist utilises industrial materials in installations, including concrete, steel and glass. In *Light Holds Me Here*, the words, "Nothing here but echoes of footsteps that follow the path of dreams," are carved from Foamex. Patterns cast shadows on the floor; the words' dual existence represents how behaviours and feelings are often fleeting. "I want the space to be something the visitor can become part of."



Elisa Artesero, *Sun Sculpture*. From *Between the Sun and the Moon*, (2022). Glass. 250cm x 165cm x 160cm. Photo: Elisa Artesero.



Elisa Artesero, *Light Holds Me Here*, (2014). Foamex. Dimensions variable. Photo: Stephen Iles.



INSTALLATION

ELIZABETH WITHSTANDLEY

withstandley.com

@E_Withstandley

Getaway is a 10-channel video installation that uses the backdrop of a tragic event at the Everglades in the mid-1990s to explore a misinterpreted land. Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Elizabeth Withstandley interrogates contemporary culture through loose narrative structures. These multi-channel compositions question individuality, morality and the purpose of life. The artist often begins with a portrait of a person and expands outwards, encompassing reflections on their wider community and local culture. Music is often a central thematic backbone to Withstandley's projects, leaving viewers to wonder about their place in life.



Elizabeth Withstandley, *Searching for the Miraculous*, (2020). Three channel HD video installation. Injet print & glass jars. Dimensions variable. 18 min.



Elizabeth Withstandley, *Getaway*, (2022). 10 channel HD video installation with sound. Dimensions variable. 28 min.



INSTALLATION

ENNI-KUKKA TUOMALA

ennikukka.com

@ennikukka.studio @

Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Enni-Kukka Tuomala is a Finnish artist based in London, whose vision is to transform the emotional response from an individual feeling into a radical power for systemic change. Tuomala's multidisciplinary practice uses installations, public interventions, environments and tools to fight the growing global deficit. For example, *Is There Space for Empathy?* invites individuals to step inside the installation together, made of sheer stainless steel mesh, to interact in an imaginative new environment. This artwork re-examines the invisible spaces between people.



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Is There Space for Empathy?*, (2021).
Installation. 350cm x 800cm x 500cm. Photograph: Laura Mainiemi.



Enni-Kukka Tuomala, *Is There Space for Empathy?*, (2021).
Installation. 350cm x 800cm x 500cm. Photograph: Laura Mainiemi.



INSTALLATION

GARETH PHILLIPS

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The *Caligo* installation, realised in the form of a seven-metre suspended photobook, tells the fictional story of a group of humans escaping climate catastrophe, who seek asylum on another planet, a utopian environment reminiscent of Eden. Gareth Phillips is a photographer exploring contemporary definitions of the photobook, experimenting with them as objects, sculptures and installations. The practitioner utilises artistic freedom to explore the boundaries of expected photobook landscapes. *Caligo* is a direct creative response to the climate emergency that pervades the present, as well as an attempt to reimagine definitions of the photobook.



Gareth Phillips, *Caligo* (detail), (2022-2023).
Photography Department at Swansea College of Art, UWTSO.



Gareth Phillips, *Caligo*, (2022-2023). Installation view.
Photography Department at Swansea College of Art, UWTSO.



INSTALLATION

GEMMA FENOL

gemmafenol.com

[@papersculpture_](https://www.instagram.com/papersculpture_)

A deep love of cinema led Barcelona-born artist Gemma Fenol on a journey to Los Angeles, where she completed a Master's degree in Set Design. This knowledge has developed into a passion for immersive installations, which allow viewers to "complete" environments by projecting their own experiences and narratives. *Paper Sculptures* sees the artist combine film production and sculpture to play with perceptions of space. Luminous wooden cutouts are pasted together to create congruent structures, reminiscent of Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill's pastel apartment blocks and Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher's mind boggling prints.



Gemma Fenol, *Paper Sculpture #29* (detail), (2020-ongoing). Paper. 30cm x 25cm x 8cm.



Gemma Fenol, *Paper Sculpture #39* (detail), (2020-ongoing). Paper. 8cm x 40cm x 45cm.



INSTALLATION

GÉRALD FOLTÊTE

geraldfoltete.com

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Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Adolescent* (1875) tells the tale of Arkady, the illegitimate son of a landowner. He journeys to visit his estranged father but becomes embroiled in a series of conflicts that reveal treachery and political forces. The story unpacks the unpredictability of both human action and the future. Gérald Foltête's *Inconsistency & Obviousness* is based on this idea, investigating discrepancies by plunging viewers into infinity. Fragments of paper are scattered in puzzle-like patterns, whilst torn writing samples are pieced back together. The mixed-media installation evokes the complexity of arranging ideas.



Gérald Foltête, *Pack Like Sardines* (detail), (2022).
Mixed-media. 50cm x 50cm x 50 cm.



Gérald Foltête, *Inconsistency & Obviousness*, (2022).
Mixed-media. 300cm x 1000 cm.



INSTALLATION

GILLIAN HOBSON

gillhobson.com

[@gill.hobson](https://www.instagram.com/gill.hobson)

Researchers estimate that the human eye can distinguish around one million different colours. Yet, there are thought to be an infinite amount of varieties beyond the visible spectrum. Gillian Hobson operates at the interface of the digital and analogue, creating experiential works that consider the potential of light for sustenance and renewal. These works reimagine stained glass for the 21st century, with moving-image projections that combine light rays from natural and artificial sources. *Radiance Vertex* uses mirrors, reflection and transparent materials to fill public spaces with luminous fragments of colour, offering a new perspective.



Gillian Hobson, *Radiance Vertex*, (2022).
Flat glass, dichroic, light. 240cm x 160cm x 60cm.



Gillian Hobson, *Mirror Stage*, (2018).
Acrylic, mirror, projection. 240cm x 300cm x 300cm.



Gillian Hobson, *Radiance Vertex*, (2022).
Flat glass, dichroic, light. 240cm x 160cm x 60cm.

INSTALLATION

JAN VAN EIJGEN

janvaneijgen.com

@janve 

Jan Van Eijgen is driven by a fascination with the body. In 2019, he graduated as a physician and now works in ophthalmology. A focus of his educational pursuits were the mechanisms of metabolism, cell structures and fungi. Moulds and yeasts are essential for the survival of almost every lifeform, but there are over 300 poisonous fungus species, making the natural forms equally vital and deadly to life. The duality inspires Van Eijgen's practice. Speaking about *Universe Within*, the artist states: "It deals with a parallel world, hidden from view. By nourishing the fungi, I make this world visible and at the same time create a new one."



Jan Van Eijgen, Interview still from *Kunstletters*, (2022). Photo: Kimberley Dhollander.





Jan Van Eijgen, *Universe Within*, (2021). Sugar water sprayed daily on large canvas. Environmental fungus and agarose on woodframe and linnen. 400cm x 400cm x 5cm. Photo: Jan Van Eijgen.

INSTALLATION

LADY KITT

lladykitt.com

@lady.kitt1 @

Lady Kitt is a UK-based disabled artist and drag king who describes their work as "mess making as social glue." Collaborative projects culminate in large-scale, vibrant installations that dominate public spaces. Works like *The Good Books* use crafting, performance and research to gently dismantle or reconfigure areas and systems that are otherwise discriminatory, obsolete or uninspiring. The new sites are also environmentally responsible, utilising raw clay, recycled paper and reused plastics in fun and engaging ways. The resulting "folk-art shrines" are driven by an insatiable curiosity about social functions of art and creativity.



Lady Kitt, *Pleasure Imprints*, (2023). Installation, recycled paper and raw clay. 700cm x 800cm x 250cm. Photo: Art Matters Now.



Lady Kitt, *Art Confined*, (2020). Installation, recycled paper. 800cm x 1500cm x 1500cm. Photo: Lady Kitt.



Lady Kitt, *The Good Books*, (2022). Installation, recycled paper.
2000cm x 3000cm x 700cm. Photo: Jade Westerman.

INSTALLATION

LAVINIA KELLER

lavkeller.com

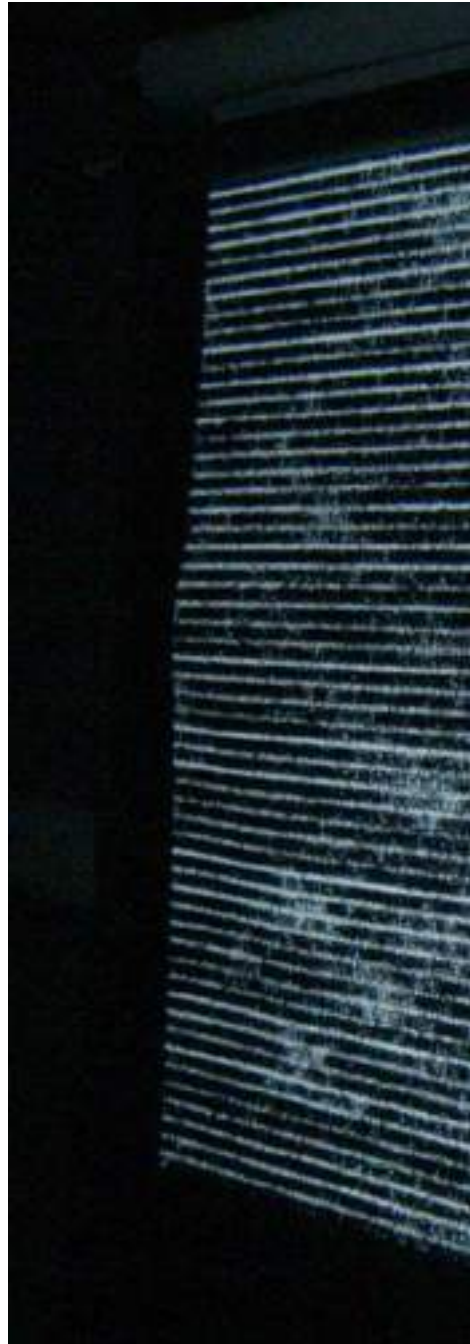
@lavkeller 



Through moving image and multimedia installations, Lavinia Keller discloses the invisible impact of technology, inviting viewers to rethink ownership and identity. Her work sits between analogue and digital spaces. It is dedicated to capturing the audience's emotions, which outlast the rapid pace of contemporary media culture. *NFMe* is an installation and infrastructure that was created to increase cyber security and self-sovereignty in Web 3.0. The project evokes a reflection on societal and technological developments, whilst showing a glimpse of possible futures. Keller demands answers to the questions that the digital age raises.



Lavinia Keller, *NFMe* (detail), (2022).
Installation view. 200cm x 250cm.



Lavinia Keller, *NFMe*, (2022).
Installation view. 200cm x 250cm.



INSTALLATION

LISA PETTIBONE

pettibone.co.uk

@lisa_pettibone

UK-based visual artist, curator and teacher Lisa Pettibone investigates human perception through the language of science, expressing concepts of energy, form, light and tension. Organic materials, such as brass, glass and rocks, are repurposed to record spontaneous natural phenomena that have altered the way people view the universe. *Instrument of Thought: A Meditation on Matter and Light*, for example, highlights the pull of gravity through movement and lustrous qualities of natural objects. Abstract, fluid white glass shapes form a two-metre mobile, gliding past each other in mid-air to reveal unique ways to view the installation.



Lisa Pettibone, *Instrument of Thought: A Meditation on Matter and Light* (detail), (2022). Crystal, wire, brass rod, glass. 180cm x 120cm x 120cm. Image ©Jason Pettibone.



Lisa Pettibone, *Instrument of Thought: A Meditation on Matter and Light* (detail), (2022). Rock, wire, brass rod, glass. 180cm x 120cm x 120cm. Image ©Jason Pettibone.



Lisa Pettibone, *Instrument of Thought: A Meditation on Matter and Light* (2022).
Glass, brass, rocks, crystal, mirror, wire. 180cm x 120cm x 120cm. Image ©Lisa Pettibone.

INSTALLATION

LIZ WILSON

lizwilson.work

@_liz_wilson_ 

Within the Wake is an ensemble of sculpture, sound and video that draws inspiration from the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Recalibrated artefacts and mechanisms are animated with ethereal sounds and robotic voices, creating a timeline of momentum that stretches between Britain's industrial revolution and the post-industrial present. Artist Liz Wilson introduces humans and machines as both the "conductor" and "orchestra" by identifying how these performative roles manifest during the process of manufacturing. Site visits were a catalyst for research that examines the fluctuating relationship between humanity and technology.



Liz Wilson, *The Optical Mechanical*, (2019). Multi-channel video installation. 800cm x 450cm. 4 min.





Liz Wilson, *Within the Wake*, (2022). Multi-channel video installation. Dimensions variable.
4 min. Commissioned by 'Art in Manufacturing' for the National Festival of Making.

INSTALLATION

NATALIA GARCÍA CLARK

nataliagarciacklark.com

A fly tries to find its way out of a transparent box that sits before an atmospheric landscape painting. The insect's moving body contrasts with the static scenery it travels through, whilst the demarcations of the plastic container are magnified by the bug's desperate flutter. This video installation by Natalia García Clark, *Conflicto Interno (Internal Conflict)*, encourages viewers to think about the spirit of captive animals. The Mexican artist works between mixed-media, performance, photography and sound to express philosophical and political ideas. She is increasingly focusing on narrative filmmaking, using humour to create connections.



Natalia García Clark, *Self Portrait (detail)*, (2017).
1080cm x 1920cm. 5 min, 59 sec.



Natalia García Clark, *Conflicto Interno (Internal Conflict)*, (2020).
2160cm x 3840cm. 7 min, 56 sec.



INSTALLATION

PAUL BONOMINI

bonominisculptor.com

@paul_bonomini

London-based artist and Royal Society of Sculptors member Paul Bonomini is driven by materiality. His practice encompasses different processes: the initial encounter with matter, gathering components and producing the final large-scale installation. One ongoing strand of artistic investigation is the beauty and symmetry of platonic solids – a group of five polygons that have regular forms that can be tessellated, such as a cube. Elsewhere, *L'Ascensione* is a sprawling mass of interlocking metal tubes. It mirrors the curvature of a surrounding public building, interrogating the relationship between the body and physical environments.



Paul Bonomini, *L'Ascensione*, (2022).
Galvanised steel. 900cm x 180cm x 150cm.



Paul Bonomini, *L'Ascensione* (detail), (2022).
Galvanised steel. 900cm x 180cm x 150cm.



Paul Bonomini, *L'Ascensione* (detail), (2022).
Galvanised steel. 900cm x 180cm x 150cm.

INSTALLATION

PHOEBE LEE

phoebelee.cargo.site

@labelled_by_pb | @presentetclair

Each of the 100 puzzle segments in *The Missing Piece* are part of a publication that holds individual authors' experiences of joy. When aligned, the picture becomes complete – inviting viewers to retrospectively explore what "being happy" means to them. Phoebe Lee is a Korean-American creative director whose work playfully communicates intangible and, at times, emotional subject matter through unexpected media. The experimental nature of her practice is designed to transform audiences into actors, listeners, makers, players, storytellers and readers. "There is never a dull moment when you are dancing with curiosity," Lee explains.



Phoebe Lee, *Curiosity Killed the Cat*, (2019).
Publication. 25cm x 17.6cm.



Phoebe Lee, *_Less / "Helpless" PT.2*,
(2020). 3D sculpture. Dimensions variable.



Phoebe Lee, *The Missing Piece*,
(2021). 127cm x 170cm.

INSTALLATION

QUIET ENSEMBLE

quietensemble.com

@quiet_ensemble

From *Quintetto's* goldfish performance to mouse-made percussion in *Orchestra Da Camera*, Quiet Ensemble specialises in unexpected audiovisual experiences. The studio takes a research-based approach, focusing on seemingly insignificant yet wonderful elements – like the movement of a fly, or the sound of trees. Installations and performances celebrate the "invisible concerts" within hidden, or overlooked, aspects of the environment. Founders Fabio di Salvo and Bernardo Vercelli are driven by "the balance between chaos and control," generating their projects by capturing the essence of various objects, forces and creatures.



Quiet Ensemble, *Ephemeral*, (2019).
Water, light, sound. Dimensions variable.



Quiet Ensemble, *Unshaped*, (2021).
Tissue, air, gravity, light, sound. Dimensions variable.



INSTALLATION

ROSIE SHERWOOD

FINALIST

rosiesherwood.com

@rosie.sherwood

The Seagrass Walk is an immersive installation that was created at the National Marine Aquarium. Light, photography, sculpture and video combine to raise awareness about one of the world's most threatened ecosystems. In Britain, seagrass meadows are shrinking at an alarming rate. Approximately 500 hectares are lost per year, mainly due to avoidable human activity. Rosie Sherwood is an artist and writer whose interdisciplinary practice focuses on the natural world. She operates at the axis of environmental sciences and fine art, contributing to dialogues around the climate emergency and humanity's complex relationship with nature.



Rosie Sherwood, *The Seagrass Walk*, (2022).
Installation view. Dimensions variable.



Rosie Sherwood, *The Seagrass Walk*, (2022).
Installation view. Dimensions variable.



INSTALLATION

SIMONE FEZER

simonefezer.com

@simonefezer @

Glass and wood are the backbone of *Tipping Point*. These towering installations dominate everyday spaces from floor to ceiling, enveloping those who venture within. Each environment is reminiscent of an organic structure: rippling waves, for instance, or the inside of a human body. Multidisciplinary artist Simone Fezer describes her large-scale works as "stages for the viewer to enter and explore;" they are part of a wider oeuvre examining the fragility and interdependency of life on Earth. Fezer prefers to work with other artists she meets, which helps to realise dynamic moving-image, performance and sculpture in collaborative, mixed-media projects.



Simone Fezer, *Tipping Point* (detail), (2021). Glass, wood. 800cm x 800cm x 1600cm. Photo: Sven Bauer.



Simone Fezer, *Tipping Point*, (2021). Glass, wood. 800cm x 800cm x 1600cm. Photo: Sven Bauer.



Simone Fezer, *Tipping Point* (detail), (2021). Glass, wood. 800cm x 800cm x 1600cm. Photo: Sven Bauer.

INSTALLATION

TAEZOO PARK

taezoo.com

@digitalbeing

In 2008, Taezoo Park moved to New York City – a year before the broadcast transmission system went digital. Walking around the city, Park began to notice lots of abandoned, analogue electronics on the street. These devices were, originally, very expensive and desirable. "They were considered icons of new technology in the period of Nam June Paik," Park explains, referencing the 1960s video art pioneer, who is remembered for incorporating TV screens into his work. In response, Park decided to give the thrown-away sets a new life. *Digital Being* asks questions about the direction of technological development and its sustainability.



Taezoo Park, *Digital Being: Rebirth*, (2017-2020). CRT TV monitor, TV mount, pipe, arduino, Raspberry Pi, Mac mini, LED, and electric parts on wood panels. Dimensions variable.



Taezoo Park, *Digital Being: Rebirth*, (2017-2020). CRT TV monitor, TV mount, pipe, arduino, Raspberry Pi, Mac mini, LED, and electric parts on wood panels. Dimensions variable.



Taezoo Park, *Digital Being: Rebirth*, (2017-2020). CRT TV monitor, TV mount, pipe, arduino, Raspberry Pi, Mac mini, LED, and electric parts on wood panels. Dimensions variable.

INSTALLATION

TANATSEI GAMBURA

tanagambura.com

Tanatsei Gambura is a new-genre artist and cultural practitioner engaged in translocal research and fieldwork-based studies. In the studio, she draws from lived experience – contemplating issues of society, such as questions of place, gender and identity. To do so, she employs unique conceptual, material and procedural techniques, such as altering textiles with the physical labour of hand washing in *Hand Wash Only*. For Gambura, the processes of forgetting and remembering are productive spaces in which trauma and violence can be understood. The artist foregrounds cultural collaboration across installation, sculpture and text.



Tanatsei Gambura, *Letter to Mama on Arrival to America*, (2022).
Glass vial, calcium carbonate, and stearic acid. 2.5cm x 1.3cm.




Tanatsei Gambura, *Hand Wash Only*, (2022).
Multimedia installation. Dimensions Variable.



INSTALLATION

WEN CHING HAO

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@tw13061 



Wen Ching Hao's work addresses the transference of memory, time and place from one object to another. How can memory be moved and altered? What is the impact of an image being copied, misappropriated and transformed in different cultural contexts? *Observation-Station* manipulates the physical perception of each viewer, which results in an emotional awakening, defined as a "past-future-present moment." This complex way of understanding time, personal and cultural recollections question the relationship between analogue and digital imagery. Traces of memory that remain in each image are translated and deconstructed.



Wen Ching Hao, *Portrait*, (2019). 164cm x 110cm x 5cm.



Wen Ching Hao, *Beach*, (2019). 70cm x 50cm x 5cm.



INSTALLATION

YEN-HSU CHOU

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@yan__xu @

Forests, streets and ruins are not, typically, considered to be traditional settings for classical music. Yet, Yen-Hsu Chou plays cello in all of these spaces, bringing performance to unassuming locations where it doesn't normally belong. Yen-Hsu Chou makes soundscapes in an array of environments, with no accompaniment, audience or stage. These experiments with different biospheres, melodies and outfits. The goal: to examine how human beings might survive in different scenarios. Audio, humour and scenery coalesce in *Bird's Summoner*, as erratic sounds reflect the range of intense feelings that people experience throughout their lives.



Yen-Hsu Chou, *Bird's Summoner*, (2022).
Single-channel video. 2 min, 24 sec.




Yen-Hsu Chou, *Bird's Summoner*, (2022).
Single-channel video. 2 min, 24 sec.



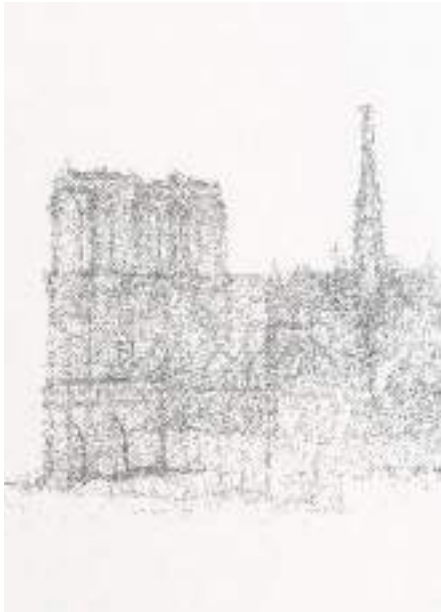
MIXED-MEDIA

BÉATRICE LARTIGUE

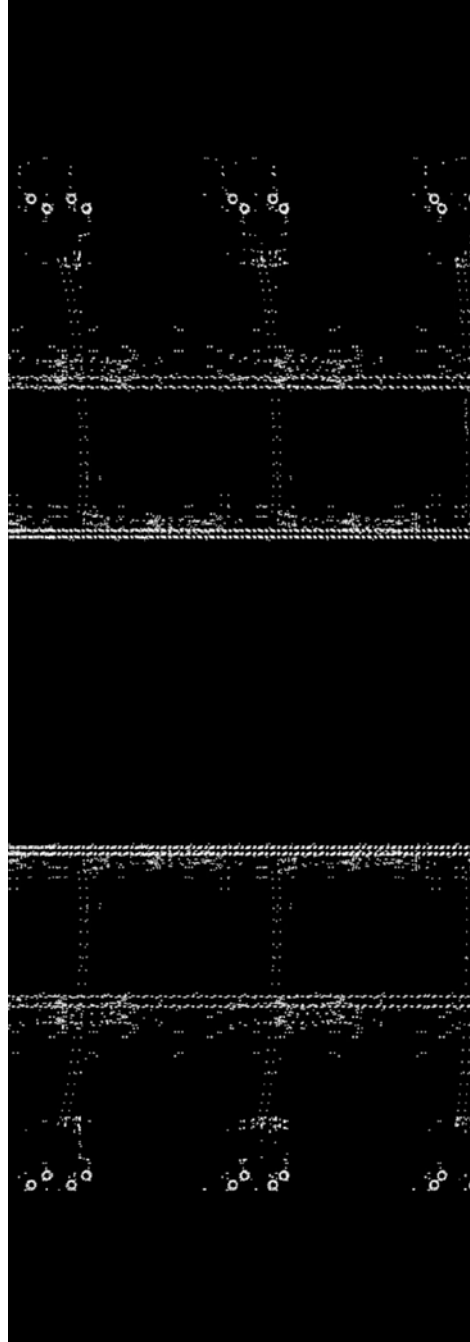
beatricelartigue.com

@beatricelartigue 

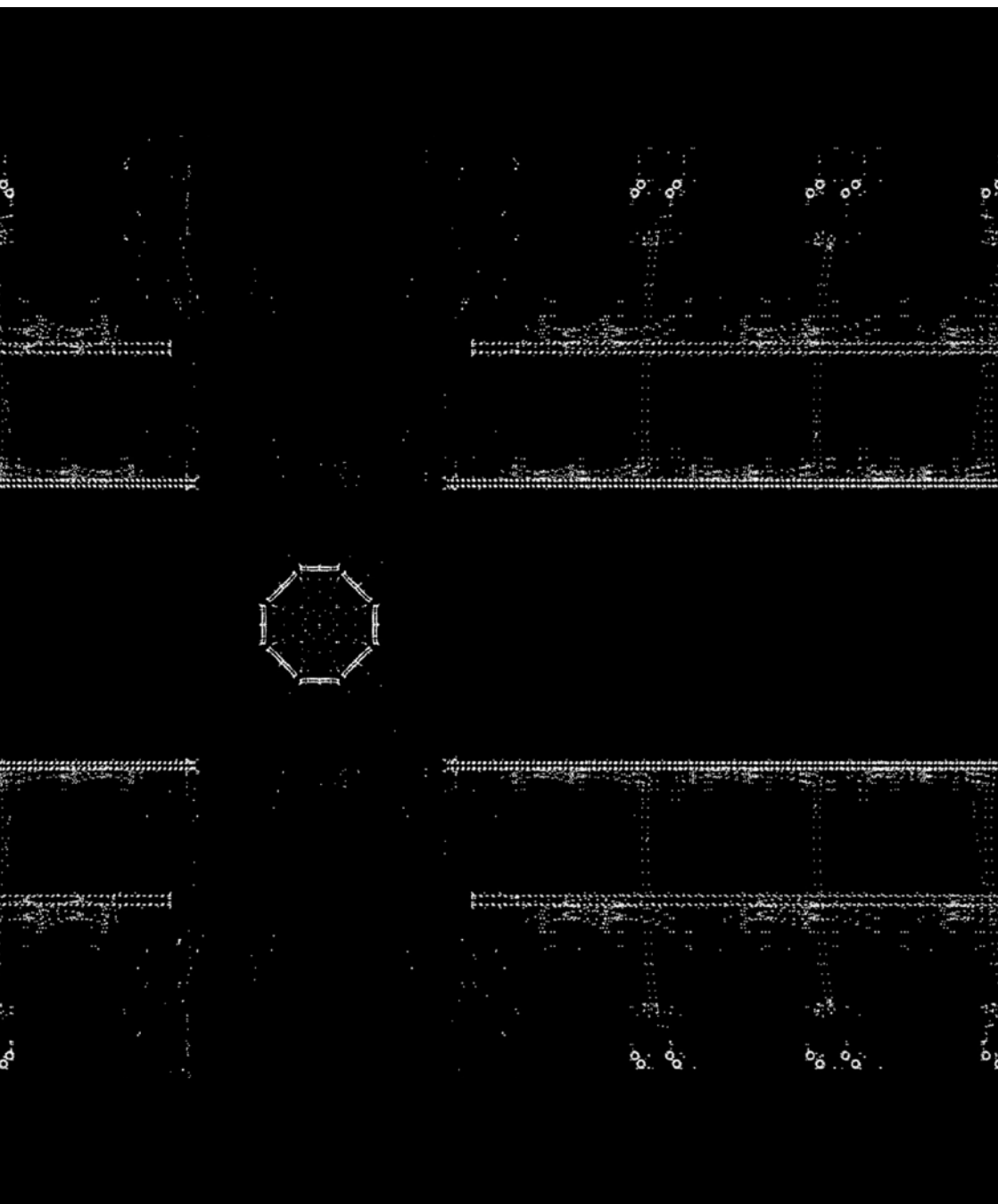
Les Villes Invisibles is an artistic installation that revolves around the theme of memory. It depicts the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, which was built in the 12th century and partially destroyed by fire in 2019. For Béatrice Lartigue, the piece is a personal testimony, echoing the work *Le Città Invisibili* by writer Italo Calvino, published in Italy in 1972. The installation allows viewers to enter, walk around and lose themselves in a 3D rendering of the building. The French artist uses various new media across her practice – incorporating patterns of drawing, light and music – to question human perceptions surrounding history, time and space.



Béatrice Lartigue, *Les Villes Invisibles*, (2020).
Black pen on paper. 29.7cm x 42 cm.



Béatrice Lartigue, *Les Villes Invisibles*, (2020).
Single-channel video. 4 min.



MIXED-MEDIA

ILUÁ HAUCK DA SILVA

iluahauckdasilva.com

@iluahauckdasilva @

Anglo-Brazilian practitioner Iluá Hauck da Silva delves into the conundrums of the human condition. Turbulent inner states of mind are depicted through digital works that are simultaneously baroque and minimal, delicate and visceral, charged and tranquil. In *Disquiet*, a cloud floats above a minimalist bedroom, becoming a metaphor for the psychological and subconscious realms. The fluffy white mass is tainted with a red mist, visually combining two states: good and evil. Elements of the surreal are threaded throughout the beautiful yet brutal installation, symbolising personal feelings of anxiety, isolation, loneliness and longing.



Iluá Hauck da Silva, *Entranhas estranhas*, (2022). Digital. 40cm x 40cm.



Iluá Hauck da Silva, *Disquiet*, (2022). Digital. 45cm x 45cm.



MIXED-MEDIA

JACOB TALBOT

jacobjtalbot.com

@scruffsart @



The project *Nurture; Nature* surveys climate fragility and ongoing technological advances, as well as humanity's ever-changing relationship with the natural world. It is reminiscent of the fine line between order and chaos, speculating on what life would be like on planet Earth if everything were abandoned. Nature would eventually reclaim everything. Jacob Talbot is a multidisciplinary artist who manipulates analogue and digital photography alongside fine art-based multimedia pieces. The work uses a range of photographic genres, techniques and styles, fusing sculpture, interactive installation and more recently plants.



Jacob Talbot, *The Day We Love*, (2022). Bespoke framed, limited edition, fine art photographic print. 60cm x 45cm x 3cm.



Jacob Talbot, *Nurture; Nature*, (2022). Mixed-media living sculpture. 36cm x 95cm x 25cm.



MIXED-MEDIA

OLGA WOSZCZYNA

olgawoszczyzna.earth

@olgawoszczyzna @

"I treat natural elements that can be found in modern public spaces as trophies and notice their additional strength when placed in a manmade context, such as a gallery." Olga Woszczyzna is influenced by the aesthetics of contemporary architecture and goldsmithing. She contemplates the connection between mood, object and place. Along with hunting for raw and rough materials, she is captivated by the beauty of tea matter. *Oolong Tea* documents original packaging from China. The vacuum compressed materials are presented as golden readymades and illustrations, reflecting Eastern tea culture and modern aesthetics.



Olga Woszczyzna, *Oolong Tea* (side view), (2021).
Ink on canvas and readymade. 20cm x 20cm x 2cm.



Olga Woszczyzna, *Oolong Tea*, (2021).
Ink on canvas and readymade. 20cm x 20cm x 2cm.



MIXED-MEDIA

PETER MASTRANTUONO

@artstudio_pm

Stillwater is a visual thinkpiece. It takes the viewer on a journey through different time periods, charting a single summer's day at the coast. Peter Mastrantuono is a mixed-media artist from the UK. He produces art as a direct reaction to what he experiences in the environment and is continuously inspired by the ever-changing nature of his surroundings. Currently, Mastrantuono is working on various interdisciplinary projects that respond to "the elements." These include modular, interchangeable pieces, which can change or grow. Each reacts to different stimuli: for example, the surrounding *mise en scène* or people's moods.



Peter Mastrantuono, *Element 1* (detail), (2021).
Acrylic on cradled panel. 50cm x 40cm x 3cm.



Peter Mastrantuono, *Stillwater* (detail), (2021).
Acrylic on cradled panel. 76cm x 100cm x 3cm.



MIXED-MEDIA

THERESA SCHUBERT

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@studiotheresaschubert @

Theresa Schubert questions anthropocentrism, facilitating sensory experiences that investigate ecology. She says, "At the beginning of this project, we tried to imagine how it could look or sound if non-neuronal beings like plants or algae were able to dream." *Hylē* exists between alchemy and science fiction. The multi-channel video environment, developed with Ivan Taranin, is created from 3D laser scans of a forest and the inside of a server farm, with an algae sculpture at its centre. The plant's real-time signals influence projections on-screen. Audiences are invited to interact with *Hylē*, breathing CO₂ into a funnel that feeds the algae.



Theresa Schubert, *Hylē*, (2022). Bio-cybernetic installation. In collaboration with Ivan Taranin. Photo: Andreas Baudisch.



Theresa Schubert, *Hylē*, (2022). Bio-cybernetic installation. In collaboration with Ivan Taranin. Photo: Andreas Baudisch.



MIXED-MEDIA

ZINZI MINOTT

zinziminott.com

@zinziminott @

Zinzi Minott's work focuses on the relationship between dance, bodies and politics. Minott explores how dance is perceived through the prisms of race, queer culture, gender and class. She is specifically concerned with the place of Black women's bodies within the form, as both a dancer and artist. *Bloodsound* examines ideas of broken narrative, disturbed lineage and how the use of the glitch can help us to consider notions of racism one experiences through the span of a Black life. Minott is interested in telling Caribbean stories and highlighting the histories of those enslaved and the resulting migration of the Windrush Generation.



Zinzi Minott, *One Lyrical Bitch Solo* (detail), (2016).
Photo: TARONA. Dimensions variable.



Zinzi Minott, *Untitled* (detail). From *Bloodsound*, (2022).
Photo: Matthew Arthur Williams. Dimensions variable.



MIXED-MEDIA

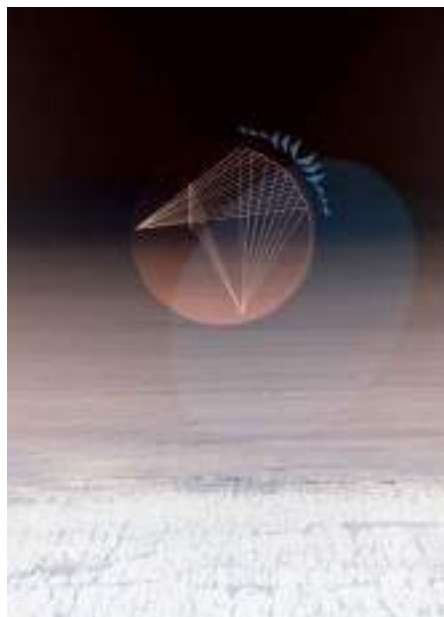
ZOE CHILDERLEY

zoechilderley.co.uk

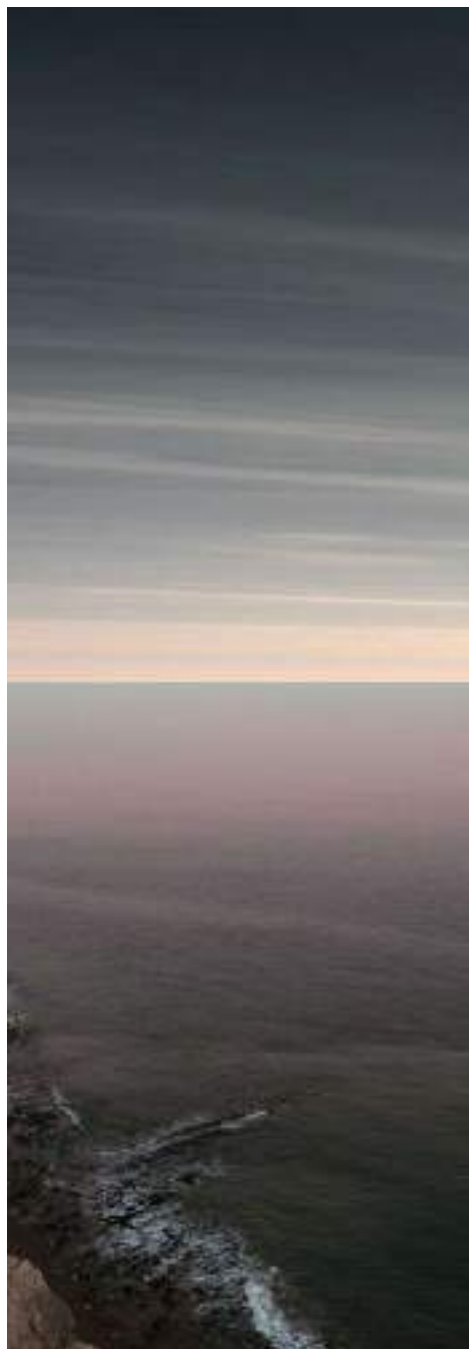
@zoechilderley



Beneath the Waves studies the psycho-geography of the coast and the lure of the sea. It is a border but a dangerous one, or a place between the known and the unknown that is always moving and permeable. Zoe Childerley works with photography and mixed-media to interrogate landscape, the concept of wilderness and the search for a primordial connection. She has a particular interest in combining a desire to experience the "sublime" with the inexplicable seduction of the abyss. Her recent practice looks at the narrative potential of photography in relation to its abstract capacities, incorporating drawing, text and moving-images.



Zoe Childerley, *Negative Light*, (2021). Photographic print and chalk drawing, 70cm x 50cm x 3cm.



Zoe Childerley, *As Above So Below* (detail), (2021). Photographic print and spring tide diagram, 70cm x 140cm x 4cm.



PAINTING

BEN POWER

visualmob.co.uk

@officialvisualmob 

Ben Power takes inspiration from the world of graffiti. He brings the essence of design and street art together in an abstract way, with a background in, and love for, graphic design. He is inspired by how graffiti can break-up the greyness and tedium of city life, bringing excitement, intrigue and interest, as well as disgust and outrage to what would otherwise be a faceless background object or building. Power comments on this dichotomy, creating multi-layered artworks that can cause discussion, but with the main intention to uplift people. Bold, bright and colourful arrangements disrupt the monotony or mundanities of daily life.



Ben Power, *Paint Everything*, (2022).
Acrylic on spray can. 18cm. Circumference 21cm.



Ben Power, *Monoti-not*, (2022).
Acrylic on canvas. 61cm x 91.4cm x 3.5cm.



PAINTING

EDDY GREENWOOD

eddygreenwoodart.com

@eddygreenwoodart

Eddy Greenwood's inspiration comes from Old Masters, such as Anthony van Dyck, Diego Velázquez and Titian. Greenwood's pursuit of their excellence led him on a journey to Italy, where he studied at The Florence Academy of Art and Charles H. Cecil Studios, both ateliers renowned for their commitment to the theory and practice of drawing from life. Enriched by this classical training, he now works as a figurative artist from his studio in The Netherlands. *The Lace Collar* is reminiscent of 17th century Dutch portraits of noblemen. His oil paintings have received international recognition, with shows in Amsterdam and Venice.



Eddy Greenwood, *Charis*, (2021).
Oil on linen. 50cm x 40cm x 1 cm.



Eddy Greenwood, *The Lace Collar*, (2020).
Oil on linen. 90cm x 70cm x 1 cm.



PAINTING

EMMA BERKERY

emmaberkerly.com

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A dash of white strikes the canvas in harsh lines, softened with a wash of moss-green in *Homage to Milkweed*, whilst in *The Promise*, a single curve of red pierces through a monochromatic mix of white and black. This complex visual language allows Belfast-based Emma Berkery to process the human experience. These artworks evoke inner and outer landscapes, highlighting the artist's commitment to abstraction that resists singular interpretations. The materiality of paint is explored through Berkery's symbolic palette and organic forms, contrasting between the controlled conscious and free subconscious imposition of structure and gesture.



Emma Berkery, *Returning the Red* (detail), (2022).
Oil on canvas. 122cm x 122cm.



Emma Berkery, *The Promise* (detail), (2021).
Oil on canvas. 91.5cm x 91.5cm.



Emma Berkeny, *Homage to Milkweed* (detail), (2022).
Oil on board. 25cm x 25cm.

PAINTING

HARUNA.PAINT

haruna-paint.com

@haruna.paint @

Four in five adults in Britain support rewilding – the act of restoring a natural habitat to its original condition. Over 313,000 miles of rural verges across the country have the potential of becoming sanctuaries for more than 400 billion wild flowers, including bluebells, brambles and cow parsley. Haruna.paint documents the flora they encounter on the roadside through fragmented compositions. In *Iberis*, handpainted swatches represent a bloom from the artist's memory. The cells seem like pixels on a digital screen, investigating how humanity encounters the outdoors. The artist reflects: "At some point, will electronic nature replace wildlife?"



Haruna.paint, *Iberis*, (2022). 91cm x 116.7cm x 3cm.



Haruna.paint, *Iberis*, (2022). 91cm x 116.7cm x 3cm.



PAINTING

JOANNA COHN

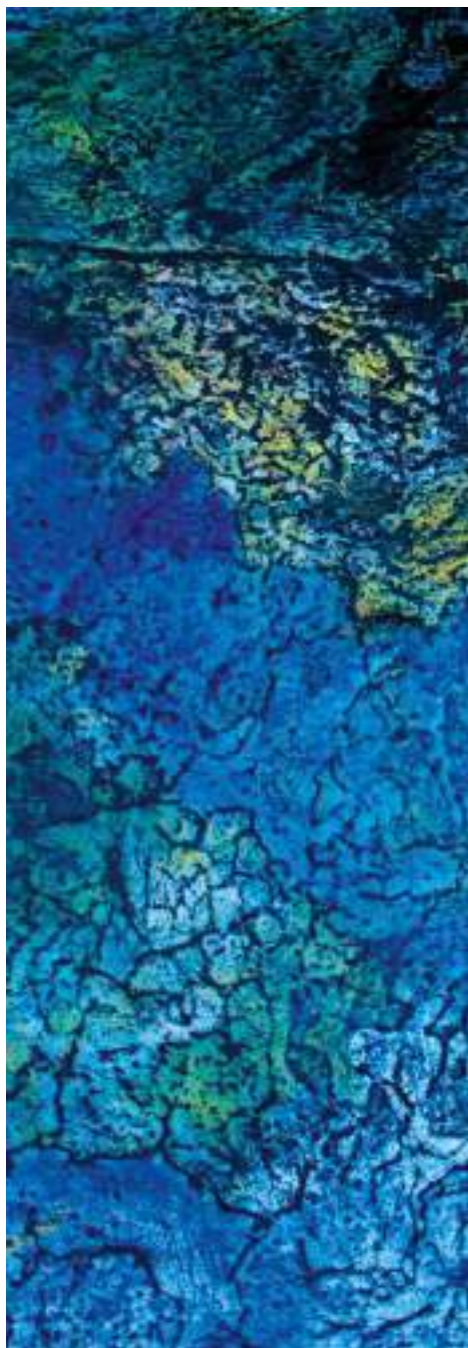
joannacohn.com

@jocohnprints

London-based Joanna Cohn is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice embraces painting, printmaking and performance. Her large-scale landscapes mimic the formation of the Earth's surface through natural and chemical processes, including corrosion, erosion, evaporation and sedimentation. For *Pangaea*, layers of materials are added and removed, drying at various speeds. Tinges of blue, green and yellow mix subtly, as black lines outline forgotten lands. The resulting composition is highly textual, evoking the appearance of vast mud flats or ancient maps. Cohn's work illuminates unseen environments and asks what lies beneath.



Joanna Cohn, *The Butterfly Effect, Still we Rise*, (2022). Acrylic on fibreglass and resin globe. 200cm x 130cm x 130cm.



Joanna Cohn, *Pangaea* (detail), (2020). Etching ink, oil pastel, pastel and wax on paper. 150cm x 1000cm x 0.2cm.




PAINTING

JOHANNA MARIE SCHIMMING

FINALIST

johannamarieschimming.com

[@johannamarieschimming](https://www.instagram.com/johannamarieschimming) 

Johanna Marie Schimming is a German artist based in Paris. Her work is distinguished by organic, decisive "gestures" and clear, minimalist lines. The artist redefines perceptions of space by working both in height and depth through relief and layers, or rectangles of transparent paint and varnish that act both as a veil and the opening up to another dimension. She also perceives the "void" that surrounds a gesture as being similar to the space of resonance that encloses a sound. The resulting work is akin to a musical composition, with time, rhythm and dynamics, ultimately conveying harmony, serenity and profound joy.



Johanna Marie Schimming, *152*, (2020). Acrylic and varnish on canvas, mounted on cardboard. 40cm x 30cm x 0.4cm.



Johanna Marie Schimming, *183* (detail), (2021). Acrylic and varnish on wood panel (MDF). 25cm x 20cm x 0.6cm.



Johanna Marie Schimming, *097*, (2020-21).
Acrylic on canvas, mounted on cardboard. 24cm x 18cm x 0.4cm.

PAINTING

JONGWOO AHN

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@jongwoo__ahn

Gum bichromate is a technique first used by 19th century photography pioneers, including William Henry Fox Talbot and Robert Demachy. The printing process transforms negatives into delicate painterly compositions, blurring the lines between the two disciplines. Contemporary artist Jongwoo Ahn expands on this method by using traditional pigments from his home country of South Korea. In *Still Life*, monochrome studies of everyday objects – such as flowers, food and packaging – symbolise overlooked moments experienced during childhood. Ahn highlights the ways memories can merge, transform and disappear across a lifetime.



Jongwoo Ahn, *Still Life*, (2022). Dry pigments on Mulberry Hanji paper. 180cm x 130cm x 5cm.



Jongwoo Ahn, *Blossom* (detail), (2022). Dry pigments on Mulberry paper Hanji, 70cm x 70cm x 5cm.




Jongwoo Ahn, *Still Life*, (2022). Dry pigments on Mulberry Hanji paper. 180cm x 130cm x 5cm.

PAINTING

KATHLEEN BEAUSOLEIL

kathleenbeausoleil.com

@kathleenbeausoleil 

"There is liberty in anonymity, safety in getting lost in the crowd," says Kathleen Beausoleil. "It's a sense of belonging that people seek." The artist navigates the balance between selfhood and collective attitudes, asking how far individuals will go to feel part of a community. *Inspired Hope* focuses on the human interactions and territorial behaviours manifested during the Black Lives Matter protests. In these photo-based paintings, individuals stand side-by-side, holding placards and gesturing in unison. The poignant canvases pay tribute to the benefits of togetherness, whilst highlighting the multiplicity of collective identity.



Kathleen Beausoleil, *Civic Grace*, (2021).
25cm x 20cm x 2.5cm.



Kathleen Beausoleil, *Inspired Hope*, (2020).
96cm x 127cm x 3cm.



PAINTING

LUNYU FU

fulunyu.com

@lunyu_fu @

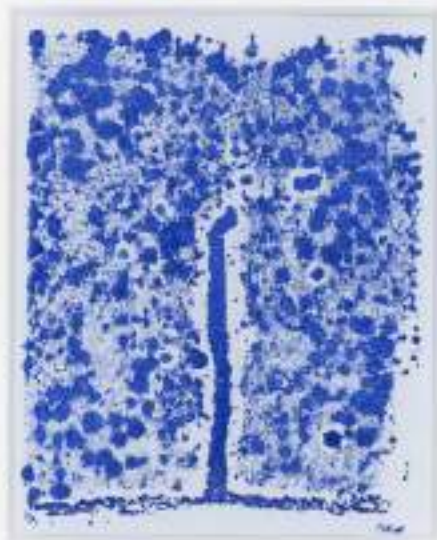
"All of my works talk about love. Art is a special gift I can give to someone I love. It might be a gown, a tree, or an action in vain. If I cannot help you change the fact, may I build a paradise in your mind?" explains Lunyu Fu. The Beijing-born, London-based practitioner draws on her environmental design background to paint, plant, photograph, print and record fading moments of beauty. *Before You Call It a Tree* is dedicated to non-human artists. The pattern, created by a male bichon frise named Mantoto, is edited and remade by Fu with Photoshop, seals and ink. These works celebrate collaboration and the experimental process of printing.



Lunyu Fu, *Before You Call It a Tree* (detail), (2021).
Print-making. 20cm x 27.7cm.



Lunyu Fu, *Before You Call It a Tree* (detail), (2021).
Print-making. 20cm x 27.7cm each.



PAINTING

NICHOLAS JONES

nicholasjones.info

@nick_jones_paintings

Nicholas Jones celebrates the sublimity of nature. His paintings, such as *A Deeper Meeting*, *Moonlit Iceberg Off Cape Mercy*, *Baffin Island*, were ignited by a time spent in the Arctic. The UK-based artist explains: "It brought a clarity to my painting and stirred a powerful desire to speak about the fragile beauty of this astonishing region, itself in such a state of rapid change, but on whose wellbeing we all depend." Notions of connection, intimacy, wonder and vulnerability come together in haunting acrylic paintings of icebergs, mountains and the moon. Each landscape encourages viewers to be truly present during encounters with the outdoors.



Nicholas Jones, *A Cold Beauty: Lunar Halo*, (2018).
Acrylic on canvas. 132cm x 107cm x 3 cm.



Nicholas Jones, *A Deeper Presence, Moonlit Iceberg off Cape Mercy, Baffin Island* (detail), (2020). Acrylic on canvas, 190cm x 160cm x 4 cm.



PAINTING

TERESA LAWLER

teresalawler.com

After training as a painter, Teresa Lawler spent time as an art director and has worked across television and theatre. This background has had a strong influence on the featured compositions, which stand out for their cinematic aesthetic. Filmic imagery is frequently referenced – from the depiction of modernist architectural structures to the use of deeply contrasting palettes and dramatic lighting. Stylised houses are inserted into fictitious landscapes, with cities occasionally glimpsed in the far distance. Work like *The House in the Forest* is shaped from an archive of references that has been collected by Lawler over a number of years.



Teresa Lawler, *Haven 9: Beyond the Edge of the City*, (2021). From *The Distant City*. Watercolour, gouache and ink on paper. 50cm x 50cm.



Teresa Lawler, *The House in the Forest*, (2021). From *The Distant City*. Watercolour, gouache and ink on paper. 50cm x 50cm.



PAINTING

TYLER MALLISON

tylermallison.com

TylerLDN 

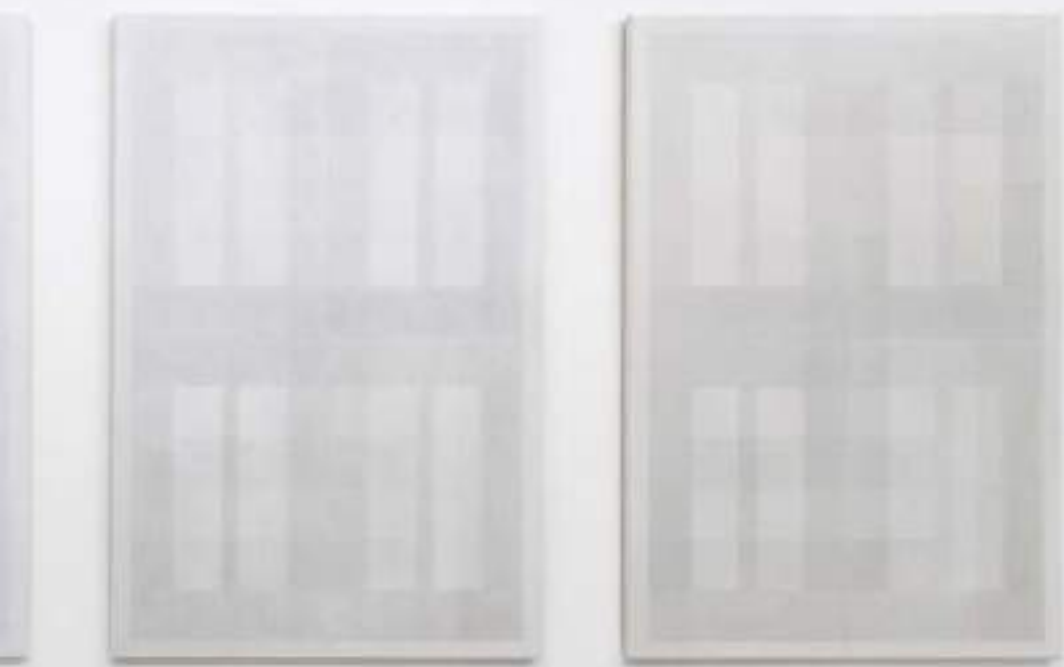
Primark t-shirts. Standing desks. Pictures of "nothing." These are the subjects of London-based Tyler Mallison, who is interested in the notion of potential and questions of agency and logic. His body of work spans a wide variety of media and is underlined by ongoing investigations into economic, societal and technological narratives. Examples include sculptural prototypes "for a better way of working," offering a pre-pandemic vision of future labour, complete with USB jump rope. Elsewhere, _____ (*N/TIME*) is a collection of illusory surfaces on canvas that demand physical proximity and invite viewers to consider presence and orientation.



Tyler Mallison, _____ (*N/TIME*), (2022). Synthetic polymer, pigment and graphite on canvas. 150cm x 100cm x 2.5cm.



Tyler Mallison, _____ (*N/TIME*), (2021-2022). Synthetic polymer, pigment and graphite on canvas. Studio view, London.



PAINTING

VERONIKA KRÄMER

veronikakraemer.com

@veronikakraemer.art

Veronika Krämer is an artist living in Berlin. Her abstract geometric paintings explore how simple lines and shapes can combine to produce complex constructs. The process behind her latest series, *Construction*, is not only about building, but it is also about letting go. Existing shapes and colours disappear and new possibilities and compositions come to the surface with each layer of paint Krämer adds. Lines collide, overlap, merge and vanish. Sometimes, large parts of the canvas are completely covered, leaving only a few strokes visible and some hazy geometric arrangements shining through – a hint of what was there before.



Veronika Krämer, *Construction VIII*, (2022).
Acrylic on canvas. 80cm x 60cm.



Veronika Krämer, *Construction II*, (2021).
Acrylic on canvas. 60cm x 80cm.



PERFORMANCE

GLEN OGDEN

glenthemaker.com

@glenthemaker

In 2021, Iceland introduced shorter working hours across the public sector. The four-day week has since become a topic of discussion across the world, as people look to secure a successful work-life balance. Leeds-based multidisciplinary artist Glen Ogden asks: "Should money be our only motivation in the workplace?" His practice investigates the role of labourers in historic and contemporary society. Intensive durational performances and films, including *Lay & Unlay*, are fuelled by futile actions and satire. Through a repetitive cycle of activity and rest, human subjects are repurposed as tools in fictional narratives – reflecting on burnout.



Glen Ogden, *Lay & Unlay*, (2022). 22min, 35sec.




Glen Ogden, *Non-Essential Workers Poster* (detail), (2022). 29.7cm x 42cm.



PERFORMANCE

TOM FOULSHAM

tomfoulsham.com

@the_tomhgf 

Tom Foulsham is fascinated by ideas and concepts that are just out of reach. He seeks to connect with, interpret and take these understandings to their extremes – until they fall apart and reveal something else. *B♭ Minor Arrangement for 3 Musicians and 1300m* is one such example, staging three trumpeters in boats across the wide expanse of the River Thames, London. Separations in time are created by differences in space. The trumpeters drift away, the chord slips apart, transforming into rolling rhythms that flow back to the audience at the shore. The performance piece premiered at The London Contemporary Music Festival in 2022.



Tom Foulsham, *B♭ Minor Arrangement for 3 Musicians and 1300 Meters*, (2022). Performance. 22 min.




Tom Foulsham, *B♭ Minor Arrangement for 3 Musicians and 1300 Meters*, (2022). Performance. 22 min.



PHOTOGRAPHY

ALEXEJ SACHOV

sachov-art.com

@alexej.sachov 

The ocean covers more than 70% of Earth, yet approximately 80% remains unexplored. Alexej Sachov's underwater seascapes capture water's vast beauty, drawing on dualities between the world above and below the surface. The scenes position viewers as aquatic creatures, allowing them to be engulfed by cresting waves and cobalt seas. The Ukrainian-German artist also engages with ecological concerns. Humanity's destruction of nature is evident in plastic pollutants that puncture these images — a stark reminder of the climate emergency. In this contrast of elegance and chaos, Sachov's underwater worlds teeter on the edge of fragility.



Alexej Sachov, *New Cosmos Underwater, Modern Rabbit* (detail), (2022). Fine art print. 90cm x 120cm x 4cm.



Alexej Sachov, *Edge of the wave. The Edge* (detail), (2022). Fine art print. 68cm x 90cm x 4cm.



Alexej Sachov, *Edge of the wave. Mountain* (detail),
(2022). Fine art print. 68cm x 90cm x 4cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANNA DOBROVLSKAYA-MINTS

adm.photo

@adm_photolife

"The uncanny arouses dread and creeping horror." Sigmund Freud's definition of the uncanny encapsulates Anna Dobrovolskaya-Mints' solemn, desolate swimming pool scenes. The UK-based artist's *Somewhere to Swim* series was taken during the Covid-19 lockdowns, where minimalist compositions draw attention to the lifelessness of ordinary public spaces. Viewers are plunged into a state of limbo; devoid of people, there is an unsettling emptiness that invites a second look. A monochromatic view of a drained pool is both bizarre and poignant, a homage to the emotional and psychological impact of the global pandemic.



Anna Dobrovolskaya-Mints, *Scotland*, 18/02 (detail), (2021). 40cm x 50cm.



Anna Dobrovolskaya-Mints, *Greater London*, 09/02, (2021). 100cm x 150cm.

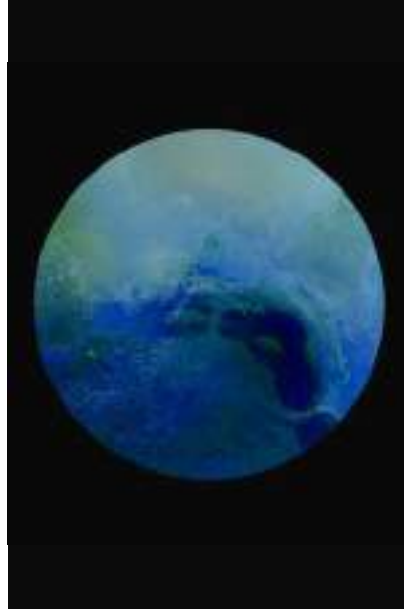


PHOTOGRAPHY

BECKY PROBERT

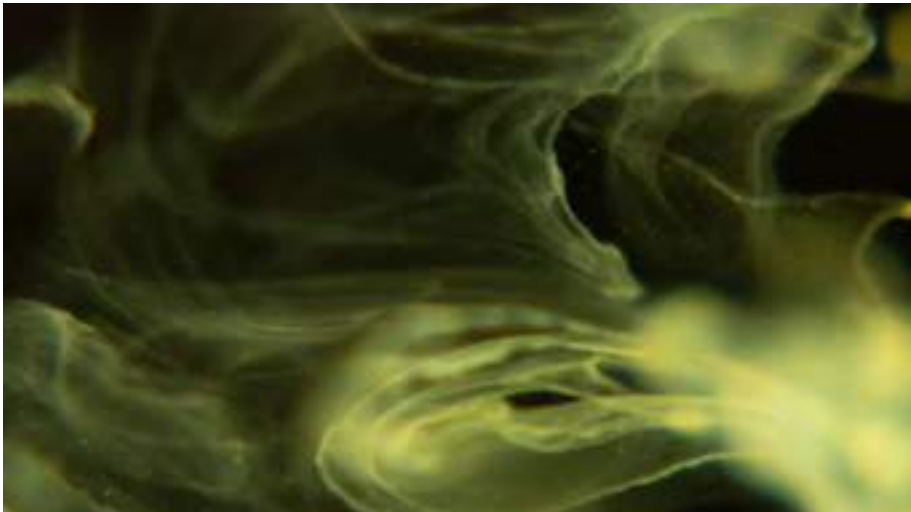
beckyprobert.com

@becky_probert_photography @

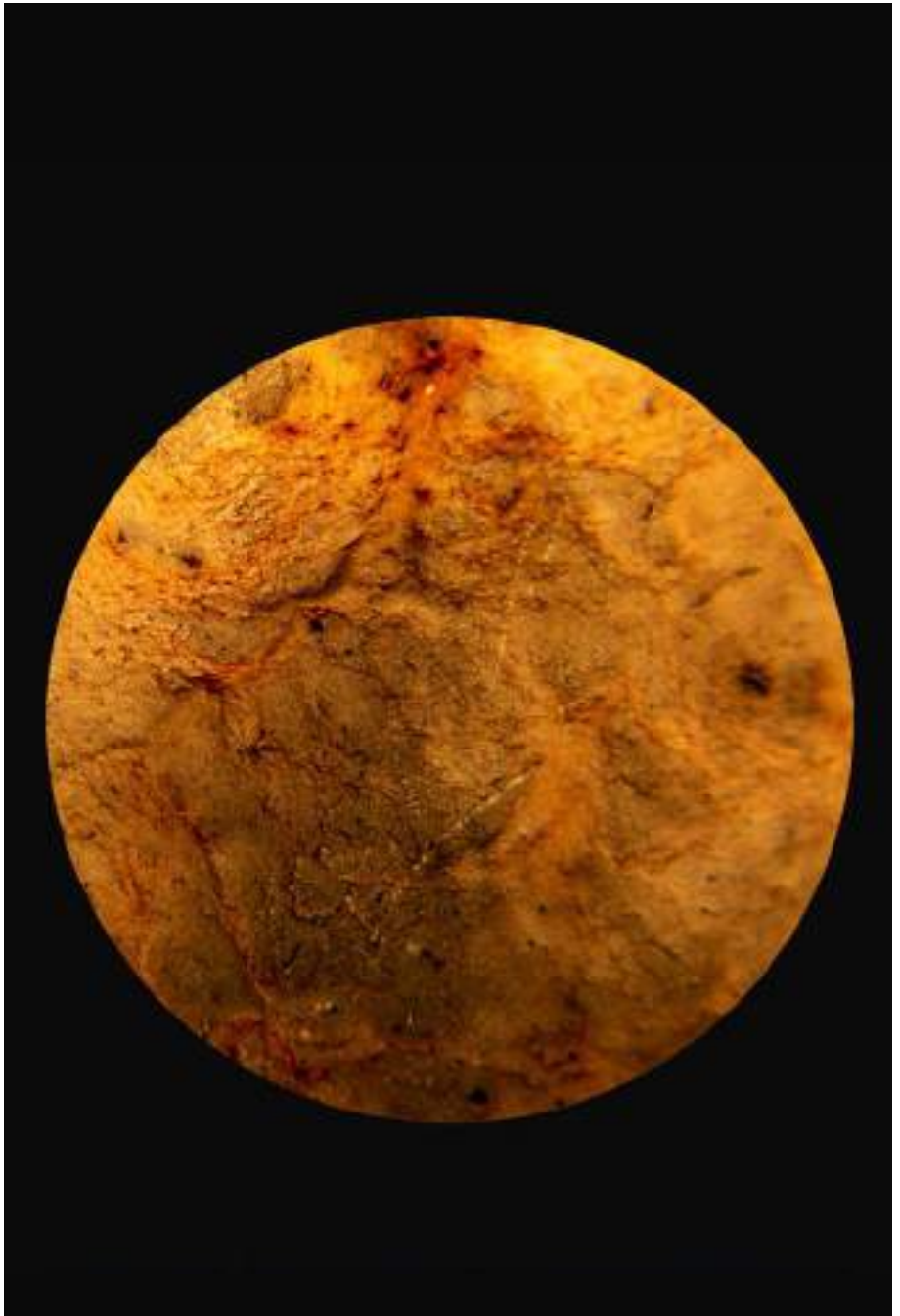


Becky Probert, *Panthalassa*, (2021). Dimensions variable.

Becky Probert uses the camera lens as a conduit to open up doors to the possibilities of what exists in the vastness of outer space, employing both analogue and digital techniques. She is a photographic artist living in Glasgow, UK. Her practice focuses on ideas in astrophysics, and she is particularly interested in how lenses and technology affect perceptions of the universe. *Invisible Planets* was created through a close-up photographic exploration of details and patterns within her immediate environment. This is reflective of the way that the particles and patterns that make up the cosmos are echoed between the smallest and largest scales.



Becky Probert, *Plasma*, (2020). Dimensions variable.



Becky Probert, *Draugr*, (2021). Dimensions variable.

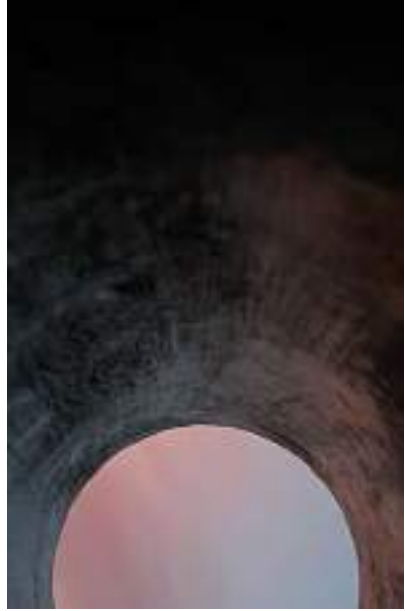
PHOTOGRAPHY

BEVERLEY CORNWELL

bevc.co.uk

@bevyamay @

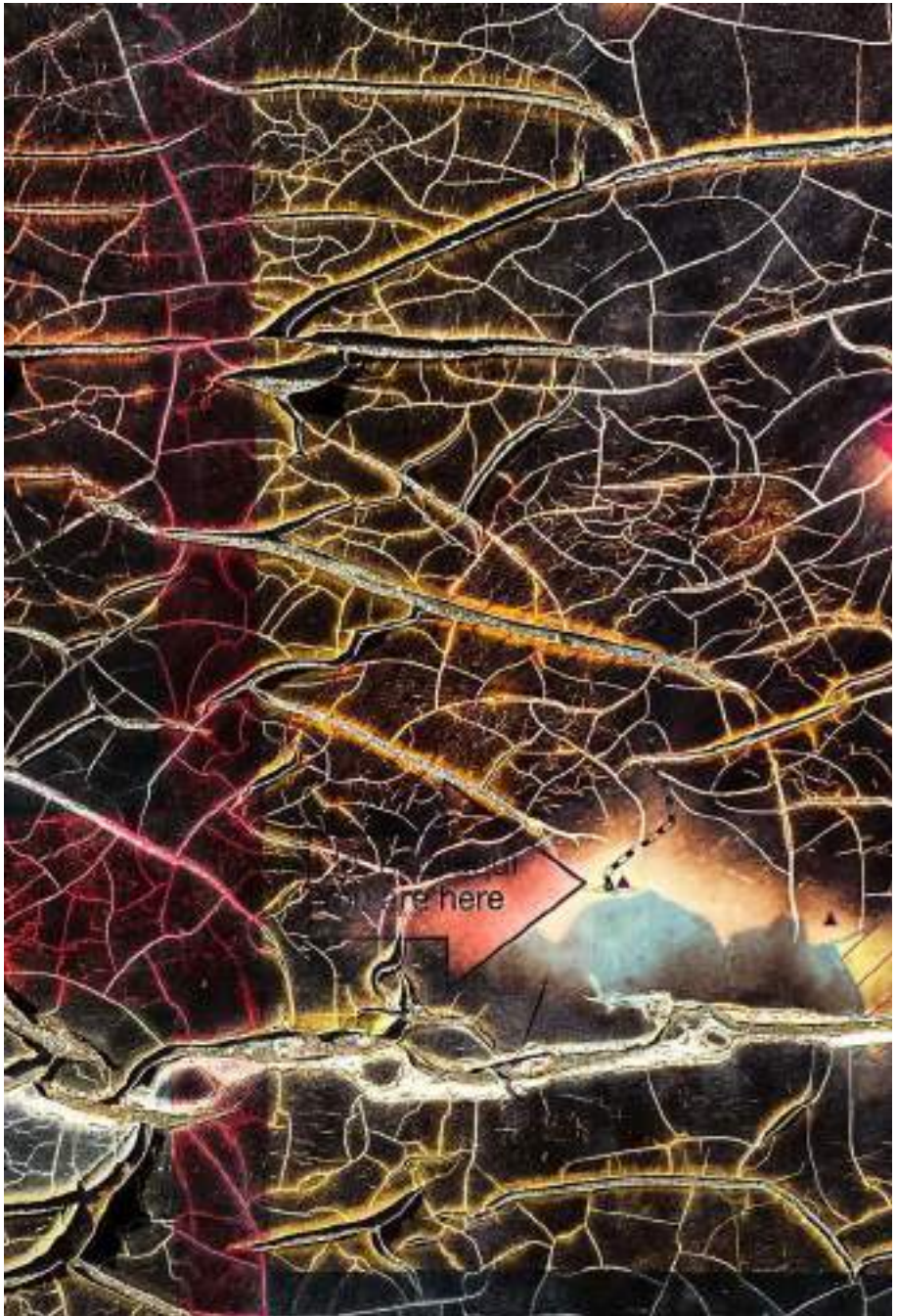
Beverley Cornwell is a Scottish Borders-based photographer who focuses on observing habitats, documenting the unnoticed through overlooked details. The artist works in analogue and digital media to reflect upon the interactions between physical and virtual worlds. In *Astronoids*, objects are manipulated into astronomical bodies, transforming the familiar into an exploration of unknown frontiers. Pale pink crescents formed beneath the curve of a pipe appear as distant planets, whilst endless swirls of cream light resemble images from the James Webb Telescope: a reminder of humanity's continuing expansion beyond Earth.



Beverley Cornwell, *Astronoid-9639*, (2022).
Giclée print. 25.4cm x 20.3cm.



Beverley Cornwell, *Astronoid-3972*, (2022).
Giclée print. 20.3cm x 25.4cm.



Beverley Cornwell, *Astronoid-1106*, (2022).
Giclée print. 25.4cm x 20.3cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

CHIA YUN WU

chiayunwu.com

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Trees blur. Buttercups trail yellow smudges. Clouds fog beneath a translucent film. These are the mixed-media landscapes in *Borderless Place*, which reveal invisible borders within the natural environment as a reflection of the contrast between beauty and reality. Taiwanese artist Chia Yun Wu incorporates photography and printmaking into her practice to question existence, materiality and the human condition. "When working with art, life becomes inspiration, and my life cannot be separated from the place where I was born." The images stretch the boundaries of reality, focusing on the intersections of freedom and belonging.



Chia Yun Wu, *Borderless Place*, (2022).
Mixed-media. 48cm x 72cm.



Chia Yun Wu, *Borderless Place*, (2022).
Mixed-media. 48cm x 72cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

CHRISSY LUSH

ChrissyLush.com

@chrissy_lush @

Chrissy Lush is drawn to subtle moments that reveal deeper levels of the subconscious. The self-portrait artist performs these moments for the camera to better understand herself and how she relates to the world around her. These portraits document a series of gestures that expose latent emotions. The resulting series *Hold Me Tight* reflects on Lush's approaching midlife. In one image, the artist curls up in a foetal position; another depicts her sunbathing on a rooftop. These staged scenes are an imagined journey shared between her present-day and younger selves, an attempt to reconcile with the perceived loss of her youth.



Chrissy Lush, *Untitled (gold chair)*, (2022).
Archival inkjet print. 71.1 cm x 50.8 cm.



Chrissy Lush, *Day Dreamer*, (2019).
Archival inkjet print. 43.2 cm x 61 cm.



Chrissy Lush, *Bubblegum*, (2022).
Archival inkjet print, 43.2cm x 61cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

CHRISTOS J. PALIOS

christospalios.com

@christosjpalios

"We live in increasingly frenetic societies broadcasting endless stimuli, inundating our waking lives and shaping our beliefs." Greek-American photographer Christos J. Palios' practice stems from a curiosity about the intersections of memory, connection and identity. *Architecture of Gilded Dreams* transports viewers from this relentless newsreel, offering a bygone era of early 20th century movie-palaces. Opulent scenes, such as the gold-encrusted hallways illuminated by chandeliers and candelabras, showcase how cinema's glamour and broad access subverted class distinctions conventionally upheld in classical theatre.



Christos J. Palios, *Grand Lobby (Mezzanine)*, Los Angeles Theatre, CA, (2022). Archival pigment print. 58.4cm x 76.2cm.




Christos J. Palios, *Pabst Theatre*, Milwaukee, WI, (2021). Archival pigment print. 58.4cm x 76.2cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

CODY COBB

codycobb.com

@codycobb 

Cody Cobb's serene photographs capture moments of stillness in the chaos of nature. The artist wandered through the American west for weeks at a time to fully immerse himself within untouched wildernesses. This period of isolation allowed for more sensitive observations of both the external landscape and the internal experience of solitude. The resulting series, *Spectral*, showcases a hidden luminescence within the environment. Collapsed lava tubes and cliffs radiate with a strange fluorescence, created when minerals are subjected to UV light. The eerie glow represents an entanglement between observer and the observed.



Cody Cobb, *CC2997*, (2021). Pigment print mounted to dibond. 107cm x 142cm.




Cody Cobb, *CC1480*, (2021). Pigment print mounted to dibond. 107cm x 142cm.



Cody Cobb, CC3573, (2021). Pigment
print mounted to dibond. 107cm x 142cm.

DEB LEAL

Debleal.com

@st.cine 

"Nostalgia acts as a way of personal time travel," according to photographer Deb Leal. Explorations of colour, identity and memory are threaded across the artist's body of work. *We Had to Wait Until Dinnertime* depicts a idyllic summertime scene, where the sun bathes a figure in an orange glow and grass shrivels beneath the heat. The overly saturated palette creates wistful, serene scenes reminiscent of the artist's childhood. "What I find myself drawn to in the creative process are candid moments that hold gravity." For Leal, these vibrant hues are a celebration of joyful moments, but also remind us of the ephemeral nature of experience.



Deb Leal, *Signed, The Fish* (detail), (2022).
Colour negative photograph, 45.7cm x 61 cm.



Deb Leal, *We Had to Wait Until Dinnertime* (detail), (2022).
Colour negative photograph, 61 cm x 61 cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

ELISA MILLER

elisamillerstudio.com

@elisamillerstudio @

"In *The Other*, I wanted to imagine what it might feel like if we were able to express ourselves freely without fear of judgment or condemnation, to look beyond the boundaries we've set for ourselves and have the courage to become who we really are." French photographer Elisa Miller investigates the myriad of expressions of the human self and the different shells people inhabit to show or conceal their identity. Individuals in retro, cinematic portraits exist in pairs. One image depicts a woman smoking in marigold gloves at the kitchen table, a second self leant back against the fridge opposite: a dual depiction of freedom and self-restriction.



Elisa Miller, *The Many Faces of Marie* (detail), (2022).



Elisa Miller, *Contact* (detail), (2021). Self portrait.



PHOTOGRAPHY

FERNANDO VISCASILLAS

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@fernandoviscasillas

Remembrances is the result of photos taken by Fernando Viscasillas over three years – each shot at quarterly meetings between artists, writers and poets in a country palace in Fontoura, Valença, in Portugal. The contemporary visual artist and art teacher captured gardens, dining halls and chapels amidst conferences and debates, combining cultural exchange with natural settings and historic architecture. “Today, this palace is a hotel,” he notes. “A lost paradise.” Illusory stone columns fade into waves, and tendrils of leaves segment the curve of armchairs. Each textured composition is an idyllic embrace between the past and present.



Fernando Viscasillas, from the series *Remembrances* (detail), (2021-ongoing). 70cm x 100 cm.



Fernando Viscasillas, from the series *Remembrances*, (2021-ongoing). 70cm x 100 cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

FREDERIC ARANDA

fredericaranda.com

@fredericaranda @

Frederic Aranda is an international portrait and fashion photographer with a career spanning two decades. The artist is renowned for his collaborative group shots. *Vogue House*, for example, was selected for the Taylor Wessing Photo Prize in 2022, and features LGBTQI+ individuals from around the world in Paris for a family portrait. Over 30 sitters are depicted in bold, performative poses. Each portrait is part of a broader ongoing project that focuses on the collective. Aranda says: "Certain things about us only become clear once we are placed in a group dynamic; there are lots of things that portraits of individuals cannot convey."



Frederic Aranda, *Camp*, (2017). Dimensions variable.



Frederic Aranda, *Vogue House*, (2022). Dimensions variable.



PHOTOGRAPHY

JENNIFER GEORGESCU

jengeorgescu.com

@jengeorgescu

Interdisciplinary artist Jennifer Georgescu became a mother in 2015. Her reflective *Mother* series documents her experience over eight years, from a disconnection with the self to realising children are the legacies humans leave behind. The collection is littered with symbolism from art history, playing with hidden meanings. In one self-portrait, Georgescu turns from the camera, only a cascade of blonde hair visible. Her two sons link arms with hers in another, conjuring both the wonder and labour of parenthood. Georgescu reflects: "When we think about birth, we must realise our death. Motherhood is precious and raw; wonderful and dark."



Jennifer Georgescu, *Temple*, (2021).
Digital archival print. 60.1 cm x 38.1 cm.



Jennifer Georgescu, *Map*, (2022).
Digital archival print. 50.8 cm x 76.2 cm.



Jennifer Georgescu, *Stripe*, (2022).
Digital archival print. 55.9cm x 38.1cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

JULIA FULLERTON-BATTEN

FINALIST

juliafullerton-batten.com

@julia_fullertonbatten

Contortionism is one of the oldest art forms, dating back to ancient civilisations, and requires years of dedication, discipline and training. Fine art photographer Julia Fullerton-Batten's *Contortion* was inspired by feelings of extreme anxiety and loneliness offset by inner strength, humour and fortitude as the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Each image embellishes the subject matter in a series of thought-provoking narrative "stories" that use staged tableaux and sophisticated lighting techniques. Fullerton-Batten insinuates visual tensions in her images and saturates them with mystique, teasing the viewer into re-examining the picture.



Julia Fullerton-Batten, *Flexible Roxy 1* (detail). From *Contortion* (2021). Lambda C-type print. Dimensions variable.



Julia Fullerton-Batten, *Ella Whipp Dance* (detail). From *Contortion* (2021). Lambda C-type print. Dimensions variable.



PHOTOGRAPHY

KAREN NAVARRO

karennavarroph.com

@karennavarroph

Colours blend. Cubes shift and tessellate. Faces are obscured, spliced and transformed. This is the work of Argentinian-born, Houston-based Karen Navarro, whose practice encompasses collage, photography, sculpture and text to investigate the intersections of belonging, race and representation. "My work is informed by my experience of being an immigrant and the ways in which I see identity as a cultural and social construct." *Segmented* pushes the boundaries of image-making with 3D structures and vivid tones. Fragmented faces recall the playfulness of Cubism and Surrealism to dissect the pluralities of the self.



Karen Navarro, *Despajo*, (2022). Archival inkjet print, wood, acrylic paint, epoxy. 176.5cm x 116.8cm.



Karen Navarro, *Fracciones* (detail), (2022). Archival inkjet print, wood, acrylic paint, epoxy. 45.7cm x 35.6cm.



Karen Navarro, *Segmented*, (2022). Archival inkjet print, wood, acrylic paint, epoxy. 168.9cm x 114.3cm.

KATE HRYNKO

katehrynko.com

@kate_hrynko @

"My works show a desire to escape from today's reality, and to feel the world through the prism of impressive and bright colour." Kate Hrynko is a visual artist from Kyiv, Ukraine, who gives shape to abstract human emotions through fine art photographs. Images such as *Red* and *Blue* combine traditional photographic techniques with colour theory and scientific research to visualise intense feelings of fear, joy and pride. These theatrical compositions help the photographer to organise her emotions. Hrynko taps into familial relationships, personal experiences and memories by saturating domestic interiors and familiar landscapes.



Kate Hrynko, *Red* (detail), (2022). From *RGB (Red, Green, Blue: A Study of Colours)*. 36cm x 42cm.




Kate Hrynko, *Blue* (detail), (2022). From *RGB (Red, Green, Blue: A Study of Colours)*. 36cm x 42cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

KATERINA BELKINA

belkina.art
@thebelki 

The Brothers Grimm is known for conjuring up the fantasy worlds of Snow White, Frau Holle and Sweet Porridge. These 19th century stories outline important morals that shape everyday life. Katerina Belkina restages these classic tales in *Dream Walkers*, examining the psychology of human emotions and relationships. Intangible feelings of despondency, indifference, jealousy and rapture are expressed by figures who play instantly recognisable characters in constructed tableaux. Compositions draw on Belkina's interest in classical art, with references to Romanticism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood heightened by digital editing.



Katerina Belkina, *Coming*, (2019).
Fairytale: The Three Spinners. 140.5cm x 187cm.



Katerina Belkina, *Whisper*, (2019).
Fairytale: Frau Holle. 140.5cm x 187cm.



Katerina Belkina, *Cook, Little Pot, Cook* (2021).
Fairytale: Sweet Porridge. 180cm x 130cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

KRISTINA VARAKSINA



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@kristinavaraksina @

In a sequence of self-portraits, shot before and throughout the pandemic, Russian-born Kristina Varaksina sits against stark white backdrops, shrouded by materials – with subtle variations suggestive of time passing. In one image, plastic packaging obscures the artist's face. In another, painted words sit sharply on the skin, manifestations of doubt. The series is claustrophobic – a 21st century take on classical painting – with Varaksina holding the viewer's gaze unrelentingly. These works are an extension of Varaksina's guiding principle: to interrogate "the vulnerabilities, insecurities and self-searching of a woman and artist."



Kristina Varaksina, *Self-Portrait #2* (2019). Dimensions variable.



Kristina Varaksina, *Self-Portrait: Queen* (2021). Dimensions variable.



PHOTOGRAPHY

KYLE SVEN

kylesven.com

@_kylesven

What does contemporary beauty look like? South African-born, Dublin-based artist Kyle Sven turns fashion photography on its head, inviting viewers into an alternate world that champions self-expression. Bold, provocative imagery digs into the photographer's personal relationship with gender and sexuality, uncovering themes of masculinity, vulnerability and the body. Profiles are framed with asymmetric haircuts. Bodies dance in block colour environments. Lips tenderly touch, becoming one under a golden glow. These narratives in *Power Struggle* and *Innocence* subvert stereotypes to re-imagine the breadth of human experience.



Kyle Sven, *Boys Like Me*, (2022). Dimensions variable.



Kyle Sven, *Innocence*, (2022). Dimensions variable.



Kyle Sven, *Power Struggle*, (2022). Dimensions variable.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LEXI LAINE

lexilaine.co.uk

@lexilainephoto

Dystopia, from the Ancient Greek for bad or hard, is an imagined society that is undesirable or nightmarish. UK-based artist Lexi Laine visualises this situation in an underwater world, highlighting the impact of humans on marine environments. Nude figures are found scrambling in a swirling ocean, bodies trapped by a thin film of blistering plastic. The image, which shares its name with the apocalyptic state, exemplifies the photographer's love of contrasts: the otherworldly beauty of nature is juxtaposed with elements of darkness and destruction. Laine's portfolio draws on baroque paintings, mythology and the contradictions of Surrealism.



Lexi Laine, *La Ultima*, (2021).
Underwater photography. 119cm x 84cm.



Lexi Laine, *In Lucem*, (2022).
Underwater photography. 84cm x 119 cm.



Lexi Laine, *Dystopia*, (2022).
Underwater photography, 119cm x 95cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

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@michael_mc_laughlin @

The Port of Wakkanai is Japan's most northern coastal base – a popular site for offshore fishing and a major transport hub. Ireland-based Michael McLaughlin's dramatic landscapes detail industrial holding tanks from this vast blue oceanscape. These works, including *Blue Silo Hokkaido*, convey a sense of unblemished abstraction, imagination and experimentation by obscuring the subject matter. Common vistas are reconfigured with ambiguous shapes, forms and patterns. The artist's intriguing portfolio describes complex realities of the environment and humanity's intrusions on it, pulling from natural beauty and the climate crisis.



Michael McLaughlin, *Three Trees Hokkaido*, (2020). 1/10 +2APs. Archival pigment print. Canson Infinity PhotoGloss RC 270gsm. 50cm x 50cm.






Michael McLaughlin, *Blue Silo Hokkaido*, (2020). 4/10 + 2APs. Archival pigment print. Canson Infinity PhotoGloss RC 270gsm. 50cm x 50cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

MICHEL ROUABAH

michelrouabah.com

@michelrouabah 

Throughout photographic history, artists have used the lens to capture buildings. The oldest surviving photograph of an image formed in a camera, *View from the Window at Le Gras* (1827) by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, depicts an angular ledge, framed by two sturdy columns. French artist Michel Rouabah's *Cosmos* utilises this stylistic lineage. The shot is taken at the bottom of a swirling staircase that descends into layers of flattened decorative rails and oblique concrete steps. His minimalist and illusory approach has been recognised by 35Awards, who named him as one of the top 100 photographers working in France in 2021.



Michel Rouabah, *Cosmos* (detail),
(2021). 41.6cm x 62.4cm.




Michel Rouabah, *Dark Galaxy* (detail),
(2021). 41.6cm x 62.4cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

NATALIE CHRISTENSEN

nataliechristensenphoto.com

@natalie_santafe 

Eight years ago, photographer Natalie Christensen left her career as a psychotherapist, exchanging a professional identity for architectural landscapes that recall psychologist Carl Jung's philosophies of the unconscious. Empty parking lots, forgotten swimming pools and open doors attract viewers to the scene, asking them to reassess everyday settings with a renewed vision, detecting forms, colours and shapes that hide in plain sight. The collection twists viewers' perceptions of deeply familiar experiences. Pink concrete slabs, for example, are pushed to the edge of the frame to segment the sky, producing a flat, geometric pattern.



Natalie Christensen, *can't escape my own escape*, (2021). Dimensions variable.



Natalie Christensen, *the pointy end*, (2017). Dimensions variable.



Natalie Christensen, *a good day*,
(2017). Dimensions variable.

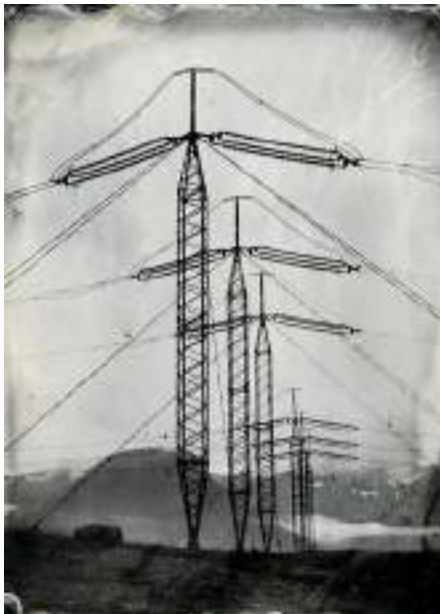
PHOTOGRAPHY

NIKLAS HLAWATSCH

fuchsteufelbild.de

@fuchsteufelbild

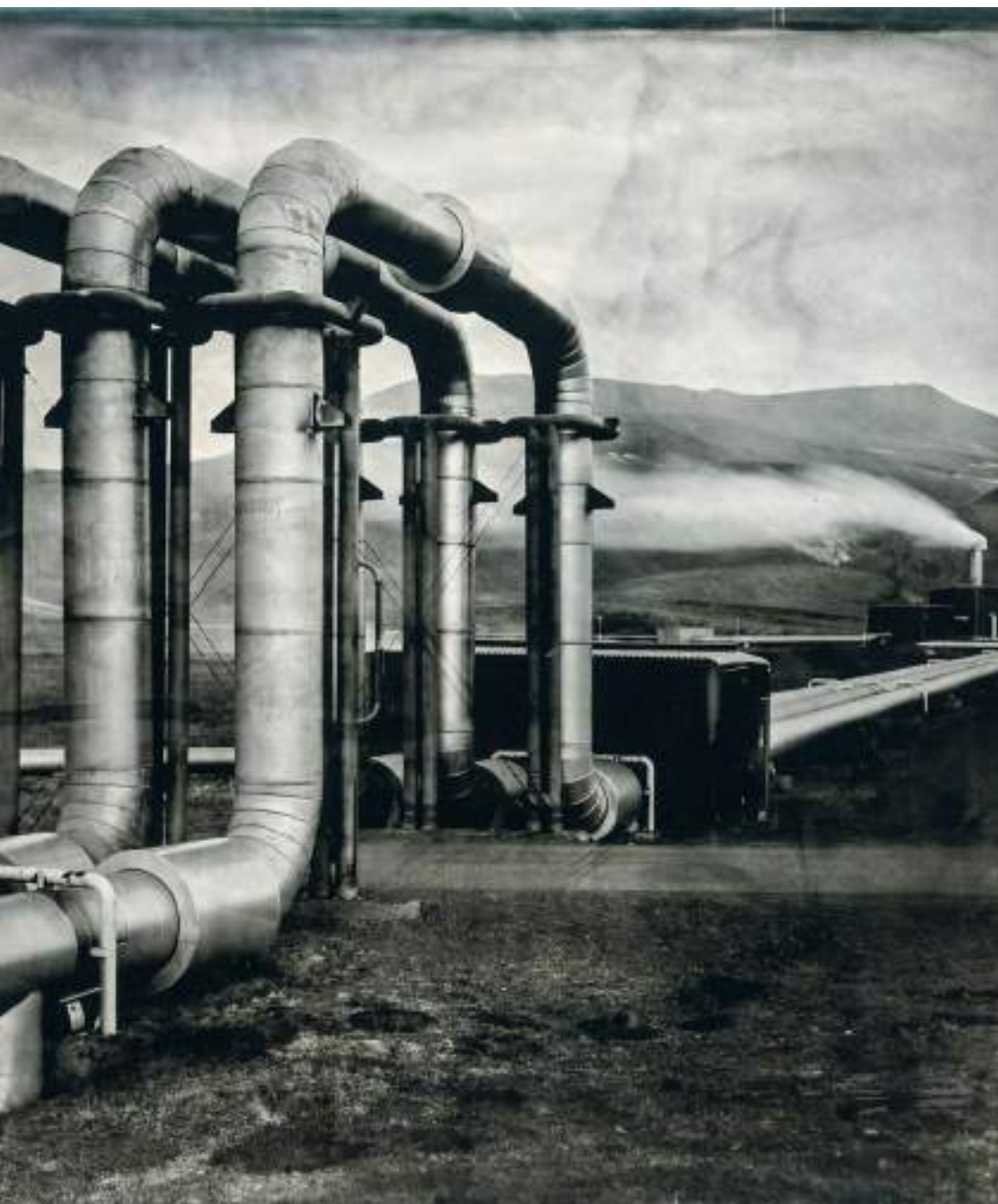
Niklas Hlawatsch works with wet plate photography, using traditional techniques to comment on contemporary ecological issues. *Aluminum and Ash* is a collaboration between the artist, Simon Hlawatsch and Birgir Sigurðsson. The pair harness the languages of art and literature to examine the environmental debate in the country, as well as the climate emergency. Large-scale aluminium ambrotypes – a photographic process introduced in the 1850s – portray electric dams, pipe networks and pylons. The collection offers insight into the infrastructure of energy consumption, investigating the relationship between industry and nature.



Niklas Hlawatsch, *Búðarí I*, (2022). Collodion and silver on aluminium. 24cm x 18cm.



Niklas Hlawatsch, *Krafta II*, (2022). Collodion and silver on aluminium. 24cm x 18cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

NIKOLA OLIC

structurephotography.org

@nikolaolic 

Abstract compositions of architecture offer a playful reimagining of urban infrastructures. *Structure Photography* sees Serbian-born, Dallas-based photographer Nikola Olic reappropriate buildings as colour palettes and repeating geometries, shedding new light on the world's cities. Through extensive travel, the artist catalogues poetic tower blocks, combining formalism and precisionism. The series is inspired by the urbanistic philosophy of Andreas Gursky, comedic and tranquil ideas of Luigi Ghirri and patience of Michael Wolf. The artist's work acts on the human instinct to amass, observe and organise through unedited images.



Nikola Olic, *Building with Steps*, (2018). 50cm x 60cm.




Nikola Olic, *Half & Half*, (2020). 50cm x 60cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

RUBY HYDE

rubyhydephotography.com

[@rubyhydephotography](https://www.instagram.com/rubyhydephotography) 

Television sets buzz static amongst lush woodlands. Twigs erupt from rib cages. Mirrors ripple like portals to other worlds. Remote houses burst into flames. These are the dark visual fairytales of Ruby Hyde, a conceptual fine art and fashion photographer based in Somerset, UK. In each composition, Hyde embraces the juxtapositions between light and shadow – using a sense of contrast and unease to address emotive concepts. The artist views image-making as a process more akin to painting than as a technical endeavour. Hyde often works with natural light and uses Photoshop to elevate pictures beyond the bounds of reality.



Ruby Hyde, *Displacement*, (2021). Print on aluminium panel. 80cm x 100cm.



Ruby Hyde, *This is No Place* (detail), (2022). Print on aluminium panel. 100cm x 100cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

SALOMÉ-CHARLOTTE CAMORS

sc-camors.com

@sc.camors 

"It is paradoxical that the massive diffusion of images highlighting and raising awareness regarding pressing global threats should have failed to induce proportionate changes to our habits." Salomé-Charlotte Camors considers our relationship with photographs: how they influence us and shape reality. *Akunnaaq*, mounted on raw steel, centres around a settlement in western Greenland. Its vulnerability to oxidation reflects the fragile state of the landscape. Camors adopts an activist, research-orientated approach; as ecological and social crises sweep the world, the artist engages with and empowers positive environmental action.



Salomé-Charlotte Camors, *Territory #3: Drée - Grand Lac*, (detail) (2020). Photography on steel. 50cm x 100cm x 0.5cm.



Salomé-Charlotte Camors, *Territory #2: Akunnaaq - Land of ice* (detail), (2019). Photography on steel. 50cm x 100cm x 0.5cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

SARAH BIRD

sarahbirdart.co.uk

@sj8bird

We are living in an age of rapid technological advancement. In *Haptic House*, Sarah Bird explores how this experience permeates private life and the sense of identity. She photographs hand-made models of domestic liminal spaces, experimenting with colour and scale to suggest varying feelings of play and control. Bird's vast influences range from Dutch interior paintings to modernist abstraction. She takes a painterly approach: composing, framing and manipulating light to create tonal range before building colour washes. *Haptic House* uses the language of technology to visualise the limitations and uncertainties of change.



Sarah Bird, *Haptic House II - Green Interior*, (2022).
Archival digital pigment print. 46cm x 30cm.



Sarah Bird, *From the Top of the Stairs*, (2022).
Archival digital pigment print. 30cm x 46cm.




Sarah Bird, *Haptic House II - Peach Interior*, (2022).
Archival digital pigment print. 46cm x 30cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

SCOTT MORGAN

scottmorganart.com

@scottmorganart 

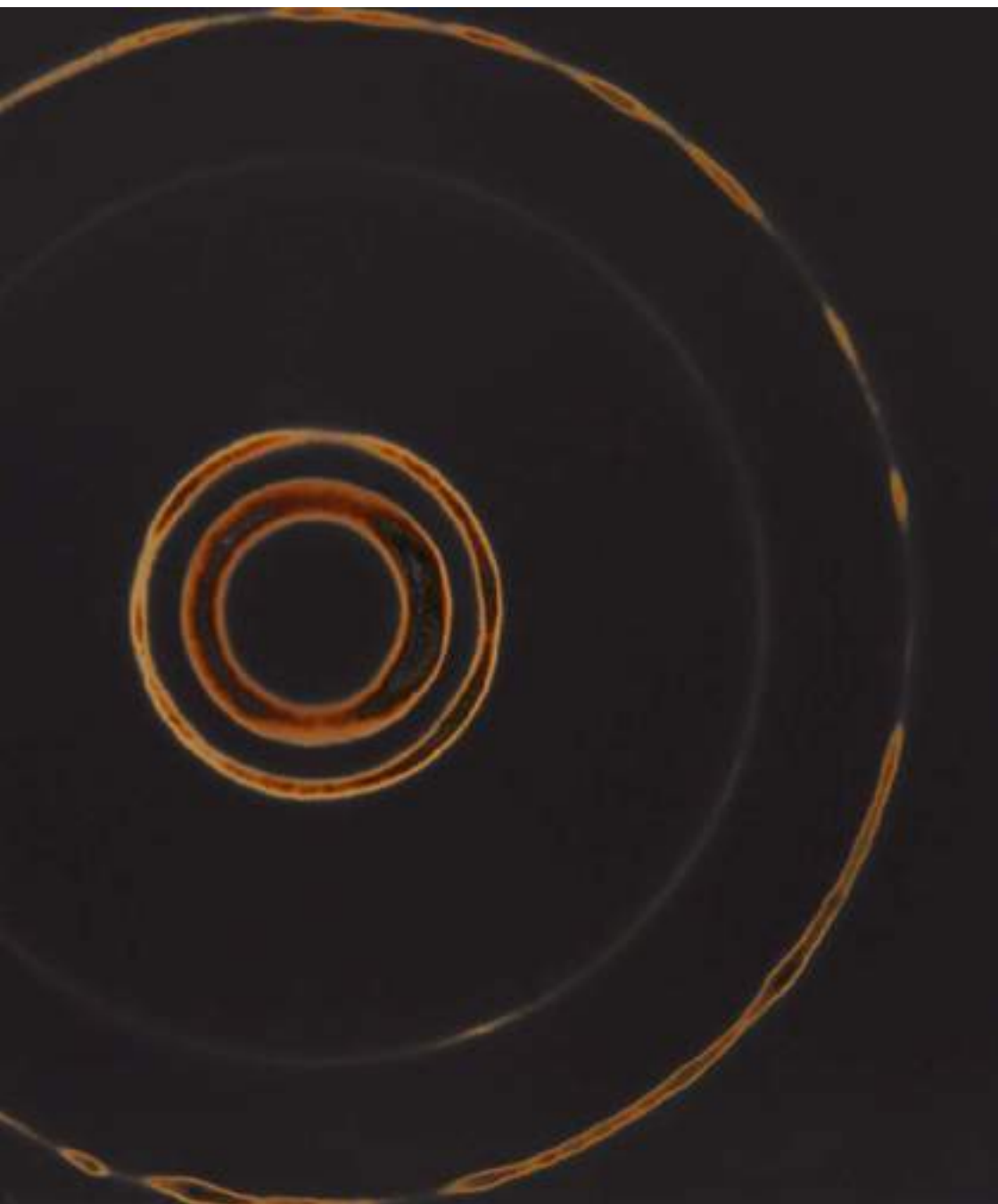
The sun's rays consist of photons – the elemental form of light – and can take anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 years to reach the surface of the Earth. Scott Morgan's *10,000 Years* envisages this ancient light by using solar radiation to etch onto silver gelatin papers. The resulting "Suryagrams", named after the Vedic god of the Sun, engage with the relationship between the material and metaphysical. The Vancouver-based multidisciplinary artist takes inspiration from cave drawings, cosmological explorations, petroglyphs and Tantric paintings. The work goes back to the simplest definition of photography: light transforming matter.



Scott Morgan, *10,000 Years, The Prayer Cycle 13*, (2020).
14.9cm x 10.2cm. Unique silver gelatin Suryagram.



Scott Morgan, *10,000 Years, Solstice 13* (detail), (2020).
25.4cm x 20.3cm. Unique silver gelatin Suryagram.



PHOTOGRAPHY

THEO DEPROOST

theodeproost.com

@theo_deproost

Bold colours, surreal lighting and vivid detail are the core characteristics of Theo Deproost's aesthetic. Here, a high level of technical ability meets inquisitive creativity to transport inanimate objects to "a realm beyond any specific location or time period." The fine art and commercial photographer zooms in on, twists and abstracts each item to encourage viewers to study and re-interpret the subject matter in new ways. In *Stasis, Re:Collect* and *Unfamiliar*, for example, tennis balls meld with crystal structures; synthetic flowers glow pink; leather caps, medical equipment and tools transform into unrecognisable, undulating shapes.



Theo Deproost, *Unfamiliar #2*, (2022). 89.4cm x 60.4cm.



Theo Deproost, *Re:Collect #1*, (detail) (2022). 59.4cm x 84.1cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

TILL RÜCKWART

tillrueckwart.com

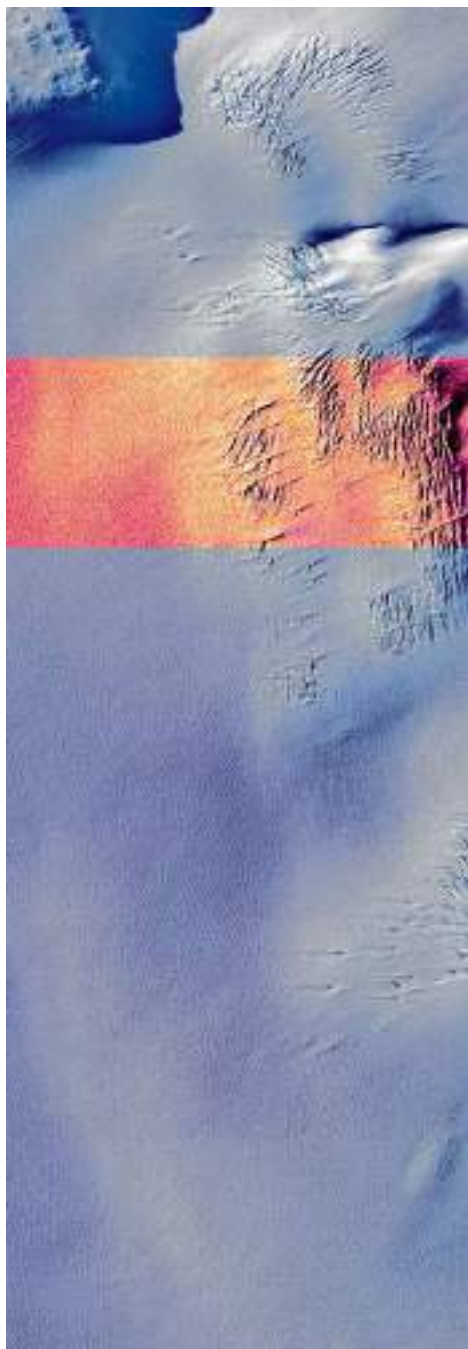
@tillrueckwart 



Salty Glitches analyses the poetic power of errors through representations of satellite imagery. In this series, colourful and abstract glitches bring attention to lithium mines in Chile's Atacama Desert and the Caucharí-Olaroz project in Argentina. By scanning QR codes coupled with the photographs, viewers can encounter the glitches on their smartphones. In doing so, they will also be tracing the origin of their device's lithium batteries. Till Rückwart is building an archive of what the artist calls "dysfunctional images" – pictures that present speculative ways of thinking about technology, its impact on the planet and our notions of reality.



Till Rückwart, *Salty Glitches 004 (with QR code)* (detail), (2021). Archival pigment print. 90cm x 90 cm.




Till Rückwart, *Orbital Mirage 76°03'49.8"N 61°43'21.8"E* (detail), (2022). Archival pigment print. 110cm x 200 cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

UWE LANGMANN

uwelangmann.com

@uwelangmann 

"Beauty and meaning can be found in even the most profound subjects and briefest of moments." Uwe Langmann's ambition is to spread this message to wider audiences. His photography is less concerned with a concrete depiction of reality than the emotional and poetic interpretation of the world surrounding him. Langmann has developed a photographic style where he takes pictures in particular weather conditions, which utilise snow, fog and diffused light from overcast skies. Examples include *Tender*, documenting trees blanketed in hazy white, and *Calligraphy*, showing delicate strands popping up from frosty ground.



Langmann, *Approach*, (2022). Pigment print on cotton paper. 100cm x 120cm.



Uwe Langmann, *Calligraphy* (2020). Pigment print on cotton paper. 50cm x 60cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

VIET HA TRAN

viethatran.com

@viethatranart @

Viet Ha Tran is a fine art photographer and multi-disciplinary artist renowned for emotionally dense and endlessly compelling depictions of women and landscapes. *Wall of Nature* is filled with strong colours, flooding each frame with pinks, oranges, greens and purples. The resulting shots are like stills from a daydream, where reality converges with the artist's inner world. Viet Ha Tran strives to paint the emotions and inner landscapes of female characters, creating a sense of intimacy with her camera. Thoughtful and lyrical, these photographs draw from poetry and philosophy, appearing to be freshly minted and timeless all at once.



Viet Ha Tran, *Wall of Nature XIII*, (2019). 105cm x 70cm x 0.1cm.



Viet Ha Tran, *Wall of Nature VI* (detail), (2019). 70cm x 105cm x 0.1cm.



Viet Ha Tran, *Wall of Nature XII*, (2019). 105cm x 70cm x 0.1cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

WEI JIAN CHAN

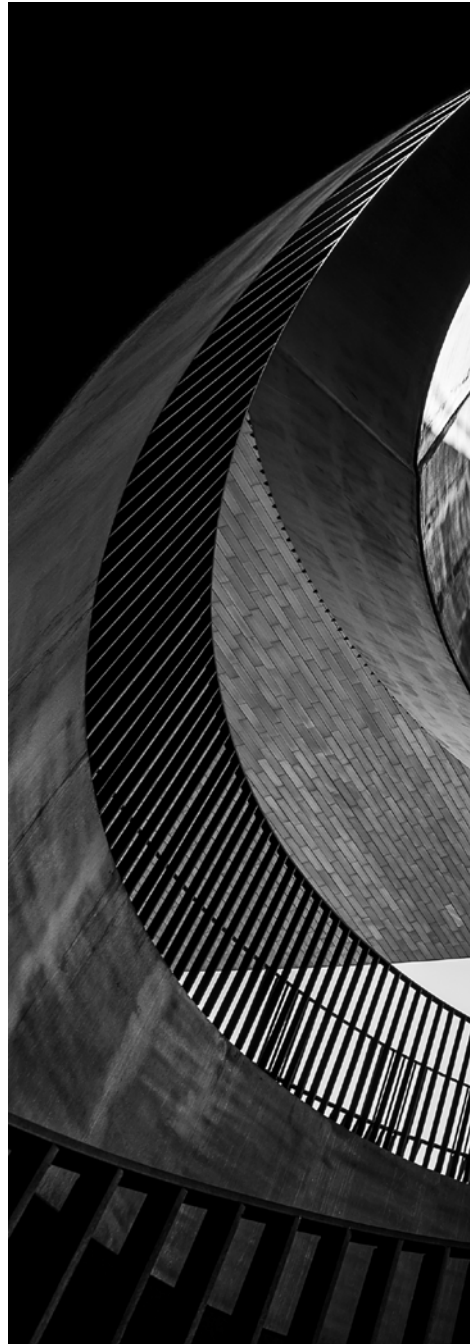
weijianchan.com

@theweijian 

The first time Wei Jian Chan picked up a camera, he was 14 years old and growing up in Singapore. He later moved to Oxford to attend university and then to London for work, but the camera remained a constant companion. Wei Jian's love of photography has grown from a pastime into a source of inspiration and passport to new experiences. The artist seeks out beauty and stillness in the chaos of modern working life. Wei Jian utilises traditional wet darkroom processes, as well as modern digital techniques. These monochromatic images incorporate elements of geometry, architecture and motion, seen in the works *Spiral* and *Shattered*.



Wei Jian Chan, *Shattered* (detail), (2022). Dimensions variable.



Wei Jian Chan, *Spiral* (detail), (2019). Dimensions variable.



PHOTOGRAPHY

WIZARD TANG

Wizard Tang

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In today's China, as in other parts of the world, young people can find themselves under immense pressure: to work overtime, get a promotion, make money and buy a house. Drifting aimlessly through the day can be viewed as rebellion. Photographer Wizard Tang has chosen Live House, which is a kind of live music performance venue, as the main location for series *Blow-up 00:00*. These saturated compositions paint a picture of activities enjoyed by contemporary Chinese youth, showing their unique sense of style – seasoned with a slight taste of kitsch. "It's a different kind of 'cool' to the rebellious passion of the previous era," Tang notes.



Wizard Tang, *Blow-up 00:00*, (2017).
Hahnemühle collection art paper. 90cm x 60cm.



Wizard Tang, *Blow-up 00:00*, (2018).
Hahnemühle collection art paper. 90cm x 60cm.



Wizard Tang, *Blow-up 00:00*, (2018).
Hahnenmühle collection art paper. 90cm x 60cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

XANTHE HUTCHINSON

xanthehutchinson.com

@xanthephoto 

Xanthe Hutchinson's practice centres on notions of visibility and change, with a particular focus on trans embodiment and adolescence. "The construct of gender is often determined by what is visible," the photographer notes. "My work is a conceit for the way in which the trans body acts in opposition to this trope and, moreover, as a site of cultural resistance." In collaboration with her own trans son, amongst others, Hutchinson's works, including *Lee Bleaching His Hair*, *Kick/Cut* and *A Waxing Moon*, visually unpick the idea of transition. The result is a powerful series of images that challenges society's often narrow perceptions.



Xanthe Hutchinson, *Gynodioecia*, (2021). 61 cm x 40.6 cm.



Xanthe Hutchinson, *Kick/Cut*, (2022). 30.5 cm x 20.3 cm.



Xanthe Hutchinson, *Lee Bleaching His Hair* (detail), (2020). 15.2cm x 17.8cm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

ZHOU CHENGZHOU

zhouchengzhou.com

@armidazhou

Industry, urbanisation and marginalisation are the key ideas behind Zhou Chengzhou's *Times Paradise*. The series is full of juxtapositions: past meets present, nature meets manmade, work meets leisure. Swimming pools are overshadowed by thick, billowing clouds from a power plant. Disused funfair rides have become swamped with overgrowth. A bright blue-and-yellow train slumps off its tracks. There's a sense of nostalgia to these images, alongside a creeping feeling of disquiet. Zhou's work as an artist, film director and writer visualises feelings of alienation – between people, places and "a broader and homogenised culture."



Zhou Chengzhou, *Times Paradise 01*, (2022). 120cm x 180cm.



Zhou Chengzhou, *Times Paradise 02* (detail), (2019). 180cm x 120cm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

ZILLAH BOWES

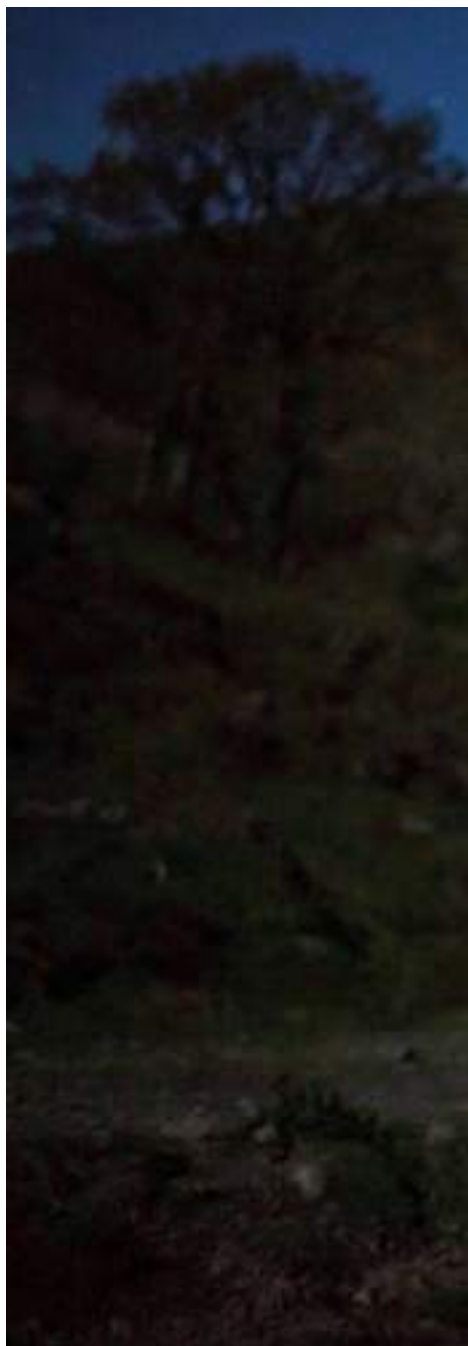
linktr.ee/zillahbowes

@zillahbowes 

Zillah Bowes is a filmmaker and multidisciplinary artist who frequently explores the relationship between the individual and the natural environment. Using lens-based media, poetry, installation and sculpture, Bowes' work often represents "a spiritual enquiry around climate change." The photographic series *Green Dark* is set in an upland area of Mid Wales sustaining a historic community. Their open hill farming practices root these people to their ancestors and provide a sense of belonging across multiple generations. Moonlight offers a space – neither darkness nor light – for Bowes to examine the people and the land in an uncertain future.



Zillah Bowes, *Maurice 'Talwm'* (portrait in moonlight). From *Green Dark*, (2020). C-type print. 62cm x 87cm x 4cm.



Zillah Bowes, *Elinor 'Rhiwnant' and Alice* (portrait in moonlight). From *Green Dark*, (2020). C-type print. 62cm x 87cm x 4cm.



SCULPTURE

ANNIE TREVORAH

annietrevorah.com

Annie Trevorah's multidisciplinary practice includes photography, print, sculpture, sound, textiles and video to communicate different socio-dynamic relationships between humanity and plants. In *CLADES*, the artist reveals fluidity inherent within structure, cultivating a balance between containment and freedom. Richly-hued resin forms examine themes of metamorphosis, with the knotted material symbolising entanglement. This organic approach to human-nature interplay recalls the work of Veronica Ryan, engaging with the remnants and residues of material to question contemporary social issues and themes of justice.



Annie Trevorah, *CLADES*, (2022). 30cm x 120cm x 8cm.



Annie Trevorah, *CLADES* (detail), (2022). 30cm x 120cm x 8cm.



Annie Trevorah, *CLADES*, (2022). 30cm x 120cm x 8cm.

SCULPTURE

CHARLIE CLUFF

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@charlie_cluff @

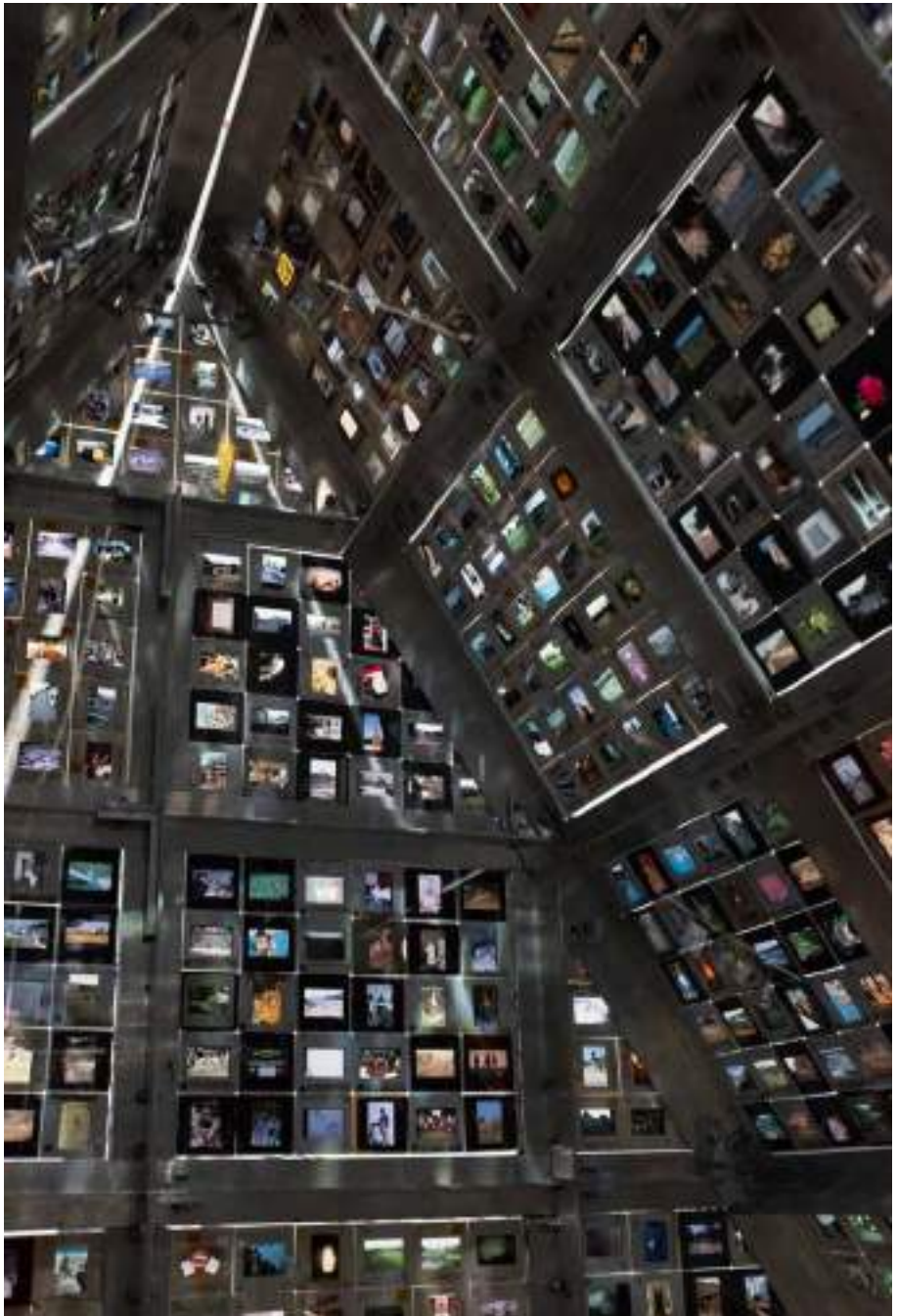
The interdisciplinarity between installation and sculpture allowed Charlie Cluff to push the boundaries of photographic art. *Photographic Memories* transforms over 10,000 slides inherited from the artist's grandfather into a house. "I know two versions of him," Cluff explains. "The man in my memory, the professor of dentistry, and the one I met through his photographs." Images of an empty sitting room and a windowsill vanity, for example, viewed from within the installation, highlight parallels in form and subject. Each connects Cluff and her grandfather across time, reiterating the value of documenting memory with images.



Charlie Cluff, *False History*, (2018). 15.2cm x 8.8cm.



Charlie Cluff, *Photographic Memories*, (2022). Installation view. 267cm x 141cm x 178cm.




Charlie Cluff, *Photographic Memories*, (2022). Installation view. 268cm x 141cm x 178cm.

SCULPTURE

DARIO PILATO

dariopilato.com

@pilato.gallery 



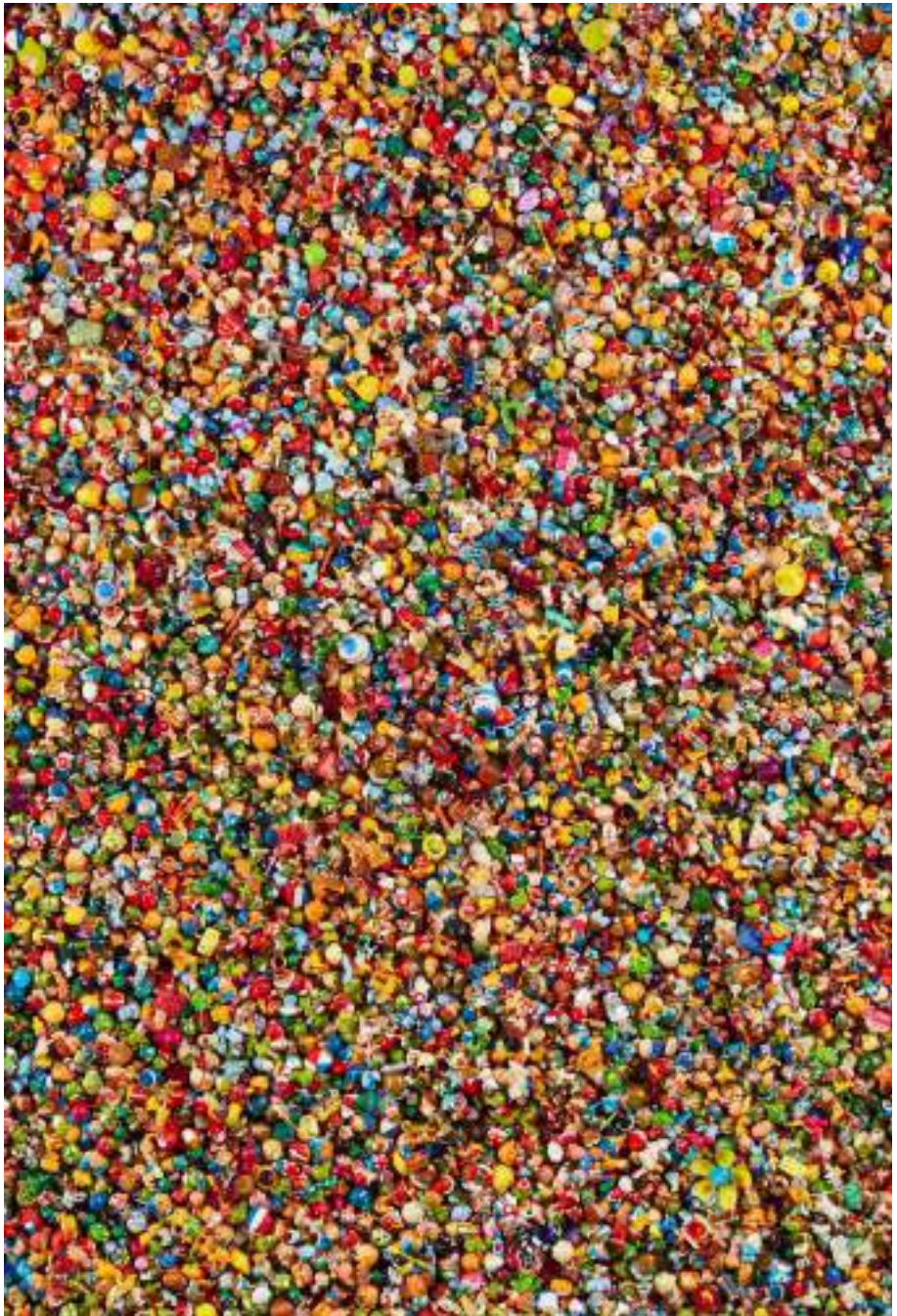
The Kinder Surprise reveals the values of society. Dario Pilato likens individuals to these collectable figures – each person is unique yet linked by a shared humanity. The artist is a native Italian who grew up in Belgium. He studied plastic, visual and spatial arts before devoting himself to his creations. *MonoKinderchromie*, for example, revives vintage toys whilst giving them deeper meaning. The vibrant sculptures are reminiscent of neo-expressionism. They are characterised by the repetition and entanglement of children's toys offered when purchasing something to attract consumers, questioning social and economic issues of society.



Dario Pilato, *MonoKinderchromie n°5*, (2021).
Vintage Kinder Surprises, 40cm x 40cm x 7cm.



Dario Pilato, *PolyKinderchromie n°1* (detail), (2021).
Vintage Kinder Surprises, 120cm x 100cm x 7cm.



Dario Pilato, *PolyKinderchromie n°1*, (2021).
Vintage Kinder Surprises, 120cm x 100cm x 7cm.

SCULPTURE

FRANCESCA SILVERTON

@francescasilvertonpots @

French mathematician Charles Dupin discovered a shape with curvature lines that are always circles in the 19th century, naming it the Dupin cyclide. Francesca Silverton combines found objects with mathematic principles to produce narratives on selfhood and identity. "I love clay that finds its own form," the artist notes. The clay *Dupin Cyclide* holds an uncountable number of circles. The ceramist invites viewers to touch the object and be reminded that clay is part of what makes us human. Silverton draws on 3D printing techniques with plaster mouldmaking, combining innovation and tradition to push the conventions of the form.



Francesca Silverton, *Games People Play, Concrete Bunkers*, (2023). Parian porcelain. 24cm x 20cm x 20cm.



Francesca Silverton, *Dupin Cyclide*, (2022). Porcelain. 28cm x 28cm x 20cm.



SCULPTURE

GEORGE ANDRIC

@georgeandricartist @

Ellipses signify a pause in literature, often to build tension or omit words. The punctuation offers its name to George Andric's large-scale stainless steel sculpture. The complexity of the shape becomes increasingly apparent as viewers move around the piece, studying it from every angle. Found in the environment, the spiral form appears like a vortex to another land, fragmenting the vista and blurring the boundaries between materiality and viewer. Andric's sculptures combine geometry and repetition within an abstract vocabulary. The work reflects a fascination with perception and the relationship between the artwork and the audience.



George Andric, *Ellipsis*, (2022). Stainless steel (316 grade). 200cm x 200cm x 74cm.



George Andric, *Ellipsis*, (2022). Stainless steel (316 grade). 200cm x 200cm x 74cm.




George Andric, *Ellipsis*, (2022). Stainless steel (316 grade), 200cm x 200cm x 74cm.

SCULPTURE

LIANG-JUNG CHEN

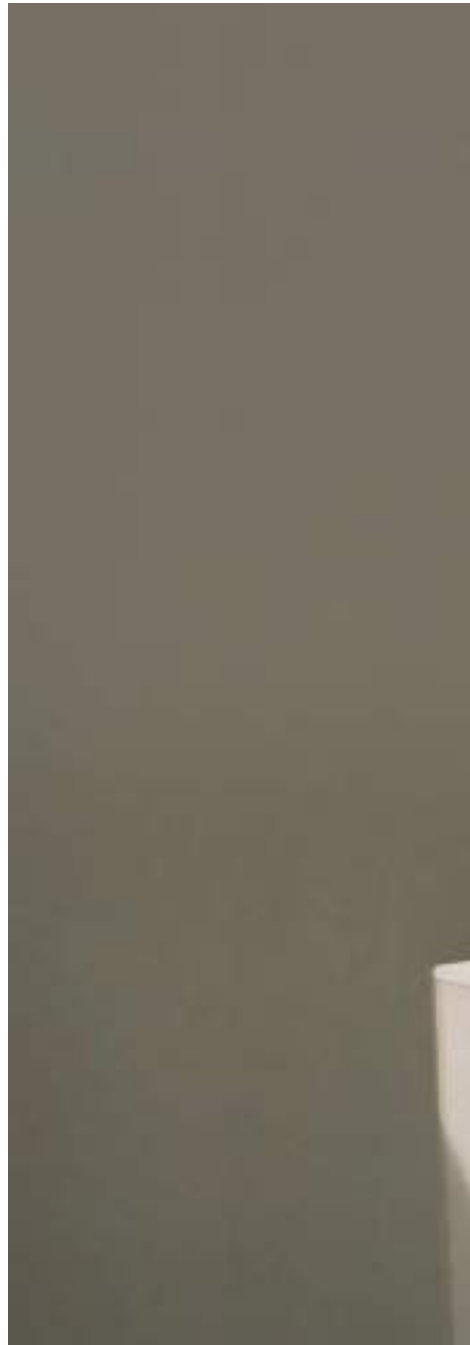
liangjungchen.com

@liangjung_chen 

An egg rocks on a fine wire sculpture. Another bounces on a wall-mounted metal sheet. These are the performative sculptures of Taipei-born, London-based artist Liang-Jung Chen, who expands on a background in industrial product design with drawing, installation, object and performance. Interactive bodies of work, such as *The Egg Rack Made a Disclaimer*, are informed by an interest in the tensions embedded in everyday scenarios, exploring the sense of boundaries and insecurities experienced in modern society. An evolving interplay between the tangible and intangible becomes a study of behaviour and psyche.



Liang-Jung Chen, *Egg rack #06*, (2020).
Brass sheet, 12cm x 4cm x 8cm.



Liang-Jung Chen, *Egg rack #03*, (2020).
Brass rod, 25cm x 20cm x 20cm.



SCULPTURE

LISA TRAXLER

lisatraxler.com

[@lisa.traxler](https://www.instagram.com/lisa.traxler) 



British artist Lisa Traxler has a multidisciplinary practice that explores the boundaries of 2D and 3D through space and form. The artist works across a range of media, including painting and sculpture, to create award-winning art that addresses an ongoing fascination with history and a sense of place, from an architectural perspective. A geometric focus is evident in juxtaposing sharp lines and fluid shapes. The natural development of her thought process is evident from her spatial configurations to the intricacy of colour. *Shape Shifter* is a "space painting" and suggests an evolution away from the wall into the places we inhabit.



Lisa Traxler, *Shape Shifter* (detail), (2022) Hand-painted acrylic on poplar ply. 257cm x 105cm x 120cm. Photo: Joe Low.



Lisa Traxler, *Shape Shifter* (detail), (2022) Hand-painted acrylic on poplar ply. 257cm x 105cm x 120cm. Photo: Joe Low.



Lisa Traxler, *Shape Shifter (A to C)*, (2022) Hand-painted acrylic on poplar ply. 257cm x 105cm x 120cm. Commissioned for the solo exhibition *Time Traveller*, Southampton City Art Gallery. Photo: Joe Low.

SCULPTURE

MANUEL URSPRUNG

manuelursprung.com

@manuel_o_urs @

Spheres repeat and fuse together. Cubes stack and twist. Manuel Ursprung creates three dimensional playgrounds for the imagination, expressing memories of daily life and travel. *MMXX* is made from more than 300 Plaster of Paris shapes, handcrafted over 600 hours. The sculptural wall hanging represents an empty urban landscape, encountered by the artist during a visit to London in 2020. "The people around me didn't notice the beauty sleeping between the city's incredible buildings." Shadows from the miniature apartments dance on a white surface, whilst Ursprung's handprints transform the scene into an expression of selfhood.



Manuel Ursprung, *Schinken Bälle* (detail), (2021).
Plaster of Paris, 73.5cm x 53.5cm x 18.5cm.



Manuel Ursprung, *MMXX* (detail), (2021).
Plaster of Paris, 137cm x 192cm x 13cm.



SCULPTURE

MARC VILANOVA

marcvilanova.com

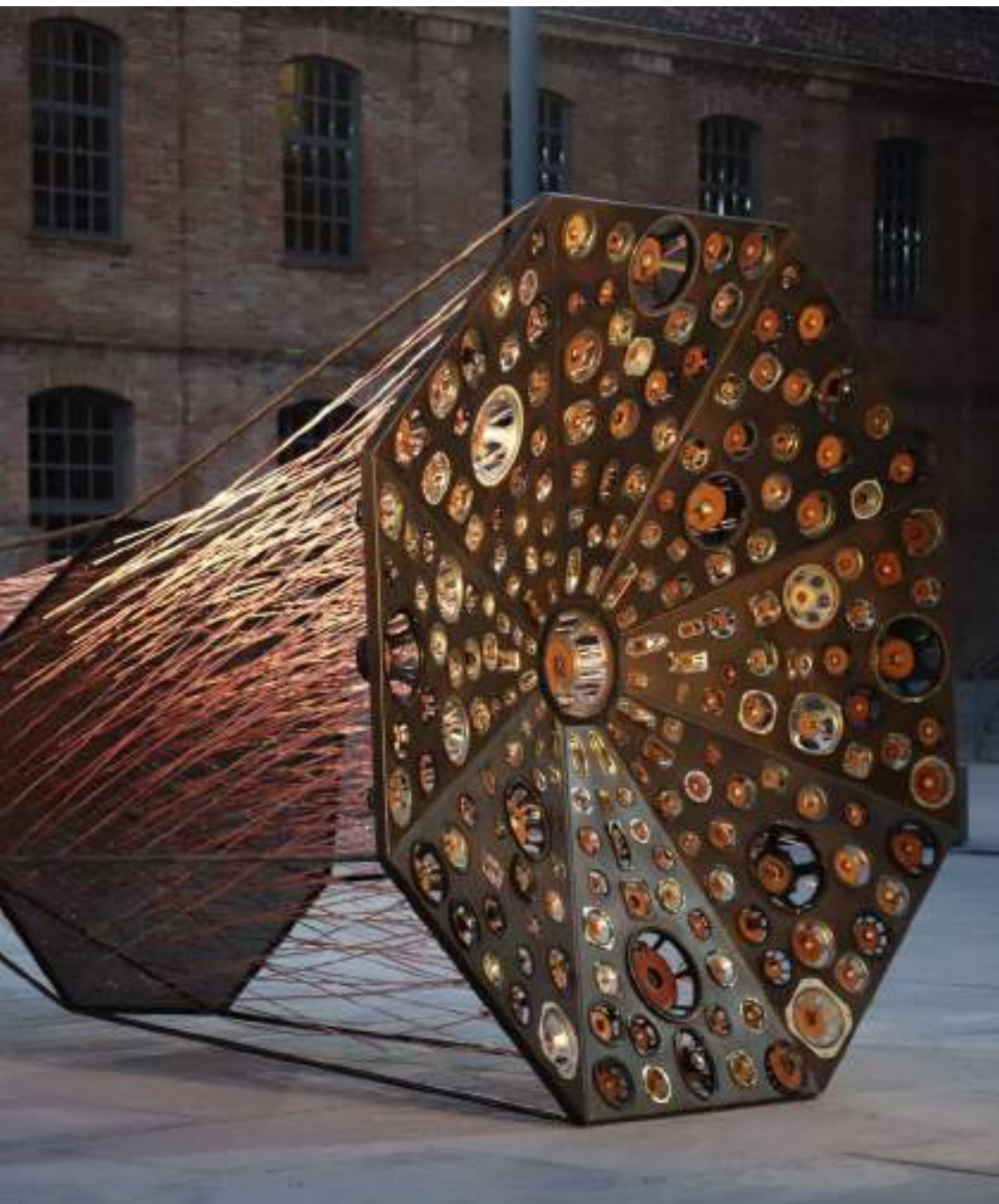
@marcvilnovapinyol @

Phonos – meaning sound or voice – provides the title for Marc Vilanova’s large-scale installation on the subject. 208 recycled speakers are sent individual signals in the form of infrasonic frequencies: sounds that are too low to be picked up by humans. The structure is unable to reproduce the audio, so instead vibrates and moves, giving shape to invisible forms. Viewers become aware of unimaginable frequencies, embracing the complexity of perception and the senses. Vilanova’s practice is rooted in innovation, digging into visibility, human obsolescence and machine expression to transform public spaces into arenas for conversation.



Marc Vilanova, *Aresta*, (2018). 12 channel sound, custom software and electronics, saxophones, steel, wood. Photo: Anna Benet. 7m x 4.5m x 3m.





Marc Vilanova, *Phonos*, (2020-2022). 208 channel sound, 208 speaker cones, 104 amplifiers, 26 audio interfaces, audio cables, steel, custom software. Photo: Anna Benet. 3m x 5m x 3m.

SCULPTURE

MIN JEONG SONG

minjeongsong.com

In 1882, French scientist Étienne-Jules Marey invented the chronophotographic gun, an early example of a moving-image camera. The inventor's films recorded humans and animals in motion. Overlapping stills revealed new ways to measure various gestures by freezing different phases of movement. Min Jeong Song's *The In-between Moments: Homage to E.J. Marey* explores the seemingly empty space between two complete actions. The 3D printed sculpture presents perpetual and ephemeral moments seen through kinetic illusion. Light passes through transparent surfaces, before refracting to virtually animate hidden depictions.



Min Jeong Song, *Absence of Presence*, (2018).
3D rendered. Dimensions variable.



Min Jeong Song, *The In-between Moments: Homage to E.J. Marey*, (2022).
3D printed PETG and resin, motorized turntable. Dimensions variable.



SCULPTURE

NIA E. ROBINSON

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[@robins.en](https://www.instagram.com/robins.en)

Backwards in Coming Forwards is a collection of wooden objects that combine minimalism with modern technology. Nia E. Robinson's practice draws on a background in creative therapies and participatory art-making, utilising actions of play to enliven an otherwise sterile approach to sculpture. Interlocking blocks, tessellating slats and three dimensional prisms are constructed in repetitive actions from laser-cut MDF. The handmade designs are one of a kind, becoming unique extensions of the artist's human interactions during a period of self-discovery amidst a background of financial unrest, the pandemic, trauma and war.



Nia E. Robinson, *Rubik 7*, (2022).
Laser-cut MDF. 20cm x 20cm x 20cm.



Nia E. Robinson, *Rubik 7* (detail), (2022).
Laser-cut MDF. 20cm x 20cm x 20cm.



Nia E. Robinson, *Rubik 3*, (2021).
Laser-cut MDF, 17cm x 17cm x 17cm.

SCULPTURE

NICKY ASSMANN

nickyassmann.net

@nicky_assmann

The intangible quality of light, colour and motion provides the starting point for Nicky Assmann's spatial installations. She utilises a background in film and art science in experiments with physical and chemical processes, such as fluid dynamics and the formation of phenomena, like turbulence. *Turmoil* is a 20-metre long double-sided sculpture that represents a tornado's development. The public artwork is saturated in intense blues, pinks and reds, which the artist selects from nature and the digital spectrum. This "macro universe" reflects the random and continuous order of the world, highlighting the turbulent period humanity is facing.



Nicky Assmann, *Turmoil*, (2019). Video sculpture.
20m x 127cm x 9.4 cm. 7m height difference. Photo: Jenne Hoekstra.



Nicky Assmann, *Turmoil* (detail), (2019). Video sculpture.
20m x 127cm x 9.4 cm. 7m height difference. Photo: Jenne Hoekstra.



SCULPTURE

PETER BARAN

regularconcrete.com

@regularconcrete 

Concrete is the most used manmade material in the world. In *Regular Concrete*, a series of sculptures designed and handcrafted by Peter Baran, it is employed as a means to capture the manmade world: smartphones, games consoles, music players. "Creating sculptures from concrete leads to a mismatch between the shapes of the objects and the material," Baran says. "When the shape and the material don't match, magic happens ... Concrete lasts an eternity, which is exactly the same amount of time as the impact of the objects captured here." Electronic devices are cast in a signature Brutalist style and become immortalised like time capsules.



Peter Baran, *The Handheld Gaming Console 1989* (detail), (2022). Custom concrete mixture. 19cm x 14cm x 3cm. 1300g.



Peter Baran, *The Video Game Console 1985* (detail), (2022). Custom concrete mixture. 10cm x 16cm x 4cm. 900g.



SCULPTURE

PETER WALKER

peterwalkersculptor.com

[@pwalkersculptor](https://www.instagram.com/pwalkersculptor) 

Peter Walker works across a vast array of media, which includes monumental sculpture, large-scale installation and light. At the centre of Walker's practice is a sense of reflection: on the self, humanity and the important questions that arise from the complex world around us. The meditative works range from intimate bronzes to vast illuminated installations, in which the artist curates the viewer's experience of light and sound. He does so through the artistic collaboration *Luxmuralis*. *The Peace Doves* is an adaptive artwork, meaning it is re-curated for each new venue it visits, creating unique experiences in four UK cathedrals to date.



Peter Walker, *The Peace Doves*, Liverpool, (2021). 25m x 9m x 9m.



Peter Walker, *The Peace Doves*, Liverpool, (2021). 25m x 9m x 9m.



SCULPTURE

SARAH STRACHAN

sarah-strachan.co.uk

@sarahstrachan

Sarah Strachan is a transdisciplinary printmaker, painter and ceramicist. Her works, which often incorporate sound or moving-image, centre around environmental changes. Series like *Becoming* are sparked by deep conversations with people, as well as interactions with place, the land and its materials. Strachan's interest lies in how our perceptions of "being in, knowing and belonging to" the world affect our ecological awareness and thinking. *Becoming* is a series of intuitive ceramic sculptures inspired by research into European native oysters, invasive slipper limpets and the role of touch in their transition from male to female.



Sarah Strachan, *Dawn*, (2022). One tonne topsoil, stoneware ceramics, wood, plants, LED lights & tripods. Dimensions variable.



Sarah Strachan, *Becoming III & IV*, (2022). Stoneware ceramics. 30cm x 40cm x 40cm.



SCULPTURE

STEVE ANWAR (AKA SAPIEN)

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@sapien_studio

"Meditation is my in-breath, art is my out-breath."
Steve Anwar is a meditation teacher and maker of solid steel sculptures. *Only Breath*, *Mantra Machine* and *Fight or Flight* are all inspired by "the collision of opposites" – an idea which Anwar describes as a catalyst for his creativity. The artist, who has industrial roots from Sheffield, is enthralled by eastern spirituality. His work under the moniker Sapien looks at the junctions between opposing elements: mind and matter, nature and machinery, chaos and order. Anwar exposes boundary lines and depicts them through sculpture, conveying "what it means to be a breathing human being."



Steve Anwar, *Mantra Machine*, (2021).
Corten Steel 220cm x 220cm x 140cm.




Steve Anwar, *Only Breath*, (2021).
Corten Steel, 265cm x 250cm x 90cm.



SCULPTURE

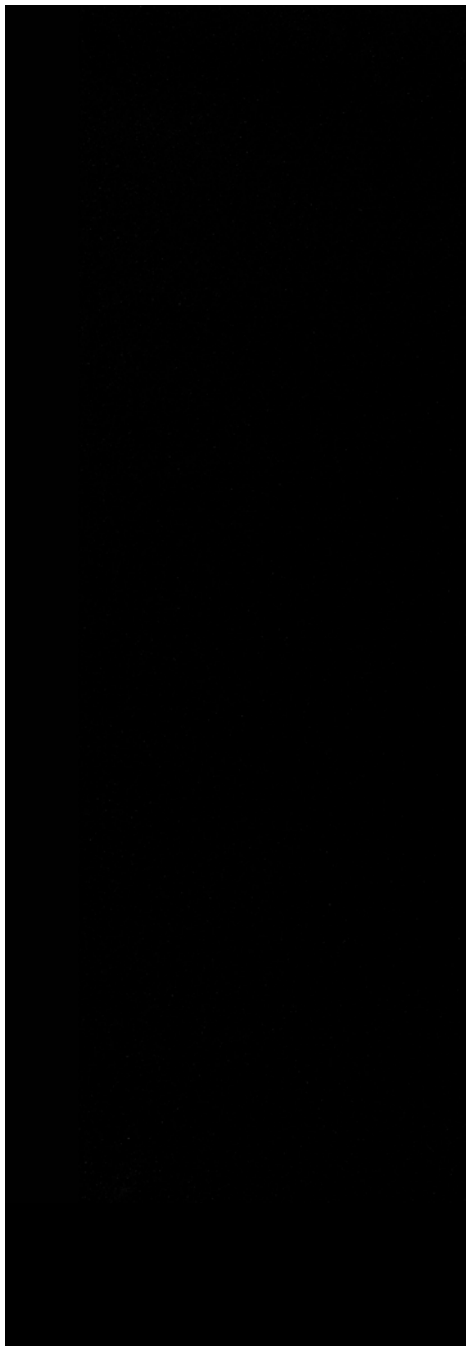
ZHIQIANG LI

@zhiqiangliart 

Information technology and cultural heritage form the backbone of Zhiqiang Li's work. As a visual communicator and sculptor, he harnesses cutting-edge digital innovation as a means to project possible futures for disappearing ways of life. *The Sound of Changsha Kiln*, for example, is based around a major kiln site in Tongguan, China. It is one of the few to be protected at the national level and is known for producing ceramics at the end of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). Zhiqiang provides traditional handicrafts with a new life, offering solutions for how we might preserve them, and their cultural significance, for generations to come.



Zhiqiang Li, *The Sound of Changsha Kiln* (detail), (2022).
Ceramic sculpture. 30cm x 45cm x 30cm.



Zhiqiang Li, *The Sound of Changsha Kiln*, (2022).
Ceramic sculpture. 30cm x 45cm x 30cm.



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FUTURE NOW

AESTHETICA ART PRIZE 2023

This anthology is the litmus test of our times. The 2023 Aesthetica Art Prize brings together 125 artists who offer creativity as a form of expression, with projects spanning the boundaries of genre – from painting, photography and sculpture to installation, mixed-media, video and digital. These works survey pressing themes from our ever-shifting world – from the all-encompassing nature of technology to the challenges brought by the climate emergency and the residual legacies of colonialism.

Our world is changing at cataclysmic speed. Art is a way to make sense of it all. The impact creativity has on society is profound. It's transformational and invites conversations that challenge our thinking and encourage us to take positive risks. Art offers hope and solutions to problems that are bigger than any one individual or country. We can use it to reach new heights of understanding and incite change.

Art is a way to make sense of the here and now at this critical juncture in history. Here, we see practitioners take the temperature of the current world and offer a new set of solutions to contemporary problems. This year's book is a place to unite and join together through the power of art. We welcome creatives from across the world, including Australia, Japan, Netherlands, Ukraine, the UK and USA. Inside, you will discover ground-breaking ideas that imagine a future with boundless possibilities.

