

Press Release

Artists announced for Syllabus VI – an alternative collaboratively produced learning programme.



Elsa James, *Black Girl Essex: Here We Come Look We Here*, 2019, Tilbury Docks, Essex, film still credit Andy Delaney

Ten artists have been selected for Syllabus VI, a national, collaboratively-produced alternative learning programme, delivered by Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge; Eastside Projects, Birmingham; Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts), London; Spike Island, Bristol; and Studio Voltaire, London.

The selected artists for Syllabus VI are: James Clarkson, Lauren Craig, Ufuoma Essi, Bettina Furnée, Olga Grotova, Helen Hamilton, Elsa James, Freya Johnson Ross, Daniel Trivedy and Sam Williams.

Now in its sixth year, Syllabus VI provides a learning programme for artists over a ten month period and is supported using public funding from Arts Council England. Syllabus is developed collaboratively with the participating artists, the partner institutions and the artistic advisors, who this year are Jade Montserrat and Amanprit Sandhu.

The Syllabus VI artists work across a range of practices, from sound, filmmaking, choreography, sculpture and work in the public realm. Their work researches diverse topics such as archiving, the body, multi-species entanglement, race and representation, materiality, language and interfaces. The ten selected artists live and work across the UK, including Yorkshire, West Wales, the East of England and Greater London.

Syllabus VI is set to be markedly different from previous iterations of the programme. This year, the programme partners decided to make Syllabus free-to-access and to reframe much of the programme activity around contributions from the participating artists. Syllabus has also shifted to a hybrid

online/offline model to contend with the challenges of Covid-19, with the programme consisting of multiple online meetings and shorter in-person gatherings at partner venues.

Over the first series of meetings in September and October, Syllabus VI artists will come together to share their work and co-produce the year's syllabus alongside the partners and artistic advisors. Beginning by presenting work and discussing shared concerns and problems, from the theoretical to the very practical, the group identify a list of aims for the year and a way of working that accommodates everyone. Meeting throughout the year, the cohort will invite guest artists, curators, writers and other practitioners to deliver intensive sessions hosted by each of the partners. Previous contributors have included Larry Achiampong, Barby Asante, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Celine Condorelli, Anthea Hamilton, Andy Holden, Evan Ifekoya, Shama Khanna, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Mark Leckey, Richard Long, Sofia Niazi, Katrina Palmer, Hetain Patel, Holly Pester, Rory Pilgrim, Morgan Quaintance, Tai Shani, Rosalie Schweiker, Louise Shelley, Linda Stupart, Keith Wilson, DM Withers, Rehana Zaman and Andrea Luka Zimmermann.

The full list of alumni and sessions from previous years of The Syllabus are available at <http://www.wysingartscentre.org/archive/retreats>

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Notes to editors

Participating Artist Biographies

James Clarkson is a Sheffield-based artist whose work explores the relationship between everyday objects, culture and technology. This investigation is underpinned by a fetishised interest into materiality; his sculptures sometimes exist as a bricolage of hacked up, raw edged, repurposed objects and at other times are shiny, slick, glossy replicas. Through this duality between reframing and replicating his work finds a playful approach to unpicking the speculative interconnectivity of things. Clarkson's sculptures appear as ghostly bodies, which act as a reflection of where we are now.

Selected, forthcoming and past exhibitions include; *Title TBC*, Bloc Projects, Sheffield (2021), *Private Song*, Doosan Arts Centre, Seoul (2020) *The Coventry Biennial*, Coventry (2019), *The Collection Stripped Bare*, The Lab'Bel Collection, France (2016), *Smooth Flow*, The Tetley, Leeds (2014), *Pavilion*, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow (2012), *Twin Tone Lustre*, DREI, Cologne (2013), *About Sculpture*, Rolando Anselmi, Berlin (2014) *Graphic Design*, Futura Project, Prague (2014), *A Painted Spot as a Yellow Sun*, Rod Barton Gallery, London (2012), *Small Rome*, Frutta, Rome (2014) and *Return Journey*, MOSTYN, Llandudno (2014) and has participated in a number of collaborative projects with artists including Haroon Mirza and Ditte Gantriis.

James Clarkson is also a recent recipient of the Freelands Artist Programme in association with Site Gallery, Sheffield and the 2020 Yorkshire Sculpture International 'Sculpture Network.'
www.james-clarkson.co.uk

Lauren Craig is a London-based cultural futurist whose polymathic practice encompasses her auto-ethnographic experiences as an artist, cultural researcher, full-spectrum doula and celebrant. Transversing photography, video, installation, performance and experimental writing, she explores themes of ecofeminism, spirituality, health, collective intelligence, and futurity. Craig's current research incorporates restorative writing circles, using still and moving image as well as therapeutic and

reparative archival methods to document the creative genealogies of contemporary celebration, and commemoration centralising the practices of womxn of colour artists and their allies. Craig's *Women of Colour Index Slide Show* screened at Tate Britain (2018) and the Centre for Contemporary Art, Goldsmiths (2019). This exploration featured methods of projection through digitally restored 35mm slides in a mediative interflow of restorative role-call, tribute and invitation. Craig has a curatorial undercurrent to her practice, establishing and directing her own arts organisation and 3rd space (gallery/studio/retail/therapy space), Field, (2009–2016) in Brixton where she designed residencies, artist development and public programmes, alongside curating exhibitions. Craig contributed to the collectively curated show *Rita Keegan (Archive) Project* (RKAP) South London Gallery, (2020). *RKAP* is a precursor to *The Rita Keegan Exhibition* opening spring (2021). As part of the *RKAP* archival task force, Craig continues her therapeutic gaze to examine her theories of 'compressed curation' and conceptual thought leadership, and themes of expansion of collective memory and intelligence, collage and care in a live-experimental art writing series September (2020). Aiming to further her practice-based research, she will attend the School of Fine Arts & Humanities Royal College of Art (2021/22).

Ufuoma Essi is a video artist, filmmaker, and film programmer from Lewisham, South East London. She works predominantly with film and moving image as well as photography and sound. Within her work, she seeks to examine the historical and contemporary links between the Black Atlantic and explores intersectional themes of race, gender, class, and sexuality. The archive forms an essential medium for her as an artist and it's through explorations with the archive that she aims to interrogate and disrupt the silences and gaps of historical narratives. By using the archive as a process of unlearning and discovery she seeks to re-centre the marginalised histories of the Black diaspora and specific histories of black women. Drawing from a range of influences including black popular culture, films, music, historical texts, and black feminist theory from writers such as Claudia Jones to Audre Lorde.

Essi's films have been screened and exhibited at institutions and galleries in the UK and abroad such as the Barbican Centre, South London Gallery, MOCA Los Angeles, Croydon Art Store and Chisenhale Studios. She is also a member of the South London Gallery based women and non-binary POC collective Narration Group.

Bettina Furnée was born in the Netherlands and came to the UK to train at David Kindersley's workshop. She studied History of Art and gained her Masters in Public Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design. Her text and language-based artistic practice is rooted in notions of site, and ranges from text and moving image to complex public realm installations and commissions. She often works collaboratively, and invites audiences to participate in her creative process through predetermined systems, aiming to inhabit multiple voices. She has been commissioned widely and recently completed touring *Even You Song*, a re-imagined choral evensong created with writer Lucy Sheerman and composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad. Driven by existential and societal concerns, her practice lies somewhere between poetics and politics, whilst viewing our accidental place and time in this world through the lens of displacement. Based in Cambridge, she is studio artist at Wysing Arts Centre.

<http://bettinafurnee.co.uk/>

Olga Grotova takes family history, landscapes, troubled ecologies and experience of displacement as starting points for installations, paintings and performances. Her work involves going on journeys to map and collect histories, mainly concerning the lives and labours of Eastern European women that have been overlooked and erased from the established narratives. These histories alongside the material from the environments where they came from, such as plants, waters and debris lay foundation to paintings and performances. Grotova uses poetry readings, sound and movement, to activate the

paintings and create situations through which those marginalised histories can be uncovered and re-articulated in the present.

Elsa James is an artist and activist living in Essex since 1999. Her work intervenes in the overlapping discourses of race, gender, diaspora and belonging. Her Black British identity ignites her interdisciplinary and research-based practice, located within the fields of contemporary performance, text and language-based art, socio-political and socially engaged art; occasionally dabbling with drawing and painting.

Solo works employ aural and the archives to examine ideas surrounding regionality of race and black subjectivity. Recent projects *Forgotten Black Essex* (2018) and *Black Girl Essex* (2019) explore the historical, temporal and spatial dimensions of what it means to be black in Essex; England's most misunderstood, and, homogeneously white county. Her social practice includes advocating for the inclusion of marginalised voices and communities in the arts sector; *New Ways of Seeing, Making and Telling* (2018), a visual provocation and live debate, challenged how the art sector can 'genuinely' address barriers to participation and involvement in the arts for Black, Asian and other minority communities.

James has exhibited, screened and presented projects nationally including Autograph (ABP), London; Big Screen Southend at Focal Point Gallery, Southend; Firstsite Gallery, Colchester; Furtherfield, London; Metal Culture, Southend; Site Gallery, Sheffield and Tate Exchange at Tate Modern, London.

Helen Hamilton lives and works in Leeds. Her practice is predominantly sculptural and explores ideas around animacy, the relationship between subject and object, and the role of objects within our mental and physical lives. Much of her research is based in material culture studies and object-oriented ontology, with a particular interest in actor-network theory and the writings of Bruno Latour.

Hamilton graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London in 2015 with a BA in Fine Art and History of Art. Recent projects include a solo commission with Index Festival, and an upcoming residency with Womp, Sheffield.

Freya Johnson Ross is an artist and researcher working across different mediums including sound, installation and collage. Her interests are focused on listening across disciplines, knowledge production and use, and its role in social change. She strives through her practice to invoke people's reflection on the intangible and their own perceptions. Her most recent work addresses the politics of listening and the ethics of making and re-purposing sound archives, and she is interested in the idea of personal and institutional archives as fiction. Born in Glasgow, she has studied at the University of Cambridge, Wimbledon College of Art, and the University of Sussex. Recent shows and broadcasts include BBC Radio 3, Resonance FM, CCA Glasgow and SPARC London.

Sam Williams is an artist working across video, live performance and collage. His work explores the connections between the cinematic and the somatic and the relationships between site, body and archive. His research is focused on how we can look at multispecies entanglements, mycelial networks, ecological systems and folk mythologies to produce ideas for present and future ways of non-human-centric living.

Daniel Trivedy is of Indian descent, grew up in south-east England and is now based in South Wales, UK. Following an initial degree in Geology and Palaeontology, Daniel later studied Fine Art at Swansea College of Art.

Using art as a method of enquiry and investigation, Daniel is a multi-disciplinary artist that grapples with themes of connection, belonging and cosmopolitanism. Fundamentally, he is interested in our psychological relationship to each other; what is the glue that holds us together and what pulls us apart? He has shown his work as a solo artist and as part of group shows in the in the UK and internationally. His work is held by the National Museum of Wales and in private collections. In 2019 Daniel was awarded the Gold Medal for Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod for Wales.

Partner Biographies

Eastside Projects is an artist run multiverse, commissioning, producing and presenting experimental art practices and demonstrating ways in which art may be useful as part of society. Eastside Projects provides vital infrastructure, supports best practice and works to expand the role of the artist run space. <https://eastsideprojects.org/>

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) is an evolving, radical visual arts organisation dedicated to developing an artistic programme that reflects on the social and political impact of globalisation. <http://www.iniva.org>

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, located close to Bristol's harbourside. A vibrant hub for production, presentation and debate, it invites audiences to engage directly with creative practices through participation and discussion. <http://www.spikeisland.org.uk/>

Studio Voltaire is one of the UK's leading not-for-profit arts organisations. Their pioneering public programmes of exhibitions, participation projects, live events and off-site commissions have gained an international reputation. <https://www.studiovoltaire.org/>

Wysing Arts Centre is a thriving cultural campus of ten buildings across an 11acre rural site in south Cambridgeshire which hosts experimental residencies for UK and international artists, and delivers a critically acclaimed public programme of gallery exhibitions and events including conferences, symposia, workshops and music events. <http://www.wysingartscentre.org/>



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