

S - O - A

Birmingham School of Art

September Newsletter 2021

Welcome (and welcome back) to Art School!

September, as the beginning of the academic year, is always filled with excitement. It marks the start of new journeys, new ideas, new opportunities, new challenges, new friendships and new communities forming.

I would like to begin this newsletter by extending a very warm welcome to our new students. Some of you will be joining us from school or college, some of you from foundation, BA or MA degrees, whilst others will be returning to education after a break. Whatever your starting point, your new chapter and learning journey will no doubt be fast-paced, rich and I hope rewarding. I would encourage you to embrace everything the School of Art and the wider University has to offer; from the teaching within your programmes to the enhanced learning activities which take place; make the most of it all. You are the School of Art and we are what you make us!

To our returning students; it is so very good to have you back! We have missed you!

I look forwards to sharing news of all of your great achievements over the next year through this monthly newsletter. For this first edition of 2021/22, amongst a range of good-news stories, I am pleased to celebrate the final outcomes of our graduating MA students who have been working hard all summer to produce individual, ambitious and thought-provoking work. Well done everyone, you did it!

Best wishes

Becky

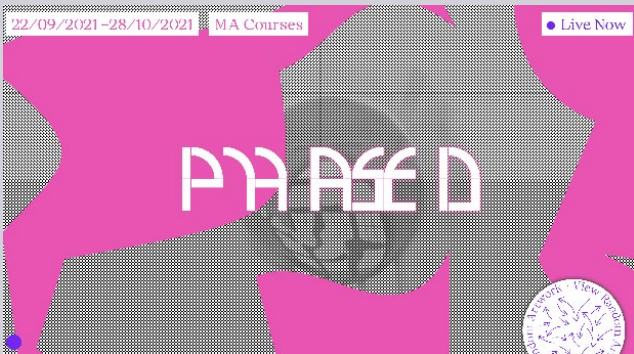


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What's been happening at the School of Art:

PHASED MA Final Show 2021



PHASED is a celebration of the talent and creativity from 2021's MA students at Birmingham School of Art. *PHASED* explores links between practice and theory from our five distinct MA Courses: Fine Art, Contemporary Arts China, Arts & Project Management, Arts & Education Practices and Art & Design: Interdisciplinary Practices. As a staff team, we congratulate this year's cohort in working through exceptional circumstances to share their work, and look forward to seeing their practices thrive and grow in the future.

MA Fine Art



Georgia Tucker, MA Fine Art
Advena, W Hotel London



Dion Kitson, MA Fine Art
Kick up the arse, Diohoria Gallery, Mykonos

The MA Fine Art cohort have surpassed all expectations. Creating new work and finding practical making solutions against the backdrop of the last year's events. They have also demonstrated their innovation by finding exciting situations and sites to show their work, including in public squares, hotels, archives, online spaces, publications and in galleries.



Boyana Aleksova, MA Fine Art
Participatory Environmental Project, Bulgaria

The work made over the last year from MAFA students has covered a broad range of interests from ritual performance and spell-casting, to representations of diasporic communities, to the environment and hyper-objects, aesthetic conundrums, disability rights concerns and so on. Each of them, wherever in the world they have come from have been dedicated to developing the quality of their art practice. We wish them all well for the future.

MA Art and Design: Interdisciplinary Practces



The MA Art and Design: Interdisciplinary Practices course engages with the hybrid nature of art and design in contemporary culture, in which students develop strong individual and collaborative creative identities. This year the students addressed topics that critically evaluated contexts within environment and production, new materialism, consumer culture, marketized education, labour working conditions, science fiction, care and wellbeing to name a few. The outcomes span multiple mediums, working across film, print, illustration, textiles, sculpture, painting, performance sound and designed object.



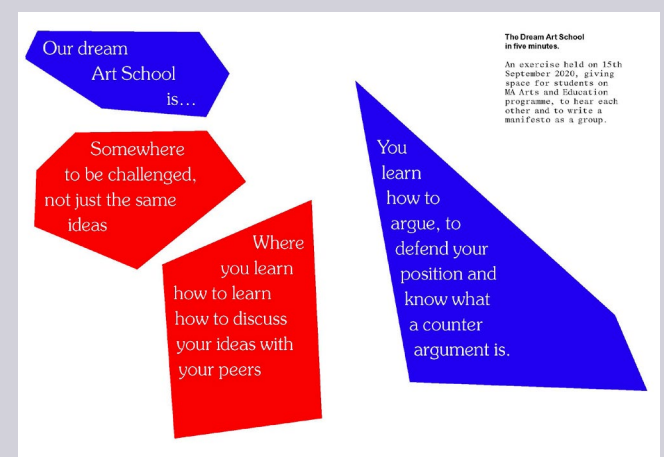
Students on MA Art and Design also engaged with workshops and live projects such as working with poet, film maker, photographer and former young people's laureate Caleb Femi and MA students from HDK-Valand-Academy in a workshop called the Misreading Group. They selected texts that exist outside of the frame of design and usually marginalised authors and read them collectively as a design text. They also worked with professional puppeteer James Frost and Postworkers Theatre to produce the puppet

performance *Precarity Bouffe*, exploring radical puppetry practices and its rich history of creative subversion, scenography and the design of objects, artefacts and performances. Contextually, the focus of the project addressed issues of precarity, inequality and bias found in the competitive area of marketized education. Students produced puppets, scenography and a series of co-written scripts before collectively performing them.

MA Art and Education Practices



Students on the MA Arts and Education Practices course have worked collectively as well as individually this year. Influencing their final show has been the conversations generated from the peer to peer learning they initiated with *Self-led Mondays*. Students also came together to develop the [As Strange as Familiar](#) publication that was programmed by Ikon as part of their 2021 Migrant Festival. The publication was grown from mutuality and shared experiences. Course Leader Cathy Wade and all of the School congratulate the students on their exceptional work this year.

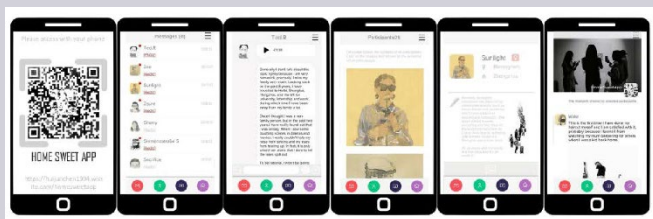


MA Contemporary Arts China



Shuyi Xie
The Strangers

MA Contemporary Arts China students have successfully completed their final Major Project this September. You can view their work in the 2021 virtual MA show [PHASED](#), and join us to celebrate their achievements. Throughout this year, working on issues of migration, identity, traditional materials and contemporary Chinese art, MACAC students have excelled in imagination, creativity and resilience. We wish them a successful future career and look forward to seeing how their work evolves and grows.



Huijun Chen
Home Sweet App

Grace Allen (BA Fine Art Level 5) Colmore BID Parklet Commission

In June, our SoA students were given the exciting opportunity to submit ideas to Colmore Business District to design and produce artworks for installation on two 'parklets' in the city, with the title 'Green in the City'. Huge congratulations go to Grace Allen as her vibrant designs were selected. Grace completed the commission over the

summer, and said: 'These murals combine processes like Acrylic Painting, Photoshop, and Collage. My vision was to paint an abstract piece, with bright colours – incorporating 'The four Ages of Colmore' and its original beauty. Working with Colmore BID was an eye opener in terms of what I can accomplish as an artist'.

Grace's artwork is installed on the parklet outside Gaucho in Church Street. It is a beautiful piece of work that has caused considerable comment among the CIB team and working group. "We are so impressed with Grace and her work that we have asked her to deliver another piece of artwork, so both parklets in Church Street will be by Grace Allen, artist." Mike Mounfield (Projects Manager at Colmore BID)



Grace Allen's Artwork: Church Street, Birmingham

Mit Jai Inn Dreamworld Ikon Gallery (Works produced in Margaret Street!)





Ikon presents the first major solo exhibition in Europe by leading Thai artist Mit Jai Inn. Over the summer, during his residency at the School of Art, Mit worked with technicians and a group of MA Contemporary Art students to create 5 of the large-scale sculptures currently being exhibited at the IKON gallery as part of his *Dreamworld* show.



You can learn more about Mits making process and the work fabricated at the School of Art in [this video produced by Ikon Gallery](#). Mit Jai Inn, *Dreamworld* is at Ikon Gallery until 21st November 2021. You can find out more [here](#).

Foundation

It has been fantastic to welcome our new Foundation Students for 2021/22 and meeting them face to face has created a positive start to the year.



We launched with a couple of fail-safe ice-breakers. Speed drawing is always everyone's favourite, generating conversation and laughter and our new ice-breaker which revealed a number shocking, dramatic, marvellous and exciting stories; some fact and some fiction and shared between staff and students!

Can you walk on your ankles?
Do you really live with a Pigmy Hedgehog?
Did you find your Gold Fish on a piece of toast
in your kitchen the night after a party?

These were just a few!



Level 4 Fine Art

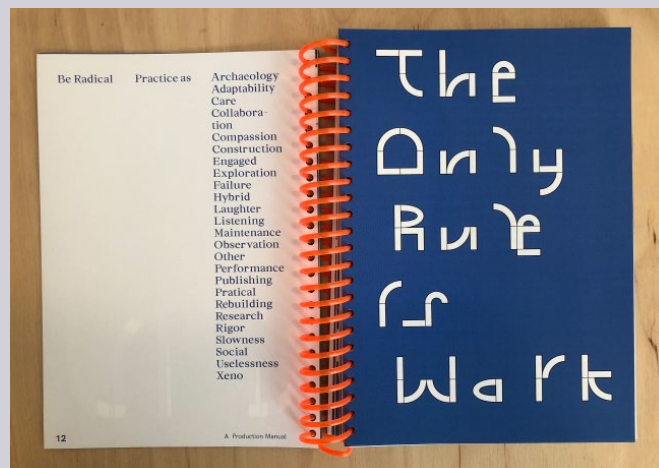
First year BA Fine Art students started their new journey with a 'Face Frenzy' speed drawing activity! Embracing failure and experimentation through quick portrait drawings that enabled them to get to know each other!



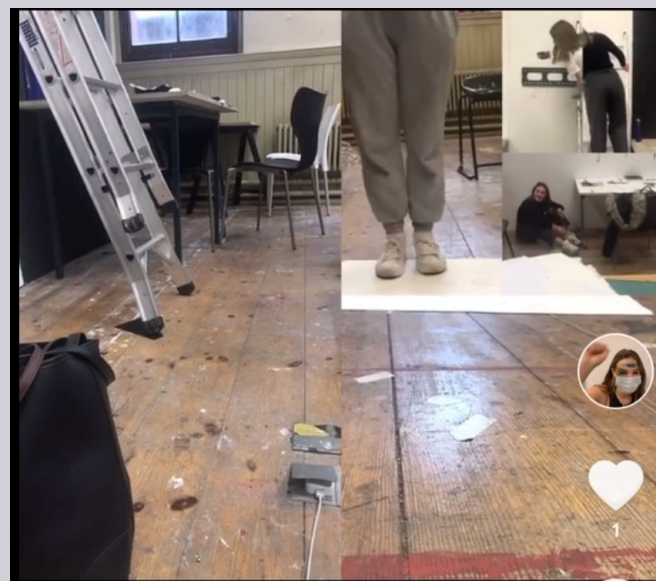
Alongside a trip to Ikon, workshop inductions, the first *Themes and Concepts* lecture and the launch of the *Conceal/ Reveal* and *From All Sides it Devours* projects, first year students also familiarised themselves with Margaret Street through an 'intervention' activity. Students were challenged to think about strategies of art making that involve site specificity, intervention and movement through space. Everyone had great fun exploring the building, you can see examples of their outcomes [here!](#)



Level 4 Art and Design

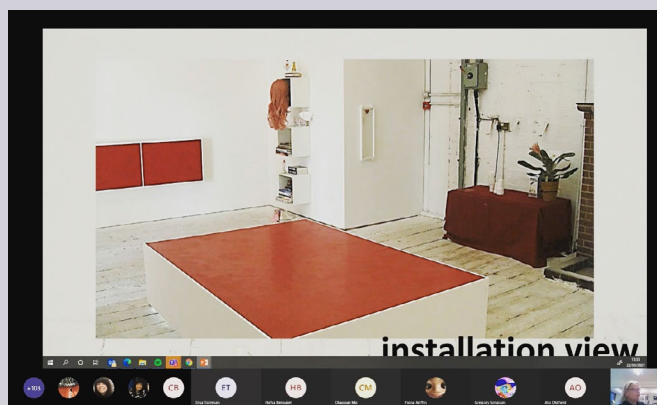


First Year BA Art and Design students also got off to a great start, beginning the year by being introduced to the BAAAD Production Manual, a 200-page guide to interdisciplinary practice filled with everything they need for Semester 1 (and beyond). The manual includes idea generating strategies, research techniques, project briefs and methods for undisciplined working. We can't wait to see their work in response to the various mini-briefs!



L4 Art and Design students also had a quick half-day workshop duetting with videos and gifs. Inspired by TikTok and the invented categories of; the POV, expanding the image and exquisite corpse, the students responded to pre-existing videos with strange and wonderful perspectives from cats and pythons (among others), and reacted to pigeons and Jason from Friday 13th. You can see their outcomes [here!](#)

Gay Place Staff Talk 1 + *No place I'd rather be* T-Street Gallery



The first of our School of Art Wednesday lunchtime *Staff Talks* got off to a flying start as Senior Technician Gay Place (joined by around 150 staff and students watching online and via screens set up around the School) talked about her practice, research and current show *No place I'd rather be* at T-Street Gallery. More information on Gays show which is open until the 22nd October can be found [here](#). You can also watch Gays talk back [here](#).

Jo Capper: *In conversation* School of Art Artist Talks Series



Artist, educator and community developer [Jo Capper](#) was the first of our guest speakers for the *School of Art Artist Talks Series*. Jo talked, in conversation with Stuart Whipps about cultural and living practices that start with simple acts of growing or sharing food – embodying the cultural specifics of human conviviality. She also discussed the current community-led scheme [Growing Project](#) that she is working with Grand Union on in aiming to ‘Green-Sense’ the City. You can watch Jo’s talk back [here](#).

Osman Yousefzada

Multidisciplinary artist [Osman Yousefzaba](#) as part of his work with [Selfridges](#) has been in residence at the School of Art where he has worked with Justin Sauders (printmaking) and Yvonne Hindle (painting) in experimenting to produce mixed media works on paper and hardboard which will form part of his *non-compliant bodies* series.



Inspired Graduates on show in the foyer!

If you have walked through the foyer at Margaret Street recently you may have spotted work from some of our School of Art 2021 graduates on the big screen! It has been a great opportunity to celebrate their achievements again. Thanks to Sara Middleton, John Hall and Lee Cadden for arranging this! You can also see the graduates work on the [Inspired](#) website.



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Other news / coming soon:

Linda Stupart
and then, a harrowing
Wysing Arts Centre



School of Art tutor and Level 5 BA Fine Art Coordinator Dr [Linda Stupart](#) has been busy this month preparing for an exhibition at Wysing Arts Centre.

Navigating wildly between the Arctic Circle, a river in South Birmingham, the length of the Thames, East Anglia, and Greenland, the new installation produced for this exhibition reflects on Wysing Arts Centre's location in rural England.

The show is open from the 18th October until the 5th December. [More information here.](#)

Re-Assemble
Exhibition: Foyer Gallery/ G20

Current BA Fine Art students Maryam Aisha, Fiona Ariffin, Olivia Clarke, Niamh Hill and Natasha Williams have been working with BA Fine Art Course Leader Rebecca Court to organise and curate a show of works from Fine Art alumni and current PhD students of the School of Art whose practices involve the use of technical processes in the production of outcomes. The exhibition celebrates the skills learnt through the technical workshops (and by working with the technical team) at Margaret Street in highlighting making of this nature. Do pop in and see the range of artworks on show!



Anneka French
School of Art Artist Talks Series
Friday 1st October 1pm



Anneka French is a graduate of the SoA, and is an artist, writer, editor and curator. Anneka will be in conversation with Cathy Wade on Friday 1st October. Text forms the core of Anneka's artistic practice. Works are often autobiographical and concerned with places and people. Current work considers the vignette in terms of its connections to family, motherhood and post-industrial landscape. Anneka's wider practice also includes curatorial work and art journalism. Anneka currently holds the role of Curator at Coventry Biennial. Prior to this she was Editorial Manager at *this is tomorrow* and Director at regional visual arts network New Art West Midlands.

If you haven't already joined, the School of Art Artist Talks Teams group (which hosts the Wednesday and Friday lunchtime lectures) you can do by clicking [here](#). Confirmed speakers this Semester include [Sunil Gupta](#) (15.10.21), [Maja A Ngom](#) (19.11.21) and [Betsy Bradly](#) (10.12.21).

Global Art Futures Seminars

GLOBAL ART FUTURES:

**3 SEMINARS ON THE
CRITICAL AND CREATIVE
PLACE AND VALUE OF
ART, ARTISTS AND
ART EDUCATION**

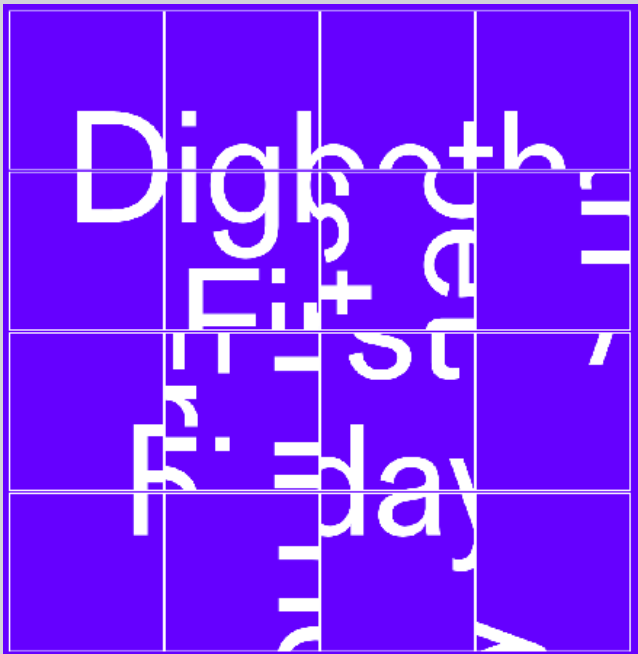
Birmingham School of Art in partnership with Tate Liverpool present a series of online public events focusing on the critical issues facing art, artists and the art world in the wake of the global pandemic. Global Art Futures is a series of three seminars on the critical and creative place and value of art, artists and art education. The next seminar *Where I Stand [1]: Alternate Perspectives, Re-imagining Sources and Other Histories* will take place on Thursday 28th October. To book click [here](#).

Eastside Projects



Eastside Projects (BCUs partner artist-run space in Digbeth) new exhibition [Portals](#), explores the display cabinet in West Indian front rooms as a site for domestic archiving, memory, and structuring futures. Artist-Curator Candice Nembhard has invited Jade Foster, Marlene Smith, Rianna Jade Parker and Vanley Burke to treat the second gallery space as its own cabinet; a view into the experiences of Black British culture and customs via the objects we keep and the stories we tell.

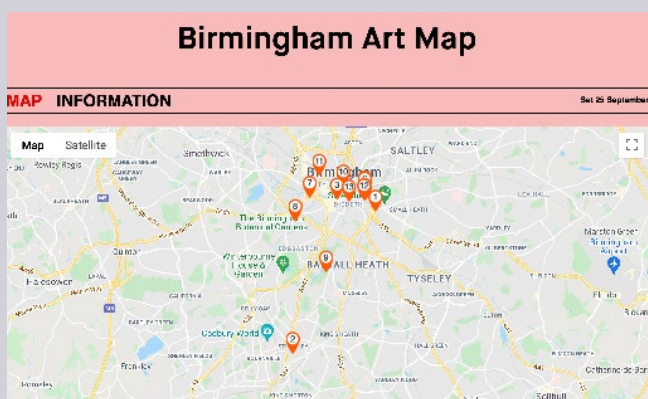
Digbeth First Fridays 01/10/21



Digbeth comes alive on the first Friday of each month with exhibitions, late-night openings, special events, culture in unexpected spaces, performances, live music, street food and more. [Check it out!](#)

Birmingham Art Map

Birmingham is home to a fantastic range of art galleries, artist-led projects, studio groups and individuals who programme public exhibitions, performances and events throughout the year. To find out what is on in the City next month do check out the [Birmingham Art Map](#) which has been designed to make it easy to discover, explore and enjoy the great art, ideas, culture and creativity made by Birmingham for Birmingham.



Recent Activity Photocopied works on paper

Opening on Friday 8th October (6pm) is an exhibition of photocopied works on paper at [Recent Activity](#), a curatorial project in Digbeth run by BA Fine Art tutor and Level 6 Fine Art Coordinator [Andrew Gillespie](#). The exhibition features work from a number of alumni of the School including [Ryan Asbury](#) (BA Fine Art 2021), [De'Anne Crooks](#) (MA Art and Education Practices 2021), [Thomas Eke](#) (MA Art and Education Practices 2019), [Leah Hickey](#) (BA Fine Art 2018) and [Andreea Pislaru](#) (BA Fine Art, 2021).

Ryan Asbury
Corey Bartle Sanderson
Ryan Christopher
De'Anne Crooks
Thomas Eke
Leah Hickey, Sahjan Kooner
Jack Lewdjaw
Tara Langford
Sian Newlove-Drew
Angus McCrum
Andreea Pislaru
Gareth Proskourine-Barnett
Lucy Vann

Round Lemon



Round Lemon is an art collective co-founded by four graduates from the School of Art. Each month they collate [opportunities](#) to share. They are also hosting a four-day event [Bees don't make lemonade](#) at Moseley Hive (14- 17 October) with an exhibition, open mic night, and art market. Check it out!

Night School is back!

After a Covid-induced break, Night School is back! Night School, for those of you who haven't experienced it before, sees the School come to life through performances, screenings, open-studios, exhibitions and more! The first Night School of the 2021/22 academic year will take place on Tuesday 26th October. If you are interested in getting involved please email Stuart.



Staff Talks series

Each Wednesday a member of staff from the School of Art will give a talk about their practice, research and recent projects they have been working on. These lunchtime talks are delivered online via the [Birmingham School of Art Artist Lectures group](#). They will also be streamed in G01 (the lecture theatre at Margaret Street) for those of you working in the building that day.

22nd September: Gay Place
29th September: Stuart Whipps
6th October: Catherine Baker
13th October: Gareth Barnett
20th October: Alis Oldfeild
27th October: Andrew Gillespie
10th November: Becky Court
17th November: Lee Hewett
24th November: John Wigley
1st December: Ana Rutter
8th December: Yvonne Hindle

Wednesdays 1pm
TEAMS

Open day



In-person open days are back! On Saturday 2nd and Saturday 23rd October we will welcome prospective students to Margaret Street to introduce them to our Undergraduate programmes; BA Fine Art, BA Art and Design, BA Art and Design with Creative Technologies, BA Design for Performance and Foundation in Visual Arts. If you know anyone who would like to attend they can book [here](#).

Student Support

Finally, I thought it would be helpful to remind everyone about some of the great resources and support services on offer to students at BCU and to provide quick links to these within this newsletter:

[Enablement and Wellbeing](#)
[Student Success Advisors](#)
[Library Support](#)
[BCUSU \(Students Union\)](#)
[IT Help](#)
[Siso \(Workshop Booking\)](#)
[Careers +](#)
[Centre for Academic Success](#)
[Graduate Plus](#)

Thank you for reading!

If you have any news you would like to share in the October School of Art Newsletter, please get in touch before the 22.10.21: rebecca.court@bcu.ac.uk