

S - O - A

Birmingham School of Art

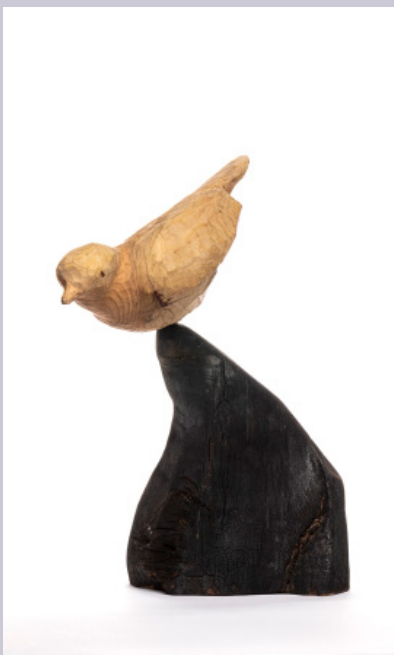
May Newsletter 2022

This is my favourite time of the year! The building is shifting and changing form - becoming the platform from which undergraduate students share their work and make it public. On all levels and courses, over the past few weeks we have seen projects come together and find resolution in their final displayed forms. We've had shows from L4 on Art & Design and L4 & 5 Fine Art that have ambitiously used the gallery and foyer spaces, our first Design for Performance installation in the void and an external exhibition for L5 A&D at Artefact in Stirchley. What a month! ... and we are not done yet!

Our L6 students on all three undergraduate courses have been working tirelessly to bring their exhibition designs to life - creating furniture, painting walls, emptying and preparing the spaces, curating and installing their final degree outcomes. This is a huge undertaking and one that offers the work the best possible showcase. The artwork a culmination of the last year of study, exploration, experimentation and consolidation that we look forwards to sharing with you in a few weeks time when the shows open on Wednesday 15th June.

For those of you that have handed in for your modules, I urge you to stick around in Birmingham long enough to visit the shows. Not only will it give you a sense of what you yourselves might be working towards but it's important that as a community we share in the successes and achievements of our peers - and what achievements they are!

Becky



CTRL

L6 Fine Art Degree Show

The 2022 graduating BA Fine Art students have been busy installing their degree show exhibition CTRL. The outcomes that the students have each realised for this exhibition are in many ways connected through a sense of being and belonging – to personal, social, and political contexts. In this, the first School of Art Degree Show since 2019, we see a group that have navigated challenges to present an exhibition that is tactile, physical, ambitious, and energetic. The sense of possibility of the works gives us much to celebrate, to be hopeful about and to reflect on. Well done everyone!



BAAAD ANNUAL

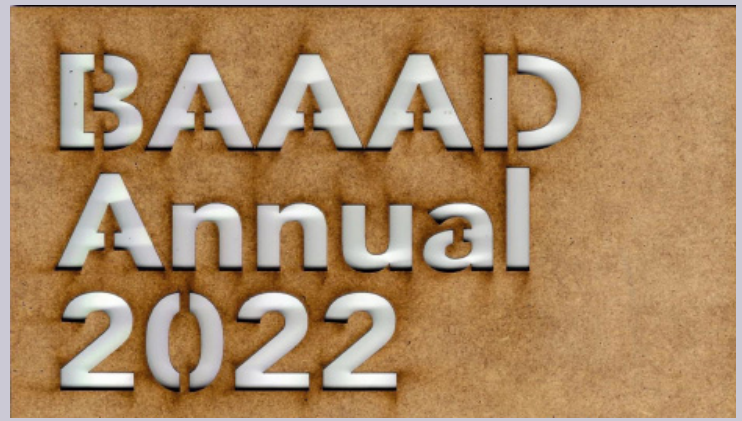
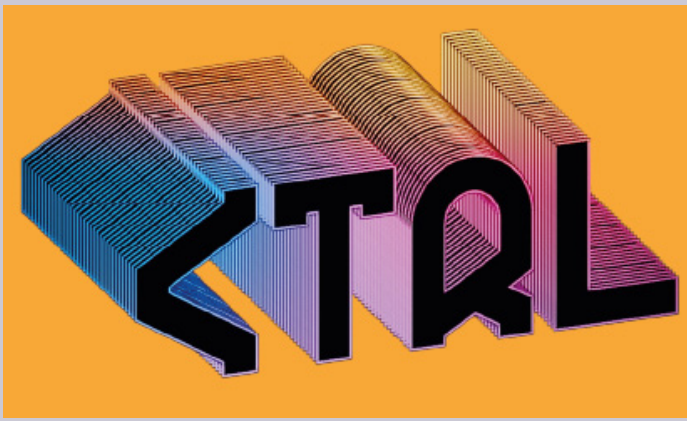
L6 Art & Design Degree Show

Level 6 Art and Design have been busy preparing for their upcoming graduate degree exhibition, transforming the studios into exhibition spaces and installing works from their Final Major Project. The breadth and ambition of the students projects has been inspiring to witness, with work that both responds and speaks to the world, tackling social issues and speculating on alternative futures.

Following a publishing and book making workshop with Caitlin Kiely, our BAAAD Press committee are now working on a bumper catalogue that brings together all of their work and ideas which will launch at the PV on the 15th June. Look out for a big colourful spiral bind!

In addition to their individual projects the students have been designing and building a range of display structures and exhibition furniture. A special thanks to Matt Moore of MJM Bespoke, Charlie Bentley-Beard and Dan Salisbury for their help with this.





Dates for your diary:

Private View:
Wednesday 15th June, 6-8pm

Show Open:
16-18th, 20-25th June, 10am-5pm

a-n interview

Becky was interviewed as part of a-n's Degree Show Guide 2022! Talking about the emerging themes in the exhibition and the significance of a physical exhibition returning to the art school. Click the link [here](#) to read it online!



Zara Masood, *Untitled*, 2021, textiles, handmade torn paper and handwritten text

The return of degree shows

Stephen Cornford, Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, Oxford Brookes University

"Installing the students' artwork in the gallery and studios is always the most rewarding and fulfilling aspect of my job. It has been a long time since we have been able to give their work the attention it deserves and it will be a great pleasure to see their projects come to fruition.

"The degree show is always a remarkable week for fine art students. There can be a feeling in all universities that the work exists in an institutional bubble; the degree show is often the proof that the work they have spent so long developing really does communicate and engage with a broader public. For this group more than any other this is the case as, having entered lockdown before the end of their first year at university, their work has never been exhibited publicly.

"There will be a website that the students are developing, but the emphasis is very much on the physical exhibition and the shared space of the gallery as the arena in which the discourse around their ideas and practices takes place."

Rebecca Court, Course Leader, BA Fine Art, Birmingham School of Art

"Emerging from a difficult two years, the opportunity to celebrate individual achievements and share work with audiences is more vital than ever. Physical proximity

allows students to engage with each other, space, architecture and audiences. The degree show is a critical step in an artist's development; it's an important marker, a platform, and a launch pad.

"We have placed a focus on 'making public' in the teaching and learning of the course this year. As a result of this the students have had five exhibitions – two open studio work-in-progress shows, an exhibition of their practice as research outcomes in the School of Art gallery, and two off-site exhibitions – in building up to the degree show. This has allowed them to test the realisation of ideas and their success in communicating to audiences, as well as experiment with display and curatorial strategies as a group. I am looking forward to seeing their ideas come to fruition and them having a platform from which to speak to an audience."

Sean Edwards, Programme Director, BA Fine Art, Cardiff School of Art

"There's definitely anticipation among the students. In normal times our first years assist the third years in making their exhibition, but when these students were in their first year lockdown happened, so they have never been able to do that. That's exciting, because it offers new potential – they're not thinking about whether it looks like something they've seen in the past.

"They're also thinking quite collectively, looking at it as a group show and how the works sit together. Often in degree shows there's that mentality of, 'I need a room, I

"This year's cohort have a very keen sense of equality and justice"



this does not mean that the work is not personal. Our students live and participate in the world where they see these injustices – the work they produce often manifests their personal response to their political environment.

"The desire to counter perceived imbalances is visible in several threads of the exhibition. We can see it in a trend of work that addresses the more-than-human constituents of our environment: the energetic potential of copper; the embodied intelligences of honey and octopuses, and the alchemical potential of imagination. We can see it too in work that explicitly addresses diversity and racial justice: that critically questions white fragility, or explores black identity through either vivid colour or the galactic metaphor of the black hole. And it is evident too in work that interrogates the value systems that we are surrounded by, whether this be the commercialisation of genomes, the status culture of the car market, or the irresponsible disposal of electronic waste."

Rebecca Court

"I would describe this year's cohort as being full of ideas and things to say; the issues they are dealing with are both complex and important. Their work is in many ways connected through a sense of being and belonging – to personal and social contexts. Many of the students' individual practices explore issues of identity, culture, heritage, environment and communication.

For example, Deashe Inwood's practice involves themes of queerness and othering, and spirituality through exploring the forces created by intersecting identities in sometimes hostile environments. Zara Masood, meanwhile, deals through language with the intersection of her trans-cultural identity and lived experience of diaspora as a second-generation immigrant."

Sean Edwards

"A lot of work is touching on autobiographical aspects, maybe more overtly this year than previously. There's work that's touching on class consciousness, there's some work that's touching on institutional racism, things like that. It's not so much Covid, but some of the other things that have come up through that time and perhaps been aggravated by various situations.

"It's coming through in subtle ways, rather than directly – there's always some flex in it. Students are certainly feeling that their work is a space to address some of the personal issues they've been experiencing, in different ways, and there's lots of variations in what those issues might be."

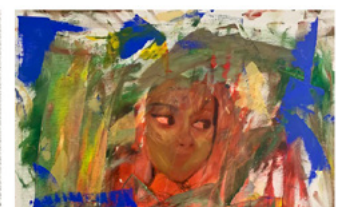
Victoria Lucas

"Many of our students are making works that foreground marginalised voices this year. For example, some works critically analyse processes of decolonisation, drawing on archives, histories and storytelling. Other works are firmly rooted in the field of identity politics, drawing on embodied experiences to expose damaging cultural tropes and discriminatory practices.

Deashe Inwood, *Formaltable Date*, 2021, rope, latex balloon, googly eyes, acrylic 200x20x20cm



Dorethea Victor, *Untitled*, 2021, acrylic paint and charcoal on canvas



Foundation End of Year Exhibition

We have been privileged to meet and work with a creative and thoughtful group of students this year who have battled with the demands of the course as well as re-establishing new ways forwards to build well-being and strengthen social footings. It has been a pleasure to integrate new students from BA Video Games Digital Arts who brought a unique strand of humour into the community.

We were also privileged to 'kick start' the end of year SHOW SEASON and I would like to credit every student for their contribution and hard work.

We also worked closely with Taiba Akhtar (student Alumni) who added another link to our expanding community. Thank you, Tabi, :)

We wish all our 2022 Foundation students the best of luck with their BA Courses and look forward to catching up with them across the University next year.

Thank you to all.

Jo Newman (Course Lead Foundation)



L4 Fine Art and BA Art & Design

Earlier this month L4 students curated exhibitions in the in the School of Art Gallery + L4 Studio space. BA Art & Design show 'End of the World' followed by BA Fine Art show 'Interwoven'

Both exhibitions were a chance to share, celebrate and reflect on work produced during

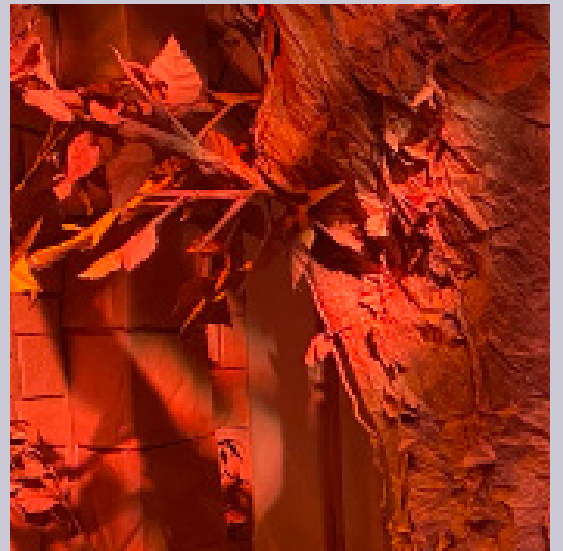
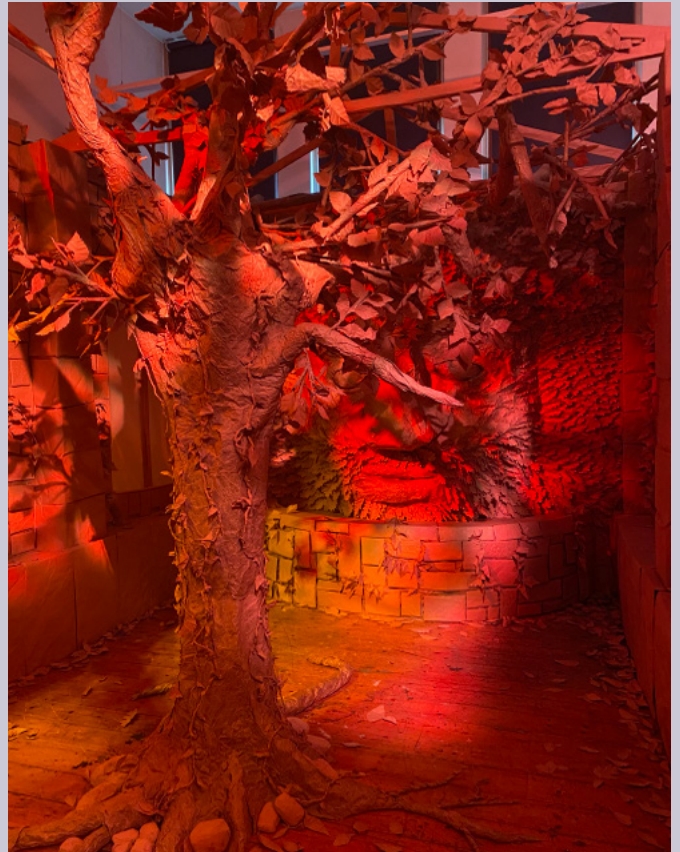
S2 and throughout there was a real diversity of ideas and material approaches on show. It was exciting to see the progress, growing confidence, and increasing ambition in the work as students begin to establish and understand their own individual practices. Well done everyone!



Design For Performance, Level 4

First year Design for Performance: theatre, film & live events students have worked diligently to transform the Wheatly Room on the basement floor of the School of Art, Margaret Street into The Fabric of the Earth; an installation based on Flora & Fauna made solely of brown paper and corrugated card. The project has been a truly collaborative endeavour, seeing students sharing paper leaf making techniques long into the nights! The design sees a connection between Mother Nature and The Green Man around a central tree.

To celebrate the end of the groups first year of the course, the installation will be open Thursday 16th & Friday 17th June, 10am-5pm.



L5 Art & Design

Students on level 5 Art and Design have been working hard on their end of year show Location3 at Artefact Gallery in Stirchley. A great turnout and tasty pizza. Well done level 5!



L5 Fine Art

'E X T E N D I N G' marks the end of the Level 5 second semester 'extending practice' module - the exhibition saw amazing work across a huge range of media including live performances on the opening night.



S - O - A

Birmingham School of Art

Other news / coming soon:

Duplicate Publishing Fair

On Saturday 7th May the School of Art hosted Duplicate Publishing Fair, an annual celebration of printed zines, comics, artists' books and alternative publishing practices. We welcomed twenty-six publishers from across the UK including Holodeck, Leicester Zine Library and Rabbit Road Press, as well as contributions from our very own BAAAD Press. A special thanks to Gugan Gill and Madeleine Washbrook for their help in organising this event.



'Artist Talks' Research Project

The School of Art hosts a series of Artists Talks connecting with diverse makers online over the year. This rich resource provides students with the opportunity to access the work of others and to ask questions however, the format follows established traditions of being 'talked-to', familiar to a lecture format, where behaviours on both sides are somewhat predicted from the outset.

A new Cluster based project asks that if we consider the 'talk' as operating as a space of research, what happens when we reorder the conventional roles of 'teacher - learner'? Using the archive of artists talks as a starting point, we will ask questions around the trouble of artistic enquiry, as presented, and the scope of its contribution to knowledge? Interested students from across the UG, PGT, PGR and staff communities will be invited to apply to be part of this project that encourages communication and collaborative enquiry as critical features.



Andrew Gillespie Exhibition

Tutor Andrew Gillespie has a show opening in Palfrey Gallery in Oval, London. The show is open between the 8-25th June. Find out more [here](#)

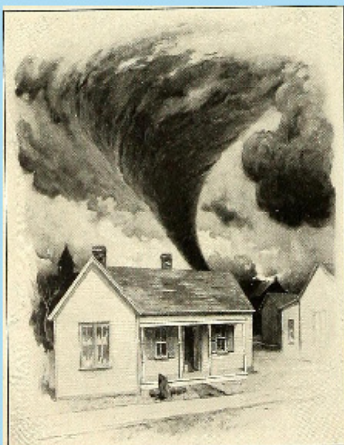


Environmental Humanities Reading Group

A study group, reignited at BCU by PhD students Fred Hubble & Laura Cooper is looking at academic texts in Environmental Humanities. Meeting monthly online and in person, it's a chance to explore interpretation and share understanding. Follow: @environmentalhumanities on instagram and DM to join.

ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

A monthly reading group for all things Ecological, Decolonial, Queer & Entangled.



Twelfth May
2pm start
3:30pm finish

Reading:
Scaling From Weather To Climate
Location
F.05 Margaret Street, School of Art

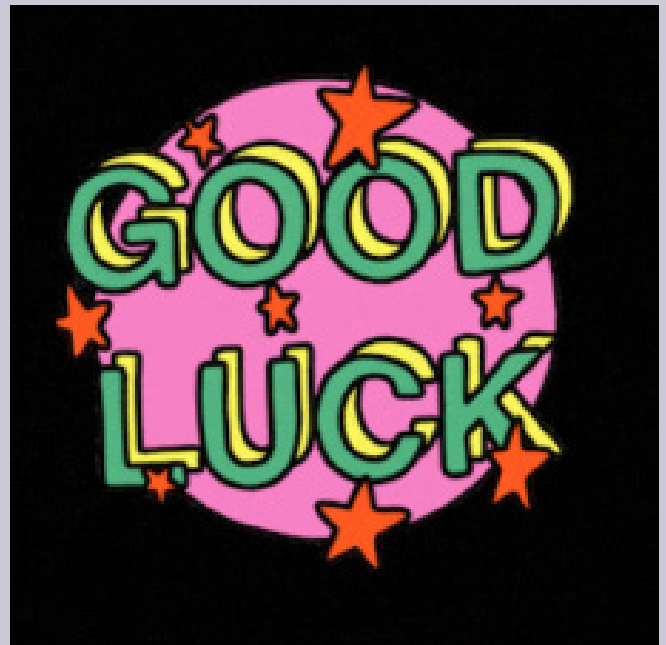
Key ideas: Weathering, Scaling, Post-Colonialism



School Rep News

Hello all,

A final note to say thank you for all the support and feedback throughout this academic year, and for your involvement with the Student Voice Conference. It's been great to see active participation in the feedback forums and how the sense of community shines through at night school and at open days. Best of luck with your future studies and degree shows! It has been a pleasure to be your school representatives for this year. Best wishes, Nikol and Inés



Thank you for reading!

If you have any news you would like to share in the June School of Art Newsletter, please get in touch before the 26.06.22: rebecca.court@bcu.ac.uk