

Meta

MFA FINE ART

DEGREE SHOW

morphosis

2023





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TOM ABERNEITHIE
XINYU CAI
KRATI DOSHI
ANNALISA HAYES
CHRISTINA KARAVA
MARGARITA FRANČESKA IEVA LOZE
PERESHONE NG
SHUHUI PANG
TANVI RANJAN
ZHE TAO
ALEXANDRA WARREN
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PREFACE

The MFA in Fine Art at Kingston School of Art offers a unique blend of studio and theoretical training. On the programme students develop their practice while critically reflecting on, and locating those practices within a changing social, political and cultural context.

As joint course leaders we have had the pleasure of working with this year's graduating students for the last 18 months. Emerging from a global pandemic, working through a period of industrial action and multiple crises in the UK and in their home countries, the students have weathered many storms. It is a testament to their tenacity, boundless curiosity and good humour that they have managed to produce an exhibition that not only showcases their work, but also asks tough questions about the system of institutionalised relations from which they are emerging and the one into which they must now enter.

An increasingly financialised higher education sector is an imperfect environment for fostering creativity, but it can still provide a safe space for students to experiment, explore difficult questions and establish a peer support network that will see them through to the next stage of their careers. This year's students have pulled together to organise a show that faces this difficult moment of transition and intense self-reflection, with solidarity and openness.

We thank them for their hard work organising the exhibition and the accompanying panel discussion with Professor Elizabeth Price and Lecturer Dr Eiko Soga. We also thank Eiko for her valuable seminars on the MFA this year, and Elizabeth for her ongoing input into the course and contribution to this catalogue of a transcript of her film *THE TEACHERS* (2019).

THE TEACHERS

They didn't use words
They didn't use words
They didn't use words
They didn't use words
They didn't use words to name themselves
or their belonging to the group
They didn't use words to name themselves
but they did
they did use voice
Which is to say they used patterns of breath
and vibration of the vocal folds
to make distinct repeatable sounds

Whilst the majority of the group kept silent
they were almost entirely mute by choice
those that did use voice
tended to make a narrow range of sibilant, spirant utterances
and unusual amongst the European languages at least
supra-glottal sounds

As the group became the subject
of journalistic and academic enquiry
as well as legal investigation
the need arose to write down
the sounds that they made
Particular attention was given to the two sounds
they used to name themselves
Using the American Phonetic Alphabet
these sounds appeared as tīčərz
The IPA, or International Phonetic Alphabet
interpreted them as tʃtʃərs
Whilst, the Speech Assessment Methods Phonetic Alphabet
Also known as SAMPA
expressed the same two sounds as tɪˈtʃ@rz

but generally speaking
in the established press and in related current-affairs media
They became known as

teachers

Certain grammatical and graphic conventions were also
established
the noun was accompanied by the definite article

the

and the words appeared in upper case, like this

THE TEACHERS

This name caught on
Its catchiness arguably contributed
to the group's international spread
But perhaps it only endured as a name
Because according to certain extant accounts
a significant number
of the group's founder members
had been academics by profession
The researcher known as P1
describes that the group emerged
from a national advisory committee for higher education
According to this account
within a year of its appointment
the committee just fell silent
They continued to meet regularly, in order
to sit together sadly, without speaking
They made no public statements
They gave no interviews
They produced no documents

Three months later
five other related museum boards
and research councils followed suit
Their motivations remain a matter for speculation
Most of the surviving evidence
can be found amongst papers left by P1
On the basis of these, and her own contact
with THE TEACHERS, P1 claimed that
the silences, utterances and profane actions
for which THE TEACHERS became infamous
should not be viewed symptomatically
They were an organisation of self-conscious expression
and their actions were protests not manifestations of illness
But most secondary sources
view P1's archive with some scepticism
The source known as SM7 argues that P1 exploited
a complex psychological contagion
that went on to afflict many professions
in order to create a political satire

of her own making
While Ag3 goes so far as to query
the authenticity of some of the papers in her archive

But let's stay with P1 for a while, with these reservations in mind
No other account provides a more compelling theory
for the origin of the group's harsh, sibilant utterances
She claims the sounds they made
were never intended to be words
but were the imitation of various, familiar noises
Indeed, they were the very sounds
of the committee's
own former work, such as
the shuffle of documents
the hum of the hard drive
the clatter of the keyboard
and the click of the mouse

P1 proposes that even the conjoined sounds
the group used to name themselves
phonetically described as txt/fərz
and generally colloquialised as 'teachers'
were actually the sounds of the opening 'txt'
and the closing 'fərz'
of a big, ancient book.

METAMORPHOSIS

KSA's MFA Fine Art students are pleased to present *Metamorphosis*, a multidisciplinary group exhibition marking the culmination of their postgraduate study.

Featuring works spanning painting, sculpture, video, sound, text, installation and performance, the show brings together 17 artists, each engaged with individual and collective critical reflection about what it means to establish an artistic practice.

The title, *Metamorphosis*, is a composite word containing *Meta*, meaning self-referential, *Morph*, meaning to change form, and *Osis*, to denote process. This offers a meditation on the increasingly self-reflexive and evolving nature of art practice as marked through the institutional process of postgraduate study. This etymology is further reflected in the geography of the show, which is presented as three satellite exhibitions, *Meta*, *Morph* and *Osis*. With each satellite site holding both individual and collective significance for the KSA MFA programme.

Meta is presented in the foyer of the Stanley Picker Gallery, a formal exhibition space often used by students to realise projects within an established public gallery setting. *Morph* is located at the Swan Public House, a former studio space for the group and now a site for experimentation and critique. Finally, *Osis* is held in the Knights Park Foyer, the reception and institutional hub of the Art School.

Presenting the cross-disciplinary interests of the '23 cohort, the exhibition engages with a multitude of contemporary debates including socio-political histories of the UK and Europe, nationalism, mythology, embodiment, power modalities, aesthetics, memory, Chinese and South Asian culture.

Metamorphosis is a show which reflects the extensive breadth of artistic practice within KSA's MFA programme—offering multinational perspectives on contemporary debates realised through cross-disciplinary mediums. The show acts as a timely and pertinent intervention to examine the polarities of collaboration and individual practice—especially during a time of increasing concern over the future of artistic institutions and access to higher education in the UK.

FAHIEM ABDULLAH



***Fragments of Faith*, 2023**, Monotone Printer paper copies, 176 x 120 x 119 cm.
Installation view. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

@f.ab333

Fahiem Abdullah (b. 1997, Pakistan) works with intricate geometric patterns that explore themes of obscurity, violence, beauty and the fragility of the cosmos. Abdullah studied BFA Fine Arts at BUITEMS in Pakistan and is currently studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. Exploring the use of vibrant and complex geometry in drawing, sculpture and painting, Abdullah has honed his skills in the art of Islamic geometric patterns, creating intricate and visually stunning designs that reflect his deep spiritual beliefs and commitment to social justice. The semi-abstract system of multidirectional lines present in his works evoke the nuanced relationship between perceived obscurity and clarity. Often appearing playful with a strange threatening twist, his uncanny illustrations blend traditional techniques with non-traditional genres, taking form in disjointed panoramas and cosmic landscapes. Abdullah's patterns often feature a mix of Islamic symbolism and contemporary approaches, creating a unique visual language that speaks to both past and present theologies.

TOM ABERNEITHIE



From Left: *On a Wire*, 2023, oil on linen, 170 x 160 cm; *A Grave in the Sunshine*, 2023, oil on linen, 156 x 136 cm. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@tom_aberneithie

Tom Aberneithie graduated with a BA in Fine Art from La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia in 1994. He went on to study Art History and Birkbeck College, University of London. From 2016 onwards Tom produced a significant body of paintings that led to an MFA Fine Art at Kingston School of Art, London (2021-2023). Aberneithie's work engages with the impact that colonialism has had on culture today. In a recent series of paintings, wild Australian landscapes are represented with references to the traditions of European painting and storytelling. By forcing images of a 'foreign' land be seen through a 'colonising eye', questions arise as to how past occupancy has affected our sense of national identity. Artistic accomplishments include shortlisted for New Contemporaries 2023, shortlisted for John Moores Painting Prize 2023, Highly Commended in the Ruth Borchard Self Portrait prize 2021, shortlisted for the John Moores painting prize 2018, selected for the Lynn Painter-Stainers exhibition 2018. Tom's work is currently featured in 'Artists Responding To...' magazine, Spring Issue 2023.

XINYU CAI



Nowhere to Hide, 2023, Mirror Ball, spotlights, paper, marker, Chinese ink, window.
Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@xinyu_cai_p

Xinyu Cai (b. 1996, Fujian, China) studied oil painting at Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, prior to studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. With a practice including mixed media paintings, oil paintings, installations and films, Cai's work plays on the notion of rules and rule-breaking, often referencing popular and mass culture through the use of written and painted symbols. His recent work has explored the ubiquitous 'internet world', touching on a variety of overlapping themes such as surveillance and the surveilled, and cyberpunk-based science fiction imagery. His mixed media artworks explore how the internet and popular culture affect people's lives and offer narrative insight into globalisation. Through images that are both new and old, he seeks to create work that is both absurd and mysterious, evoking the viewer's sense of the unfamiliar and the familiar—challenging the dichotomous relationship we constantly reconstruct between the self and the other.

KRATI DOSHI



From Left: *I want earthy colours. A little Indian., 2022; She is ten years older than me and the eldest sister is six years older., 2023*, acrylic, pen on primed board; *They look ruined, old and dusty., 2023; Look at that white deer on the right., 2023; Seven sheeps, 2023*, acrylic, pen on paper. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@krati.doshi

www.kratidoshi.wixsite.com/mysite

Krati Doshi's (b. 2000, India) ritualistic vocabulary of muted colour, form and composition, united with an obsessional structure of rigorous mark making, allows her to reflect upon her lived experiences. Through an instinctive and repetitive visual language, Doshi's practice helps her to find a sense of balance in the everyday. By drawing upon phenomenology, as understood by Merleau-Ponty, she encodes perceptual and existential experiences within formal visual language, inviting the viewer to enter into their own personal conversance with her artworks.

Through a series of reductions, her work impresses upon 'the essential' embodiment, movement, and space, to isolate the forms and contents of these interventions. Doshi composes and assembles artworks by means of systematic repetition, using organic forms as punctuations throughout the space. The relationship between the works and the space is revealed, prompting the idea of play by attending to spatial and optical considerations. Herein, the play emancipates from her coping mechanisms, staging a transient moment of balance.

As a manifestation of embodied spirituality, being in an insightful relationship with oneself, there is a constant tension between order and disorder, chance and necessity, spontaneous and deliberate. This polarity within the meticulous practice of making indicates interiority while forming an active engagement with the spatial, minimal, and aesthetic work of art.

ANNALISA HAYES



The Safeword is Austerity, 2023, leather, rubber, steel, faux fur, golf ball, cricket bat. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@ahayes_arts
www.annalishayes.com

Annalisa Hayes (b. 1994, South Wales) based in London and currently studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. With a multidisciplinary practice that spans sculpture, installation, text-based work and poetry, Hayes' practice is rooted in exploring the complexities of queer embodiment. Examining the relationship between the queer body and heteronormative societies, institutions and systems, Hayes' work viscerally explores how the queer body becomes a site upon which various modalities of biopolitical and social power are violently exercised. A central part of Hayes' practice is an interest in the materiality of objects and language, with many of their pieces exploring how the juxtaposition of specific materials and the recontextualization of objects can evoke specific discourses or draw attention to attendant politics. Notable recent work includes group shows QUEER ART(ists) NOW (2022) at Space Station Sixty-five, Sleeve Shock (2023) and Toughness & Tenderness (2023) at Bermondsey Project Space, and In: Dialogue (2023) at FuseBox Kingston.

CHRISTINA KARAVA



apocalyptic ant, 2023, video, colour, sound, projection, 46 seconds. Installation view.
Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@_lilb0at

Christina Karava (b. 1999, Cyprus) is a new media artist, predominantly working with sound and moving image. She develops audiovisual compositions which consist of narratives that merge fiction and reality in a digestible and entertaining manner. These narratives develop via documentation and experimentation with recurring thoughts and inner monologues, which then appear in her works through wry conversations occurring among and between sound, text, video and space. Sound is a highly significant element when it comes to perceiving and understanding her works, which for Karava, is the ingredient that glues her compositions together and forms the overall atmosphere. Karava's works are mainly exhibited as projections, utilising strange corners and spots that have something interesting about them—allowing for an amorphous blend between the work and space. Due to this highly affected dialogue between the work and space, each time Karava's work is exhibited, it offers a totally new experience.

MARGARITA FRANČESKA IEVA LOZE



***Nacreous Dream*, 2023**, hand-drawn stop motion animation on transparent paper, colour, sound, projection, 5 minutes 33 seconds, MDF, 137 x 80 cm. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

www.margaritaieva.com

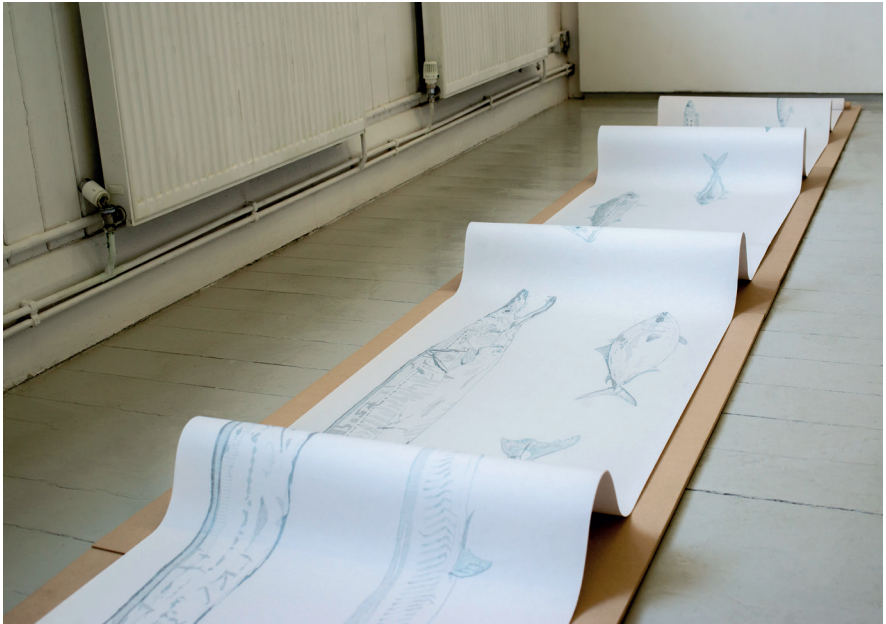
The work of Margarita Frančeska Ieva Loze (b. 1997, Latvia) is an exploration of the subtle beauty of life's moments and a celebration of the poetics of the ordinary. Her recent work combines textile production with the use of found objects. By using a variety of mediums, such as hand-drawn stop motion, writing, embroidery and sculpture, she attempts to capture the transient nature of life and create a tangible connection to universal and personal memories. Through her experimental narrative approach, Margarita creates a dreamlike ontology, to capture the nuances of spatial, temporal and poetic navigation.

Loze seeks objects with defined functions, such as photo albums and frames, or peculiar objects with odd forms and holes. Although she directly works on these materials, adding new marks with threads, she retains details of their original shapes and imperfections. By blending these derelict objects' ephemeral qualities with her own memories and imagined worlds, she questions the function of the objects and the phenomenology of appearance.

By exploring myths from various cultures, phenomena such as *déjà vu* and atmospheric optics, she seeks to capture a sense of magic and the supernatural. Through her work, she invites the viewer to experience the sense of awe and wonder that these phenomena evoke. The use of transparent paper drawings in her stop motion animations further enhances the ethereal and surreal atmosphere of these experiences.

Recent group shows include *Red in Tooth and Claw* at FILET (2023) and *Reflections* at Islington Arts Factory (2022). In 2022 she was selected for the Venice Biennale Fellowship programme.

PERSEPHONE NG

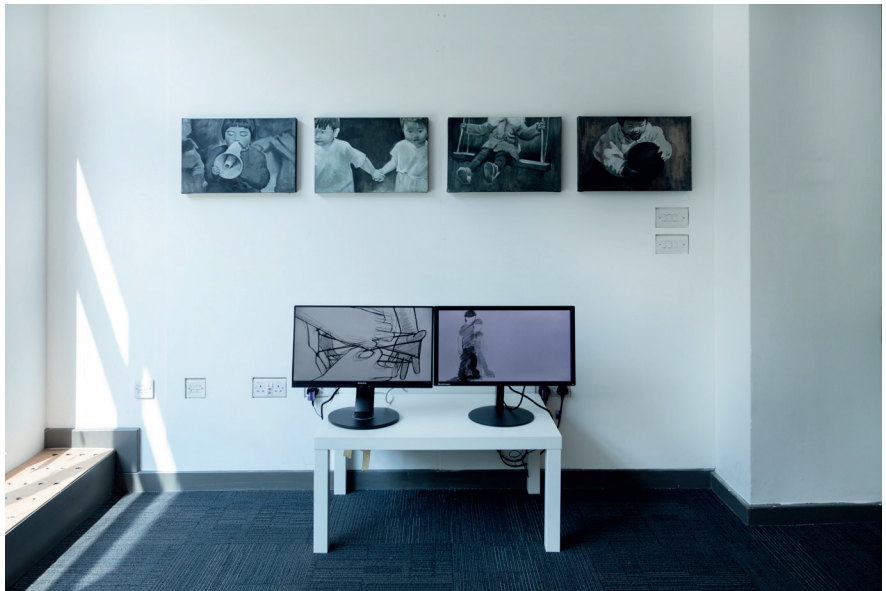


Gyokairui 魚介類, 2023, graphite and non-photo blue pencil on paper, MDF, 510 x 75 x 20 cm. Installation View. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

@seph_intj

Persephone Ng (b. 1995, Hong Kong) is a multimedia artist currently based in London, studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. Persephone's practice is inspired by the freedom of creating and the happiness evoked by simple, yet transformative, art. Finding beauty in the mundane, Persephone's drawing explores the tiny overlooked aspects of everyday still-life objects, animals and humans—working to bring out the intricate details of ordinary subjects through lines and shades. She finds immense satisfaction and personal joy in her creations and subjects coming to life on paper. Drawing upon her Asian heritage, she often intertwines East Asian elements, including specific references to Hong Kong culture and Traditional Chinese and Japanese cultures, into her compositions. Her latest work, *'Gyokairui'*, is a 7-metre drawing depicting various aquatic animals which are traditionally used as sushi ingredients—expressing a longing to visit Japan and taste some fresh seafood, sashimi and sushis.

SHUHUI PANG



From Up: *Flashbacks*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 35 x 50 cm; *Untitled*, 2023, 2-channel digital stop motion animation, black and white, 1 minute 24 seconds. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@shuhui_pang

Shuhui Pang (b. 1999, China) is a painter who currently studies and lives in London. Her work mainly focuses on the relationship between her memories of childhood, dreams and reality. After graduating from the China Academy of Art with a BA in Oil Painting, she has continued to develop her paintings during her study at Kingston School of Art. Inspired by Donald Kuspit's sentiment that "art is a way of remembering", Pang works with fragmented personal memories to help her understand her unique position within the world and explore the contradictions that exist between memory and past realities. Pang's recent work has utilised non-narrative film, drawing together over a thousand pieces of digital drawing to create intricate animations. Juxtaposed against her paintings that offer snapshots into these aforementioned personal histories, together her painting and animation explore the similarities and differences between both of these artistic mediums.

TANVI RANJAN



From Left: *Half Cardigan Jacquard, 2023*; *Moss Jacquard, 2023*; *Honeycomb Jacquard, 2023*, machine-knitted garments on wooden hangers, 100% Cotton, Made in India. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@_tanviranjan_
www.tanviranjan.info

Tanvi Ranjan (b. 1995, India) is a multimedia artist whose works include textile, sculpture, moving image, and sound. Her practice explores language structures and communication between humans and machines by elaborating on techniques of textile making, more often knitting. The artist reflects on her personal experience of working in knitting factories of India to address discourses around industrialisation which remains entangled within India's colonised history. Using the loop-based structure of knits as a metaphor for feedback loop mechanism, Ranjan juxtaposes the sociopolitical nature of language with the binary logic in computers and analyses it with a decolonial lens. The artist often evidences cyberfeminist takes on language by foregrounding coded information and patterns in her works, thus stressing on the labour of handling secrecy systems and investigating what the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein calls the "private language".

ZHE TAO



The great mother, 2023, clay, pastel, dimensions variable. Installation view.
Photo: Ellie Laycock.

The exploration of tactile art has become a form of therapy for Tao's practice, which explores the maternal relationship between women and their mothers. She finds that by focusing on the sensations evoked by materials and their materiality, she is able to tune out the noise and stress of the outside world and find a sense of peace and inner tranquillity. Through her work, Tao's practice strives to create pieces that evoke texture and depth, inviting the viewer to engage with their own sense of touch and meditate on the connection between their own physical and emotional worlds.

ALEXANDRA WARREN



From Left: *Banner Gan Canny, 2023*, linoprint on paper, hand embroidery on scrap fabric, 155 x 105 cm; *Banner 1 & 2, 2023*, embroidery, embellished and piping on velvet, 28 x 35 cm, 26.5 x 37 cm. Installation view. Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@alex___warren_

Alexandra Warren (b. 1999, Gateshead) is a visual artist, currently based in London whilst studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. After completing a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Sunderland University, she graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts, UAL in 2021 with BA (Hons) in Painting. Through a variety of mediums, including drawing, hand-embroidery, and video, Warren's work investigates post-humanism within post-industrial landscapes—inspired greatly by the geography and distinct socio-political history of the North-East of England. With a research based practice, her work develops via a unique uncovering process, often gathering research through site visits to areas of particular interest. Often referencing mythology, symbolism and utilising repetition, Warren's recent work, including a series of banners and videos, explore how traces of socio-political histories are experienced in and influence the contemporary. Notably recent work includes, *'Embroidery of the Underworld'*, recently exhibited at The Common Room in Newcastle Upon Tyne, responding to the mining seam maps housed in the archives of The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering.

YINGLI XU

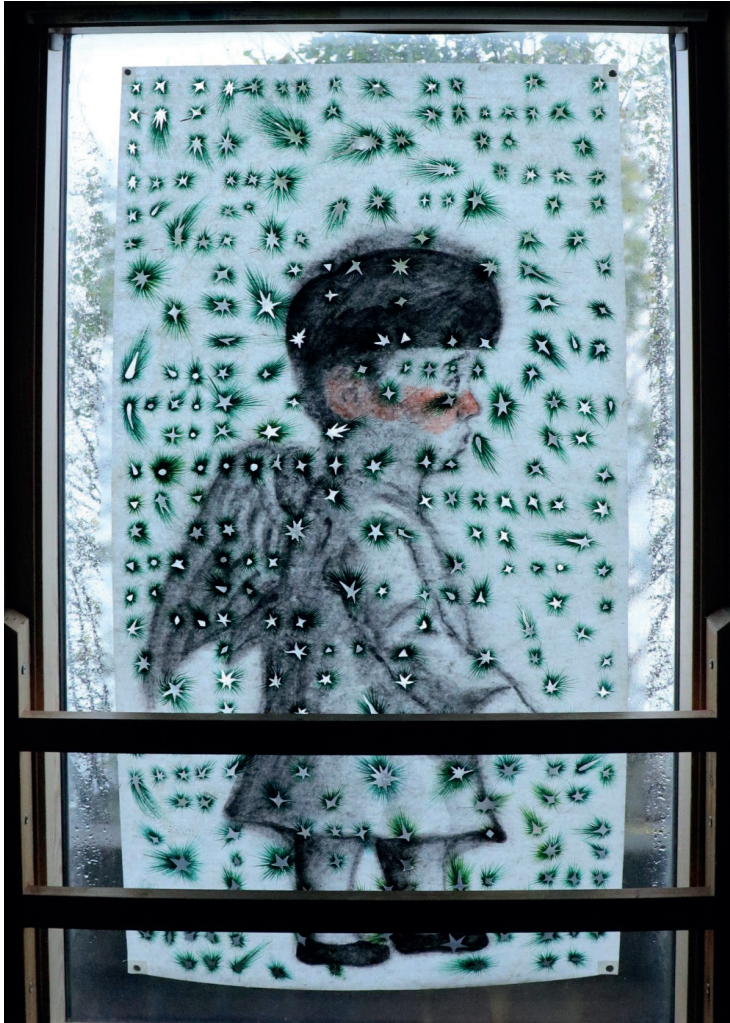


I am the future of your past, 2023, Inkjet Printing, 58 x 49.2 cm.

@yingli_xu00

Yingli Xu (b. 1997, China) is a multimedia artist using sound, photography and moving image. Inspired by the artist Michael Snow's film *'Wavelength'*, her work is currently concerned with experimental conceptualisations of time and exploring the dialectical tensions that exist between photography and moving image. By deliberately combining the seemingly absurd, Xu tries to make visible the chaotic existence of time, often utilising objects with unique reference to particular histories, which allow the audience to travel back and forth between past and present. Furthermore, drawing from personal experiences of the UK as an international student, Xu's recent documentary photography has explored the similarities and juxtapositions that exist between different cultures, whilst interrogating how the medium of photography and moving image can be used to capture both relationships and conflicts.

LEI YU



Kepler, 2023, Chinese ink on ricepaper, Chinese colour, 120 x 90 cm.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

@yulei547

Lei Yu (b. 1998, China) received his BA from Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts and is now studying for an MFA at Kingston School of Art. His practice is based on exploring personal experiences and emotions, examining the relationship between reality, dreams and authenticity. Lei's work uses traditional Chinese papers, materials and mediums to create unique dreamlands that evoke magical, mythical and psychedelic narratives—each interrogating a unique set of contemporary questions.

This dialogue between traditional mediums and contemporary topics, for Lei, acts as an exploration into the distance between realism and internalism, notions of time and space, and the differences between the physical and psychological. Ultimately, Lei utilises his practice to deeply analyse the relationship between himself and his surroundings, questioning what it means to act as a subject within contemporary society.

ZIXIONG ZHOU



The Body without Organs – Organ site, 2023, plastic, nails, oil paint, 101 x 101 cm.
Photo: Ellie Laycock.

@zixiong1402

Zixiong Zhou (b. 1998, China) is a multidisciplinary artist from Chongqing. He studied Oil Painting at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute and is currently studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. Zhou's practice is mainly engaged with oil painting and contemporary experimental art research, which is currently focusing on Deleuze's aesthetics, notably the '*Body without Organs*'. Through viscerally rendered oil paintings of surgical procedures and deformed bodies that draw upon Baconesque motifs, his work explores how the human body can be reduced to a system in flux, through automatic or forced transformation.

YANHUAN ZHU



用一个七天拥抱死去的昨日 *LACRIMOSA*, 2023, posters, fabric, video, colour, sound, 4 minutes 47 seconds. Installation view. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

@yanhuan_z

Yanhuan Zhu (b. 1997, China) is currently studying an MFA at Kingston School of Art. With a practice that spans performance, installation, sculpture, video, photography and painting, her work focuses on the possibilities of art for spiritual healing, with an emphasis on mental illness, femininity, cosmic energy and the relationship between space and people. Zhu's practice forms a personal interrogation into her own psychology, utilising her work as a means to spiritually grow, heal, influence and empower. Notable recent works include group shows *Cloudy to Clear* at Yard Gallery, Shanghai (2021) and *A Nomadic Box* at Bargehouse Gallery, London (2023).





