

Assembly 2023

The Wolverhampton School of Art
13 - 26 July



185504141 (Needlepoint tapestry), 2021 © Isobel Scarsbrook

Exhibition Floor Plan

Toilets

Entrance /
Fire exit

6

7

6

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3

2

The Greenhouse

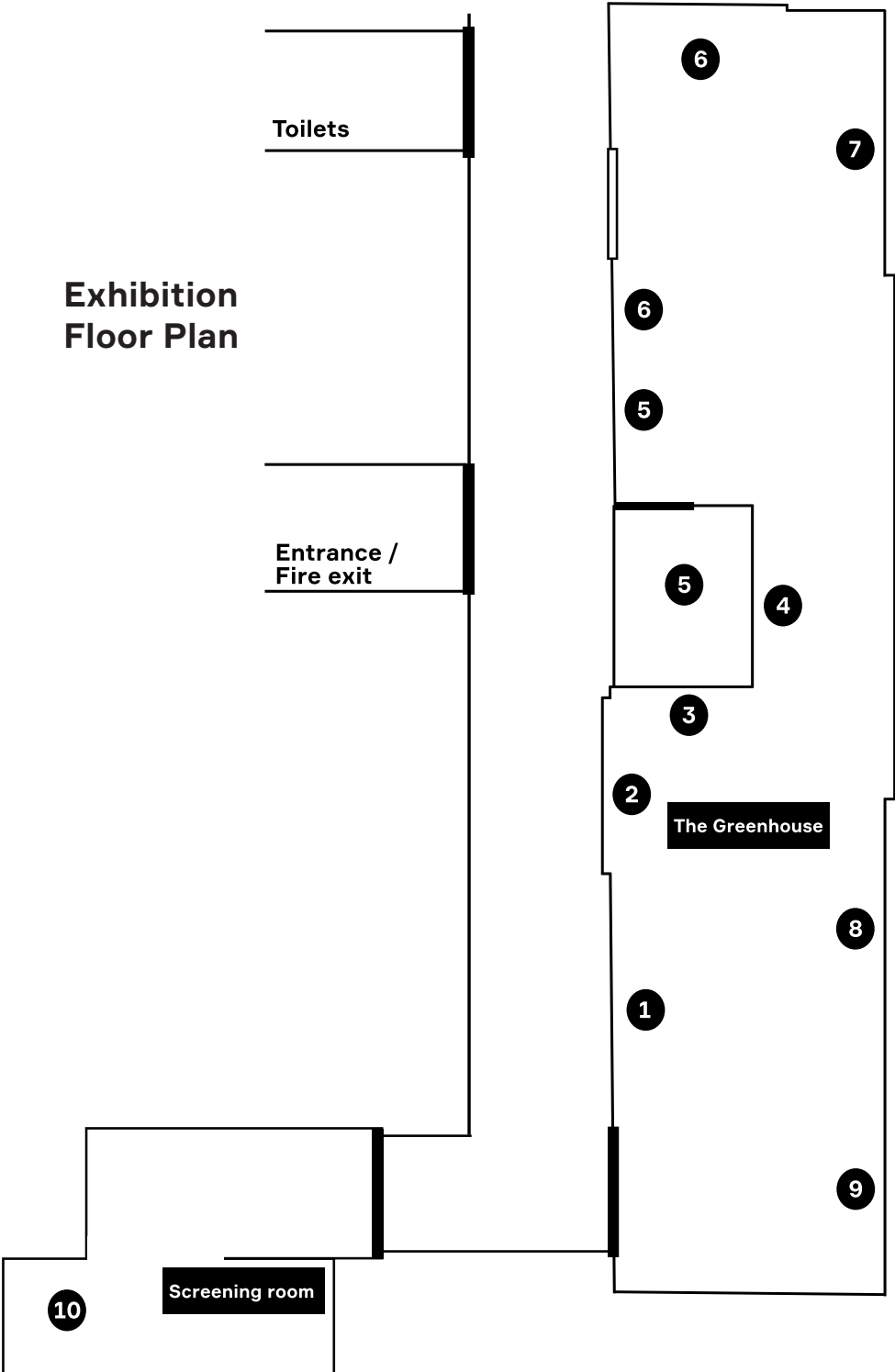
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Screening room



Assembly 2023

A group exhibition presenting new and existing works by artists based in, or who have a strong relationship to, Sandwell and the wider Black Country, including visual, moving image, sculpture and installation. The Assembly commissioning strand has been initiated as part of Multistory's artist development programme Blast Creative Network, to create a platform for emerging artists and collectives in the region. Each year, artists are selected through open call for the opportunity to make and show work.

This first exhibition of the programme contains works that respond to the wider Black Country, with its multiplicity of voices and communities, and stories of migration. Artistic practice as a means of exploring our sense of place, the meaning of home, and the many identities that coexist within ourselves.

With work by:

Daya Bhatti, Susan Brisco, Thomas Jack Brown, Sukhjeven Chumber, Amelia Hawk, Shannel James, Neoliberalizard, Chantal Pitts, Isobel Scarsbrook, Natasha Stoianovska.

Dates: 13 - 26 July 2023

Opening event: Thursday 13 July, 5.30 - 8pm
With a performance by Neoliberalizard at 7pm

A huge thank you to the team at Wolverhampton School of Art for their generous support, and to Arts Council England and Sandwell Council for making projects such as this possible.

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Natasha Stoianovska

Adaptation

Natasha Stoianovska is a Ukrainian expressionist artist living in West Midlands, UK. Russian aggression against Ukraine and unwilling immigration became a catalyst for the artist's works, as a desire to face, analyse and release the overwhelming emotions. Her works reflect the topics of self-exploration, solitude and observation. The West Midlands and in particular, Wolverhampton, gave the artist the safe space as a refugee to be able to reconsider some aspects of her life. All the art pieces were born out of this process of reconsideration. The psyche perceives something new as hostile, foreseeing a danger in change. Nevertheless, at some point, everything new becomes familiar and well-known, and safer. The works presented in the *Adaptation* series depict this process of transition - from the new to the usual, from danger to safety, from past to present, from present to future.

Works

(Left to right)

Barking at flower: acrylic on linen canvas

Cutting ends: acrylic on linen canvas

Horse with no name: acrylic on cotton canvas

Instagram: @natashible

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Amelia Hawk

Flavour of Emotion

What does emotion taste like?

Is it quantifiable?

Can we imagine the flavours that might change our mood?

When we reach for our favourite hot drinks, it might be through comfort, fatigue, enjoyment, habit, but underneath these simple reactions could be a more complex set of thought processes. Flavour of Emotion allows you to design a coffee for your mood, thinking about how flavour may have an influencing role in emotional state change.

This participatory project will be live between 20-21 July, 10am-4pm at The Happy Coffee Man (coffee van) in Warley Woods (Abbey Road, entrance), Sandwell. Come and design a cuppa, choose your flavours, strength and style. Create the cup for your day.

Amelia Hawk is an artist integrating counselling and support strategies into her emotionally informed practice.

www.amelia-hawk.com

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

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Daya Bhatti

Threads of Identity

The project is inspired by the remarkable women in my family. Growing up, I was captivated especially by my grandmother's consistent embrace of traditional attire even after migrating to the UK, which sparked my fascination with the language of clothing. Garments have the power to narrate stories, carrying our histories and serving as a tactile link to our heritage. Through clothing and fashion, I discovered a profound sense of connection to my heritage, a tangible thread that ties me to my roots. This piece celebrates and unravels the complexities of my British Asian identity, intricately woven into the fabric of my life.

Works

Photographic print on fabric hung on wood dowel

Outfit hand painted and embellished on silk

www.dayaillustrations.co.uk

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

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Neoliberalizard

Trippy Triptych

During this project hundreds of spray cans have been donated from fellow graffiti artists, subverting them from landfill, or worse, being thrown into the canals of the Black Country. Breathing new life with paint covered lungs into these wasteful pieces of disposable packaging. The raw industrial aesthetic contrasts with the sacred geometry found in nature, exposing the absurdity of free market capitalism and our disconnection from the planet we call home. The iconography of the inverted pyramid represents anarchy i.e. decentralisation and upheaval of the existing power structures within our society that create so much suffering. A joyous expression replaces the all-seeing eye of providence, one associated with the apocryphal Illuminati, and big brother authoritarian capitalism. The most powerful form of protest we have is to withdraw our energy, resources, and labour from the ruling classes. If you disagree with a corporation, government, institution, or way, then you have the divine power to say no.

Works

Candala - Wah (3033): reclaimed spraycans, aluminium, acrylic, plastic

Flip your mid (3033): savaged mild steel, paper, tape (Asia-futurist alien Neo hand cut this piece using a muslimic ray gun aka a plasma cutter.)

In Mush We Trust (3033): laser print, recycled paper, potato starch

Instagram: @neoliberalizard

5**Susan Brisco****Plants As Ink Around the Black Country**

Researching and experimenting with botanical ink-making takes you into a fascinating world of alchemy, archival recipes and new ways to engage with nature. Chemistry evolves into the final hues that nature makes to create a unique colour pallet for Wolverhampton, as observed from an artistic perspective. The value of discovery and sustainable foraging of plants, in Semestow Valley, West Park, East Park, Canal sides and green areas gives a sense of wellbeing and exciting anticipation; what colour of ink will the next plant yield? The installation of film, drawing and sound presents as an art/science eco-visual array of botanical colour, reminiscent of each plant's essence. The unusual, soft muted tones extracted from common plants, trees and wildflowers found in local hedgerows, fields, grass verges, and woods give a sense of place and connection to our local community and familiar landscapes around the Black Country.

Works

Turn thy gaze on the many-hued thousands: 60 botanical ink circles

She is the sole artist: test tubes with botanical ink

She is whole yet always unfinished: white magnetic holder to be suspended from beams by fishing thread line.

Rhapsody with Nature.

Looping, 5 minutes.

www.informedfineart.com

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

Chantal Pitts

Nest of the Matriarchs

My work is self reflective. I use furniture as a medium to express my inner self; I'm so much more than my gender, race, culture and appearance. The self portrait is made from a TV cabinet, used to exhibit qualities of my inner self, such as strength and a stable base for my children, reclining as a metaphor for a sense of falling. Yet it is still on stable ground, as I strive to keep my mental state, life, home and family as balanced as I can.

The head represents my inner mother; during hypnotherapy I met my inner mother, who was holding a shallow bowl of water. She told me to keep the water (myself and life) flowing. The family portrait is of myself and my 3 daughters standing strong together. Our hair flows to the ground like roots, grounding us in heritage, female unity and expression. The wall pieces are stories from dreams.

Works

Self portrait: wood and fabric TV cabinet sculpture

Family portrait: wooden sculpture made from the legs of 2 small tables

Dreaming: 2 wall pieces from the wooden table tops (family portrait)

The Many Faces of Me: paint on plywood

Instagram: @chantal.pitts

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Isobel Scarsbrook

The Mermaid of Marden

A series of works focussing on the history of female craft, weaving together themes of women's history, local Black Country folklore and folk song within an ever-evolving England. Untitled (rag rug), is a map of the Black Country, inspired by the regional tradition of rag rugging. The technique weaves scrap fabrics, ribbons and lace into a canvas with a latch hook tool. A theme that runs through my work is a desire to tell womens' stories through womens' craft. Often the crafts themselves are steeped in folklore and have their own independent stories to tell us, as well as being the perfect medium through which to relate to these tales.

Works

185504141: (needlepoint tapestry) wool, tapestry canvas, mountboard, plastic frame

The Mermaid of Marden: (needlepoint tapestry) wool, tapestry canvas, mountboard, plastic frame

The Mermaid of Marden II: terracotta clay, glaze

Untitled: (rag rug) scrap fabrics, ribbons, lace

Unnamed Queen of Fair Elfland: (beadwork) beads, nylon thread

www.isobelscarsbrook.com

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

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Sukhjeven Chumber

Go Home

The three images are about who I am, where I am from, the things I have experienced and the things that I witness going on around me. *Go Home* is about the racism I have experienced and the racist abuse that still continues today, but it is also about my Indian heritage. In these works I used Mehndi henna to adorn my hands with words that have been said to me; “Go back to where you come from!”.

I juxtaposed these with traditional Mehndi designs to present a powerful response to racism, one which celebrates my heritage. It is possible to take back the power in our own hands, transforming the negative into positive energy.

Works

Go Home I, Go Home II, Go Home III: photographic prints on art paper

Instagram: @suki.singh_artist

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Shannel James

Where Do I Belong?

These works are inspired by my personal experience of migration. Born to a British mother whose parents migrated from the Caribbean with ancestry from West Africa, this got me thinking “where do I belong?” My hair and melanated skin tell me I need to be in my country of origin, yet when I travel back to the Caribbean and Africa I am reminded I am a foreigner as I was born in the UK, so “where do I belong?” As a minority in the country where I was born, I’ve been faced with undertones of “go back to your own country”. Which, again got me thinking “where do I belong?” My love for British vintage furniture, traditional African fabric and restoring bespoke pieces is the inspiration behind my work; being able to use each piece I create to tell a story that will either enlighten, motivate or inspire.

Works

Antique chest of draws: wood & tradition African Batiks fabric

2x large canvas wrapped in traditional African Batiks fabric with poetry

1 small canvas wrapped in traditional African Batiks fabric

Small vintage suitcase, leather

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Thomas Jack Brown

From There to Here

From There to Here is a cumulative exhibition by video installation artist Thomas Jack Brown. Thomas Jack Brown started his career as a video artist in his mid-thirties after completing an MA in Creative Media at the University of Worcester. Thomas's work predominantly uses either self shot or archival Super8 film to create new narratives and interpretations of the captured images, underpinned by theories of reconstructive memory and collective memory. *From There to Here* includes works that utilise archival Super8 film, as well as process based works intended to experiment with format and function. Thomas has created a new piece for this exhibition titled 'Kruger', a short film that uses archival footage of the Kruger wildlife sanctuary from the 1970's.

Works

Pilgrimidj, Forest, Noctiluca, The Carnival of Animals, Fissure and Kruger.

Looping, 23.23 minutes

www.tjbrown.co.uk

Instagram: @TomJackBrown

Blast Creative Network

Blast Creative Network offers artists in Sandwell and the wider Black Country a free, annual programme of talks, workshops and social events, providing opportunities for critical engagement, collaboration and making connections outside of formal arts education. BCN offers yearly funded residencies, a group exhibition and a public programme of events for artists in the Black Country, alongside the opportunity to be published in a yearly journal of art writing.

If you're an artist based locally, get in touch!

Email Jess at jesspiette@multistory.org.uk

Multistory

Multistory is a community arts organisation. We have been based in the borough of Sandwell since 2006 and the people and place shape our work. We work with a wide range of communities, creatives and partners to reimagine the local area, platform under-represented voices and inspire creativity and social change. Our programme of participatory arts projects, workshops, talks and events takes place in libraries, community centres and indoor and outdoor public spaces. The stories told through our projects have a local resonance but are also seen by audiences far beyond, both in national exhibitions and through our digital programme. We support creatives through collaborative projects, employment, bursaries and skills development opportunities.

www.multistory.org.uk



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School of Art



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