



MK CALLING 2020

Wolfson Gallery Guide

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15th Feb - 17th May
130 Artists
Free entry

1

As Without, So Within, 2018
Oil on canvas

A Troubled Afternoon, 2019
Oil on canvas

Gathering Stones, Shotesham Ford, 2019
Oil on canvas

Anna Townley

Anna Townley is a painter based in Norwich. Colour is fundamental to the way Townley understands her surroundings, relationships, and to how she paints. Townley currently explores ways of enriching colour by layering paint, playing with the translucency and opaqueness of pigments. She often begins with opposite colours, building through layers towards the final colour. In *Gathering Stones, Shotesham Ford*, the dark water in which the stooped figures are reflected began as areas of brown and orange (and in the foreground, bright blue). Townley added tones of pink and dark green to create the sense of cold depths and a bright reflective surface.

Key influences are Townley's family and her regular meditation practice. During meditation, she experiences brightly coloured visions. The colours are vivid, transparent and fluid, shifting while her attention is on them. These experiences guide her use of colour in the paintings. Townley's role as a parent is ever-present alongside her practice as an artist. Her paintings record observations of the family, including frequent episodes of emotional intensity: moments of conflict or of joy. *A Troubled Afternoon* depicts a point during a holiday when everyone was dissatisfied. While visiting Neolithic standing stones, the presence of these ancient monuments allowed the family conflict to clear.

26

Transitions, 2019
Digital drawings, animation

Creator, 2019
Digital drawings, animation

Namen Basil

Namen Basil is an illustrator and animator from Colombia, currently based in Mexico City.

Basil's work is comprised of surreal shapes and characters influenced by 1930s cartoons, which evolve and regress through the animations. Basil's work touches upon the contradictions found in social behaviour, raising questions on concepts of identity, and considers our inability to properly connect with others. Basil approaches these topics with humour, in a playful and colourful way.

25

This is a public space, 2009
Digital video, 0' 17" (loop-play)

Bill Balaskas

Bill Balaskas is an artist, theorist and educator, born in Thessaloniki, Greece and currently living and working in London.

This is a public space questions what is a 'public space'. "In theory, it should be a spatial experience of democracy: an agent of well-being for all members of our societies, regardless of their gender, race, age or socio-economic background. An open and unrestricted space that belongs to the people. But, what truly belongs to the people? In a time when the new urbanity of capitalist development and the politics of terror have together transformed the way we conceptualise our environments, the answers to such questions are anything but granted."

This is a public space attempts to expose the ambiguities emerging from the characterisation of spaces as 'public', while advocating the expansion of their definition as a means for their democratisation. The phrase 'I can own it' in the video, underlines not only opportunities but, also, challenges. The redefinition of 'public space' lay at the epicentre of the establishment of Milton Keynes. This related not only to the provision for spaces such as parks, but also to the creation of unstable boundaries between public and private landscapes – a challenge that is even more pertinent today.

2

Cauli Fear, 2019
Watercolour on paper

Suck it Up, 2019
Watercolour on paper

Iceberg, 2019
Watercolour on paper

Rachel Magdeburg

Rachel Magdeburg is an artist, based in the West Midlands, interested in the natural environment, anxiety, humour, socio-economics, politics, art history and consumerism, and how these interrelate.

The paintings in MK Calling are part of a series of still life watercolour studies that respond to the concept of the Anthropocene, the proposed new geological epoch. The studies take a slightly comedic and mundane approach to what is considered 'nature' by focusing on everyday grocery products and those objects that have cultural resonance in the ecological crisis, where once benign things such as plastic drinking straws now seem to take on new meaning. The use of water in the painting process to dilute forms and allow them to bleed diminishes slightly the role of the artist. In *Iceberg*, the genres of still life and landscape are linked through the title's play on words referencing melting, and therefore creating more water. In *Suck it Up* the straw that is represented is made through extracting and removing the paint using water to wash it away.

3

Clamber, 2018
Steel, paint, digital C-type prints on paper.

Lucy Gregory

Lucy Gregory is an artist based in London and Buckinghamshire. Working in sculpture and photography, she creates immersive, large-scale, kinetic systems of objects and environments.

Fractured sets or props are activated: the inhuman and the human intertwined. Images are lifted from the screen and re-contextualised into surreal, kinetic collages. This theatricality of flatness allows the spectator to feel like they are walking into an animation: a cartoon world from which much inspiration is drawn as bodies and matter become flexible and unstable with an undertone of violent, slapstick humour.

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24

Index for Instruments of Seeing, 2020
Mixed media

Abi Freckleton

Abi Freckleton is an artist based in Letchworth. Her artistic interests include the embodied nature of visual perception.

Index for Instruments of Seeing reflects the artist's research into the rituals and behaviours around taking, and looking at, images on digital devices. The studio remnants on display have emerged from pressing, printing, casting and copying various tools related to visual capture and viewing.

The work draws attention to something that all of us do every day - snap, scroll, search, post, and stare at pictures on a screen. Freckleton seeks neither to promote nor to denigrate contemporary visual modes, but simply pays them a new kind of attention, drawing out the spatial and tactile in our encounters with them.

23

The Sound Of The Space You Displace, 2019
Installation

Stuart Moore

Stuart Moore is a sound artist living in Milton Keynes. His work explores the overlap between perception of the soundscape surrounding us and human composition. Microtonal notes and qualities are derived from natural sound, forming the basis of unique internal harmonies specific to each piece.

This composition is built from microtonal harmonies sourced from nature and the man-made environment, including traffic sound, birdsong and rain. Additionally, a number of devices take natural and involuntary qualities of the observer to form parts of the composition. Tiny air-flows, displacement of invisible electrical fields and even our social perceptions shape the world around us in ways we can't easily change and don't usually perceive, but that we can understand emotionally and intuitively. In this way, the piece is an attempt to find the music that we are constantly immersed in, but usually unconscious of.

4

Cecily, 2018
Oil on canvas

Why do we only meet at weddings and funerals?, 2018
Oil on canvas

Eleanor Breeze

Eleanor Breeze is an artist living and working in Cambridge. Breeze reimagines memories and old photographs to create scenes that may or may not have occurred in the past. She is interested in the idea of trying to establish some control over the uncontrollable by reproducing images of people whom she once held close relationships with, but who are no longer in her life. By introducing fictional narratives to the images, Breeze questions our relationship to the past.

In *Why do we only meet at weddings and funerals?* Breeze reimagines a family photograph, examining the ritualistic way in which families gather to mark important events. Whether the two figures depicted here are attending a funeral or a wedding remains unknown, allowing the viewer to draw parallels between the two.

Through painting highly personal scenes, Breeze explores her relationship to the past and questions the moments, people and objects that resonate in her memory. In *Cecily*, layers of paint suggest different layers of time and disrupt a simple reading of this image, in which two women smile out at the viewer. The claustrophobic nature of their environment contrasts with their relaxed expressions. The title contributes to the narrative - it is not disclosed who Cecily is, or why she has been named.

5

Full English Breakfast
Oil on canvas

Lemsip Max
Oil on board

Monster Munch with Moon
Oil on canvas

Archie Franks

Archie Franks is a London-based painter. Franks's work draws upon a wide range of imagery from popular and consumer culture, alongside art history and the artist's everyday experiences. Franks's paintings present memories through a filter of cultural influences, rendering the familiar strange. Memory, decadence, and a dreamlike unreality are core recurring themes.

With an interest in "making art from art that already exists", Franks's points of visual reference are varied: filmic influences include David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983), Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* (2006), and Dario Argento's *Suspria* (1977). Other reference points include the horror fiction of Stephen King, fairground designs, young adult book-jackets, and Caravaggio's *Basket of Fruit* (c. 1599). Making sense of these eclectic touchstones, Franks reflects "I am an archaeologist of my own youth, trying to make poetry out of broken and forgotten things."

22

Paved Paradise, 2019
Plaster, wood and rubber

Check Out, 2019
Plaster and cotton

Where Is My Mind?, 2019
Plaster, polyester, foam
and polystyrene beads.

Josh Wright

Josh Wright (b. 1993, High Wycombe) is a London-based artist. His creative practice consists of two main outlets: his work as an independent artist, which is predominantly sculptural, and through an on-going collaboration with fellow artist Guillaume Vandame, operating as Wright & Vandame.

The sculptures presented in MK Calling form a fragmented figure, alluding to notions of travel within a dream-like landscape. Wright is interested in how space can be transportive and directly shape how someone might encounter his work. He deploys a number of everyday objects such as clothes airers, lamps and bathroom tiles, playfully dissecting and reconfiguring them into something new. He is particularly drawn to these objects to open up wider questions around contemporary domesticity and the role of the home today, but also is interested in escaping or transcending the everyday nature of space.

21

Feet, 2019
Copper and polar fleece

Permindar Kaur

Permindar Kaur is an artist working primarily in sculpture and installation, based in Hertfordshire. A common theme throughout Kaur's work has been the question of where 'home' is, often using dynamic, and sometimes fragile, architectural forms and precarious furniture to represent the concept of home in order to consider its effect on the formation of personal identities.

Kaur's work is often playful, using childlike forms to explore the territory of cultural identity, often including figures fashioned from soft fleece that resemble half-stuffed toys.

In *Feet*, 28 miniature pairs of sandal-wearing feet are walking, as on a busy street. Each pair seem to have a destination and purpose, though none appear to have realised that they are missing their bodies. The design of the footwear is inspired by traditional Indian sandals. However, made out of copper, they squeeze and pinch the split-toe socks. The softness of the fabric jars against the cold hard metal. The copper footwear acts like armour, protecting the feet, contradicting the vulnerability of having no bodies and giving them an air of comic menace.

6

Rose Noire, 2018
Oil on canvas

Peony Noire, 2018
Oil on canvas

Saint Akua

Saint Akua is the alter ego of Milton Keynes-based artist, Stephanie Takyi. Takyi's journey as Saint Akua began as a result of her fascination with portraiture. The artist sketches and draws in brightly coloured oils straight onto the canvas, inspired by Pre-Raphaelite artists.

The *Noire Flower Boy* series, from which the works in MK Calling are taken, challenges narratives of black men and how they are represented as hyper-masculine and aggressive, especially in light of the recent increase of police stop and search in London. On these portraits of friends, the artist states: "I wanted to show the parts that I see, their *nephesh*." *Nephesh* is a Hebrew word that is translated as 'soul', 'body', or 'breath'. "Words from the Bible form the basis of my work and I draw inspiration from finding the meaning of translated words. I was drawn to the idea of painting a symbolic *nephesh* of a person. My Ashanti culture and its use of symbolism play an important role in my paintings. We use symbols to remind ourselves of wise words past from our ancestors."

7

To A Beheading, 2015
Ink on paper

Untitled, 2017
Ink on paper

*Somewhere Cosy For A Cold
Winter's Day*, 2017
Ink on paper

Dina Tses

Dina Tses is interested in 'potustoronnost' – a Russian concept loosely translated as 'otherworldliness', suggesting a parallel world beyond our own that is both brutal and hypnotic, stripped of escapist whimsy but not of hope.

The resulting work includes collages and automatic drawings whereby forms emerge from an initial 'skeleton' of lines laid down at speed. Made using paraphernalia sourced at postmortal house clearances, such as ledgers and illustrated non-fiction, the collages draw inspiration from Luigi Serafini's *Codex* and the Voynich manuscript, obscure texts featuring images of unidentifiable fauna and flora.

20

Ambarnath Slow, 2019
Paper clay and bricks

METROPOLITAN, 2019
Clay

Rekha Sameer

Rekha Sameer is an artist based in Buckinghamshire. According to philosopher George Simmel (1858-1918), "The characteristic experience of the modern city is living among strangers who always remain strangers." *METROPOLITAN* is a microcosmic representation of the cities we inhabit. It shows nine figures inhabiting a small, dense space, who in spite of their setting remain isolated from one another. The grey colour of the figures, made from clay, reflects the increasing concretisation of cities around the world. The installation of the figures was appropriated from a Navagraha, an Indian altar with nine statues of planets who never face each other.

The idea for *Ambarnath Slow* came from the slow train of the same name that runs between the main business district in the south of Mumbai to Ambarnath in the state of Maharashtra, India. "Whilst travelling on the slow train, one sees people defecating with their bottoms exposed. Their faces are shrouded with a shawl to conceal their identities from slower walking traffic. They live in ramshackle slums made out of corrugated metal sheets with no electricity and water. In a crowded city like Mumbai, most are forced to do their most private activities in public." Though the work might seem cheeky in its visual language, Sameer encourages viewers to engage with its serious undertones.

19

Tracing The Pathway

Tracing the Pathway is a collective made up of the artists Ashleigh Bowmott, Mads Floor Andersen and Cara Davies. Their work explores the relationship between bodies, sites and encounters.

The Future we Left Behind is an interactive installation made from a series of material parts: soil, concrete and art objects, and is accompanied by a photographic series. It consists of an archaeological mesh-work of soil and concrete, where the past is undefined. It refers to time that is suspended between what 'once was' and what is 'to come'. Tracing the Pathway asks "how to make sense of the past: what do we want to reshape in this thick soil of memories, love, politics, land ownership and druid circles? How can we move forward, or rather how is it possible to grow and live with this soil?" *The Future we Left Behind* invites viewers to "delve into the soil, to unearth the past, which we gift to you to take home and to be part of your future to come".

8

Doug Foster

Doug Foster is an artist/filmmaker based in Milton Keynes. He employs craft skills honed in a previous career as a lighting cameraman to create imagery that aims to affect people at a visceral level. Years of research into the human visual system have informed Foster's use of repeating spatial patterns and subtle temporal rhythms to stimulate primal areas of the brain. Many of the artist's video works and projection installations at first appear to be abstract compositions, but are actually constructed with intricately filmed elements from nature.

Weaver is Foster's latest work and takes the form of a moving painting that strives to invoke a calming influence on its audience. The composition features twisting, textural imagery, repeated as eight horizontal bands that are offset in time and entwined into three-dimensional forms. The imagery is bestowed with a gentle, descending motion while the action is repeated at a constant rate of one beat per second in the hope that it will slow and synchronise the viewer's heart rate.

Weaver, 2020
Single-channel digital film, UHD colour
stereo sound, six minutes 24 seconds
seamless loop

9

Eustace and Makepeace - Their Final Encounter,
(Part of 'The Disappearance of Makepeace -
A Tale of Two Lives) Series, 2020
Acrylic and charcoal on canvas

Nick Malone

Nick Malone currently lives and works in London. *Eustace and Makepeace - Their Final Encounter* is comprised of six canvasses which can be viewed separately or as a coherent whole. The work refers to the final section of a graphic novel by the artist, *The Disappearance of Makepeace - A Tale of Two Lives*, a mystery thriller tracing the relationship of Eustace and Makepeace from their first childhood meeting to their final encounter. It is a story of disappearance and change, and is based on events in Malone's life. Issues of identity and dissolution are explored through inner and outer worlds, a magic workshop at the interchange between observation and dream where new kinds of art can be developed.

These paintings can be fully enjoyed in their own right, but if you are curious about the story and the metaphysical elements behind them, you can discover further layers by following the QR code on your mobile device, or going to <http://www.nickmalone.com/mk-calling> to hear a short podcast or see a two-minute film.



18

these supple waters, 2019
HDV video, Raspberry Pi, LCD
screen, birch plywood, steel, nylon

Emily Hawes

Emily Hawes is based in Bournemouth and works with choreography, sculptural assemblage and poetry. Hawes's practice involves site-specific research and attentive surveying processes, and is characterised by a strong participatory dimension, often grounded within an ecological sensibility.

these supple waters has been reconfigured for MK Gallery. It was originally commissioned by The Old Waterworks, Southend-on-Sea during the artist's 2019 residency. The work resulted from the artist's investigations into conservation projects, ecological sites, estuarine communities and industrial histories along the Thames and Blackwater estuaries. Historically, the estuaries in Essex have been used as dumping grounds for the city's waste, resulting in a 'toxic cocktail' of refuse material. More recently, these sites have ceased taking landfill and have been declared as areas of scientific interest due to their complex toxicity. The video incorporates footage shot in Southend during the residency and documentation of a choreographic workshop Hawes developed with dance artist Marta Ammendola at Pavilion Dance South West in June 2019. Using material gathered from the residency, such as passages of text, video & field recordings, the work responds to the estuarine landscapes and suggests the slow secretion of a toxic landscape, presenting the body as intermeshed and porous.

17

SCRSELF IMG_0712, 2020
Oil on aluminium panel

Abbie Schug

Abbie Schug (b. 1997) focuses her research on the relationship between the body and representations via the screen. Within contemporary life, one's relationship with the screen is ever more important and, in many ways, inter-dependant.

Schug utilises a combination of analogue and digital optical devices to capture the translations unique to the act of representation. Translating images of the self beyond the point of being human, yet leaving visible traces of having once been present, creates a constant state of flux across the surface of the painting. This tension between being and non-being highlights the possibility of absence as a presence.

The act of painting remains crucial to this process; investing time to establish tension upon a surface with physical mediums contrasts with the instant nature of digital culture. This piece is the first in an experimental series working on aluminium panel to create an active surface which, even behind the layers of paint, subtly reacts to the immediate environment creating a backlit, vibrant image – an effect similar to that of a digital screen. The ability for an image to constantly mutate in the presence of a spectator allows one to remain quizzical about the anatomy of the images we encounter.

10

Gap Particles, 2020
Digitally printed silk, unravelled

Fabienne Hess

Fabienne Hess was born in Switzerland and works in London.

Gap Particles is an ethereal silk work, featuring images of objects drawn from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The printed images include textile fragments, shards of pottery and scraps of paint, all of which are incomplete, whether through physical loss or missing information. The silk threads have been unravelled to the point where the fabric barely holds together.

Hess's practice engages with image archives. Regardless of source, the artist is interested in undoing existing taxonomies – hierarchies, groupings and formal relationships – to create new narratives. The delicate materials she uses, such as silk and plastic foils, gesture towards the elusive quality of memory.

11

South Mimms, 2019
Acrylic and varnish on board

Roxholme, 2019
Acrylic and varnish on board

Langton, 2019
Acrylic and varnish on board

Anna Turner

Anna Turner grew up in Hemel Hempstead and now lives and works in Leeds. Turner creates hard-edged, abstract paintings with flat, finite, forms that are rimmed by a sharp, clean edge. Shapes are independent of any basis in reality, are autonomous and sufficient unto themselves. Vibrant, solid colours are mixed with soft pastel shades, combining matt and gloss finishes. 'Hard-edge' painting is known for its economy of form, fullness of colour and smooth surface planes. Abrupt transitions are found between colour areas, creating visual contrast. In Turner's plywood works, the edges play an active role. Many of these paintings cannot be viewed in their entirety from a single angle, encouraging the viewer to move about the piece. Although Turner works to create a meticulous finish, building up layers with tape and other mediums, the subtle ridges resulting from this technique provide evidence of their hand-made nature. These are not digital productions and are carefully constructed, leaving little to chance. The works' pure abstraction is created slowly, layer by layer.

"Nothing more concrete or more real, than a line, a colour or a plane" – Theo Van Doesburg (Founder, De Stijl, 1883-1931)

16

Gifs that keep on giffing, 2019
GIF, video

Ikran Abdille

Ikran Abdille is an artist currently working and living in Northampton. Abdille's work explores ideas around language, GIFs and overlaying textures and thoughts. The artist creates work that is filled with fragmented stories relating to many different ideas and which are carefully pieced together. Abdille's work represents a puzzle comprised of layered photographs and moving images, playing with the eye's tendency to focus on many things at once. Abdille's work captures the fast-paced, constant generation of GIFs to communicate, while also considering the stand-still aspect of a photograph.

15

Untitled (Configuration), 2019
Polymorph, flocking, PVA, copper sulphate, wire, string, MDF, emulsion paint, cardboard, fillerfound image, modelling clay, chalk, plywood, salt, marbled paper, aluminium, Iroko and varnish

Untitled (Diagram), 2019
Powder coated steel, spray paint, OSB, copper, 3D prints, glass, oak, steel, pollyfiller, model grass, sterling silver, cotton, copper sulphate, salt and PVA

Kyle Kirkpatrick

Kyle Kirkpatrick lives in Bedford. Central to Kirkpatrick's making and thinking process is a fascination with materiality, natural landscape formations and objects.

In Kirkpatrick's work, materials and images are found, made, remade, altered and organised to form 'workings out'. The objects that he makes and their resulting placements are propped up by shelves or tables to reference the domestic and the familiar. Kirkpatrick navigates curiosity through "thing-making", exploring the intrinsic human need to touch. The objects created by the artist, re-imaginings or re-workings of the familiar, form curiosities ready to be unpicked by the viewer.

Kirkpatrick is led by a compulsion to make, to attempt to understand what he sees both materially and formally. He layers, grows, orders and then places to form visual or material dialogues which allow him to work through his thoughts.

12

Digital Fossils Series, 2019
Inkjet photograph

Christina-Shelagh Mongelli

Christina-Shelagh Mongelli is a London based artist whose current work concerns technology and the way we understand and are aware of software and hardware as two different poles, both essential to the mechanisms of our digital era.

Digital Fossils is a series of photographs that explores the digital space of LCD screens. Mongelli often views this digital domain in relation to the sea, as they both occupy indefinite and indeterminate spaces. The glass objects, made by fusing sheets of glass with trapped air between them, were placed and photographed on LCD and laptop screens. The action of photography fictionally 'fuses' them to the LCD screens, transforming them from three-dimensions to two. Mongelli sees the glass forms as 'digital fossils' that have been 'embedded' in the digital strata of the screens; just as fossils become embedded in rock, flattened by time and weight.

13

Homework, 2020
Cardboard, latex, feather,
balloon pump, digital frame

Stephanie Spindler

Stephanie Spindler is an American artist living and working in Milton Keynes. Spindler's artistic practice explores the fluidity of the 'body' through the experiential and material engagement of matter and meaning: embodiment and lived body experiences. She looks at the specificity of a female sexed body through processes of doing/undoing, touching/touched, moving/being moved and moving with. The artist states that she is not a performer, but instead brings the making process into public places in order to reclaim space. Currently, Spindler creates metaphorical bodies out of cardboard boxes and then wrestles them until they are both changed from the outside in and the inside out.

Homework is about making space, 'instrumentalising' the self in order to reconsider how individuals might contribute to, resist and perform the idea of becoming. *Homework* is a strategic feminist work, where the personal is considered as political.

14

From The Mystery of Chess Boxing Series, 2017
Watercolour, board, pastel, foam, clamps and nails

Priya Chohan-Padia

Priya Chohan-Padia has lived in Milton Keynes for four years, practising both as an artist and teacher.

The title of the piece *From The Mystery of Chess Boxing Series* is deliberately playful. It refers to a series of work in which Chohan-Padia considers each form as a piece of a game, an expression of strategic thinking. Ideas of weight, balance, repetition and rhythm are recurrent concerns throughout Chohan-Padia's practice.

Chohan-Padia's work involves making interventions with materials, often exploring the sculptural qualities of colour. The artist is interested in how individuals connect to spaces, both architecturally and spiritually. The intimacy and ritual of making things by hand, the flow of working physically with a form, and the connection with the body are all central concerns of her work. The artist enjoys the alchemical qualities of materials, and the point at which they shift in meaning to form a dialogue. Chohan-Padia works intuitively to create experiments with materials, feeding personal discoveries back into her work. Through the repetition of a mark, image, layer or process, a collective series emerges.