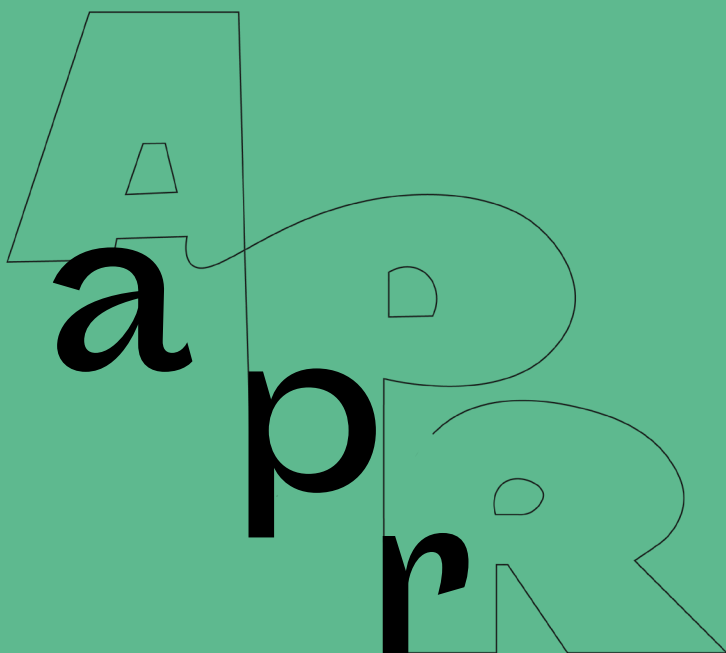


A Particular Reality

Edition 1



CONTENT

Forward	3
Introduction from Jo Addison & Michelle Williams Gamaker	5
Featured Artists:	
Srijana Tamu – ‘Notes on Attending Earth Portals’	8
Dayana Bernal Echeverry – ‘Hands’	10
Zethu Zizwe Ruby Maseko – ‘She Ssold Ssea Sshelss’ – ‘Fable - You Do Not Belong Here’ – ‘Womb Tug of War’ – ‘Fable - You Do Not Belong Here’ (continued)	12
Vittoria Vilela Cogorno – ‘Untitled 1 & 2’ & ‘Untitled Text’	22
Kaira Rattu – ‘A Home Remedy’ – ‘White Washed’	24
Artist Biographies	28
A RECIPE FOR RESISTANCE: Roots and Routes by Raju Rage	30
Reading List	36
Contributors	38

A Particular Reality is intended to forge connections across creative disciplines amongst students, educators and makers. We intend to elevate individuals who identify with feeling isolated in respect of their cultural identity and lived experience. Students from Goldsmiths and Kingston expressed a desire to be proactive in helping to address this feeling, not only for themselves but for the benefit of future students. To this end it is hoped that what can be learned from this project will be instrumental to the development of art departments across the country.

Stemming from a frustration with often being marginalised, APR began in 2018 to create a new space which noticed the lack of engagement students of colour received from both tutors and peers. Our space allowed us to be seen and heard with sensitivity and celebrated despite the systematic racism, discomfort, ignorance at times and forced silence. Noticing overlaps in our experience through this discussion highlighted the possibility for collaboration that eventually kick-started our first exhibition, *Fake Woke Situation*.

We felt that it was time to reflect on the work we have done to date, and to broaden the scope for new conversation. This publication is another step into making space for acknowledging, listening, learning and sharing feelings of artists living as diaspora. APR attempts to centralise individual experience, drawing connections with collective, cultural or inherited understanding/discourse. This should serve as an environment to see one another.

Potential Communities

“A black visual art is an innovative expression of a particular reality – a reality set in the framework of specific cultural and historic forces. These are: cultural domination by Western Euro-centrism and marginality to it; the experience of exploitation, appropriation, slavery, inequality and racism; and the long and abominable history of colonialism. A black art emerges from this framework and is vitalised by these forces.”

Gavin Jantjes

Talking at the Vision & Voice Conference
Birmingham, 12th April 1986

A Particular Reality was devised by Michelle Williams Gamaker, Lecturer BA Fine Art Goldsmiths, University of London and Jo Addison, Head of Department, BA Fine Art, Kingston School of Art, Kingston University.

Introduction

This project began in 2018 in the Fine Art Departments of Goldsmiths and Kingston Universities. During studio tutorials, we both listened to the experiences of our students of colour, the majority of whom told us in various ways that they felt isolated, exhausted and expressed deep frustration with how colleagues and tutors were engaging with their work.

The question of intersectional identities and their expression will always be a particular reality, and one that presents daily personal challenges to those who are also processing what it means to be marginalised within the white majority of a Fine Art course and beyond. The experiences of BIPoC Goldsmiths and Kingston students are not unique in this respect. We felt, that if left unchecked, the isolation that many of our students were speaking about was likely to increase, if the potential communities that could

strengthen their practice remain atomised.

As tutors we felt that more conversation was needed about experiences that often get overlooked because it takes hard work to find the words to talk about race, which intersects with sexism, class, ableism, gender and sexuality. What seemed worse was not talking at all.

Thirty-eight first, second and final year students who were engaging directly with these issues responded to our call out. We first met at Raven Row, empowered by coming together and realising that we shared similar concerns. We then travelled to each other's studios across London to share time, friendships, collaborations and eventually to make work towards the exhibition *Fake Woke Situation*. We soon realised the atomisation felt by the

BIPOC artists on both courses also affected us as studio tutors, as we both worked through how we processed our own relationship to our identity while simultaneously striving to secure an environment that makes space for the multiplicity of experiences on our courses. Our hope for this project was that if our group felt invisibilised, a space was needed to be seen and heard with sensitivity and reciprocity, where individuals could be celebrated and not feel inhibited by racism, ignorance, or collective inability to talk about these artists' work in tutorials, seminars and group crits.

We acknowledge our co-learning among the first Particulars, and this is an invitation to our colleagues and other tutors in Art Departments to create BIPOC-focused initiatives like this and collaborate with us for future iterations of this

project that extend across the country.

The APR Zine is the first, we hope of many collaborations between BIPOC art students from Goldsmiths and Kingston and for those who wish to genuinely engage with their work beyond tokenism, as allies committed to building a learning environment that sees one another.

Michelle and Jo



Gloria E. Anzaldúa, AnaLouise Keating
(2002) *This bridge we call home* Radical
visions for transformation. New York and
London: Routledge

Preface: (un)natural bridges, (un)safe spaces

Whenever I glimpse the arch of this bridge, my breath catches. Bridges are thresholds to other realities; archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and connectors that connect, transfigure, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds, spaces I call *nepantla*, a Nahuatl word meaning *tierra entre medio*. Transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries. *Nepantla* is *tierra desconocida*, and living in this liminal zone means being in a constant state of displacement—an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling. Most of us dwell in *nepantla* so much of the time it's become a sort of "home."

Notes on attending earth^portals (2018-19)

*** This is not just about the study of conceptual death/re-birth/home for the displaced in the diaspora (that is, in the imperial empire). This is not just about attending earth portals where we will be magically immersed into another - "fourth" - dimension where there is no form of capture to the body and mind. The academia is not where the power lies. The power is not within academic sell outs. The university is within itself a colonial institution. Most of us attend schools to buy ourselves time and that is fine. For many, this could be a disguise in order to committing truly revolutionary works on the down low. Use the library, share the library with your mates.



Jose E. Munoz (2009) *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer Futurity* (Sexual Cultures Series). New York and London: New York University Press

Introduction: Feeling utopia

It is as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideal that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain. Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present. The here and now is a prison house. We must strive, in the face of the here and now's totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a *then* and *there*. Some will say that all we have are the pleasures of this moment, but we must never settle for that minimal transport; we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds. Queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present. Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing.

3 "The urgency that the thing of Coloniality insinuates is the distress reality of the past, present and future made must-study material" for all students of colonised worlds (near-by listeners who are also revolutionists capable to self-critique and seek freedom for all colonised people) is to be poignant to think about, to explore the global powers and the dimensionality of the model itself, in M's hegemony, M's call of duty, M's unfettered rights to take tropical vacations and to vacate, intervene, inflict, to shred the dense components of this world into (this/that) dichotomies because thus far, coloniality sure does persist. The Capital M fluctuates and irritates us with their index-pokes under the capitalist-colonialist voyage into the superficial zones/ever portals... one could say that there is a place where we can house our homes, speak with neighbours in multiple mother tongues at all corners of the world equally raged by the Capital M who, to sabotage the growing anti-subordination of the oppressed, shoves us into captive to stop us from speaking to one another, to form allegiance in confidence no matter the diminutiveness and/or amateurism of the collective...."



J. Sakai (2014) *Settlers: The mythology of the white proletariat from Mayflower to Modern*. Oakland, CA: PM Press

Introduction

In fact, the 1960s breakthrough of "ethnic studies programs" at universities has been dialectically turned around and used against us. We are getting imperialist-sponsored and imperialist-financed "Asian studies," "Black studies," "Puerto Rican studies," "Indian studies," "ethnic studies" pushed back down our throats. Some of the most prominent Third World intellectuals in the U.S. Empire are getting paid good salaries by the imperialists to teach us our histories. Why?

- 1) The cyborg's hand: Care or control? An interview with Trinh T Minh-ha (2002) via The digital film event (2005)
- 2) Hello steryl, In Free Fall: A thought experiment on Vertical Perspective. e-flux journal (April, 2011)
- 3) Extracts from Capital M Jrs : Reading Sylvia Wynter's Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, its Overrepresentation- An argument. (a piece of writing still in working progress).
- 4) Open access movement expored in Aaron Swartz's 2008 *Guerrilla open Access Manifesto*.
- 5) Black Hammer org's PUBLIC RALLY #3 THE LAND QUESTION! via facebook live. (17 June 2020)

2. First, let's take a step back and consider the crucial role of the horizon in all of this. Our traditional sense of orientation – and, with it, modern concepts of time and space – are based on a stable line: the horizon line. Its stability hinges on the stability of an observer, who is thought to be located on a ground of sorts, a shoreline, a boat – a ground that can be imagined as stable, even if in fact it is not.



problematic of documentary filmmaking and, more generally, the problematic of realism. I wanted to start this interview with this anecdote because your work, and particularly *The Fourth Dimension*, questions the conventional boundary between fiction and documentary, by explicitly confronting the issue of narration, and therefore of history and temporality.

Trinh: We keep encountering these classifications – fiction, documentary, and experiential – everywhere in the film world. I don't feel as if I belong to any of them. Even the terms art and transgressive raise questions among artists. In making these distinctions, the tendency often has been to reiterate a preconscious hierarchy, and hence to hinder a fundamentally explorative activity into a category of work. There is no real experiment when "experiential" becomes a genre of its own, "avant" and "anti-avant" are but the two sides of the same classification. In "documentary," one has to go through fiction to show reality, just as in fictional narratives, one has to go into reality to show the truth of documentary. I document our own fiction. That's why, rather than the realm of documentary, I document our own fiction. I produce films that endow these categories by which the film world largely abides, I produce films that I consider to be first and foremost "boundary events." One can view them as different ways of *attending with freedom* to experiencing the self and the world.

The documentary aspect of *The Fourth Dimension* has less to do with the rethought nature of the material shot than with the process of documenting its own unfolding: it documents its own time, its creation in megabytes, the different paths and layers of time-light that are involved in the production of images and meanings. Our life utopia-time are regulated by time – by institutional work time or television time, for example; our bodies and daily activities tell us with precision how time takes on specific form, and leaves its mark in our landscape. And yet, when I introduce the work as a video or a film on time, it is like saying it is about nothing. This is a bit similar to the case of the student you just mentioned: a documentary has to be about something factual and verifiable. But a *sum* of facts does not necessarily *lead to truth*.

Time defines and dominates our technology. If conditions were aspect of our lives and is often invoked as a criterion to determine the "quality" of media works. Film that are quickly dismissed as "too long" by film reviewers are often those that let us feel time in its operation and materiality. So, when people tell me the subject of *The Fourth Dimension* is abstract... OK, but depending on how we live it, what is more concrete than time? Is "too long" an abstract reality? Film is time and it is a fiction, so are we – a fictional field that can be acted on, but one that is also haunting us and changing us as we inhabit it.

In the realm of cinema, "the fourth dimension" refers to the dimension of time. In spiritual practice, it can refer to the dimension of light – light not as the opposite of darkness, but light within darkness. Whenever one encounters a wall, or a space called darkness, one is not merely dealing with a finite boundary... the function of a wall, or a boundary, is not simply to stop you. It can also be to signal a departure and the preservation. So every time you hit a wall or an impulse that

med here, not because of a lack of differentiation between the but because of the "bridge" digital technology has extended



inspire can tell you a lot about yourself: having nowhere to go, you're "in" – at the beginning of something new, that is happening.

For me, rituals (in Japanese culture and in digital technology for example), which concern one aspect of the film, delineate a very strong boundary defining the worlds of past and present, light and darkness, outsiders and insiders, or form and content. But when one really enters this boundary, really deals with it, it becomes a *threshold door*, something that opens both ways and allows you simultaneously entrance and exit. We can understand "the fourth dimension" in this sense. And, there is also a third meaning to "the fourth dimension" when some Japanese novelist use this term, it is usually to refer to that dimension of reality that is *unintentionally* perceptible through "normal" sight. In other words, one has to lose one's "normal eye" in order to enter the fourth dimension.

V: When you discussed the film after the screening, you were asked about representing tradition and Japanese rituals. You explained that you were not representing tradition as old and modernity as new. The film documents the dialectical relation between interrelated ideas of tradition and ideas of modernity. One dimension that is very present, even tangible, in your film is the mobility of the camera. By which you trace, in your own terms, this relation between two realms that are habitually conceived in separate. For example, at one point, the camera focuses on women dressed in traditional garb, and more particularly on the paraphernalia worn on the face, which looks like a gag, possibly because it was conceived as a way of constraining the woman and her voice. And yet, as the camera withdraws, or rather, crosses the face of a woman, something comes through, in the woman's expression and in her eyes, in spite of the mask, or perhaps because of the mask, something that is unique to that woman.

In this scene, as in many others, the camera performs a telescoping between intimacy, traditional custom and modern life, so that the woman's mask appears in an entirely new way. As you put it, it appears as a boundary that, as boundary, makes something new happen: here it produces the image of an individual woman in modern-day Japan. Could you say something about this "telescoping," and more particularly about the fact that such mobility does not so much stop but change at a specific moment in the film, so that half way through, the initial movement – a very mobile camera, nudged and split frames, near de-spatialisation and an interesting use of the voice over, which loops, as it were, from voice-over to diegetic but off-screen voice and vice versa – turns into what seemed to me a more conventional, or perhaps just a more "well behaved" mode of filmmaking. From that moment onward, the voiceover stabilises, even if it is still not the makeover of conventional documentary film.

post 2019 - current 2020 > THE LAND QUESTION : a stable ground is possible.

5 [Malcolm X, Message to the Grassroots]

Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis for all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality. The white man knows what a revolution is. He knows that the black revolution is world-wide in scope and in nature. The Black Revolution is sweeping Asia, sweeping Africa, is rearing its head in Latin America. It's based on land. A revolutionary wants land so he can set up his own nation, an independent nation. These Negroes aren't asking for any nation – they're trying to crawl back on the plantation.

[Amilcar Cabral, To start from the reality of our land – to be realists]

We advance towards the struggle secure in the reality of our land (with our feet planted on the ground). This means, as we see it, that it is impossible to wage a struggle under our conditions, it is impossible to struggle effectively for the independence of a people, it is impossible to establish effective armed struggle such as we have in establish in our land, unless we really know our reality and unless we start out from that reality to wage the struggle.





You Do Not Belong Here

"You only are free when you realize you belong no place – you belong every place – no place at all."

Maya Angelou

Zethu Zizwe Ruby Maseko

Characters:

Night Flower	Main character
Madam	Patriarchy's puppet
Captains and Merchants	Men of hegemonic masculinity and conspicuous consumption
Sea	Mother of all living things and holder of the universal truth
Maidens	Women being trafficked
Waiter	Symbolises Night Flowers repressed identity
Woman of the rocks	Siren

On the sea, in an unidentifiable location, a ship floats. Anchored to the sea bed, where the cells of forgotten humans are ingested over and over again. Off the ship hangs a flag.

Inside the ship, on the lowest deck, a bevy of bustling maidens prepare to sell their womanhood to Caucasian captains and merchants. A madam conducts them. The maidens take turns to use the dressing table, climbing over each other, for the best chance of avoiding discipline. I am one of them. With a whistle through her fingers, Madam lines us up. We exhibit ourselves to her. Nails on display, faces uncomfortably poised. Chin up, chest out, shoulders back, stomach in. Madam examines every stocking, buckle, bustle and bonnet. She sends me back saying my hair looks wild and that I need to tighten my corset.

When Madam is confident in our appearances, she directs us up the rickety wooden stairs that lead to the upper deck. Each maiden's dress or skirt is held by the maiden behind her. On the top deck, Captains and Merchants chatter in anticipation. A zealous energy blows amongst the sails of the ship. The sound of seagulls, clanking of glasses and hegemonic masculinity, grows louder as we approach the top deck. We spread out and begin approaching the men of conspicuous consumption.

An hour and a few conversations later, I find myself standing alone. The Merchant I had been speaking to, had taken off to the lavatory. Nervously, I pull my gloves over my elbows and wait for his return.

When he walks back onto the deck, he approaches two maidens and a Captain, who seem to be flirting and laughing. After a minute or so I realise that he is not coming back and his interests are elsewhere. I thought he was interested in me, but perhaps just not enough to see past my mustard brown complexion, barely disguised by pale makeup.

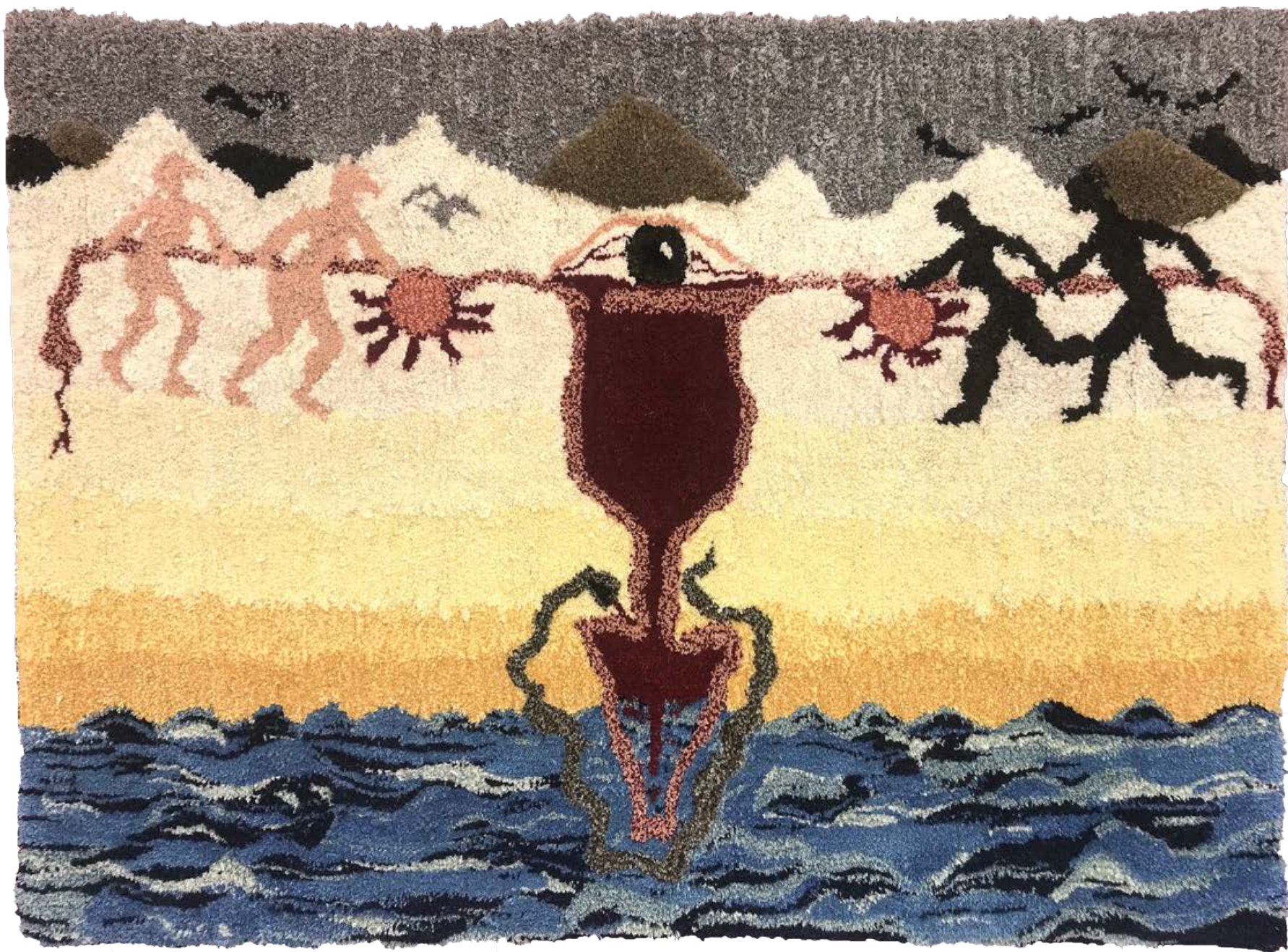
Pretending not to notice his abandonment, I reach for a glass of water from a waiter's tray. We were only allowed water on this occasion, but if we were lucky enough to go home with a man, we may have some whisky under his supervision.

As I take the glass of water from the waiter's tray, intending not to look him in the eye, as if by magnetic force, my eye catches sight of his. A moment of alignment.

His dark tanned skin glows and reflects off mine.

A nostalgic sense of familiarity tugs on my heart, followed by an empty sensation. In that moment, I shudder away, then wondering if anyone has noticed our resemblance.

As I bring the water to my mouth, Madam swiftly approaches me in a non-confrontational way. To my surprise, she takes the water from the hand and gently pours it down the front of my dress. She pretends to apologise and in a gentle voice says, "None of the men seem to like you. Put on something that leaves less to the imagination." In other words, go and find something more provocative to wear and hope a man is willing to buy your services for the night. Otherwise you will be punished.



Punishments range from acts of humiliation such as public lashings, to deprivation of any food, other than what was needed to keep us alive (usually porridge, potatoes and beans for weeks).

Startled, I head down to the lower deck dressing room to change my wet dress. As I walk down, I try to think of all the garments which had not been worn already. I begin rehearsing what to say if anyone asks me why I changed my clothes. I will say something along the lines of "Oh I just spilt some water down my front, clumsy me".

The dressing room is the quietest I have ever seen it, and my thoughts are the loudest I have heard in a while. With Madam's voice loud in my mind, I hear "The more ankles the better". I sieve through the dresses, ruling out the ones that cover the chest and looking for

dresses shorter in length. With two options, I go over to the dressing table to try them on. The first is a beige calico dress with an extremely low square neck and frills on the shoulders. Before putting the dress on, I put on a pair of flesh coloured stockings, which are extremely pale next to my brown skin. I wrap a bustle around my waist, but I cannot get it to fasten at the front. After minutes of pulling and tugging, it eventually clips. The bustle is supposed to create volume around the buttocks area, however on top of my already rather large derriere, the bustle protrudes more than deemed 'normal'.

Wanting to make sure that I look 'desirable', I try to see myself through the eyes of a man. Staring into the mirror, I no longer recognise myself. For my tender age, I feel and look so aged within.

An overwhelming fight or flight feeling rushes through my body and a voice in my head saying "You do not belong here." After years of nights like this one, which usually ended in lashings and humiliation, I finally feel like I can't bear to be in this position any longer. After I had thought many times of long-winded plans of escaping, I suddenly wonder, what if it is as easy as just leaving?

I feel hot bubbly blood rushing through my body, from my feet to the tip of my nose. I unclip the bustle and run up the stairs in my undergarments. Straight up to the top deck in what feels like a few seconds. By the time I am at the edge at the back of the ship, I have everyone's attention. I turn to look at them and before anyone has time to react, I jump.

I am falling for a really long time. I feel relief mixed with fear of the unknown depths in which I am about to vanish. However, somehow, the sea is still a more desirable place to be than that ship. As my skin contacts the water, I feel as if my body is being held. Held in a way that I have never been before. It feels as if someone is gently pulling me under. My body spirals round and round, down towards the sea bed.

Now it feels as if the bubbling of my blood has stopped, my thoughts are louder again. I start to hear what sounds like humming coming from all directions. In my ears, between my toes, around my neck. Like a warm vibration. I am guided downwards, till my feet touch the soft sand particles below me. My body lowers onto the sea bed.

“Night Flower, you are home now. I am the mother of all living things” Sea speaks to me through its tiny molecules seeping into my eyes, mouth and ears. My mouth is pulled open by Sea and she fills my lungs. Images of familiar people, fill up my eyes as Sea feeds me ancient wisdom and information from my ancestors. I am learning about the people whose bodies and souls I am a manifestation of. And suddenly I understand who I am.

Sea begins to spiral my body around and around again. Pulling me up gently towards the surface. As we approach the surface, Sea glides my body up a bed of rocks. As we trickle up the rocks, she leaves at the top of a rock, bare bodied and at the feet of a long straight haired, pale skin woman. Woman of the rocks turns her head to look at me over her shoulder. Her wet hair drapes over her breasts and her dark green eyes look at me as through she was looking into my soul.

She says provokingly “What are you doing here? Why did Sea bring you to me? You don’t belong here.”

I begin to pull myself up off the rocks and say “let me show you that I do belong here.” I begin to slide on my front back down towards Sea. When I reach Sea, I spread my arms out in front of me and begin to swim fast. As my pace increases I hear Sea humming again. I begin to effortlessly glide through the water like a bird does through the sky and as I look down towards my legs I notice that I am rapidly growing fin like flaps. The more they grow and the bigger they get, the faster I swim. Eventually I no longer have legs. Woman of the rocks swims up beside me with a smile of pride and I say to her “Told you. I belong no place, I belong every place – no place at all.” We swim through Sea to endless possibility.

The end



Like a rose in my grandmother's garden I was born con labios rojos
 Lips and cheeks stained red / I attract light.
 Tengo la expression de una flor como mi mama y su mama y su mama.
 I paint my face a layer of red.
 I mark out a space / my space
 Reclaiming the colour of violence and love,
 Destruction and fertility / The colour of life.
 Mis labios rojos draw those who are hungry.
 Hot and sticky, my lips trap flies.
 Wandering men get stuck in these lips of mine
 With the belief I will repay them for the sin of my existence.
 With the belief I will repay them for the sin of my existence.
 I paint my lips red to honour our dark foremothers.
 I wear inherited resilience on my lips and tongue as a way to continue
 their resistance.
 I preserve the power of the women who taught us to obey and rebel.
 Rooted in the earth
 I am made of the sun and moon
 Constructed of miniature specks of radiant light
 I am a mineral / a star, polished by pachamama.



Fill a bath with olive oil

Dip
In
Your
Toes

I
M
M
E
R
S
E

Take honey straight from the beehive

Rub it all over your body

Feed the black cow sweet sweets made with white sesame seeds
wrapped in maize flat bread.

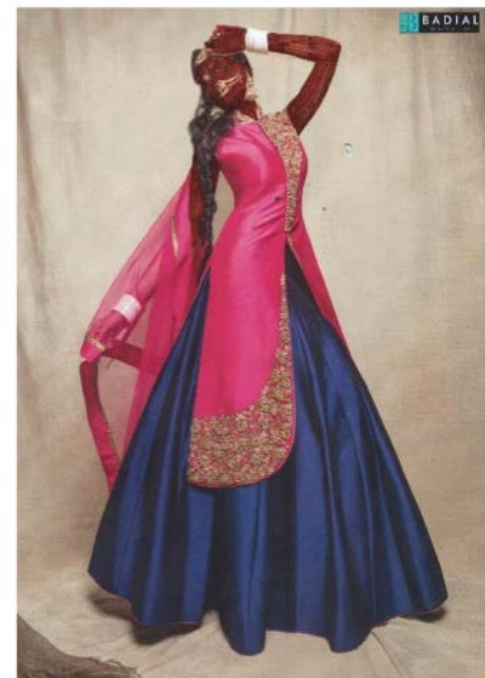
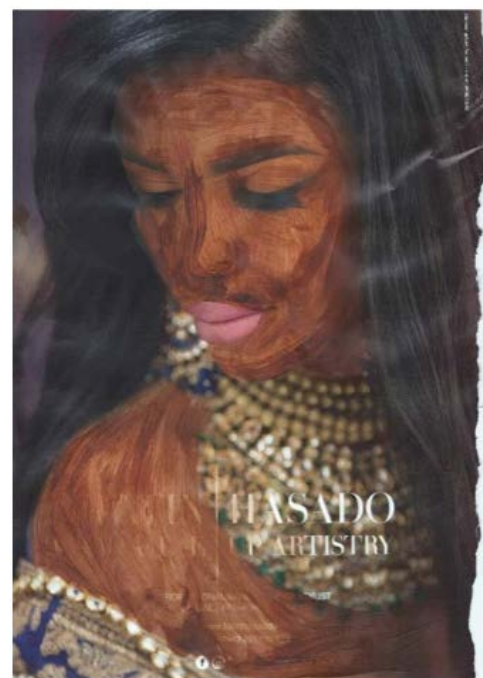
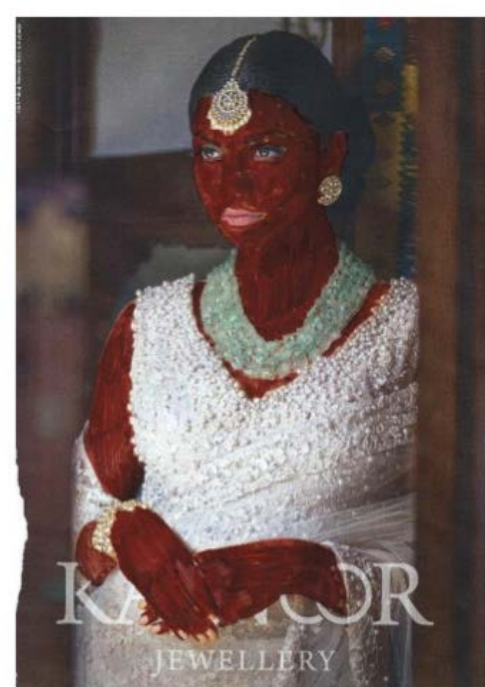
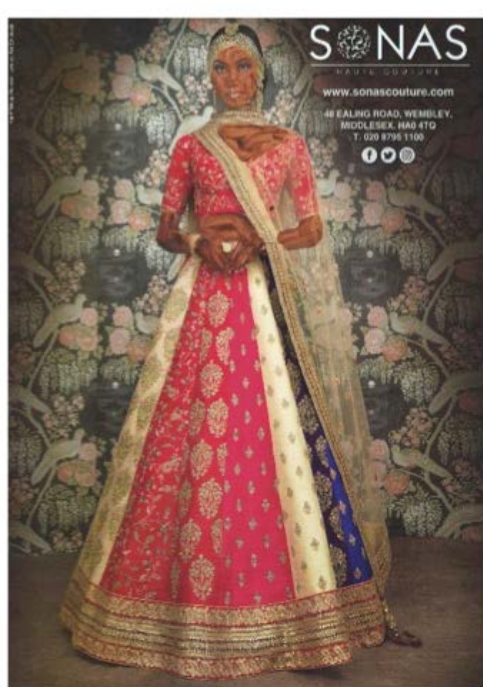
Use your left hand and left hand only.

sunrise
before
it
do
to
sure
Be

The bees may sting you.
But that's okay

They have whitening powers





Featured Artists

Dayana Bernal Echeverry

Dayana's practice focuses on the exploration of her Colombian heritage. She uses narratives and stories from the women in her family to ask herself the question: where do I position myself?

@dayana.echeverry.art

Zethu Zizwe Ruby Maseko

Zethu Zizwe Ruby Maseko is a Swati and Cornish artist and musician based in London. She works across performance, film, sound and sculpture and often delivers workshops. Her work explores de-colonial thinking, investigating de-colonial memory practices using ritual, storytelling, sonics and spiritual objects. In her practice, she draws on issues of racial and gender politics, post-coloniality and Black experience in the UK.

www.zizweruby.com

Kaira Rattu

Mixed media artist Kaira Rattu graduated from Kingston in 2019. She takes inspiration from everyday life, contradictions and important undiscussed topics. Her practice explores and challenges the beauty ideals and representation of women in tabloids, on social media and in her Indian culture.

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Srijana Tamu

Srijana is an indigenous earth bender belonging to the tamu community from the eastern hill region of occupied Nepal. Displaced in the uk, they support themselves financially by working in a convenience store and learn about political education on off days. They love the colours of turmeric, matcha, oatmeal and the cinema (the hysteria, social horrors, freedom, dreams, revenge) + so much more.

@himalayan_frostbite

Vittoria Vilela Cogorno

Vittoria Vilela Cogorno is a London based multi-disciplinary artist working around themes of shapeshifting, ritual, performed femininity and 'queer' symbolism as a way to reveal ancestral fears, hopes, memories and desires that populate our bodies through inherited colonial narratives. Often referencing pagan mythology, Vilela Cogorno searches for ways to connect with their motherland through language and visual story-telling.

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A RECIPE FOR RESISTANCE:
Roots and Routes
by Raju Rage

Recipe:

Gather your ingredients, a handful of quotes:

If what we need to dream, to move our spirits most deeply and directly toward and through promise, is discounted as a luxury, then we give up the core—the fountain—of our power...we give up the future of our worlds. Audre Lorde, 1984

Just the other day I was reading that resilience is an ecology more than it is an individual trait or possession. If so, dreaming together can weave the context for our healing. That is: a container, an atmosphere, a potentiality. Not transcendence. In fact, I'm not sure how much we're breaking free of personal/collective trauma as much as we're brewing adaptogens, recipes for resistance, a kiss and a fist. Almah Lavone, 2015

Capitalism treats our dreams (the dreams of multiply structurally oppressed people) as nightmares to repress. But one thing about the relationship to dreams that we are talking about is that it also challenges the internalized capitalism of our relationship to our aspirations. Are our aspirational dreams just something else that we feel pressure to individually achieve? What if that's just not how it works? What if the future our dreamworlds require can't be achieved? What if it just has to be listened to, collectively held, remembered, allowed, loved, accepted, like our night dreams? We really are creating collective energy to dismantle some of the american dreams, (in my case) immigrant dreams, capitalist dreams that are taking up so much energy in our lives to make space for a love and connectedness we could never individually chart up.

Method:

Stir and stew together

I have sat and slept with these quotes. Gotten intimate with them with the power of my erotic and what the art world calls my practice. Marinated and digested them - The irony being that I have gastroenteritis and my doctor tells me I need to take considerable time off work due to stress induced illness aka teaching/working while trans-queer-brown (so I quit my institutional job/s because I know these cis-tems are not (here) for me).

I could regurgitate quotes from icons and those less known, with no question to their worth and/or wisdom. Just the other day I was reading about how celebrity culture and making icons out of ourselves, besides being a neoliberal fixation disguised as salvation, is also part of a punitive system that creates good (people) - we put on pedestals, and (bad) people - we punish and incarcerate or dispose of in some way. One feeds off the other, just like the concept of 'male' and 'female' needing each other to exist. This system infiltrates and penetrates our very existence, in fact our every existence, our everyday lived experience. Day in/day out. Production. Status. Career. Fame.

What use is rain on tarmac? It took me to get out of the west, outside of the city, to realise that so much of our resources are put to waste, no, are created to be wasteful. Recycling is all good, but when you are recycling the same slogan, the same concept, the same ideology, the same curriculum even... it's not always an ecosystem that's beneficial to most. Recycling our ancestral knowledges, and collective capacities of care on the other hand is our resistance. Whose knowledges count? What else can we do beyond sorting ourselves into recyclable and non-recyclable plastics? Nothing is binary or really about fitting and measuring - you need to look between the cracks and spot which plants to pull and which to leave, which are the weeds and which are actually good for the soil e.t.c. It's an energetic ecology and economy precisely, because it's about knowledge through experience and exchange, in the process of practicing.

Bake until it smells right but pay
attention and don't let it burn!

What we need are roots that cannot be pulled out and have the depth required to grow. Ones that will hold tight but are flexible to adapt with the elements they face. That can breathe and be nurtured to blossom and bloom. When capitalism is destroying our earth and killing us off, when we are forced into competitiveness and precarity, what we need is to plant trees strategically, not cram into crowded buildings. (Raju Rage 2020)

When Audre Lorde spoke of the power of the erotic what hit hard on my chest that I felt I couldn't breathe, was the fact that we have been taught to suppress our relationship to ourselves, become so detached from our desires that we would just accept our oppression – the mundane, the mediocre but also those 'objective' pills we swallow that slowly kill us without us realizing or knowing that they will, but thinking it's the only way. Our only road.

We can discourse about access, intimacy, resistance, adaptogens, surviving and thriving... until we pass out with battle fatigue. Let's take another route.

I hope you can read between the lines, that moment in grease, beyond the sharp fade and into the blurry borders. Territory is not only land but also our bodies.
Let's take care of them and each other.

Sprinkle with seasoning, savour and enjoy.

Further Reading

Shy Radicals - Hamja Ahsan

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - Maya Angelou

The Fire Next Time - James Baldwin

Kindred - Octavia Butler

Freedom is a Constant Struggle - Angela Y. Davis

Being, in a State of Erasure - Hannah Dawn
Henderson

Wretched of the Earth - Frantz Fanon

*"I Will Not Be Erased!" Our Stories of Growing Up
as People of Colour* - Gal-dem

Surviving Art School: An Artist of Colour Tool Kit
- Evan Ifekoya, Raisa Kabir, Raju Rage, Rudy Loewe

There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack - Paul Gilroy

Your Silence Will Not Protect You - Audre Lorde

*We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist
Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*
- Bettina L. Love

Contributors

Simmone Campbell

Campbell attempts to use satirical word play within the context of spoken word poetry and film to question the idea of authenticity of culture and race as a way to add humour to uncomfortable situations, whilst also trying to destabilize her own identity by using her own emotions to exert points of spontaneity from these objects which serves as a form of catharsis.

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Paola Rafaella Kossakowska

Paola Rafaella Kossakowska is a 2019 Fine Art Graduate from Kingston University. Her practice explores location politics and power negotiations through the use of space, archive, time and familiar objects/material to create an archived non-location. Paola works with sculpture, installation, moving image, and photography.

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Janaki Mistry

Janaki Mistry is a 2020 Fine Art Graduate from Goldsmiths University. Her practice is an ongoing exploration to how personal identities play out in wider culture and the sensitivities of talking about race, identity, and colonial histories. She uses the experience of living in white-dominated spaces and questioning western ideals by navigating and contesting what it means to be British.

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Amrit Sanghera

Amrit Sanghera is an artist currently studying at Kingston University, whose work examines her family history, whilst tackling themes of memory and migration. Her practice centres around a continuous question and argument, posing questions around the notions of home, culture and experience. She works with film, writing and up-cycling material to recreate narratives to explore these subjects.

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Tara White

Tara's work sits amongst a collection of personal and family objects that tell stories of migration, grief and colonialism. The works often consider a sense of urgency and fear. Furniture and heirlooms are used as talismans of memory, that in many cases no longer exist or were left behind.

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