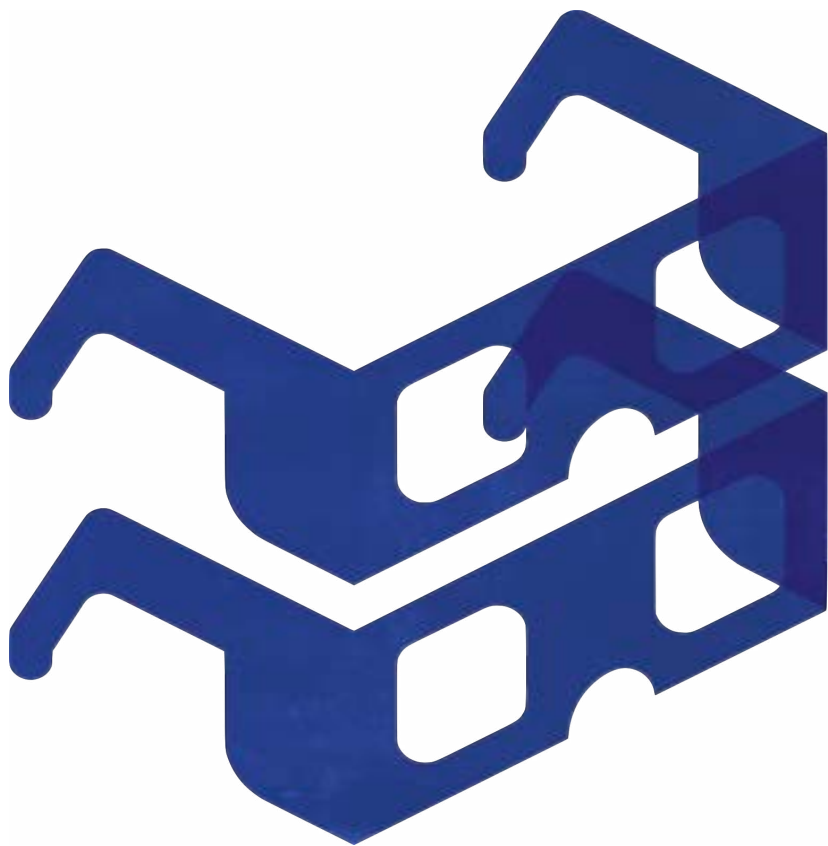


EAST WING BIENNIAL 16

RE:VISION



Published on the occasion of the
exhibition:

RE:VISION

East Wing Biennial 16

The Courtauld Institute of Art
Vernon Square
Penton Rise, London
WC1X 9EW

Open September 2025 - July 2027

For details on opening times, events,
lectures, and the EWB Archive
Project see:

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/research/east-wing-biennial/>

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Catalogue design: Romy Brill Allen

Cover design: Romy Brill Allen,
Jadyn Chin, and Grace Park

East Wing Biennial 16

RE:VISION

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List of Featured Artists

Ghazal Abbasi	Elizabeth O'Farrelly
Michael Ajerman	ORLAN
Lisa Brice	Alessandra Rebagliati
Jeremy Deller	Camilla Ridgers
Simon Fisher Turner	Pipilotti Rist
Amy Gillies	Stefano Sacco
Maria Gvardeitseva	Gracie Schylling
Hanski	Yinka Shonibare
Laura Jane Hegarty	Maya Silverberg
Amanda Holiday	Kristian Smith
Bhawana Jain	Max Spendlove
Susan Kellaway	Melanie Stidolph
Peter Kennard	Hank Willis Thomas
Steffi Klenz	Mamu Unu
Kit Line	Jeff Wall
Gareth Lloyd	Jimmi Wing Ka Ho
William Lowry	Kelly Wu
Dora Maar	Else/Xun
Sophie Mei Birkin & India Ayles	Isabelle Young
Ana Mendes	Yi Zhou
Andrea Mindel	

RE:VISION

East Wing Biennial 16

RE:VISION brings together a selection of contemporary artists who aim to avoid the pitfalls of history by remembering without repeating. Their work resists erasure and reclaims autonomy by challenging what endures and what expires. Rethinking, reinventing and reconstructing, they release us from the stifling structures of the past and present so that we might imagine and move towards alternative futures.

Founded in 1991 in the East Wing of Somerset House by Joshua Compston, the student-led exhibition is dedicated to displaying contemporary art in the Institute. It reflects the ideas, concerns and creative ambitions of The Courtauld's student body. Over its 16 editions, the project has developed into an exciting forum for young curators to engage in vital conversations.

RE:VISION invites audiences to question: Who writes history? Who has the right to revise it? And how can art destabilise familiar narratives?

***RE:VISION* Director's Introduction**

*"To define is to limit."*¹

Oscar Wilde

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the sixteenth edition of the East Wing Biennial, *RE:VISION*. The exhibition asks us to reflect on how we see, how we remember, and how we imagine. In doing so, it brings forward urgent questions about the ways we understand history, the persistence of memory, and the role of art in destabilizing the stories we take for granted. *RE:VISION* is a celebration of the act of looking again; of returning to the past not with nostalgia but with curiosity and a hunger for change. The artists displayed refract the concerns of the present through the lens of the past to remind us that what endures in culture is not fixed or inevitable, but subject to change and reinterpretation. The act of revision is therefore not merely one of correction but of expansion. *RE:VISION* seeks to build more plural, nuanced, and equitable futures.

The biennial itself was built with this very same outward looking approach. The exhibition has always been a reflection of the ambitions of The Courtauld's student body. Over more than three decades, the project has become an evolving archive in its own right. Through each iteration, one can map shifts in artistic concerns and an evolution of innovative curatorial approaches. In this vein, its sixteenth edition remains true to its founding aim; engaging students and visitors in broader and more accessible conversations about contemporary art. The ongoing 2025 East Wing Biennial Archive Project was born alongside *RE:VISION* to preserve the previously largely undocumented process of the exhibition. Thank you to all those who have contributed memories and testimonies.

¹ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (Wordsworth Classics, 1992), 264.

RE:VISION gathers artists who interrogate and draw from the past, reclaiming it in order to address the issues of the present. They re-invent materials and motifs, re-construct forgotten stories, and re-think our very methods of interpretation. In doing so, they remind us that history is not static, but a dynamic force, constantly rewritten by those who engage with it. This feels particularly urgent in the current moment in which polarisation increasingly threatens to separate us and narrow the ways we view the world. The artists in this exhibition open space for multiplicity and plurality.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary dedication of the entire East Wing Biennial team, whose vision and commitment have brought *RE:VISION* to life. My deepest thanks to the artists and their galleries for their generosity in sharing their work, and to all members of the Courtauld faculty who have supported this project with their expertise, advice, and encouragement. Thank you also to the students, scholars, artists, and visitors who will pass through these halls over the next two years and continue to give meaning to the exhibition through their engagement.

RE:VISION aims to affirm the critical power of artists, students and audiences alike to reimagine the terms of history. Together, we can see anew.

Romy Brill Allen, *Director RE:VISION*

***RE:VISION* Curator's Introduction**

"I do think that art can change society. I don't think it's one artwork that does it, I think it's the collective effort of artists and institutions together."

Bojana Janković¹

To categorise experiences, place boundaries on technique, or dilute the particularities of meaning is to risk squashing and flattening a multiplicity of artistic expression beneath a single, monolithic theme. This reductive approach to telling, and retelling, narratives is far from what *RE:VISION* seeks to do. It would be simplistically reductive, even antithetical, to the intention of the show to curate rooms in which themes are determined only by similar aesthetic values and techniques or artists' shared attributes and identities. Rather, the framework of our curatorial approach is constructed with the following questions in mind:

Who gets to write history?
Who has the right to revise it?
How can art destabilise narratives?

RE:VISION is an interrogation of how alternative futures are imagined, enforced, and advocated for, not by proposing a singular or universal method to follow, but by foregrounding a multiplicity of approaches that resist consolidation on all grounds.

Each theme in the exhibition begins with the prefix *re-*, a linguistic thread, a piece of invisible string that laces and links each artist in the show under a premise of unity and resistance. These are not categories in which to contain artists, but lenses through which to illuminate a

¹ Bojana Janković, "Can Art Change Society?," *Tate*, accessed 29/08/25.
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/can-art-change-society>

different inflection of revision. Reflective or disruptive, playful or reparative, they demonstrate that whilst artists' intentions for the future may diverge and their specific concerns may be individual, they remain united in the act of challenging the authority of inherited histories. Together, they insist on the capacity of art to evolve what we might otherwise have thought of as fixed.

Each participating artist addresses matters on both personal and universal levels with a dignified urgency which is mediated through their inventive and thoughtful approach to materials and ideas. It has been a pleasure to draw them together in solidarity and dialogue with one another. *RE:VISION* demonstrates the potential of art to change society. It is not "one artwork that does it" but, as artist and researcher Bojana Janković describes, it is the "collective effort of artists and institutions together."² This communal impact is not activated by uniformity, but because their differences sharpen what it means to act together. The exhibition confirms that revision is not about consensus, but about the coexistence of multiple visions. Both principle and provocation, it dismantles the suppression and limitations of what has been inherited to form new subjectivities and challenge what we think we know.

Here, at The Courtauld, we begin to unravel the process of bringing latent meanings and histories to the forefront. On entering each room, there is an invitation to look again: at history, at representation, and at what we assume to be true. Under this new light, inherited narratives begin to flicker and fragment. These artworks are not created in steadfast certainty of the past, rather they refuse to settle, opening space for futures still in formation.

Madeline Cheeseman, *Lead Curator RE:VISION*

² Ibid.

RE:PRESENT

The Research Forum

“The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”¹

Audre Lorde

The Research Forum is a place for discussion. During the day, the room buzzes with conversations about the most cutting-edge research in the art historical field. Each evening the lights turn off and the clinking of glasses and hum of intellectual discourse fades into silence. Although the words uttered dissipate immediately, traces of the event remain. The projector cools, static electricity buzzes, the pipes gurgle. The impact of a moment, abstract or literal, can linger for an eternity. The works in *RE:PRESENT* aim to illuminate and explode the illusive thread that we imagine ties the past to the present, and the now to the future. They blur temporal, spatial and figural boundaries to challenge and problematize our perceptual biases. To enact genuine change within existing intellectual and institutional frameworks, we must first directly acknowledge the residual, often invisible, networks of power that shape our ways of thinking and seeing.

To be afforded the power of representation is a privilege. Representation and its politics extend far beyond questions of depiction and visibility. It encompasses the invisible networks and power structures that silently determine whose stories are told and how. Who is depicted by whom, and for what purpose? It is the joint role of both artists and cultural institutions to expose and interrogate the potential of art to uphold established systems of authority.

¹ Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press, 1984), 110-113.

The inherent contextual limitations of our own interpretive frameworks must be acknowledged to shape change in the future.

At the entrance of the room, visitors are greeted by Hanski's satirical rug *Sub Elite* (2022). Our historical, hierarchical ideas of 'high' and 'low' art have led to the dismissal of textiles and other craft-based practices as domestic, feminine and lesser. Borrowing from the aesthetic codes of both political satire and children's cartoons, Hanski positions craft as a site of critical resistance. Placed high on the wall, both her illustrative style and the technique of rug hooking itself are elevated. In a vivid sweep of colour and comedy, Hanski blurs the lines between fine art and craft, aesthetics and functionality, entertainment and social critique. She challenges our binary ways of seeing the world. By refusing neat definition, her work compels viewers to recognise, and see beyond, their own expectations and visual biases.

Dora Maar's photogram *Lemons* (c.1980) pulls apart the boundaries of artistic practice itself. She radically subverts the composition of the conventional still life, exploding the very notion of representation by negating the need for a camera. This surreal practice collapses our perception of reality. Still life, traditionally one of the few domains acceptable for women practitioners, has historically been viewed as the lowest in the hierarchy of artistic genres. Maar's revolutionary intervention, and reinvention of the genre transforms it into a site of resistance.

In *Untitled (After Ophelia)* (2020), Lisa Brice reimagines and complicates the enduring trope of the passive heroine. Brice's dark blue protagonist emerges from her flat background, naked body partially obscured by vertical ribbons of colour that both conceal and reveal. The figure is anonymized, her flat outline obscuring any identifying features save for her eyes, indicated by two small white slits. Her nakedness forces us to confront our own voyeuristic position

as we are encouraged to question her context. Is she naked for a partner? For work? For herself? Perhaps for us? As she pushes through the composition, a sinister tone infects the bright palette of the piece. Bottle in one hand, cigarette in the other, it is unclear whether she has been frozen in a moment of festive celebration or escape. At first glance, the stripes of colour seem to invoke party streamers, or plastic strip curtains often found in nightclubs. However, they could equally be interpreted as metal bars; caging the figure who endeavours to assert her presence despite constraint. In any case, Brice's figure takes up space with a dynamic and unapologetic vitality. Through this ambiguity, the artist problematizes and pushes inherited visual codes to expose limiting systems of representation.

Each of the works in this room engage with historical themes and reappropriate the techniques of the past to reclaim visibility. Susan Kellaway's sardonic oil paintings appropriate Realist and Post-Impressionist gestural styles to explore this very tension. In *Blancmange Rabbit, after Manet* (2024), Kellaway speaks directly to the Courtauld Gallery's world renowned collection of Impressionist works. Kellaway's woman gazes into the distance, eyes and lips downturned with a foreboding sense of melancholy. Her expression reverberates eerily with echoes of Édouard Manet's barmaid in his seminal work *A Bar at the Folies-Bergères* (1882). Kellaway's painting collapses temporal boundaries, reminding us of the insidiously pervasive influence of the past. Despite her soft, bright palette, her oil paintings have an underlying edge to them. The inescapably uncomfortable sense of voyeurism in each of her scenes forces the viewer into a state of complicity in the objectification of the naked female body. Simultaneously, she visually disorientates the viewer by subverting the passive, 'feminine' connotations of her light pinks and yellows with uncanny, lumpy and misshapen bodies that refuse to concede space. In both *Blancmange Rabbit* and the large-scale *Should I Get The Bill?* (2024), Kellaway's women refuse to be overlooked.

By choosing to depict a Black woman in a state of absolute joy at a monumental scale, Amanda Holiday's *The Sense* (2024) similarly rejects minimization or categorization. Her staggering drawing depicts a woman in a moment of rapture, summoning spirits with her eyes closed in serene animation. Complicating potential preconceived notions of diasporic identity, the rhythm of her mark making and visceral treatment of the raw medium of paper create a complex sense of dynamism. The woman's form emerges from the sheet, indicated by a series of circles, her head the only figural indication of her presence. She is at once undefinable and indomitable. Visibility is not enough. To escape the stifling historical paradigms that continue to control, categorize and reduce marginalized bodies, we must self-reflexively shift our ways of seeing. As Holiday's woman rises from the page, we are forced to question whether true equality can exist within our existing hierarchical frameworks, rooted in and maintained through violent marginalization.

Representation is never neutral. It is always selective by nature. The politics of visibility operate on both a microcosmic level in the visual depiction of subjects, and at an institutional one in terms of what kind of art is given a public or commercial platform, extending well into the macrocosmic operation of society. Throughout the room, the question of partial perspective is paramount. *RE:PRESENT* encourages us to confront our own visual and perceptual biases by challenging assumptions about legitimacy and visibility. Together, the works in this room operate within a liminal space between past and present where multiplicity must be favoured over monoliths. Nothing exists in a vacuum, least of all art.

Romy Brill Allen

RE:PRESENT

Hanski, *Sub Elite*

Wool, acrylic and jute, 2022

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Lisa Brice, *Untitled (After Ophelia)*

Lithograph in colours on wove paper, 2020

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery)

Dora Maar, *Lemons*

Photogram, c.1980

(Photo courtesy of RE:VISION and Amar Gallery)

Susan Kellaway, *Blancmange Rabbit, after Manet*

Oil and pencil on canvas, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Susan Kellaway, *Should I Get The Bill?*

Acrylic and oil on canvas, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

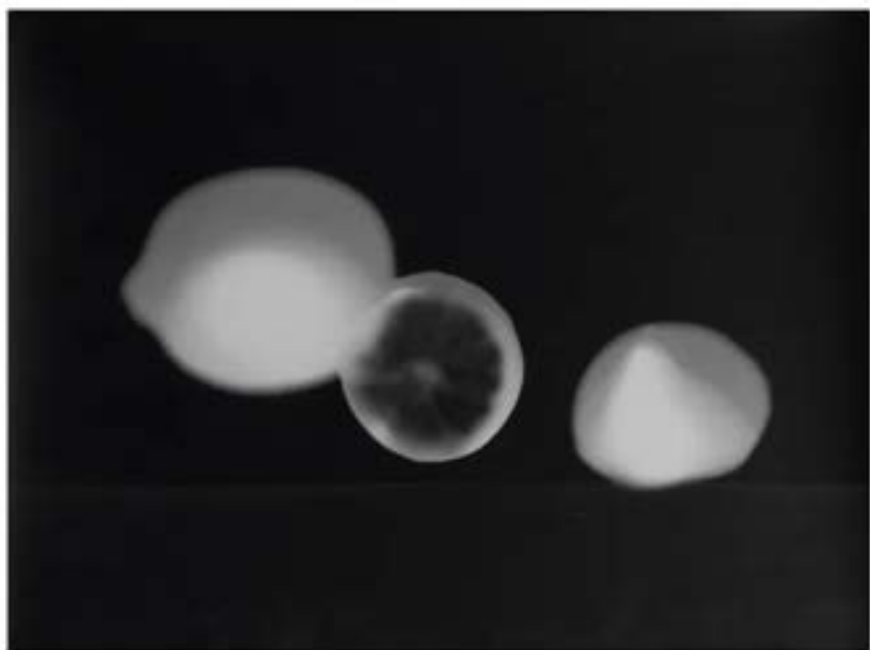
Amanda Holiday, *The Sense*

Chalk pastel, charcoal and acrylic paint on paper, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)













RE:ASSERT

Seminar Room 3

“If we examine the process of ‘understanding’ people and ideas from the perspective of Western thought, we discover that its basis is this requirement for transparency. In order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgements. I have to reduce.”¹

Édouard Glissant

The artists displayed in *RE:ASSERT* reclaim their individuality on their own terms. Mobilising personal identities and experiences through a number of different mediums, these artworks reflect a fundamental exclamation of the self beyond traditional expectations of the hand and biography of the artist, embracing intersectional lived experience.

French Caribbean philosopher Édouard Glissant speaks of ‘opacity,’ the right to be unknown. He argues that in identifying and naming differences, we only strengthen hierarchical and imperial norms. Instead, the concept of opacity is a fluid tapestry in which a diverse set of lived experiences can coexist, without needing to be measured against any standard. By autonomously denying visibility, one denies categorization and hierarchy, the first step to, in Glissant’s words, “displacing all reduction.”² The visual medium can, paradoxically, be a fruitful site for this opacity. Visual art demands visual aid; something to look at, unpack, criticise. Denial of full visibility undermines the traditional demands of the visual medium and reinstates the autonomy of the subject. It is through the lens of this opacity that I would like to

¹ Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189-190.

² Ibid, 190.

approach the six pieces in *RE:ASSERT*.

In *Social Contract* (2022), Mamu Unu approaches opacity explicitly. His three figures are only indicated by their clothing, their flesh and individual features literally obscured in blackness. While the social roles in which these figures have been cast, (bride, groom, officiant), are the only things solidly defining them, Unu refuses to flatten the inner lives of his subjects through their outward appearance. The blackness, which camouflages and protects the subjects, envelops not only their skin, but their setting and context. Extending to the photograph's frame, it creates a visible presence through absence, embodying a space of productive conversation and critical engagement. We are not made privy to whether the occasion is joyful, sombre, or, perhaps even forced. The only expression that is made visible is the glossy, red-lipped smile on the bride's face as veneered and put-on as her white lace-and-tulle gown. Unlike the men around her, convention requires her to carry the burden of agreeability; her upturned lips not representative of genuine emotion but merely another ornament adorning her face and obscuring her truth. The opacity remains but is complicated by the intersectionality of her identity and its unique expectations.

Continuing the discourse between opacity, identity, and gender, Stefano Sacco's *Stylvts Qvi Legit* (2023), a heavy bronze bust, recalls canonical Greco-Roman sculpture and its narrative authority in building national and gendered identity. The contemporary, unassuming look of Sacco's figure is not the traditional classical patriarch but rather a contemporary man, wearing a backwards cap and holding a cigarette in his mouth. Most strikingly, his eyes are closed. *Stylvts Qvi Legit* comments on ongoing narratives and expectations surrounding masculinity and the male figure. Opacity is not projected outward towards the viewer, but inward. This is the figure Sacco chose to cast in bronze: mundane, seemingly oblivious, upheld on a stately

plinth, declaring legitimacy. In his inquiry, the artist chose to avert his figure's gaze, living disinterestedly outside of the engagement expected from a sculpture. His attention becomes opaque, not oblivious to social expectations but consciously withdrawn.

Opacity as defined by Glissant operates beyond literal obscuring: it is as much a denial as it is a deliberate, conscious invitation. Jimmi Wing Ka Ho's work engages with colonial memory, deeply rooted in the visual legacies of empire. His social critique is communicated through his own visual language, and through this style, never conceding power too far from his artistic authority. *The Weight of The Colony* (2024), depicts an outstretched hand before a solid crimson background. The hand is disembodied, the personal identity of the body it belongs to irrelevant to the piece. Instead, the artist draws us towards the slide, a solid black rectangle at its centre, partially blocking the Union Jack on the object's upper left corner. Wing Ka Ho reappropriates the visual and photographic apparatuses of the British Empire and the identities which have been projected and forced onto bodies for the purpose of othering. There is no single figure that could hold this imperial weight. By not providing a unique identifier of personal identity, the artist turns the body into a place of comment and conversation away from the individual and towards a dialogue surrounding identity politics as a product of the colonial matrix.

In his slide projector-based installation *Fictional City* (2024), Wing Ka Ho explores metropolitan landscapes, both real and imaginary, as a way of commenting on the speculative spaces between fact and fiction, and the way in which these were shaped by colonialism. The moving nature of the piece reveals the shifting notions of the city as it adapts to the needs and structures of its population. Glissant mentions the power structures of imperialism, the way it imposes and fixes itself upon a colonised locality, resisting

change as it physically establishes itself, becoming more solid and visible in the landscape.³ *Fictional City* transforms the so-called solid colonial city into something transient and unstable, thus challenging the imposed notions of structural dominance and architectural subjectivity.

Across the room, Kelly Wu engages with different levels of opacity in *Here You Are* (2024). The piece is deeply personal to the artist and their lived experience, cutting directly into complex familial relationships and blurring the lines between public discourse and private matters, featuring their grandmother's handwritten notes embedded in a soft sculpture frame manufactured by a company that makes products for people with dementia. The opacity of this piece comes not from a deliberate choice to withhold, but rather an imposed barrier in communication. Wu is verbally fluent but illiterate in Mandarin, meaning the contents of their grandmother's notes were incomprehensible to them. Their grandmother intended for her notes to become a touchpoint between their two languages, two ends of communication. Wu expands outward, fixing one page to a green animal-bed frame. The readymade bed was manufactured with the intention of supporting and comforting its owner, but Wu severs the object from its context, fixing it to the wall and rendering it untouchable and unusable. The artist's treatment of the bed parallels the function of the note: both objects are cleaved from their intended uses. Wu carefully obscures context, practicing opacity around the personal objects they present, explicitly challenging notions of knowing and understanding.

Similarly, in *i bring the imaginary sword to the centre of my forehead and stick it in tightly* (2024), the artist extends their practice of contextual opacity into their nuclear family, in the medium of *tian zi ge*, a Chinese calligraphy practice mat gifted to Wu by their father.

3 Glissant, *Poetics*, 14.

UV print mimics a handwritten note Wu wrote to their father as a child wishing him well when he had contracted a common cold. This piece speaks to similar ideas as *Here You Are*, particularly in the realm of language barriers and spaces of lateral communication as avenues for rich inquiry and introspection rather than division. Wu is no less tied to her family because of their Mandarin illiteracy. In fact, these pieces focus on written words, not as a practical form of communication but as a conceptual field of connection; a reflection of the greater ties that bind.

Opacity is about ensuring ultimate individual choice in any depiction of the self and the world. In the opaque, critical engagement becomes consensual. No one person or experience can be socially or politically reduced. Through the diverse explorations of the works in this room we can move closer to a collective understanding of the intersectional nuance of conversations around cultural reassertion and personal identity in both its systemic complexity and individual simplicity. *RE:ASSERT* encourages us to view historical and present absences and erasures as an invitation for curiosity, connection and empathetic dialogue.

Maria Cicala

RE:ASSERT

Mamu Unu, *Social Contract*
Photography print, 2022
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Stefano Sacco, *Stvltyvs Qvi Legit*
Bronze bust, 2023
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Jimmi Wing Ka Ho, *The Weight of The Colony*
Analogue C-print, 2024
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Jimmi Wing Ka Ho, *Fictional City*
Slide projector, 2024
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Kelly Wu, *Here You Are*
Grandmother's English notes, pet bed, 2024
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Kelly Wu, *i bring the imaginary sword to the centre of my forehead
and stick it in tightly*
UV ink on felt calligraphy mat, 2024
(Photo courtesy of the artist and Chris Fourie)













RE:CONSTRUCT

Lecture Theatre 2

“One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory. This relationship between the locus and the citizenry then becomes the city’s predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape, and as certain artifacts become part of its memory, new ones emerge. In this entirely positive sense great ideas flow through the history of the city and give shape to it.”¹

Aldo Rossi

To define what it means to reconstruct, we must first understand the term in a material sense. Here, we look to a reconstruction that encompasses social and historical elements to reshape narratives and uncover hidden layers. In this exhibition, where artists function as disruptors and architects of narratives, this room is concerned with recovering memory in place. Aldo Rossi reminds us that “the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places.”² In this sense, we can understand reconstruction as more nuanced than the repair of physical structures. Reconstruction can reshape the collective memory within a built environment. Through intervention into architectural forms and the recasting of urban sites, artists participate in reconfiguring to maintain the memory of the city for future generations.

Both works in this lecture theatre are from Steffi Klenz’s series *Tensed Muscles* (2021), commissioned by the Camden Alive Project as part of the Mayor’s London Borough of Culture award. For part of this

¹ Aldo Rossi, ‘The Individuality of Urban Artifacts; Architecture’, in *The Architecture of the City*, trans. Diane Yvonne Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (Oppositions Books, MIT Press, 1982), 130.

² Ibid.

commission, the artist focused her attention on the Maiden Lane Estate in Camden and worked with the hip-hop artists Brownsilla and Boss B at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre to learn about the estate's history. The Modernist project by architects Benson and Forsyth originally envisioned around 400 homes alongside sports facilities, local shops, a primary school, a community centre and multiple green spaces. Unfortunately, financial constraints in the late 1970s meant that the scheme never reached full completion, leaving behind a divided site which went on to face decades of social and practical difficulties. By the 1980s and 90s, the estate built a reputation for deprivation and decline through increases in drug use, prostitution and violent crime. The Maiden Lane Estate can be understood as a site where architectural promise fractured into lived precarity. This is the dissonance which *Tensed Muscles* seeks to interrogate.

At first glance, the large plywood backing of each work asserts itself, but soon our gaze is caught in the restless layering of collaged details, each fragment competing for attention and pulling us deeper into the work. Klenz weaves together photograms based on the estate's building forms: images of microfilm machines recorded with a handheld scanner, sculptural displays of rulers and yardsticks reflecting the measurements of the estate's residencies, and anatomical drawings of muscle fibres. In reference to Karel Teige's *Abeceda*, a book published in 1926 inspired by a series of poems dedicated to the alphabet, there are multiple photographs of upraised hands of various skin tones wearing vibrantly coloured finger cots. We might also understand these hand placements as references to hand gestures often found in hip-hop culture, which, Klenz argues, is a form of communication much like sign language. Around the works we find red dots of varying sizes and multiple black lines connecting one element to the next. Infused with a sense of social vitality, the assemblages allude to the city's conflicts and stresses through suggestion rather than representation.

Rather than operating as didactic statements or straightforward documents, Klenz's works function as reflections on the unstable role of the image, caught between conveying information and producing aesthetic experience. The *Tensed Muscles* series is strikingly energetic on a visual level. However, its greater force lies in the way it shifts us across multiple registers of visual language, be it journalistic, typographic, symbolic or metaphorical, continually returning us to the act of looking and reflecting. These works remind us that images can still carry weight and complexity in a culture where pictures mostly appear as fleeting, frictionless surfaces on digital screens.

Rossi suggests that the city is the locus of collective memory, continually shaped as new artifacts are added to its fabric. Klenz's *Tensed Muscles* embodies this process. By layering architectural plans, archival photographs, medical illustrations and the bodies of Maiden Lane's residents, she inserts new fragments into the collective record of the Estate. These fragments counteract erasure: the detached hands, spasmodic muscles and hip-hop gestures restore presence and agency where trauma and inequality had produced absence. Through these layered fragments, her work reconstructs Maiden Lane by reweaving the memories and identities that shape the Estate's sense of place.

Even Vernon Square, the setting of this exhibition, embodies such a palimpsest. The building has been home to a school, another University of London college (SOAS), and is now the temporary location of the Courtauld Institute. Embedded in its walls are traces of these past lives, from science taps in what is now a study room, to the exterior lintel inscribed with 'BOYS', and the building's lingering identification as SOAS in online searches. To view Klenz's *Tensed Muscles* within this context is to recognise that architecture, memory and narrative are never static. They are reconstructed through our use of space and through the meanings we inscribe upon it.

Will Fairfax

RE:CONSTRUCT

Steffi Klenz, *Untitled 02* from 'Tensed Muscles'
Mixed-media collage on plywood, 2021
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Steffi Klenz, *Untitled 05* from 'Tensed Muscles'
Mixed-media collage on plywood, 2021
(Photo courtesy of the artist)





RE:ENACT

The Staircase

*“Doing is more than knowing.”*¹

Paracelsus

Paracelsus, the Renaissance physician and alchemist, unsettled the intellectual hierarchies of his time by emphasising the value of embodied practise. His provocation resonates here, where reenactment is not simply sweet nostalgic mimicry, something we do to dramatize the wonder of the past for ostentatious or whimsical effect, but a critical methodology. It surpasses mere repetition, becoming a process, gesture, or form through which to expose the structures of knowledge and memory, and the authority embedded within material and action. Descending or ascending this staircase, *RE:ENACT* stages this idea as a passage in which acts of replication and reoccurrence unfold as tacit processes of critique and learning. In this sense, Paracelsus mobilises the act of doing, where embodied practise becomes the grounds for experiential knowledge. Reauthorising what has historically been dismissed as secondary, feminised, or inferior, and unsettling the haze of nostalgia that warps reality, the works in *RE:ENACT* present not a return but a *revision*.

Laura Jane Hegarty’s cyanotype installation, *After Isobel* (2025), materialises this principle with a quiet yet captivating insistence. Hanging swathes of deep indigo fabric hold spectral impressions of the artist’s body. Each cyanotype print is a ghostly trace of the matrilineal line after her maternal grandmother, Isobel. Stirring with the drift of those who climb the staircase, these are not fixed images.

¹ Paracelsus, *Die groß Wundartznei*, 210, quoted in Pamela H. Smith, “In the Workshop of History: Making, Writing, and Meaning,” *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 19, no. 1 (2012): 6.

Here, the cyanotype process is an act of reoccurrence and recovery. Reenacted three times upon fragile cloth, the body's impressions are neither fully captured nor erased. Held in suspension, they are a poignant reminder that memory and knowledge are not confined to texts and archives but inscribed in gesture, skin, and proximity. We move between a living archive, one that transmits tacit knowledge across generations, a matrilineal inheritance accessed exclusively through touch and impression rather than formal record. Once dismissed as secondary, maternal care and bodily intuition is reauthorised here as a vital site of knowing. Hegarty foregrounds matriarchal knowledge networks, a phenomenon attracting increasing attention in the field of epigenetics, challenging dominant knowledge hierarchies by exposing what science is slowly beginning to discover but the body always knew.²

The veil-like tactility of Hegarty's cyanotypes engages her work within a broader lineage of women's textile heritage, where fabric is a site of embodied knowledge and connectivity. A thick, unruly rug of tufted wool, Hanski's *Textile Art Clearance Sale (Made by Women!)* (2021) is dense with craft and labour, asserting in weight and volume a humorous critique of the dismissal and marginalisation of a traditionally decorative and feminised practise. Through the ironic framing of the assembled work as a "clearance sale," Hanski exposes the cultural processes by which women's labour has been systematically devalued, its tacit knowledge reduced to the domestic. By reenacting the traditional craft of rug-making with a deliberate exaggeration, she exposes the histories of prejudice and misogyny by which authority has been assigned and knowledge hierarchies sustained, remobilising this craft as a valid and important site of critique.

² Laura Jane Hegarty, "After Isobel," Artist Statement submitted to *RE:VISION* Open Call, 2025, in author's possession.

In a parallel, sonically infected register, Simon Fisher Turner extends the principle of reenactment into the auditory realm. His site-specific installation transforms the multitude of everyday sounds into an archive for what usually goes unnoticed. The slightly eerie, shifting soundscape winds down the staircase. Fisher Turner's field recordings are collaged in seemingly absurd ways, manipulating textures that oscillate between the familiar and the strange. These are not new sounds, but a plethora of reenacted moments that are performed time upon time again as they are recorded and replayed. Fisher Turner's process of collecting and distorting transforms reenactment into a practice of attention where listening is valued as a mode of knowing; an epistemology in its own right. His repetition of sound does not deaden meaning, rather he estranges it from the ordinary as a way to expose its capacity for alternative ways of feeling and knowing from which new subjectivities and alternative experiences can emerge.

Ascending and descending the staircase is experiential. Rising between the drifting veils of Hegarty's matrilineal impressions reveals Hanski's sharp and witty textile piece whose humour hinges on the reenactment of the very medium it seeks to assert. Enveloped by Fisher Turner's eerie soundscape, this passage is thick with repetition, memory, and critique. To repeat an action, to restage a gesture, is to prise open the parameters of what we thought we knew, creating the capacity for us to confront the ways knowledge has been miswritten, conflated, or erased. Inhabiting the gaps and silences in the archive, it is an epistemological act: an act of doing that is also an act of knowing.

Madeline Cheeseman

RE:ENACT

Laura Jane Hegarty, *After Isobel*

Cyanotype on muslin, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Chris Fourie)

Hanski, *Textile Art Clearance Sale (Made by Women!)*

Wool, acrylic, polyester, found rugs, jute and cotton, 2021

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Chris Fourie)

Simon Fisher Turner, *The Staircase in King's Cross*

Site-specific sound installation, 2025





RE:FORM

Seminar Room 4

“It’s the bone that pushes out from inside, as you bend your leg the knee gets tautness over it, and it’s there that the movement and the energy come from. If you clench a knuckle, you clench a fist, you get in that sense the bones, the knuckles pushing through, giving a force that if you open your hand and just have it relaxed you don’t feel.”¹

Johann Gottfried Herder

Clench your hand into a fist and notice how the outwards press of your knuckle whitens and distends your tightening skin. When the artist takes up their pen, their paintbrush, the vital, creative force is found in the active hand, in the tension of the bones beneath the surface. The artist’s hand is not a singular thing, it flexes and gestures within an infinitely complex world of other things, other forces. For too long the folklore of ‘Greatness’ tainted the artist’s hand with quasi-divine, creationist properties. But this distracted from the real place of the artist’s hand within the material world. *RE:FORM* is an attempt to refocus artistic creativity as a practice of *reformation*. *RE:FORM* is an appraisal of the hand’s place within the intelligent material world.

It is a foundational scientific principle that all matter in the universe *already exists*. Matter, stuff, substance, whatever you want to call it, it’s all already here. It cannot be created, nor can it be destroyed. Therefore, creation in a purist sense, with all its lingering connotations of divine ‘Genius’, is a myth. When we are talking about artistic form then, we should always be talking about *reform*. All artistic and expressive forms are reformations of something which already exists,

¹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sculpture; Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion’s Creative Dream*, trans. Jason Gaiger, (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 73-92.

which always has. Artistic form is an intervention on pre-existing form, an expression of resistance against the brevity of life. This exhibition seeks to explore the autonomy of the artist and the creation of artistic legacies. We can talk of the artist as a kind of progenitor, as an architect of action and change. We can talk of the artistic right to write histories; we can place them in and against the textures of past and future through which they move. But to describe the artist as such a visionary agent is a shallow endeavour unless we acknowledge the world within which they work.

So, on form: what are artistic forms and where do they come from? They are reformed. Everywhere we go, intentionally or not, humans leave their mark. Traces of their presence, their interaction with the world. When walking home through Brockwell Park, Michael Ajerman noticed flashes of the limbs and heads of people nestled in the landscape. These harmonious moments of immersion are captured by the energetic motion of his brush. In *Brockwell Park, Again* (2019/2024), the impasto swell of oil pushes life onto the canvas. A memory recaptured, the afterimage of a woman emerging from the grasses. The vertical motion of her limbs and the wafting fronds of the grass are synchronised and vertical, a moment of synergy between man and matter, her form shifts briefly. She moves with her surroundings.

Elsewhere in this room, similar dynamic qualities appear in the blurred motion of Pipilotti Rist's film stills. *Stay Dear Homo* (2006) and *Untitled 14* (2009). Here, movement is frozen into still image. Caught between suspension and motion, the female body is revitalised by its abstraction. Form is reformed. It appears as a pulsing sensation, a heartbeat of movement and stasis. Rist collapses the ordinary separation of form to reveal the fluidity of matter and movement.

There is an astonishing series of palaeolithic cave paintings in Lascaux in the Vézère Valley of France. Hordes of bulls, deer, and other

animals charge across the stony surface of the cave walls. Though far from photorealistic in style, the sensation of *life* in them is palpable. You can almost hear the thunder of their hooves, the acrid scent of fur and hot animal breath. One senses the intimacy of the relationship between man and beast, an observed understanding of the way these creatures run, posture, and interact. The artist's hand knew these beasts, it cast their outline, but the vitality of the paintings bleeds from the rock itself. Bulges and indents in the stone become part of the rippling movement of the animals across the walls. Like the knuckle beneath the skin, the rock presses outwards, the forms of the bulls distend. Rock and paint breathe together.

Artistic form is a kind of alteration, a mark-making upon the world. Incidents like the caves at Lascaux prove this transformational action to be as old as human history. Yet new challenges for the artist's hand have appeared with the advent of the modern digitised world. Camilla Ridgers ventures an exploration of this changed landscape with *In Between Subjects: ii* (2024). A pale biomorphic form flickers in the darkness. The body has been re-formed by technology. By an algorithmic accumulation of data on forms and bodies. Ridgers casts a fluid shroud, a mechanised, transformative veil.

Artistic form necessitates reciprocal reactions and interactions between man and matter. The artist does not create forms, he reforms. In *The Land of the Lotus Eaters* (2024), Kit Line takes the fragments of an old form, pieces of a Turkish wedding cart, and reassembles them, reframing them as a tale from ancient Greek mythology. The creation of artistic form is as the building of a jigsaw puzzle. Found fragments in interaction. So, on form: all form, artistic or otherwise is being continually reformed. From the twisted cityscape spires of Line's sculpture *Quivira* (2018) to the stony musculature of the bulls in Lascaux, we find the mercurial slippage of form between matter and image.

Nothing matters when it stands alone. Meaning is only found when in relation to other forms, other substances. The movement of the artist's hand through the world is always relational, not purely creative. It is an endeavour of mark-making upon the world. The artist changes and transforms only what is already there, what has always been there. *RE:FORM* is vital, dynamic. The same enthusiastic expressions of energy for such transformations are found in the hands of the artists of today as in those people 17,000 years ago who felt the blood of great beasts rolling out of the rocks.

Celia Ongley

RE:FORM

Michael Ajerman, *Brockwell Park, Again*

Oil on linen, 2019/2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Camilla Ridgers, *In Between Subjects: ii*

Oil on canvas, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Pipilotti Rist, *Stay Dear Homo*

Inkjet print on photo rag paper (video still), 2006

© Pipilotti Rist. Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring
Augustine / 2025, ProLitteris, Zurich

Pipilotti Rist, *Untitled 14*

Inkjet print on hand-made paper in found frame (video still), 2009

© Pipilotti Rist. Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring
Augustine / 2025, ProLitteris, Zurich

Kit Line, *The Land of The Lotus Eaters*

Welded steel, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

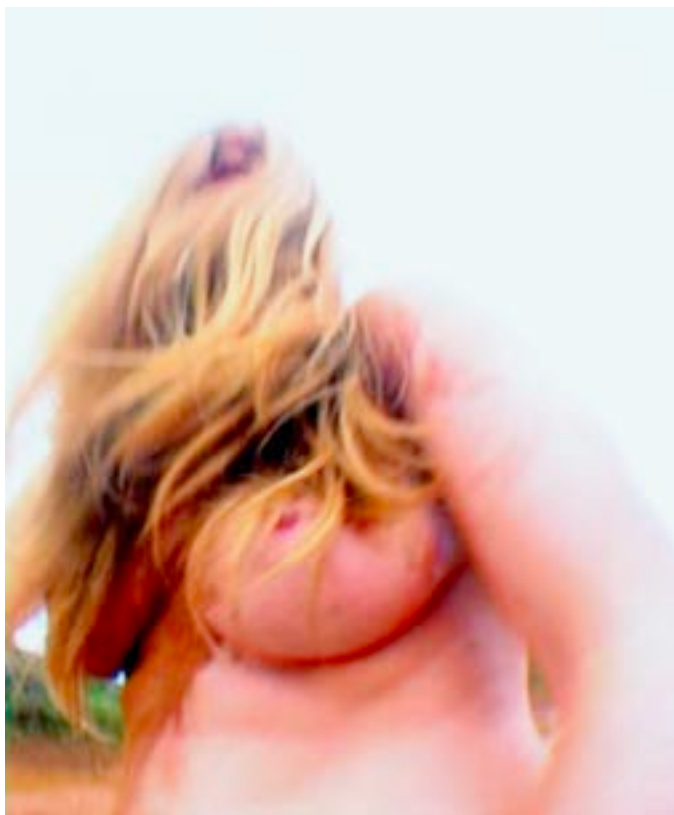
Kit Line, *Quivira*

Welded steel, 2018

(© Ellie Laycock, courtesy of 155A Gallery and the artist)













RE:PLACE

Seminar Room 5

*“The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple.
[...] Places viewed this way are open and porous.”¹*

Doreen Massey

Replacement marks a point of change. A process that inseparably entwines preceding and following states, it can have seismic implications or emerge as undetectable substitutions. Replacing, reforming, reframing and rewriting are constant processes, both consciously and subliminally achieved, ever-present in the world around us. As Doreen Massey recognises, places are unfixed, the space around us is “always under construction [...] always in the process of being made.”² Instances of replacement are thus one moment in a place’s ongoing transformation. For artists, such dynamism evokes responses that are entangled with both the physicality of place and the social, cultural and political positionalities of themselves and their subjects. Entwined with notions of identity, memory, status, power, dreams and myths, place (both material and metaphysical) remains an enduring artistic subject.

Through the lens of Isabelle Young, quiet corners of Italy and California render an evocative stillness. Retaining the intimacy of a holiday snap, the images feel laden with unspoken narratives and half remembered memories. Softly sunlit, pastel worlds possess a dream-like quality. Young responds to the indigenous yet ubiquitous architecture, presenting a fragmented and often indirect record. Yet,

¹ Doreen Massey, “General Introduction,” in *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 5.

² Doreen Massey, “Opening Propositions,” in *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 32.

concealed amongst the Roman architecture there lie signs of modernity – of ancient city in motion. Caught mid-emergence, a heavy-handed angel peers around a corner, while the striped, green awnings peek from between Californian columns which masquerade as remnants of ancient European history. Young’s photographs point to a constant negotiation between presence and absence, capturing places where the stillness of the present moment is already on the move.

The collapse and replacement of systems of power, control and belief often mark moments of seismic change. As established certainties are challenged, the transitory periods themselves are frequently fraught with uncertainty and, at times, brutality. Amid this flux, many questions arise - what persists, what truths emerge, what is held close? Throughout history, artists have responded to these turbulent passages, capturing the spectacle of battle, the changing heads of state and the quiet echoes of instability that follow. At the margins of decline, it is often mythology and spiritualism that emerge, providing a lens through which to search for meaning amid the transformations of practices and place.

William Lowry’s allegorical scenes explore the turn toward spiritual ritual in dystopian spaces amid systemic collapse. Fire purges the structural symbols of failed power systems, acting as an agent of transformation. In *Panopticon* (2025), a burning panopticon (designed as a means to assert control through an invisible omnipresence) rises in billowing smoke, as a lone boy, engulfed in a protective halo, cradles a simian-like creature. Lowry’s figures mediate between destruction and continuity, as a congregation of modern ‘magi’ kneel in front of a desolate, industrial backdrop in a collective search for greater meaning (*Magi*, 2025). In these fragile moments of transformation, ritual and reflection emerge as markers of endurance and human presence. Lowry’s work blurs the boundary between reality and allegory, situating place itself in flux and revealing the persistent impulse to seek

connection, meaning and orientation amidst upheaval. Understanding our ‘place’ in the world is intrinsic to our sense of self. Social and political systems, historical legacies and class, gender, racial and sexual identities are inextricably linked to the identification of this ‘place’. As these factors are often deeply inscribed, reforming them can be profoundly difficult and complex. The experience of being ‘out of place’ remains deeply unsettling. As Sara Ahmed suggests, the sense of being ‘out of place’ is not simply geographical dislocation but the feeling of “facing at least two directions: towards a home that has been lost, and to a place that is not yet home.”³ When caught between states of belonging, artists often respond through an assertion of their sense of place, rooting themselves within the histories, cultures and identities that shape them.

In *Sahan Shakti* (‘The Strength to Endure’) (2025), Bhawana Jain honours women’s invisible labour, invoking ecological imagery in an exploration of ancestral memory. A bulb-like female form, complete with flowing hair and decorative jewellery, endures as umbilical tree roots inescapably assimilate her into the larger natural system. Through this integration, Jain asserts women’s enduring presence within the cycles of life, fertility, and renewal. Here, the body is both shaped by, and actively shapes, the surrounding environment. What appears at first as unyielding is revealed as a constant, generative process, each iteration rejuvenating with the strength and continuity of those who came before. Jain’s powerful imagery foregrounds the dynamic yet imperishable relationship between female identity, systems of ancestral memory and organic renewal.

Yinka Shonibare’s work interrogates the validity of cultural and national identities, contesting notions of hard, dividing borders by exposing the entwined political and cultural histories of Europe and

3 Sara Ahmed, “Introduction: Find Your Way,” in *Queer Phenomenology : Orientations, Objects, Others* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006), 10.

Africa. ‘Place’ is central to his practice—both in its geographical sense and as a marker of status and identity— revealing how historical, social, and political systems continue to shape our understanding of belonging. Re-clothed in a patchwork of Shonibare’s signature African wax print fabric, the masked figures of *Power* and *Aristocrat I* (2018) become anonymous vessels for a complex retelling of colonial relations, in which authority, identity, and history are unsettled and reconfigured. Dutch wax print was first produced in the Netherlands during the 19th Century, appropriating style and technique from Indonesian batik. It was later embraced across West and Central Africa, becoming, paradoxically, a symbol of African cultural identity. Shonibare’s replacement of Western fabrics with this print entwines the aesthetics of European power with the legacies of colonial trade, re-narrating familiar performances of authority and status. In doing so, Shonibare articulates a more complex conception of identity—one that resists reductionism and transcends the rigidity of national borders.

Across this room, ‘place’ presents itself as a dynamic site of continual negotiation—between belonging and displacement, myth and memory, authority and resistance. Interwoven with structures of power and frameworks of identity, ‘place’ remains unfixed, contested, and in a state of perpetual becoming, continually reshaping collective consciousness. Replacement thus transcends mere substitution, becoming an act of persistence and renewal, a process of re-narration that generates increasingly complex understandings of our place in the world.

Chloë Ward

RE:PLACE

Bhawana Jain, *Sahan Shakti*

Monoprint and drypoint etching on paper, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Isabelle Young, *Californian artifice*

C-type print, 2019

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Isabelle Young, *Open arms*

C-type print, 2022

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Isabelle Young, *Roma aperta*

C-type print, 2023

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

William Lowry, *Panopticon*

Oil pastel, pencil, chalk and charcoal on maple-veneered board, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

William Lowry, *Magi*

Etching and aquatint on Fabriano paper, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Yinka Shonibare, *Power*

Relief print with woodblock and batik fabric collage on paper, 2018

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Cristea Roberts Gallery)

Yinka Shonibare, *Aristocrat I*

Relief print with woodblock and batik fabric collage on paper, 2018

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Cristea Roberts Gallery)

















Jean Cocteau 1925

RE: PURPOSE

Seminar Room 6

“The most important thing for me is the transformation. The fact that these media... are no longer going back to serve the same role but are elements that could generate some reflection, some thinking, or just some wonder. This is possible because they are removed from their accustomed, functional context into a new one, and they bring along their histories and identities.”¹

El Anatsui

The prefix *re-* is used to indicate repetition, otherwise meaning “again.” Placing it before the word *purpose* signals that a given object or process is being used again but adapted to suit a new function. El Anatsui’s shimmering swathes of bottle-cap tapestries enact this etymological dynamic. He discusses the act of material repetition as a radiant transfiguration in which each cap is rethreaded into a larger, repositioned narrative. They are not now devoid of their previous purpose, but carry lingering past identities and cultural residues that inflect the critiques he weaves.

Repurposing demands both rejection and preservation. We must discard what is old, unhelpful, and no longer relevant whilst retaining enough of the original material and concept that it continues to be something informed by a past action. This is precisely what the artworks under the theme of *RE: PURPOSE* seek to do. By literally repurposing materials and concepts, they advocate for a life cycle that is in constant flux and regeneration. Here is a world where nothing is fixed and there is capacity for true transformation. Where we find fault and flaws, injustice and cruelty, or exploitation and

¹ El Anatsui, and Laura Leffler James, “Convergence: History, Materials, and the Human Hand- An Interview with El Anatsui,” *Art Journal* 67, no. 2 (2008): 42.

discrimination there is also a sense of hope. There continues to be opportunity for change, even within the limits of what already exists. Repurposing does not render the past unimportant, nor does it seek to erase it, rather the remnants of what has been left behind give authority and testament to the need for evolution.

All the works in this room use materials that once held a distinctly functional role. Kristian Smith's *Saint Catherine* (2023) removes print advertising from the circuits of commodity desire. A *Celine* advert superimposed by an editorial Claude Montana shoot has been reappropriated as sculptural material. Manipulating the magazine pages into a wing-like arrangement, the symmetrical spread and central focus construct a form reminiscent of medieval and renaissance altarpieces. Breaking their original flat, commercial function this mixture of sensual fashion imagery in a sacred compositional order disarms the visual rhetoric. The artist certainly no longer lures us into the fantasy of consumerist desire, instead critiquing how it takes on ritualistic, devotional qualities.

Amy Gillies' hanging sculpture *Cyclone* (2024) similarly reappropriates an object symbolic of human labour. Removed from its function within an industrial factory, the can of Cyclone Paint Stripper hangs idly from the ceiling with a haunting stillness. Here, in a seminar room at The Courtauld, it is completely detached from its original objective. Still, it retains a dialogue with Britain's industrial economy as it swings limply. The absence of original function laments the loss of a once thriving labour landscape and the communities it sustained.

By dismantling the authority of familiar objects, such acts of repurposing reveal how material carries with it embedded histories of power, memory, and cultural significance. Maria Gvardeitseva's site-specific performance piece *Men in Suits* (2025) uses suits that are stripped of their wearers to repurpose the technique of Yves Klein's

Anthropometries (c. 1960). Nude female bodies were directed by Klein, suited himself, as living paintbrushes. However, on the opening night of *RE:VISION*, Gvardeitseva reclaims agency by ridding the suits of the male presence and using them as the medium in which to leave traces of new gestures of resistance and visibility. Rather than serving the objective to smartly clothe the male and project a sense of power, the suit's original intention is effectively ruined by the stains of the International Klein Blue paint they have been soaked in. The very fibres of their fabric continue to hold a legacy of patriarchal power and objectification that can no longer continue to be worn unseen.

Materialising memory, fabric is similarly used as an archive in Hank Willis Thomas' *We must dare to invent the future* (2023). A quilted pattern of resistance, the flags of the states of Africa are cut, rearranged, and stitched into the kaleidoscopic geometry of the North Star quilt, recalling the coded textiles of the Underground Railroad Code. Emerging at the beginning of the 19th century as an organised network of secret routes that guided enslaved people toward freedom, it is folkloric that the quilted patterns stitched messages to those who could read them. The North Star quilt first showed that one should prepare to escape, then, it instructed one to use the North Star as a beacon to true North and freedom in Canada. Repurposing emblems of sovereignty through patterns of liberation, their colours and fragments linger, transfiguring residues into new constellations of hope and freedom. Sewing together futures from the threads of what remains, Thomas preserves memory whilst creating the potential to invent the future.

The lifecycle of these objects and patterns has not ended at their original use. Instead, they have been reactivated in the exhibition space. This new environment prompts us to consider whether the gesture of material reuse ends at a simply aesthetic level. It is clear in each of the artists' practises that the action of re-purposing is

imperative to the impact of the final product, splintering the surface level aesthetic formalism to inhabit new purposes and open new critical narratives. By shifting their medium's trajectory, the artists have revealed its capacity to testify to history and to advocate for renewal. Echoing Anatsui's principle of preserving traces whilst relinquishing function, their works embody a processual transformation that bears witness to multiple histories, making them profoundly purposeful as sites of intervention, regeneration, and reflection.

Where discarded materials and ideas are not erased but reimaged, we are learning not to simply reject what is no longer 'useful', but to actively rethink how we can then approach things differently. This is a question of perception, where residue and waste are gathered and displaced as fertile foundations for new narratives to take place.

Madeline Cheeseman

RE: PURPOSE

Kristian Smith, *Saint Catherine*

Collage of original 20th Century magazine adverts, 2023

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Amy Gillies, *Cyclone*

Installation, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Maria Gvardeitseva, *Men in Suits*

Site-specific performance, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Hank Willis Thomas, *We must dare to invent the future*

Mixed media including contemporary African National Flags, 2023

(Photo courtesy of Hank Willis Thomas and Goodman Gallery)









RE:SHAPE

Seminar Room 7

“These materials think in us, as we think through them”¹

Tim Ingold

Our hands can give form to clay, hammer a nail into wood and draw with graphite over linen. What if the clay had an uneven texture, the nail went in a direction the hand didn't intend, or the pencil snapped midway through a straight line? When thinking of who to blame for this action, would we point a finger at the hand or the medium? Would we understand the relationship between the hand and the medium as vertical, with the hand commanding, or horizontal, with the medium responding? Anthropologist Tim Ingold would side with the horizontal. For him, inquiry is not about control or prediction, but about participation, responsiveness and openness.² Instead of an accumulation of facts, knowledge is an ongoing dialogue with the world, where understanding grows from correspondence rather than detachment. As the artists in this exhibition act to disrupt and question narratives, we can understand this room to be based on the reshaping of matter and meaning. Here, the works allow us to envisage the act of shaping as a reciprocal process between the maker and their material, its absence and its presence, belief and fragility. *RE:SHAPE* is a rejection of hylomorphic categorisation, understanding form not as something imposed on passive matter, but instead as a product of the active exchange between maker and material.

Plywood, pigment and nails. In a list, these could be assumed to be the materials of a pigment work on a canvas – all bar the linen. Maya Silverberg's *Sealed with a Kiss* (2025) embraces its materials rather

¹ Tim Ingold, 'Knowing from the Inside,' in *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, (Routledge, 2013), 6.

² Ibid.

than disguising them, as a mimetic oil painting might. The contours of the wood, the vertical pattern of hammered nails, the deep crimson backing all draw us toward its conspicuous form. Silverberg evokes the illusion of *trompe l'œil*, a painting technique that imposes realism by deceiving the eye, dramatically dismantling its authority by drawing our attention to the work's medium instead. The work appears to resemble a soft-back book, perhaps flexing open. This interpretation is furthered by the pattern of nails on the right leaf. Although this does not directly resemble words, it could be seen as being akin to text. The crimson backing of the sculpture might infer the glossy and bright quality often found on book covers. However, being on the back and of all the same colour, this pigmented segment is only a minor detail of the work's shape. Protruding outwards by over half a metre, this sculpture inhabits the viewer's space, further rejecting the traditional expectation of the *trompe l'œil* technique. Being made of two contoured sections, we find the gaps between forms as much a feature of interest as the sculpture itself. Hung at around two metres high, close front-on inspection is not accessible. Instead, our attention is guided to the surrounding space it protrudes into. In thinking about the absence of space, the hand inevitably comes to mind. Unlike a realist work, where gesture recedes into illusion, the hand is present in how the wood was bent, how the nails were driven and how the pigment was laid down.

In Ghazal Abbasi's photograph *Breathing Life into Clay* (2024) the hand is even more present. This image stages two means of shaping. In the first instance a hand shapes the clay. Then, the image is edited to feature a face within the earthy material. If we were to look at this work in a context of censorship and constraint, we might read this as a metaphor for survival whereby one must shape their identity when under restriction. The clay in this work also carries two registers of meaning. It functions as a metaphor for divine play where creation is provisional and exploratory. We see a child's hands squeeze the

material in a gesture that suggests curiosity rather than control. The clay becomes a stand-in for human life; vulnerable to the shifting intentions of another. The material also functions as an active substance that holds memory. Every squeeze and release remain visible. Every hesitation leaves a mark. Clay warms in the hand and pushes back against pressure, so that shaping takes place through a constant exchange. It never offers a smooth surface ready to receive form. It yields unevenly, recording the weight of touch and the time of its handling.

In Gareth Lloyd's *Figures of Clay* (2023), the question of shaping becomes a meditation on memory, belief and cultural time. The work stages three figures on a folding table. At the centre stands a body that remains unfinished, suspended in the state of becoming. To one side an Egyptian deity with a lotus bloom bears the trace of myth that has faded from cultural dominance. To the other a bodhisattva raises a hand in a gesture of blessing or affirmation, though its meaning shifts with place and time. Each figure speaks to a different temporality. One fades, one transforms, one is still in formation. Together they mark the uneven life of belief across centuries. Despite their differences all three are formed from the same base clay. This shared materiality underlines a common ground beneath the variety of symbolic forms. The folding table beneath the figures is reduced to an outline in chalk. It appears temporary and spectral, more a suggestion than a structure. A pedestal in a museum is meant to be solid, to guarantee stability and permanence. Here the platform is only a trace, open to erasure with a single sweep. The figures that rest on it are not fixed monuments. They are precarious shapes held in place for now, already at risk of collapse or removal. This outline deepens the work's play between presence and absence. The figures are made of solid clay, marked by touch and weight, yet the surface beneath is only hinted at. What appears to support them is already fading. Lloyd stages history and belief as forms balanced on fragile supports, open to revision and to loss.

Together these works embody reshaping as a process of mutual exchange rather than unilateral control. They remind us, as Ingold suggests, that materials are not passive matter awaiting human command. They are active participants in the making of meaning. Through wood bent against resistance, clay that records the press of touch, and figures poised on fragile supports, each piece shows how form arises from correspondence between hand and medium, presence and absence, belief and fragility. *RE:SHAPE* frames making as an ongoing dialogue in which matter and maker think through one another.

Will Fairfax

RE:SHAPE

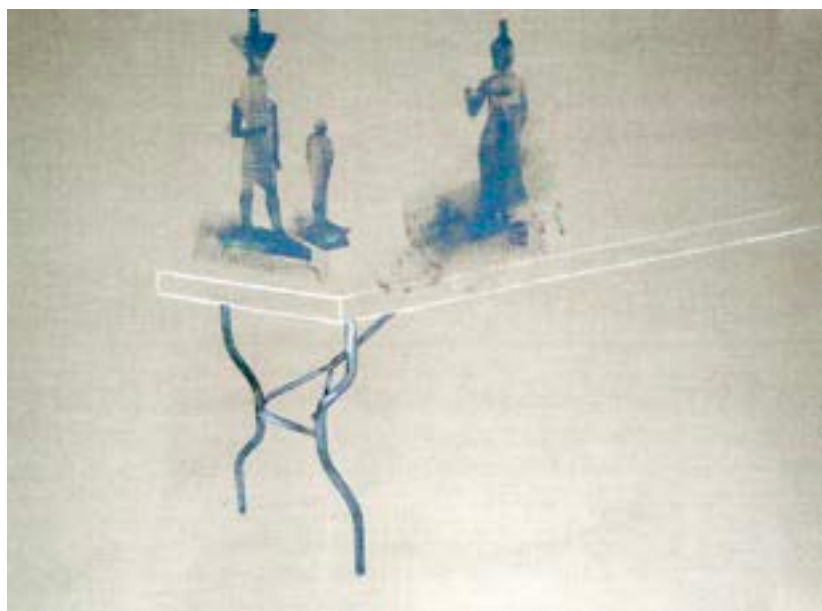
Maya Silverberg, *Sealed with a Kiss*
Nails and pigment on plywood, 2025
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Ghazal Abbasi, *Breathing Life into Clay*
Photographic print, 2024
(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Gareth Lloyd, *Figures of Clay*
Clay, chalk and graphite on linen, 2023
(Photo courtesy of the artist)







RE:COLLECT

Seminar Room 8

“History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history within us. We are our history.”¹

James Baldwin

The four artists in *RE:COLLECT* have worked around and within collecting. Whether picturing collections, gathering items, collaging concepts, or confronting methods of collection, they build an archive of remembering.

Photographer Jeff Wall visited his friend, Claus Jahnke in Vancouver with the intention of capturing his collection of pre-World War 2 German and Austrian costumes. Amidst Jahnke’s opulent trove, what most caught the photographer’s attention was a simple white shirt. It moved Wall: “a white shirt is the thing most unlikely to survive,” he remarked in a later interview, “as they are seen as disposable. They’re not preserved, but this one was preserved almost perfectly.”²

Authentication, Claus Jahnke, costume historian, examining a document relating to an item in his collection (2010), is a series of images about documentation, about the constellation that is a single object’s material history. The subject could not be confined to one picture. Its relationship to Jahnke, to its history, to its archive, to Wall, and to itself was too vast. It metastasised the more the artist probed. When is a sole object truly singular? A memory truly individual? A collection genuinely objective?

Curator and academic Ariella Aïsha Azoulay advocates for a ‘potential history,’ one which moves away from the imperial notion of the

1 James Baldwin and Raoul Peck, *I am Not Your Negro*, (Penguin Books, 2017), 65.

2 Jeff Wall, “On Authentication,” The Hasselblad Foundation Collection, YouTube, March 8, 2021, 2:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncI4x3VAZ10>.

archive and towards grassroots ambiguity, fertile with subjectivity, experience, and empowerment. Potential history is not simply revisionism, but rather “a deliberate attempt to pulverise the matrix of history,” to disavow what was historicised by “making repressed potentiality present again.”³ She defines this mode of thinking as “a form of being with others, both living and dead, across time, against the separation of past and present,” questioning the inherent universal value of the archive and its mission of “sanctioning people’s actions as records of past achievements that cannot be rewound.”⁴ Both physical and conceptual archives are built on their characterisation as a neutral space for preservation. This authority is so embedded in the dominant hegemony that it persists unquestioned. The museum, the library, the collection, the canon— all of these perform innateness and thus perpetuate the systems of power on (and for) which they were built. Jacques Derrida’s key text *Archive Fever* famously unpacks this illusion. He states that “there is no political power without control of the archive.”⁵ Derrida grants the archive violent economic power, the rich exergue from which the institution’s hegemonic influence flows. “There is no archive without a place of consignment,” he expands, “without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority.”⁶ There is no archive without the tension of the inside vs. outside, the citizen vs. the foreign, the included vs. the excluded, the empowered vs. the voiceless.

Ana Mendes challenges the power of the centralised, Western cultural institution in her ongoing project, *The People’s Collection* (2014-ongoing). Mendes invites people originating from formerly colonised countries to visit ethnographic museums around the world,

3 Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (Verso Books, 2019), 288.

4 Ibid, 43.

5 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4.

6 Ibid, 11.

choose an object that they would like to see returned to its country of origin, and perform contemplative tasks during their visit. Afterwards, Mendes visits the site herself and creates a postcard named after the participant. She contacts the director of each museum individually with a call for repatriation by publishing the participant's comments. *The People's Collection* subverts the political control of the archive, decentralizing its power into the hands of the people. Mendes rejects singularity and embraces dialogue. The postcard, an inherently mobile and marginalised medium, probes conversation across space and time, uniting the individual participants under a new kind of collective, experiential archive. In *Potential History*, Azoulay states that the "imperial apparatus presumes that such (colonial) struggles exist only in the past, only as dusty records in the archive."⁷ Mendes and the participants she collects, build a living, plural archive in retaliation; an act of empowerment and self-appointed legitimacy. *The People's Collection* is a potential archive, a threat to the institution. After all, what is there to preserve if nothing decays? What is the need for the archive if everything is archivable? Why build museum-temples if art and culture exist everywhere? Then, the need for classification, labels, segregation.

Alessandra Rebagliati confronts memory, legacy, and the imaginary in her photographic series *Legacy 'To You'* (2022) These images are personal and introspective, seeking meditation from the viewer. Rebagliati collages and questions the iconography which associates itself so closely with identity. She deconstructs nostalgia and reality, creating a space in which art confronts itself. Light, colour, portraiture, patriarchy, objects of affection, and decorative states are all referenced in these images, eliciting a deep-seated emotional reaction and internal reflection. Rebagliati's icons carve to the heart of what exists in each of us, what we must strive to question and delink from. If reality is constructed through a vast, graphic archive, what then must we do to enact change?

⁷ Azoulay, *Potential History*, 43.

Semiotician Walter D. Mignolo states that one must “delink and reexist” in order to overcome the colonial hegemony which binds the individual to the institution.⁸ This work happens at a highly local scale, a successful delinking and rebuilding “under new conditions and modes of existence that are your own.”⁹ He stresses the importance of memory in this practice, as delinking necessitates a relinking with one’s own “memories and legacies... securing modes of existence that satisfy them.”¹⁰ I would like to turn our attention to individual experience and individual memory. Mignolo speaks in terms of a colonial power, but his framework can be widely applied to any hegemonic struggle at various levels, from Jeff Wall’s hyper-individual series of photographs of Claus Jahnke, to Alessandra Rebagliati’s metaphysical inquiry into iconography and consciousness. The artists in this room, through their engagement with memory and collection, build their own potential histories, rejecting the notion of a single archive, and instead embracing coexisting, plural *archives* in dialogue.

Derrida places the archive in a domicile, confining the concept to a physical place of power (i.e. the museum, the library, the court), but in delinking, we can decentralize history, cultural memory, and recordkeeping away from the central domicile and into the singular embodied experience. We can cultivate plurality. Kelly Wu takes their practice to the heart of the home in *Slat of Sunlight, Base of My Door* (2024-ongoing). The artist has stolen over 70 door wedges from pubs, clubs, studios, workplaces, and cultural institutions. However, they contextualize the found object sculpture in terms of their own door; this collection of wooden doorstops are found at the base of a place Wu owns, despite their origins. Wu exerts their force as an individual, reclaiming items which literally hold the institution open and placing

8 Walter D. Mignolo “Coloniality is Far from Over, and So Must be Decoloniality,” *Afterall Journal* 43, (2017): 41, <https://www.afterall.org/articles/coloniality-is-far-from-over-and-so-must-be-decoloniality/>.

9 Ibid, 44.

10 Ibid, 45.

them in a new domicile. The unassuming wooden object operates as both a single and collective piece, realised across time and location, and created through the productive labour of compiling the individual pieces to create a whole. As well as literally undoing and reclaiming pieces of the institution, Wu centralises sidelined objects and turns their body, action, and collection into a site of artistic dialogue and artmaking. It is a personal archive of the artist's mobility.

James Baldwin wrote that history lives in all of us, that “we are our history.”¹¹ How then do we grapple with the collective cultural memory so present in our institutions and foundational archives? The answer is careful, conscious, and slow: to *recollect*, on our own terms, resist against theirs, and revisit those memories which have been erased.

Maria Cicala

¹¹ Baldwin and Raoul Peck, *I am Not Your Negro*, 65.

RE:COLLECT

Jeff Wall, *Authentication. Claus Jahnke, costume historian, examining a document relating to an item in his collection*

Four inkjet prints, 2010

© Jeff Wall. Photo © White Cube (Fabrice Gousset)

Ana Mendes, *The People's Collection*

Framed postcards and sculpture book, 2014-ongoing

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Alessandra Rebagliati, *Legacy 'To You'*

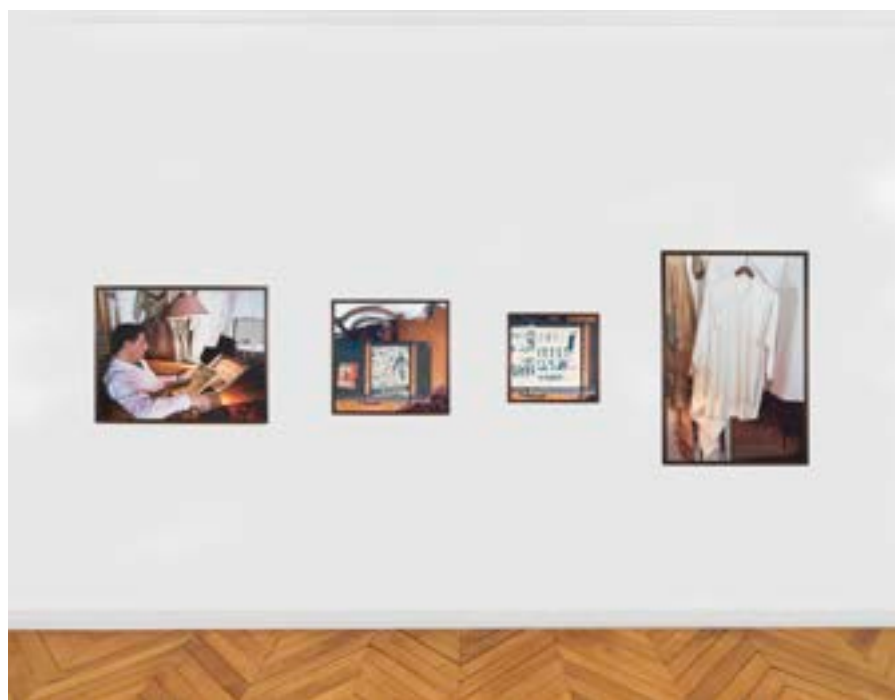
Digital collage on cotton paper, 2022

(Photo courtesy of the artist and RE:VISION)

Kelly Wu, *Slat of Sunlight, Base of My Door*

'Obtained' wooden doorstops, 2024-2025

(Photo courtesy of George Ackerley and the artist)









RE:ACT

Seminar Room 9

“...personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution.”¹

Carol Hanisch

Reaction is response. It is activation, disruption and transformation. This room seeks to position art as a method of change-making. It argues for art as a verb, uniquely positioned to challenge perception, mobilise communities and reconfigure the world around us. In 1940 Walter Benjamin challenged the traditional understanding of history as a linear narrative chronology.² The bourgeois, he argued, designed this way of looking at the past to maintain the hierarchical status quo and reduce the potential for revolutionary change. Thus, the only way to create true systemic change would be through a complete ‘explosion’ of this continuum. For Benjamin, the dismantling of the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art was a key signpost in this event. *RE:ACT* stages this very disturbance. Destroying the binaries between public and private artistic practice and imploding temporal boundaries by fusing the resonance of the past with the immediacy of the present, the works in this room enact art’s capacity to galvanize and reimagine the future.

Peter Kennard’s photomontages *Target London* (1983), designed for the activist organization Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, exemplify art as a political tool. Rooted in Dada strategies of

¹ Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” in *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation; Major Writings of the Radical Feminist*, ed. Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (Radical Feminism, 1970).

² Walter Benjamin, “These on the Philosophy of History” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (Fontana/Collins, 1973), 255-266.

appropriation and montage, Kennard's darkly humorous reassembled images rupture the visual codes of mass media. His scalpel becomes a political weapon as he literally tears apart the materials of consumer culture. The materiality of his handmade process resists the frictionless flow of the digital. Crucially, these works circulate beyond institutional contexts. They are not static images to be peered at, separated by sheets of glass hung onto white gallery walls. His images are pasted on placards, street corners and newspapers - accessible, vital, active. In *RE:ACT*, two such placards hang from the ceiling. As people pass through the space they sway and spin with an animated sense of kinetic energy. Kennard's raw imagery exposes the often-abstracted horrors of war, rendering them suddenly visible and unbearable. Representation is transformed into action.

In direct dialogue with Kennard's functional works, on the adjoining wall Andrea Mindel's delicately hand-stitched linen glows with a delicate urgency. The pearly white titular words *You Make Me Sick* (2025) juxtapose the softness of the fabric with a harsh and intensely emotional reality. With each precise stitch Mindel imbues the material with an affective sense of urgency. Her practice echoes Judith Butler's reframing of vulnerability not as weakness but rather as the ground of resistance.³ By situating her critique within the domestic and the hand-made, Mindel radically implodes hierarchical binaries between public and private, destabilizing traditional notions of masculine and feminine. Her careful process is a form of emotional expression in every way. The antique fabric, reminiscent of a handkerchief, is a powerful symbol for grief. Subverting this, Mindel punctures the surface with her needle in a triumphantly angry act of reclamation and resistance. Exploding gendered binaries, the spellbinding elegance of Mindel's plain statement testifies that protest operates as much through intimate acts of mourning and persistence as through mass mobilisation.

3 Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay, eds. *Vulnerability in Resistance*, (Duke University Press, 2016) <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11vc78r>.

Where Mindel visualises the power of protest at any scale, Yi Zhou's photographic series *My Body, Where My Memories Store* (2024) positions the human body as an archive of personal history. Our scars, gestures, and postures all testify to resilience. In Zhou's photographs memory is inscribed directly onto her flesh as she presses quotidian objects against her skin and photographs them as they fade. Each image embodies a paradox. They are both static preservations of a moment, and evidence of memory as a living, dynamic force constantly in flux. As time goes on, the impression, once traumatic enough to mark the skin, will inevitably fade. Here, memory is both political and personal. In cultures of systematic erasure and marginalization, remembering itself is a radical act. Zhou's images compel recognition of embodied histories that resist forgetting. They extend Mindel's intimate testimony into the terrain of corporeality, asserting that activism begins in the body: in what it remembers, carries, and refuses to relinquish.

Similarly, in Gracie Schylling's introspective audiovisual performance *Daydream* (2025) duration itself becomes both medium and action. Through slow and deliberate gestures, she foregrounds transformation and adaptation. Accompanied by a soundscape, Schylling projects shapes, coloured film and poetic text above her as she reacts to her environment, visually animating the lasting impression of various personal memories. Using her contemplative poetry as a springboard and responding to the *RE: VISION* opening night on 24th September 2025, Schylling builds an abstract and irreplicable visual interpretation of the evening. In dialogue with Kennard and Mindel, her work bridges the personal and political, demonstrating how both reaction and activism must be sustained rather than imagined as a singular event.

According to Donna Haraway, all perspective is partial, informed by personal experience and context.⁴ These individual “situated knowledges” must be acknowledged to avoid the emergence of a primary perspective that creates a reductive hierarchy, marginalising those seen as ‘other’. Thus, the works in this room seek to examine the mobilization of art as activism at every level. Elizabeth O’Farrelly’s sculpture *Shrinking, Shrinking* (2024) tests the politics of scale and, by extension, perception itself. The meticulous process required to create each tiny world within the foamboard box is itself a performative test of skill, endurance and attention. However, the sculpture demands patience from its audience. As the viewer is forced to peer deep into the box, our sight is actively slowed down. This near invisibility obliges careful looking. In these compressed forms, the politics of recognition is laid bare. O’Farrelly’s microcosm forces the viewer to introspectively adopt a removed, third-person perspective of the world around us, fundamentally altering our way of seeing. We are forced to acknowledge our own complicity and inherent biases, to confront our own situated knowledges.

Together these works insist that art’s strength is not confined to aesthetic appreciation but lies in its capacity to mobilise, to care, to remember, and to reimagine. To re-act, then, is not simply to respond. It is to transform. To turn memory into momentum, intimacy into solidarity, and material gesture into collective possibility. *RE:ACT* affirms the potential of art to be used as a tool for mobilisation and the enaction of social change.

Romy Brill Allen

⁴ Donna Haraway, ‘The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,’ in *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 575–599.

RE:ACT

Peter Kennard, *Another World Is Possible*

2x Inkjet print posters, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Peter Kennard, *Target London, Crushed Missile and Broken Missile*

10x Photo litho posters, 2x inkjet print placards, 1983

(Photo courtesy of the artist and Chris Fourie)

Andrea Mindel, *You Make Me Sick*

Hand embroidery on heritage linen with cotton, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Yi Zhou, *My Body, Where My Memories Store*

Photographic prints, 2025

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Gracie Schylling, *Daydream*

Site-specific performance using poetry, soundscape, props and an overhead projector, 2025

(Photo and poem courtesy of the artist)

Elizabeth O'Farrelly, *Shrinking, Shrinking*

Foamboard, watercolour paper, balsa wood, 2024

(Photo courtesy of the artist)



In order for me to
write poetry that
isn't political /
I must listen to
the birds / and
in order to hear
the birds / the
warplanes must
be silent.

Marwan Mahoud













RE:PLAY

The Film Programme

*"But her friend is nowhere to be seen
Now she walks through her sunken dream
To the seats with the clearest view
And she's hooked to the silver screen."*¹

David Bowie

To *replay* is not simply to repeat or replicate. It is to return with difference, to look again with new eyes, to imagine what might be. *RE:PLAY*, the opening night film programme of *RE:VISION*, presents a series of moving image works that draw on this idea as a provocation. As dynamic as their medium, in each of these works the past becomes a fluid site of resistance and reinvention. Here, the past is unsettled and alternative futures can be rehearsed, recorded and, ultimately, built. The moving image is uniquely suited to this goal. Its capacity for editing, looping, and layering lends it an inherent sense of temporal disjunction. In film, time can be spliced or slowed, replayed or rewound in front of our eyes. As a result, the medium often stages a collision between the imagined and the real. The artists featured in *RE:PLAY* use this potential to question the authority of history. They burst it open at its seams to ask how we remember, and to what end?

Created to accompany his exhibition at the British Pavillion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Jeremy Deller's *English Magic* (2013) reframes nationalistic ideas of cultural memory. The work is a vibrant collage of fragments of English identity, cutting between shots of falconry, scrap heaps, street parades and an inflatable Stonehenge. Set to the soundtrack of steel-drum cover of tracks by David Bowie, A Guy

¹ David Bowie, "Life on Mars?" Track 10 on *Hunky Dory*, (RCA, 1971; single released June 22, 1973).

Called Gerald and Vaughan Williams, Deller weaves an absurd tapestry of seemingly disparate images drawn together by a common thread: his own celebratory interpretation of what it means to be English. The artist explodes and reframes the constructed mythologies of Englishness, prompting us to see them anew. *Play* itself is a recurring motif for Deller. Stonehenge, perhaps the ultimate symbol of lasting national heritage, is transformed into a site of childish delight. No longer is it solid and static. The monument becomes inhabited once more, brought alive by the joyful movement of human bodies. Deller's sense of play does not trivialise history. Instead, he loosens the grip of traditions that too often serve exclusionary purposes.

Whilst Deller breathes life into an ancient monument of national heritage, Else/Xun's *The Snow to Fall* (2024) examines how such a site exists when it is no longer accessible to the public. The film renders the invisible clear, lifting the curtain and allowing us access to the reality of a heritage site undergoing maintenance. Two disembodied voices circle around abstract splinters of memory: the decaying interiors of a room, the dust that always returns. The artist draws our attention to the minute gaps through which the past slips into the present. Their conversation stretches on, not to reach a resolution, but to pass the time. Here, preservation is both continuous yet rarely recognised as the artist lingers on the slow, repetitive labour required to maintain these sites. Else/Xun sheds light into the deep crevices in which the bonds between people, places and objects that fail to enter history's record persist.

Situating remembrance and grief as a form of collective labour, Melanie Stidolph's *The Dawn Next Spring* (2024) is an ode to the healing and transformative power of shared memory. Filmed at dawn and dusk on the Cornish coast, the film gathers twelve women who sing together to their lost children at the water's edge. The work

gives voice to experiences of loss and childlessness that are too often silenced or ignored. With each collective breath, the tide draws in and out in a unifying gesture of support. The work is both film, performance and healing process. One participant described the music as a “keening song”, a traditional Gaelic vocal lament, for absent children and lost ancestral lines.² The song is both an act of mourning and a triumphant declaration of presence. The work draws attention to and dismantles the dominant and pervasive framing of women’s value as linked to motherhood. By creating a space of solidarity where grief can be both shared and witnessed, care, memory and survival become collective testimony.

In her video works *Le Drapé Baroque* (1979), *ORLAN Corps/Saint ORLAN* (1979), *Sainte ORLAN et les Vieillards* (1983) and *La Liberté en écorchée* (2013), revolutionary artist ORLAN confronts the iconography of saints, classical drapery, and the self-portrait. By appropriating and replaying these inherited symbols, she destabilises the ways femininity and sanctity have historically been constructed. Her work positions the female body as a stage. She embodies Michel Foucault’s idea of the body as a “surface of inscription” on which power leaves its mark.³ Performance becomes a radical act of defiance, and the female body is transformed into a site of resistance. ORLAN takes back autonomy and agency through self-representation. By showing a selection of her works spanning several decades, *RE:PLAY* insists on the urgency of feminist critiques of representation.

Finally, Sophie Mei Birkin and India Ayles’ video essay *Inside the Cauldron* (2024) brings these threads of remembrance together in a speculative, mythic register. Responding to the urgent vision of pioneering artist Leonora Carrington (1917-2011), the film brings her

2 Melanie Stidolph, “The Dawn Next Spring”, artist statement submitted to *RE:VISION*, 2025, in author’s possession.

3 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (Vintage Books, 1995), 102.

words into dialogue with a contemporary perspective on environmentalism. Filmed inside Carrington's previously unseen home and studio in Mexico City, the interpretive work blends experimental filmic techniques with performance, and voiceover to immerse viewers in her world. Performance artist Isabel Legate moves fluidly through each intimate space while Carrington's essay, delivered by Dame Marina Warner (b. 1946), frames the film's abstract composition. The film dynamically complicates and dissolves boundaries between poetry and prose, human and beast, past and present to meditate on our entanglement with the natural world. Repetition becomes generative, transforming Carrington's ecological concerns into an urgently relevant call to action for today.

Each of these films approach remembrance as an act of play with the potential to produce new possibilities. They *replay* or *play with* dominant narratives on their own terms to expose their fragility and to carve out space for alternative futures. By revisiting what has been, these works create futures that come into being not through the numbing rhythms of repetition, but through reinvention. They release us into the freedom of imagining futures yet to be scripted.

Romy Brill Allen

RE:PLAY

Jeremy Deller

English Magic, 2013 (Still)

HD Digital video, 14 minutes 23 seconds

Commissioned by the British Council for the British Pavilion, Venice
Biennale 2013

(Courtesy the Artist and The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd,
Glasgow)

Else/Xun

The Snow to Fall, 2024

(Stills courtesy of the artist)

Melanie Stidolph

The Dawn Next Spring, 2024

(Stills courtesy of the artist)

ORLAN

Le Drapé Baroque, 1979

ORLAN Corps/Saint ORLAN, 1979

Sainte ORLAN et les Vieillards, 1983

La Liberté en écorché, 2013

(Photo courtesy of the artist)

Sophie Mei Birkin and India Ayles

Inside The Cauldron, 2024

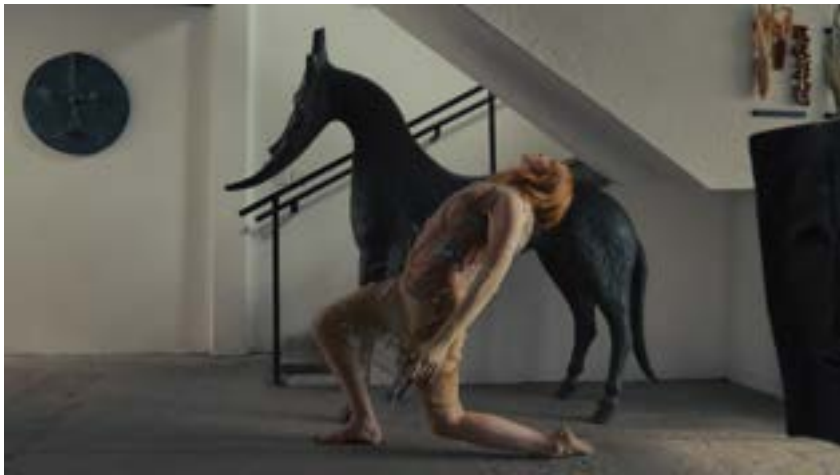
(Stills courtesy of the artists)















Acknowledgements

RE:VISION Executive Team

Romy Brill Allen, *Director*

Madeline Cheeseman, *Lead Curator*

Will Fairfax, *Registrar and Head of Development*

Maria Cicala, *Head of Publicity and Communications*

Design Team

Grace Park, *RE:VISION poster*

Romy Brill Allen, *Catalogue*

Jadyn Chin & Grace Park, *Catalogue cover*

Celia Ongley & Sophia Jactel, *Open call poster*

Alice Sharpe, *Install photography*

Curatorial Committee

Camille Cassard

Lily Catherall

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Aislin Hirst

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Celia Ongley

Isabel Schmidt

Aoife Soni

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Hannah Synder, *Student Union President 2025-26*
Anthony Tyrell, *Head of Facilities & Estates*
Isabelle Young, *Assistant to the Märit Rausing Director*

Special Thanks

Evie Anderson
Rob Baker
Caitlin Brooker
Sarah Carne
Dr Esther Chadwick
Olivia Cheney
Jamie Chetwood
Eoin Donnelly
Professor Mark Hallett
Ronnie Hamoudi
Helen Higgins
Susan Horsfield
Perce Jerrom
Milo Kester
Norman Kleeblatt
Geoff Matthey
Thomas Rhyner
Alice Sharpe
Professor Sarah Wilson
All contributing artists and galleries
All students who have contributed to the development of *RE:VISION*
and the EWB Archive Project
All alumni who have contributed testimonies to the EWB Archive
Project

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wing
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