

HOW TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

Salon for a
Speculative Future

Women Artists'
Print Portfolio

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Front cover:

See Red (detail) Angie Butler/ABPress, 2022

A collaborative project by:

Sarah Bodman & Monika Oechsler

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Sarah Bodman & Monika Oechsler

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PREFACE

SALON FOR A SPECULATIVE FUTURE

Sarah Bodman and Monika Oechsler discuss the evolution of the Salon for a Speculative Future, inaugurated in 2019, and the theme 'How to be in the Future' for this 2023 Salon publication, which follows the Women Artists' Print Portfolio created in 2022.

SB: Why did you create the Salon for a Speculative Future (SFASF).

MO: The Salon originated as a response to the concerns about the future of the planet. As artists we can speculate on the future from a creative perspective - we are not looking for specific problem solving or suggestions - we have the freedom to bring our imagination and creative ideas to future thinking. Artists are not bound by facts, data and reality, we can look beyond these speculatively to imagine positive change.

SB: Tell me a little bit about the first SFASF project.

MO: I inaugurated the Salon in March 2019. The initial idea was to organise an event in honour of Women's History Month and to create a network of women artists who would share their research interests. For the first iteration of the SFASF I worked collaboratively with artist and researcher Monica Biagioli of London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, UK. We sent out an open call to a large number of women artists with an invitation to submit an artwork for an exhibition at Chisenhale Art Place and Studios in London. The participating artists responded to our wish to highlight women's contributions for a more positive future across generations and disciplines. Alongside the exhibition, the opening event included a film screening and live performances. After the success of the first event, I decided to develop the SFASF as an ongoing platform for creative exchange and with evolving projects celebrating Women's History Month on a yearly basis. For the second Salon iteration I collaborated with the artist and researcher Sharon Kivland of Sheffield/Hallam University, UK. Together we produced a book for the SFASF in 2020. This included the original works submitted for the first Salon exhibition alongside new works contributed by more women artists responding to our open call. The publication includes images and texts by 75 women artists/researchers, was funded by UWE, Bristol UK and published by MaBibliothèque.

SB: Why the title 'How to be in the Future' for this iteration.

MO: Women's History Month reminds us each year of how much has been achieved in the past by women pioneers. However, my feeling was that many major contributions, now more relevant than ever, have been forgotten or simply ignored. Equally, the number of contemporary women creatives actively concerning themselves with future thinking is growing, as the awareness of the threat of climate change and other ecological issues gains wider traction. As much as it is the mission of the Salon to remember the positive forward thinking made by previous generations of women, the intention is also to expand on the existing wealth of positive future thinking through new ideas.

SB: Why did you decide to make this print-based edition.

MO: The aim of producing a print portfolio with contributions by twenty women artists in collaboration with you was twofold. Firstly, the portfolio seeks to promote contemporary women artists whose work, concerns and ideas are about a positive future. Secondly it was driven by a desire to reach a wider, more inclusive and international audience aiming in particular at educational institutions, libraries and art archives. With each new project the SFASF seeks to work with new collaborative partners and increase the network of participating artists. The contributing artists for this project specifically responded to the question of how to be in the future. The print portfolio was first exhibited at UWE Bristol's Bower Ashton Library for the IMPACT international printmaking conference in September 2022, and this publication, together with the print portfolio, launches in March 2023 at MOCA London.

SB: What led to the decision to focus on the future.

MO: Philosophically speaking, the future is all we have to look forward to. The present is but a short-lived moment before it becomes the past. The future is what we should focus on, not by ignoring the past - since the past has much to teach us - but by learning from it to imagine a fairer, sustainable and globally shared future. I believe that many voices, perspectives and ideas need to be heard. It is often said that artists have the privilege to say and do as they see fit. Perhaps that is true to an extent. Yet many artists undertake substantial research when exploring cultural and social issues and also engage with the complexities of a globally and technologically challenged future. Contemporary art practitioners unlimited by social or cultural constraints can see beyond the status quo. Instead

of being stifled by complexities, artists have the advantage of associating freely thus creating new connections and ideas in their forward-thinking processes.

SB: What are your hopes or speculations for the future.

MO: Everything that women do in a positive light will help to save the planet, creative forward thinking is the future. We need to rebalance society to use and apply artistic creativity, not just think logically and rationally. I hope that there will be a global body established, a kind of stewardship, that will safeguard sustainability of global resources and ensure that they are shared equally between all, as well as guarantee equal rights for all people sharing the one and only globe, we have.

SB: What changes do you hope might happen in the future.

MO: That patriarchy will disintegrate globally, and that women's position and voices will be equal on a shared ratio of 50:50 with men in every area of social life. That men will change radically not only in outlook or appearance but that they have to contribute to and take on the same roles and tasks that women have carried out for all time. If men's time and energy is curtailed and split like women's are by multi-tasking various roles such as domestic, child-caring and job related, I predict that the male dominated world view would rebalance itself to a more empathetic, less consume oriented and profit driven world. My hope is for a more humane world not driven solely by capital but by consideration for each other.

SB: How do we as women approach our future through the Salon.

MO: The first iteration of the SFASF celebrated women's past achievements. Since then, it has expanded to highlight contemporary women artists, their creative work and their reflections and inspirations taken from other generations. As the network and the participating number of artists grow, we will see more collaboration and iterations. The mission of the SFASF is to enhance and support the visibility and creativity of women artists thus work towards a rebalancing of the male-dominated art world in the future.

WOMEN
ARTISTS' PRINT
PORTFOLIO
AND TEXTS



O1

Warning Stamp

Lubaina Himid

There will come a time when the rulers of territories disguise themselves as animals to win popularity. In an imaginable future, food shops will have vanished and we will rely on street vendors to supply us with our daily meals. Men will always run away if they can and will usually fight if they cannot. Shadows may become problematic. The post horn should be banned but the noise of colonialism will doubtless linger on. This screenprint is a stamp for a letter addressed to the past in which I warn them and apologise because we should have seen all this coming and tried to at least clean up after ourselves.

Screenprint on Pure Dutch Arctic paper, 280gsm, 40 x 27,5 cm, 2022.



First Edition 25/25

Harriet Berman

Tyre Shred
Harriet Bowman

Over the last couple of years, I have been photographing skid marks on roads. The marks reveal sites of lapses in concentration or collisions. The average tyre lasts 20,000 miles on the road. Once their life on the automobile ends, they are shredded and their heavy metal supports are removed with giant magnets. The shreds go on to be used in recreational playgrounds, sports pitches and horse-riding arenas. The shredded tyre surfaces provide a soft landing for bodies and tendons.

Riso print of a 3D scanned scaled up shred of tyre on Nautilus Classic 250gsm, 100% recycled card, 37 x 25 cm, 2022.

gnir gnibhew n sli.I .smul km otul .psef kur ni tash A .smrit(g)M ni Bids sdt

AR 1/2

AR 2022



Ordinary plants from the Maritime cliff paths. One stem cast in the gold loop.

A wedding ring makes visible some deep connections. I feel in the past, projected into the future. § One early Spring I plan a long and solitary journey, but when it's all arranged I am afraid. I'll miss the cliffs and paths. The sea. In May I collect chickweed, plantain, cow parsley, thistle and other plants. I choose one stem to cast as a gold loop. The flesh of my ring finger is softly dented where it rests. It's always there. Like an ear lobe, an eyebrow. Before this, I'd never worn any kind of ring. My hand felt somehow hampered when I tried. § When I'm away from home, my thumb covertly doubles back inside my fist to rub the slight ribs of the ring: my rosary, my anchor. The secret of the May-tide cliff, the green rush to the light like a high ringing shout, a stampede, salt on my lips, sound of the sea, the breeze on my bare arms. Earth breaking into a run. § One November morning I take the 5am from Penzance to Paddington and wake cold. On the wet London pavement my heart races. I feel dizzy. It is lost, swept up with the other trash from the train. I cry for it. I still need the May Cliff with me. I will make it anew, in Spring.

03

The Cliff in Maytime, a Dent in my Flesh
Abigail Reynolds

I imagine this work as a double-page spread from a book which when folded shut places surfaces together, to connect points that are otherwise far apart. I have used translucent paper partly to make the connection / disconnection inherent in the book form more evident. The circle described in the story is immanent when the book is open. Unfolded, half the circle of text is backwards, nonsensical. When the 'book' is closed, the circle is connected, but ready to spring apart again when the book is reopened to be re-read. I am using the dynamic form of the book opening and closing to explore the idea that a partial completion might be achieved by connecting with a person or a place.

Double sided photocopy on GF Smith Transclear white 150gsm,
19.6 x 27.6 cm (folded), 2022.

**THE FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS**



**THE FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS
BELONGS TO**

See Red
Angie Butler/ABPress

A lick of ink transferred onto the sheet, shifting packing, rising spaces.
Any 'errors' that are usually removed from a finished printed edition, have been left in: to reflect both our sense of urgency to get a tangible message out into the world and the importance of the printing press being the means to enable us. This work was inspired by Womens' Print Workshops of the 1970s and 80s. The press empowered women to learn new skills, forge relationships, and experiment with anti-hierarchical ways of working. Looking forward, the work questions where the freedom of the press belongs, can we be that freedom?

Printed letterpress on Awagami Bamboo 110gsm, 40 x 27 cm approx. (folded), 2022.



£5

See 1
but the 5 which can't be
in the bank of them

Big Card
Museum

Bank of England

By order of the Governor of the Bank of England

ABOLISH

Five
Pounds

£5R

Pounds

FIVE

5 5 5 5 5 5 5

05

**Abolish
Conway and Young**

2022, the year of the Platinum Jubilee - abolish the monarchy.

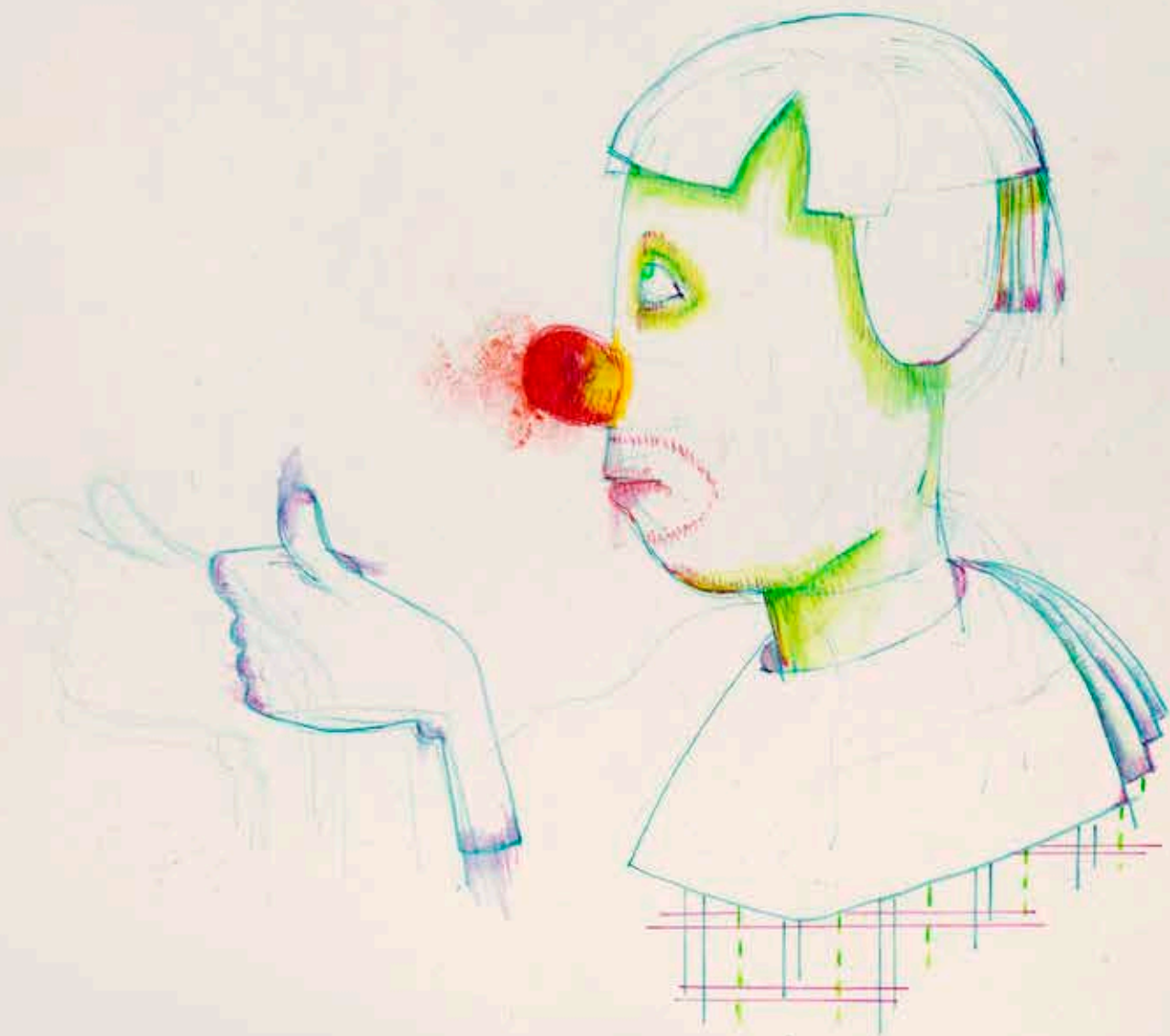
“Abolition is not absence, it is presence. What the world will become already exists in fragments and pieces, experiments and possibilities. So those who feel in their gut deep anxiety that abolition means knock it all down, scorch the earth and start something new, let that go. Abolition is building the future from the present, in all of the ways we can.”

Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Prison Abolition, 2019*.

Edition of 20 artists' prints £5 bank notes stamped with the demand 'abolish' over the queen's head, rubber stamp, permanent archival ink, 12.5 x 6.5 cm, 2022. Printed on 15 th August 2022, before the death of the queen.

Image displayed is a representation of bank notes described above and was made as an edition of 75 archive prints, Risograph print on A3 size 140gsm recycled cartridge paper, image: 16 x 30 cm, 2022.

<https://abolitionistfutures.com/latest-news/practising-everyday-abolition>



O6.1

Etruscan fool #15

Oona Grimes

The touchstone for these the spare, crayon drawings is post-war Neorealist cinema. These films were an antidote to Fascist-era national identity. Deleuze locates the power of the Neorealist cinematic image between reality and dream, the self and other. These drawings inhabit that same liminal space: The joke is written all over the face of the boundary-crossing Fool. The trickster embraces chaos and transgression, described by Italo Calvino: "...a moral personality fulfils itself traversing a ruthless nature or society."

Inkjet print on Somerset Photo Satin 300gsm, 21 x 29.7 cm, 2022.



06.2

La sorella di Gelsomina

Oona Grimes

The touchstone for these the spare, crayon drawings is post-war Neorealist cinema. These films were an antidote to Fascist-era national identity. Deleuze locates the power of the Neorealist cinematic image between reality and dream, the self and other. These drawings inhabit that same liminal space: The white brutalised face of a child, runs with snot and is blotched with cold - an anonymous but not forgotten child extra. An unknown player, without credit or lines of dialogue, who inhabits the background action.

Inkjet print on Somerset Photo Satin 300gsm, 21 x 29.7 cm, 2022.



Morlock Temple with Barlach Head**Karen Russo**

The departure point for *Morlock Temple with Barlach Head* (2015) is a set from George Pal's 1960 film adaptation of H.G. Wells' 1895 novel *The Time Machine*. While Pal topped his troglodyte's sacred site with a statue of a stylized sphinx, the work swaps out this mythological creature for an Expressionist commemoration of Germany's military dead, Ernst Barlach's bronze sculpture *The Floating Angel* (1927). In so doing, the work not only collapses the distance between different places and eras (Weimar Germany and Pal's 802,701 AD suburban London), but between the real world, and the realm of fiction.

Inkjet print on Fine Art Matt 315gsm, 41 x 29 cm, 2022.



Wrapped Up**Magda Stawarska-Beavan**

Cities tend to hide things, and have been known to keep difficult subjects secret for hundreds of years. Often at the point of great change when building work is almost completely covered up, wrapped in swathes of scaffolding, netting and fabric in order to make sure debris doesn't fall into the street, these secrets are inadvertently revealed. Flapping tarpaulins, long ropes curling in the wind, white dust and painful memories swirl about on the hot street. They tell the story of money, of power, of revenge intermingled with love and loss. Change forces everything into a fragile and lengthy state of flux.

Screenprint on Awagami Washi, Kitakata Green, 36gsm, 40 x 26.2 cm 2022.



Deep Time Dip
Liane Lang

Deep Time Dip is a photograph of a printed agate crystal. Millions of years of mineral deposits, fossilised water, creating the glass like surface. The foot is a cast made by the artist, of her own foot. Lived time, the blissful state of ecstatic being immerses itself in deep time, hinting at a future where we too will be a part of the fossil record, a thin slice of time.

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photorag Ultrasmooth, 305gsm, 400 x 280 mm, 2022.

HOW TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

Our suggestion for this commondifficulty project is to create a universal mindcarelayer via humanitythoughtcommunication.

Glossary

Commondifficultyproject:

An all-inclusive venture in which everyone takes equal, joyful responsibility.

Mindcarelayer:

A quiet, calm cloud of empathy and respect.

Humanitythoughtcommunication:

A non-defensive and open exchange of opinions and ideas.

I dream of a borderless future, where people will look back at the society we have today and question why we were so obsessed with difference.

Only through small challenges and disruptions to the status quo can positive change occur.

Gradually and quietly...

We will rely more on, and begin to use a different mode of communication, which will be closer to our human nature, and more true to ourselves.

This new mode of communication must allow us to listen to what others including animals and plants have to say.

We must learn to listen not from a perspective of what is useful for us, but from a perspective of what the interests of the other parties' lives really are.

We will be able to learn to listen to them through other means of communication such as rituals, energies, gestures, silence and sounds.

Through this listening, we will learn more about others as well as our own co-dependency with different organisms as well as their worlds.

In his 1989 book 'The Three Ecologies' Guattari describes how altering the ecology of human thought is necessary to alter our damaging relationship to the ecology of the natural world and that we cannot expect government structures to respond to the crisis.

In his 1974 photo book 'Tomorrows People' Sandford considers Glastonbury Festival as a model that society will naturally move towards, more collaborative, more open to nature and our own desires; not driven by capital.

I would seek self-organisation into groups in which care can be taken over each other and over our immediate surroundings. The new structures will be modest and rhizomic, akin to choirs, reading groups, gardening clubs, village pantomimes. In fact, Atwood has already invented this idea in her 2009 novel 'Year of The Flood' in 'God's Gardeners'. I believe that way lies hope.

✧ Abigail Reynolds

Re-Remembering our Future

'We are not separate from this Earth; we are a part of it, whether we fully feel it in our bodies yet or not'.

✧ Sharon Blackie, *If Women Rose Rooted*.

Advances in technology encourage us to strive to see beyond our human capabilities but these technologies are blind to the vastness within our sensory sphere.

Re-remembering the power of perception and attentiveness to the connections between all living beings and energies will provide the power to see, hear and feel our future world.

✧ Tracy Hill

A gate to the future
imprinted with your organs
See them float

Hanging from the ancient past
by the weak thread of justice
Like a figment of one and a picture
of the other

You will delight in your sins
Your trembling body will revenge
his anxiety

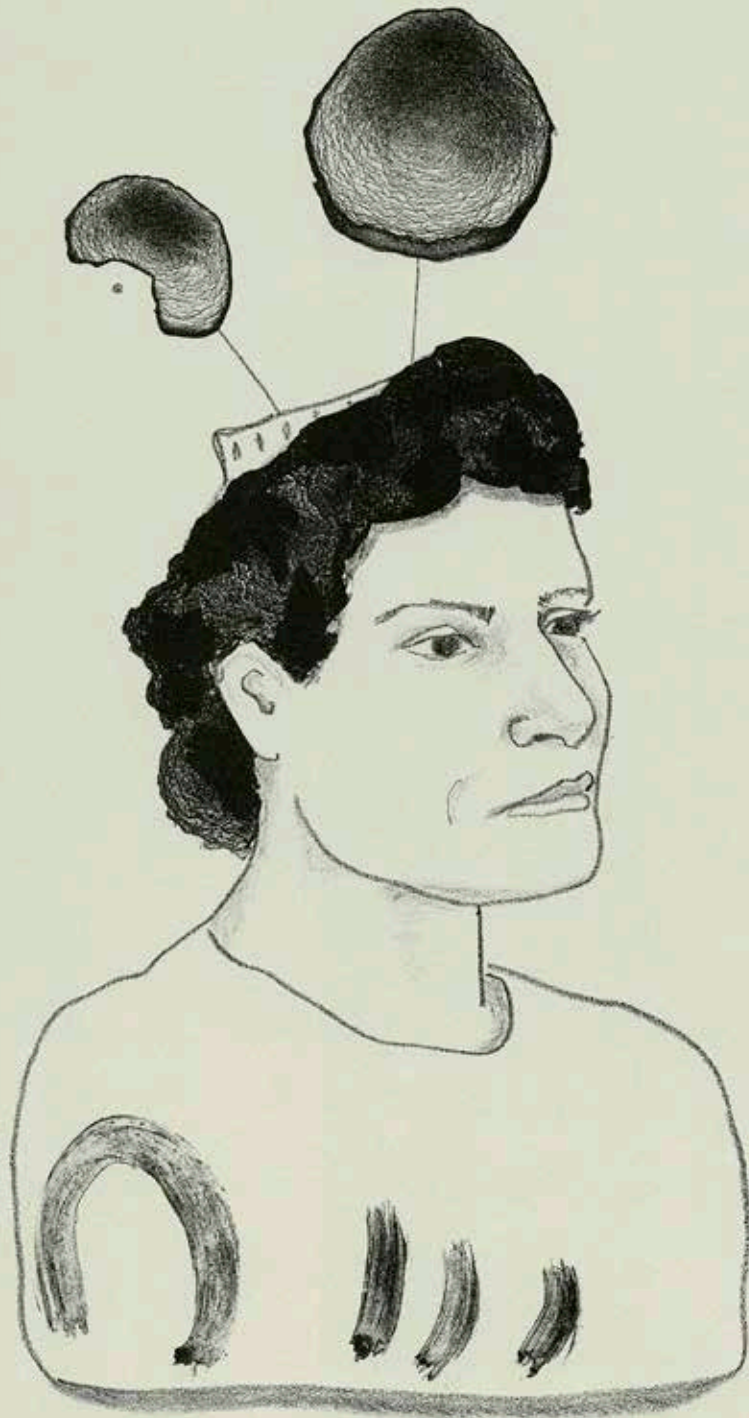
As a bright cry chants your virtue,
forever bearing you.

07

NAPCO ware - Aunty Bet
Catherine Ade

NAPCO (National Pottery Corporation, Ohio) produced a line of decorative vases in the 1950s and 60s depicting women. The figure's head is hollow to place flowers inside. Throughout history, women have been portrayed as decorative, passive objects and I wanted to make my own NAPCO version that tells a different story. My pot depicts my great aunt, Bet. Bet was 20 years old when World War II broke out and she spent it working at Euston Station in London. She worked there until retirement and was entirely self-sufficient in every sense. I placed some moon-like forms in her head, a symbol of feminine force.

Lithograph printed from one stone on BFK Rives Grey 300gsm paper,
21 x 30 cm, 2022.



13/25

NAPCO ware - Aunty Bet

Catherine Ade

Fly(A)way
A Hundred Words Home

They flew back noisily each year. A spectacle in the November sky. Nomads.
She could smell the warm salty air, and knew she was almost there. Seaweed. Refugees. Aliens. Welcome.
As the years passed, it took her longer and longer to find refuge. A Fish. Fish. Fish. Respite for aching wings.

Vulnerable.

Uncertain.

Anxious.

appeared.

ones

tired from

Her weary body,

landmarks disappeared and new ones appeared. Anticipation.

Her weary body, tired from

Familiar Her memory kept her going. Anticipation. Her weary body, tired from

Many years of making this journey, could not find a place to rest.

Anguish. Fear.

She flew around in circles in despair. Abandoned. She knew

this was no longer home. Defeat. Resignation.

Surrender.

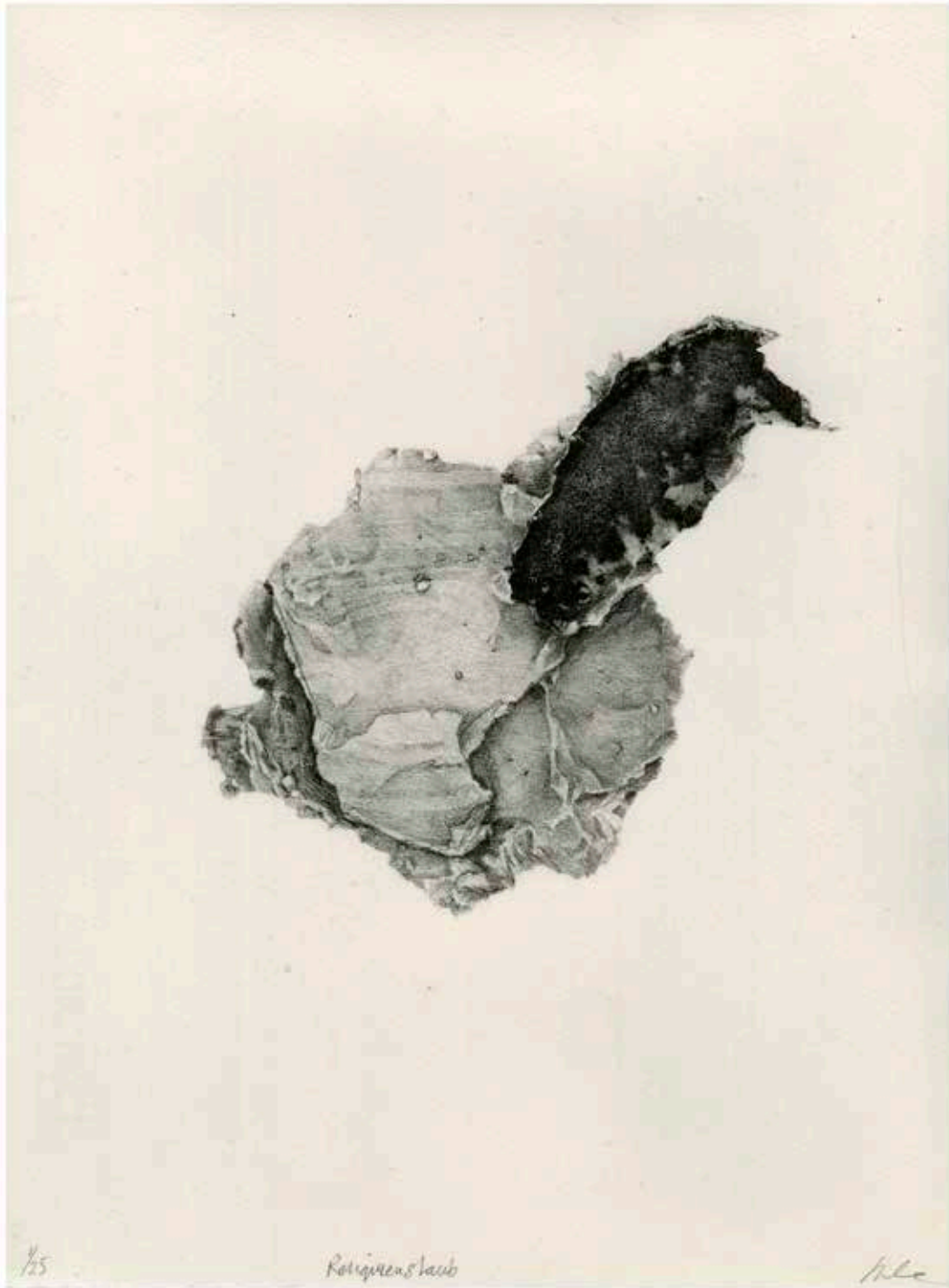
08

FLY(A)WAY

Huma Mulji

The Indus Flyway is the migratory route for Lesser flamingoes and hundreds of other bird species, from Siberia, across several mountain ranges, to the Indian Sub-Continent. Through the eighties and nineties, each year, sometime between October and March, I would watch the startling flamboyance of flamingoes, almost white on arrival, pink on departure, wallowing around the mangroves near Native Jetty, and around what is now the Mai Kolachi Road. They would come to Karachi in the winter months, like family and friends from abroad. Over the years the water bodies shrank, wetlands were polluted, the birds mercilessly trapped, and their sanctuary violated by development. Without alternative refuge, the Lesser flamingo population found other places to call home.

Riso print on 100gsm paper, 21 x 29.7 cm, 2022.



09

Reliquengartens
Johanna Love

A drawing of a particle of 15th Century reliquary dust.

The intense slowness, tangibility and closeness of drawing the image on stone lies in direct contrast to the speed, detachment and intangibility of the scientific technology that makes the dust visible. Different senses of time and matter come together, through observation and imagination, embalmed within the limestone's grainy surface – like a fossil.

Stone Lithograph on Somerset Satin 330gsm, 28 x 38 cm, 2022.



10

The Throne hall. Persepolis/Fragment
Koushna Navabi

The Throne hall. Persepolis/Fragment (2019) is one of a series of drawings representing shapes that refer to sexual organs, both real and imagined. The series began by tearing apart and drawing on the pages of glossy coffee-table books printed in the 1970s and 80s depicting ancient Iranian monuments and landscapes. The drawings on the ripped-out pages are mimicking an act of abuse.

The contrast between the drawing and its photographic background evokes a surreal ambiguity. Sexual organs hover menacingly, like a dream dark cloud, over an ancient landscape evoking the anxiety of belonging. The layers and layers of thin black lines appear like stitches of a textile work recalling the repetitive motions that brought them to life. The bright pops of colour play an evocative game of mischief and playfulness reminiscent of a childlike dream.

Inkjet print on Somerset Satin, enhanced 330gsm, 27 x 40 cm, 2022.

I am reduced to a thing that wants.

I composed a beautiful letter to you in the sleepless nightmare hours of the night, and it has all gone: I just miss you, in a quite simple deperate human way. You, with all your un-dumb letters, would never write so elementary phrase as that; perhaps you wouldn't even feel it. And yet I believe you'll be sensible of a little gap. But you'd clothe it in so exquisite a phrase that it would lose a little of its reality. Whereas with me it is quite stark: I miss you even more than I could have believed; and I was prepared to miss you a good deal. So this letter is just really a squeal of pain. It is incredible how essential to me you have become. I suppose you are accustomed to people saying these things. Damn you, spoilt creature; I shan't make you love me any the more by giving myself away like this - But oh my dear, I can't be clever and stand-offish with you: I love you too much for that. Too truly. You have no idea how stand-offish I can be with people I don't love. I have brought it to a fine art. But you have broken down my defences. And I don't really resent it.

Please forgive me for writing such a miserable letter.

Janice Kerbel

Inkjet print on Basildon Bond paper,
18.7 x 22.9 cm, 2022.

12

Replay (for Sophie Scholl)
Monika Oechsler

During the research for my film *Lieu de Memoire* (2015) I photographed several memorials dedicated to the Nazi resistance group the White Rose situated on the grounds of the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany. Mysteriously, a pair of women's vintage shoes were neatly placed on the edge of one of the memorial fountains. Branded 'Replay' I pondered if someone had lost, discarded or possibly left the shoes as a memento to Sophie Scholl.

Replaying, like recalling, is an act of remembrance and also a chance to reconsider and to rethink. Like a *mise en scene*, the placement of women's shoes on the memorial fountain conjures multiple scenarios. Yet perhaps it is the blanks of history, the gaps that cannot be filled in simply by a recall of facts that hold the most promise for a positive future. Giorgio Agamben suggested that 'living memory', that is a connection with the past in the present, transcends mere remembrance.

Inkjet print on Somerset Satin Enhanced 330gsm, 42 x 29.7 cm, 2022.



ELAINE,
LET'S GET
THE HELL
OUT OF
HERE

J.M.

ER/LXG

13

Come on Elaine!

Emily Lucas & Nick Grellier

(aka Lady V Pecker & Mary Ellen Johnson @bothlaughing)

The 'Elaine' poster refers to the double-bind that women artists are put in, illustrated by an anecdote concerning Abstract Expressionist artists Joan Mitchell and Elaine de Kooning.

At an art opening a man went up to the two artists and asked "What do you women artists think?" "Joan grabbed Elaine's arm and said "Elaine, let's get the hell out of here". Of course – all women must think exactly the same and are not given the same agency as artists (men) to have their own opinions. The poster makes reference to the difficulty of thinking about 'women artists', who have been overlooked, but do not want to be referred to as 'women artists', which immediately puts them into a category of 'not quite artists', a potentially less important, sub-section of artists.

Riso print on Redeem recycled paper 250gsm, 15 x 21 cm, 2022.



14

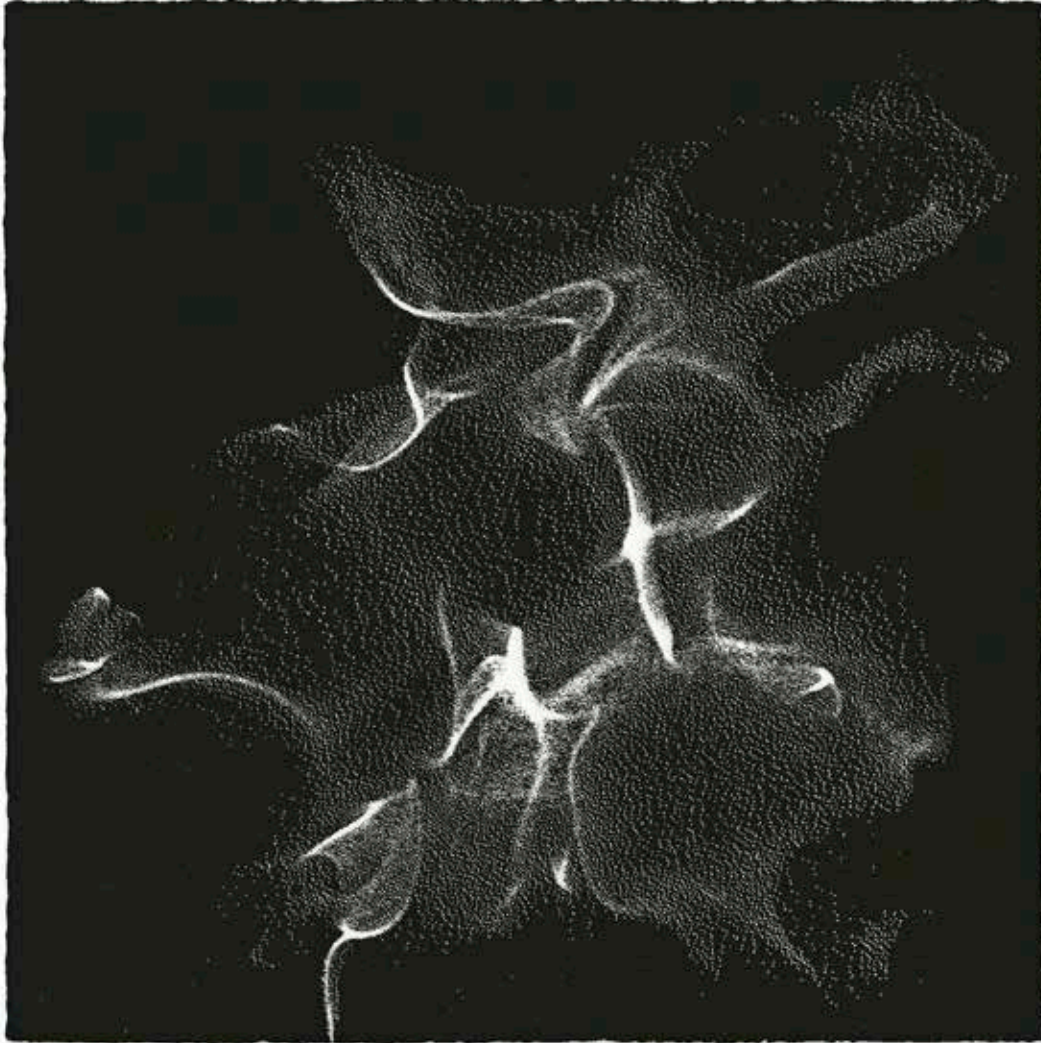
Baby Sapling
Sophy Rickett

Baby Sapling is part of a wider series of work *There it is, the Soil* (2022) is an installation of nine photographic works shown for the first time at Hestercombe House and Gardens, Somerset over the summer of 2022. The work also features a short-written text, presented in a booklet. Inspired by the restoration of Hestercombe House and Garden's Elizabethan Water Garden, *There it is, the Soil* explores soil as a medium for growth, for burial, for excavation, as a commodity, an element of the landscape, and a means of support, literally and metaphorically. The work also touches upon ideas around bereavement and loss.

Documentary images made on location at Hestercombe are combined with studio-based imagery, still lives, and fragments of wall text. Imaginary scenarios are also featured, referencing gardens in literature for example Mellors from *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm, 21 x 29 cm, 2022.

Archival inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm, 21 x 29 cm, 2022.

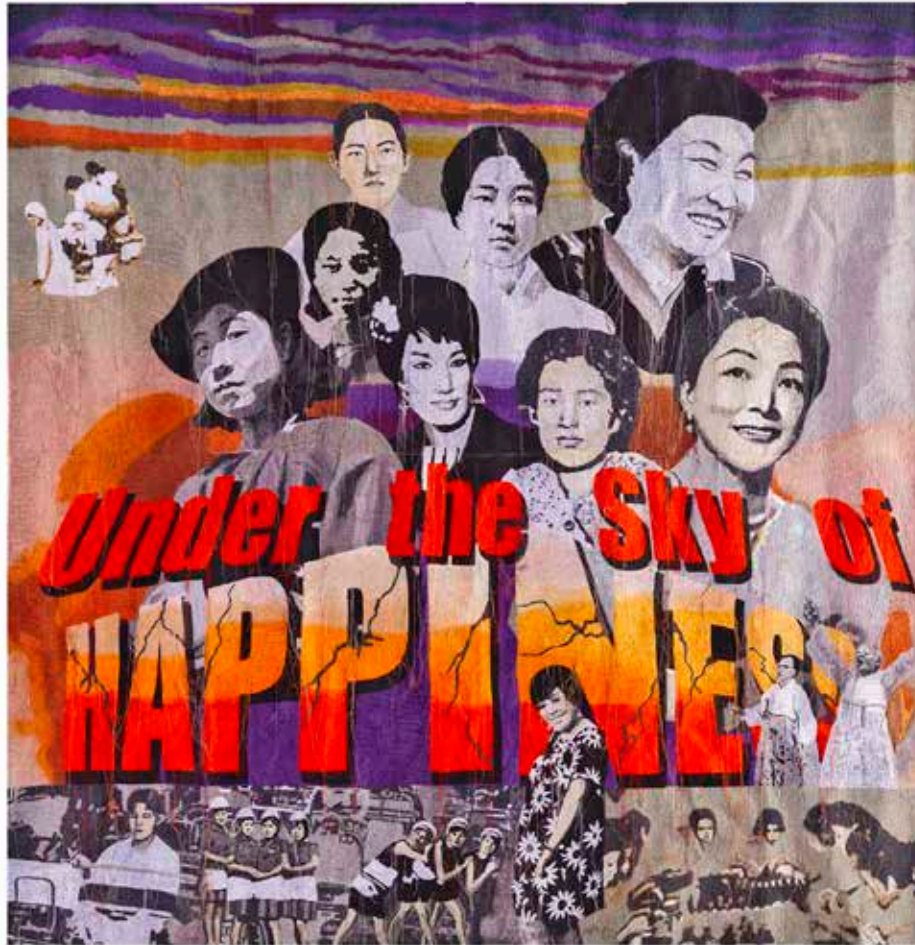


18

Centre Point
Tracy Hill

Centre Point explores the idea that the walking body is a porous and receptive threshold for receiving energy. Specifically, it considers what forces are present when crossing subterranean flowing water on foot. The imagery is created from GoPro footage of dowsing rod's (Hazel sticks) movement as the magnetic pull moves the rods at the point of crossing the centre point of the underground spring. The trace of the wood, touch of the hand and body movement are translated into a woodcut surface remapping the exchange of energy between the body and print surface.

Laser cut wood print, Charbonnel Aqua Wash ink on Awagami Bamboo Select paper 170gsm, 21 x 21 cm, 2022.



19

**Under the Sky of Happiness
Young In Hong**

My work promotes an idea of equality and its practice through art making. I work in different ways to expose dualism, understood as the tendency to create opposition between groups and individuals and to define the world through opposites.

I use the following methods:

Starting from small steps or gestures, I challenge the dualism embedded in historical narratives that we have been conditioned to accept. I cast doubt on the current capitalism's dominance that vigorously establishes dualistic divisions of labour, gender, and species.

HP Indigo digital print on 324gsm Mohawk Eggshell Superfine Ultra white,
20 x 20 cm, 2022.



Three Card Flush
Sammy Paloma

Divination works because it rends the veil of linear time. There's this moment where past, future and present are an amorphous blob of oil you are never not sinking into. You have to approach the blob without moving, or it will simply suck you in quicker. Bayo Akomolafe has this great saying that goes something like, "What if our attempts to solve the problem are part of the problem?" Control is the last thing the future needs of you. Every prepper out there should invest in a Tarot deck or some such. Divination works because it melts the forms of rational thought.

Linocut gouache and rice paste medium, print touched up by hand,
on 300gsm Cold Press Acid Free Watercolour paper, 21 x 29 cm, 2022.

AFTER THOUGHTS

DEAR SELF... BY ELEANOR DUFFIN

Dear future self, the best times are yet to come.

Right now it's hard to imagine next week, let alone ten years or even a hundred into the future. You hold so much in your headspace; what time to pick up the child from nursery, when to respond to that email about install dates for your next exhibition, how you make space to bring your elderly neighbour to the doctor, what the firing schedule is for that ceramic glaze you're testing out. It feels the tasks of day to day living leave very little room for the bigger questions, the ones you long to mull over as you untangle socks from jeans.

Last week, you learned that the word scim was an Irish word and not English, as you had always believed. You've used scim to describe a super fine layer that is created by the action of spreading thinly. You've obviously been misspelling the word skim and blended its meaning with a native word you learned when you were 5 years old. You read that in old Irish scim means a thin threshold to the "fairy" world or a succumbing to the supernatural through sleep. For a week now scim has niggled in the back of your brain. It describes so perfectly your current state of feeling stretched to the limit, living in some sort of in between place of alertness and dreaming, a place that feels really slippery. You wonder now if this is the place you will always occupy?

Perhaps scim is a word that could be used to describe seamlessly drifting between two places. You think of this in regards to looking backward and forwards simultaneously from this present moment. You remember your younger self, the person you were 10 years ago and how she still lives in you. She was rougher. Perhaps more prickly. Time has softened her edges, like the tide moving over rocks on a beach. She was raw, raw with emotion and fear. You look at her now and feel a longing to protect her. But she was shaping her place in the world with her unwavering enthusiasm and a blissful arrogance. She has grown into a place that doesn't feel so tight. What she was unaware of back then was that she was tuning into her womanhood. That right then was the moment it began. But it happened so subtly and over such a long time she didn't notice the changes. No one noticed it in her. Except you now, calling up this version of her.

Dear younger self, the best times are yet to come.

This younger self has been shaped by the women she befriended in the last 10 years and those she has never met who sing to her soul. She feels exceptionally grateful

to these people. They teach her many things. One woman tells her to stand in her power. She will always feel at odds with this but will learn through witnessing the strength of her friend. Another tells her to call into being the model of the art world she desires to practise in. To materialise her comrades in this world and to let go of any expectation to be accepted by the establishment. This will free her and allow her to breathe more slowly.

There is a friend of hers who lives life with a creativity she hasn't encountered before. A creativity that joins seamlessly with the souls of rocks and rivers. Another will teach her how to be more accepting and patient with those who don't think like her. Who will show her what loyalty and pure love looks like. There is a friend who has a depth and wisdom she is in awe of, who is a very old soul and has lived life multiple times in multiple universes. There is a woman who she has still yet to know who is quietly watching over her and nudging her softly away from the rocks in order to give her some respite from herself.

Ten years from then is now. You gather the love for those women who have shaped your idea of how a person should be.

Imagine the person you will be in 10 years. What do you wish for yourself? Do you hope to be more knowing? Will you find a voice that doesn't shy from speaking up when burning thoughts arise? Will you be more authentic and learn to ask for help when needed? Do you think you'll know your limits and when to prioritise your own care above others? Will you love ferociously? Have you learned to stop second guessing your decisions? Do you think the work you will make will be for you and not to the expectations of others? Will you be standing in the borders, in a place that allows you to gain a perspective of multiple positions and allow more fluidity? Will you see aspects of yourself in the younger ones that circle your life? Will you strive to support them in finding their power and learn from them how to be less judgemental? Will you continually be in flux but comfortable in this position of becoming the person you hope for yourself?

Dear self, the best times are yet to come.

How to be in the Future is the 2023 iteration of **the Salon for a Speculative Future** a platform for the creative exchange of artistic research and an ongoing project curated by Monika Oechsler in celebration of Women's History Month.

How to be in the future:

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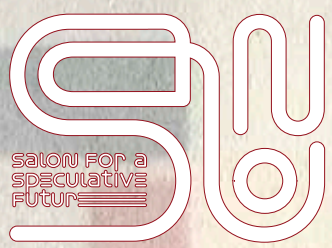
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