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VOLUME ONE:

# ... like a short cut through the brambles

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# **CHAPTER ONE.**

## **INTRODUCING COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2023:**

# DIRECTOR'S WELCOME: BY RYAN HUGHES

Publishing has been a significant feature of Coventry Biennial's activities for as long as Coventry Biennial has had activities!

The edited volume that is on your screens, or in your hands if you've been fortunate enough to get hold of one of the highly limited print copies, is the inaugural issue of a new series that is being produced alongside Coventry Biennial 2023.

Similarly to the small *Communiqués* that we produced in 2021, this new series is a place for artists' projects, texts by our team, by our partners and from within our networks. They are a place for knowledge production and exchange. They are a place for sharing ideas and they are an insight into the process of thinking through and making the fourth Coventry Biennial.

The Biennial this year is called ... *like a short cut through the brambles*. We hope that these publications will act as a kind of gap cut into the metaphorical brambles that provides uninterrupted access, a view into, and a sense of clarity on our programmes.

In this first volume you'll find texts by our curators, Aneka French, Dr. Ian Sergeant and myself as well as a number of conversations that members of our team have had with artists and their collaborators who will be presenting projects in our exhibitions later this year.

We are also presenting a chapter dedicated to *Mothers Who Make a Garden*, an innovative co-created

project that was started earlier this year and is designed to support artists who are mothers to grow a space that responds to their needs. In that chapter is a short text by project co-ordinator Adele Mary Reed, a photo-essay by Sinéad Patching and a conversation between Assistant Curator Emily Gardner and gardener and mother Alice Wood.

We're also delighted to re-publish a zine by Warwickshire-based artist Janet Tryner that we published this spring, extending the project's reach to an audience who might not have been able to see the original limited edition.

All of the materials included in this edited volume have been produced while our team have been *Developing Coventry Biennial 2023*. This has been an Arts Council England funded programme of research, development and activity delivery that has prepared us, our partners and the communities that we're working with for the year ahead. We hope that the texts, images and projects included here help you to prepare for the upcoming Coventry Biennial.

To that end the first things included in this volume are a curatorial statement and a poem by Coventry-based poet and activist Antony Owen. They will give you an initial insight into what is to come. They will help you to begin to engage with some of the conversations and ideas included here.

Welcome.



Alice Channer  
*Megaflora*

Sand-cast Aluminium  
2021

Courtesy: Alice Channer



Janet Tryner  
*Untitled*

Made during the observation of waste material.

Digital Photograph  
2023

Woodlands, Warwickshire

Photo: Janet Tryner

# CB23 CURATORIAL STATEMENT:

*... like a short cut through the brambles* will take place from 6th October 2023 until January 2024 in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Across Coventry Biennial 2023 artists and their many collaborators interrogate humankind's relationship to the world around us. Starting with the broad themes of place, the human condition and the intersection of these, the fourth Coventry Biennial will present a series of exhibitions, events and activities in museums, galleries, historic buildings and public locations.

Focusing on deep time, the mythological and the ground-level, a number of projects explore what is or might be right under our feet. Water becomes a recurring theme. In a city that is about as far from the sea as you can get in the United Kingdom, artists are asking questions about access to water, local and global water infrastructures and the implications and impacts of living on islands. Likewise, what is extracted from the earth is a common thread across the fourth Coventry Biennial, with investigations into petrocultures, guano, geology and waste materials. What can and should be added to our public spaces is a significant area of enquiry and action across a number of socially engaged projects encompassing portraiture, storytelling and the cultivation of urban gardens.

Buried, flowing, growing. Rising, extracted, discarded. Our relationships to the world around us are dense and tangled. Throughout

the fourth Coventry Biennial artists remind us of this. *... like a short cut through the brambles* they take us by the hand and lead us, cautiously.

Our title is drawn from a line of poetry by Antony Owen, a Coventry-based poet and activist. As a title for our Biennial, this half line of poetry acts as an open-ended provocation that connects deeply to the work that our artists are making and asks questions about belonging, protest and survival in a complex world. The title might suggest danger or risk but is also emblematic of freedom, navigation and a close engagement with the natural world.

We are delighted to introduce the Coventry Biennial 2023 artists:

**A History of Frogs**

**Can Altay**

**Ania Bas**

**Phoebe Boswell**

**Alice Channer**

**Jo Gane**

**Clémence Lollia Hilaire**

**Ikon Youth Programme**

**Seungwon Jung**

**Yva Jung**

**Dinh Q. Lê**

**Paul Lemmon & Graeme Macdonald**

**Rene Matic**

**Mothers Who Make & Alice Wood**

**Jem Southam**

**Janet Tryner**

**IT IS SNOWING IN NARNIA AGAIN**  
*FOR DOUGLAS GRESHAM*  
**BY ANTONY OWEN**

Below the marble carpenter a scruffy boy knelt  
his frayed jumper ragged as his mother's breath  
god grants boys like this coats only men can carry.

I picture the wrought iron latch moaning for him.  
He enters the door of his house to a priest drinking tea,  
hot towels breathing from a rush dressed doctor.

For boys like him it is snowing in Narnia again.  
I picture his mother's fur coat covered in snow  
blowing into the mink black shadowlands.

I think of the great creator weeping for what made him,  
those three years, each one a day of beautiful rest.  
Grief snags the heart **like a short cut through the brambles.**

For men like him it is snowing in Narnia again,  
that last year with the holy ghosts of winter breath  
talking to her son of God and how he makes orphans.

I picture death as a lamppost flickering in Narnia.  
In veins of fallen leaves her poems recite to the wind,  
sun is mane, and mice gnaw ropes so they can climb back to  
Aslan.

The snow is thawing in Narnia again.  
There are no statues.

**CHAPTER TWO.**

**MOTHERS WHO MAKE A  
GARDEN:**

# AN INTRODUCTION TO MOTHERS WHO MAKE A GARDEN: BY ADELE MARY REED

*Mothers Who Make a Garden* was conceived in the winter of 2022/2023 between myself, Alice Wood and Coventry Biennial colleagues in response to the themes of the upcoming Biennial programme, from a joy of flower gardens, and for a longing for more beauty in the city centre from the point of view of being both a mother and an artist.

The project asks the questions:

*“How welcoming is the city to our care-giving and artist-dreaming needs? What do we require from a beautiful, accessible city centre garden?”*

Mothers from the region have been involved in a collaborative dreaming of what the garden will look and feel like, producing artworks for a zine, planting dahlia tubers in preparation for summer, sharing seeds and favourite flowers.

Urban gardening and the subject of growing on disused land is highly topical at the moment as we try and cling on to the health of our humanity. Biodiversity is constantly crumbling under building redevelopment and concrete. We are planning for a space where friendships can grow alongside plants, artworks can be made, people can tend to the cultivation at their own pace, rest, find inspiration and have no expectations put upon them, perhaps offering an antithesis to other areas of their care-giving lives.

The garden will ultimately be for everybody in the city who feels that as humans we should be allowed more natural beauty, more blooms, more colour, more insects, less work, more peace. So all of our local creativity can flourish, so we have the opportunities to dream.

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Over the following pages are a collection of materials produced during the initial dreaming period of the *Mothers Who Make a Garden* project, including a photo-essay by Coventry-based artist-mother Sinéad Patching and a conversation between Alice Wood and our Assistant Curator Emily Gardner.

Alongside this journal, we have published a limited edition, collaboratively produced zine called *Mothers Who Make a Garden: The Dreaming* that highlights the work that Mothers Who Make members have produced over the past months.

Copies can be requested by emailing [info@coventrybiennial.com](mailto:info@coventrybiennial.com) (while stock lasts).



Alice Wood  
*Garden*

Digital Photograph  
2023

Coventry

Courtesy: Alice Wood

# AN INTERVIEW WITH ALICE WOOD: BY EMILY GARDNER

**EG: How did the collaboration between yourself and Mothers Who Make come about?**

AW: I'm from Coventry originally and I lived here until I was 18. After I left I lived in London for over 10 years and moved back in 2018 with my daughter who was then a toddler. I didn't know all that many people when I arrived and Adele and I were introduced by our mutual friend Sapphire; they're both photographers who were aware of each other through Instagram and Sapphire was totally right in thinking that we'd get on. Adele and I have known each other for maybe two years or so now.

I'd been in Coventry for just over a year when Covid arrived and I was furloughed from my job working in recruitment; it was the first break I'd had in a really long time, certainly since I became a garden-owner and I was really keen to do some work that meant I was outside as much as possible. Turning the garden from a concrete nightmare into a really happy space full of flowers felt like a wonderful use of that spring and summer. During that time, I saw, as many people did, a real sense of community developing on mine and the surrounding streets which I loved!

So many of the people I chatted to seemed genuinely interested in the work I was doing to my front garden and it got me thinking that there may be a real appetite for some sort of communal garden space; I'd come across a few articles about community gardens and wondered if we could make one in our streets. I identified a few spaces and started

contacting people but nobody really came back and I was really struggling to find anywhere.

One day I was talking to Adele about the idea and she mentioned that she'd love to make a garden too and suggested we talk to the Biennial.

Adele had the idea of creating it through the group that she facilitates in Coventry, Mothers Who Make, and *Mothers Who Make a Garden* was born with me on board as gardener and Adele masterminding! It's really great to be working with Coventry Biennial because it means we can open the project up to bigger audiences and from a work load point of view it wouldn't be possible to do it without a group effort. Working together I'm hopeful that really amazing things can happen.

I think the collaboration will work really well because it combines many elements of making a beautiful garden including building a place where people can go to sit and be and enjoy some green space, maybe learning about gardening and increasing biodiversity in a very urban area, with something that artists can respond to and be inspired by. It feels quite holistic to have us all working on the garden together.

**EG: Can you tell me about your past experience with gardening?**

AW: We had a garden as well as an allotment when I was a kid and my dad was always quite interested in what you can do with land and how it can be used to cultivate different crops.

The allotment was left to brambles and fruit trees because he made wine and wanted to grow blackberries; another part was used to grow grape vines which take a lot more effort and planning, and a different type of work. He was really into figuring out how to grow vines because they don't easily grow here and that was an interesting puzzle to solve. Plus we had chickens!

I had always gardened when I lived in London so I have been gardening with varying degrees of success for maybe around 12 years. At first I had a tiny balcony with barely any light in Bethnal Green, and then a larger roof terrace in Stoke Newington which was still tiny but was a lot more open and where I managed to grow a lot in a very small space. When we moved to Coventry I was really excited to have an actual garden for the first time.

When we moved in the garden was a patio with a couple of really retro looking conifers, so nothing special at all. I spent the first year hanging out in it a bit, figuring out where the light was and how we wanted to use it. When lockdown happened, Phoebe was three and we had a lot of spare time on our hands so needed a project! That turned out to be making some raised beds, chopping down the shrubs we had and replanting with a lot of flowers!

We made a really lovely garden to be in and it was a really nice thing to do together.

**EG Why do you think it's important for a garden like this to exist within Coventry city centre?**

AW: I think that one of the things that really struck me when I moved back and was highlighted when Adele and I were thinking of potential sites

in the city centre, is just how municipal it feels and how little green space there is. Coventry city centre is obviously very urban but more so than other cities; it felt like there is a real lack of space where a person can escape buildings and sit within nature. It can sometimes feel a little gloomy and depressing.

The site that we may well end up using for the garden is particularly unloved at the moment and there's almost a feeling of, why would anyone look after this space? It's really not cared for and I think that has potentially helped to perpetuate a cycle of neglect. I hoped that if we could pay attention to the space, transform it into a place of beauty and crucially, open it up for people to use, it might be somewhere that morphs from a kind of horrible place to a really lovely area. I think that having a physical space that a person can see and experience, with bees and butterflies whizzing around and birds singing is a really sensory experience that will help people to engage with the area but also with the possibilities for other spaces.

**EG: From where are you drawing inspiration for the garden?**

AW: We're drawing inspiration from a few places and I think that mine and Adele's styles and influences will be reflected as the garden starts to take shape. I guess my main influences come from books and literature, as well as visiting gardens and taking inspiration from there. There's some lovely gardens around the Midlands including one of my favourites which is Hidcote. I love the planting there but actually wonder if I should be slightly appalled at my taste because one of the other gardens that I love, which is a totally different style, is Derek Jarman's garden at Prospect Cottage in Dungeness on the Kent



Alice Wood  
*Gardens at Hidcote*

Digital Photograph  
2022

National Trust Hidcote, Chipping Campden

Courtesy: Alice Wood



coast. He was a really amazing gardener, and that garden is glorious, but he used to call Hidcote 'hideous-cote' because he thought it was really boring.

There's another garden over the road from Hidcote called Kiftsgate, which is really inspirational because it's been built, designed and maintained by three generations of women for over a century. It's always been their garden and the oldest parts are seriously beautiful.

I've also been reading a lot over the past year or so about the Bloomsbury set and the art that was coming out of Vanessa Bell's house, Charleston. I had found out more about her and Virginia Woolf's gardens, as well as Sissinghurst which was owned by their friend, and Virginia's lover, Vita Sackville West. All three gardens are incredibly romantic in feel and, particularly in the case of Sissinghurst, there was an emphasis on colour and flowers which is something I think Adele and I are also keen to focus on.

A lot of the gardens I love and am inspired by are the gardens of writers or artists who also happen to have a passion for gardening and I think that intersection really makes sense generally, as well as within the context of our garden which is of course also an arts garden in some ways.

**EG: I know that you are keen that this isn't a garden that grows produce. Can you tell me a bit about that?**

AW: I think that the garden will contain some plants which are usually grown for produce; so we're thinking about kale and chard to add colour and also what we can use over the winter to keep the garden interesting

when most plants have stopped flowering. I suppose though, that even with that in mind, the garden is ultimately hopefully going to be a place of inspiration and contemplation in which individuals, artists and groups will have their own responses too. I think that if we were to create a working garden it could take away that emphasis. In a way, maybe it's easier to have a reflective garden if there's not that expected output from it?

We also consciously want the garden to be as rich and colourful as possible and from an aesthetic point of view there's only so much that you can do with vegetables. We also thought that there is quite a lot happening already around gardening to produce food and we wanted to see if we could offer something that complemented that to show how gardens can be further used and enjoyed.

**EG: There are a lot of similarities between gardening and parenting, aren't there?**

AW: Yes, there absolutely are similarities and obviously both parenting and gardening both have huge elements of nurturing and watching growth which is lovely. I think as well though that parenting can be so all encompassing both practically and emotionally and whilst there are certainly similarities, gardening can also provide moments of calm and reflection that don't naturally factor in lots of people's lives, whether that be because of work commitments, kids, caring responsibilities or any number of other components that make up a busy life.

Also, so much of what gardening means to people is drawn from memories from when they were young

and is oftentimes how they've connected with certain people in their lives like their parents and grandparents. Most people who I know who garden have not been formally trained but have been taught by someone in their family. That sharing of skills and connecting to different generations is really important.

**EG: Can you tell me about your work with the Hub to date and what you've got planned over the coming months?**

AW: So far we've had a dreaming workshop which was a chance for me to meet a few of the other mothers in the group. It was a really wonderful session where we all sat and chatted about what gardens mean to us, influences, our memories of gardens, and our inspirations whilst we drew or made collages and embroidered. It was really lovely to have uninterrupted time dedicated to making which I valued so much.

Then we had a dahlia planting workshop at Herbert Art Gallery & Museum which was more practical; we planted the tubers that we'll eventually plant in the garden and it was a communal learning experience which I hugely enjoyed. One extra nice part of that day was that we each took a couple of dahlia babies home to look after and nurture until they're big enough to be planted out which ties in really nicely with Mothers Who Make. We have a WhatsApp group where we can share advice and ask questions and it's turning into a whole collaborative process between the women who took part where we're all learning and communicating.

We've got a raised bed building workshop coming up where we will learn some more skills in readiness for

being able to start work on the garden when we have a site. Everybody's inputting something and everybody has a voice. It feels like a really organic way for us all to learn more.

Once we have the space, we'll be able to figure out what the individual considerations are for the site and start clearing it. Hopefully we will be able to work in partnership with other organisations for this.

And then we'll start making the garden itself! It feels like there will be a slow build up with steady preparation and then it'll be all hands on deck! First up will be to measure and start to plan how many beds we're going to have and build them, ordering soil, and developing how it will ultimately look including considerations around where we want places for people to be able to sit and where we want pots or beds, or climbing plants and so on.

**EG: How will the garden continue to have a life after CB23?**

AW: We hope that we can find a way to portion elements of the garden out to different groups. There's so much potential for it to be dispersed in a really authentic way across the community including potentially donating the beds and plants as well as thinking about how we can harvest any seeds or produce. We're hoping that artists will respond to the garden in different ways which will of course leave a legacy, and also that we can inspire people to look out for and perhaps create other green spaces for people to enjoy.

**A PHOTO-ESSAY.**

**MOTHERS WHO MAKE A GARDEN  
DAHLIA PLANTING WORKSHOP:**

**BY SINÉAD PATCHING**





















## **CHAPTER THREE.**

**who blew the leaves**

**BY ANNEKA FRENCH**

## **Bone**

A chair leg made a choice. It had to. It gave birth and watched as tiny golden ferns crept slowly along it, blooming in spirals. There was always the threat of them being carried away, of course, but the chair leg tried to shake it off.

The bones and fragile bodies are stored away safely in plastic crates. Can you see them? I tip the dust from the bottom of the tea bag box into the bin. The bags keep on bursting, scattering ashes across my drink, across my skin. A fingertip in the crate. Can I touch it? Is it sharp?

I visit the cemetery and try to catch a fly in my hand.  
I visit the art school and try not to fall over.  
All those boxes make me feel sick.

An Alsatian with a muzzle waits on the station platform. Another Alsatian eats rich tea finger biscuits through a chain-link fence, hand-fed by a small translucent girl with a soft skeleton. And another train, impossibly luxurious waits at the platform, lit from within by hundreds of white table lamps, silver service, manual windows, chased down by a man who has forgotten his wallet.

How can the bones disappear from your arm? he asks. Magic, I say.

A plastic bag is caught upside down on the branches. Whipping. Its shape like a droid from the seventies; white with a red stripe. I wonder if it is still there. Stuck in place. Thick. A crow on green grass.

## **Rock**

Wimpey No-fines. Shells cast in situ, quick sticks, long before Alexa came with her bifold doors. Before your time. Bone becomes space becomes cast becomes rock becomes lost becomes plastic becomes spectacle. No fine aggregates. I stand underneath the tail and try to remember what it looked like last time. When he was young. What it felt like.

His trousers laid out ready for the morning that didn't come. Rough wool and wooden bowls. A short scramble. A combat roll. She sent the wrong size trousers for him, Gromit, and following a series of awkward WhatsApp messages where I worried (deeply) about offending her (deeply), she sent the wrong colour instead.

Rocks emerge from the screen, from his mouth. Purple amethyst and Fool's Gold. I wonder if they are actually disappearing into it. Emerge and submerge. Dive down. Swallow.

I try not to breathe in the dead things that float in the air. As a rule. Try not to pick up that wet slippery chicken. Chicken on floor, he says. Chicken in mouth. With charcoal, shell and salt. Clinker and clay.

We walk barefoot.

## **Glass**

Walk along the cemetery wall. One step, two step ... but get no closer. It's like a dream except I'm awake. I keep walking. The brambles follow me down the hill. I'm so tired. Have you read this?

A cut. The cut.  
A face in the glass.

We are asked to play with mirrors and seeds. I put seven seeds in my palm. Some of them are painted; most of them are browned with a ridge down their longest edge. They look like the extracted teeth in a photograph that I saw and have tried to forget. The teeth have roots that are too large. They are too pink. I realise that the seeds were in someone else's mouth before being spat out. I put them back on the mirror and I think about the way that flavours taste like temperatures and how music makes you cry. I want my sanitiser though I don't want to be rude and try not to touch anything else while making small talk.

I book a room. The four-poster is made of mirrored glass, with a transparent coffee table accompaniment. It was supposed to be mine except they double-booked it with the bride and then blamed me.

We walk around the grounds, find the pond. We spring door locks and crocuses, pick our favourite stars from the dark. We practice our letters and sound things out. We lie on a bed of nails and the sand is lurid.

## **Water**

I am embarrassed about certain things, like when the water is dyed slightly blue. Taglia unica. Squeeze it all out. Like, when my horse arms don't work and are ready for the ground. Like when I try to escape from the window that isn't there. Slip through the fence and right into the silver liquid beyond. They bought a book about brains, brains belonging to Lovelace and Einstein. It wasn't what they thought it was. What did they think it was? What did you think it was?

Your body is made of water and meat. Our neighbour has his dry cleaning delivered weekly even though he is dead. The gardeners, who blew the leaves around, don't come any more. Which is a shame.

My dress was covered with brightly coloured parrots as the pirate put his hand on my back. I wonder if I did the right thing.

That kid that punches other kids in the stomach and the face, especially at parties. That kid that poured his drink over another kid's head. That kid that spits and was then cast as a camel in the school nativity. Do we have to invite him to yours?

Swimmin'.

The impossibility of a swan, of a dolphin, of snow. The impossibility of a shower positioned in a courtyard and fronds of seaweed that swell with the current, reaching out with their giant floating limbs. The possibility of a rope; of a single thread that binds everything together fragrantly.

The possibility of a rope at the end of the tunnel.

**CHAPTER FOUR.**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH SEUNGWON  
JUNG:**

**BY ANNEKA FRENCH**

**AF: Your background is in photographic practice. Can you explain how you have come to work in the medium of textiles in recent years? How do the two areas influence each other?**

SJ: I was trained as a photographer and a lot of my works still begin from a photographic image. In the beginning I simply wanted to find a way to put these somewhat different mediums together – partially from the frustration of photography and partially from my desire to create something more physical, tactile and haptic. This is when I first started to print photographic images on the surface of woven fabrics. It was a purely intuitive decision and I wasn't thinking much about how the two mediums have a similar nature and share the same structure in many ways.

As I started to think more about the materiality and nature of the mediums I'm using in my practice, I tried to understand my work as the point of intersection. Digital images are formed by accumulated grids of pixels. The basic structure of woven materials are the same – they rely on a system of threads crossing each other at right angles, formed by gridded interactions between the warp and the weft. Photography and textiles share the same back room of the grid and both grids support the production of images.

When I first learned how to hand weave everything started to make more sense. To see how a single strand of thread completes itself into a cloth through the weaving of warp

and weft was intriguing and mind blowing. I related this process to digital imagery, pixels and photography, and that's when I started to transpose photographic images into weavings and tapestries. Now I feel like it was an inevitable choice to work with these two mediums together.

**AF: How do you make choices about the photographic images you work with?**

SJ: When I'm working on a project that stems from something more intimate and personal such as *Kyung Ae* (2016) or *Memories Full of Forgetting* (2017-2018), most of the time the image comes to me (as opposed to myself selecting images) and that's how the project starts, develops and ends. There is an image that speaks to me and I have less control over my choices, even though this still may be my unconscious decision making. It's more intuitive and a consequence of my layers of emotions.

When it comes to projects that are more based on information and fact such as *Digital Strata* (2018-2019) I go through a small image archive of mine. I've accumulated an archive of photographs that is hard to categorise, standardise or organise. (I personally think a lot of artists are but I'm a serious image hoarder!) These images include photographs from daily life, research images, images from books, films and artworks. Going through these images feels like diving into my unconsciousness/consciousness. For projects that are based on

Seungwon Jung  
*Quarry #4 (Detail)*

Digital photograph woven into fabric, digital Jacquard woven tapestry  
2020

Courtesy: Seungwon Jung

information, the photograph becomes the draft of the tapestry. I consider the transformation and transposition from photograph to textile more than my personal connections or emotions. It's definitely more controlled and methodical.

**AF: Can you tell me more about the research and technical processes you go through when you create a work such as the hand knotted tapestry *Barstow Formation* (2020)?**

SJ: I was looking into a type of fold called anticline in structural geology that is an arch-like shape and has its oldest beds at its core. The hand knotted tapestry *Barstow Formation* starts from a photograph of an anticline exposed in Barstow, California. Starting from a digital image of geological strata, I use software to generate a textile pattern which is a colour coded, pixelised image map. According to this textile pattern I then make a hand knotted tapestry. A pixel transforms as a cell of a textile pattern, then as a knot of a rug. I love how my personal time and labour weaves into geological layers through this process and how the impossibly vast natural event can render at a domestic scale. I spend weeks or months finishing these hand knotted tapestries. The repetitive process is meditative but at the same time very frustrating and slow. I think this frustration really parallels how big cosmic events and nature can make our everyday affairs appear trivial and pointless. This process makes me honour and appreciate mediocrity and slowness.

**AF: Your embroidered photographic series *Kyung Ae* (2016) is quite distinctive within your practice and on your website, different in process and subject to your newer works. Please can you describe this series?**

SJ: *Kyung Ae* is a series about my nan Kyung Ae which also means 'love and respect' in Korean. At that time she was diagnosed with early dementia. Even though I didn't have a close relationship with her when I was young, we spoke more often and spent a lot of time together as I grew older when I started to see the wounds in our family, especially my mum and nan, and started to understand the complexity of the family relationship. *Kyung Ae* is a work that started from my desperation to understand her. I had a difficult relationship with my nan for a long time so this piece began from a distanced observation and developed into a somewhat co-created, collaborative piece. I collected images of her personal effects and photos from old albums – evidence and traces of her life – and printed these on fabric. Reflecting on her life through these objects and images, I asked her to grab strands of threads, as much as she relates to each of them. Each piece of work was hand embroidered during the time I spent with her. I still have the audio recordings and videos from this project that I took for my personal records. It's a meaningful work for me. It does feel like the beginning of everything – what I am still continuing in my current works, exploring time/space and creating tangible representations of intangible layers.



Seungwon Jung  
*Fault Line*

Hand knotted tapestry based on digitally generated pattern, digital print on fabric  
2022

Courtesy: Seungwon Jung



Seungwon Jung  
*Digital Strata #6 (Detail)*

Giclee print, textile pattern generated from software  
2019

Courtesy: Seungwon Jung

**AF:** Can you explain how you approach the subject of time? As you say, it's a subject which is foregrounded within your work in a wide sense.

**SJ:** This is a very difficult question for me, even though as you mentioned, it is the foreground of my work overall. I've recently noticed that most of my works begin from looking at the past. I don't necessarily perceive time as linear but I think for a long time observing the 'passing of time' and looking into the past was how I restored my relationship with the present. Now I try to see time as more fluid. I try to see myself on a rocking boat (present), slowly drifting out to sea, riding the tide, back and forth – future, past, present and again present, past and future.

**AF:** What would you say are your hopes for the future of your practice?

**SJ:** Thinking about the future used to give me a lot of anxiety but I'm slowly starting to feel calm about it and see things more clearly. For my future works, I want to reflect more on the precarity of time and the world in which we're living. I've recently started new projects focusing on environmental climate changes. It could seem like a leap from my previous projects but for me it feels natural as it's so tightly related to time. I'm also reassessing my practice in terms of sustainability and material choices. I want to be fully aware of the weight of the world that I'm participating in and be responsible for it.



**CHAPTER FIVE.**

**WHAT IS THE POINT?:**

**BY DR IAN SERGEANT**

Reading the newspapers these days makes me wonder why so many of the articles are negative stories of war, murder, hate, disease and disaster. I do not have television, so I do not watch TV news and I do not listen to the news on the radio. I source my news and information differently these days. However, it is argued *“that negative news coverage of politically relevant social issues stimulates political participation by shaping citizen awareness of collective problems and interest in politics. By drawing citizen attention to social problems that the government may attend to, the press acts as a sentinel for the mass public, cuing them to periods when participation is more important”* (Martin 2008).

Presently, as a nation, many of us are experiencing the hardships of the so-called *“cost of living crisis”* (Patrick and Pybus 2022), and having to make tough decisions between *“eating and heating”*. Public sector workers, who only a couple of years ago were being applauded weekly for their heroic efforts at the height of the pandemic have resorted to strike action to increase their salary and improve their working conditions. Some are even having to resort to using foodbanks to provide for themselves and their families. In stark contrast, UK businesses such as British Gas and Shell (Lawson, A 2023) post multiple billion-pound profits.

This begs the question, what is the point of companies like British Gas and Shell posting excessive profits, if the nation’s citizens do not share the

benefits in some way? Furthermore, what was the point of applauding nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers during the pandemic, if they are not then rewarded for putting their lives at risk and even saving the life of Boris Johnson, the then prime minister?

This leads to the main question of this article, what is the point of art in these challenging times? What role does art play in our lives as artists, makers, curators, galleries, institutions and audiences?

Art education, particularly in state schools in recent years, research indicates, has seen a 40% fall in students enrolling on art GCSEs and a 23% drop in art teachers available to teach courses (The Guardian 2023). Whilst under the guise of continued austerity the *“government announced courses not among its strategic priorities, [namely perceived high-cost courses] of music, dance, drama and performing arts; art and design; media studies; and archaeology – are to be subject to a reduction of 50%”* (Walters 2021). Such a decision, I argue, is a knee-jerk response and an economic instrumentalisation of the arts, which Belfiore (2015) contends *“‘value’ {has} become inextricably linked to the challenge of ‘making the case’ for the arts to justify public cultural funding given increasing funding pressures facing public service provision, especially in the West”*. Drastic and continued reduction of arts provision and teachers may soon lead to the arts being only affordable to the privileged few. Yet only

recently, we saw how vital arts and culture became in our daily lives for our wellbeing.

During the pandemic, arts and cultural institutions, along with all businesses and the public at large, had to readjust how we engaged with each other, including our loved ones, friends and families. Many of us lived in isolation, with little or no communication with the outside world for extended periods, contact perhaps only coming through fleeting visits by delivery services of take away food, consumer goods and groceries. It was at this point many arts organisations and institutions (re)developed their online profile and platforms to enable us to engage, including online watch-a-long cinema screenings or dance performances filmed at home. People drew pictures and hung them in their windows, some even projected experimental films. The streets, whilst we were out walking to exercise and break the monotony, became the corridors to a strange kind of external imagined gallery. Perhaps the artworks were made to show compassion for each other, to let each other know that we cared and that we were not alone, even if we were.

Of late, polymath Gaylene Gould has been on a quest, asking what I believe to be pertinent questions about art. In her BBC Radio 4 documentary *Transcendence: How Can I Feel Art Again?* Gould describes a feeling of transcendence she experienced as a child while watching an experimental film of Franz Kafka’s titled *Metamorphosis*. It is perhaps these

feelings Gould experienced as a child that she is on a quest to rediscover. Gould took this one step further through *How Do You Feel? Feeling Guide*, which invited a small group, me included, to experience the abstract art of Frank Bowling’s *Land of Many Waters* exhibition at Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol. As participants, we were asked to *“pay mindful attention to our feeling responses, whilst in the gallery. Focusing in on four paintings, the guide uses Phenomenology as inspiration to draw visitors’ attention to their perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and bodily awareness”* (Gould 2021).

It was a profound experience, as we were still in a state of recovery from the pandemic, with our masks on in the gallery, unable to see the full face of other participants on the day. Yet, we were able to connect with each other and with the art. We moved more slowly through the gallery, spending more time with each artwork than we would normally. The experience made me see and feel the work differently, I did not have to view the work from an informed position as a curator, instead I was asked to find an emotional connection. As Gould believes, the *“value of art is the emotional development ... the work allows us to be present and still ... to think and feel”* (Gould 2021).

A year later, in May 2022, a group of us from Coventry Biennial had the pleasure of attending the 59th Venice Biennale. This was my first visit to the Biennale, and I had been warned about the scale and the demands of navigating the various



Gaylene Gould  
*How Do You Feel? Feeling Guide*

Participatory activity set in Frank Bowling exhibition.  
2021

Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol

Courtesy: Gaylene Gould



Collin Sekajugo and Acaye Kerunen  
*Various Artworks*

Installation shot of *Radiance They Dream in Time*.  
2022

Ugandan Pavilion, Venice.

Photo: Ian Sergeant

# REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES:

locations and the possibility of being overwhelmed by the amount of art on view. In all, the experience was very positive, and reflecting on Gould's idea of feeling, there were times where I felt the work of artists and curators had a lasting impact on me.

Curator Shaheen Merali's inaugural Ugandan Pavilion exhibition *Radiance They Dream in Time*, at the Palazzo Palumbo Fossati, was such a show. Merali presented counterpoints between the paintings of Collin Sekajugo and the craft of Acaye Kerunen, within the intimate space of the gallery.

As we entered the gallery, the smell of raffia wafted through the warm air, enhancing the experience even more so. Of the exhibition, Merali suggests the spaces are "curated to contextualise the potential to understand intellectually and emotively. By calling the viewer's creative ability to combine and find their way through the symbolic and symbioses offered by the artist or the presentation ..." (Mehrali 2022, 13). This is realised through Kerunen's deconstructed basket weaves and sculptures, evoking ancestral traditions, and Sekajugo's modernist portraits in vibrant colours, flattened planes and collaged bark cloth. Spatially, aesthetically and curatorially the artists responded to the setting below the building's frescoed frieze, raising questions of the historical and contemporary, the west and the global south. I left the gallery with a feeling of elation having spent time with their art. I had intended to go and see Mehrali's exhibition and was pleased to have found it down one of the many side

streets of Venice.

Stuart Hall (1997) argues we derive meaning through the "signifying practice" of the selection and display of artefacts or objects in an exhibition. This is what I think the point of art is, to give meaning, which we then as viewers convert into some kind of emotional response. At times we leave with the feeling we have just experienced something we may not have expected. I want to be challenged. I want to feel. I cannot profess to knowing all there is to know about art or art history but like Gould I want to find that inner child, find that moment of wonder and on occasion be transcended. It will not happen all the time but when it does happen it is a unique feeling.

Witnessing the art of Kerunen and Sekajugo embodies the idea of the relevance of art now. Art should not be for a privileged few. For me, making art in whatever form is an opportunity to create a mirror to society, where we, society, are reflected back, at times distorted, grotesquely or comedically, like in a fairground house of mirrors. I believe the point of art in society today remains an integral part to understanding who we are: our human condition. Whether that be from a secular, religious or agnostic perspective but always in relation to flora/fauna and the planet itself. Artists by their very nature are curious souls, and they create work perhaps out of curiosity and wonderment, asking what does this look, sound, or feel like? All we have to do is find it.

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## CHAPTER SIX.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH YVA JUNG:

BY ANNEKA FRENCH



Yva Jung  
*Mooning Monday*

Wood  
2015

Courtesy: Yva Jung

**AF: There are several prominent recurring motifs within your practice, particularly apples and moons. Can you detail what fascinates you about these?**

YJ: I'm interested in using everyday materials to create a moment of pause and reflection. Apples have been a motif since my trip to the North Pole in 2011. Before travelling to the Arctic Circle, I was interested in its gravity. As the Earth is not a perfect sphere, I was curious how my body weight would feel there. There are of course more scientific ways to measure gravity but instead, I took an apple, thinking about Isaac Newton and his quiet afternoon under an apple tree. Journey and place inform my art practice. In order to talk about the 'moon' as a motif, I want to take you to my sculpture, entitled *Mooning Monday* (2015).

This sculpture is a set of five suitcases with a growing bump on their fronts. The shape comes from a compact suitcase I used while travelling to five locations (New York, Seoul, Montreal, Lagos and the Arctic Circle). I was imagining a balloon growing inside the suitcase getting bigger and bigger – the nickname of this piece is pregnant suitcases. I titled this piece *Mooning Monday* – 'mooning' because of its meaning of wandering around. I like its association with journey and also my own experience moving around with a suitcase. I was also interested in the etymology of 'Monday' which is 'moon-day'. I like how Monday suggests everyday but also how it links to moon, tide, female rhythm and it comes back to the pregnant body.

By entitling it *Mooning Monday*, I try to create both visual and audible rhyming. When you pronounce *Mooning Monday*, your mouth shapes 'o' which echoes the shape of the bump on each suitcase.

**AF: The focus of many of your recent works and some of your most recent research is the sea. What draws you to this subject and how has this work developed?**

YJ: The sea has always been a place for me to reconnect and reflect. I started making work about the sea when I wasn't able to travel physically because of restrictions back in 2020. I know Covid affected people in many different ways and for me, it really shifted my practice from taking inspiration from a physical journey to more of a conceptual journey. In order to imagine the sea, I started reading books such as *Salt on Your Tongue* by Charlotte Runcie and *Small Bodies of Water* by Nina Mingya Powles and others. This helped me to imagine certain elements of the sea - its smell, horizon and reflection. Then, a series of questions started to form: how do you explain the horizon of the sea? how do you explain the smell of the sea?

I tried to answer each question by using domestic materials found in and around the house which resulted in making a video piece titled *How Do You Explain the Sea To Your Child?* (2020).

**AF: I am really interested in *One Room Blow* (2013), a work you made with your mother and the ways that**



Yva Jung  
*How Do You Explain the Sea To Your Child?*

Video  
2020

Courtesy: Yva Jung



Yva Jung  
*One Room Blow*

Video Installation at the Korean Cultural Centre UK, London

Video Installation  
2015

Courtesy: Yva Jung

**your children are included within some of your most recent film and drawing works. Please can you describe your approach to collaboration with family?**

YJ: I'm interested in finding materials in my immediate surroundings. When I say materials I don't mean just physical materials but also inspirations and ideas. Making art with my mother and children has been a natural process in terms of how my surroundings inspire my practice. My mother and children's appearances are quite specific in my work but I wanted them to represent something more universal than my own immediate family.

I particularly find interacting with my children quite transformative. My new video (work in progress) is called *This is How We Do (being five)* (2023). This is inspired by my five-year-old daughter and it is about doing things from a child's perspective. Making art with my children has given me an insight into their untamed viewpoint and perspective.

**AF: How does this compare to your more socially engaged or performance work, for instance, in *Morning Dew on Monday Mornings* (2017)?**

YJ: In a sense, I don't see much difference between making art with my family and making art with morning dew as they're both materials I found in my surroundings. In my *Morning Dew on Monday Mornings*, I collected dew every Monday morning for a year using

different domestic tools such as a spoon, sock and pistachio shells. It was in a way a study of 'Monday' as much as a study on dew. As my dew collection grew bigger, I wanted to invite others into this work so I set up a temporary vendor to exchange the samples of dew for stories, songs and poems about Monday – no money was exchanged. Each exchanged narrative inspired me to then make a series of drawings.

**AF: Can you tell me more about the relationship as you see it between text and image within your work?**

YJ: Albert Camus said that "*People can think only in images. If you want to be a philosopher, write novels.*" I have always been interested in the relationships between text and image. For a while, I explored this in the way I title my work (e.g. *Mooning Monday, Spooning the Moon*). I'm interested in creating rhyming (either visual and audible) between the titles and the work.

I have also been exploring the relationship between text and image with video work e.g. through handwritten text and found obituaries. More recently, I started composing text and images together through a series of drawings. A good example is *The Distance Between* (2022).

It's a series of visual essays that defines distance not in numerical measures but in abstract measures. This is also born out of the pandemic when we were required to distance ourselves 2m apart. This piece installed in Felixstowe explores



Yva Jung  
*The Distance Between: Sea & Wave*

Felixstowe, commissioned by Channel Festival, curated by Pier Projects

Fabric Banners  
2022

Courtesy: Yva Jung

distance and our relationship with the sea. To me, the writing in this series is not a caption of my drawing and the drawings are not an illustration of my writing. I want them to carry equal weight and convey equal amounts of information or emotion.

**AF: You work with vast landscapes and have made large banner works as well as tiny drawings and intimate hand-written texts. Please could you describe your perspective on scale?**

YJ: I'm interested in playing with space and the scale of the work. I don't think one's work carries more weight just because it's bigger, nor do I think that work can create a big impact only if it is big. If one were to think about performance, a small tremor by the performer can trigger a more intense emotion than a loud gesture of the performer.

I am also interested in working with different scales in terms of the subject whether it's the immense Arctic landscape or ephemeral morning dew or whether it's a spoon or the moon. I like playing with the tension between the macro and the micro.

**AF: What are your longer-term aims for your practice?**

YJ: Haruki Murakami said in his book *Novelist as a Vocation* (2017) that "If you just shift your focus a little bit and slightly alter your way of thinking, you will discover a wealth of material lying about just waiting to be picked up and used." Echoing his

thought, the long-term aim of my practice is building and sustaining a strength in finding materials in the everyday and finding a truth (whether about yourself or the world) in the most ordinary of things.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN.**

**REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST  
SEASON OF COVENTRY BIENNIAL  
CYCLE CLUB (AND HOW WE GOT  
THERE).**

**BY RYAN HUGHES**

By the time you read this publication we will have ridden almost 100 miles together. At the time of writing we've collectively saved 59.7 litres of fuel and reduced our collective CO2 by 140,235 grams.

We've visited Jephson Gardens, Warwick Arts Centre, Coombe Country Park, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and Jo Gane's studio in Nuneaton. We've ridden canals, cyclepaths, greenways and a few main roads. We've got a flexible but growing membership that has been built quickly since January 2023 and that is developing our organisation's audience base (1).

But why a Coventry Biennial Cycle Club?

When I was an art student I made a durational performance as a part of an international exchange with peers from Utrecht in the Netherlands. I "cycled" the 350 miles between the 2 participating art schools on an exercise bike. John Wigley, the course director, asked if I was some kind of masochist.

Some years later I made a project called *Pentref Crwydrol* in Snowdonia National Park. I led a group of early career artists and photographers on a walking, climbing and camping trip. We became the inhabitants of a *Nomadic Village* over the few days when the UK had just voted leave in the Brexit referendum.

Later in that same year I worked with Heath Bunting on a presentation of his much celebrated online work

*BorderXing Guide (2)*, a project that "primarily consists of documentation of walks that traverse national boundaries, without interruption from customs, immigration, or border police".

Throughout my time working in the arts I have been developing projects with, around and about journeys. Physical activity has connected me with art, ideas, places and people.

As Coventry Biennial has developed, this combination of physical activity and intellectual or creative activities has been a key feature of our work. In 2017 we worked with Katie Hodson and Aleksander Wojtulewicz on an Artist-Led Yoga session, this evolved into a full programme in 2019 with Lynnebec Performance Company leading regular yoga practices throughout the Biennial. Most recently we worked with Rachael Davies of the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University on making an exhibition and engagement programme in 2021 highlighting and reanimating the archives of a radical dance group called Cycles who were based in the West Midlands in the 1960s.

As we were in the very early phases of thinking about Coventry Biennial 2023 I completed a secondment at the University of Amsterdam as a part of *Spatial Practices in Art and Architecture for Empathetic Exchange* (SPACE), a research project that asks how art and design "effect public exchange and opinion formation in urban spaces, and enable more empathetic and inclusive ways of living together?"



Justin Haynes  
*Cader Idris*

Digital Photograph taken during *Pentref Crwydrol*

Digital Photograph  
2016

Courtesy: Justin Haynes



Coventry Biennial Cycle Club Meeting

Jephson Gardens, Leamington Spa

Digital Photograph  
2023

Photo: Verity Jackson

(3). During these 31 days in the Netherlands the ubiquity of bicycles across the country was pretty hard to ignore, after all, 28% of all trips in the country happen by bike (4). Every gallery, museum, studio or office I visited during this secondment was surrounded by bikes. Cycling had a very close relationship to making and seeing art. No gallery was too far away. The systems, cultures and habits across the country ensured that getting to exhibitions was easy.

When I returned to Coventry, bicycles were on my mind and I was quickly reminded that the city had once been *“the home of the British cycle industry and at one time produced the greatest output of cycles in the world”* (5).

This combination of experiences, practices, facts, interests and histories galvanised. Starting the Coventry Biennial Cycle Club as a programme designed to connect people with artists and cultural institutions in Coventry and Warwickshire in a social way that benefits health, wellbeing and promotes mutual support was an exciting possibility.

Early in 2023 we delivered a pilot event with a small invited audience of local colleagues, all of whom work in the creative sector and who I happen to know cycle frequently. We set out from the carpark outside Coventry Artspace and rode to Leamington Spa where Janet Tryner delivered an intimate and informal debossing workshop using objects gathered during what she refers to as *“ground-level investigations”*.

Since then we have delivered a number of meetings of the Coventry Biennial Cycle Club in collaboration with an evolving, local and publicly open membership.

In February we rode, again from the carpark outside of Coventry Artspace through Coventry's Memorial Park and along the Kenilworth Road cycle path to the Mead Gallery at Warwick Arts Centre. The gallery's Exhibitions Curator Thomas Ellmer (who is also a cyclist) gave us a guided tour of Katrina Palmer's exhibition *What's Already Going On* that poignantly explored *“our capacity to change paths, to confound stereotypes and to act in new ways”*. On our way back into the city centre we paused at Hearsall Common for a few laps of the gravel oval that is more often used for funfairs or learning to drive.

In March, with some horrid weather, we cycled to Coombe Country Park, stopping along the way at Binley Mega Chippy (of TikTok fame). It was during this meeting of the Coventry Biennial Cycle Club that we encountered our first mechanical. A pedal and crank arm fell off of one member's bike, after collectively spending a while searching the roadside for the missing fixings, we returned to the city centre where we visited the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum to see the recently acquired and installed sculpture by Leilah Babirye that we originally presented during Coventry Biennial 2021. This work uses spent inner tubes to create dreadlocks, referencing Leilah's time working as a cycle courier in New York.

For April we headed towards Nuneaton, departing from the Coventry Canal Basin, mostly following National Cycle Route 52. When arriving in Nuneaton we were treated to a studio visit with Jo Gane who showed us a series of works in-progress and offered an amazing spread of freshly baked croissants and tea and coffee. Jo and her family then led us to nearby Riversley Park where we completed a specially designed pinhole photography activity, marking our contribution to international Pinhole Photography Day.

These collaborative and participatory meetings will continue throughout the upcoming year, activating the fourth Coventry Biennial programme.

Our next meeting, taking place just a few days after this text is being published, sees this network grow. We are working with Shift Cycling Culture (6), a Rotterdam-based, globally active not-for-profit who are working to make the cycling industry more environmentally sustainable. While their work is specific to the cycling industry, we can see clear points of connection and learning that could be applied to the art sector and our programmes more specifically.

Riding bikes has connected me with art, ideas, places and people. Through the delivery of Coventry Biennial Cycle Club this is being extended and amplified.

Riding bikes is supporting interpersonal, intergenerational relationships. Riding bikes makes art

making more accessible. Riding bikes gives people access to public space and is improving their perception of Coventry and the surrounding area (7).

Riding bikes is fun.



Emily Gardner

Pinhole Photograph taken during Jo Gane's Coventry Biennial Cycle Club Workshop

Pinhole Photograph  
2023

Courtesy: Emily Gardner

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1. 14.3% of survey respondents reported that they had not previously attended a Coventry Biennial exhibition or event.
2. <https://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/borderxing.shtm>  
(20<sup>th</sup> February 2023)
3. <https://www.spacex-rise.org/research/>  
(20<sup>th</sup> February 2023)
4. <https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Netherlands-Cycling-Facts-2020.pdf>  
(20<sup>th</sup> February 2023)
5. Kimberley, D, Coventry's Bicycle Heritage, The History Press, 2015.
6. <https://www.shiftcyclingculture.com/>  
(2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023)
7. 85.7% of survey respondents reported that their perception of Coventry was improved by attending a Coventry Biennial Cycle Club Meeting.

**CHAPTER EIGHT.**

**CRACKS IN THE MOON AND  
ALIENS IN THE SAND.**

**BY JANET TRYNER**

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JANET TRYNER.

**Cracks in the Moon  
and Aliens in the Sand.**

EDITED BY EMILY GARDNER AND RYAN HUGHES.

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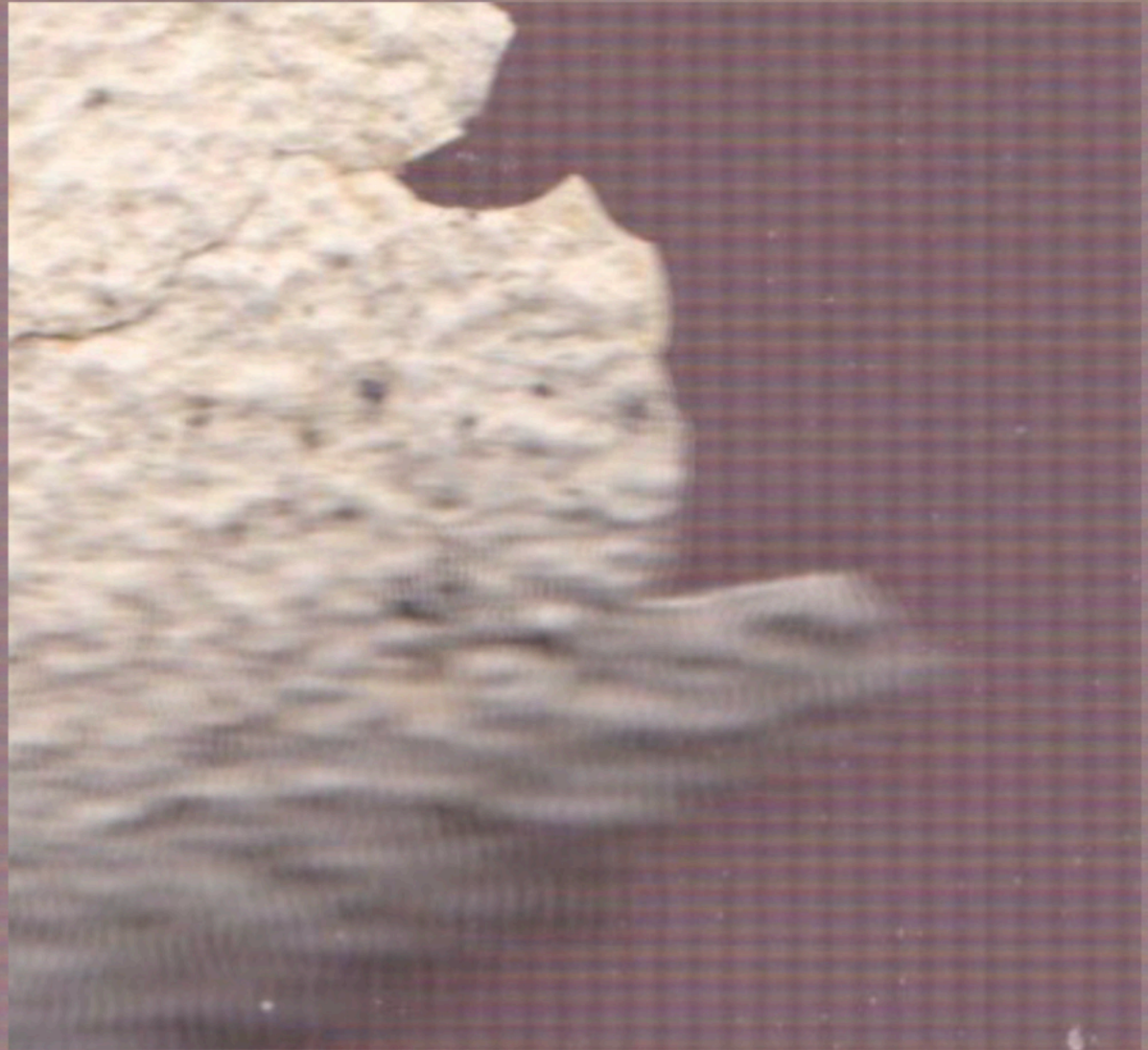




25%



100%



Cracks in the moon and aliens in the sand. A portrait of The Empire on Mars.

Peeling, falling, letting go, leaving.  
Becoming leaves.

A pigeon got in. You know what a mess they make.

Pieces of fluffy white down gleam among flakes of paint. Tapering olive-brown shadows are cast from a floodlight laying tilted on the floor.

Lockdown 1: Planet Four is a citizen science project designed to assist in identifying and measuring features on Mars' southern polar region. You proceed through a series of caramel-coloured images dotted with sooty blobs [click if seen] that sometimes extend out in 'fans' or 'blotches' [draw carefully on these to indicate width and direction.] I needed to make my brain run so I could stand still and putting it to work on tedious imagery stopped it making me sick with anxiety.

I am standing in my boots, feeling the pull of shoelaces keeping me on Earth.

The sooty blobs are seasonal. Possibly, they are produced by bursts of carbon dioxide gas and liquid escaping through a layer of carbon dioxide ice. Probably, air currents force the geysers to make deposits in a certain direction. Hence a steady breeze could cause a fan, and perhaps a sharper gust could cause a tapering sooty blotch. All my tired mind wanted to do was play join the dots, and to help somebody somehow find out stuff, even if that was on another planet.

The screen brought Mars closer, onto my knees, showing me its story in placement of minerals and rocks. In return, via the slippery smooth surface of my laptop, in drawings made of pixels of light, I annotated its surface and, slowly, what must surely be grit took on the sheen of my skin-friendly device.

I wear a mask, a hat, old jeans – comfortable enough but not nice to wear – protecting my skin from the building's de-clothing.

The skylights are slightly domed and made from thick, discoloured plastic. Four square moons.

Becoming leaves. Falling. No longer a fluttered eyelash of spinning salsa dancer fringe on the eyes of a peering, unconcerned sky, counted four times, two times two. An array of two.

I think of scans being a blink.  
Becoming data.

Hit something now, become something now.

The curl away of paint manifests as mist. It signifies failure in this scanner's capacity as scanner. Where the software starts to be additive, imaginative, substituting an algorithm for data. Something must be put in that space. There can't be nothing. That distance curled out of reach; the difference between paint and not-paint and light and not-light substantiates algorithmic conjecture on the page. Machine anxiety materialising as stuttering waves merging in an almost painterly way with the hazy chequered field that is its impression of ambient light in The Empire.



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**Mark Cook** is a Coventry-based historian, curator and producer. He recently worked as site manager on The Museum of Me and curated recordings for Grown Up in Coventry (Museum of Youth Culture). He presented the Art & Language Day School at Coventry Biennial 2021 and was part of the Building Supervisor team. He is also a member of the Coventry Biennial Cycle Club.

**Anneka French** is an independent curator and critic. She contributes to Art Quarterly, Burlington Contemporary and Photomonitor, and has had writing and editorial commissions from the Turner Prize, Fire Station Artists' Studios, TACO!, Photoworks+ and Grain Projects. She worked as Co-ordinator and then Director at New Art West Midlands, as Editorial Manager of contemporary art magazine this is tomorrow and has worked at Tate Modern, Ikon, The New Art Gallery Walsall and Wolverhampton Art Gallery. French is Curator at Coventry Biennial and has curated exhibitions at Grand Union, Birmingham and KH7 ArtSpace, Aarhus, Denmark among others. Her publication Gently Bumping was published in 2022.

**Emily Gardner** began her relationship with Coventry Biennial through a curatorial internship in 2019 and now works as Assistant Curator at the Biennial. Gardner is interested in themes relating to growth and collaboration. She has a multidisciplinary fine art background, particularly sculpture, and studied for a degree in Fine Art and Contemporary Cultures at Warwickshire College. She has worked at Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park and at Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum.

**Ryan Hughes** is an artist, curator and independent researcher interested in DIY cultures, collaboration, community and what was briefly called the post-internet. He is the founder and Artistic Director of Coventry Biennial. Prior to this Biennial he made projects working closely

with artists, academics, musicians and technologists at spaces including MK Gallery, ICA London, Leamington Spa Town Hall, the slopes of Cader Idris and the streets of Digbeth. He has spoken nationally and internationally at events organised by the British Council, Kunsthal Gent and Eastside Projects as well as at a wide range of universities and educational institutions.

**Seungwon Jung** is an artist based in London. Her practice concerns how perception situates time in relation to space and traverses installation, sculpture, textile and photography. After receiving her BFA from Chung-Ang University, South Korea in Photography, she relocated to London where she achieved an MFA in Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Fine Art. She is the recipient of several awards including The Photographers' Gallery New Talent Award and The Museum of Photography, Seoul Talent Portfolio. She has exhibited her work internationally in the UK, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan and recently exhibited at KCCUK, London, The Museum of Photography, Seoul and The Photographers' Gallery, London.

**Yva Jung** is a visual artist based in Hertfordshire. Jung studied Fine Art in Seoul and New York before receiving her practice-led PhD from Slade School of Fine Art. Yva has been awarded many grants including from Arts Council England and Arts Council Korea and her work has been exhibited in contemporary art institutions globally including CAFAM Biennale (China), König London (UK), Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival (UK) and the St Albans Museum (UK).

**Antony Owen** is a writer from Coventry and his working-class roots have heavily inspired his writing. Born in 1973 Owen has always been interested in conflict, politics and the effects these have on everyday people. His fifth book, The Nagasaki Elder, was inspired by his trip to Hiroshima to meet atomic bomb survivors and was shortlisted in 2017 for the Ted Hughes Award for new work in poetry.

His work has been translated in many languages including a full bilingual book, Phoenix (2022, Thelem Press). In Summer 2024 his New & Selected Poems will be published by Broken Sleep books.

**Sinéad Patching** is a Coventry-based photographer. Her photographic practice instinctively composes emotional and honest images rich in themes of nature and human experience. Shifting between domestic reflection and a gently surrealist attention to small, subtle details, she creates fine art pieces as well as undertaking commissions including for Coventry City of Culture and Studio Morison. Poetically utilising natural light, shade and colour, Patching records unfolding candid events with a unique ethereal style which straddles documentary and art.

**Adele Mary Reed** is a photographer and mother from Coventry. She co-ordinates the Mothers Who Make Coventry Hub with Coventry Biennial and is currently developing the Mothers Who Make a Garden project alongside collaborators in a collective framework. Within her practice she is interested in analogue methodology, taking unplanned walks, plant-life, moods of stillness and balance, and themes relating to living in the city. Through her imagery she carefully documents the places she finds herself in, seeking to playfully highlight, introduce or restore the more inconspicuous beauty of everyday life.

**Dr Ian Sergeant** is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow with Transforming Collections: Reimagining Art, Nation and Heritage, University of the Arts London and Curator for Coventry Biennial. In 2022, he completed his practice-based PhD Visual Representations and Cultural (Re) Constructions of Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham, at Birmingham City University. Curated exhibitions include Reimagining Donald Rodney at Vivid Projects (2016), Donald Rodney at Celine Gallery, Glasgow International (2021); Cut & Mix, New Art Exchange,

Nottingham (2021); Interference:s, Coventry Biennial (2021), Nation's Finest, Putting Down Roots and Birthing, Birmingham 2022 Festival (2022). He is a director of performing and visual arts organisation Kalaboration CiC and on the board of directors for Vivid Projects, a non-profit company supporting media arts practice. He is also a member of the Blk Art Group Research Project.

**Janet Tryner** is a contemporary visual artist living and working in Warwickshire, Coventry, and beyond. By focusing her research and field-work on the ground level she aims to facilitate experiences of small lives at ground-level in the hope of improving dislocation from ecosystem. During Coventry Biennial 2023, she is presenting research around the intersection of waste objects and environment, inspired in part by her current MA in Contemporary Art & Archaeology.

**Alice Wood** is based in Coventry, the city she grew up in, and is a self-taught gardener with huge amounts of enthusiasm for turning unloved areas of the city, including her own back garden, into beautiful spaces filled with colour and wildlife. She's also a mother to a six-year-old daughter, and is interested in any and all ways to encourage young people into the great outdoors, and in the idea of gardening as artistic practice.

# TEAM, PARTNERS AND SUPPORT:

Delivering a project of this scale takes a huge amount of energy, expertise and generosity. *Developing Coventry Biennial 2023* wouldn't have been possible without the support of the following individuals and organisations.

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Paula Orrell & Lara Ratnaraja.

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Jim Alimpertis, Helen Cuthill, Mel Jordan, Evie Kissack, Shwetal Petal, Deborah Smith, Kate Stoddart.

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# COLOPHON:

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