

Press Release

Showcase for AMPLify - a digital residency for 18 - 25 year olds

Thursday 28 April, 7 - 8pm

Available online until 28 July.



Image description: A wavy scan of some plants against a black background.

Image credit: Lucy Rose Cunningham, *starlings' lament, keeners' dirge*, 2021-2022.

'It is with these tongues that we explore the contours of the centre and the margins, the signs for somewhere and elsewhere and here and now.' Quote from participating artist

Since October 2021, eight young artists from across England have been creating new digital work as part of Wysing Arts Centre's AMPLify programme. The work will be showcased online on Thursday 28 April, 7–8pm on Twitch with a live chat via WysingBroadcasts.Art. Spanning sound, audio-visual and text, the new work explores themes including: reframing histories; relationships between non-human and human; trauma and loss; voices, places, bodies and time; pain, queerness and religion; and fantasy world building. Following the showcase the work will be available to be viewed online until 28 July.

This year the participating artists are: Sarah Al-Sarraj (she/her/they/them), Elinor Arden (she/her), Billie Baxter (she/they), Harry Cross (he/him), Lucy Rose Cunningham (she/her), Zoe Harding (she/her), Rowan Perrow (they/them) and Meitao Qu (she/her).

AMPLify is an alternative learning programme and residency for artists aged 18 to 25 years to test new approaches and ideas through workshops and talks, whilst also having time to develop their own work. It has been running annually since 2018. In 2021/22 AMPLify took place as a hybrid programme, with an initial residency at Wysing in October followed by online workshops, sessions and 1-2-1 mentoring. The workshops were delivered by contributing artists: Uma Breakdown, Dylan Fox, Carl Gent and Rebekah Ubuntu.

About Wysing Arts Centre

Wysing values the freewheeling imagination and believes that everybody has the right to time and space for creativity, away from the distractions of daily life. The Arts Centre includes 20 studios for artists who live nearby, a 17th century farmhouse where visiting artists stay, a gallery, a ceramics studio, a recording studio, fields, woodland, and several outdoor artworks.

Wysing engages people of all ages through artist-led workshops, events, online projects, gatherings and an alternative art school called *The Syllabus*. There is a young people's programme that has a focus on reaching people from rural areas. Wysing is currently building a youth council who will have decision-making powers in the organisation and is also investigating how to be more accessible, including different ways to share its resources – land, land, buildings, skills, and knowledge – more equitably.

Notes to editors

Logos/Funders



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Participating Artist Biographies

Sarah Al-Sarraj (she/her/they/them)

Sarah Al-Sarraj is an artist working with painting, comics, writing, and moving images. Her practice cultivates a visual language that deconstructs power and reimagines liberated futures. Focusing on a curiosity with the unseen - secrets, fantasy, desire, and dreams - their work dwells in the radical potential of imagination, she is currently exploring this through methodologies of world building, speculation, and alt history. She aims to challenge the legitimacy of traditional hegemonies by subverting iconography from a range of sources, including pop culture and the colonial visual archive. Her work is ultimately guided by love, friendship, and community, and interrogates broader sociopolitical concepts through interpersonal relationships. She recently completed Open School East's Associates Programme. Over the course of the AMPlify residency, Sarah has been experimenting with rotoscoping animation and glitch art to interrogate and transgress the limits of subjectivity.

Website: sarahalsarraj.com

Instagram: [@ssaarraahj](https://www.instagram.com/ssaarraahj)

Elinor Arden (she/her)

Elie is an artist, musician and writer, working with sound and performance. She is particularly interested in the material embodiment of memory, and how this might interact with contemporary AI technologies. Elie also designs sound for the stage, currently creating sonic webs for dance-theatre which move between ancestral memories and dreamscapes. She has devised two productions with Wringing Metamorphosis. She has recently performed at Gallery V, Cambridge, with *Diasporas Now* and in a devised work alongside the poet Bhanu Kapil. In April, she will perform as part of Emily Louise Perry's work 'Narcissus, Morte, Mukbang' at New Hall Gallery. Elie also DJs, often focusing on experimental

mixing between genres and spoken word. She has played at venues including Pushkin House, London (for Russian party collective Fetisch) and the King's Bunker, Cambridge. She is part of queer, womxn-centered DJ collective, Playtime. At the moment she is in her third year of studying English Literature at the University of Cambridge.

Website: <https://wringingmetamorphosis.squarespace.com/biographies>

Instagram: @elie.arden

Billie Baxter (she/they)

Billie is a multidisciplinary sound and visual artist interested in communication, anthropology, folklore, processing memories, and finding beauty in the everyday. She studied Illustration at University of Brighton, and is currently based in Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.

Harry Cross (he/him)

Harry is a London based, multidisciplinary artist. He uses installation, sound and moving image to explore the relationship between time and memory, ritual and mental health, as well as isolation and escapism. He believes everything is interconnected and seeks to understand the correlation between important issues.

Ritual is a fruitful topic due to its broad scope. From disciplined ritual to compulsive ritual, his practice explores these behaviors which are a key part of most people's day to day lives. Harry's sterile aesthetic and clinical methodology is seen as a manifestation of grappling with his own mental health. He is a keen advocate of battling stigma that surrounds mental illness and aims to start or continue discourse on these topics. When working with temporal mediums like sound and video, he feels it is key to investigate the concept of time. By employing memory cues associated with olfactory, echoic and visual memory, the viewer is able to get a sense of their own personal history and how they might perceive time. In an attempt to understand the here and now, Harry looks to the subject of isolation as it can be seen as a defining factor of our present reality. Closely linked to this is escapism, an ever-growing tendency in the digital age we currently live in. The duality of these themes is what fascinates Harry the most and has great influence on his practice.

Lucy Rose Cunningham (she/her)

Lucy Rose Cunningham is an artist and writer based in Leeds. Her practice looks at the performative potential of language, works made emerging as performances or soundscapes utilising voice and movement, and written words in the form of publications and print. Exploring language as a holistic embrace, she seeks to use voices and field recordings to reflect the mutuality between people and the spaces they dwell in. Spaces and bodies interact as a feedback loop, collecting and exhaling each other's rhythm. The sounds and words she gathers touch on history and embedded memories within landscapes, and present sound as an archival medium; a space for sharing narratives and intimacy. In recent years, Cunningham has exhibited performances at Leeds Art Gallery, The Hepworth Gallery Wakefield, South London Gallery, and HuMBase, Stuttgart. She is also the author of pamphlet *For Mary, Marie, Maria: after the nectar, pyre and linden tree*, published by Broken Sleep Books (2021), with a second pamphlet out for release in July 2022.

Website: <https://cargocollective.com/lurose>

Instagram: @lurosecunningham

Zoe Harding (she/her)

Zoe Harding is an interdisciplinary artist with an ongoing engagement for the materialisation of inner constitutions within spaces. By situating aspects of dependency, regulation and withdrawal at its core, the contingency of language

provides a meeting point between self and other via intimacy and labour. Through modes of affect, the slippage between periphery and transitory are adapted as means to recondition the body at its limits.

Instagram: @z_o_e_h_a_r_d_i_n_g

Rowan Perrow (they/them)

Rowan is an artist and musician from Norwich who specialises in performance art and DIY methods of making. Their work focuses on experimental and alternative music, queer experiences, and the ins-and-outs of mental health. They're also keen on disrupting the relationship between performer/artist and audience, showcasing the nature of process, and how these approaches more widely inform our knowledges and expectations of art. They have recently been accepted into alternative art programme School of the Damned, commencing in 2022.

Instagram: @rojopo666

Meitao Qu (she/her)

Meitao lives and works between London and Beijing. From costume to architecture, she is interested in how images and other forms of visualisation operate as 'props' to stimulate imaginations. Taking scrapbooking as a method, her work brings together contradictory perspectives to draw out the misunderstandings that inform their conflict. Traversing sculpture, installation and moving image, her practice uses storytelling and worldbuilding to consider the fissure between ideology and reality.

Instagram: @mt_qu

Contributing Artists Biographies

Uma Breakdown

Uma Breakdown is a disabled artist/writer/researcher interested in horror films, queer feminist literature, and games design. They create work as text, online games and visual diagrams. In 2020 they finished a PhD about The Evil Dead, care, trans* women's writing, disaster. They have recently created a plant horror role playing game at Kim? in Riga; a video game about sleeping on the ground next to animals for FACT, Liverpool; and a short story about SSRIs and Artaud for Ma Bibliothèque. In 2021 they have produced web-based artworks for Akademie Schloss Solitude and Wysing Arts Centre as part of the Digital Solitude and British Council NET//WORK residencies respectively. Forthcoming summer projects include commissions for Arbyte in London, CCA and Market Gallery (both in Glasgow), and an article for the horror studies journal Revenant. Visit their website at: www.umabreakdown.com

Dylan Fox

Dylan Fox's practice examines the various barriers the transgender community faces. More specifically he explores the injustice of inefficient healthcare pathways in the UK, bias in media representation and by extension, wider societal views. Fox utilises found objects and printed matter to create works designed to replicate the feelings of frustration felt through his own gender transition, developing scenarios where the public endure a similar experience of ambivalence. Drawing on his research into socially engaged art practices, theories of open form, and queer histories, these scenarios often have a participatory element, aiming to shift public perceptions through dialogue. He recently created The Future is Fluid, a new commission for the Wysing Broadcasts. Selected solo exhibitions include shows at Big Shop Friday, Milton Keynes; Contains Art, Somerset; NN Contemporary Art, Northampton; and The Old Truman Brewery, London. Visit his website at: www.dylanfox.co.uk

Carl Gent

Carl Gent is an artist from Bexhill-on-sea, UK. They have recently been in residence at Wysing Arts Centre with Kelechi Anucha, developing, recording and broadcasting new recordings that will feature in an upcoming exhibition at Wysing

in the Autumn. Reworking the form of traditional folk songs, Anucha and Gent looked at themes including rurality, sonic commons, narrative tropes, pagan/Christian integration, low/high cultural forms, the radical duality between oral and broadcast communication, and the ways in which folk songs have contributed to varying political projects and have undermined the English imaginary. In 2019 they collaborated with artist Linda Stupart in producing *All Us Girls Have Been Dead for So Long*, a feature-length musical that was commissioned by the ICA as a part of the live programme for *I, I, I, I, I, I, I*, Kathy Acker. The play populated the narrative structure of the 1990s video game *Ecco the Dolphin* with a host of other protagonists including Naomi Klein's reportage of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Margaret Cavendish's 1666 proto-scifi novel *The Blazing World*, Westlife's cover of *Seasons in the Sun*, and Kathy Acker herself. They are one of the recipients of Artangel's Thinking Time grant and have recently exhibited and performed at David Dale Gallery, Glasgow; ICA, London; De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-sea and for *Transmissions*, episode 2. Visit their website at: www.carlgent.com

Rebekah Ubuntu

Rebekah Ubuntu is a multidisciplinary artist, musician and university lecturer. Their practice explores speculative fiction through a range of disciplines, particularly, sound art, electronic music, performance, the moving image and mixed reality. Tate Modern commissioned Rebekah to create *Despair, Hope and Healing: Three Movements for Climate Justice*, an audiovisual performance exploring climate justice in response to the Olafur Eliasson exhibit. In tandem with this performance, Tate Modern's Uniqlo Lates invited them to discuss the influence of Afrofuturism in their work. Shape Arts have since selected *Despair, Hope and Healing* for exhibition in the ground-breaking augmented reality app *Unfolding Shrines* which launched in Spring 2021. Upcoming commissions include audio art project 'Autism and the City: a Sonic Diary' co-commissioned by the BBC, Institute of Contemporary Art (UK) and NTS Radio, soon to be featured on BBC Radio 6. Rebekah's solo and collaborative works have been showcased by BBC Radio 1, Tate Britain and Tate Modern, Frieze London, Barbican Centre, Adam Mickiewicz Institute (Poland), Diametre Gallery (Paris), New Art Exchange (Nottingham), FACT (Liverpool) and London's Serpentine Galleries among others. Rebekah has taught and guest lectured at The Place Contemporary Dance Trust, Siobhan Davies Dance Company, The University of the Underground, Tate Modern, Wimbledon College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, King's College London and SOAS University of London among others. Rebekah has mentored artists as part of Wysing Arts Centre's Amplify project, LGBTQ Outside's Queer Youth Arts Project and Arts Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grant. Rebekah is a Jerwood Arts Bursary recipient (2021), Womxn of Colour Art Award finalist (2021) and Adam Reynolds Award finalist (2021). Rebekah Ubuntu identifies as Black, queer, genderqueer and disabled. Intersectional queer and transfeminist theories, perspectives, practices and languages are central components of their praxis and research. Rebekahubuntu.com | IG: @rebekah.ubuntu | T: @rebekahubuntu | they/them, she/her