

WYSING 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



2020: OUR PRIORITIES

2020 was an extraordinary year for everyone and like many other organisations we had to adapt our planned programme in response to the pandemic. Our immediate priority was to ensure that all the artists we had planned to work with did not lose the funding we had committed to them. Artists had the option of postponing residencies and opportunities, adapting projects, moving projects online and advance payment of fees and budgets. We also diverted funding to new commissions so that artists could continue to make funded work.



Helen Cammock, 'They Call it Idlewild', 2020 (still)

Cover: Maëva Berthelot and Coby Sey, 'A Tender Ascent', 2020 (live). Photo: Geoffrey Taylor

Cover: Maëva Berthelot and Coby Sey, 'A Tender Ascent', 2020, (live)

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

In 2020 we took further steps to address access and inclusion, in particular digital access. We ensured that all broadcast and video content was subtitled and transcripts provided for podcasts. We introduced image descriptions and legible hashtags for those using screen readers and to support neurodivergent visitors. We created an Access page on our website outlining these adjustments. We joined the Disability Confident accreditation scheme and will continue to find ways to make our work more accessible.

We recognise that addressing ableism, racism and other forms of discrimination is ongoing work that we are committed to as an organisation. In 2020 our staff took part in unconscious bias training and we shared some of our learning on diversity and inclusion with our partners including the Plus Tate, as co-hosts of the annual Director's conference, and CVAN networks. We produced a Code of Conduct that captures our values and which can be accessed via [our website](#).

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

For the past five years we have been committed to diversifying our organisation and programme, leading to Arts Council England consistently rating us 'Outstanding' when measured against their Creative Case for Diversity. However, we recognise that there is much more still to do. Following the tragic killing of George Floyd in May 2020, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign gained renewed mainstream media attention with protests worldwide. In solidarity with BLM, we published a statement on social media, on 1 June 2020, outlining our position. Our staff and trustees subsequently undertook a review of our organisational performance and targets around equality, diversity and inclusion and, as a result, we added new targets to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Some of the steps we are taking are highlighted in the section '2021 Plans and Commitments'.



Socially distanced Syllabus VI. Photo: John Bloomfield

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (CONT.)

As a starting point, we are publishing current data on the people we worked with in 2020 who identified as having protected characteristics. This data is based on information provided voluntarily through anonymous forms. We will update this information annually and make it public.

46% of the artists we worked with in 2020 identified as having a disability, 73% are women or non binary; 52% LGBTQ+ and 27% people of colour.

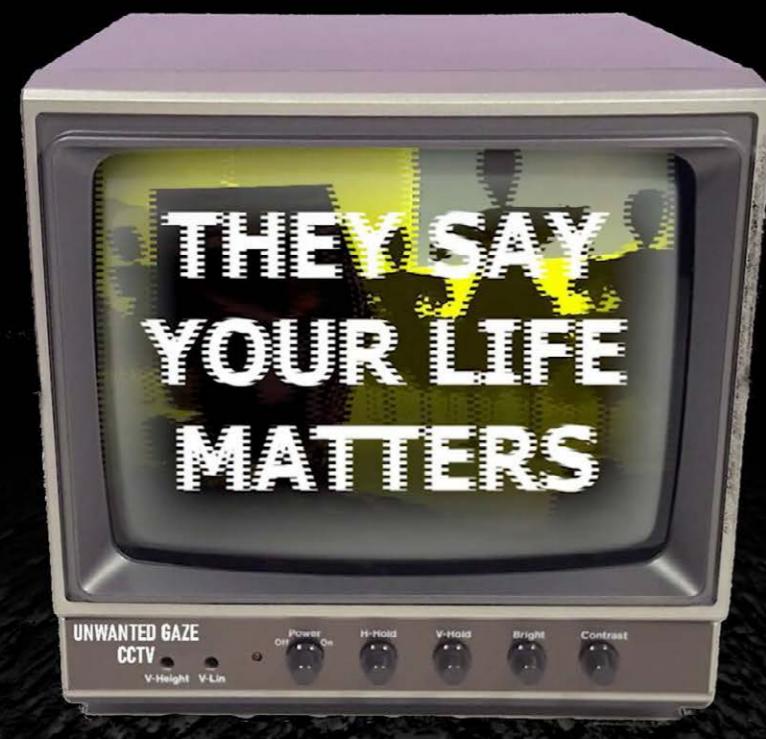
As of December 2020, 10% of our trustees identify as having a disability, 70% are women, 20% are LGBTQ+ and 20% people of colour.

As of December 2020, 33% of our permanent staff identify as having a disability, 77% are women, 22% are LGBTQ+ and 11% of mixed heritage.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In 2020 we introduced a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. We provided training to all staff and two members of staff are Mental Health First Aiders alongside a Trustee who is a Mental Health Champion. We are committed to creating a supportive environment within which conversations around mental health can take place openly. Wysing staff have 24 hour access to mental health support and we extend support to the artists we work with through open conversations and sign-posting.

ONLINE PROGRAMME

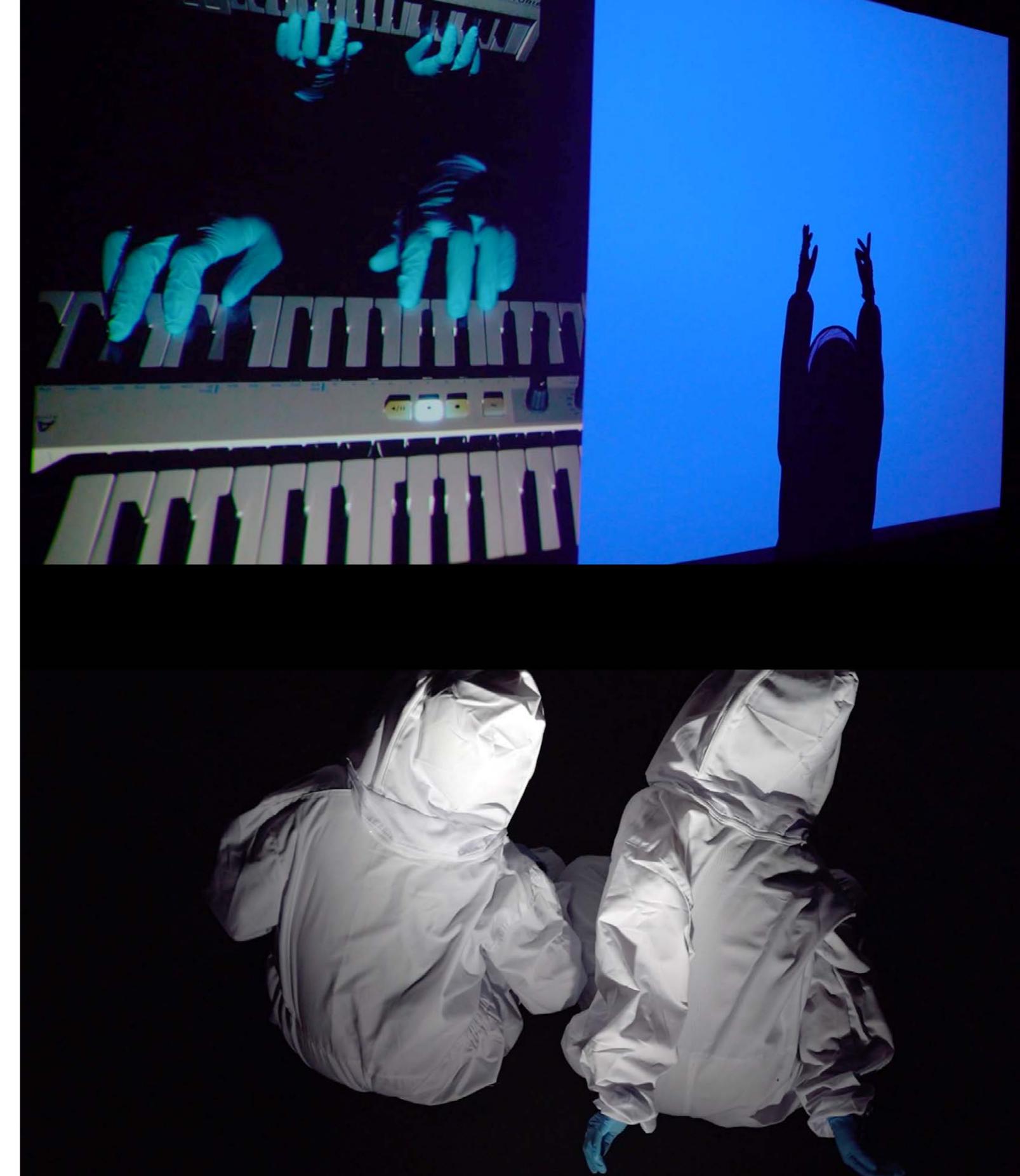


With the support of ACE and Art Fund we were able to rapidly develop the new website WysingBroadcasts.art designed by Albino Tavares and developed by John Hill. Featuring the sections Play, Explore and Discover, the site includes new commissions by artists Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Catalina Barroso-Luque and Feronia Wennborg, Rebecca Jagoe, Juliet Jacques, Abi Palmer, Morgan Quaintance and Victoria Sin. Kelechi Anucha and Carl Gent, David Blandy, Simnikiwe Buhlungu, Naomi Harwin, Mae, Tessa Norton, Hannah Wallis and members of Circuit shared their research and work and progress. We also platformed existing work by Helen Cammock, Ruth Angel Edwards and Dean Rodney Jr.

We had 5,500 unique visits to WysingBroadcasts.art in its first few months.

WYSING POLYPHONIC

Our annual festival of art and music moved online in 2020. Titled 'The Ungoverned' and curated by A...Z (Anne Duffau), the festival interrogated normativity through collaboration, exchange, texts, ephemeral gestures and other languages. It included a major new collaborative commission by dancer Maëva Berthelot and musician Coby Sey, a specially commissioned programme of mixes and soundscapes from musicians CRYSTALLMESS, mobilegirl, LYZZA, AUDINT and Hannah Catherine Jones, and a broadcast of poetry readings from Whiskey Chow, Rachel Long and Tanaka Fuego.



Maëva Berthelot and Coby Sey, 'A Tender Ascent', 2020 (live). Photo: Geoffrey Taylor

TRANSMISSIONS

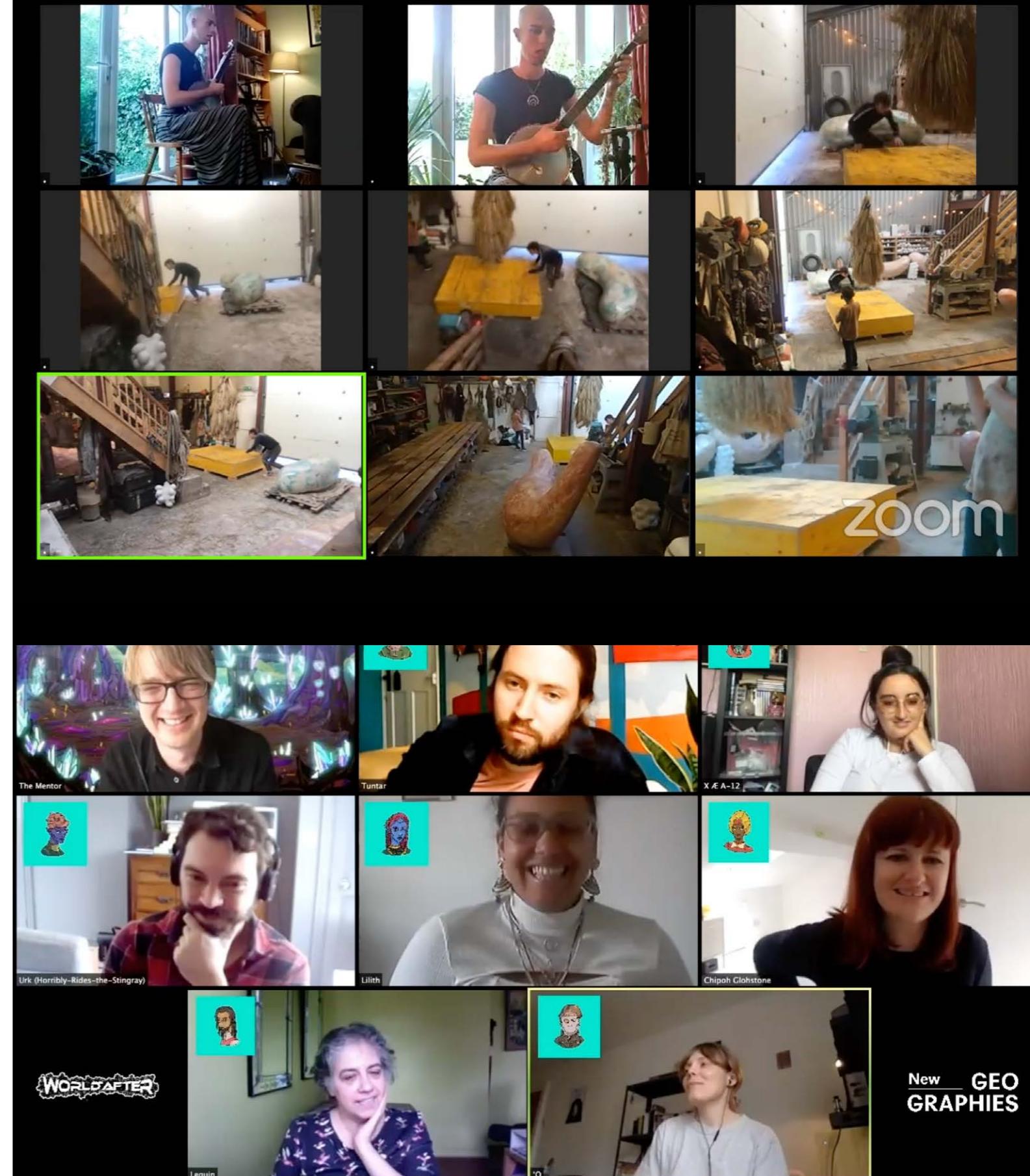


We were thrilled to support the new online platform 'Transmissions' that was established by Anne Duffau, Hana Noorali and Tai Shani in response to the lockdown in March when many artists were losing commissions and exhibitions. Alongside Wysing, Season 1 was funded by ArtQuest+DACS, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Oscar Murillo Studio, Somerset House Studios with Chisenhale Gallery, Grazer Kunstverein, Netwerk Aalst and Matt's Gallery joining us for Season 2. Alongside Anne Duffau, Hana Noorali and Tai Shani, the invited hosts and curators of episodes were Kat Anderson, Mykki Blanco, BBZ collective, CAConrad, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Johanna Hedva, Ignota Books, Juliet Jacques, Sophie Jung, Tarek Lakhrissi, Plastique Fantastique and Legacy Russell.

Transmissions broadcast the work of 95 artists, poets and musicians over 14 episodes and was watched by 14,000 people.

TRACING THE EAST

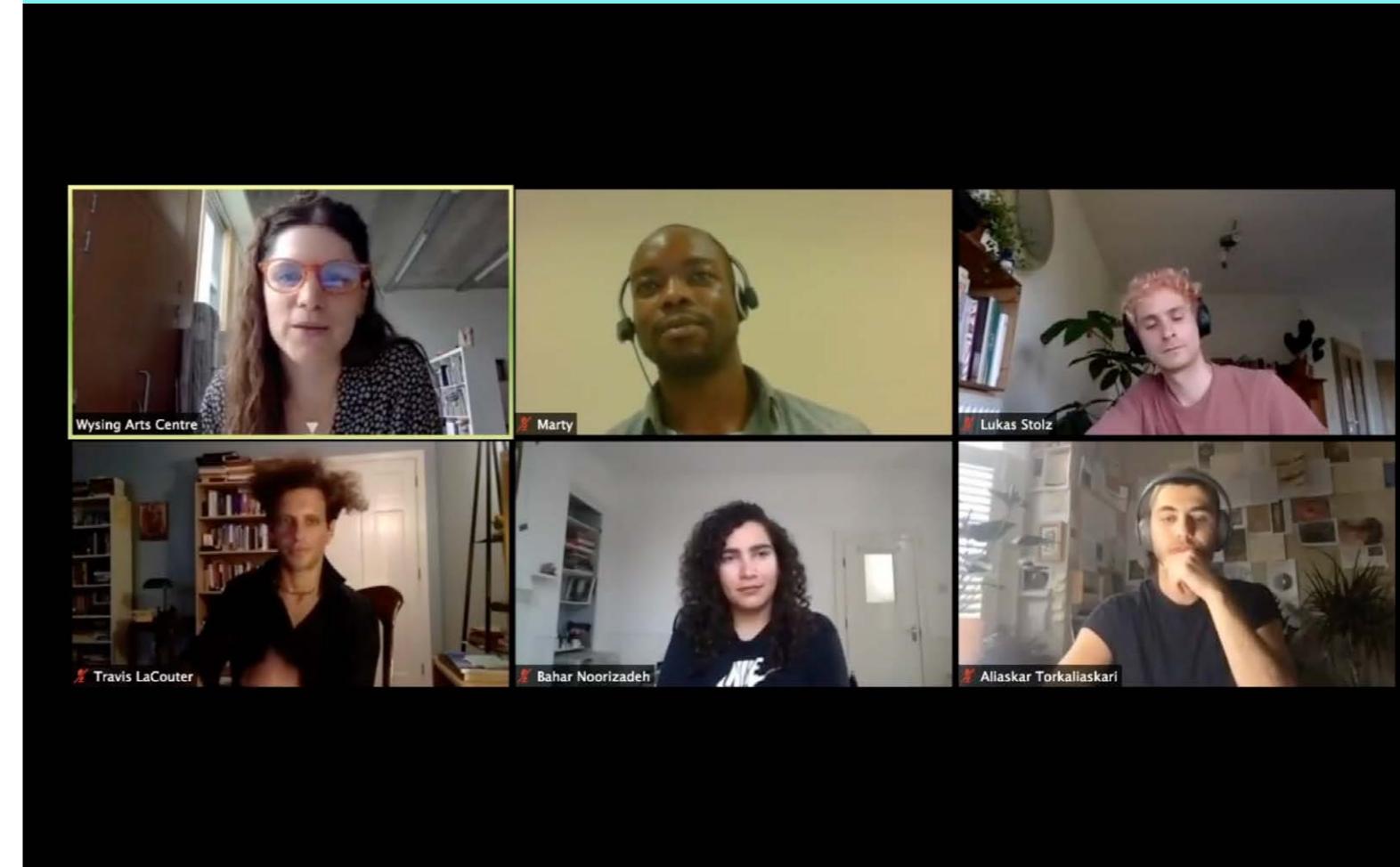
'Tracing the East' was the culmination of our three-year collaborative programme, 'New Geographies'. Initially intended as an onsite event, it was re-configured for an online audience and included ten podcasts, five films, a soundscape, an audio walk, a live online gaming session, two live performances and three live panel discussions discussing the themes of Population, Landscape, and History. With contributions from New Geographies artists Maria Anastassiou, David Blandy, Marcus Coates & Leah Millar, Cooking Sections, Ian Giles, Krijn de Koning, susan pui san lok, Studio Morison, Stuart Whipps, Laura Wilson and invited contributors: dancer, Sam Amos; musician, Jacken Elswyth; independent curator, Kate Phillimore; writer and curator, Sarah Shin; and Dr Amy Tobin, Curator of Exhibitions at Kettle's Yard.



'Tracing the East' live role-playing game 'The World After', by David Blandy

OPEN STUDIOS

In response to the closing of our site we brought our annual Open Studios event online and extended it over five weeks through a series of panel discussions and online presentations. The artists who took part were Damaris Athene, Philip Cornett, Emanuela Cusin, Lawrence Epps, Robert Foster, Bettina Furnée, Naomi Harwin, Penny Klein, Mae, Emma Smith, Soheila Sokhanvari, Lucy Steggals, Aliaskar Torkaliaskari and Caroline Wendling with additional contributions from Marty Fati, Travis LaCouter, Bahar Noorizadeh and Lukas Stolz. Four artists joined our studio programme: Beeny Harwood-Purkiss, Aaron Ossia, Sally Plowman and Olu Taiwo.



Aliaskar Torkaliaskari in conversation with Marty Fati, Travis LaCouter, Bahar Noorizadeh and Lukas Stolz as part of Open Studios Online.

AMPLIFY & LEARNING



Ten artists were selected for our online residency for artists aged 18 to 25 years AMPlify: Lauren Clifford-Keane, Kelly Emelle, Jules Fennell, Poppy Jones-Little, Lucie MacGregor, Rosemary Moss, Alexis Parinas, Johanna Saunderson, Oliver Warren and Frances Whorrall-Campbell. The group are supported by artists Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Robin Buckley (rkss) and Anna Bunting-Branch and mentored by artists Laura Fox and Harold Offeh.

Working with partners, including the Kite Trust, Huntingdon Youth Group and 20Twenty Productions, we supported young people's wellbeing and creativity across Cambridgeshire and Fenland. We created a podcasting resource for young people that was distributed via local food banks and schools with Wysing studio artist Bettina Furnée, and a collaborative online programme with Lucy Steggals.

Other artists who supported the learning programme were Kelechi Anucha, Damaris Athene, Jack Cornell, Philip Cornett, Fiona Curran, Ben Doherty, Robert Foster, Carl Gent, Naomi Harwin, Penny Klein, Florian Roithmayr, Soheila Sokhanvari, Maxwell Sterling, Linda Stupart, Alice Theobald and Caroline Wendling.

SYLLABUS

Syllabus is our collaboratively produced alternative learning programme that provides a year-long series of retreats, reading groups, exhibitions and other opportunities for ten artists over one year, delivered in partnership with Eastside projects, INIVA, NewBridge Project, S1 Artspace, Spike Island and Studio Voltaire. As with our other programmes in 2020, Syllabus moved online.

The artists selected for Syllabus V were Sophie Blagden, Juliet Davis-Dufayard, Yuxin Jiang, Hwa Young Jung, Sarai Kirshner, Jack Lewdjaw, Sarah Maple, Duncan Poulton and Aliaskar Torkaliaskari and Barby Asante and Louise Shelley were Artistic Advisers across the year. Invited contributors included Al Cameron, Dr Edson Burton, Liz Gamlin, Lesley Guy, Sumaya Kassim, Ciara Lenihan, Modern Clay, Tendai Mutambu, Linda Stupart and Rehana Zaman.

The artists selected for Syllabus VI which will continue into 2021 were James Clarkson, Lauren Craig, Ufuoma Essi, Bettina Furnée, Olga Grotova, Helen Hamilton, Elsa James, Freya Johnson Ross, Daniel Trivedy and Sam Williams and Jade Montserrat and Amanprit Sandhu are Artistic Advisors.

RESIDENCIES

All residencies in 2020 had to be re-shaped in response to the pandemic. Some artists decided to undertake remote residencies and some have delayed their residencies until 2021. The artists who were in-residence during 2020 were Maëva Berthelot and Coby Sey, Robin Buckley and Laura Fox, Ruth Angel Edwards, Adam Gallagher, Chloée Maugile and Conrad Pack, Kelechi Anucha and Carl Gent, Christelle Oyiri-K, Linda Stupart, Sophie J Williamson. Artists who took part in remote residencies were West Java West Yorkshire Cooperative Movement (WJWY): George Clark, Ismal Muntaha and Bunga Saigian; Jessa Mockridge, Rebecca Jagoe, Maija Timonen, Rosa-Johan Uddoh and Anna Zett.

We worked with partners DASH, Midlands Arts Centre and MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) to host a residency for a D/deaf or disabled curator, with Hannah Wallis being selected.

EXHIBITIONS

'They Call it Idlewild' was a new film and text work by Helen Cammock, commissioned as part of our 30th birthday programme in 2019. The exhibition's centrepiece was a new film that explored the processes of idleness through visual and poetic intertextuality, drawing on writers such as Audre Lorde, Mary Oliver, James Joyce and Jonathan Crary to consider what it means to be idle. The exhibition closed early due to lockdown but the film was subsequently presented online and Cammock participated in an online in-conversation with Wysing curator, John Bloomfield, and gallery director Kate MacGarry.



John Bloomfield, Kate MacGarry and Helen Cammock, in-conversation

'Encounter' was a new solo exhibition by artist Naomi Harwin, and our first presentation as part of a new programme strand, Test Space, which provides a public platform for Wysing's studio artists to test out new ideas and directions. For the exhibition, she presented a series of objects with ambiguous sources, referencing machine-made and corporeal forms in a deceptive interplay of line and form, surface and object.

'Difficult Truths' was an online exhibition developed by the young people's group, Creative Circuit Huntingdon. The theme was chosen by the group to reflect issues young people face including concerns around climate change, mental health, bullying, fake news and the challenges of identity in the age of social media. They were supported by Wysing studio artist Damaris Athene and 11 young people took part in the open call exhibition.

WYSING ON TOUR

Helen Cammock's film 'They Call it Idlewild' was included in her first exhibition at Kate MacGarry Gallery, London and the group exhibition 'Unprecedented Times' at Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria. 2019 residency artist Athanasios Argianas exhibited work developed during his residency within his solo exhibition at Camden Arts Centre. 2018 residency artist Joe Moran launched 'Materiality Will Be Rethought', commissioned by Whitechapel Gallery and Dance Art Foundation and taking his residency research as a starting point. Studio Morison realised the ambitious structure 'MOTHER...' as part of our contribution to the region-wide commissioning programme, 'New Geographies'. Located at Wicken Fen nature reserve, the work takes wellbeing as its starting point and references local building traditions, materials and architectural vernacular to root the structure in the landscape as a space of respite.



Above: Studio Morison, 'MOTHER... 2020'. Photo: Charles Emerson

Below: Wysing on Tour: 'Materiality Will Be Rethought', Joe Moran at Whitechapel Gallery.
Photo: Camilla Greenwell



Helen Cammock, 'They Call it Idlewild', 2020, at Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria.
Photo: Markus Tretter

WYSING STAFF

Sally Adelman, Book-Keeper
John Eng Kiet Bloomfield, Curator/Acting Head of Programme
Zena Brackenbury, Volunteer
Elizabeth Brown, Assistant Curator
Damaris Dresser, Housekeeper and Caretaker
Ceri Ann Littlechild, Head of Operations
Donna Lynas, Director
Rhiannon Moxham, Receptionist and Administrative Assistant
Matt Nightingale, New Geographies Project Manager
Chloe Page, Digital Producer
Lucy Shipp, Education Manager
Hannah Wallis, Curator in Residence
Sandy Weiland, Fundraiser
Jack Wilson, Site and Technical Manager
Kath Wood, Business Continuity Support

WYSING TRUSTEES

John Bickley (Vice Chair)
Catherine Bray
Jenny Brooks
Terry Brooks
Michaela Crimmin
Jessica Lack
Rummana Naqvi Ladak
Jo Marsh (Chair)
Harold Offeh
Sohelia Sokhanvari (Studio Artist Observer)
Sarah Wells

WYSING SUPPORTERS

We are grateful to all our funders and supporters, in particular Arts Council England, for funding through their National Portfolio and Ambition for Excellence programmes. We would like to thank Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The National Trust, Art Fund, The British Council, D'Oyly Carte, South Cambridgeshire District Council and DASH, alongside our growing network of individual supporters for their funding during this challenging time.

2021 PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

Building on our work in 2020, our 2021 programme will take the theme of reception, as both a second part to last year's broadcasting theme and a response to the challenging events of 2020. An understanding of reception as an act of welcoming, hosting and caring will support our priorities over the year.

At a time of increased uncertainty and precarity, particularly for artists, we feel an increased obligation to use Wysing's resources responsibly. We will increase the portion of our annual budget spent on artist fees and new commissions across onsite residencies, remote residencies, digital and learning programmes. We will be undertaking a review of artists' pay across all our programmes.

We will review our use of open calls to consider approaches to programming that are less reliant on unpaid artist labour. Working with a network of advisors made up of Wysing alumni, we will make efforts to bring new voices into our programmes. We will also widen our support to artists beyond our geographic boundaries through a large scale programme of free 1-2-1 sessions.

We will support new audiences to reach us by introducing tiered pricing for ticketed events and travel bursaries for onsite events and exhibition launches.

In 2021 we will be prioritising the recruitment of a Trustee who is disabled or neurodivergent. And to address the diversity in our staff, we will invite an artist or board member who identifies as BIPOC to join interview panels. We will organise an annual internal study day addressing anti-racism, inclusion, equity and diversity.

We will continue to work with artists programmed as part of our broadcasting year, many of whom have had plans affected by Covid-19. Focusing on reception, the component of broadcasting that receives information, signals an openness and sensitivity to the new and unknown, while also considering how Wysing and our programmes can be more than a platform or a tool for speaking, but a tool for listening.



Above: Helen Cammock, 'They Call it Idlewild', 2020 (still).

Following page: Helen Cammock, 'They Call it Idlewild', 2020, at Wysing Arts Centre.
Photo: Wilf Speller



Can you remember when you last did nothing?



www.wysingartscentre.org