

SYLLABUS - WHAT IS IT?

Syllabus is a collaboratively produced alternative learning programme in its fifth year that supports ten artists across ten months. Syllabus V is led by Wysing Arts Centre, Eastside Projects, Iniva, The NewBridge Project, S1 Artspace and Spike Island.

Each Syllabus is built around a series of intensive gatherings, which the ten selected artists collaboratively develop with curators and artists who work with the partner organisations and two external Artistic Advisors. The participating artists actively contribute to its design and delivery across the ten months, working with individual organisations to shape each retreat.

Syllabus V aims to reach artists with a range of practices and artistic approaches and bring together individuals from across the UK. We are particularly keen to support applicants who have not yet had access to similar programmes and artists with Black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage, those who are facing barriers due to difficult socio-economic situations, and artists who identify as LGBTQI+ or have disabilities.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

The Syllabus was established in 2015 by six innovative UK arts organisations Wysing Arts Centre (Cambridge), Eastside Projects (Birmingham), New Contemporaries (National), S1 Artspace (Sheffield), Spike Island (Bristol) and Studio Voltaire (London). Iniva (London) joined as a partner in 2017, whilst New Contemporaries left the partnership in 2018. For the duration of Syllabus V, Studio Voltaire will be stepping back to focus on a major capital development project during which their entire building will be closed for re-development. The NewBridge Project (Newcastle) will be joining as a guest partner.

The individuals and organisations who will collaborate with the Syllabus V artists, and who will be involved across the ten months, are Ruth Claxton, Eastside Projects; Tavian Hunter, Melanie Keen and Simina Neagu, Iniva; Niomi Fairweather, Rebecca Huggan and Daniel Russell, The NewBridge Project; Laura Clarke, S1 Artspace; Elisa Kay, Spike Island; John Eng Kiet Bloomfield, Wysing Arts Centre. For Syllabus V, The NewBridge Project have joined as a guest partner. Barby Asante and Louise Shelley will be the two Artistic Advisors for Syllabus V.

The first iteration of the programme, The Syllabus in 2015, was led by artist Andy Holden. Contributing practitioners included Barby Asante, Ruth Beale, Richard Long, Goshka Macuga, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Niki Russell, Emma Smith, Nayia Yiakoumaki, Richard Wentworth, Keith Wilson and Rehana Zahman. With additional support from John Akomfrah, Benedict Drew, James Langdon, Kathy Noble, Eddie Peake, Marinella Senatore, Mike Sperlinger and Milly Thompson.

The second year of the programme in 2016 included artist Milly Thompson and curator George Vasey as Artistic Advisors. Contributing artists and curators from year two included Jeremy Akerman, Polly Brannan, Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Anthea Hamilton, Mark Leckey, Katrina Palmer, Cally Spooner, Jonathan P. Watts and Dr. Zoe Whitley. It also included a trip to Documenta IX in Athens.

Syllabus III included artists Jesse Darling and Harold Offeh as Artistic Advisors. Contributors included Larry Achiampong, Barby Asante, Ross Birrel, Jamie Crewe, Sabel Gavaldon, Ellie Harrison, Nav Haq, Nadia Hebson, Young In Hong, Lucy Lopez, Evan Ifekoya, Randolph Mathews, Trevor Mathison, Sofia

Niazi, Richard Parry, Imran Perretta, Holly Pester, Rory Pilgrim, Rosalie Schweiker, Tai Shani, Dr Helen Smith, Richard Taylor, The Other MA (ToMA) and DM Withers. The programme included a trip to Glasgow International.

Syllabus IV started in September 2018 with Artistic Advisors Sonya Dyer and Helen Nisbet. Contributors so far include: Jamie Harper, Hamish MacPherson, Jenny Moore, Morgan Quaintance, Monika Walenko and Andrea Luka Zimmermann.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURE?

The programme is structured around seven gatherings, lasting between 3 and four days. During the first retreat at Wysing Arts Centre, artists and individuals connected to the partner organisations and the Artistic Advisors come together with participating artists to identify broad themes. This group then collaboratively devise and structure a curriculum that will support individual and collective artistic development and provide access to networks and knowledge.

During periods between gatherings, texts and reading lists are uploaded onto a shared drive which will also support discussions to be continued remotely. The benefits of the programme include:

- A collaborative and reflexive learning experience
- The opportunity to develop a supportive network of peers
- An intensive programme of seminars at partners venues that offer time to come together to discuss work
- Introductions to, and connections with arts organisations, communities and networks in cities across the UK.
- Two focused 1 to 1 hour-long visits with the Artistic Advisors over the course of the year

WHAT DOES A GATHERING LOOK LIKE?

Examples of previous gatherings can be viewed through Wysing Arts Centre's website here:

<http://www.wysingartscentre.org/archive/retreats/>

WHAT HAVE ALUMNI THOUGHT OF THE SYLLABUS?

2015 Alumni: Simon Bayliss, Noel Clueit, Susie Green, Mathew Parkin, Rory Pilgrim, Jessica Sarah Rinland, Tom Salt, Lucy Steggals, Tom Varley and Rafal Zajko.

2016 Alumni: Mira Calix, Faye Claridge, Mike Harvey, E. Jackson, Tyler Mallison, Nika Neelova, Tom Smith, Dylan Spencer-Davidson, Thomas Whittle and Laura Wilson.

2017 Syllabus Artists: Frederica Agbah, Chris Alton, Conor Baird, Ilker Cinarel, Phoebe Davies, Freya Dooley, Rose Gibbs, Jill McKnight, Ben Sanderson and Karis Upton.

2018 Syllabus Artists: Scott Caruth, Libita Clayton, Jessica Coleman, Bettina Fung, Laura Hindmarsh, Beth Kettel, David Lisser, Alicja Rogalska, Kirsty Russell and Abigail Sidebotham.

"In all honesty I expected this year to make me more professional - but it has made me more honest, raw, personal and added an energy to my work that I think my undergrad and working in the art sector had begun to numb out of me."

"I feel like I have developed as an artist in ways that I could not have envisaged a year ago. I feel much more confident, particularly in terms of breaking media boundaries and working more conceptually. I feel that The Syllabus has acted as a reliable and focused audience for my work and ideas, and has made me more aware and confident about how these connect within a wider field. I generally feel much more connected and supported outside the South West, which is an exciting prospect"

"One of my aims when applying for Syllabus was to increase my network beyond the bubble I had been working in - to meet artists practicing elsewhere in the country and find out what was going on with them. These expectations have been completely exceeded."

"Looking back at the variety, depth and sheer complexity of each retreat, it has been an immensely challenging and illuminating experience. The generosity of all the partners and contributors has been amazing – the level of commitment and care has been deeply inspiring and motivating"

"I found the Syllabus an excellent test bed for new ideas and work. The constant of my fellow participants and the addition of a new audience at each retreat meant I was confident in taking risks that I would have otherwise reconsidered. This opportunity to fail is enormously useful when you are trying to figure out how far you can push different aspects of your work."

"I was extremely shy and socially anxious at the beginning of the program and struggled greatly with public presentations of all kinds. Having to repeatedly do these things and being occasionally pushed out of comfort zones was really helpful. I still have to work a lot at these issues, but Syllabus has made me much more confident that I can and that this is worthwhile."

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Syllabus V costs artists **£500** for the ten-month programme. There will be additional costs related to travel and accommodation, but sessions are planned well in advance to give time for participants to book low cost travel and accommodation. Accommodation is provided at the first and final retreats at Wysing Arts Centre. Partners try to provide lunch and dinner during a gathering or to source low-cost options.

Participating artists in previous years have estimated the additional costs at **£800** to **£1000**.

The overall cost to deliver Syllabus V is £50,000 per year. The direct costs of delivering the programme are £23,000 of which £18,000 has been raised from Arts Council England and of which £5,000 is made up from fees from the ten participating artists. The remaining £27,000 is the contribution in-kind from the partner organisations to enable the programme to happen.

CAN I APPLY FOR SUPPORT?

The partners are happy to write letters of support for participants who wish to make applications for professional development or travel grants. We are also offering one artists bursary of £500 to cover

programme costs, aimed at artists in difficult socio-economic circumstances. Examples of this could include periods of homelessness, being a carer for a disabled or elderly relative, needing additional access costs or childcare costs, being in receipt of jobseeker's allowance or a range of other barriers to participation. If you would like to be considered for a bursary, please make this clear in your application and outline your circumstances.

Here are links to some funders who have supported previous participants:

- [Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice](#)
- [Creative Scotland Open Project Funding](#)
- [Arts Council Wales](#)
- [Oppenheim-John Downes Memorial Trust](#)

HOW DO I APPLY?

Applications to the programme are made through an open call from March 2019. We are particularly keen to hear from applicants outside or not engaged with formal education or formal art training, have been out of formal education for at least 4 years, and/or have not yet undertaken an MA. We will be looking to establish a cohort that represents a diversity of cultural perspectives and of artistic practices and applicants willing to both develop their own work and actively contribute to the development of the curriculum.

We cannot support international travel so if you are not permanently based in the UK, you would need to be able to commit to attending the sessions at each location throughout the ten months.

Please visit Wysing's website at www.wysingartscentre.org and click on Opportunities to find out more about how to make an application to Syllabus V.

Applications may be made via video or audio, to support those with dyslexia, rather than written form. If you require any further support to make your application, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at info@wysingartscentre.org or visit one of our drop-in sessions found on the open call form.