

## Press Release

02 June 2016

### **Syllabus II artists announced - alternative peer led learning programme for artists**

Ten artists have been selected for Syllabus II, a national programme delivered by Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, Eastside Projects, Birmingham, New Contemporaries, S1 Artspace, Sheffield, Spike Island, Bristol, and Studio Voltaire, London, working in partnership. It provides an alternative learning programme for artists over a one-year period which is peer led and developed collaboratively with the artists and partners. This year, we are pleased to announce additional support from The Fenton Arts Trust in the form of bursaries for the artists.

The selected artists are: **Mira Calix, Faye Claridge, Mike Harvey, E. Jackson, Tyler Mallison, Nika Neelova, Tom Smith, Dylan Spencer-Davidson, Thomas Whittle and Laura Wilson.**

The artists are based across the UK – Sussex, Essex, Edinburgh, Warwickshire and London - and represent a wide range of ages and experience, coming from across the globe. Their work includes painting, sculpture, music, publishing, installation and performance, alongside cross-disciplinary and curatorial practices.

Starting at Wysing in September 2016, the artists will come together to share their work, and co-develop the year's syllabus alongside the partners. Meeting every two months, the cohort will invite guest artists, curators, writers and other practitioners to deliver intensive seminars at each of the partner venues. Artist Milly Thompson and curator George Vasey will lead on the delivery of the programme across the ten months. The first year of The Syllabus in 2015 saw guest artists including Barby Asante, Céline Condorelli, Andy Holden, James Langdon, Richard Long, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Richard Wentworth and Rehana Zaman. The full list of retreats from 2015 are available on Wysing Arts Centre's website here: [www.wysingartscentre.org](http://www.wysingartscentre.org)

After the pilot year of The Syllabus in 2015, which has already seen ten artists develop a strong peer support network and create new opportunities, the partners invited applications for year two through an open call. Following an interview process that sought to select artists from a wide range of backgrounds and whose work reflects a range of interests and practices, the partners are delighted to announce the second cohort of the programme.

**Mira Calix, selected for this year's programme commented,** *"I'm so looking forward to the start of this year's Syllabus and with it, the opportunity for collective inquiry and discourse. Participating in the programme allows me to take a moment to examine and reflect on my practice, something that feels luxurious, yet I know to be essential. As a group we are being given the forum and licence to shape our field of learning in the company of a highly innovative consortium of UK arts organisations. Roll on September and the homework assignments!"*

**Chelsea Pettitt, Head of Partnerships at Wysing Arts Centre and Coordinator of the Syllabus** said, *“We are excited to bring this cohort together for the second year of the Syllabus. Their mutual interest and commitment to peer led and collaborative learning, alongside a wide range of backgrounds and interests, will contribute to a very diverse programme throughout the year. Each artist has a unique approach to their practice which should certainly create an inspiring support network.”*

For press information contact Nicola Jeffs – nicolajeffspr@gmail.com / 07794694754

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Artists Biographies**

**Mira Calix** is a British award winning artist, composer and performer born in South Africa and currently based in rural Suffolk. Music and sound have always been a key component of her work, which she continues to integrate with visual media and technological innovation to create multi-disciplinary installations and performance works. Collaboration is at the heart of Calix’s practice, often working with visual arts, scientists, architects and musicians. She is particularly interested in how sculpture, performance and installation can make an impact on public spaces with the audience influencing and activating the work. Recent commissions include The ADA Project with Conrad Shawcross, the Vinyl Factory, London and Peninsula Hotel, Hong Kong (2016) Moving Museum 35, Nanjing University of the Arts, China (2016), Trichotomy, Southwark Arts Council (2015) and Inside There Falls, Sydney Festival (2015).

**Faye Claridge** lives and works in rural Warwickshire and her work is often site-specific, activated by the public and rooted in historical ideas. Claridge is fascinated by national and personal identity and how notions of tradition or folklore can influence current, shifting identities. Her photographs, sculptures and installations are often inspired by collections, archives or landscape and look to recreate past events in order to fuel questioning around history and storytelling, and the participants’ place within it. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions include *Kern Baby*, Library of Birmingham (2016) and Compton Verney, Warwickshire (2015), *Weighty Friend*, Ironbridge, Shropshire (2015), and *Children Then and Now* with the Heritage Lottery Fund in Warwickshire (2014-15); recent group exhibitions include *Tattoo*, R-space, Ireland (2016) and *Harvest*, Metal, Peterborough and Studio Orta, Paris (2015).

**Mike Harvey** was born in Belfast and lives and works in London. Harvey’s installation work encompasses prints, sculpture, text and video and looks at the formation and boundaries of personal space. He is interested in how these boundaries contribute to the feeling of displacement and belonging, individual and structure, fascination and fear. He analyses the memories and integration of the personal, versus memorialization and commemoration of the societal. Recent solo exhibitions include *Brick Biter*, fourFOLD, London (2015), *1/2 cut chromes*, OUTPOST, Norwich (2015), *So Swamped So*, Xero, Kline & Coma, London (2015) and the group exhibition *The MAC International* at The MAC, Belfast (2014).

**E. Jackson** was born in Manchester and lives and works in Essex after many years living abroad. Jackson

uses painting, printmaking, photography and objects to explore the ambient space of experience and the geometrical space of the picture plane. Her interest lies in how time-based theories from natural science and philosophy translate into frameworks for composition, surface and scene in painting. Specifically, can a painting be made within the same temporal space as experience? She also produces small print editions and artists' books for individuals, public collections and national libraries. Recent and forthcoming exhibitions and publications include Esparto (collaboration), Museu Molí Paperer de Capellades, Barcelona, Spain (2016) Immersion, as part of Intuitive Projects by artist Ignacio Acosta and Folio for The Temporal School of Experimental Geography publication (2016).

**Tyler Mallison** is a British-American artist living and working in London. Through a combination of installation, painting, sculpture, photography, video, animation and digital drawing, his work gives form to an 'uncertain space'— characterised by traces of the ephemeral and actions that introduce the medium of time, body and movement. Both research and material exploration are integral to his process—drawing on diverse subjects that span consumerism, philosophy, psychology, semiotics, science and digital technologies. Recent exhibitions include Tools of Resilience, Space Studios, The White Building, London (2016), FORÅRSUDSTILLINGEN, Spring Exhibition, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2016), Show What You Want Show 2: Platform Platvorm, Melkweg, Amsterdam (2015) and Fingers Crossed III, The Wonder Inn Gallery, Manchester (2015).

**Nika Neelova** was born in Moscow, Russia and lives and works in London. Her sculpture explores a post-human landscape and are often dysfunctional replicas of daily objects. Neelova is interested in the material processes involved in translating an object into another medium, decoding and recoding it into its new reality, altering its internal structure and eliminating its original purpose. Recent solo exhibitions include FAULTS FOLDS FALLS, Vigo gallery London (2015) and I lean to you numb as a fossil. Tell me I'm here, Ron Mandos, Amsterdam (2014); group exhibitions include Archeologia e Architecture, Fondazione 107, Turin (2015) and The Sky is a mountain, Foundation Stifelsen 3,14, Bergen, Norway (2015).

**Tom Smith** lives and works in London. Working in print, text, video, and sculpture, Smith tests the shifting and unstable border between the fictive and the actual, looking at the loyalty of images to their subjects. He is interested in how fictitious stories can impact our perception of the present, and how definitions of value and changes in the nature of technology can contribute to creating uncertainty. Smith confronts the fundamental anxiety about what constitutes an authentic experience. Recent exhibitions include Stolen Tear, Unit Projects, Blackpool (2015) Showdown, Bloc Projects, Sheffield (2015), TomTom, Model Gallery, Liverpool (2014) and Vulcan Point, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh (2014).

**Dylan Spencer-Davidson** was born in Washington D.C, USA and lives and works in London. Spencer-Davidson's work incorporates music, text, performance, online media and video. He is interested in questioning the reality of perception, the functioning of the human mind and the shortcomings of logic. The work often slips between virtual and 'real' worlds – opening up a subtle crack between the two, offering a glimpse of experience free of the violence of normativity. Recent exhibitions, performances

and screenings include *The One Minutes, Eye*, Amsterdam, NL (2016), *Open Film 2016, Outpost*, Norwich (2016), *Recommended 4 errbody*, Art Licks Weekend, London (2015), *Ariel 2.0, Bold Tendencies*, London (2015) *Kunstnacht Konstanz & Kreuzlingen*, Kreuzlingen, CH (2014) and *I Keep Dreaming of You Every Single Night Last*, G30, Berlin (2013).

**Thomas Whittle** lives and works in Edinburgh. His practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, and writing; often bringing these mediums together. Whittle produces images through an exploration into pattern, texture, tone, journey, accident and failure, but always with a keen interest in the materials used. Recently, he has moved into analogue photography, developing and manipulating celluloid film in the dark room and focused on making small publications. In 2016, He founded the publishing company the Long Distance Press with the artist Adam Shield and in 2015, the online curatorial project MONOMATIC. Recent curated and solo exhibitions include *The Number Shop*, Edinburgh (2016), *Slide Night #3, Rhubaba*, Edinburgh (2016), *RIFF at Baltic Project Space* (2013-14) and *I Against I: Part I and Part II*, at the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland (2013).

**Laura Wilson** was born in Belfast and lives and works in London. Raw building materials and the ephemeral qualities of light and movement are the main source materials in Wilson's work, which manifests itself as performative, sculptural or architectural intervention. In constructing and relocating physical objects and events, her work investigates how memory and knowledge is created, stored and translated, posing questions around labour, skill and the manipulation of material. Recent exhibitions include *Politics of Food 3*, Delfina Foundation (2016), *Fold and Stretch*, Site Gallery, Sheffield, UK (2016), *Brick Project* at RIBA, London, UK (2016), *Black Top*, Whitstable Biennale 2014, Whitstable, UK (2014) and *Pattern for a Dark Lantern*, for Café Curio at Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2013).

### **Partner Organisations**

**Eastside Projects** is an international centre of excellence based in a free public gallery that is being imagined and organized by artists, in partnership with Birmingham City University. Eastside Projects makes art public; commissioning, producing and presenting experimental art practices and demonstrating ways in which art may be useful as part of society. The influential Extra Special People programme develops regional talent positioned in a hyper-local and super-international context. Eastside Projects provides vital infrastructure and supports best practice by establishing and exercising new models for artists and curators to research, produce and thrive.

**New Contemporaries** is the leading UK organisation supporting emergent art practice from British Art Schools. Since 1949 New Contemporaries has consistently provided a critical platform for new and recent fine art graduates primarily by means of an annual, nationally touring exhibition. Independent of place and democratic to the core, New Contemporaries is open to all. One of only two open exhibitions in the UK, participants are selected by a panel comprising influential art figures including curators, writers, and artists often who have themselves previously been a part of the New Contemporaries, and a rigorous process that considers the work within a broad cultural context.

**S1 Artspace** was set up in 1995 by artists living and working in Sheffield who wanted to create a different type of studio organisation. One where artists would collaborate, share ideas and create opportunities for themselves. It's grown from a modest, voluntary run studio complex to an organisation that now exhibits work at an international standard. S1 provides studio space for artists at varying stages, from recent graduates to established artists working at an international level. Over its 20-year history, S1 has accommodated over 130 artists through its studios, presented work by over 500 artists and commissioned 65 new works. Most recently this has included new commissions with Michael Fullerton, Elena Bajo, Jessica Warboys, Nicolas Deshayes and ambitious solo exhibitions with international artists Haegue Yang, Keith Wilson and Jennifer West.

**Spike Island** is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, a place where artists and the public can meet, enabling audiences to engage with artists' research and production. It also creates pathways for artists and other creative producers by nurturing a rich arts ecology that supports professional development beyond the confines of the organisation. Within its 80,000 square foot building, Spike Island offers visitors a year-round programme of exhibitions, events and activities, as well as providing working space for around 90 resident artists, designers and creative businesses and students from the University of the West of England.

**Studio Voltaire** is a leading independent contemporary arts organisation based in London. Studio Voltaire exists to support artistic practices and create a space for thinking, experimentation and reflection; its main activities are the provision of affordable studios, a renowned programme of exhibitions, performances and commissions, and a pioneering education programme.

**Wysing Arts Centre** develops new ways to support artists and enables art and ideas to engage a wide range of people in unexpected ways. Wysing's large rural site near Cambridge comprises artists' studios, educational space, a gallery, live/works studio, a 17th century farmhouse and outdoor sculptures and structures. Wysing offers a unique environment for research and experimentation and for the development and presentation of new work; with an ongoing and innovative artistic programme of events, exhibitions, retreats and residencies and a unique programme for young artists.



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