

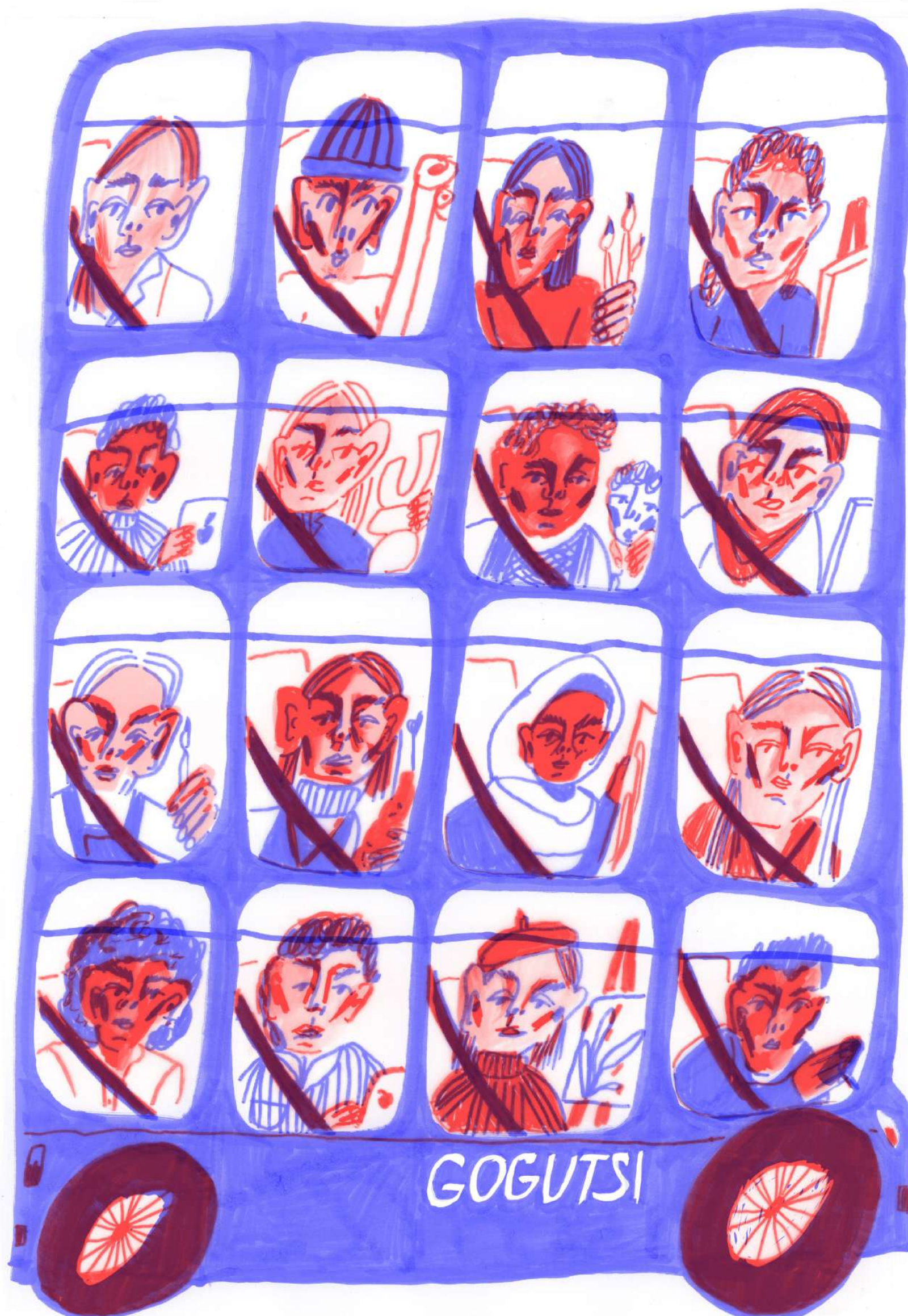
# The DODO



Issue #2

The RCA Student Newspaper

Wednesday, 6th December 2023



**NEWS** | Details about the **upcoming RCA Christmas Fête**, an introduction to the **Students' Union**, and updates on **student & alumni projects**

**CULTURE** | **Short fiction** by Canaan Brown, **exhibition reviews** by Salomé Mercier and Lanzehang Ying, an **interview** with Hongxi Li, **poetry** by Alice Dawson, and a zine extract by Lujane Vaqar Pagganwala

**GLOBAL** | Sketches from a **visit to Maijiku in Gansu, China** by Lifeng Liao and a drawing of a fountain in **Singapore's Raffles Hotel** by Sally Hsiao

**GALLERY** | **Paintings** by Margaux Halloran, a **food installation** by Lixin Wang, and **coloured soundscapes** by Marian Miñarro

**SATIRE** | A **cartoon strip** by Madeline Horwath

With special thanks to:

The RCA Students' Union  
Sohom Mandal, MA Digital  
Direction  
Artemis Weng, MA Digital  
Direction



# THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART CHRISTMAS FÊTE

Artists and Designers from the Royal College of Art, invite you to their annual Christmas Fête, hosted by the RCA Students' Union

Illustration by Erick Guzman Cal, MA Architecture

RCA



7th, 8th & 9th DECEMBER  
Courtyard Gallery,  
Upper Gulbenkian  
RCA Kensington Campus,  
Kensington Gore/ Jay Mews

Royal College of Art  
Postgraduate Art & Design

## The Christmas Fête

The Royal College of Art and Students' Union presents to you our annual Christmas Fête. Established in 2012, the RCASU Christmas Fête is a traditional indoor Christmas market. Artists and Designers invite you to view and purchase bespoke creations. A wide range of ceramics, jewellery, prints, textiles, illustrations, and zines will be waiting to catch your eye and fill your stockings. Pop by Thursday 7th, Friday 8th and Saturday 9th of December between 1pm - 8pm to pick up bespoke works by the artists and designers of the future. Plus, enjoy mulled wine and soft drinks while you shop at our pop-up bar!  
Address: Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU

Warm regards,  
The Royal College of Art and Students' Union

## An Introduction to the SU Team!

In the heart of our vibrant student community, the Students' Union (SU) stands as a beacon of unity and advocacy. But who are the fantastic individuals that make up this dynamic team?

👑 **President Kimberley** - A Scorpio with an undying love for music, Kimberley guides us with her passion and determination.

🐼 **Vice President Thomas** - As a Gemini, Thomas is a fierce advocate for social justice, always ready to take a stand for what's right.

📖 **SU Director Ryan** - The meticulous Virgo of the group, Ryan delves deep into fantasy and lore, adding a touch of magic to our journey.

🐻 **The Mother of the Group - Fardusa** - A whiz with numbers and a real-life cuddly bear, Fardusa keeps us grounded with her warmth

🌟 **Ruby and Halimo** - Both Virgos, they're the eclectic spirits of the bunch. You'll find one tending to a horse, DJ'ing, hitting the rugby pitch, or exploring far-off lands.

🚀 **Sara** - A pocket rocket, also a Scorpio, Sara is the nomad of the team, always on the move, seeking new adventures.

👩 **Newbies Alert! Megan** - A Pisces on a quest to become Dr. Megan, she's the embodiment of ambition and dedication.

🎵 **Ali** - A mellow Cancer with an impeccable taste in music, Ali adds a harmonious touch to the team and ArtBar.

These are the fantastic minds and hearts behind the SU, working tirelessly to make your student experience truly unforgettable. Stay tuned for the latest news, stories, and events in our buzzing campus community!

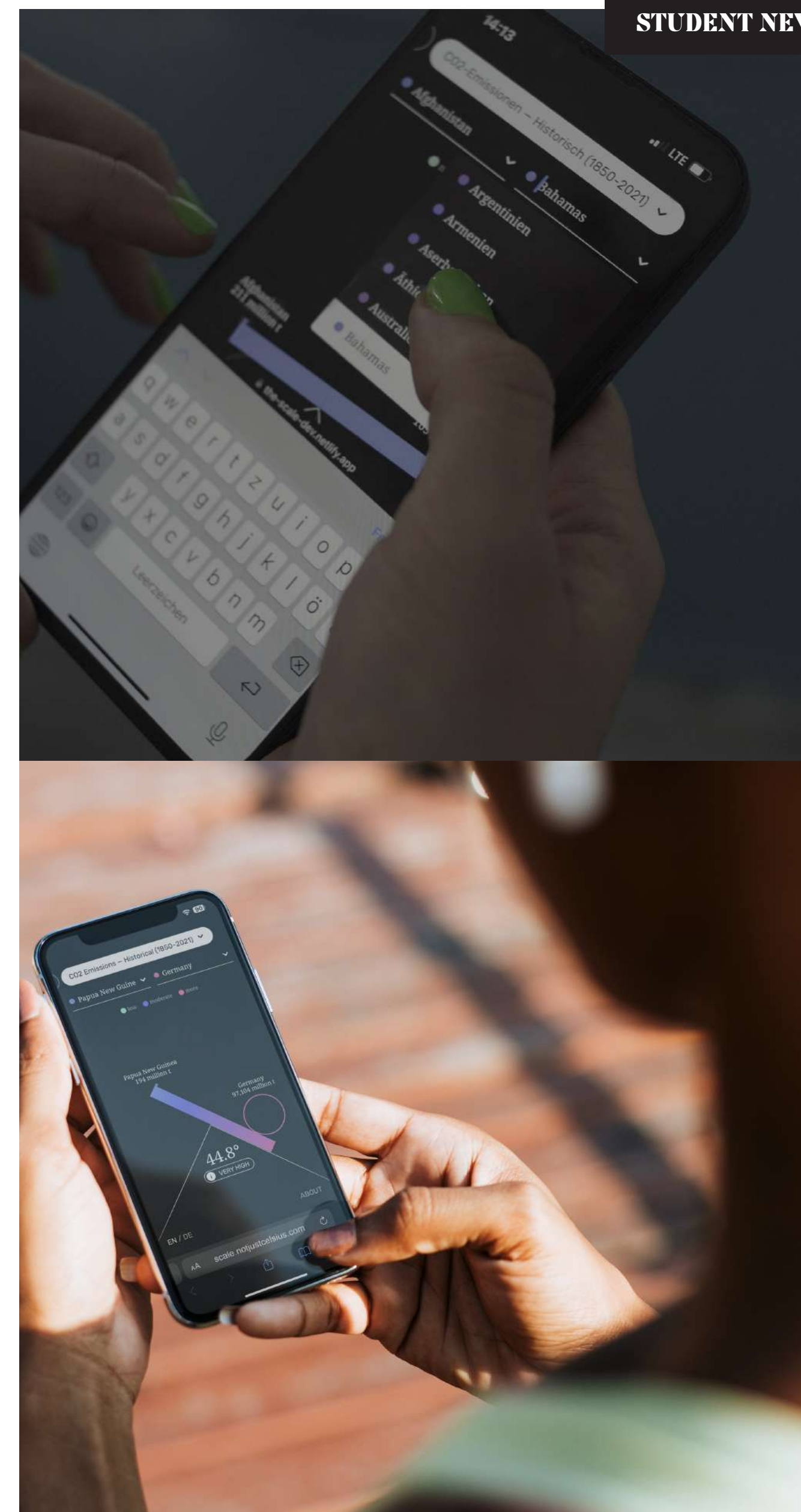
## The Scale

The Scale is an interactive data tool that calculates and visualises climate inequality. Paul Baule from MA Digital Direction has been working with the Interactive Media Foundation to make the design and concept work for this project happen.

Following the principle of a traditional scale, The Scale uses scientific data to compare how vulnerable different nations are to climate change and to show how unequally nations have contributed to global CO2 emissions over time. The digital tool hosted as a subdomain on the NOT JUST °CELSIUS website in the form of a web application.

The Scale is part of the NOT JUST °CELSIUS project which is pushing for a fundamental shift in how we protect our planet and its people: Visionary youth from around the world are taking governments to court to force ambitious climate action and greater climate justice. For the first time in history, this fight has reached The World Court.

NOTJUST°CELSIUS was initiated by the Interactive Media Foundation gGmbH, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating impactful narratives on socially relevant topics. We believe that appreciation, responsiveness, cooperation and diversity are the basis of social cohesion. Our commitment to these values is the foundation in our work towards democratic structures. As a scientific partner Climate Analytics gGmbH supported the project by verifying the data and developing the calculation for the data visualization.



To test out the tool, scan the QR code or visit: <https://scale.notjustcelsius.com/>

Credits:  
Concept and Design: Paul Baule, Kaj Schlicht  
Producer: Kaj Schlicht  
UX Design and Programming: Miek Dunbar  
Design Consulting: Regine Abo  
Scientific Partner: Climate Analytics



# TRA : A Curatorial Collective Born From the RCA

The reason for this curatorial collective, perhaps, has to do with the limited opportunities and relatively short duration of the RCA Curating course. The craving for practical experience complements the theoretical foundation of our course, and engaging discussions with artists transform the ideas in our minds, allowing them to flow, circulate, and become vibrant.

As international students, we face uncertainties tied to visa requirements. Our creativity always has an expiration date, as is the case for many artists. Once we are no longer labelled “students”, proving that we are “global talents” becomes a genuine concern; and the nitty-gritties of organising an exhibition emerge as ideas transition from paper to reality.

The curatorial collective TRA was born under these circumstances: to coexist between resonance and ambivalence, and to support emerging creative practitioners.

The prefix ‘TRA’ signifies going beyond and existing in between. It encapsulates the idea of crossing boundaries, borders, and navigating the liminal spaces where new possibilities and perspectives emerge. We see contemporaneity existing within transitions, the ephemeral, and our ever-changing present, which reflects the themes we explore throughout our three exhibitions.

**TRA Collective** is led by Lanzehang (Lan) Ying and Blair Haijia Luo, both of whom are independent curators currently based in London.



Featured artists: Lucas Ferreira | Jinju Koo | Song Lee | Changpeng Li | Yujie Li | Ava Tribušon Ovsenik | Dana Powell | Liberty Quinn | Unu Sohn | Rebecca Tucker | 227



Featured artists: Theo Papandrepoulos | Noa Geras | Bede Robinson | Jiu Jian Zeng



Featured artists: Juliet Aaltonen | Shangyu Cai | Ülku Çağlayan | Jessica Woo Jung Ghil | Xin Hui Hu | Jinju Koo | Sara Osman

The three exhibitions mentioned here are collaboratively curated by Lanzehang (Lan) Ying, Blair Haijia Luo, and Ran Zhu. To learn more about our projects, please visit our website <https://www.tracollective.co.uk/> or you can find us on Instagram @tracollective.

# BLEET !

verb (used with object)  
-to give forth with or as if with a bleat:  
He bleated his objections in a helpless rage.  
-to babble; prate.  
noun  
-the cry of a sheep, goat, or calf.  
-any similar sound:  
the bleat of distant horns.  
-foolish, complaining talk:  
I listened to their inane bleat all evening.

To give forth - to offer a position  
To babble - to grapple with language  
The cry of a sheep/goat or similar sound  
- to consider the sonic  
Foolish, complaining talk - to commit to making noise and being heard

Bleet began life as a zine, conceived by three friends. The publication was initially created in order to generate a shared physical space within which we were free to ‘bleet!’. A vessel or a wishing well in which we could place our thoughts, our desires and our half-formed attempts to try to understand or to try to get close to.

As the project progressed and we explored our relationship with text and language, we began to explore the ‘noise’ that language makes, how it resonates in our bodies and how it connects us to other bodies. Le Guin suggests that literature is a ‘social act’ and so we considered how Bleet! might leap off the page and to enter into a shared place of utterance. This is how Bleet’s live events were born; a place to combine the performative nature of language, the creation of the sonic and perhaps most importantly, the act of listening.

The first dictionary definition of the word bleet/bleat is, ‘to give forth’ - we consider this as an offering of commune, to give forth a place for our shared pursuits. To bleet/bleat is also ‘to babble’; an attempt to grapple with language, a place in which we allow slippage and repetition through our attempts to express. Perhaps most recognisably to bleet/bleat

7.30PM  
1ST FEBRUARY  
THE IVY HOUSE SE15 3BE  
@bleet\_zine

MERMAID CHUNKY  
JP GUERRIER  
AVA GRAULS  
LOLA  
SALLY O'REILLY  
DJ PATRICK CLARKE (THE QUIETUS)  
MORE ACTS TBC  
+ ZINE LAUNCH 004: SALLY O'REILLY

7.30PM  
1ST FEBRUARY  
THE IVY HOUSE SE15 3BE  
@bleet\_zine

is described as, ‘the cry of a goat, sheep or similar sound’, we take this definition as our cue to consider the sonic beyond the linguistic, to consider music, noise and oscillation as forms of communication. Finally to bleet/bleat is described as, ‘foolish complaining talk’. This we take as our commitment to foolish ideals, to being critically engaged, to making noise and to being heard.



# Opthalmia

## Canaan Brown, MA Contemporary Art Practice

As the slave ship rolled and rocked through the stormy night, lurching through the cyclic assault of the Atlantic ocean’s waves, a horrid affliction descended upon the crew, and the enslaved, alike. It came as a surreal sickness, mercilessly quick, and as it spread it began to take away the vision of the people aboard the ship. Cries and moans rang into the night, from the hold where the enslaved were chained, all the way to the deck and forecastle, where the crew congregated. The curse was a darkness, stealing their sight until they were consumed by it, lost in the dark, all the while jolted and swayed by the unforgiving waves. Rain hammered down hard, battering the deck, and thunder growled and roared through the cloud-ridden skies. Lightning cracked at precarious intervals, slicing the sky with its vivid, nightmarish light. And amidst this all, lost in the chaos, was a young pregnant woman, shackled by heavy chains in the ship’s hold, who fell into the temporary safety of sleep.

Her name was Vertigo, and as she slept, bound between the bodies of the enslaved and the sightless, she ascended into the realm of dreams. She swam into it, a dreamscape, an underwater world filled with castles and marketplaces and houses and chapels, illuminated by a ghostly purple light at the bottom of the ocean. She could breathe here, oblivious to the harsh climes of the deep ocean, and as she waded through this sublime world, she saw mutants swimming around her, a metropolis of submarine dwellers, seemingly unperturbed by her presence. Their skin was dark brown, rich and radiant in the glow of the purple light, and they wore garments fashioned from scales and coral, complementing their webbed feet and hands, and the

gills that fluttered on their necks. She kept going, flowing through it all, until she came face to face with a young man. The man floated before her, mutated just like the others who lived here, and his tall muscular frame was covered by a tunic and pair of shorts made from shark skin and algae. In him, she saw herself, for his glinting brown eyes and wide nose and smooth complexion matched her own, and she watched as he outstretched his arms to her.

‘Mother’, the young man said, and Vertigo felt the floating world around her sway, warp and tilt. ‘We soon will be free’.

She stared, knowing with a surreal certainty that this man was indeed her future son, and that this dream was not so much a dream, as it was a vision of a distant time ahead. She opened her mouth to call for him, to comfort him, and she reached for him, but the young man and the underwater metropolis blurred and warped, and the purple light faded, and the vision fell away, and Vertigo found herself sitting upright, breathing hard in cold sweats, reawoken.

She had returned to the real world just as the horrors had heightened, for she heard the crew of the slave ship descend upon her and her enslaved tribe. She heard screaming and dragging, shouts and pleading, and before she knew it she too was being dragged, hauled up to the deck of the ship, her chains biting into her limbs, all the way. She was brought into the storm, and she could see nothing, but she could feel the heavy rain upon her skin, and she could hear the deep thundering of the angry sky, and all the while she was being dragged and dragged, her body scraping along the splintering wooden panels of the deck, until she collided with the bulkhead marking the edge of the ship’s deck. She kicked and wreathed and screamed as hands lifted her, heaving her up and over, until all she could feel was the air beneath her, as the wicked winds of the blustering storm whipped at her body. As the colossal waves surged and rose to meet her, Vertigo felt her vision

return. The dreamscape, beautiful and glorious, formed around her, absolving her in its underwater paradise. The purple light returned, and it illuminated the metropolis around her, and in the distance, beckoning her, she saw her future son. She heard his words across the distance, and in them she found refuge, as the young man repeated; ‘Mother. We will soon be free’. Vertigo swam forwards towards him, a smile spreading across her face, as she waded towards her freedom.

*Opthalmia is a short story written by Canaan Brown, inspired by Le Rodeur—a series of paintings by the artist Lubaina Himid, drawing from the real events in which sick and aggrieved enslaved Africans were thrown overboard by the crew of a French slave ship called Le Rodeur. This atrocity, occurring in 1819, followed the crew and the enslaved catching Opthalmia—a disease that causes blindness.*

Image top right:  
Le Rodeur: The Lock, 2016, Acrylic paint on canvas - Private collection, London.

Image bottom right:  
Le Rodeur: The Exchange, 2016, Acrylic paint on canvas - Courtesy of the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Image Source:  
ANATOMY OF AN ARTWORK Le Rodeur: The Pulley, 2017 by Lubaina Himid  
By Artspace Editors  
DEC. 15, 2021





# Jenkin van Zyl’s “Surrender”

Salomé Mercier,  
MA Writing

We rush through the doors of FACT Liverpoolsoakingwet,Citymapperopen on one phone, and a short description of Jenkin van Zyl’s *Surrender* on the other.

The exhibition just opened the same morning, and at first glance, the entrance gives the impression of an untouched welcome display: neatly piled cans of energy drinks, a festive birthday banner, and a pristine reflective floor. Unsettling rat-faced trophies, old compressed air tubes and bold red letters spelling out “there is no happier place than a loser’s” somehow barely clash with the overall clean, almost sterile atmosphere of the installation.

This kind of immersive piece almost always seduces publics, allowing for an easy, often only superficial escape from the expected institutional display.

We keep going, walking by very Instagram-friendly red-lit doorbells

labelled “grief”, “physical pleasure”, or “animal behaviour”, and even if each space is undeniably carefully thought-out, so far the exhibition feels more like a succession of fun set designs than an actual art piece.

*“This kind of immersive piece almost always seduces publics, allowing for an easy, often only superficial escape from the expected institutional display.”*

The next room displays the main piece of the exhibition work: a giant, silver rat

mouth opens on a red-lined intimate viewing room, screen playing what we mistakenly assume is a short film. If installations in institutions often feel like a winning formula, video works might as well be the opposite. Any visitor walking in an exhibition room will usually catch the film halfway-through. Longer loops are rarely watched in their entirety (I have seen people look at a label reading “5 minutes long” when entering a viewing room and back out immediately, and have been guilty of the same thing), while shorter or more abstract ones can easily fade into a soothing but overlooked background noise.

We sit on the red cafe chairs, coats still on, bags on the table, ready to get up again in a few seconds. We finally left the room almost an hour later, walking in complete silence until we were out of the building.

I am rarely able to sit still through an entire movie without once stretching out my legs, cracking my knuckles, opening some actor’s Wikipedia page or taking various snack breaks. But I stayed so still watching *Surrender* that once I got up, the armrests bore the exact imprints of my rain-soaked sleeves and hands. None of the five other spectators moved, whispered, or even coughed for the entire 45 minutes we were inside. A phone screen quickly lit up only to get turned facedown on the table right away.

*“Surrender ropes you in in a matter of seconds. The narration unfolds in a seamless loop, allowing you to easily get on board at any point in the video.”*

*Surrender* ropes you in in a matter of seconds. The narration unfolds in a seamless loop, allowing you to easily get on board at any point in the video. Rat-faced vogue dancers in fetish inspired outfits, masked football referees in high heels, horror movie nurses vaping, and vintage motels rooms and silver spacesuits all merge into a carefully curated aesthetic. They draw inspirations from various sources, ranging from the alternative drag and queer scene to Japanese love motels and old-fashioned science experiments on trapped rats, tying them together in a post-apocalyptic drag performance.

*Surrender* is a revamped take on dance marathons, a phenomenon popular during the 1930s Great Depression. These consisted of often desperate participants dancing in pairs for days, only stopping for very short rest periods. They were made to complete daily activities like eating, reading or showering while still dancing, competing in exchange for food and

shelter. The movie follows Grace, one of the half-rat, half-humanoid contestants, day after day for an endless week, from entering the hotel where the competition takes place, to completing a series of abstract tasks (long distance lactation, marathon hand-holding, vogue dancing) in between short rest periods delimited by a familiar iPhone ringtone. Throughout the film, questions surrounding the idea of pleasure in suffering and suffering as entertainment for a voyeuristic eye all blur together in an unexpected visual crossover between queer subcultures and dystopian fantasy. Most of all, what the film explores is the idea of collective identities: dancers’ bodies sway, tangle and untangle like rat tails, merging often violently into a single, monstrous entity, mirroring each other’s every move or pushing and pulling softly against each other. Bodies are in tension, in a constant state of violent desire, aching for something that seems everchanging, an escape towards an abstract elsewhere. The choreography, performed by queer actors and dancers, draws inspiration from vogue-dancing and club kids routines, and it’s hard not to see a painful parallel between the collective, painful and ecstatic identity quest of our eight contestants, and the collective struggle of queer communities historically looking for safer spaces and a sense of belonging on dance floors and in clubs.

The film slowly ties together the previous rooms of the exhibition: every single item displayed) plays an important part both in the narration and in the visual language of the film. It’s hard to ignore the amount of craft and skill that went into every aspect of the film: van Zyl’s experience in drag, set design, writing and directing makes for a very memorable work, immediately enticing and keeping a tension throughout the whole narrative loop, aided by a bizarre, unique aesthetic presents in each frame. Overall, *Surrender* is hard to forget but even harder to reminisce properly, in the way good films always are.

*Surrender can be seen until the 28th of January at FACT Liverpool.*





# Making Art Work with Hongxi Li

Hongxi Li is a sculptor and a member of the RCA class of 2024. Her sculptures frequently take the form of furniture that contorts the user's body into uncomfortable and unnatural positions, exploring the negative impact that an oppressive, controlling atmosphere has on self-expression. A recent show titled 'Next' Diner utilised barely functional seating and bizarre foods (most notably a steak covered in chocolate sauce and sprinkles) that served to remind the viewer of the grotesque demands that society places on modern citizens, as well as the familiar feeling of thinking about dessert while still consuming the main course.

In 2022, Li collaborated with Rimowa on an installation called Travel Light. She installed an industrial grade shredder inside of one of Rimowa's famous trunks, turning it into an object of destruction. We spoke with Li to discuss the process of working with a commercial brand like Rimowa as a way of funding her art practice.

**The Dodo:** Do you find it challenging to find funding as a young artist?

**Hongxi Li:** Yes, especially for sculpture/installation works! Funding from the arts council is good but also limited. Public commission is a whole other game! Recently, I participated in a workshop with Ivan Morrison in which he shared many of his public commission proposals of past projects, which I found very insightful.

**D:** What are other methods you've used for funding your art practice? Do you receive funding from galleries, apply for grants, or work for other artists?

**HL:** I'm currently applying for the DYCP (Developing Your Creative Practice) grant—it's my first time! Fingers crossed it will come through. My friend shared her successful application with me, which was super helpful. I think that gave me a good base



to start with, otherwise I'd be clueless.

**D:** What was the process of collaborating with Rimowa like?

**HL:** The idea of the Travel Light is to convert the functionality of the Rimowa trunk from protection to destruction. The creative team really loved the idea but had concerns that the concept of the work could potentially be very threatening for brand image. I really appreciated that they were able to go this far; it's very brave and refreshing. It was a shame that the performance of the work wasn't shown at the exhibition

in Berlin; the message of the work got a bit lost. I learned throughout the collaboration that when you work with a huge commercial brand, you have to deal with a lot of restrictions. It's clear your work is valuable to them, but at the same time, as an artist, you have an opportunity to play with the role you have been given.

**D:** Do you have any tips for other RCA students who are interested in working with established brands on commercial projects?

**HL:** I definitely recommend talking to other artists who have done commercial

projects before. As an emerging artist, you are a small individual facing a large corporate entity; it's a vulnerable position. Speaking with someone who's had similar experiences before you start can help you protect yourself. Our community needs to help each other by sharing our experiences in a more transparent way!

**D:** Do you have any tips for other students trying to make an art practice a sustainable career choice?

**HL:** I think I'm not in the position to give advice as I'm still trying to figure it out! I am hoping there will be more mentorship available from established artists who can share some tips with us.

**Mary Bond (MA Writing) in conversation with Hongxi Li (MA Sculpture)**



*Travel Light, 2022*

## Moody River // Bi Storm Alice Dawson, MA Sculpture

Each day I am twice high and twice low. At my base is thick sludge and sometimes my surface disappears and I am only thick sludge. I am either thick sludge or I am water. The only in between is when I am becoming low or becoming high, even then the in-between is murky, a rippling mist of mud and water. Where water should be exists an ever moving anxious metamorphosis, a battle between shallow and deep which churns every morsel in my soul. There are even life forms who have evolved to survive in your chemical spill, smothered in oil, trapped in polluted waters. It is murky to exist here, impossible to see through my own blood and skin. No clarity is poised within my surface, only a dirty, overlooked, unappreciated service do I provide.

I swallow some and let others pass me by. Grief stricken ducks delve into my sludge, I don't know what toxic poisoned flesh on which they find to feed. The wheel of time affects their sensory wisdom, as I carry them with me on my journey. A toxic river penetrated by the highs and lows of human interaction. Do you ever wonder what lives or exists below my opaque brown waters? Does it cross your mind to search for anything beneath the surface? Does it blow your mind that I am the roof to your trains? Or that your water travels through rusty pipes beneath my facade?

Twice a day I am high, twice a day I am low. Non-consensual and slow was your command, you did not hear my wish to be clean and clear. You filled me with unrelenting, unforgiving pipes, trains, oil, poison, objects until I too was an objectified, un-alive river.

*In the bi of the storm a shepherd said:  
"Herding artists is like herding cats!"  
The shepherd, the cats try desperately  
Not to be sheep.*

*Writing the way from madness of fields  
Green to the insane whirling whip  
Of miserable weeping hollow skies.*

*The shepherd doesn't see the eye  
But sees the bi:  
the between States and  
inability for stability.  
Tantrums merged with ecstasy  
seeking salvation. Seeking the moon and  
sun and stars  
But never finding the blank space  
between.*

*The shepherd tries not to be a sheep  
but sometimes imagines the simplicity  
of  
sheepdom. And when that  
Salutation is found,  
The shepherd once again lands in the bi.  
The shepherd is a withered leaf looking  
for fluid  
Or drowning in the flood.*

*The mental fields turn from vibrant  
green  
To a desolate desert of withered sea,  
A sea blank and losing its salt,  
Too absorbed by sugar.  
The sugar is succulent and summons  
The shepherd to a whiter pasture  
far from the dirty chaos.*

*The chaos soothes and becomes a  
Violent stream of rippled fears,  
Osmosing into a seldom storm of  
Frantic breath. The breath runs out,  
The heart beats faster than lightning  
Which gets its light from the place  
High above the bi.*

*Crimson and yellow fantasies  
Become realities on the  
Unsteady planes of the wounded mind.  
The light trembles and fades to dust  
Until nothing is left but a  
forgotten memory which circles  
The bi of the storm.*



# Our Earliest Memories: A Review of Hiroshi Sugimoto: Time Machine at the Hayward Gallery

“A cloudless sky, a sharp horizon, gentle waves. My thoughts continued. Where do these ancient sensations that I feel come from? I wondered if it was possible for modern people to see the landscapes that the ancients once saw. Then I realized that it must be the sea.” – Hiroshi Sugimoto, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Time Machine

Upon entering the second floor of the Hayward Gallery, I encountered Sugimoto’s black and white Seascapes, stretching across the walls of the gallery space, each with a clear horizon bisecting the sea and sky. My last visit to the seaside was in Eastbourne during a storm. Amidst the roaring wind, my friend and I, while futilely attempting to hold our umbrella, found shelter in a café. Through the windows, we saw the ocean in a rage—wave after wave

crashing onto the stone beach, invoking both awe and fear in me.

This time, however, I was enveloped by calm waves and a cloudless sky, a sense of tremendous serenity. A visceral feeling surged in my blood. Water and air, fundamental elements of life, connected me from the modern gallery interior to the ancient past. The ocean, whether in the past or present, continues to ebb and flow, teeming with life. It felt like a portal, offering a sense of security as if I were transported to the past, visiting my ancestral home.

The exhibition, underpinned by a Japanese aesthetic that values minimalism, ushered me into a state of contemplative silence. Since his initial journey to the Caribbean in 1980 with an 8 x 10 view camera, Sugimoto has

travelled to more than 200 locations worldwide to create the Seascapes series. Each sea, photographed at a different location, presents a unified image: the eternal sea, existing since ancient times. The reality captured by his camera extends beyond what our eyes can perceive—it’s a reality that transcends time, compressing past, present, and future into a single, dreamlike instant. Sugimoto once recalled a childhood dream in which “the ocean would break apart and drift away into the cosmos at the touch of a finger.” Perhaps what he dreamt of as a child was an echo of our earliest memories seeping into his subconscious—the memories of the first humans immersing themselves in the primordial sea, like pebbles on the Eastbourne beach.

*Hiroshi Sugimoto: Time Machine is on view at the Hayward Gallery from October 11th, 2023 to January 7th, 2024.*

**Lanzehang Ying, MA Curating Contemporary Art (Alumni)**

Image credit: Hiroshi Sugimoto, East Chine Sea, Amakusa, 1992. Gelatin silver prints. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

## No Title Shall Be The Same

Lujane Vaqar Pagganwala, MA Contemporary Art Practice



The work titled ‘No One Will Be The Same’, is part of a zine I created recently, which was exhibited at Focal Point for Sharjah Art this month. It includes two pieces of writing I did. The background of the work is an image of a cyanotype drawing I made on cloth, in Pakistan (my home country).





## Maijiku Sketches

Lifeng Liao, MA Textiles

Last summer I visited Maijishan Cave in Gansu, China. I was amazed and shocked by the fascinating art pieces created by Chinese artists thousands of years ago. I was also intrigued by the different art styles that were trending because of the economy and politics in that period of time. In order to protect these fragile ancient artefacts, photography was not allowed in many places, thus I recorded them using the old way: by sketching. I'm very happy to share this wonderful journey I went on with my fellow students through my sketches.



## The Fountain Sally Hsiao, MA Visual Communication

I love sketching during travels, and I love it even more when I learn something about what I drew afterwards. There's an undeniable allure in not just capturing scenes but unravelling their hidden stories. I drew this beautiful fountain in the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, after a couple glasses of the iconic Singapore Sling. Little did I know, this cast-iron masterpiece had its own nomadic tale. It was originally made in Glasgow and brought to Singapore in the 1890s, relocated to Orchard Road market, placed in the garden of a Singaporean family, and finally, donated to Raffles Singapore in 1990.



# Object Fetishization

## Margaux Halloran MA Sculpture



There is a catching which takes place between my whole and the parts that the others have attributed to my makeup. I find myself caught in their preferences, and the qualities of appearances which favour them. What favours them, should favour me—perhaps that is kindness. I have confidence. I have strength, and weakness. I am exposed and become exposure's process.

There is grace within the catching of bodies. The body catches the mind of the other and mixes in the same formula of a warm liquor jet streaming into one's belly. I think there is no greater feeling, even as someone in the grey world of sobriety, I claim that position as my own.

I find it easiest to claim myself through words on paper. I better claim myself through sculptures of various forms. It is easy because my physical form can maintain a physical distance. I do not require my words of nonsense to be coded onto my skin. I do not own my words when they come from my throat. I do not own my interests. If I owned my entire whole, then I would be a capable product. I am my own act of translation, and will not succumb to the backwash that spews from my american, feminine lips. I wish to be excluded, what a privileged thing to say.

I can invent a sculptural thing from a barely formed idea in my mind—This idea could even be a motion, A physical movement, Possibly not even a word is deemed necessary, But do not ask me to speak. I do not want to participate in the accessibility of the artist's word if they do not choose to bare their backs, To know no one but the trees and their conjoined shadows, Illusionary play.

I believe in the gap, The space that forms when the artist refuses to be caught by their own work. The artists' ball and chain. Sensual and seduction, Playing within the shadows.

I believe in the gap. The gap that forms when the artist becomes intangible. A conversation of tailored conventions. There are too many possibilities Too many explanations that simply aren't existent Too many explanations that require a bodily existence Too many toys to fuck yourself with, An incapable existence without a rhythm of coming and going

The existence of a sculptural thing, is the existence of the artists body, and how can you expect a person to explain their own physical existence Do you ask that of a new mother?

The motion of the mind is seeking explanation, just as much as the viewer of a film is watching with hunger and a forked tongue.

Stop your fetishization of my sculptural things.

When I approach a piece, I consider the assembly line and mass production. My sculptures are about finding a center within a gap, Making a wider space, not explaining a pre-existing theory. Sentences read like a circle draw, and words are nonphysical readymades.

The thing doesn't need respect. I don't need your respect. I am unreliable. Do not try to catch my sculptures within your qualifiable structures. I pay attention, Therefore, I'm not clearly understood by my own words.



# Free Bagel Society: A Food Installation Exploring Societal Boundaries

## Lixin Wang, MFA Communication and Yi Tong, MA Photography

Following a sound tour on our headphones through Brick Lane, my friend and I made our way to the garden next to the church, where we greeted walkers as far as our eyes could reach before turning our attention to the trees. When the voice told me to leave the garden, I glanced around again and saw that the people there had each established their own distinct "territories" and were content to leave each other alone inside them. The end of my voyage could only be considered complete once I got to the bagel store, where a long line provided the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle, and all the clues fit together.

Even as I listened to the speaker, my mind was already at the bagel store our tutor had described; perhaps I was anticipating the next stop on my voyage, or maybe I was just hungry. During this practical exercise, I engaged in the process of producing bagels and successfully made a total of 40 bagels within the confines of my residence. These bagels played a crucial role in this project.



I conducted a behavioural experiment on social distancing by distributing free bagels to people and animals in the primary location where I frequently pause throughout my travels. The objective of my experiment was to gain a firsthand understanding of the idea that interpersonal social distance

and friendliness is linked to the development of urban civilisation and the pace of life. 40 bagels were hung under tree branches as part of the presentation.

Afterward, I asked each recipient of the bagels about their motivation for



taking free food from a stranger. The responses obtained exhibited a notable degree of similarity, and it is worth noting that a significant proportion of participants expressed a lack of prior contemplation on the matter. Suppose we categorise recipients into three groups: ‘yes,’ ‘no,’ and a distinct yet comparable scenario for the third group. Initially hesitant about my bagel offer, the individuals in the third group fully agreed after I explained the process of obtaining one for free. In this practice, no one would refuse my bagel after hearing my complete explanation: ‘Answer a question, and you will receive a bagel.’

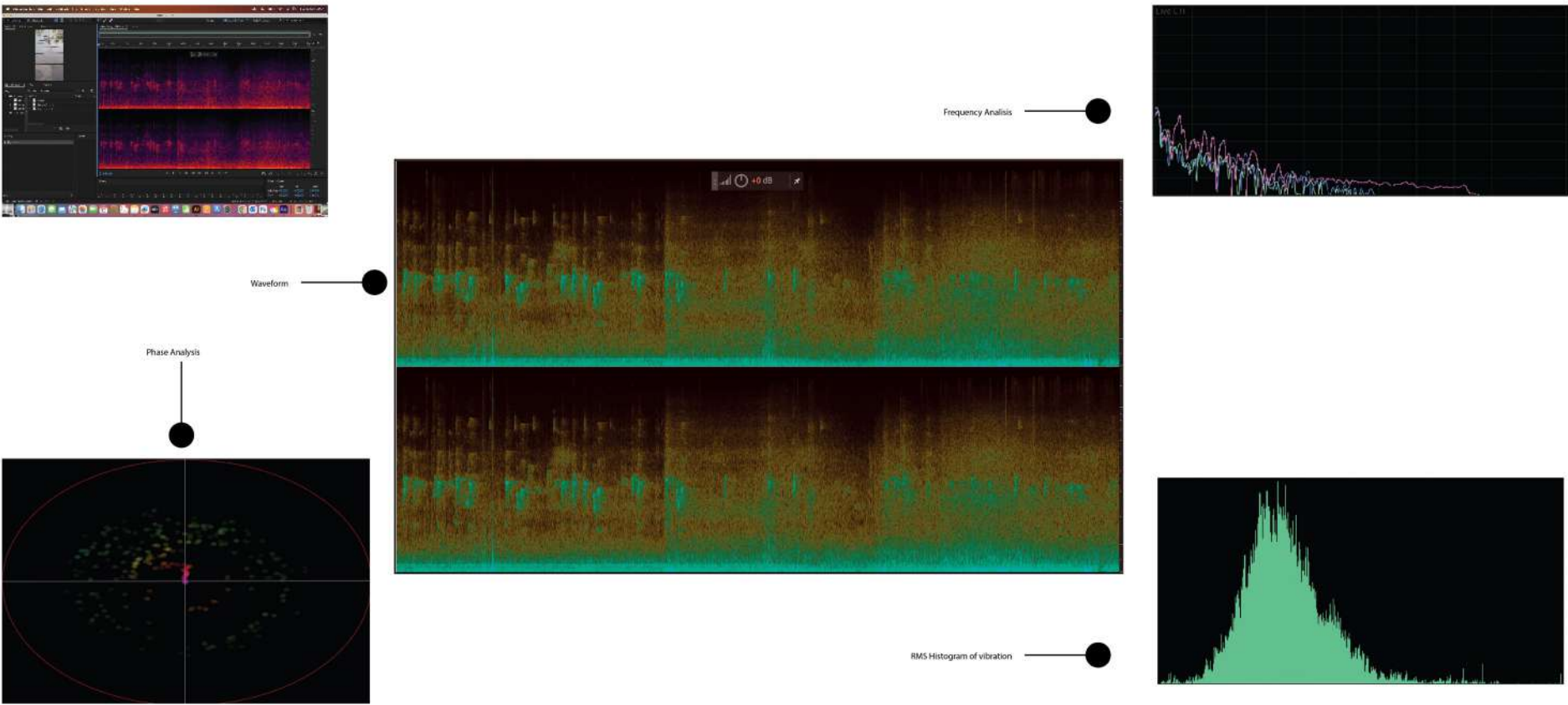
The experiment helped me understand how social distance dynamics vary across communities and the importance of security in building trust and positive relationships, making it a critical factor in creating meaningful connections.



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# Coloured Soundscapes

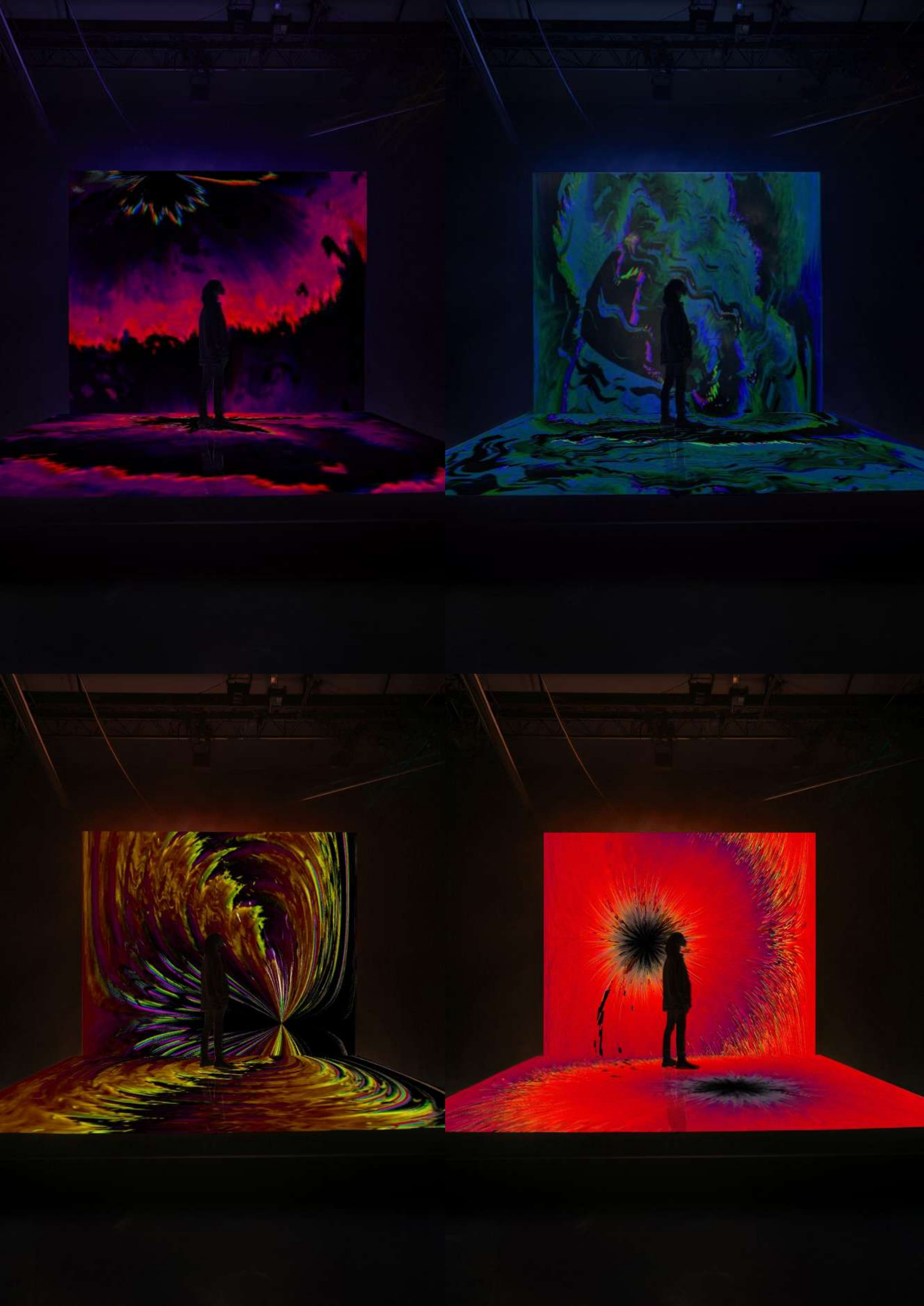
Marian Miñarro, Graduate Diploma, Art & Design



According to the British philosopher Alan Watts, the easiest way to get into the meditative state is to begin by listening. Focused on the soundscapes that surround me, I recorded the background sounds of nature that we tend to ignore. ‘Coloured Soundscapes’ portrays a set of installations that

combine sounds and visuals to create an immersive environment. Through sensory stimulation, the spectator is encouraged to maintain awareness and tune into our natural environment. The animations on the installations give the recorded sounds a physical form and colours by analysing the frequencies,

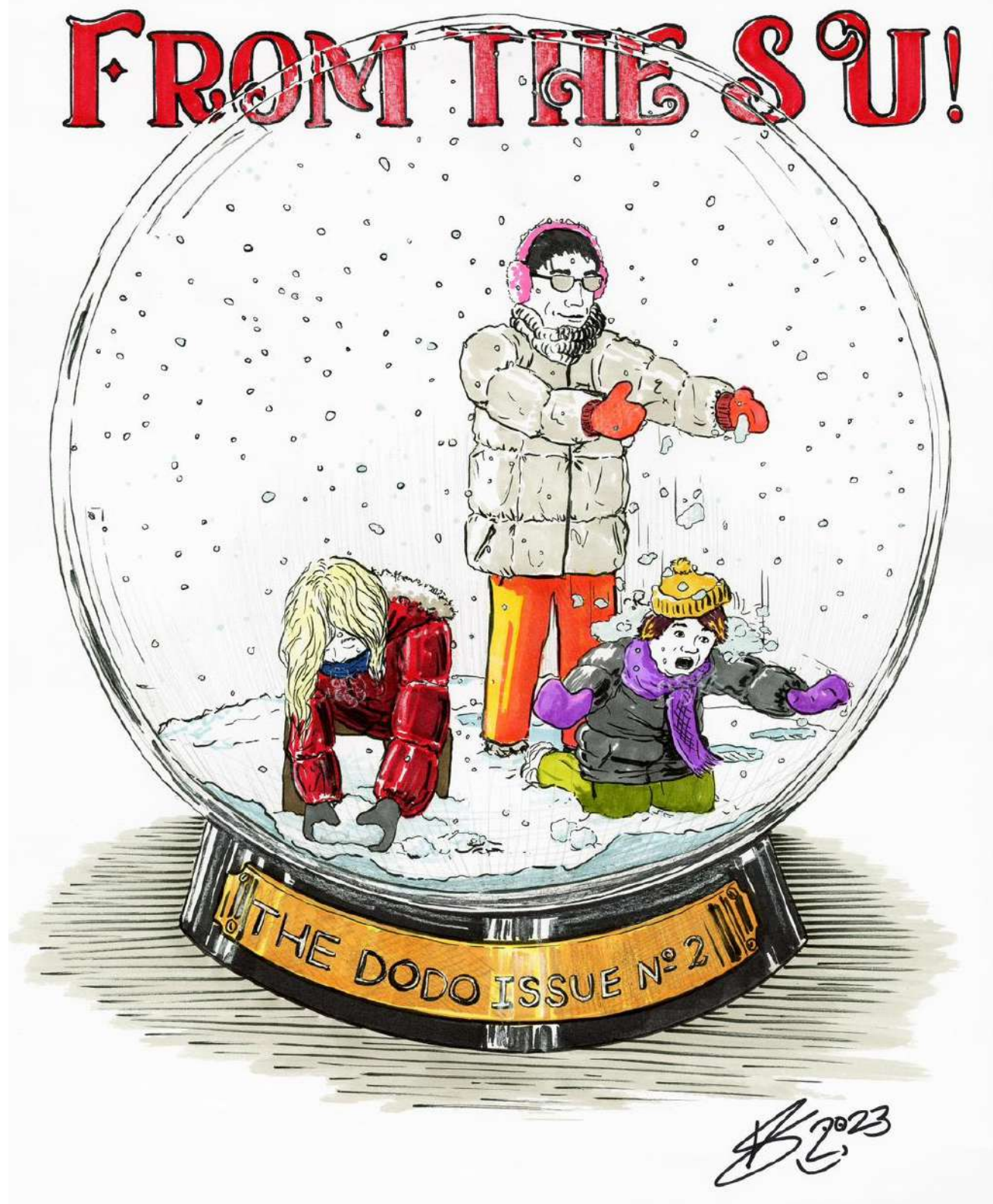
histograms of vibration, and waveforms, creating a sensory experience that fully immerses the viewer in the soundscape.







# WARM WISHES FROM THE SU!



Thank you so much to everyone who submitted their entries to the cover competition for our second issue! We had some incredible submissions and loved all your ideas.

A huge congratulations to Chloe Watts on the MA Visual Communication programme for creating the winning design for this issue! We loved the detail of this piece featuring RCA students on the shuttle bus that runs between the college's three campuses, and how it showcases the diverse array of creative practices across the university. Another huge congratulations is due to Andrew Sviridov from the MA Visual Communication programme for his runner-up submission, featured here as the SU's official Christmas poster. Happy holidays, everyone!

Our third issue will be released early next term, so if you have any ideas you'd like to think about over the winter break, feel free to send them our way: [the.dodo@rca.ac.uk](mailto:the.dodo@rca.ac.uk). We'll be releasing details about any new competitions in the new year, so keep an eye out on our Instagram page: [@thedodo.rca](https://www.instagram.com/thedodo.rca).