

In Search of Ghosts |
Fringe Arts Bath 2025

23 May - 7 June 2025

44AD Artspace |
4 Abbey St. Bath. BA1 1NN

Curated by Isabel Young |

David Ian Bickley |
Helen Blejerman |
Diane Eagles |
Andrew Ekins |
Mark Antony Haden Ford |
Caitlin Hazell |
Mark Heitner |
Sadie Hennessy |
Dajana Heremic |
Helen Hurford |
Jamie Lee |
Rhianon Lewando |
Becky Little, Tom Morton & Joshua Davie |
Marisa Müsing |
Steve Pettengell |
Sarah Rhys |
Paul Vivian |
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Isabel Young |

IN SEARCH OF GHOSTS

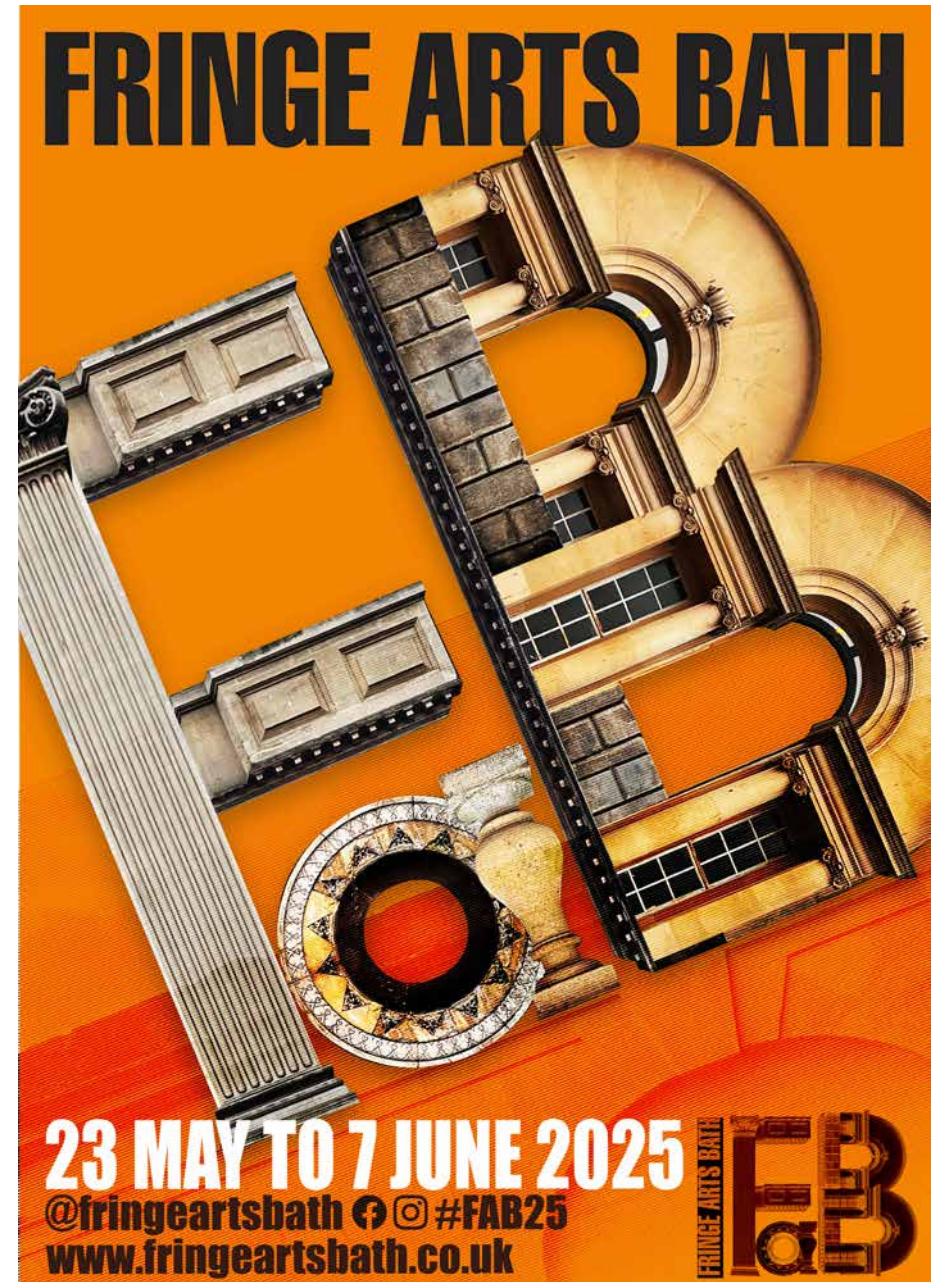
Excavation

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Aquae Sulis is famed for its Roman Baths built almost 2000 years ago, which gives the city its contemporary name. As a repository of material culture, the waters of the thermal springs are an interface between architecture, its lineage of inhabitants, ancient practices and non-human assemblages. Against a backdrop of the Temple of Sulis Minerva, the city of Bath, neighbouring Stonehenge and the world of archaeology beyond, this exhibition goes 'In Search of Ghosts' to excavate the people who occupy/ied ancient spaces in recognition that what is happening now is a result of what has come before.

The theme of this exhibition is interpreted through the lens of contemporary art 'with' archaeology to examine ancient rituals, artefacts, ways of living, and the future archaeology of waste. Simultaneously it considers how our own Plastic Age might be decoded in 5000 years, and speculates how ancient practices could propose a model for a sustainable future.

The gallery – 44AD Artspace – has been conceived of by the curator as an archaeological dig and new materialist site of excavation. As a platform to hypothesise how we interpret and understand the world, this exhibition journeys immense tracts of time in consideration of ancient and different ways of being in the world.

With special thanks to the Royal College of Art, Fringe Art Bath 2025 & 44AD Artspace.



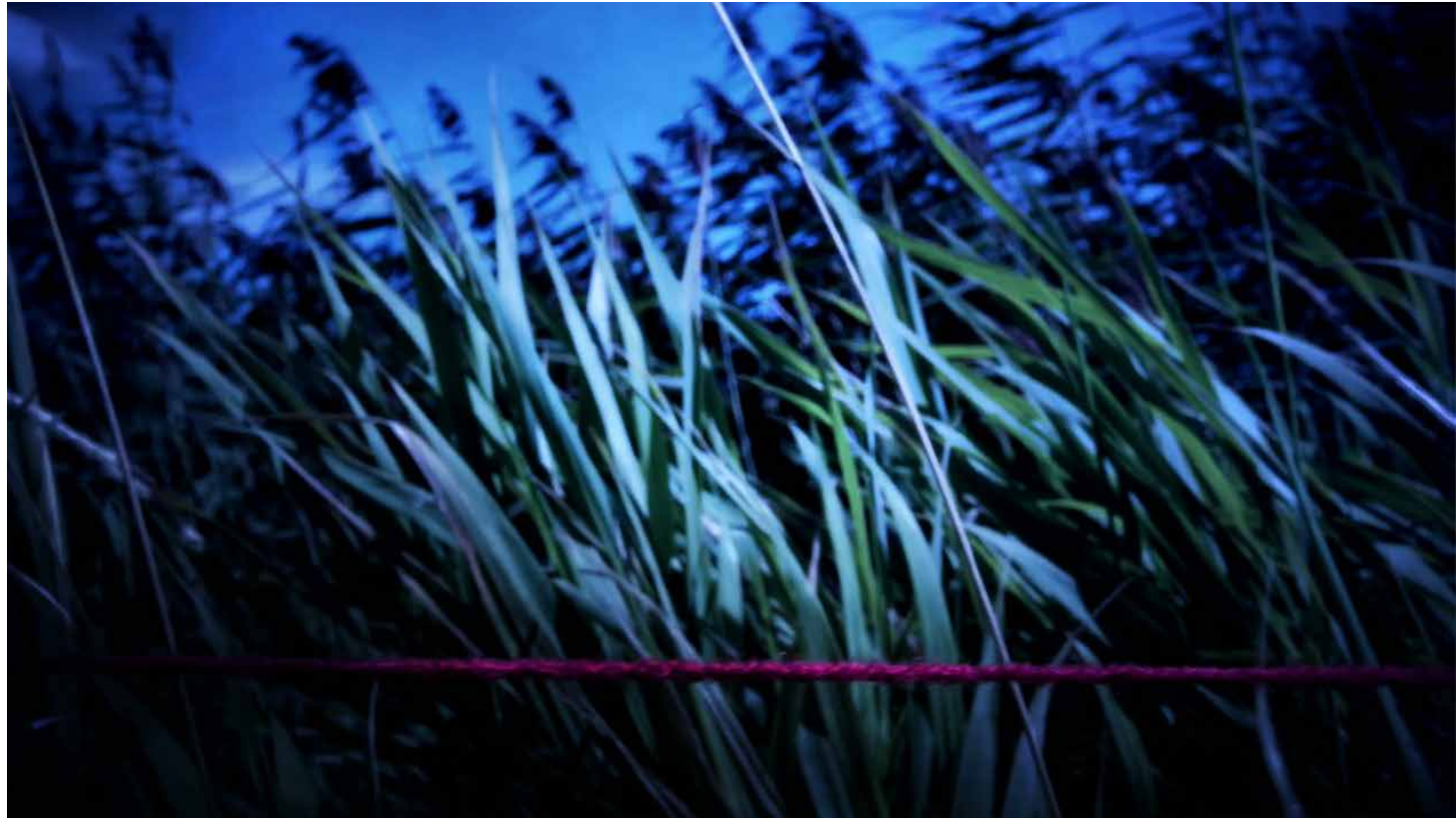
David Ian Bickley

Response to In Search of Ghosts

“Threads” responds to the exhibition’s theme by creating a monomyth—a personalized journey inspired by Irish folklore. This immersive audio-visual environment allows visitors to connect viscerally with ancient symbolic motifs embedded in Irish culture.

The narrative follows an unseen protagonist who has lost their way, wandering into an unfamiliar place. This concept relates to “The Stray Sod,” an Irish folklore motif where someone accidentally enters the ‘Otherworld.’ Known as being ‘Pixie-led’ in Cornwall, this transformative journey changes the hero’s consciousness upon their return to the world of people.

The audio elements of “Threads” are composed of location recordings, augmented through sound design techniques. This enhances the immersive experience and ties back to the exhibition’s exploration of ancient rituals, artefacts, and ways of living, providing a contemporary interpretation of these timeless themes.



About the Artist

Bickley is an artist, filmmaker and composer creating immersive experiences with film, light, and sound. His work explores alternate realities, referencing mythology, folklore, and symbolism. Known for his documentaries and work with Hyper[borea], his art has been exhibited internationally. Bickley uses multi-channel installations and digital curatorships to showcase his work.

Threads

Video / Music

Duration: 10 minutes

2019

Helen Blejerman

Response to In Search of Ghosts

In 1978, the 3.4-meter stone of Coyolxauhqui, the dismembered Aztec goddess of the Moon, was discovered at the foot of the pyramid of sacrifices in Mexico City. This large carving was created around 1473, depicting the mythical story of Huitzilopochtli famously butchering her.

Helen Blejerman painted her figure on four large plastic rubbish bags. In some Mexican towns, people often feel uneasy when encountering a full rubbish bag, worrying it might conceal a dismembered woman. Here, the artist explores the mutilated Aztec goddess, seeking insights into Mexican femicide and female power. She questions whether this goddess on challenging material can help us unearth the past and reveal the brutal present concerning gender-based murder.

Through the intersection of archaeology and forensic materiality, her aim as an artist is to contribute to understanding femicide, not with a passive representation but with a revelation from the past to influence the future.

About the Artist

Helen Blejerman is a Mexican artist based in Sheffield, UK. She works as an associate lecturer in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University, where she is pursuing a practice-based PhD exploring the role of ritual in art practice to gain a deeper understanding of Mexican femicide.

La Coyolxauhqui

White paint on four ensembled rubbish bags

167 x 145 x 0.1 cm

2025



Diane Eagles

Response to In Search of Ghosts

“Burning” refers to graffiti which continues to be visible. The term “the heaven spot” indicates mark-making in difficult to access places.

Since 2018, Diane Eagles was one of the summer artists in residence at the Neolithic Ness of Brodgar archaeological dig in Orkney. For the final 2024 season, she produced temporary, chalk stencil graffiti referencing the incised stone decoration and evidence of pigmented colour, found across the site.

The works echo how mark-making could have been used, acknowledging significant places within the site. Evidence indicates that decorated stones were reused and relocated, as some occur in rather random places. Like the incised decoration at the Ness, the graffiti can be visibly dominant, grabbing attention, but can also be elusive, appearing in unexpected locations.

The graffiti makes us see the site in a different way, with colour.



About the Artist

Diane Eagles is a London based artist and NHS Art Psychotherapist with a Contemporary Art and Archaeology MA from The University of The Highlands and Islands.

Eagles works with found materials, in locational or environmental engagements. She's inspired by spiritual and emotional object investment, historic resonance, chance and the unconscious.

Burning the Heaven Spot

Photographic prints

29 x 21cm

2024

Andrew Ekins

Response to In Search of Ghosts

Concerned by the negative consequences and residue of a climate of excessive consumerism and waste, Ekins' work employs a methodology of regeneration and renewal. Using the trope of creative alchemy to reconfigure waste material into substance, he evokes an allusion between a geo-topographical landscape and the spectre of a crumpled fleshy landscape of the human condition.

Formed over time and bearing the marks of time in the corrupted patina of their appearance, works like 'Slippery Slope' aim to make good from bad by exploring an imaginative topography of trash. A succession of paint crusts/skins (combined with used clothing, found furniture, books) are layered and repainted to shape an image of an excavated puckered, meaty landscape.

About the Artist

Andrew Ekins lives and works between the urban grit of London and the geological grandeur of North Wales. Graduating from the RCA in 2001 with the Socrates Travel Prize (Egypt) his work has featured in international exhibitions including Kurt Schwitters Merzbau, Royal Academy (London), Joyce Goldstein (New York), RAID (Los Angeles).

Slippery Slope

Oil on paint skins, used clothing, bar stool
105 x 52 x 38cm
2024



Mark Antony Haden Ford



Adze

Wood Hazel
140 x 40cm
2025

Response to In Search of Ghosts

Ephemeral objects like this are rare in the archaeological record. This 'Adze', used for moving soil and chalk, was a carefully selected sun shoot from an over-stood hazel coppice. It has been carved by flint and then fire hardened to preserve the wood. The maul or heavy mallet, also in the exhibition, was grown from a wind fallen oak tree. These tools are still used in traditional jobs like hedge laying.

About the Artist

Mark Antony Haden Ford is an environmental artist known for his large-scale sculptures, particularly his work with willow and other natural materials. His studio is located in Slindon, South Downs National Park, where he explores themes of sustainability, natural rhythms, history and the interconnectedness of humans and nature.

Caitlin Hazell

Response to In Search of Ghosts

'Pilgrim Badges for The Noseless Saint' are anachronistic artefacts that investigate contemporary and historical anxieties around bodily integrity, through the narrative of unreliable Medieval experience. The badges detail two fictitious ideas of a Saint with a false nose, idolised in fear driving a desire to conform, transform and turn ordinary ideas to extraordinary through viral hacks and fads.

Like other historical adornments of the time, 'Pilgrim Badges for The Noseless Saint' exist to emphasise the special relationship between saint and the everyday person, a powerful psychological device for times of crisis, and the first mass-produced tourist souvenir. The badges are cast in bronze, existing purposefully in varying states of degradation; time worn relics from the ancient past that mimic different forms of archeological replica, reproduction, and museum arrangement.

About the Artist

Caitlin Hazell makes objects, relics and props that intertwine imagined, absurd and exaggerated aspects of everyday life with myth, folklore and ritual.

Caitlin Hazell graduated with a BA Fine Art at Kingston University in 2017, and MA Sculpture at The Royal College of Art in 2024, where they won the Kenneth Armitage Postgraduate Sculptor Prize. They have shown in exhibitions at The Art Workers Guild, Block 336, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and Steam Works.



Pilgrim Badges for The Noseless Saint

Lost wax cast bronze

7 x 7cm each

2024

Mark Heitner

Response to In Search of Ghosts

This print was the result of a merger of a Hubble telescope image with a photograph of the massive pylons of the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III in Egypt. The image was etched with a laser cutter and printed with a manual press.

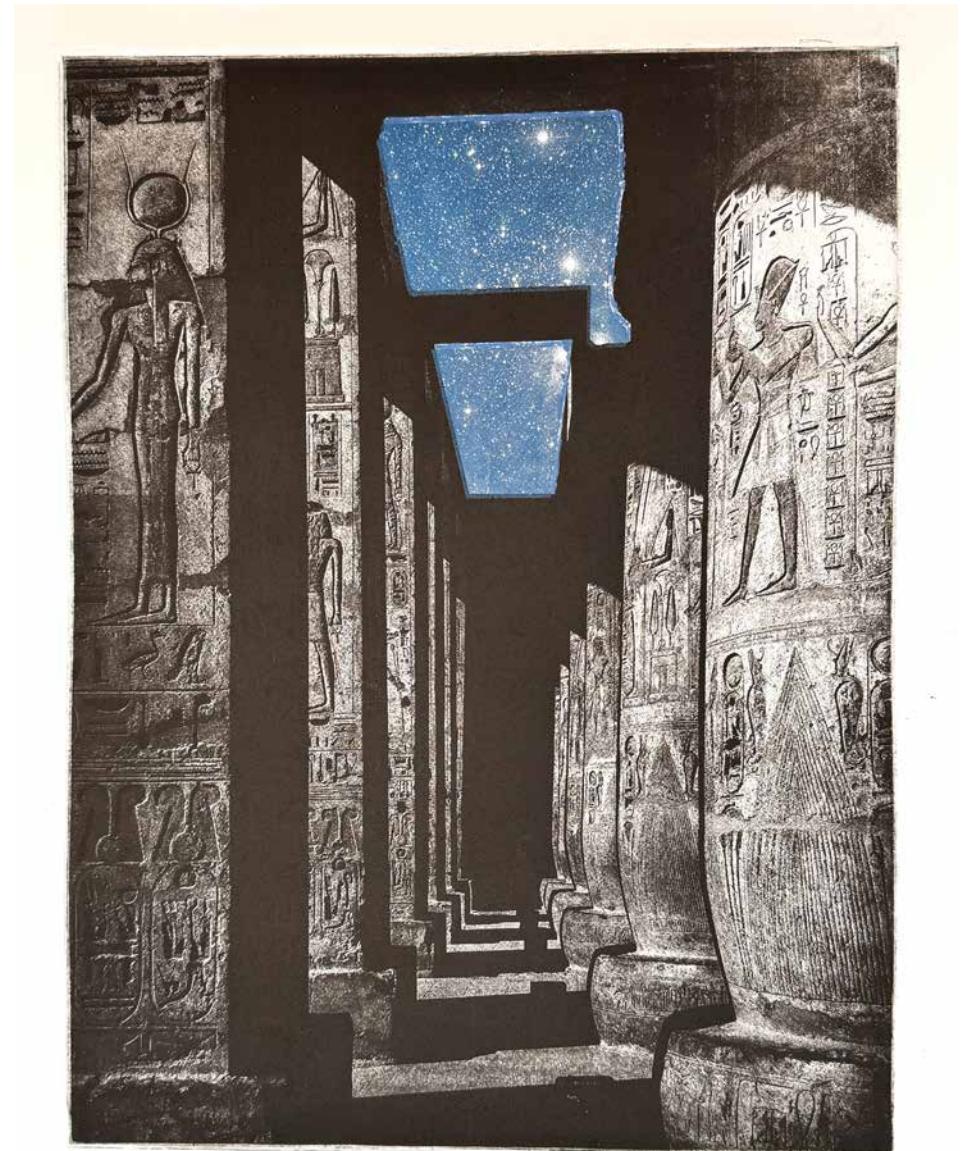
My previous work as a classical psychotherapist orients me to the consideration of how the past influences the present. The global disaster emanating from Washington has led me to create a series, 'The Fault is Not in Stars', to which this print belongs. Does the arc of the universe bend towards justice?

About the Artist

American expat painter, printmaker and photographer living in London. Mark Heitner is a graduate of the Weill Cornell Medical College and the Royal College of Art.

Temple 3

Ink on paper
39 x 29cm
2025



Sadie Hennessy

Response to In Search of Ghosts

This small work alludes to the concept of deep time, it encapsulates the present (now) in amber (the past) for people from the future to find.

About the Artist

Sadie Hennessy is a multi-disciplinary artist whose roots lie in collage, but who has expanded her idea of collage to encompass the third and fourth dimensions, creating immersive environments and events, reflecting the zeitgeist and her personal experiences of everyday life. Her work tends to operate in the realm of metaphor. Recently she's started to utilise performative elements in her practice, using her body, and autobiographical stories, to explore universal topics. All this is done through a dark prism of melancholia, mixed with a sense of humour, that comes from the more macabre end of the comedy spectrum.

Hennessy has exhibited widely in London and beyond, won the Jealous Graduate Art Prize in 2010 with her MA Show 'Accident & Emergency (Central St. Martins), and was Screen Print Fellow at The Royal Academy 2016-19. Her work is held in the UAL Collection and the Victoria & Albert Print Collection.

Aeon

Mixed Media
10 x 5cms
2019



Dajana Heremic

Response to In Search of Ghosts

In exploring prehistoric Europe & reclaiming the cyclical & dark of (our) nature Dajana finds meaning and wisdom. Through visual and magical arts & rewilding, she weaves biocentrism, ecofeminism, ceremony, wildlife & earth skills, folklore, shadow work and hedge riding into her daily life.

As a refugee of war, the Kinship with the other-than-human world, since her childhood, deepened her sense of place, belonging and the radical meaning of home. With her work she creates and holds space for this re-membling. This particular work explores and connects the origin story of thread and a sustainable future.

About the Artist

Dajana Heremic is an artist, mother and both teacher & student of the wild, living and working from a profound love for the Earth and a deeply animistic experience of the world - to her this is true anarchy!



Ostara

Film

Duration: 3.02 minutes

2019



Helen Hurford

Response to In Search of Ghosts

This work explores the link between cultural practices, historically, and now. Inspired by the pilgrims of the Middle Ages, collecting dust from reliquaries. The bowl has been made from the dust of Hereford Cathedral bound together using egg white. Connecting to sustainable ways of making, inspired by ancient practices, where egg white was commonly used as a binder.

The shape of a bowl is recognisable throughout time and culture showing how connected we are to our ancestors. This dust is a record of Hereford Cathedral at this moment in time, a combination of mud and leaves, plastic fragments, and stone. The weight of these different particles create textural differences within the piece. From the delicate edge, created by the micro plastics, to the organic rock like texture of the base from mud and stone. It is a true record of interaction between current culture and this historical space.

About the Biodesigner

Helen Hurford is a Hereford based artist specialising in Biodesign. Currently studying at Hereford college of art, her work focuses on cultural relationships to materials and place. Inspired by the issues around waste and sustainability, she explores alternative ways of making through the use of grown, found and biodegradable materials.

Dust bowl

Dust and egg
10 x 28 x 28cm
2025



Jamie Lee

Response to In Search of Ghosts

Jamie Lee is an artist working across sound, video, photography, print and installation while incorporating interactive, socially-engaged and site specific elements. His works often address the audience directly, exploring how places are constructed by the interaction of historical artefacts, bodies and the architecture that contains them. In previous artworks, field recordings gathered from remote sites are presented alongside sensors that track the movement of bodies and adjust their outputs in response.

For In Search of Ghosts, Lee has used material gathered on a residency to Tusheti, Georgia's remotest region in the Caucasus mountains, to form a video and sound piece.

Presented outside Georgia for the first time, 'Tusheti Loops' brings fragments from the landscape, ancient architecture, customs, rituals, music, fauna and flora of this unique highland region into dialogue with the unique context of Fringe Arts Bath 2025.

About the Artist

Jamie Lee's site specific practice is process driven, working with field recordings, sensors, video, photographs, animation and text. His work has been presented by Radiophrenia (2025), MK Gallery (2024), Fringe Arts Bath (2024). He graduated from UWE Art and Visual Culture (2015) and OSE (2023) and has received WEVAA funding (2024).

Tusheti Loops

Video, Audio

Duration: 4.22 minutes

2024



Rhiannon Lewando

Response to In Search of Ghosts

History removes man from sights of carnage; death tolls of warfare are reported via the amount of weapons used rather than casualties: "They describe the struggle of the tanks, guns, battalions, supplies, barbed wire, divisions. The dead take their place, along with burnt out tanks and empty petrol cans, among the waste material of history." Gil Eliot, 20th Century Book of the Dead.

Objects From the 'Salient Dead' lifts items previously buried, discarded and heaped, into their own individual focus in an act of battlefield archaeology. It explores a landscape of manmade death that unifies the humanity with the metamorphosis of man into weapon.

About the Artist

Rhiannon Lewando is a Wales based ceramic artist whose works are concerned with creating tension between the human and inhuman, the mass and the individual, burial and archaeology. Rhiannon begins her work on the sewing machine, creating fabric moulds which after a process of casting are realised in unglazed porcelain.

Objects From the Salient Dead

Porcelain

Dimensions various ranging from 64 x 33x 18cm & 22 x 8 x 7cm
2022



Becky Little with Tom Morton & Joshua Davie

Response to In Search of Ghosts

Earthbound Orkney is a creative response to the eroding soils and Neolithic sites of the Orkney archipelago—70+ islands off the north coast of mainland Scotland. The video traces a three-year research project to reveal and understand the hidden and beautiful clay earths of Orkney, once central to the island's material culture in structures and objects. By making “treasures from dirt,” Becky Little and Tom Morton explore ancient technologies that have been largely overlooked and highlight the potential of natural materials in new, sustainable construction. These old–new ways of making shelter and art—rooted in place—can help support circular, resilient economies, especially for island communities on the frontline of climate change.

About the Artist / Architect / Filmmaker

Becky Little (artist/builder) and Tom Morton (architect) share a fascination with materiality and place, and how both are shaped by the intertwined rhythms of human and more-than-human worlds. Their practice weaves together architecture, archaeology, and art, exploring forgotten or hidden aspects of material culture made from earth and fibre. They worked with filmmaker Joshua Davie on the video Earthbound Orkney.

Earthbound Orkney

Video

Duration: 6 minutes

2024



Marisa Müsing

Response to In Search of Ghosts

How does AI dream of ancient sensuality?

Since its excavation in 1909, the Villa of Mysteries in ancient Pompeii has accrued layers of meaning and memory from archaeologists, artists, writers and spectators searching for narrative in the pleasurable bodies depicted in the mysterious wall paintings.

Applying contemporary digital tools to the site, the work looks at the embodied presence in the image and the translation of meaning that occurs through simulacrum. Using Google's AI program Deep Dream on the fresco in repetition, strange alien forms emerge that are placed back into their original settings, challenging notions of beauty and narrative between ancient and technological perspectives.

About the Artist

Marisa Müsing is a transdisciplinary artist and cyber thinker exploring relationships between the body, digital identity and archaeological history, expressing ethereal feminist ideals through digital and sculptural media. Their PhD at the Royal College of Art reinvestigates Pompeiian frescoes through a queer cyberfeminist lens. They have exhibited and lectured globally.

Deep Dreaming for Body Mysteries

Giclee print & aluminium frame

25 x 34cm

2025



Steve Pettengell

Response to In Search of Ghosts

The diptych 'Lost & Found' uses imagined archaeological/anthropological fragments, creating a dialogue with a past life to elucidate the truth that some people experience in the now. Reframing historical truths and questioning the normative concept of the home as refuge.

Through sections of a domestic wall, the work examines the boundary between domesticity and entrapment, the public facade versus the private experience. Sections of domestic wall that have borne witness to people's lives, providing a tangible record embedded in the materiality of the architectural fragment.

The pareidolic qualities of the wallpaper on these wall fragments acted, for the past inhabitants, as the framework for quiet acts of rebellion, hidden behind long-removed picture frames- The transgression of drawing on the wall secretly, as a form of rebellion, respite and freedom.



About the Artist

Steve Pettengell is an interdisciplinary artist, having studied at Glasgow School of Art and Goldsmiths College he has exhibited extensively in the UK and abroad, including The Venice Biennale, Miami Art Week, and Frieze Week among others. His work is held in private collections in the UK and abroad.

Lost & Found

Mixed media on plasterboard
40 x 40 x 4 cms (each panel)
2024

Sarah Rhys

Response to In Search of Ghosts

Sarah Rhys is interested in the 'trace archaeology' of the coracle - a small Welsh vessel still used for river fishing in west Wales. Historically, coracles were common across other parts of Britain, particularly in Somerset and along the River Severn. They also belong to a much older and wider global heritage that stretches back thousands of years.

Traditionally, coracles are made from locally sourced wood such as ash, willow, or hazel, with a 'skin' originally fashioned from animal hide - now typically replaced by calico. These boats form a powerful link to a recent past in which rural life was deeply intertwined with local ecologies, traditions, and sustainable practices. These ways of life are especially relevant in our present moment.

Sarah built this coracle in collaboration with a local fisherman, learning traditional techniques and gathering cultural stories- including ritual practices- as part of an ongoing project. This particular white coracle, with its semi-transparent surface, has an almost 'otherworldly' quality.



About the Artist

Sarah Rhys is an interdisciplinary artist living and working between an estuary village in west Wales and Bristol.

Sarah received her MFA from Bath Spa University and Post Grad Diploma in Multi-disciplinary Printmaking from UWE, Bristol. Sarah has a background in education; teaching/lecturing in Bristol for many years.

White Coracle

Coacle: Ash laths, calico, willow, pinewood & paint

Coracle: 39 x 103 x 162.5 cm

Images: 30 x 42cm

2024/5

Paul Vivian

Response to In Search of Ghosts

'Five Stones' documents the material and sonic environment of Duddo Five Stones, a Neolithic standing stone site located in North Northumberland and is part of a project initiated early 2023, following a chance encounter with unusual airborne sounds at Swinside Stone Circle. This experience initiated a field study exploring the internal resonance of standing stones at pre-historic sites across the UK.

Since the emergence of archaeoacoustics in the 1980s, the role of sound at these sites has gained increasing scholarly attention. My own project seeks to extend this field by considering resonance that occurs independently of human interaction potentially becoming an integral element of ritual and its physical surroundings.

Drawing upon recent philosophical reframing of Neolithic sites, challenging anthropocentric interpretations highlighting the agency of non-human elements, this research positions resonance as a non-human agent in ancient ritual and re-considers these sites as dynamic environments shaped by human and non-human interactions.

About the Artist

Paul Vivian is a UK-based artist who studied at Norwich School of Art and Design and Chelsea College of Art. Conducting fieldwork at archaeological sites, he collates unique recordings from ancient stones capturing their internal audio resonance, an innovative approach to Neolithic sites that has yet to be widely explored.



Five Stones

Digital 4k, HD Video Colour, Audio

Widescreen 16.9

Duration: 04.03 minutes

2025

Seitaro Yamazaki

Response to In Search of Ghosts

This series is based on a speculative fiction setting: what if products from a modern global brand were turned into fossils and excavated in the distant future?

What sets this series apart from sculptures with similar concepts is that the main body of the product is made from casting sand, and the brand logo is made from acrylic. This separates the part of the product that provides use value from the part that is the object of conspicuous consumption.

The casting sand will crumble over time, but the brand logo will continue to shine without changing shape.

When, in the distant future, an intelligent life form other than modern humans sees the excavated fossils, what will they think when they see the strange shapes embedded in the products?

About the Artist

Seitaro Yamazaki graduated with a BA in Sociology in 2006 and, after a successful career as a designer, completed MFA in 2016. Since then, he has been active as a contemporary artist and has exhibited his work in London, New York, Venice, Washington DC, Nagasaki, Tokyo, Berlin, Fukushima, etc.

Fossils From the Future # 06 "Lay's"

Sand, Acrylic, Sumi, Pigment
30 x 30 x 25cm
2022



Isabel Young

About the Curator

The contexts for this project span 6000 years beginning in the Neolithic and arriving at the present day. Isabel Young's practice takes its coordinates from field research and the immersive, embodied experience of landscapes, ancient places and ancient homes. For her the ancient, in all its forms, is an encounter with the presence of those who have come before. It inspires reverie, reverence, feelings of awe and a connection to a great lineage of people.

Her long-term research explores the socio-cultural dynamics and history of the house, its integrated environments and architectures, and the people who lived in them. Drawing on archaeological theory and experimental archaeology, she works within an expanded field practice and presents here in this exhibition '6000 of Darkness', as a tribute to La Hougue Bie, a 6000 year old passage grave in Jersey.

Isabel Young is an artist, researcher and Senior Tutor (Research) at the Royal College of Art where she has held a post since 2018. She holds a Masters in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art and a Masters in Landscape Architecture from the University of Greenwich.

Young is an Academic Member of the Landscape Institute, a Member of the Vernacular Architecture Group, and a Member of EXARC (Association for Experimental Archaeology). She is Representative of the Ali H. Alkazzi Scholarship Award & the Basil H. Alkazzi Scholarship Award for MA Painting at the RCA.

A recent example of her practice, The Lararium Project (a shrine to the household gods), can be visited in the Roman Villa at Butser Ancient Farm, a museum of experimental archaeology. As a permanent fixture, the lararium is used for education and re-enactments, gaining further insight into religious practices.



Field Research (clockwise from top left)

Pompeii Archaeological Site, Wattle & Daub at the Weald & Downland Living Museum, Equinox Boat Burn at Butser Ancient Farm, Skara Brae (Orkney), Neolithic Chambered Cairn (Orkney)