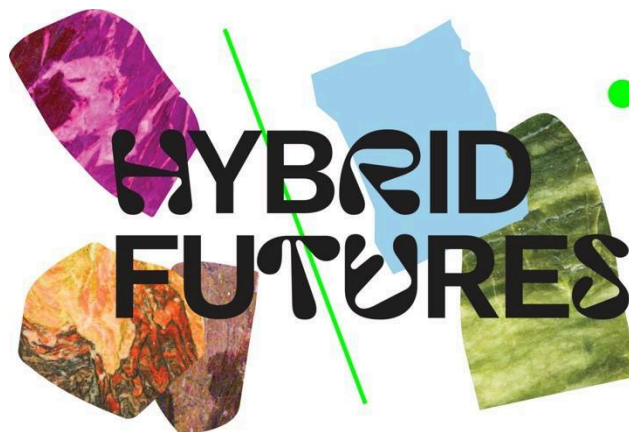


Press release
issued February 2024



Hybrid Futures

Partnership of north west galleries act on climate change by introducing sustainability in commissioning, exhibiting and collecting art for their region

New exhibition at Salford Museum and Art Gallery 23 March to 22 September 2024 will showcase new commissions and outcomes of this pilot project

Castlefield Gallery in Manchester, **Grundy Art Gallery** in Blackpool, **Touchstones Rochdale**, **University of Salford Art Collection** and **Shezad Dawood Studio** have been in partnership on a pilot project that they believe will change the way that galleries should operate in the future.

The Hybrid Futures partners have explored collective and more sustainable ways of working by pooling their expertise to influence how the partnership commissions, exhibits and collects new work by visual artists. This change they consider will benefit and be more relevant to their audiences, now and in the future. This pilot will be used to provide a framework that can be shared with other public galleries and collections in the UK.

The University of Salford Art Collection will bring together the new work and co-commissions by **Shezad Dawood**, **Jessica El Mal**, **Parham Ghalamdar** and **RA Walden** in **Hybrid Futures** (23 March – 22 September 2024), a group show at **Salford Museum and Art Gallery** that will mark one of the final phases of this project. Each artist has different perspectives and approaches, with their personal experiences and backgrounds informing how they interpret and explore the universal threat of climate change. Some of the commissioned work will be co-acquired by University of Salford Art Collection, Grundy Art Gallery and Touchstones, with the acquisition of Shezad Dawood's *Island Pattern* 2017 funded by Henry Moore Foundation.

Also featured is the wider work of the project including Collective Futures, a test bed community engagement programme and the findings and recommendations of Hybrid

Future's Sustainability Advisor, Danny Chivers whose work has been integral to the project and the partners.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a national symposium on 10 May 2024, where learning from this pilot project will be shared with a wider and interested group of peers. Booking and full programme details [here](#).

Shezad Dawood's Leviathan: From the Forest to the Sea is the latest instalment in Dawood's film series *Leviathan Cycle*. **Episode 8: Cris, Sandra, Papa & Yasmine** was developed remotely, in collaboration with Guarani scriptwriters, directors and activists Carlos Papá, Cristine Takuá, Sandra Benites and Brazilian artist and researcher Anita Ekman. This film not only expands the collective and horizontal filmmaking method that has become a central feature of the cycle's second half but reduces its own environmental impact through an intimate yet remote co-authorship. Set in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest - one of the most ecologically diverse and threatened biomes on earth - it intersperses the imagined journey of Dawood's protagonist Yasmine with accounts, songs and the retelling of foundational Guarani origin stories.

Shown at the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool as part of Lightpool, **Shezad Dawood's** work **Island Pattern** 2017 was co-acquired through funding from the Henry Moore Foundation. *Island Pattern* was originally presented in Venice in 2017 alongside Episode 1 of *Leviathan* which was co-commissioned by University of Salford Art Collection. The neon work is informed by studies of the wave patterns in the Venice Lagoon. It tells the story of a city at increasing risk from climate change and rising seas levels. The ideas for *Island Pattern* evolved out of conversations between the artist, the Marine Engineer Angela Pomaro and the chief designer at Venice's Fortuny textile factory, Pietro Lunetta, who had created a textile print using the same wave pattern data. Adding his own family history of links to the textile trade in Pakistan and the North West of England into these discussions, the artist is exploring how the seemingly disparate subjects of pattern, migration and climate change, intersect.

Co-commissioned as part of Hybrid Futures and also shown as part of Lightpool, **RA Walden's The Universe is a Clock (i) Schrödinger's equation, (time dependent)**, 2023 is made from clear glass and neon gas. The numerals of a clock are replaced with the different elements from an equation by the Nobel Prize-winning Austrian physicist Schrödinger. This work brings the physical world and the world of physics together to invite the viewer to consider their own understandings of time. As we occupy bodies in their varying states of health, on a planet careening toward sickness, this work also opens up questions of clock time, sick time and normative time-keeping.

The work of both **Jessica El Mal** and **Parham Ghalamdar** is motivated by the effects of capitalism, corruption and colonialism on the natural environment. Through a series of ceramics and colour saturated oil paintings of dystopian landscapes, Ghalamdar is reflecting on a recurring theme in Persian mythology: a struggle to prevent the separation of soil and water and the repression of growth and knowledge that would cause. Ghalamdar feels this struggle is taking on an absurd tone as it gets repeated in

contemporary politics without success. Alongside ongoing research into the history of climate injustice El Mal has worked with field and voice recordings and developed imagery with cyanotype prints made with rainfall in Morocco. The resulting works are poetic rather than prescriptive, aiming for a more emotional and expansive experience of their subject matter. A shared point of reference for El Mal and Ghalamdar is contrasting attitudes towards rainfall; particularly between Manchester where regular rainfall is a common source of complaint and Morocco and Iran where droughts and water shortages are an increasingly serious problem. Together their works invite visitors to look across landscapes, borders and centuries and to think deeply about these fundamental elements of soil and water.

Two additional works by Parham Ghalamdar and Shezad Dawood will be screened at the New Adelphi Exhibition Gallery, University of Salford, to coincide with the exhibition. Part of the gallery's art film season - showing works from the university art collection with an international focus - *Birds or Borders* by Ghalamdar screens 18 March - 3 April, and *Leviathan Cycle, Episode 1: Ben* by Dawood screens 10th - 24th April - visit the [UOSAC website](#) for full details.

Collective Futures is an experimental engagement programme with people from the communities of Salford, Manchester, Rochdale and Blackpool who have a shared concern about the climate crisis. The group has focused on hearing from invited guests - artists, community activists and cultural strategists - with reflection a big part of the group's sense-making, combining facts, feelings, interpretations and unlocking personal and professional relevance. The programme has given those involved new ways to think about their own work and working practices and helped embed these individual and collective responses at a carefully considered pace. The programme has led to direct action and infiltrated unexpected spaces, for example, a new community growing space, an NHS HR newsletter featuring three artists' work. It has changed the way people think about their everyday activity, for example, whether their actions go beyond sustainable to regenerative, such as the ambition to create and validate a community driven university course, and the extent to which arts programming is either sustainable, exploitative or regenerative.

A new exhibition by RA Walden will open at the Grundy 20 April – 15 June. Object transformations through the coordinate of time is a solo exhibition of newly commissioned and existing works. Spanning sculpture, installation, text and moving image, the works in this exhibition mark and measure the passing of time. Drawing on reference points as varied as, quantum physics, the ecological crisis, ancient timekeeping and the life cycle of worms, Walden is asking us to consider time at both a macro and micro level. More specifically, as an artist with lived experience of a disability, RA Walden also uses their work to explore and express non-normative experiences of time. From sculptures made from hacked office clocks, to texts that ask who and what defines, 'work', Walden's exhibition also provides a poetic meditation on lives and bodies whose timekeeping does not conform to the supposed 'norm'.

For further information, interviews and images please contact Catharine Braithwaite on 07947 644110 or cat@we-r-lethal.com

Notes to editors:

More information at <https://hybrid-futures.salford.ac.uk/>

Hybrid Futures: a multi-part collaboration focusing on climate, sustainability, collaborative learning and co-production between Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, Touchstones Rochdale, University of Salford Art Collection and Shezad Dawood Studio, and generously supported by Arts Council England, Art Fund and Henry Moore Foundation.

The University of Salford Art Collection is an ambitious and growing collection of modern and contemporary art, founded c.1968. The Collection aims to support excellence in teaching, research, community engagement and artist development; and actively acquires new work through a 'commission to collect' approach.

Salford Museum & Art Gallery exists to collect and preserve Salford's heritage and art collections, making them available for all through exhibitions, events, education and outreach. This Hybrid Futures exhibition builds on a growing collaboration between Salford Museum & Art Gallery and the University of Salford Art Collection, including exhibitions Print UnLtd (2018), Acquired: a Century of Collecting (2018-19), Everything I Have Is Yours (2019), Rediscovering Salford (2020/21) and Rachel Goodyear: Stirrings (2022).

Shezad Dawood is a multidisciplinary artist who interweaves stories, realities and symbolism to create richly layered artworks, spanning painting, textiles, sculpture, film and digital media. Fascinated by ecologies and architecture, his work takes a philosophical approach, asking questions and exploring alternative futures through what Dawood describes as 'world-building' and 'imagineering'. His practice is animated by research, working with multiple audiences and communities to delve into narrative, history and embodiment.

Selected solo exhibitions include Zien (2023), Integrations, Barakat Contemporary, Seoul (2023), Hybrid Landscapes, Deutsche Bank Frieze Lounges (2022), Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai (2021), Concert From Bangladesh, commission for British Council Digital Collaboration Fund (2021), Timothy Taylor, London (2020-21), MOCA Toronto (2019), FriezeLIVE, London (2019), Kunstverein, Munich (2019), Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice (2017), Pioneer Works, Brooklyn (2015), Fig.2 at the ICA studio, London (2015), Parasol Unit, London (2014), and Modern Art Oxford (2012).

Selected group exhibitions include Toronto Biennial of Art (2022), Sea Art Festival, Busan (2021), Paradise Row, London (2021), Folkestone Triennial (2021), Guggenheim, New York (2021), Southbank Centre, London (2020- 21), Boghossian Foundation – Villa Empain (2020), WIELS Bruxelles (2020), Manifesta 13 (2020), Lahore Biennial (2020), Dhaka Art Summit (2020), Sharjah Biennial 14, UAE (2019) – Jury Prize for Encroachments, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2018), Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2016), Museum of Modern Art, New York (2015), Taipei Biennial (2014), Marrakech Biennial (2014), MACBA Barcelona (2014), Witte de With (2013), Busan Biennale (2010), Tate Triennial: Altermodern (2009), and Venice Biennale (2009).

Selected collections include Guggenheim Arts Council Collection, Tate, University of Salford Art Collection, UBS, LACMA, Los Angeles, National Gallery of Canada, Government Art Collection, UK, US Government Art Collection, The British Museum, London, Sharjah Art Foundation, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, and Mathaf, Doha. His film works have been screened internationally, including at the ICA, London, MoMA, New York, and Guggenheim, New York.

Jessica El Mal is a British-Moroccan artist and curator with a particular interest in ecology and care. Her work addresses global structures of power through critical research, multidisciplinary projects, and speculative future imaginaries. She works internationally, having had projects with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, Manchester Museum, Esmat Publishing Ciaro and MAMA Rotterdam to name a few. In the UK, she runs arts programs in nature for people with experience of migration, as a way of addressing accessibility of green spaces whilst also building community networks. Jessica is also the co-founder of A.MAL Projects, an art and research initiative between Europe and North Africa, dedicated to providing paid opportunities for artists.

Parham Ghalamdar is a painter with a background in graffiti. He studied MA in painting at Manchester School of Art, specialising in oil painting. Ghalamdar expanded his painting and drawing practice into the digital realm in 2020 and has recently finished two short animations/films in collaboration with the director Martin Cooper, commissioned by the Oscar-winning artist, animator and filmmaker, Joan Gratz. He is a member of the Workplace Foundation's Community of Artists. Recent solo exhibitions include Painting: An Unending HOME Manchester, Fig.1 at Caustic Coastal, A Fine Kettle of Fish at Granada Foundation Galleries HOME, Manchester and Against the Absurdity of Life at Maria Behnam-Bakhtiar Gallery, Monte-Carlo. Recent group exhibitions include The Lowry, Salford, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London, London Paint Club, Floorr Magazine, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, Manchester Art Gallery, the Whitworth, Manchester, Beep Painting Biennale, Swansea, Asia Now Art Fair, Paris. His work is also in University of Salford Art Collection.

RA Walden is a transdisciplinary artist whose work centres a queer, disabled perspective on the fragility of the body. Their practice spans sculpture, installation, video and printed matter, all of which is undertaken with a socially engaged and research-led methodology. RA Walden has exhibited at Storm King Art Centre, New York, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool as part of GRUNDY x LIGHTPOOL x HYBRID FUTURES, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, HAU, Berlin, The National Gallery of Australia, SOHO20, New York, and Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam.



GRUNDY ART GALLERY



Shezad Dawood Studio



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