

Birmingham School of Art

November Newsletter

It feels very strange to be writing 'this will be my final newsletter of 2020'.... where have the last 12 months gone? As we come to the end of an unprecedented year, we wait in hope, anticipation and perhaps slight trepidation to see what 2021 has to bring.

Despite its challenges, 2020 has had moments of real positivity and triumph. From graduating student's digital degree shows; [It nearly never happened](#), [BAAAD annual](#) and [Unavoidable](#), to live projects which included opportunities for students to work on the Tate Liverpool public exhibition [Ferocious Love](#) with Mikhail Karikis, you, our student community, have continued to blow us away with your creativity and resilience. The School of Art protest choir Angry Margaret's first [music video](#), MA Fine Art student Dion Kitson's success in being awarded the [ACS studio prize](#) and a school trip to Barcelona are amongst some of the other highlights of the year. Looking back reminds us how much there is to celebrate.

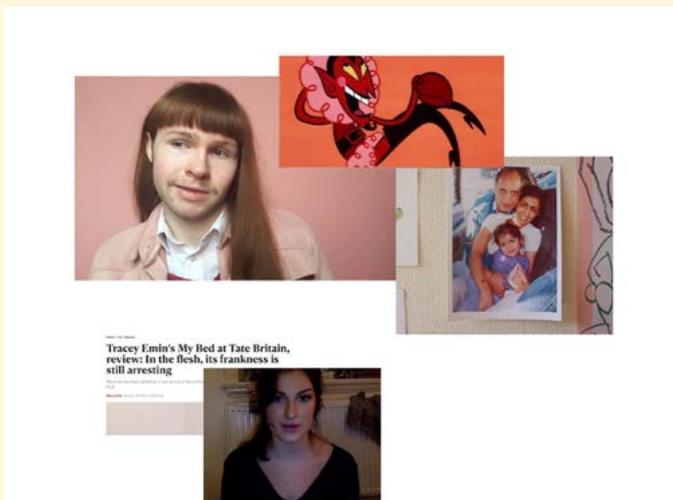
As we begin the count-down to the winter break there is just enough time to update you on some Margaret Street news and to remind you about a few of the activities, opportunities and resources on offer. Whether you are spending some time over the holidays making work, writing dissertations, completing your CHC research reports or updating reflective logs (alongside some rest and relaxation time!) I hope you have a good break when you get there and I look forwards to seeing you all in 2021!

Best wishes

Becky

Rebecca Court
Head of Undergraduate Studies
Birmingham School of Art

Whats been happening at the School of Art:

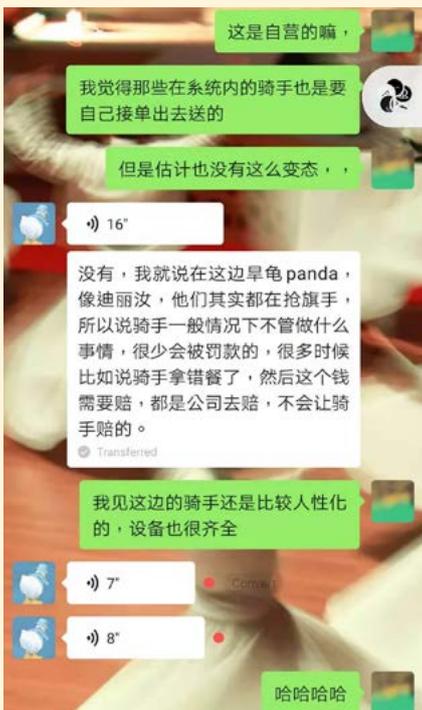


L5 BA A&D – Public research

Students in the second year of BA Art and Design have been thinking about ways to engage broad audiences in the things they have been researching. They have made some incredible podcasts, lectures, documentaries and essays that challenge who academic research is for and explore criticality in its many different forms. All of their submissions will soon be available for everyone to experience [here](#).

Level 4 BA FA Conceal and Reveal

BA Fine Art Level 4 students have been exploring masks as part of a *Conceal/Reveal* project. As things we now attach to our faces everyday, this was a great opportunity to consider masks in a wider historical and cultural context, and to be as inventive as possible with material and form.



MA Socially Engaged Practices Optional Module

Students on the MA Socially Engaged Practice in the Visual Arts module have been developing a range of publicly engaged activities, exploring some of the key issues of our time. One activity, enabled an online conversation between a delivery rider in China and a Chinese delivery driver in Birmingham, both sharing their individual experiences to critically compare and reflect on their precarious working conditions, and the complex yet divisive social conditions that they are up against. (Pictured left by student Shuyi Xie).

Foundation Art and Visual Communication

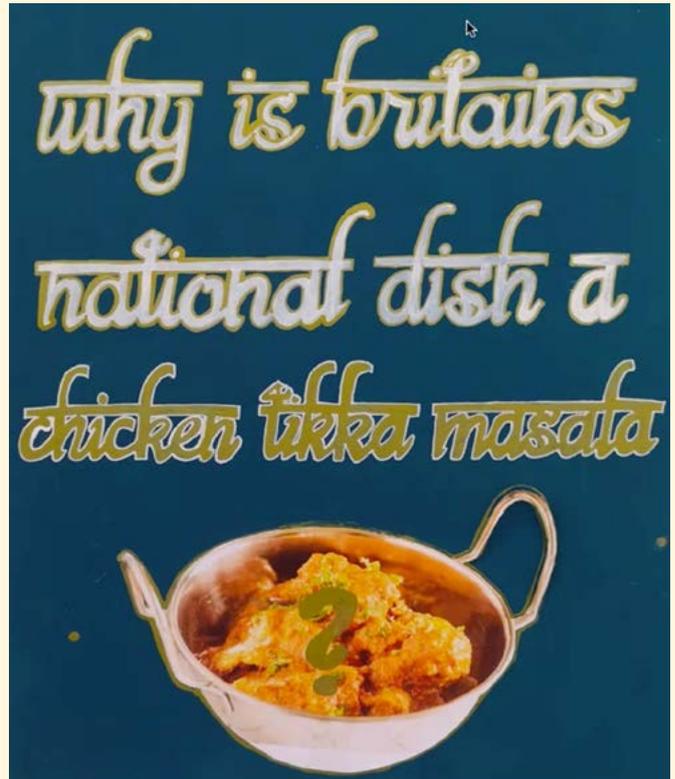
Our initial Module during the first semester started by smashing objects, chopping toys, dissecting lemons and dismembering familiar objects while continually tussling with the idea of understanding contexts. Our second module, BioArt, is underway and has sparked new ways of analyzing natural life and future scenarios. Over the next few weeks there will be analysis of the cognitive reaction of a Hamster to Gallery Art, sound and drawings from trees, life under the microscope, coding, the value of making with cardboard, 3D, studio workshops, online presentations and tutorials.





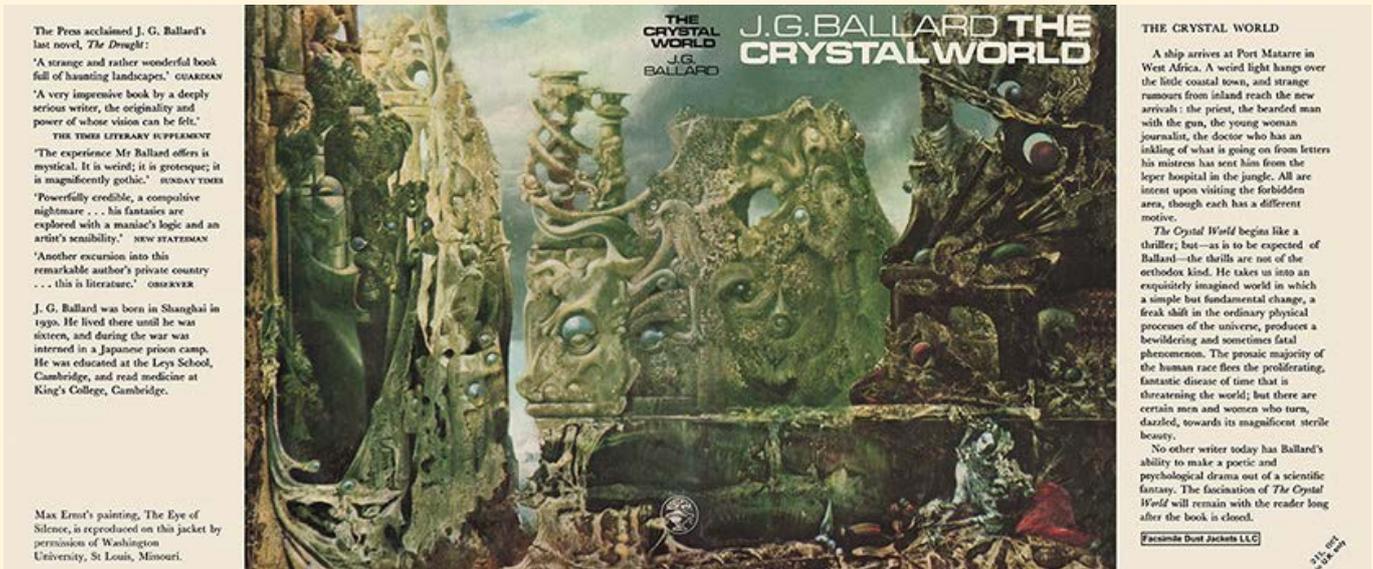
Level 6 BA Fine Art Formative Reviews

Third year BA Fine Art students last week all took part in formative review presentations discussing work made and research undertaken so far for their Practice and Professional Presentation module. There was an exciting range of practices and ideas and evidence of excellent experimentation that has been developed in the studios, workshops and across digital platforms. Well done everyone! Pictured is work by Carmella Hodgson (above left) and Elinor Hunter (above right).



Level 5 BA Fine Art Critical Theories

Second year BA Fine Art students have been working on group collaborative practice-led responses to important texts that form part of the Level 5 Critical Theories syllabus, including essays by Hito Steyerl, Sylvia Federici, Bell Hooks, Edward Said and Okwui Enwezor.



Uttering Ferocious Love an Open Reading, Tate Liverpool, 12 November 2020

Students, alumni and staff on the MA Arts and Education Practices course ran an online participatory reading event at Tate Liverpool that responded to Mikhail Karikis's installation *Ferocious Love*. Inviting audiences to hear a selection of readings that resonate with the current climate emergency.

Readings from J G Ballard's *Crystal World* and the Strugatsky's brothers *Roadside Picnic* were delivered with Mikhail reading his text "Plunging into Noise". Termed as sci-fi at the point of publication the texts are prescient about our current climate emergency. The audience choose texts to read back to us and an invaluable conversation emerged about the experiences of isolation in 2020 and how we might move forward.

MA Contemporary Arts China

'How can we enable a sense of community at the School of Art during lockdown?'

This is the question that MA Contemporary Arts China student Huijun Chen is asking as she aims to open a conversation on the ways we can be together and share experiences in times when social distance obliges. Some of the suggestions collected so far include all School online lectures, cross-course crits or facilitating free open conversations and collecting ideas. Come and drop your ideas and suggestions in the project noticeboard installed at the SoA foyer, or drop Huijun a line at: huijun.chen@mail.bcu.ac.uk.



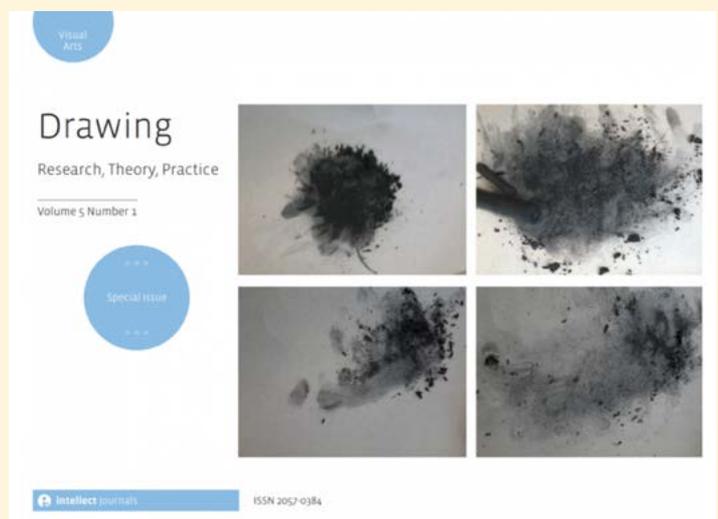


Design for Performance L5 students Live brief with BMAG and Tom Piper visit

This month second year BA Design for Performance students have started working on a live brief in collaboration with Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, in response to their new Birmingham *Revolutions: Power to the People* exhibition. After visiting the exhibition and meeting the curator, the students have been given the challenge of choosing one object from the exhibition to develop a narrative and concept design for an exhibition that engages the visitor in a theatrical, immersive and interactive way. To support the students through this project, we invited Tom Piper (designer of the 'Poppies' installation; *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* that was initially at the Tower of London) to talk about his practice.

Research Student Success

Doctoral students Harriet Carter and Jonnie Turpie have both had research report articles accepted for the next volume of the *Intellect Journal Drawing: Research, Theory and Practice 5.2 Drawing and Science*. They joined Dr Catherine Baker and Dr Jacqueline Taylor for a successful online Material Encounters Research Cluster event on the 17 November 2020 to discuss their experiences of the peer-review process towards getting their research published. Catherine and Jacqueline shared their experience of undertaking editorial roles in order to shed light on the process from both sides. Harriet and Jonnie's generosity in sharing their feedback in a transparent and candid way was appreciated by all.





G20 Gallery Space

The new booking system for the G20 Gallery has already begun to be put to good use since its launch. Pictured here are works by Level 6 Fine Art Students Suellen Maciel Moraes (above) and Ella Smart (right) who utilised the opportunity of a formal white cube exhibition space to test and document installation ideas. The space can be booked by all students through your personal tutor.



Other News:



Mental Health and Wellbeing

The present circumstances may be adding pressures to our mental health and wellbeing. It is really important that we seek support and there are lots of services and resources available to students such as: speaking with a [Student Success Advisor](#) if you are experiencing issues which are affecting your ability to engage with your course, getting in touch with the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Team](#) who offer wellbeing support, counselling and CBT therapy, [Student Support](#) who can advise on financial issues (and more), the [University Healthcare service](#) provided by Handsworth Wood Medical Centre who offer telephone, video and face-to-face appointments, [Disability Services](#) who offer support for existing and newly identified disabilities such as dyslexia and learning difficulties and the [BCUSU Advice Centre](#) who offer academic advice and support with accommodation issues (and more).

Round Lemon Open Call

Round Lemon is looking for works for their new show, 'Body'. The purpose of this show is to make a selection of artists from all around the world that associates their practice with the exploration of the human body, including artworks that investigate sexuality, gender, identity, objectification, abjection, nature, body art, and traditions - the body as material, etc. We accept every kind of medium (photography, video, painting, drawing, performance, sculpture, installation, dance, etc.). The deadline is the 13th December and work can be submitted [here](#). Entries are free but donations are asked for where possible. The show will open on the 28th December on the [Round Lemon website](#).



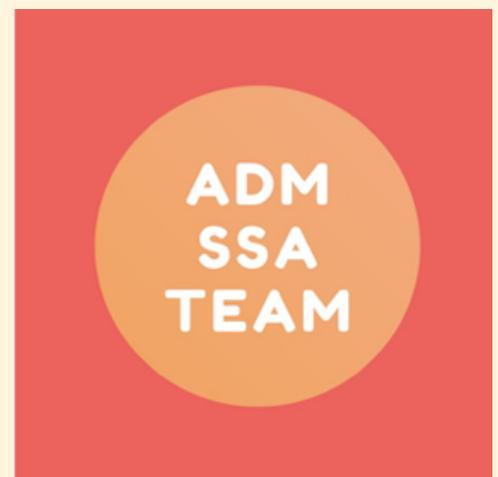
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



On 9th November, staff from across the Schools of Art, Visual Communication and Games, Film & Animation, met online for the first of a new series of equality, diversity and inclusion sessions. These sessions are due to continue monthly for the foreseeable future, enhancing our commitment to ensuring that our university is open and accessible to all, whoever they are and whatever their background. BCU are also running a series of talks as part of the [UK Disability History Month](#), included within this series is a talk by Professor Phil Cleaver on 10th December discussing designing with Dyslexia. You can book your place [here](#).

Social Activities with the Student Success Advisors

Over the next month the Art Design and Media Student Success Advisor teams are running a number of online social activities that all students can (and are encouraged!) to get involved in. These include Wellbeing Wednesday Xmas Food Hacks on [2nd December 12noon](#), Christmas Quiz Day on [Thursday 3rd December at 3.30pm](#) and Craft special Xmas Extravaganza on [Tuesday 7th December at 1pm](#).



If you have any School of Art news or events you would like included in my January newsletter please email me: rebecca.court@bcu.ac.uk by the 22/01/2021