

Press Release
March 2021

JERWOOD ARTS

Jerwood Solo Presentations 2021 Emii Alrai | Freya Dooley | Bryony Gillard



**Jerwood Arts, London
19 May – 17 July 2021**

Press Previews: by appointment, 4–18 May

Jerwood Solo Presentations 2021 showcases new commissions by Emii Alrai, Freya Dooley and Bryony Gillard in three concurrent solo presentations at Jerwood Arts in London.

Diverse in content and materials the works span sculpture, installation, moving image and sound; with each artist taking over a whole gallery to present their ideas. The exhibition brings together three distinct voices, based in Leeds, Cardiff and Bristol respectively, convening individual dialogues on loss and illness; façade and post-colonial museum practices; and the experience of interdependence and untethering within leaky interiors.

Now in its fifth year, Jerwood Solo Presentations creates a platform for the most outstanding early-career artists from across the UK to have their first major solo presentation in London's thriving Southbank area only moments from Tate Modern. Selected and curated by Harriet Cooper, Head of Visual Arts at Jerwood Arts, it provides a fully resourced opportunity for three artists to develop a significant new commission at a pivotal moment in their career. The resulting exhibition creates a unique space for conversation and experimentation, across and between disciplines.

Emii Alrai, *Passing of the Lilies*

Alrai's *Passing of the Lilies* is a layered installation which positions monumental sculptural forms alongside smaller clay pieces to interrogate the idea of value and the origins of artefacts. In one of her largest compositions to date, Alrai creates a facade of excavated ruins and historic objects from everyday materials like plaster, polystyrene, metal and clay. When seen from a distance these forms seem precious and of value, but on closer inspection they are not what they first appear to be.

Through this installation Alrai continues her exploration of the complexities and issues of how objects from the Middle East are displayed in museums in the West, and how they gather new meanings and narratives through this. Alrai's work is rooted in her own dual identity growing up in Scotland in an Iraqi family, leading her to navigate an understanding of displacement and cultural collisions which now informs her practice. Exploring ideas of facades and forgeries, Alrai asks audiences to consider the specific journeys, narratives and conditions that inform an object's presence within the museum.

Freya Dooley, *Temporary Commons*

Temporary Commons is an immersive multi-channel sound installation that weaves dodgy plumbing, turbulent neighbours, bad weather, canned laughter, pets and etymology to describe experiences of connection, untethering, and futile attempts at control.

The meandering fictional narrative, voiced by the artist, roots itself within the porous walls of a rented terraced house which is infiltrated by various leaks. The musical score, produced in collaboration with musician and artist Emma Daman Thomas, interweaves synthesised vocals and domestic field recordings to create a sculptural, polyphonic soundtrack.

The work borrows its title from the introduction to poet Lisa Robertson's *The Weather* and is occupied by contradictory states of distance and intimacy, surface and interior. In moments of pathetic fallacy, the narrator is preoccupied by the fear of an imagined sinkhole which threatens to swallow the house – anxious that the building's continued state of disrepair compromises the ground it sits on. Oscillating between conditions of intrusion and invitation, other leaks penetrate the space as the narrator develops an ambivalent, voyeuristic relationship with the voices of the couple next door. The neighbours experience moments of fleeting communion through the domestic commons of the party wall, the plumbing system and the incompetent landlord they share.

Bryony Gillard, *I dreamed I called you on the telephone*

I dreamed I called you on the telephone is a moving image work which considers loss, illness and time under late capitalism. At its core is an excerpt from the poet Anne Boyer's autopathography, *The Undying* (2019), a memoir that brutally tracks her experiences of cancer and the cancer industry in the USA.

Reconfigured in the context of *I dreamed I called you on the telephone*, Boyer's call to "weaponise" one's sick body against "what you hate and what hates you" is spoken as a monologue by the artist's sister, an NHS midwife. With a range of protagonists and collaborators, including a fox, a midwife, a sewage works and a countertenor, the work explores ideas around bodily autonomy, grief and practices of care and resistance.

"Jerwood Solo Presentations provides a unique London platform for some of the most talented early-career artists making work today. Emii Alrai, Freya Dooley and Bryony Gillard were selected in 2019 and despite this difficult past year their ideas and ambitions have continued to grow into the distinctive commissions that are taking over our galleries in this exhibition. I am incredibly excited to be supporting these three incredible artists to present new work at this pivotal moment in their practices and look forward to welcoming audiences to Jerwood Arts in 2021" Harriet Cooper, Head of Visual Arts, Jerwood Arts

Jerwood Solo Presentations launched in 2016 and is presented annually. The exhibition presents new solo commissions and aims to discover, develop and promote early-career artists at a critical stage in their careers. Previous Jerwood Solo Presentations artists are: Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom, Kitty Clark, Sofia Mitsola, Rob Crosse, Susie Green, Georgia Horgan, Anna Bunting-Branch, Imran Perretta, Ben Burgis & Ksenia Pedan, Lucy Parker, Rachel Pimm and Katie Schwab.

Events:

As part of Jerwood Solo Presentations 2021, there will be a series of accompanying events – online and in person, Covid-19 restrictions permitting – developed in collaboration with the artists. All events will be announced in May 2021 and are free to attend, please visit jerwoodarts.org to book a space.

Exhibition Listing Information:

Title:	Jerwood Solo Presentations 2021
Dates:	19 May – 17 July 2021
Address:	Jerwood Space, 171 Union Street, Bankside, London, SE1 0LN
Opening Hours:	Wednesday – Saturday: 12pm – 7pm
Admission:	Free
Nearest tube:	Southwark, London Bridge or Borough
Website:	jerwoodarts.org/exhibitionsandevents
Social Media:	@jerwoodarts #JerwoodSoloPresentations

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For further information please contact Harriet Clarke or Truda Spruyt at Four Culture:

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Image credits (L-R): Emii Alrai, *House of Teeming Cattle*, 2019. Installation view at Two Queens, Leicester. Photography by Jules Lister; Freya Dooley, *Speakable Things*, 2018. Installation view at Chapter. Photograph by Mark Blower; Bryony Gillard, *I dreamed I called you on the telephone*, 2021. Still. Image courtesy the artist

Further images of the works can be found [here](#).

Notes to Editors:

Emii Alrai was born in Blackpool and is an artist based in Leeds. Alrai's practice is informed by inherited nostalgia, geographical identity and post-colonial museum practices of collecting and displaying objects. Alrai creates mainly sculptural installations that recall the mode of museological displays and diorama. Drawing references from objects in museum collections, ancient writing from the Middle East and cultural memories, her work questions the value and origins of artefacts, as well as navigating the experience of diaspora. She studied her BA in Fine Art and an MA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies at The University of Leeds. Alrai is currently part of the Yorkshire Sculpture International Sculpture Network and was selected for the 2019 Arab British Centre Making Marks Project in Kuwait and the 2018 Tetley Artist Associate Programme. Recent group and solo exhibitions include: *The High Dam*, The Tetley, Leeds, UK (2020); *Tutelaries*, VITRINE, London, UK (2019); *Fallow*, Rectory Projects, London, UK (2019); *House of Teeming Cattle*, Two Queens, Leicester, UK (2019); *An Ancient Quiver*, GLOAM, Sheffield, UK (2018); *The Hum*, Caustic Casual, Salford, UK (2017); and *Limbo Lambada*, Hutt Collective, Nottingham, UK (2017). In 2020 Alrai received the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Artist Award and in 2021 she was selected for the prestigious Triangle Astérides Residency in Marseille.

Freya Dooley lives and works in Cardiff. Working across media, her practice encompasses writing, moving image, performance and sound. Recent projects have manifested as installations, visual essays, recited monologues, listening events and collaborative fictions. In her work she is often concerned with the characterised voice; layered narratives navigate disparate threads between interior thought and public performance. Dooley undertook a residency with Beppu Project in Japan, supported by Wales Arts International, which culminated in her solo exhibition *Scenes From Between the Mountains and the Sea* in Beppu, Oita (2020). Other recent projects and exhibitions include: *Ventriloquy for Radio* a broadcast for Interruptions at Holden Gallery, Manchester, UK (2020); *New Writing with New Contemporaries* which included performances at Leeds Art Gallery, UK (2019) and South London Gallery, UK (2020); *The Song Settles Inside the Body It Borrows*, a solo exhibition at Chapter Gallery, Cardiff, UK (2019); and *Somewhere in the Crowd There's You*, a solo exhibition at Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK (2019). A vinyl record edition of *Somewhere in the Crowd There's You* was published by Eastside Projects in 2020. Dooley currently holds a two-year Fellowship at g39, Cardiff, which is supported by the Freelands Artist Programme. She was a member of Syllabus III, a UK-based alternative peer-led learning programme, jointly

delivered by Wysing Arts Centre, Eastside Projects, New Contemporaries, S1 Artspace, Spike Island, Studio Voltaire and Iniva. In 2019 she was shortlisted for the Kleinwort Hambros Emerging Artist Prize. The research and development of Dooley's commission for Jerwood Arts was additionally supported by funding from the Arts Council of Wales' National Lottery Fund.

Bryony Gillard is an artist, curator and educator based in Bristol, UK with an MFA from the Dutch Art Institute, School for Art Praxis. Through a process of both uncovering and layering, assembling and disassembling influences, histories and conversations, her work attempts to create a space for genealogies of intersectional feminist practice that are elusive, messy and entangled in contemporary concerns. Her work was included in the Tate touring exhibition *Virginia Woolf: an exhibition inspired by her writings* (2018) and she was awarded the 2019 Royal Albert Memorial Museum artist commission to create *Unctuous Between Fingers*, a new work exploring Amelia Warren Griffith's seaweed collection and its connection with contemporary feminist ideas and conversations. Recent projects include: screenings of *Unctuous Between Fingers* at The Holden Gallery in Manchester, Cinema Maison, BB15 in Linz, Ocean Archive Programme at TBA21 Academy in Venice, Arnolfini in Bristol and Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter (2019-20); *Slippery Bodies* a two-person show at FLATLAND Projects, Hastings, UK (2019); *Bau-bo-bad* performance at De Pimlico Projects, London, UK (2019); and *A cap, like water, transparent, fluid yet with definite body* a solo exhibition at Peninsula Arts, Plymouth and Turf Projects, Croydon, UK (2017-18). Forthcoming projects include a moving image installation for Estuary Festival in Kent and a new commission with the University of Bristol's Post Graduate Research Centre (both 2021). She is an associate lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire and facilitates creative workshops with adults and young people, working with organisations and groups such as Spike Island, Arnolfini, Feminist Archive South, Eastside Projects, Into the Wild (Chisenhale Studios), Grad Jobs (Embassy Gallery), CAMP and Hestercombe Gallery.

Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting UK artists, curators and producers to develop and thrive. We enable transformative opportunities for individuals across art forms, supporting imaginative awards, bursaries, fellowships, projects, programmes and commissions. We present new work and bring people from across the arts together through our exhibitions and events at Jerwood Space, London, as well as across the UK. jerwoodarts.org

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The research and development of Freya Dooley's commission for Jerwood Solo Presentations 2021 was additionally supported by:



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