

**Seren Metcalfe (b.1997) is a Yorkshire-born Artist,
Writer and Curator based in London**

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About

Seren Metcalfe (b.1997) is a Yorkshire-born Artist, Writer and Curator based in London.

Her art practice spans Performance, Moving Image, Installation, Sculpture, and Text. She attempts to create honest imagery that blurs the lines between fictional narratives and the poetic reality of being human. Combining themes of Time, Television, and Technology to question societal structures and the theatrics of everyday existence. Commonly using the body as a tool to question these ideologies with inspiration from Yorkshire Landscapes, Urban architecture, and Pop Culture.

Seren is the founder and director of [The Working Class Creatives Database](#). She has managed, programmed and curated exhibitions, residencies, talks and workshops for working class creatives throughout the UK collaborating with institutions such as Yorkshire Sculpture Park and contributing to research in the arts. She strives for Art to be for everyone, not just those who can afford it.



Photographed by Aria Shahrokhshah 2021

CV

Seren Metcalfe (b. 1997)

Seren_metcalf@hotmai.co.uk

@werealljusttryingtogetby

Education:

BA Hons Fine Art, Slade School of Fine Art, 2016 – 2020

Foundation Diploma, Leeds College of Art, 2015 – 2016

Prizes:

AWITA Sponsored Membership 2024

New Contemporaries 2021

Clare Winsten Memorial Award, 2020

Herbert Seaborn Memorial Scholarship Prize, 2019

Selected Exhibitions:

Duo:

Hard Drives, Soft Walks, Chemist Gallery London, January – February, 2023

Group:

Works That Never Came To Life, 3D Women, Art Hub London, June 2023

Dream Weaver, Grove Collective London, March – April 2022

New Contemporaries, South London Gallery, Dec 2021 – Feb 2022

3D Women, Platform Southwark, Dec 2021

New Contemporaries, First Site Colchester, Sept – Nov 2021

Slade BA Degree Show, Sept 2021

Personal Space, Surface Gallery, Online 2020

The Future is Loading..., Shape Open, Online, 2020

Final, not over, Unit 1 Gallery, London 2020

Words To Be Looked At, Wolfson College Oxford, 2020

Platform 1, Bloomsbury Theatre, February 2020

Curation:

It's a joy to be here, Working Class Creatives Database, 87 Gallery Hull, Jan – April 2023

Gatherings, Working Class Creatives Database, SET Woolwich, August 2023

Press:

[The Face Magazine](#), September 2023

[Gowithyamo](#), August 2023

[It's Nice that](#), June 2022

[Sick Love Zine](#), June 2021

Installations

[Hard Drives, Soft Walks, 2023](#)

[Fish Interlude, 2022](#)

[Phase 1, 2021](#)

HARD DRIVES, SOFT WALKS – Installation, 2023

Sculpture, Soundtrack, Programmed Lighting, Animatronic Mouth, Performance.

Duo show with Martina O'Shea

Shown at Chemist Gallery, 19 January – 19 February 2023

Live Performer: Chana Joyce, Reuben Sutherland

Sound Mastering: Louis Grace

For the inaugural exhibition at 'Chemist', Martina O'Shea and Seren Metcalfe debut new work alongside a collaborative sound and light installation. 'Hard Drives, Soft Walks' is a mashed up journey of the two artists, from night clubs, to mud larking, glitching landscape, tv soaps, late night walks and half remembered dreams.

The centre of the installation is a collaborative sound piece: two voices telling tales through radio static, located in an ever changing vista of London, Ireland and Yorkshire. Fields, birdsong hit against traffic jams and sirens, mummers and echos from tv sets counter to techno beats transformed into the bodhrans. City remains and construction materials, pop memorabilia and programmed lights are forming a ghostly, theatrical set of the ever in flux space between body place and time.

The Hard Drives, soft walks Publication is an edited version of a google doc made prior and during the show. Starting off as complete strangers, they used the document as a means to form greater understanding of each other's practices. This conversation evolved into monologues, poetry and eventually a 12 minute soundtrack.

Video: <https://youtu.be/HMKJg6yEjDA>

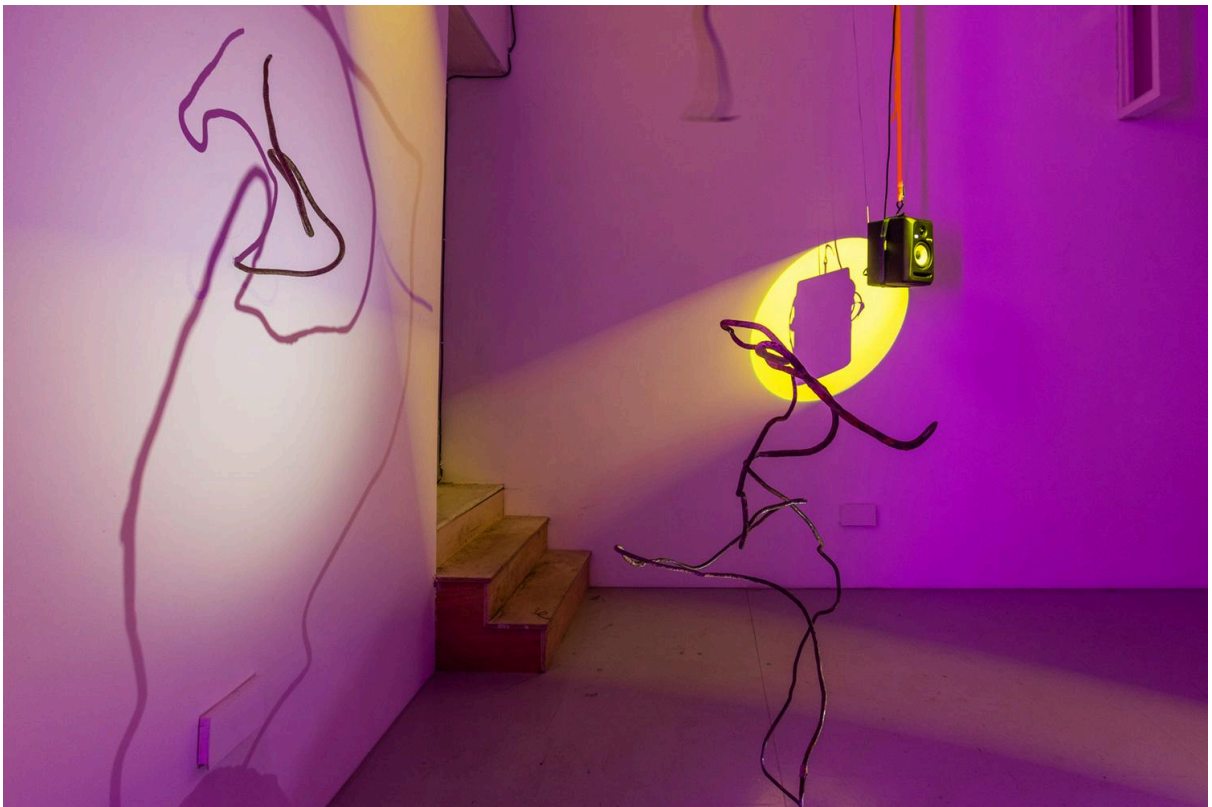
Performance Video: <https://youtu.be/rQcJ8y44FPw>

Soundtrack: <https://on.soundcloud.com/FozFD>

Publications: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/ae4b657f6f.html>

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/57df839d7d.html>











SM Recently I've been working with found materials. I want the work to be slow to feel suspended in memory and time - memories and objects feeling trapped and also free and engulfing like stars. I want to use more found materials - space junk. I like the idea of you using car articles, especially in terms of music. There's also something interesting about cars and transport and cars being private moving karaoke booths.

MDP Yes, a car aerial capsule. Radio and articles as a symbol of collective consciousness. There's a certain quality to the type of construction that happens while driving. Memories, materials, space, time is present in both of our practices. At the end of a show I installed and deconstructed this capsule. I took this photo of the steel wall being knocked down. Why does it seem like such a joyous thing to me? Maybe the breaking of any wall triggers some kind of excitement about what's coming next! Making way for the new!

SM The idea of a divider from the window of the gallery with some kind of entrance hole could work well - a change in atmosphere. Steel walls form the bones of television, film sets and artist studios - the illusion of an environment - The avoidance of

SM We could create an environment where inside the steel wall feels dark - encapsulating the audience and the outside feels like behind the scenes. I want to create a contrast between light and dark or artificial light and natural light.

MDP Yeah, the steel wall definitely is reminiscent of tv sets and artist studios. Back in 2013 I worked behind the scenes in the art department for the national broadcaster RTE in Dublin for a couple of years on shows like The Den and Fear City. There was always a sense of being shielded by the set lights when you entered the set from behind the steel walls. For me steel walls also give off a sense of imprisonment/ change-time. Maybe this was the attraction to working in TV.

SM It reminds me of a nightclub. Social rules are so strange. We can enter a certain room and suddenly the purpose is to dance and jump around and as soon as we exit the door of the nightclub and continue dancing or singing everyone looks at us like we are crazy.

SM Music and Television are important elements I want to reference in my work, nostalgic feelings of hope and belonging, and reliability.

MDP I'm thinking a lot about sound lately. I got a book today called Quantum Listening by Pauline Oliveros - 'a manifesto for listening as activism. Blending technology and spirituality' (forward by Laurie Anderson)

*'As I listen I remember
'As I write and listen, hidden sounds emerge'
'Can you imagine listening beyond the edge
of your own imagination'
'Can you imagine the feeling of the world'
'As you listen, the particles of sound decide to
be heard. Listening affects what is sounding'*

MDP When Pauline and a couple of others descended into the Dan Harpole Centre, using Empty receptacles for water basins that underground, built by the US military near Austin. In the depths they listened intently as their sounds interacted to them with an extraordinary delay of forty five seconds.



The sun was so strong that day, I could hardly breath, the sun was so strong that day, and I ran in the fields and lay down and looked up at the sky, I was so happy, I felt that I burst, I must have been there nearly an hour or more, I must have been there nearly an hour or more

A bootleg ballad blares out across the seafloor, The Horizon reminds me to spin around the sun, it reminds me of the big burning ball of fire we so sweetly call sunshine. We have come to accept the circular orange flames that burn whilst we complete our daily routines, our 9 till 5's or 5 till 9's, repeating everyday with the waves

When we spent summers in the attic I painted a rocket on the wall

I remember driving from spit to zulfiana in croatia, sometime after the london olympics, it was dark and we all piled out of the car for a piss. It was there that I heard the most magical sounds, what seemed like hundreds of frogs croaking under a blanket of stars. A frog chorus among the constellations, with us pissing in the background. Smooth

Whilst working at the theatre I watch as people are desperately searching for rules to follow, tuning in to their basic bodily needs and animal instincts.

In an Uber home from a job last month at 4 am the two rotating sacks of fluid otherwise known as my eyes are burning in my head. I contemplate asking the driver to stop at McDonalds but instead I open the window and let the cool air touch my face. A song comes on the radio, A guy is singing all my exes live in Texas. How convenient I think for all your exes to live in the same place.

"Where's the food? Where's the water? Where's the toilet? Where can I pray? Where can I survive and where can I reach god? Where can I love? How can I love? I watch as two lumps of warm conscious flesh feed each other small pots of vanilla ice cream with little wooden sticks. I can't stop thinking about how much the smoke detectors look like Belgian Buns or how a yawn can be passed around for a whole eternity

The storm is turning everyday objects into missiles, are people covered insurance wise or is this considered an act of god. The car park is now under water, that dramatic moment that the roof flew off the school lunchroom. It used to be a jazz bar but now it's another hotel, now it's another hotel.

Night clubs become churches and DJ's the priests,

Now its another hotel

Calibrating bodies and beat, limbs loose bones shack with base, pheromones striking, collective vibrations between unknowns, pulsating petri dish of specimen, squeezing the last line of a song out of the facade into the silence of the street, big stinking, dirty ends. Losing salt to fall asleep, while others are wide awake, to walk with no aim. To function as fluid around solid matter, majicified, to look beyond the facade of building, of face of television screen, of set, of societal structure, whether I in-camera capture embodied in a machine, caught images become distorted memories, bouncing off one another. Beyond our own personal province.

"Of all those worlds we have no indication of life. For me that understates the rarity and preciousness of our earth and the life upon it. Now you can see it looks more like dot but in fact it's less than that "

FISH INTERLUDE – *Installation, 2022*

Paintings, Fish Sculptures, Animatronic eyes and mouth, Soundtrack

shown as part of 'Dream Weavers'

A Group Exhibition featuring Seren Metcalfe, Jesse Pollock, Ernesto Renda, and Amba Sayal-Bennett With [GROVE](#) 10th March – 9th April 2022

'Fish Interlude' is a conversation formed between 3 Fish; a conversation of rhythm, nature, and bodies, an exploration of existence, time, and Spotify algorithms.

The fish are symbolic of movement, labour, and industry. In the past, the waterways and train lines were both used to connect cities and as a way to transport goods. The movement of fish across rivers felt parallel to my movements back and forth on the railway from North to South. The fish also brings back childhood memories of going to the trout farm or playing with the plastic fish my Grandad gave me that would sing Elvis on command.

It wasn't until my teens that I discovered there was more than just pop music and the Top 40 UK charts. I'd search endless hours on Wikipedia going through different genres; obsessing over 50's rock and roll, neo-soul, and Riot Grrrls. Songs began to signify moments of my own history. Whilst writing the script I was working as an usher on Saturday Night Fever. My days were filled with research and learning how to wire electronics and my evenings were filled with a room of dreams, desires, and disco. I began reading a book that's been on my reading list for a while, Songs in the factory: Pop music, Culture, and Resistance. In a strange twist of fate, a full chapter is dedicated to Saturday Night Fever and the culture of 'Stayin' Alive'. It reminded me that the more you notice in the world, the more these networks of energy and time begin to connect and be in sync with each other.

The Paintings that accompany the work were produced from the research of movement and networks.

The music provides freedom for the fish similar to that of factory workers who used radios as means of escape from the repetitive labour. Music forms a reflection of rhythms and histories. Their robotic elements are a constant reminder that everything is constructed and structured and a mere program of time.

A journey of feeling, memories, getting lost and found again.

Video: <https://youtu.be/HmQT6mW52KQ>







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PHASE 1 – *Installation, 2021*

Paintings, Performance, Video, Soundtrack, programmed lighting, Animatronic eye.

Shown at The Slade School of Art, 2021

Live Performers: Chloe Walker, Izzy Catterall, Sarah Baugsto, Chana Joyce, Julia Zlotnick

Sound Mastering: Louis Grace

Video Performers: Mina Owen, A Milejski, Florence Woolley, Chanelle Love, Beth Mellett. Liv Kisby, Theo Dunne, Moza Al Mazrouei, Shannon Roberts

Exhibition Documentation: Will Glass

Sublime vast Yorkshire Landscapes, Microorganisms Multiplying, Bodies moving as one entity to the shape of the green hills; the curvature mimicking the human figure. A constant exchange of energy through space, thoughts, and all living things. This is a journey of energy and the existence of time. Transport becomes a place of timelessness – where past, present, and future can exist on the same plane.

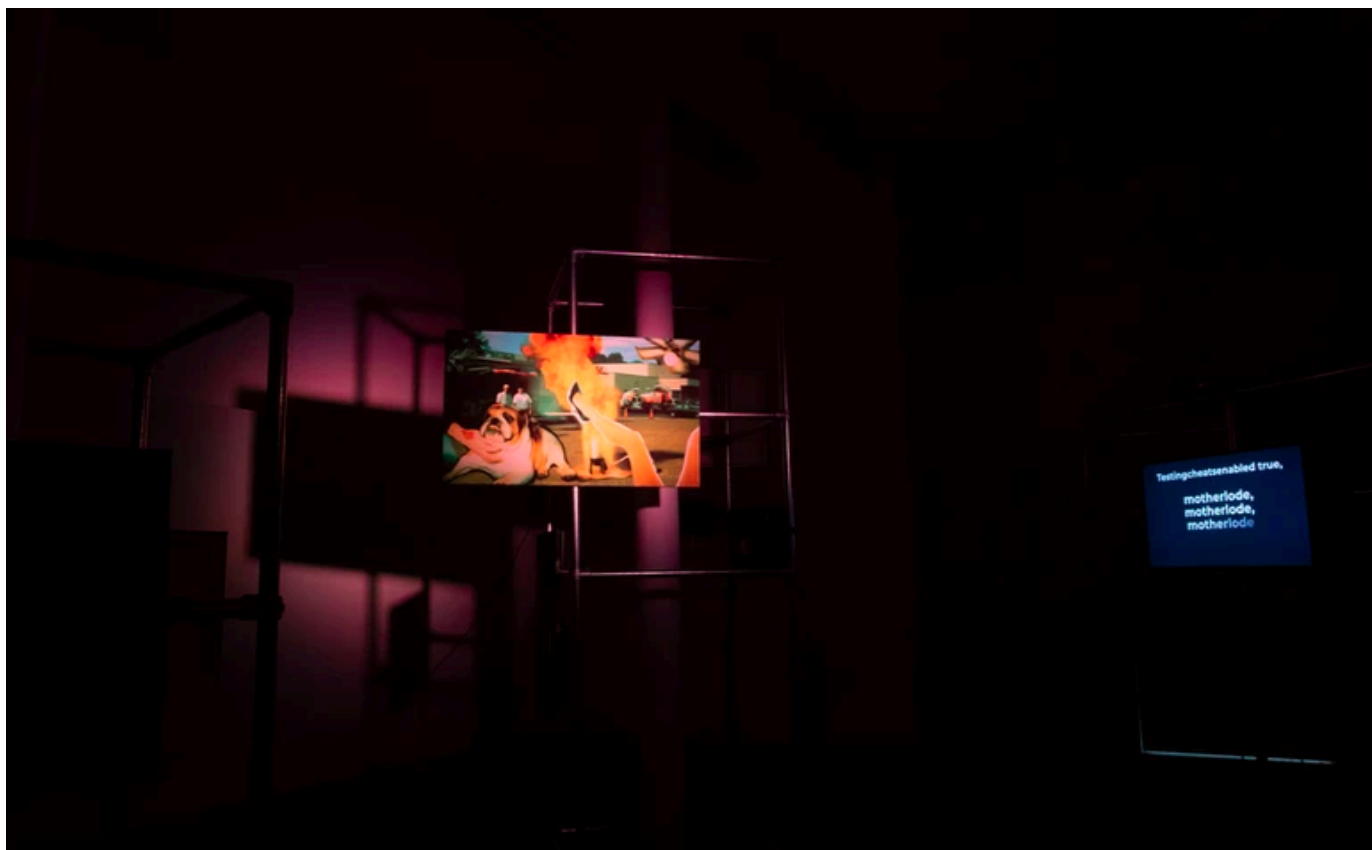
(Our traditional sense of time is on a timeline and moves forward but the brain thinks back and forward and back again; I go out to drink a coffee and think about a memory of my first coffee whilst imagining a story where a character drinks coffee in the future. Whilst appearing to the crowd; the many, that I've just gone to a coffee shop, Me; the singular person has travelled back and forward in time whilst also maintaining periods existing in the present moment.)

The city is a factory, bodies work like machines, and movements become routines. Everything in time repeats itself; reshaping and reforming. I'm reminded of past memories at every word of fiction. A journey of becoming.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjYooQHvpDw&ab_channel=Seren

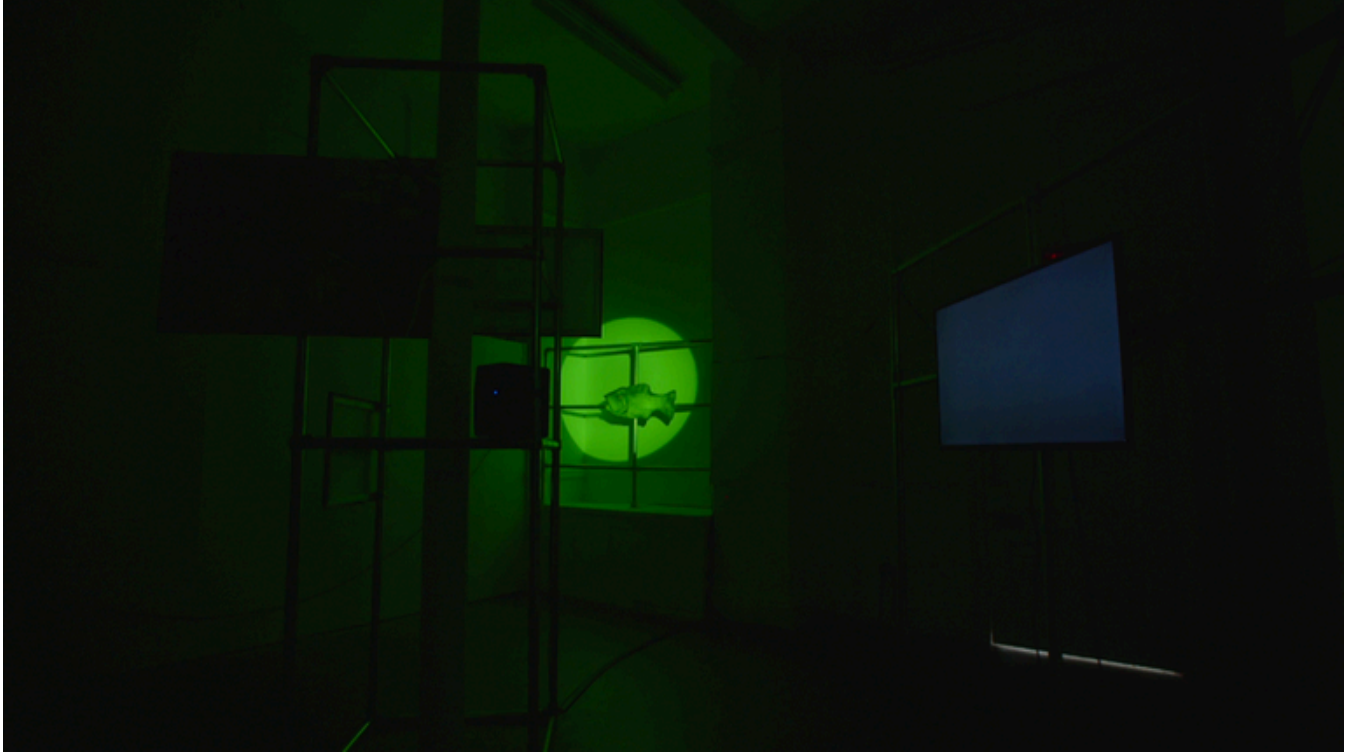
Soundtrack: <https://on.soundcloud.com/gXKaJ>

Publication: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/a3fd9fc376.html>









Publications/Writing

[Hard Drives, Soft Walks, 2023](#)

[Half Truths, 2020](#)

[Script Writing 2019– Current](#)

HALF TRUTHS – Book 2020

HALF TRUTHS is a Publication housing a collection of daily passings – a mixture of daily strolls and daily scrolls gathered into an autobiographical archive. It attempts to be research; to explain things, and act as a navigation system for my thought processes as well as being a directory of current artworks. All thoughts within the book are placed within categories such as time, labour, body language, and fame.

Book Design: Matthew Clark and Veronika Marxer

Limited 2nd & 3rd editions available to buy via:

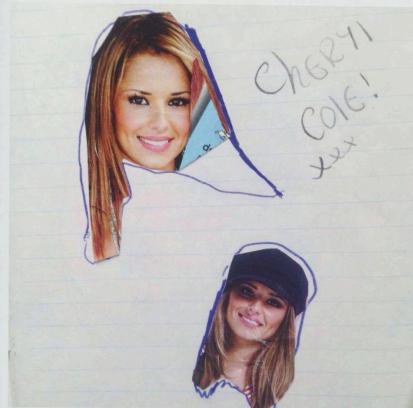
Kindred Ldn
Goodpress Glasgow
South London Gallery London
Village Books Leeds

This book was selected for New Contemporaries 2021 and displayed at First Site, Colchester and South London Gallery.

Book Extract Reading: https://youtu.be/_epBC_6QlIs

Digital Book: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/a3fd9fc376.html>





BODY LANGUAGE

As bodies dance like boxes, Their movements almost always appear robotic. They're uptight and anxious. They don't know how to greet one another. Do they go for the double kiss? The hug or the handshake? God forbid they go for the triple kiss.¹

It's 2007 and I pick up a body language book and put it on as a disguise. Unaware this would set me up for years of pretending I was a really confident person. I'd spread my arms and legs as far out as possible; going to job interviews with the wingspan of an eagle and the leg span of a man spreader and walking down school corridors like catwalks.

Private schooled politicians are taught how to hold their hands in forced positions to convey certain meanings. The 'popular fist with thumb held firm into the palm' apparently shows precision, as this action is recognised by our brains as a gesture used when writing, eating and drawing. My brain recognises it as an action used when turning on the Telly. When opening their palm it suggests handing over money to the crowd; an action used to cover up the lack of.²

It's 2008 and I'm trying to erase the fear in my head of people who stand behind counters or desks or who wear fluorescent jackets and uniforms with hats.³ Obstacles between body to body seem to be an element of fear or suggestive of hierarchy. I'm scared of the girl behind the counter in topshop and the guy asking if I want a bag in tesco. I'm scared of the security guard in the shopping centre and the policeman who rides his bike past me most mornings.

It's 2020 and I still do that thing of introducing myself to myself in the mirror or repetitively counting the coins in my hands when in a que even though I know I've got enough or repeating the words 'erm hi can I have a large veggie deluxe meal until it becomes a long string of nonsensical words and something completely different comes out my mouth.

The obstacles still form barriers,⁴ and create the choreography of social intervention. The objects that split a room such as a desk or bar create a differentiation and box in the worker from the customer. The worker may enter the customer area when commanded but the customer rarely enters the workers box; This box is for staff only.

¹ To make a ring they say you must see with the pressure of a handshake

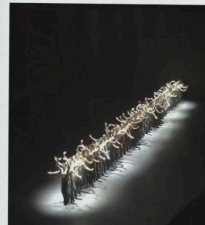
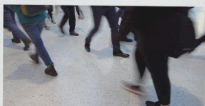
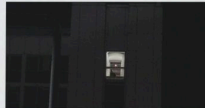
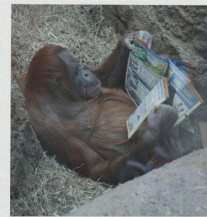
² It's 2020 and I can only imagine the level of awkwardness gained from having to greet people from a distance.

³ I can't say my brain recognises an open palm as handing over money but I'm sure many private school scholars would disagree.

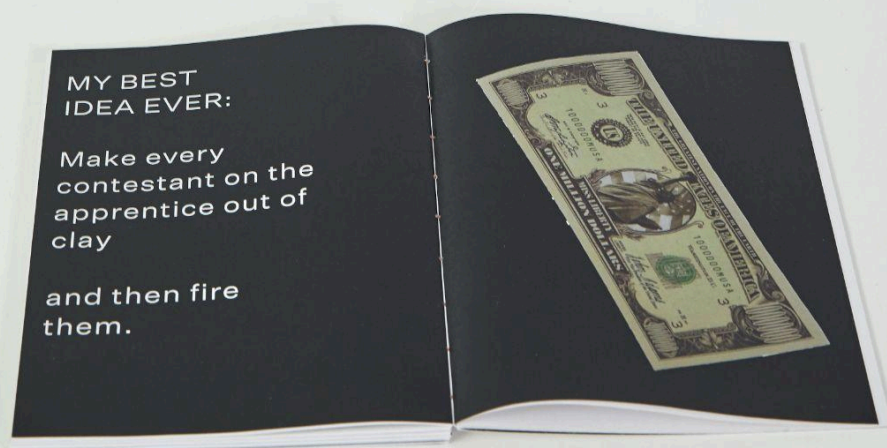
⁴ See Character

⁵ See boundaries





Seren Metcalfe
Half Truths, 2020



SCRIPT WRITING - 2019 - Current

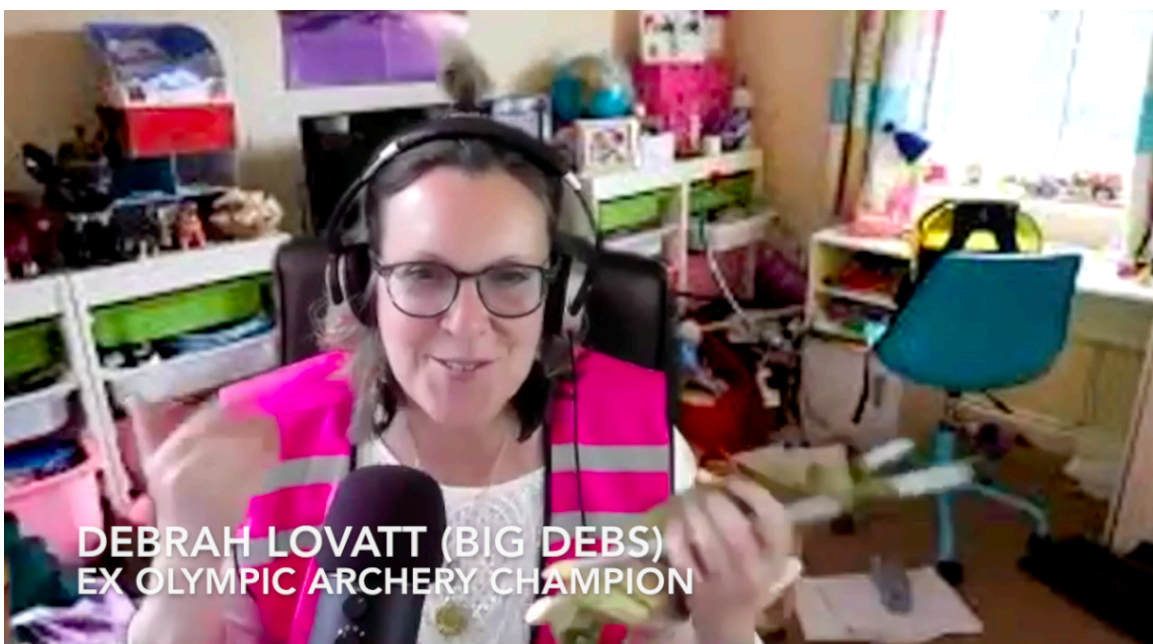
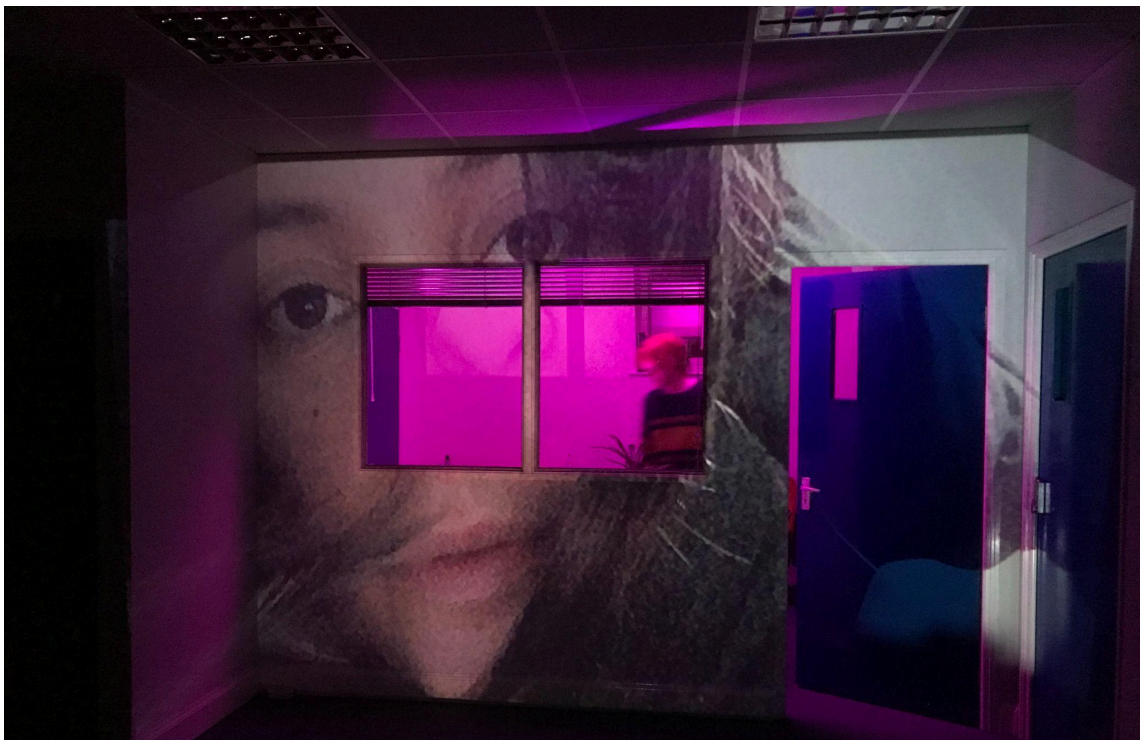
Since 2019 I have been writing and developing scripts for Television and Theatre.

2020 - Current: Don't Forget to Feed Gary - A series written with Billy Parker.

2019 - Current: Petrol - A Play written with Billy Parker

2018 - Current: STI (Sorry to Intrude) - A Web Series Pilot written with Lucky Christie

Please get in touch to view sample scripts.





Performance/Video

[Coronation Street of Contemporary Dance, 2020](#)

[Go Fuck Yourself Choir, 2020](#)

[Television Studio, 2020](#)

[Applause, 2020](#)

[Contact Points, 2019 – 2020](#)

[A Large Scale print of the Yorkshire Moors, 2019](#)

[Felt, 2018](#)

[Rush Hour, 2017](#)

[The Crawl, 2016](#)

[Were All Just Trying To Get By, 2018](#)

[News Reader Pauses, 2016](#)

[Wheelie Chair, 2016](#)

[Concrete, 2016](#)

Coronation Street of Contemporary Dance - 2020

A live choreographed performance with a projection. The Video is a Montage of moments from the first episode of Coronation Street to Current episodes. The Montage depicts a timeline of working class northern history from the 1960's till our current time through the eye of a TV screen. These moments will be turned into a chain of movements to create choreography for two dancers to perform live next to the video. The depiction of time within soaps is of interest to me and how we can witness these highs and lows of emotions of an entire street within a 30 minute time frame summing up some kind of human experience throughout time. The television screen acts as a window into those moments of time where fictional narratives are formed from real life experiences.



The Go Fuck Yourself Choir - 2020

Lit up by smartphone torches, a Choir of voices repeat the words 'Go Fuck Yourself'



Television Studio - 2020

Television Studio looks at themes of labour and time within television. On the stage everything is set out in stations much like a television studio. I imagine the moment on a talk show when the camera moves from the chat show host to the next station where the band will play. Or on a game show where each obstacle is set out at a different platform of the circle but the camera films one station at a time so the audience views everything on a continuous timeline. The layout represents a clock face. Three performers are on stage. A drummer placed at 12 o'clock, A dancer placed at 3 o'clock and the actor/ cold caller placed at 9 o'clock. At 6 o'clock sits the audience completing the circle.



Applause - 2020

I walk home at night. I can't help but peak into the windows of the houses I pass. Their televisions and bedroom lights illuminate the street. I feel drawn to watch. Indulging on micro- moments of strangers and neighbours lives. I go home and watch the flats opposite. I watch the random codes of lights turning off and on. I watch hands raise up as goals are scored, I watch candles from birthday cakes being blown, fights and moments of joy. They watch me too. The window acts as a television screen - capturing these moments.

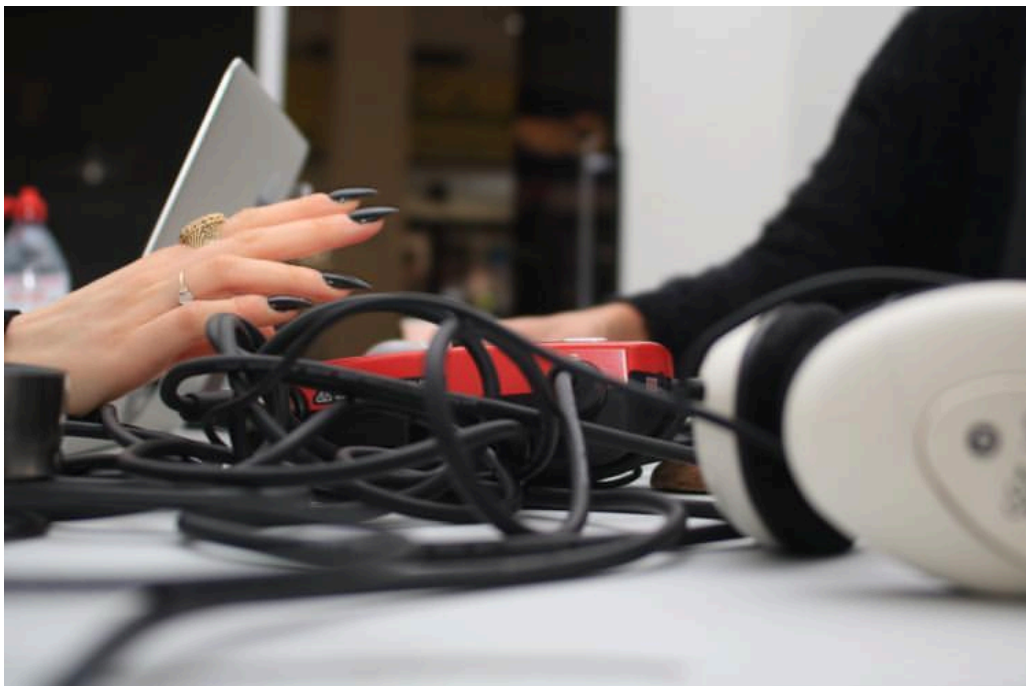


Contact Points - Workshops, 2019 - 2020

Contact points is a Series of Sound and Movement workshops run alongside artist Eleni Zachariou, with a focus on accessibility and the shared interests in bodily communications and collective movement within the urban landscape. The Workshops have previously been hosted at Tate Modern, Peak Gallery and Chisenhale Studios. The Workshops will inform a future performance. This work is currently being developed into a Performance.

The below soundtrack was created at Tate modern with instruments, voices and a looper pedal. Taking inspiration from imagery such as crows, factories, bodies at rush hour and vast green landscapes.

Soundtrack: <https://soundcloud.com/seren-636503014>



A Large Scale Print of The Yorkshire Moors - 2019



WERE ALL JUST TRYING TO GET BY - 2018



FELT - 2018



Rush Hour - 2017

In the Factories the women would tap their steel toe boots to the sound of the machinery transferring rhythm from machine to body and body to machine. The dancers tap through the space of The Crypt Gallery. The corridors mimic the underground tube tunnels focusing on the systematic, structured movements of the city. The dancers become more and more erratic, repeating routines and movements until they reach their final destination.

In Collaboration with Dancers: Chloe Walker, Beckie Callow and Sophie Alstead.



The Crawl - 2016

Performers crawled through the city streets like spiders in suits. Their bodies are animalistic – moving together in a pack. The robotic movements of commuters at rush hour seem so structured and mechanical. Its body vs the city, Animal vs machine. The suit is the costume of the city – The symbol of time passing, the symbol of labour and movement.



News Reader Pauses - 2016

A work in progress montaging together clips from BBC and Sky News reporters. I'm drawn to the pause before a news reader speaks. This delay to me is a reminder of being human. It makes me think of the technology behind the television, the systematic reading of placards, the mechanical eye movements. The pause is the breath. It is the activation of life from machines.

<https://youtu.be/pDNBMjLWScw>



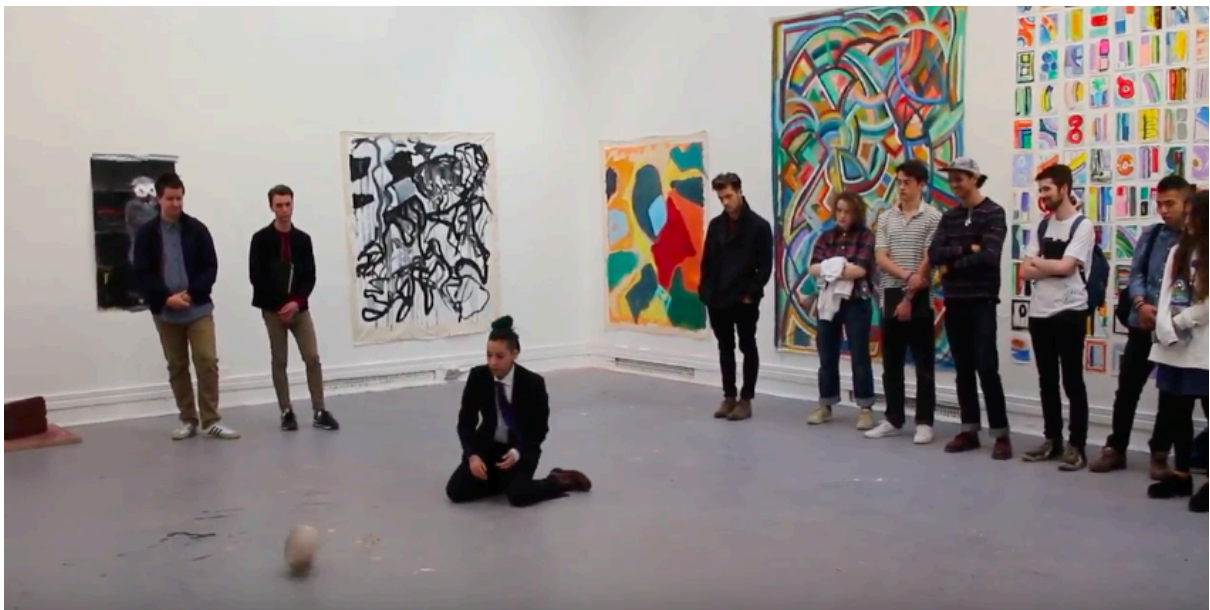
Wheelie Chair - 2016



Concrete - 2016

Performed at venues around Leeds

Videos of the performance were screened at The Royal Standard, Liverpool and The Tate Modern, London



2D/3D

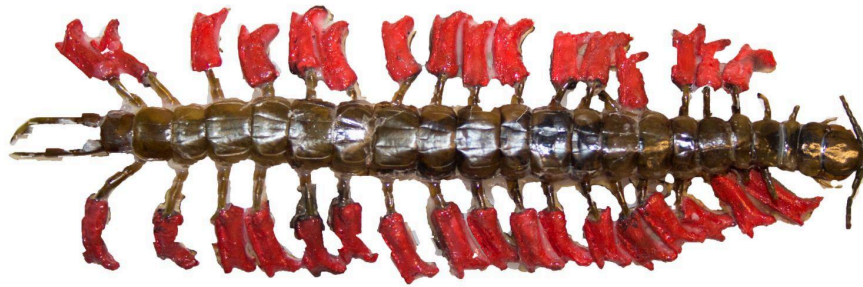
[Consumer Centipede, 2017](#)

[Business Man, 2017](#)

[Bus Diagrams, 2016](#)

Consumer Centipede, 2017

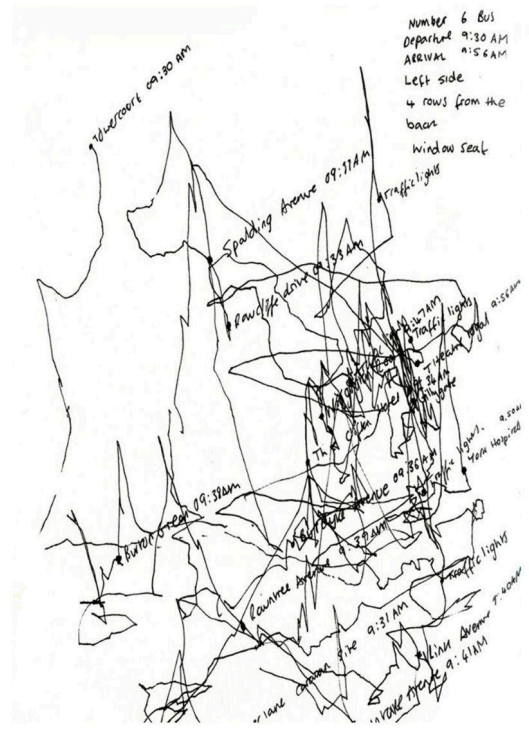
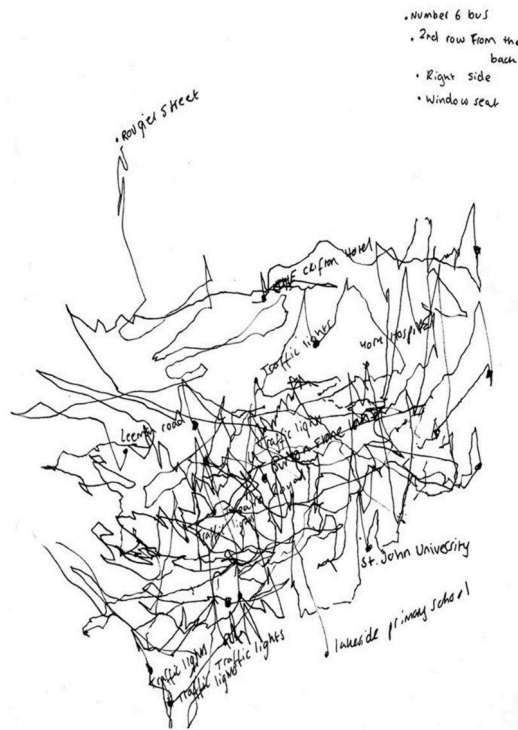
Dried Centipede with hand-painted 3D printed boots



Business Man, 2017



Bus Diagrams, 2016



Curation

[It's a Joy to be here, 2023](#)

[Gatherings, 2023](#)

It's a Joy to be here, 14th January 2023 – 1st April 2023

Working Class Creatives Database x 87 Gallery Hull

'It's a joy to be here' brings together six working-class artists from around the UK. Collectively, the artists draw on the history and traditional processes of craft whilst conceptually exploring the nuance of personal narrative. Many of the artists do this through the use of materials that are immediately available, reused or altered, together challenging stereotypes around gender, class and DIY approaches. By celebrating methods often associated with the working class, such as textiles and metalwork, the work provokes questions around the hierarchies within artistic practice.

When brought together these pieces open up a dialogue between artists from the North and the South of the UK and capture the power in the community, reinforcing the idea of there being strength in numbers. The exhibition considers how our experiences, working-class histories and identities can both set us apart and unite us. It also celebrates the collective joy of learning, loving, community and collaboration.

Exhibiting artists are Ben Brumpton (based in Manchester), Charlotte Cullen (based in Leeds), Daniel Fountain (based in Exeter), Grace Clifford (based in Sheffield) Sam Batley (based in Liverpool) and Stephanie Francis-Shanahan (based in London).







Gatherings, August 2023

SET Woolwich

Gatherings brings together twenty eight artists across a range of disciplines as part of a collaborative show between SET and the Working Class Creatives Database. Made up of work from a host of different disciplines, though touching on installation, sculpture, photography, video and text, the exhibition offers a variety of approaches to making and thinking, with Gatherings distilling them into a space of collaborative belonging.

To gather, to bring together. Gathering is a process of thoughtful contemplation, a cathartic approach to collecting. Artists in Gatherings have approached the making of works with a level of intimacy and trust through muted tones and care for their subject and practice. A softness runs throughout the works, balanced by a structural rhythm created by the ways in which they examine the world around them. Intimacy bleeds through familiarity, created by that softness of touch.

The exhibition showcases the breadth of working-class voices, representing diversities, histories, places, and identities within the working-class experience. Overall, "Gatherings" presents a collection of deeply personal, delicate, and powerful works.







See more of my work on my [Website](#)
Or Via my [IG](#)

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