

FUTURE PROOF
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Future Proof

Visual Arts South West in partnership
with Arnolfini

Friday 20 September 2019
10.30am – 5pm
Registration from 10am

The term 'future-proof' refers to the ability of something to continue to be of value into the future, the guarantee of not becoming obsolete.

Visual Arts South West invites artists, curators, arts organisations and audiences to gather for a day of discussions and learning. Join inspiring speakers to work collectively and consider our future amongst increasing precarity, limited access to the arts, the turn away from the European community converging with the rise of fascism, the rapid development of digital technologies, and the climate emergency.

Future Proof will seek to identify and address key challenges of our region while establishing collective survival strategies for the future in perpetually changing conditions. Our speakers will address: post-truth politics and the accelerated aggregation of wealth that obstruct effective responses to ecological decline; the importance of hearing young voices as an essential driving force of social change; pedagogical and activist traditions in collective working; and the resilience, solidarity and care required to sustain diverse artistic and curatorial practices.

This day of learning and coming together is an opportunity to focus on some critical issues that artists, curators and arts organisations in the South West are facing, but cannot tackle on their own. Together we can develop new strategies of support and self-organisation that reflect our needs for the future.

Within the context of Greta Thunberg's call for an international strike to campaign against climate change on 20 September 2019, we will be working together and investing in regenerative action.

Join us to contribute, be part of and enjoy a day packed full of listening, learning and laughter. Come and claim your stake in this region.

Programme

10.30 – 10.45am

Set the Scene: Paula Orrell (Visual Arts South West), Helen Palmer (Palmer Squared) and Gary Topp (Arnolfini)

10.45 – 11.30am

On resilience and personal as political: Libita Clayton (artist), Tania Kovats (artist) and Abigail Reynolds (artist)
In conversation with Eliza Gluckman (Deputy Director, Government Collection)

11.30am – 12pm

Platforming young voices: Leeza Awojobi (artist), Anna Rathbone (artist), Brook Tate (artist)
In conversation with Emily Bull (Creative Producer, Creative Youth Network)

12 – 12.30pm

She Really Good At What She Do: Keijaun Thomas (artist)

12.30 – 1pm

Performing Medicine: Suzy Willson (Artistic Director, Clod Ensemble; Creator, Performing Medicine)

1 – 2pm: **LUNCH**

2 – 2.40pm

Worlds and futures made possible through practice: Brunswick Club (artist collective) and Simon Sheikh (Programme Director, MFA in Curating, Goldsmiths)
In conversation with Robert Leckie (Director, Spike Island)

2.40 – 3.10pm

Forecasting the future of exhibition making: Katie Baron (writer, content director, brand strategist and futurist)

3.10 – 3.40pm

The Uncertain Future: Speaker TBC
In conversation with Alice Sharp (Director, Invisible Dust)

Due to unforeseen circumstances Joanna Kavenna can no longer join us for a conversation with Alice Sharpe. We will announce further details in due course.

3.45 – 4.45pm

Breakout Sessions: Imagining our future together
Facilitated by artists and curators from the region

- *On Collective Action* with TBC
- *Emerging Practices Building Futures* with Ronda Gowland-Pryde

4.45pm

Ideas, responses and closing remarks
Chaired by Kieran Swann (Senior Programme Manager, Arnolfini)

Speakers

Leeza Awojobi is a calm, creative and conscientious poet and storyteller based in Bristol. She loves to use her poetry to delve deep into fundamental human nature, exploring ideas and issues which often go unnoticed. Her most recent projects include *A Meal Around Bristol* and her ongoing collection initiative *Handle With Care*. Leeza is part of the *Creative Futures* programme at Creative Youth Network.

Katie Baron is a journalist, author and futurist who specialises in defining and predicting the key intersections between technology, pop culture, brand culture (including retail) and consumer behaviours.

Emily Bull is Creative Producer at the **Creative Youth Network**, a Bristol based organisation producing work and programmes for emerging young artists to help them unlock their potential.

Alastair Cameron, Lizi Hoar and Oliver Sutherland are all members of **the Brunswick Club**, a uniquely autonomous artistic space in Bristol for collective production, radical ideas and experimental practice across multiple art forms. Brunswick's strong DIY ethos is firmly placed within, and seeks to continue, the Bristolian tradition of grassroots activism, alternative ideas and ways of being.

Libita Clayton is a British-Namibian artist who works across sound and performance. She also organises workshops and discursive events developed in partnership with DIY organisations, broadcasters and publishers.

Eliza Gluckman is Senior Curator and Deputy Director at the **Government Art Collection** and Founder Director of **A Woman's Place**, a catalyst and umbrella for cultural projects and advocacy where equality provides the contextual backbone. Eliza was previously Curator of the New Hall Art Collection, Cambridge.

Tania Kovats is an artist whose sculptures, large scale installations, commissions, writing and drawings explore our understanding and experience of landscape. Her recent work considers rivers, seas and oceans, exploring poetic, psychological, geo-political and environmental issues. She is Professor of Drawing at Bath Spa University.

Robert Leckie is Director of **Spike Island** in Bristol. He was previously Curator and Head of Programmes at Gasworks in London, where he led the exhibitions, residencies, and public programmes from 2011 to 2018. He has written for *Afterall*, *Rhizome*, and *Mousse*, among other publications, and is a visiting lecturer at the Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths, and the University of the Arts in London.

Helen Palmer has worked with theatres, museums, galleries, non-venue based arts organisations, local authorities, destination management organisations and festivals across the UK for over 25 years. She was part of the team that set up and delivered *Cultureshock* – the cultural programme that accompanied Manchester's 2002 Commonwealth Games – and the inaugural Manchester International Festival. Helen is a Director of **Creative Tourist** cultural tourism consultancy and **Palmer Squared** marketing and audience development consultancy.

Anna Rathbone is an artist and theatre maker based in Bristol, currently working with installation and performance, sometimes at the same time. She has been supported by Rising arts agency and Creative Youth Network and has a particular interest in accessibility and inclusion.

Abigail Reynolds is an artist living and working in Cornwall. She works across collage, moving image, print, performance and sculpture, she considers group identity through representations of place and community. In 2016 Abigail was awarded the BMW Art Journey Prize at Art Basel to travel to the sites of former great libraries along the Silk Road. Her book 'Lost Libraries' published by Hatje Cantz, documents her spiritual and physical journey. She is currently looking at the history of glass made from Cornish seaweed in Bristol.

Alice Sharp is the founder and Director of **Invisible Dust**. Invisible Dust is a commissioning organisation that works with leading artists and scientists to produce new and exciting works of contemporary art that explore our environment and climate change.

Simon Sheikh is a curator and theorist. He is Reader in Art and Programme Director of the MFA Curating at Goldsmiths, University of London; a correspondent for Springerin, Vienna; and a columnist for e-flux Journal. Simon is a member of the Bergen Assembly 2019 core group and is currently working on a book about art and apocalypse entitled *It's After the End of the World*.

Kieran Swann, Senior Programmer at **Arnolfini**, is an artist, curator, producer and facilitator, working in both performance and visual art. His practice returns to ideas of memorial, queerness, performance and bodies as archives, and strategies of co-creation, meaningful engagement of the audience, or at least displacing the usual audience/artist relationship.

Brook Tate is a painter, writer and musician producing decorative portraiture, children's books and musicals. His work has exhibited in Bristol, London and Shanghai and his two musicals, Mr Maglump and My Great Giraffe have shown at the Bristol Old Vic. Having a background in the care sector and working with marginalised members of the community, his work contains strong themes of inclusion, aiming to celebrate ordinary and everyday heroes. His most recent project, My Great Giraffe, highlights the impact young people, especially young girls, have had in the face of the climate crisis, and the importance of listening to their voices.

Keijaun Thomas is an artist who creates live performance and multimedia installations that oscillate between movement and materials that function as tools, objects and structures, as well as a visual language that can be read, observed and repeated within spatial, temporal and sensorial environments. Her work investigates the histories, symbols and images that construct notions of Black identity within black personhood.

Suzy Willson is Artistic Director of the **Clod Ensemble** theatre company and Creator of their *Performing Medicine* programme. She is Honorary Professor at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry at Queen Mary. Suzy has been pioneering the use of arts in healthcare education for over 20 years, working with a range of medical schools, higher education institutions and NHS Trusts, as well as curating public events with leading cultural venues across the UK.

Bursaries

Visual Arts South West will offer a number of travel bursaries to independent arts professionals attending from Cornwall, West Devon and Hampshire.

To apply for a bursary, please email a short statement (max. 100 words) explaining why you would benefit from attending *Future Proof* to Nella Aarne at nella@vasw.org.uk.

Access to Arnolfini

The nearest parking is in The Grove Car Park which has a number of accessible bays. The car park is a paid one, but blue badge holders can park for free. If you feel uncomfortable walking around the building over the cobblestones to the main entrance, we welcome you to call +44 (0)117 917 2300 and request Arnolfini's front of house team to come and meet you outside UWE on Prince's Street which leads directly through to Arnolfini. This entrance is card holder only so please call ahead to request Arnolfini staff to meet you. The paving outside is still uneven, but less so than the front of the building.

For further access information about Arnolfini, please visit [Arnolfini's website](#) or send any enquiries specific to the *Future Proof* event to nella@vasw.org.uk.