

EXHIBITION GUIDE

SOLOS

Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom, Emma Cousin, Lindsey Mendick and Hardeep Pandhal
18 Sep–13 Dec 2020

SOLOS is a series of new commissions by four early career artists who have been making work throughout the lockdown. The programme has been devised as a commissioning structure with which to support the creation of new work during a time of severe precarity. The artists selected are part of the CCA's community (either by being based in South East London, or by having worked with us previously). Each artist presents a solo exhibition of new work in an individual gallery in the CCA. Their work either explicitly, or implicitly, tracks the impact of lockdown on their lives and practices.

Please note that each gallery space has a capacity of 6 people only. Please wear a mask during your visit.

GROUND FLOOR
GARCIA FAMILY FOUNDATION GALLERY
Lindsey Mendick
Are You Going To Destroy Me?

Mendick's work often draws on the autobiographical, spinning personal stories into fantastical immersive environments populated with objects and sculptures whose materiality and narrative qualities move through seduction, horror and ribald humour. Drawing together a myriad of references, this new body of work brings Mendick's precise handling of the affective qualities of interior spaces, into contact with the film tradition of gothic horror, with its combination of sex and death, power and bodily violence.

Are You Going to Destroy Me? centres on Mendick's relationship with her now fiancé; the title quotes the question she asked him on their first date. Taking a cue from the inherent vulnerability one faces within the power structures of a romantic relationship, she draws on their shared love of the gothic horror movies that have been a mainstay throughout the lockdown.

Drawing on a maximalist aesthetic established by films such as *Suspiria* (1977) and Peter Greenaway's *The Cook the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989), Mendick has transformed the gallery space into a macabre interior. Vivid red tomato sauce wallpaper bears paintings of the couple, with her fiancé cast as a vampiric lover. Mendick is remarkably open in sharing the stories and intimate parts of her life, and this vulnerability is heightened as she, for the first time, makes paintings for this exhibition.

Elsewhere vitrines contain objects and artworks related to the detritus of lockdown. Mirrored pedestals support complex glazed ceramic forms, both vessels and figures. Full-scale costumed figures mix fast food iconography with portraits of the couple metamorphosing; the body in Mendick's work is unstable and excessive. The installation moves through the provocations of the gothic genre to explore and exploit the gendered tropes of submission and domination within relationships.

FIRST FLOOR
GERTLER GALLERY
Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom
Before, During & After: Here Again
Before, During & After: Here Soon

Appau (Junior) Boakye-Yiadom presents an exhibition in two parts; one in which the artist is present, the other in which he is physically absent. Both parts centre on his learning to play the drums, and as such the artist's practice and process becomes one in a live and uncensored display of trial and error. Percussion is treated as a universal language with a capacity for bodily connection in its mass of rhythms and beats.

Titled *Before, During & After: Here Again. Before, During & After: Here Soon*, the artist recalls a colloquialism one might expect from a shop vendor. His absences from the space - the product of external commitments - reiterate the core value of time, its record, and our experience of it. The artist transcends the expectation of omniscience in the gallery space, submitting himself to the various outcomes that neither he nor the viewer can predict. He is at once in control of his actions whilst also vulnerable to the volatility of a process occurring in real time. Both artist and viewer are then on an equal footing, the division between these positions shattered by a communal investment in time and process.

In his absence, the disassembled drum is accompanied by video and audio works that depict close-ups and sound bites of the artist and previous percussive collaborators as teachers, rendering them never truly gone. This movement between the presence and absence of musicians resonates in a time of lockdown, in which live performances have been curtailed. In this abstracted continuity we are asked to reconsider the artist's body within the experience, resisting the label of performer and its relationship to commodified bodies. The artist sheds himself of the expectation to appease or entertain, but rather function as part of an experience. Absence becomes an important way to address the artist's agency and labour.

The artist commits the viewer to an experience, which in its unique curation of spectatorship, is an investment of time and emotion rather than passive voyeurism. Progress and development are by no means promised in this work, rather in presenting his learning process, we are shown the complexity and dynamism innate within cultural products and their inability to achieve a state of stasis. This work is a poignant extension of a space dedicated to learning, a habitual process where education is manifested as a form of exchange and experience.

FIRST FLOOR
DASKALOPOLOUS GALLERY & RODEN
COURTYARD GALLERY
Hardeep Pandhal
Ensorcelled English: Prestige Repellent

Pandhal's newly commissioned video work *Ensorcelled English* (13.40 mins) plays out both in the gallery and online. It reveals the mechanics of a cursed art school, where inherited issues of racial and sexual representation emerge. Reflecting the artist's wider interest in practices of interpretation in Western education, these issues are carried over into the installation in the courtyard outside, where a suspended steel cage is marked by a custom heritage plaque.

Based partly on Pandhal's experience as both an art student and visiting art lecturer in the UK, this work considers the structures upon which contemporary art schools are upheld, whilst contrasting both the emancipatory and stultifying effects of their workings.

Written by Pandhal during lockdown, the two-part video features voice acting from his peers and close friends, rehearsed over webcam and recorded remotely. The first part, visualised as an animated storyboard drawn and arranged by Pandhal, revolves around delicate exchanges between an art student and an art lecturer. References are made to Richard Dyer's book *White* (1997), with particular emphasis on Dyer's reading of white femininity in the TV series *The Jewel in the Crown* (1984). The second part recalls an instructional lyric video comprising rap vocals delivered by Pandhal to a horrorcore beat composed with Glasgow based musician Joe Howe, alongside animations made in response by Nottingham-based graphic artist Stefan Sadler.

The work in the courtyard space invokes the cursed game-world of *Dark Souls* (2011), a Japanese video game directed by Hidetaka Miyazaki that is often credited for the popularisation of the gaming genre known as

'masocore' (games characterised by 'tough but fair' mechanics that necessitate the player die an inordinate amount in order to learn how to overcome in-game obstacles). Controlling a customisable avatar in a fantasy world abounding with distinct Gothic atmosphere - a unique, transcultural evolution of the European generic inheritance of J.R.R. Tolkien - the player starts their *Dark Souls* quest in an 'undead' state of being.

The custom heritage plaque which marks the steel cage includes an image of the official flag of the Black Country in the West Midlands, where Pandhal grew up. The design grew out of a competition amongst local schools before being adopted in 2017. Chains were included in the design as an attempt to cultivate a sense of pride in the industrial heritage of the region. However, a local politician argued that the design had racist connotations and the potential to cause offence as the Black Country was a key provider of metal worked goods, including chains, to the slave trade and British Empire. The flag's colour scheme was inspired by a well-known poetic description of the area made by an American diplomat in 1862, "black by day and red by night", which refers to the smog in the air caused by industrial production.

Keeping in mind the gallery's proximity to Goldsmiths' Art Department, Pandhal makes analogies between the perilous fantasy space of *Dark Souls* and the reality of contemporary free-market academies, drawing attention to both the zombifying and liberating affects they have on their players and users (once their respective abysses have been arduously traversed and ascended).

FIRST FLOOR
BRIDGET RILEY GALLERY
Emma Cousin
New Dirt

Emma Cousin presents *New Dirt*, a series of five new paintings, and a site-specific wall drawing that animate ideas around bodily experience, memory and painting. In her images, made during lockdown, Cousin examines dirt and digging for its relation to life cycles, loss, exhaustion, and ideas of being present. Her complex compositions of interrelated female figures explore our reliance on each other as both violent and intimate.

For Cousin, the body endures as a site of memory like the land, carrying scars, seeds, and new growth, even in the face of destruction, decay and potential attacks and threats. In many of the works, especially *New Dirt*, lessons from nature are manifold. Patterns and systems of bindweed, rhizomes and filigree roots mimic the

FLOORPLAN

vascular and nervous systems of the human body, so that the soil becomes an anatomical mirror bringing us closer to an understanding of ourselves.

Her soaring wall drawing *Clarty Ayres* is a liquid narrative, building up from the ground like a tree, or perhaps pouring down from above like a waterfall. Ayres refers to melodies of folksongs in which a tune is passed around and improvised, an expression of the compositional process of making the work. Clarty is a northern term for 'muck' a hint at the 'muckiness' of their interactions; growing out of each other through clasped fingers, balanced toes, popping eyes, and gaping nostrils.

Elsewhere the body is tested for its capacity to support, connect to, or damage other bodies. In *Trigonometry* various organs and body parts are abstracted to triangular shapes and are passed between figures who try to figure out a solution to fit in and slot together. The image is a threatening vision, and like the work *Pythonlcing* expresses the shame and fear that lies around the body's desire and need to leak, seep and ooze. Cousin uses saturated colours to render skin as a shifting and uncertain surface. A vivid blue background creates an abstract theatre for these figures; neither sky nor ground but a liminal space of infinite recession, somewhere just out of reach. Viewed in series, her paintings become cartoon-like dystopian scenes, or folkloric fables of the near-future.

The exhibition is accompanied by a colouring book available at the front desk. The publication features line drawings made to be coloured in, and which formed the basis of an exchange between the artist and her grandmother Rita Wood during lockdown. It features a short story by Raj Parameswaran written directly in response to the drawings.

The animated drawing, *Flower Moon*, is available to view on the Channel section of the CCA's website, developed from her nascent meditation practice, and related ink drawings and writing made over the lockdown period.

EVENTS

23 Sep, 7–8pm ONLINE TALK:
*SALVAGED RHYTHMS: APPAU
JNR BOAKYE-YIADOM + SOPHIE
WILLIAMSON*

Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom discusses his new commission and practice with curator and writer Sophie Williamson. An extension of their ongoing dialogue, this online event provides an opportunity to explore Boakye-Yiadom's use of drums and improvised music within his multimedia installations, and how his works shuttles between function and aesthetic quality to unmoor fixed cultural representations.

29 Oct, 7–8pm ONLINE TALK:
*HALLOWEEN IN-CONVERSATION:
HARDEEP PANDHAL AND LEILA
TAYLOR*

To coincide with his exhibition *Ensorcelled English: Prestige Repellent* Hardeep Pandhal invites writer and designer Leila Taylor to share and discuss her research on the gothic in Black culture, horror, and the aesthetics of melancholy. Stemming from different entry points, they will discuss key aspects of their practices, identifying and bridging convergent themes and tropes.

12 Nov, 7–8pm ONLINE TALK:
*HEATHER PHILLIPSON + LINDSEY
MENDICK*

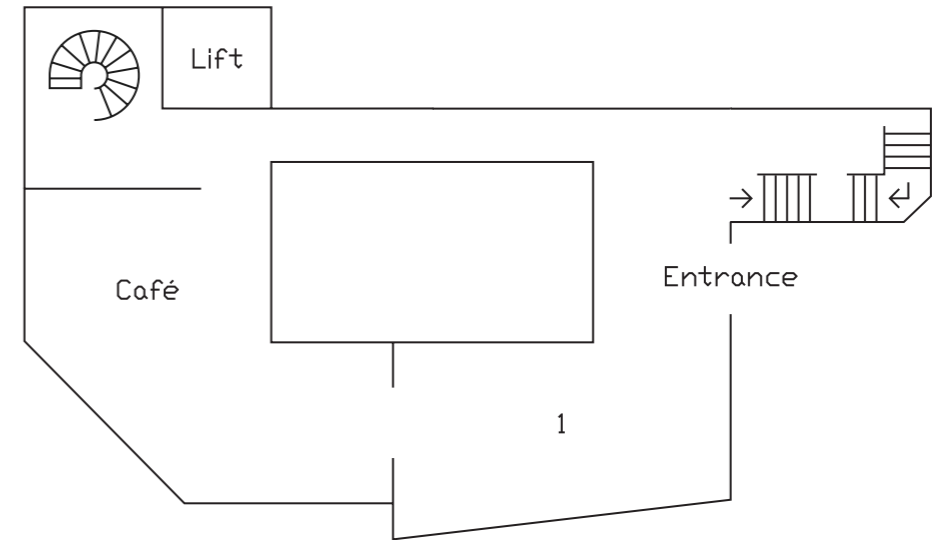
Join Lindsey Mendick and Heather Phillipson in an exploration of Mendick's new commission *Are You Going to Destroy Me?* as part of an extension of their ongoing conversation.

For more information on upcoming events visit goldsmithscca.art

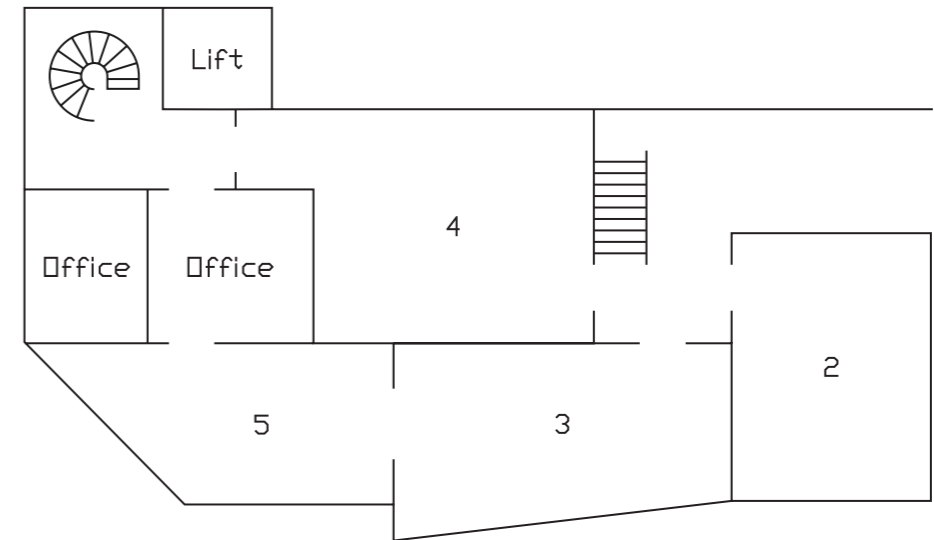
LIMITED EDITIONS

Each artist has created a limited edition in support for Goldsmiths CCA's programme. These will be released during the run of the exhibition. Please ask at the front desk for more information, or to make a purchase.

Ground Floor



First Floor



1. LINDSEY MENDICK
Are You Going To Destroy Me?

2. APPAU JNR BOAKYE-YIADOM
*Before, During & After: Here Again
Before, During & After: Here Soon*

3. & 5. HARDEEP PANDHAL
Ensorcelled English: Prestige Repellent

4. EMMA COUSIN
New Dirt