



Poplar Union

Digital Arts Festival

looking out • looking in • looking up

Programme





Poplar Union
**Digital Arts
Festival**

looking out • looking in • looking up

Poplar Union Digital Arts Festival is Poplar Union's debut digital arts festival showcasing the work of 18 commissioned artists including musicians, theatre makers, writers and dancers.

After closing our doors back in March 2020, and postponing almost two season's worth of live shows, the team got thinking about how best we could support the artists that had lost out on work and creative projects throughout lockdown. As the world began reflecting on 'unprecedented', 'strange' and 'extraordinary' times, we too were questioning what creative responses might be to the Covid-19 crisis.

We reached out to a number of artists who have either performed or were due to perform at Poplar Union, inviting them to respond to the theme; Looking Out, Looking In, Looking Up.

Each artist has submitted a piece of digital performance which together will form the two-day Poplar Union Digital Arts Festival premiering on Friday 28 - Saturday 29 August via our YouTube channel.

The work is timely, responding to the world in which we find ourselves; be that in relation to Covid-19, Black Lives Matter or simply the realities of staying in our homes for days on end. The commission is not about being polished or perfect, but a celebration of creativity and the creative process under such extraordinary circumstances.

At 7pm each evening, there will be the opportunity to attend a live, online Q&A with all the contributing artists from that day, as they discuss their process of making the work and their experiences as artists in lockdown.

Poplar Union Digital Arts Festival is supported by the Arts Council



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS (click for artist info)

**Fri 28
August**

- 10AM [PURPLE MOON DRAMA DIGITAL YOUTH BOARD](#)
- 11AM [JAKA SKAPIN](#)
- 12AM [SANGEETA PILLAI](#)
- 1PM [BRYONY BYRNE](#)
- 2PM [TOUSSAINT TO MOVE](#)
- 3PM. [GRAND UNION RE:GENERATION BAND](#)
- 4PM [MS PAOLINI & FRIENDS \(JPP\)](#)
- 5PM [JOEL O'DONOGHUE](#)
- 6PM [CENTRE STAGE](#)
- 7PM [Q&A HOSTED BY BETH WATTON](#)

**Sat 29
August**

- 10AM [ANANDADHARA ARTS](#)
- 11AM [DANIELLE TEALE](#)
- 12AM [DICKSON MBI](#)
- 1PM [DENDÊ NATION](#)
- 2PM [LYN GERALD](#)
- 3PM [SAUDHA SOCIETY OF POETRY AND INDIAN MUSIC](#)
- 5PM [ALEX MARLOW](#)
- 6PM [MISHTI DANCE](#)
- 7PM [Q&A HOSTED BY WILL ROPER](#)



How to watch

To access this free festival, tune into Poplar Union's YouTube channel on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 August. A new video will be premiered on the hour, every hour.



Q&A sessions

To attend the live Q&A sessions with the contributing artists, please join the relevant ZOOM meeting:

FRIDAY at 7pm: Webinar ID: 969 6833 4436 | Passcode: 537255

SATURDAY at 7pm: Webinar ID: 945 1227 7406 | Passcode: 042847

The links will also be shared on the Facebook event page, website and Eventbrite listing on the day of the festival. This is also free to attend.

Q&A will be BSL interpreted



[Back to artists menu](#)



HERMIT

Tucked away in our homes during 2020, we've had a lot of time to ourselves – our good, our bad, and our ugly. Amidst the chaos around us, can we be courageous to confront or comfort these hidden parts of ourselves? Can this help us contend with the challenges in our world? Hermit is one queer's exploration of isolation, introspection, and reclamation.

ALEX MARLOW

ARTIST BIO

Alex Marlow (he/they) is an actor, poet, and performing artist from East Lancashire. Now based in London, his work explores contemporary queerness, the body, notions of home and belonging, and love. He's appeared on stage at the RVT, The Glory, Pleasance Theatre, The Kings Head Theatre, and the Arcola. His sell-out debut show, *IN THE BEGINNING*, premiered at Katzpace in February 2020. He's currently working on digital projects and towards his first publication.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

  @AlexJMarlow

 <https://vimeo.com/alexjmarlow>

Spotlight

<https://www.spotlight.com/7659-1273-9215>





ANANDADHARA ARTS

ARTIST BIO

Directed by Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, a well-known Oncologist in UK as well as one of the most prominent Tagore singers in the West, Anandadhara Arts have been organising weekly music classes for UK born Asian children and adults for last 15 years. Anandadhara also organises several musical events each year in venues like Barbican, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Rich Mix, Wimbledon Arts Space, Poplar Union and Nazrul Centre.

During the lockdown, Anandadhara has organised more than 20 online music events involving world famous musicians from the UK, India and Bangladesh. Some events have attracted over 100k viewers from all over the world. Anandadhara has also organised a unique world-class events with Baul singers from remote villages from India and Bangladesh. These first of its kind events have been a huge hit amongst music lovers all over the world. Recently Anandadhara has opened branches in Australia and Scotland.

MELODY OF RESILIENCE

Anandadhara Arts presents a medley of songs of Tagore, Nazrul and Pete Seeger. The first of the three songs was composed by Bengali poet, Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam. It depicts outside calamities and urges everyone to fight together.

The second song is a Tagore song where it talks about the need of inner strength and the need for resilience even if one is alone in this fight.

The final song, by the children, is about the hope for a better future sung originally by Pete Seeger. The song will be sung in three different languages implying that we are all in it together irrespective of age, race or gender.

The piece is a combination of music, lyrics and melodies by the students of Anandadhara Arts.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @anandadharaartsuk

 anandadharaarts.co.uk





BRYONY BYRNE

ARTIST BIO

Bryony Byrne makes and performs live art. She's interested in community, social dynamics and the act of performance. She's got a background in longform improv and clown, and her debut comedy feature film, Akela, has won multiple awards internationally. She performs regularly at the Free Association in London and is a graduate of the Soho Comedy Plus Lab.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

-  @bryonybyrne
-  @brybo87
-  bryonybyrne.com

OTHER ANIMALS

Other Animals is a short comical exploration of the artist's time in lockdown, spent at home on a narrowboat in East London. Long periods at home on the boat stimulated interactions with neighbours and observations of their habits, leading to reflection on how we share our homes and how we exist with the environment around us..

Filmed on a phone by her partner, Stefan Willhoit. Edited by Bryony.





DREAMS

Centre Stage have collectively brought together artists from their open-mic community to contribute to this commission. Different voices combine their perspective on this one music single. They have written lyrics to show their experience of lockdown. Whether that's BLM, Covid-19, not seeing family or being able to freely speak/ chase their dreams due to what's going on politically, environmentally, mentally and emotionally.

CENTRE STAGE

ARTIST BIO

Centre Stage is an event platform for artists & creatives from the performing arts industry. In partnership with Poplar Union, they provide a safe, comfortable and inclusive space for emerging artists to showcase their talents. It is a great place to gig, network and enjoy live music and local talent. At Centre Stage they also have an artist development programme in place to help them achieve their full potential.

For this project Centre Stage collective will be providing a contribution from 20 artists on one single.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

   @centrestageopenmic

 @centrestageopenmic@gmail.com





CONNECTION IN ISOLATION LOOKING DOWN

The film piece brings the theme of looking out to nature and looking in to find connection to self. It is a short experiment which has evolved from the process of dancing and conversations between Danielle Teale and dancers with Parkinson's who have engaged in online sessions during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Last year, the Dancing with Parkinson's Company, directed by Danielle Teale, began to explore 'Collective Identity' which resulted in a performance at Poplar Union. During the CV19 lockdown, this theme became even more pertinent – collectively we have been isolated, and independently we have tried to find connection.

Through movement, Danielle and her dancers have worked together to express their shared isolation.

DANIELLE TEALE

ARTIST BIO

Danielle Tale is an independent Dance Artist, Choreographer and Artistic Director of Dancing with Parkinson's Company, as well as Initiator of the Artists' Exchange Programme.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

Danielle Teale

 @tealedanielle

 /danielletealedance

 @tealedanielle

Dancing with Parkinsons

 @DTParkinsons

 /dancing.parkinsons

 @artists_exchange_programme

Film and vocal contributions from dancers of the Dancing with Parkinson's Company, from their homes.





DESIRE FOR CHANGE (DESEJO DE MUDANÇA)

This video piece demonstrates Dendê Nation's passion, education and respect for the Samba Reggae traditions of Afro-Brazil, the very existence of which is a social action music.

The essence of these traditions comes from a desire to change, which in turn inspires the members of Dendê Nation to their own everyday struggles.

Intensified through lockdown, the group represents different perspectives on different issues, joined in a common movement of solidarity and support. Whether the need to protest without fear of retaliation, media misinformation, the way we are governed and controlled, everyday fear's of structural oppression... there is, in Dendê Nation, a desire for change.

Through lockdown, the group has been meeting, rehearsing and learning online with their leader Emmanuel 'Mac' MacDonald, sharing and supporting each other. The video is a capture of the first meeting 'in person' to play together in 6 months.

DENDÊ NATION

ARTIST BIO

Dendê Nation is a UK based Samba Reggae Bloco.

Samba Reggae is an Afro-Brazilian style of drumming, often seen out on the streets at carnival time, with costumes and dancers. A Bloco can be thought of as a group of people.

Influenced and inspired by the Bloco's of Bahia in the North-East of Brazil, Dendê Nation's founder, Mac, has worked tirelessly over the past 20 years studying, playing and conversing with Brazilian Masters, teachers and players of this art form to create Dendê Nation's Samba Reggae sound. All grounded respectfully in the stirring and uplifting rhythms of Afro-Brazil.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 /London Samba-Reggae

 /Dendê Nation

 @dende_nation





AMISSA

This work in progress is an inward exploration of self, looking-in first before looking out for answers on our current situations in life. I'm I lost, I'm I searching for something or I'm I running away from something I do not know.

DICKSON MBI

ARTIST BIO

Dickson Mbi is an award winning choreographer and has been commissioned by several theatres, festivals and arts organisations. In 2016 he received REVERB Award for Best Choreography, MASDANZA Audience Award for Best Choreography and Leave A Trace – CHVRCHES (Music Video). Sadlers Wells Theatre commissioned a documentary about his artistic journey on BBC4: Street to Stage and commissioned him to make work on their elderly company 'The Company of Elders' 2018 and choreographing the winning choreography for the BBC Young Dancer 2019.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

-  @dicksonmbi
-  /Dickson.Mbi
-  @dicksonmbi
-  dicksonmbi.com

COMPOSER:

Roger Goula





I AM THE SULTAN

Reflecting on the theme: Looking Out, Looking In, Looking Up the band explored internal feelings of isolation throughout the lockdown months [looking in], the explosive state of the world directly after and the re-emergence of much inequality and division [looking out], and they took a view of the future beyond 2020 – the changed world we'll be living in, for better or worse [looking up].

I Am the Sultan Speaks from the perspective of a young person growing up in inner London, groomed into a gang; violence as their way of life. By all appearances this is highly glamorous as the rewards it can bring are far more appealing than slaving away at a low paid job. Life is cheap, at least other lives are. They've come to no harm themselves: yet. So feeling invincible, like a sultan; yet witnessing fragility – they ironically chant, "having the time of our lives" ..

GRAND UNION RE:GENERATION BAND

ARTIST BIO

The Grand Union Re:Generation Band is formed of musicians from the Grand Union Youth Orchestra, and consists of more experienced musicians on the threshold of a professional career. Working with musicians from the Grand Union Orchestra – themselves mainly first generation migrants, expert in many different global musical traditions – GURB are developing their own material reflecting these and contemporary styles, which they've been performing in residency at Poplar Union's 'Live in the Library' sessions. Grand Union's ethos is a fusion of cultures and celebrating the diversity of East London; this is their musical melting pot.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @gurb.london

 /gurb_london

MUSICIANS

Amira Campbell – Violin
Amisha Karsan – Sitar
Cassius Cobbson – Drums
Evan Cryer Jenkins – Trumpet
Freddie Abel – Trumpet
Joshua Brandler – Guitar, Voice
Luke Bacchus – Bass
Mahesh Parkar – Tabla
Orlando Valman – Keys

A/V TEAM

Amira Campbell – Artwork
Evan Cryer Jenkins – Video
Joshua Brandler – Audio

FILMAKER

Evan Cryer Jenkins





JAKA SKAPIN

ARTIST BIO

Jaka Skapin is a Slovenian artist, producer and director. Currently based in London, he bases most of his creative practice in the individual and communal use of voice and language, especially through collaborative improvisation.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @jakaskapin

 jakaskapin.com

PLEASE CAN I (A LIVE IMPROVISATION)

As a species, we have always made sound, we have always sung and we have always improvised. This commission brought together people and vocal artists, to express all that they feel during these testing and triggering times, especially for music and the arts. There was no plan or rehearsal, just an open space and the intention to come together as they are, questioning what this year means to them and where it fits in the overall scheme of things.

CREDITS

Solo: Sylvia Schmidt-Silas

Featuring:

Briony Greenhill
Guillermo Rozenhuler
Jaka Skapin
Kate Smith
Marcia Willis

Produced: Jaka Skapin

Sound: David Holmes

Video: Pavel Radu





MEASURE OF FIDGET (PART 2)

In 1886, psychologist Francis Galton sat at the back of a lecture hall and, during a 90-minute talk, kept a tally of the number of fidgets each individual student performed per 60 seconds – the record was 53. He concluded that the number of fidgets per minute gave a numerical expression for boredom.

During lockdown Joel has at times been sat down, binge watching TV, knitting, or just being plain idle – completely at a loss of what to do. During these recurring episodes of nothingness, he seems to enter a sort of meditative state of sub-conscious gobbledygook, and occasionally goes on some bizarre out of body journey.

Measure of Fidget (Part 2) is an investigation into boredom, and the highs and lows of not having anything to do.

The show is performed by Joel O'Donoghue, his flatmates, and a group of very willing and wonderful local volunteers.

JOEL O'DONOGHUE

ARTIST BIO

Joel is a performance artist and has worked for a range of internationally renowned companies such as, Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, Luca Silivstrini's Protein, Ben Wright's BGROUP, and Hagit Yakira Dance. As a choreographer he has performed work at a variety of established venues both in the UK and abroad, such as Sadler's Wells Lillian Baylis Studio, The Place, Tripspace, and L'Escaut (Brussels). He was also commissioned to create a dance film work for Ballet Boyz in January 2020, which will be premiering in Autumn on Channel 4. He has most recently toured two separate works, Treasure and Tat (2017-19), and Forever Again, All The Time (2020).

He is now interested in taking his work to less conventional performance spaces, in order to make the work more accessible to the wider public.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @joelbodonoghue

 /joel.odonoghue

 joelodonoghue.co.uk

CREDITS

Choreographer: Joel O'Donoghue

Performers: Joel O'Donoghue, Carla Harrison-Hodge, Ben Grant, Waj Ali, Ashley Tan, Sabrina Rachel Duncan, Bruce Currie.

Sound Designer: Ben Grant

Filmed by: Scott Buxtone





LYN GERALD

ARTIST BIO

LYN has a wealth of experience as a backing singer for the likes of Womack and Womack, Reggae Philharmonic Orchestra, Black Slate International, Luciano, Cornell Campbell, to name but a few, and has now put those vocals to formulate an album simply called LYN 'DEBUT' produced by Lloyd Brown. The new, yet seasoned voice of British Female Reggae, Lyn believes there is room for all in this industry and she is ready to take pride of place. Her soulful approach to Reggae will give a new boost to the British Female Reggae scene here and around the world

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @lynmusicglow

 /Lynofficial

 @LynMusicLMG

MULALAMBO – SCARS

Mulalambo is a multi-layered documentary short which follows Lyn Gerald from her discovery of her Congolese roots to look at the traditional art of scarring and the impact of the scars we carry inside and out. Drawing questions about both her own and the scars of Chantille Raime and Michelle Jones, the piece blends original composition with interview and spoken word. The video, styled by Norah Nona and shot by both Meesh Jay and Lyn, plays on the backdrop of beautiful African imagery.





LOOKING OUT, LOOKING IN, LOOKING UP

Mishti Dance's contribution features three artists who were involved in the Asian Underground movement. DJ Isuru and Coco Das team up with Ramjac Corporation and Bubble-E to create a track based on their experiences of lockdown and focussing on the hope for a brighter future.

The music video, filmed and directed by Coco Das, incorporates her work as a VJ and is based around dance by Bubbly who was due to perform at Mishti Dance #7 which was postponed due to the pandemic.

As always the work features themes and motifs that highlight Mishti Dance's commitment to the Asian Underground movement and the fusion of performance art, club culture and politics.

MISHTI DANCE

ARTIST BIO

Founded by DJ Isuru in 2018, "Mishti" is the Bengali word for Sweet and Mishti Dance takes its name from a track by DJ and music producer, State of Bengal.

'A return to the experimentation of the Asian Underground in the face of commercial clubbing'. The format of Mishti Dance comprises a community-based arts and performance space featuring both poets and DJs, in a radical defiance of the rigid, distinct cultural categorisation of arts events as either high arts- or club music-based.

It is a space for experimental and electronic music and performance arts with South Asian influence. A night club meets an art gallery. Mishti Dance takes inspiration from the Asian Underground music scene particularly the legendary Anokha and Swaraj Asian Underground club nights of the 90s and early 00s.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @mishtidance

 @coco_vu_portfolio

 /mishtidance

 djisuru.com

 ramjac.co.uk

COLLABORATORS

Coco Das

Ramjac

DJ Isuru

Bubble-E





MAGNA, MAGNA!

A PERSONAL OFFER: FOOD AND TALKS FOR CHANGES AND GROWTH

'I want to open the door, I want to open my mouth, I want to open my heart.'

Lockdown has stripped Patrizia of her work, her house, her certainties.

Not sure how to face the magnitude and complexity of the numerous issues that impact us all, she turns to the one thing she thinks, she knows: invite people to sit around the table to eat and talk.

She invites people of different backgrounds to talk about work, race, inequality, class, while eating a three courses Italian meal, prepared with all her love. With joy and ease, she embraces the cliché of herself, hoping to favour, even if ever so slight, change and growth in her guests, herself, and maybe you.

We are a privileged society, yet quite f***ed up!

Participants: Buddleia Maslen, Ella Steward-Holland, Kieron Jecchinis, Lesley Ewen, Nauen Park with a very brief and special appearance of Jon Haynes (Ridiculusmus).

MS PAOLINI & FRIENDS

ARTIST BIO

Ms. Paolini & Friends (JPP) is an ensemble created and directed by performance artist, theatre maker and comedian, Patrizia Paolini. The ensemble has been working on observations about identity and female comic performance, while resisting the 'showgirl' stereotype of contemporary cabaret and other forms of spectacle comedy has adopted. The ensemble aims to be the backdrop or stimulus for collective authorship, cross-disciplinary practice and political critique.

MEMBERS & COLLABORATORS

Buddleia Maslen

Nauen Park

Kieron Jecchinis

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE

 @Montegranario

 /patrizia.paolini.58

 /mspaolini

 jesuspaolinipark.wordpress.com/productions/

MENU

Antipasto: prosciutto e melone + fichi neri with focaccia al rosmarino

Primo: spaghetti mare e monti

Secondo: scaloppine al limone

Contorni: insalata di cicoria e datteri, insalata lattuga e pomodori

Frutta: fragole e uva nera

Da bere: Spritz – Campari e prosecco; varietà di vini bianchi e rossi





PURPLE MOON DRAMA DIGITAL YOUTH BOARD

ARTIST BIO

Purple Moon Drama exist to create access for young and emerging creatives to develop their craft and get the next rung on their career ladder. The Digital Youth Board are and inspired and passionate group of young leaders.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

  @purplemoondrama

 purplemoondrama.co.uk

REWIND

Three journeys, three people. Before, during, and after lockdown. How has life changed from then to now? From the craze of panic buying to endless zoom meetings and countless reflective moments; Purple Moon Drama's Digital Youth Board presents Rewind; a collection of three monologues following the lockdown journey of Naomi, Evangeline and Vinesh.

IDEAS BEHIND THE PIECE

What was the process of creating the film?
Did you create it at social-distance? And what was that process like?

Vinesh: "The process of creating my section of the film was very easy. It was only two of us, me (the actor) and my friend (DOP). We tried a few different ways of doing the scene before finding the perfect one. Once we got everything we needed, we shot the scene and it was great! The process was okay but the heat outside was a factor that played against us however we persevered through. For social distancing, we had a table that was used as a barrier to keep us separated. We also requested if we can use the quietest bit of the outside area to film our scene."

Layla: "Our actor Naomi began filming whilst on holiday and within her family bubble so the process was very straight forward – I think the most exciting thing was finding new ways of filming scenes!"

What has the adjustment to digital been like?

Layla: "I think everyone on the project has adapted brilliantly to digital change, and we have used our tools wisely to create a fresh and dynamic piece of work written from the perspective of young people during lockdown, highlighting the common challenges we have all faced. Bring on the digital festival!"





SANGEETA PILLAI / SOUL SUTRAS

ARTIST BIO

Activist, writer & speaker, Sangeeta Pillai, is the founder of the South Asian feminist network, Soul Sutras, which is all about tackling taboos within the culture.

She's the creator of the Spotify award-winning 'Masala Podcast', nominated for two British Podcast awards. The show for South Asian women deals with sex, sexuality, shame, periods & other taboos. Sangeeta is also the creator of the Masala Monologues series of writing workshops & theatre shows in the UK & the US. She has been featured in the Evening Standard, Eastern Eye, Huffington Post, BBC Asian Radio, Brown Girl Magazine and has been a writer for over 20 years.

ISOLATION NATION

A piece attempting to capture how COVID-19 and the enforced isolation has forced us to look inwards, see for the first time the isolation inside all of us. And all around us.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

-  @Soul_Sutras
-  /SoulSutrasNetwork
-  @soulsutras
-  /SoulSutrasNetwork
-  soulsutras.co.uk





LETTERS TO GOD

Letters to God is a production of poetry, music and dance that showcases the artists' own reflections on this difficult time through different art forms.

The production features dialogue between the conscious and unconscious self, dialogue between man vs god as a way of redemption from the agonies of this time.

Directed by Ahmed Kaysher, it features poetry readings from two prominent poets, dance performance by two Kathak dancers, and devotional music written, composed and performed by two leading vocalists and instrumentalists.

SAUDHA SOCIETY OF POETRY AND INDIAN MUSIC

ARTIST BIO

Led and directed by poet and Bengali-opera director, Ahmed Kaysher, Saudha is one of the leading promoters of Indian classical and global music, celebrating poetry, dance, theatre, film and art from South Asia. Saudha has been critically acclaimed for its live events and productions.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @Saudha01

 /saudha.saudha.12

 saudha.org

PERFORMERS

Sangita Chatterjee
Chandrimaa Roy
Shree Ganguly
Tanisha Chowdhury
Padma Shri
Dr Soma Ghosh
Anayah Nirvana
Anvita Gupta
Niknaz Mirghalami
Srimati Koyel Bhattachary

MUSIC

Will Lawton (Anjali Mudra)
Sri Ramprapanna Bhattacharya

EDITING AND TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT

Neel Malakar

CONCEPT, DIRECTION AND SCRIPT

T M Ahmed Kaysher





THE CORNER

Have you ever felt stuck or suspended in time and space?

During lockdown there has been another threat on our health and wellbeing, other than Covid 19. This is our mental health. Humans are social communal creatures by nature. Our obsession with social media shows that we yearn for collective solidarity, acceptance and knowing we are part of something bigger than ourselves, without this we feel: cornered, alone, frustrated, uneasy, angry, anxious, low self-esteem, and the list goes on. This short film uses dance, spoken word and original music to explore this experience in all its vulnerability and urgency.

TOUSSAINT TO MOVE

ARTIST BIO

Toussaint To Move's intention is to create moving, thought provoking, accessible and free spirited projects. The work challenges, enlightens and entertains audiences and participants. Audiences are not just observers; they are implicit in the experience. The work aims to reflect on reality, looking at on going socio-political issues, with a humanitarian intention.

Since graduating from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance with a first-class honours Bachelor degree in Performing Arts, Akeim has been involved in multiple cross disciplinary programmes with a wide range of artists and communities from around the world. The aesthetic of his work combines expressive skills such as dance, creative writing, film, poetry, beat-box, singing and acting, fused to create performances that tell stories capable of bridging the gaps between audiences.

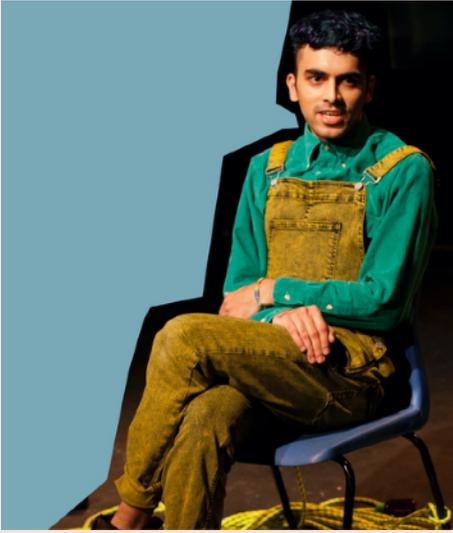
SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

   @toussainttomove

 toussainttomove.com

All content created and performed by Akeim Toussaint Buck.





VIJAY PATEL

ARTIST BIO

Vijay Patel (He/him) is a performance artist based in London. His art forms are interdisciplinary, ranging from live art, performance art and cabaret. The work he makes predominantly surrounds cultural identity, making autobiographical/political statements around being a queer, British/Indian, working class, person living with Asperger's syndrome. Vijay centres his lived experiences/identity throughout his practice to advocate/uplift/raise awareness of marginalised communities.

ASPERGER'S QUESTION TIME

Asperger's Question Time is a neurodivergent brain exercise where Vijay Patel takes on a facilitation role to answer questions about his experience of Asperger's syndrome.

Adapted from his show, Sometimes I Leave, this online version examines handling the barriers of social communication, the notion of 'leaving' as an access requirement and what might happen if he were to simply walk away from leading this exercise. Vijay has often left social situations because they become too uncomfortable. He has left situations for a respite, a way to calm his brain quietly on his own. This is a complex situation of battling the exhaustion of social interactions while having to hold space to answer questions to understand him better.

With thanks to Fk Alexander, Bryony Harris, Roxanne Carney, Katayoun Jalili, Sarah Moore and Teddy Lamb for participating.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

 @vijayrajpatel92

 @vpateltheatre

 vijaypateltheatre.co.uk



A message from the curators

BETH WATTON - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Since opening Poplar Union in 2017, I've always looked forward to a time where we feel established and confident enough to launch a commission such as this. Offering creative and, vitally, financial support to the artists whose work we were looking forward to sharing live with our audiences when Covid struck has been hugely rewarding and speaks directly to our mission of nurturing talent and supporting artists.

Through the brief 'Looking Out | Looking In | Looking Up', we invited our artists to muse on what the world is today, their place within it and how we might move forwards. This festival celebrates risk, creativity and process. It's not about the perfect finished piece, but the learning and development the artists encounter in the making of the work.

I hope this festival shows how, even in the most dire of circumstances, art and creativity can flourish and, as always, it's artists helping us make sense of it all...

A bit about Beth...

Beth Watton is the Artistic Director of Poplar Union. Her background is in performance art and theatre making and, when she's not too busy at Poplar Union, produces academic research in the field of performance archives, subversive/queer performance art and new-materialist thinking.

WILL ROPER - MUSIC PROGRAMMER



We put together the idea for the commission to try and connect with our regular artistic community that would have filled Poplar Union with people, music and art over the last months. With the new reality of social distancing, we wanted to find a way to showcase their many talents, skills and help stimulate the process of music making.

The theme 'Looking Out | Looking In | Looking Up' was chosen as it seemed we had all been more aware of doing these things, and wanted an open idea that the artists could play with.

Discussing the process behind the works has brought me some personal highlights through the last few trying months, and I can't wait to see what they have come up with.

A bit about Will:

Will is the Music Programmer at Poplar Union, helping make musical things happen there. He is also a musician and educator who has been involved in professional and community arts for many years, as a trumpet player and dodgy percussionist, mainly.



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