

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

A SERIES OF MICRO-COMMISSIONS CELEBRATING NEW WORK IN SOLIHULL

THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2022
THE CORE, SOLIHULL



Small is Beautiful

This is the start of an idea – the start of something new. The opportunity to be in at the beginning. There are so many starting points here in this programme, Small is Beautiful.

Across all art forms, this is the beginning of a new Culture@Solihull initiative, to support new artists, new projects from Solihull and the wider West Midlands. With these micro commissions, we're able to kick start new projects, to make possible long held artistic dreams, and to build new collaborations for the future.

From an overwhelming number of submissions, for this first series of commissions, we've chosen work that covers all art forms, explores a diversity of subjects, and ranges from the playful to the serious.

It has been inspiring to discover so much talent and creative imagination. Right here.

These are fragments, developments, research, layers. This might be a first exhibition opportunity, a new layer added to existing work to move it forward, a script being tried out for the first time. Be gentle but honest, because the final ingredient in the mix is you: the audiences and viewers. This is work in progress and you can help how it goes forward, by feeding back to the artists and to us. Tell us what you think – what inspires you.

Perhaps this is the beginning of other new projects.

Everything starts somewhere, with a small step. Because - Small is Beautiful

Philip Parr
Parrabbola

Participating Artists:

Cree Amory-Reid (CreezOn)
Wersha Bharadwa
James Blake-Butler (System of Strings)
Jack Davies (System of Strings)
Caitriona Dunnett
Hannah Elsy
Tye Forde
Sarah Fowler
Amber Gollay
Martha Harris (Calico)
Liz John
Claire Jones
Sujatha Menon (Microbelles)
Anna Nierobisz
Natalie Roe
Richard Rudge
Daz Scott (Calico)
Janet Tryner
Elle Walker
Tammy Woodrow (Microbelles)
Carl Woods
Vicky Wyton-Mills

VISUAL ART – Ground Floor


Janet Tryner - Calling Earth Stars

Visual and Digital Art

Janet is a multidisciplinary conceptual artist based in Coventry who is interested in ground level environments and how other species live within human designed environments and makes site specific art inspired by her research.

This piece brings our shared environment into The Core, as it is inspired by her discovery of four collared earthstar mushrooms growing in Theatre Square. She visualises a kind of conversation between the fungi that also preserves and speaks to the network that connects them under the ground.

Access the augmented reality on this webpage:
<https://futuristic-shocking-cuckoo.glitch.me> and allow access to your camera.
Any problems see Janet's blog: <https://anatomyofasmile.blogspot.com>

 @anatomyofasmile | www.janetryner.com



VISUAL ART – Ground Floor

Caitriona Dunnett - Work in Progress

Photography

Caitriona Dunnett is an Irish artist based in the West Midlands, who has studied and worked internationally, garnering widespread acclaim, with work featured in Black & White Photography Magazine and online with the Irish Times and Atlas Obscura.

This work is an experiment in using leaves, twigs, and berries to produce large abstract prints through a process called phytography. Her practice investigates memory and its subjective, personal and forgotten narratives, specifically looking at land and nature, manifested through alternative processes.

 @caitrioadunnett | www.caitrioadunnett.com



VISUAL ART – Ground Floor

Hannah Elsy – Observations on Town Life

Cartoons

When Hannah is not doodling in her spare time, she's an entrepreneur and producer, with Off West End credits and an entertainment business for any occasion called Stageless.

This work in captures the essence of memories of Solihull derived from old snapshots. "I'm working in biro because during I'm transitioning from my day job work – perhaps using a biro to write down a financial calculation – to doodling at night using the same materials."



VISUAL ART – The Courtyard Gallery

Vicky Wyton-Mills - Portraits of Ralph Road Allotments

Visual Art; Sketches and Paintings

Vicky Wyton-Mills is drawn to paint subjects that hold personal significance and have strong contrasts in light and dark, currently drawing inspiration from the love of her local woods and the micro-community and companionship of the allotment.

The works for this project come from photographs, then sketches, of her allotment friends and neighbours. She begins by underpainting with a thinned oil paint and tries to imbue her subjects with the emotions they are expressing – sometimes by mimicking the expression herself.

 @wytonmills |  @vicky_wyton



VISUAL ART – The Courtyard Gallery

Tye Forde Art (TFA) – Art exhibition by an artist without an art degree

Visual Art

Tye Forde is a self-taught artist with a love for pop art, reusing and upcycling everyday materials to create pieces with a light-hearted humour. These action paintings are unique and made to be remembered, but Forde says, "Sometimes art I have created has no meaning. It's Pop Art, so try not to over think Art as often... it is what you see!"

 @ffa_tyefordeart #TFA #tyefordeart |   @TyeFordeArt




VISUAL ART – The Courtyard Gallery

Elle Walker - I Am.

Photography

Elle is a Birmingham-based documentary photographer, drawn to limited and transitory photography techniques, who often takes an ethnographic approach in making work, to give a voice to the marginalised, and seeks to empower people of colour by including text or audio of her subjects in her work.

This work is an investigation of the societal perceptions of Black women: as stereotypes, lacking, insufficient; both unheard and unseen and often on the periphery of society. It was created by fusing modern digital technology with traditional camera-less techniques, and borne because of the performative responses from institutions in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020.

 @ellewalkerphotography | <https://www.ellewalkerphotography.co.uk>



VISUAL ART The Courtyard Gallery

Tammy Woodrow & Sujatha Menon - Microbelles

A Sculpture & Poetry Project

Tammy Woodrow is an investigative visual artist and concealed curator who makes exploratory site-specific sculptures and installations, seeking to fuse personal experience with academic enquiry.

Sujatha is a British Indian poet and musician (with the band Satsangi), with published poetry in a variety of magazines and journals and broadcast musical work on BBC Radio and MTV.

Microbelles is part of a larger, developing project that reimagines our inner physiological landscapes as metaphors for our lost connection with nature and ancestral lands. The Solihull micro-commission has enabled Tammy and Sujatha to begin an exciting collaboration that greatly supports their vision for a more socially engaged practice.

 @tammywoodrow |  @sujathamemon_

More info: tammywoodrowartist.wixsite.com/curator | www.sujathamemon.com



VISUAL ART First Floor

Richard Rudge – It All Comes Together, It All Falls Apart

Graphic Novel

Richard Rudge is an artist and writer inspired by science fiction, folklore, and the changing world who has exhibited his award-winning work around the UK.

"It All Comes Together, It All Falls Apart" is a graphic novel exploring repeating cycles, the feeling of trying to learn from mistakes and breaking destructive cycles. The uniform page format is an experiment in using comic panelling to alter time, aiming to slowly build meaning from the visual cacophony of the artwork.

 @Richrudgeart_ |  @RLRudge | www.richardrudge.com





VISUAL ART First Floor

Sarah Fowler - 100 Mandalas

Fine Art

Sarah specialises in Craft-based Fine Art, inspired by the intricacies of nature, and works in a variety of mediums. This project is a series of hand drawn images following the rules of the Mandala. She finds the process of drawing and colouring in these designs to be relaxing and cathartic and encourages the viewer to see what they can decipher from her pieces.

 @sarahfowler0512 |  @Sassy0512 |

Website: cargocollective.com/sarahfowler

Please see QR code that takes the viewer to Sarah's website page which will catalogue the mandalas.



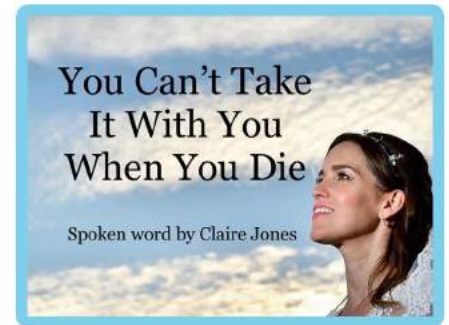
PERFORMANCE - Library Ground Floor

Claire Jones - You Can't Take It With You When You Die

Spoken Word Performance

2pm, 3pm, 5pm, 6pm, 7pm - 10 minutes each

Claire was born and raised in Shirley, Solihull. She studied at St. Peter's School and aged 11, attended a free weekly drama group at Hall Green Little Theatre and started performing in a variety of shows. She then went on to study performing arts at A level at Joseph Chamberlain College in Birmingham. In 2002, Claire attended drama school at Manchester Metropolitan School of Theatre. Since 2005, Claire has worked as an actress, voice over artist and writer across the UK in television, theatre, film, and radio. Claire is represented by AK Agents in London. Claire's ethic is to create things that make people feel good.



Representing the unheard women born and raised in Solihull who passed down the saying, 'You can't take it with you when you die'. Through a live one woman show using spoken word, poetry, a projection of old photos and beloved items passed down through generations, we discuss what we do take with us when we pass and the importance of what we leave behind. A celebration of women: a celebration of generations. A feel-good show: as familiar as a warm cup of tea. Suitable for all ages.

'I am passionate about creating work in my hometown. I love all elements of creativity and expression and believe it is a vital necessity to promote wellbeing, celebrate culture and inspire all generations.' - Claire Jones

 @claire_jones_actor |  @clairejonesl | www.clairejonesactor.com

PERFORMANCE - Library First Floor

Anna Nierobisz - Ode to Virtual Heavens

Virtual Reality Experience

Running throughout the afternoon, this is a one-to-one experience with the artist

Anna is a Polish-British artist based in Birmingham who works across a spectrum of media: Theatre, Film, and Virtual Reality. She works with game engines and the latest motion capture technologies and applies her knowledge of creating immersive theatre and storytelling to the XR media. Her most recent piece is a Sci-Fi experience called Sensosis, supported by Arts Council England and inspired by the works of Polish author Stanislaw Lem, exploring the impossibility of communication between profoundly alien beings.

For Anna's next ACE VR project, Robot Diaries, she will work with young people in Birmingham to help them experience and understand better their creative potential and possibilities of self-expression through the VR medium. Ode to virtual heavens takes the audience into an abstract landscape occupied by a "spirit dancer," and invites them to witness and participate in the metamorphosis of this "dancer." The audience observes dissolving sculptures which suddenly vibrate and disappear, thereby telling the story of the sense of the transience that accompanies the acts of change and creation.

As the "sacred dancer" drifts into the outer space, ambient sounds accompany their emerging freedom of expression. The "sacred spirit's" body transmutes as it dances through space and becomes a free spirit of abstraction that takes the viewer from the restraints of the real world into the realm of VR. Thereby, the audience realize that they are not merely passive observers, but the story of the "sacred dancer" entails their active immersion in the freedom of creativity and expression afforded by the VR medium.



PERFORMANCE - Children's Library

System of Strings (Jack Davies and James Blake-Butler) - Hand Eye Coordination

Theatre & Family

3:30, 4:00, 4:30 - puppetry workshops

5:15, 5:45, 6:30, 7:15 - performances

James Blake-Butler and Jack Davies are West Midlands-based performers and theatre makers, and together form System of Strings Theatre.

James is a musician, actor, and puppeteer, who began working with puppets in Whole Hog Theatre's adaptation of Studio Ghibli's Princess Mononoke. He has since performed with theatres nationwide, and now works as a puppetry specialist for other theatre companies.

Jack is a performer and educator, who works with young people across the West Midlands to develop performance skills in acting and puppetry. Jack is currently performing in Quick Duck Theatre's tour of Fashion Spies and is continuing to develop education programmes to engage wider audiences in theatre making.

System of Strings is an emerging puppet theatre company, based in the West Midlands. We create playful, accessible theatre with a strong focus on the communities we reach, alongside hosting workshops and education projects for these communities. Our key aim is to bring our stories to people who have little access to professional theatre, while encouraging theatre newcomers to tell their own stories through education and engagement projects. By working with a multi-disciplinary approach and challenging ourselves to make puppets with whatever we can get our hands on, we aim to make theatre that is engaging and relevant to all.

We are thrilled to be performing Hand Eye Coordination, our first original performance since the pandemic!



@system.of.strings | www.systemofstrings.com



PERFORMANCE - Theatre

This programme is 30 minutes, starting at 6:30, 7:15, 8:00, and 8:45 and comprises of three artists - Natalie Roe, Carl Woods and Wersha Bharadwa.

Natalie Roe - Northern Lights Noise

Performance of Electronic Music

Natalie is a composer and performer from the West Midlands with a passion for live electronic music. Currently in her final year of studying acoustic and electronic composition at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, she spent the past year studying Music Technology at Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. Recently selected as part of BBC National Orchestra of Wales 'Composition: Wales' competition she will have her piece 'Nexus' premiered by the orchestra in May. She also composes for and performs in 'The Flying Bedroom Company', a new actor-musician puppetry show, which has recently been performed at Theatre Clwyd, The Richard Burton Theatre in front of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall and toured around schools in North Wales. Other projects include composing for BBC 2 Wales' short film 'Parklife', composing and performing live electronics in a large-scale work for orchestral and tape machines premiered in the Dora Stoutzker Hall and was also Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's YCP commissioned composer 2019/2020.



PERFORMANCE - Theatre

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Natalie Roe – Northern Lights Noise (continued)

Performance of Electronic Music

Inspired by my sightings of the Northern Lights in Lapland last year I am performing a composition titled 'Northern Light Noise' which combines the movement and colours of the aurora borealis with the overwhelming feeling of seeing the rare sight. Whilst watching the Northern Lights I heard a pack of huskies howling in the distance which I recorded. Using a granular synthesiser, I will manipulate the sound of this recording to reflect the different grains of light which constantly change and move around. Unlike my past performances using hardware such as modular synthesisers, vinyl, and tape to create sounds, I have used a new method to generate my music digitally within software on my laptop which I can play and trigger with a MIDI keyboard.



 @natalieroemusic |  @natroe21 | natalieroemusic.weebly.com

PERFORMANCE - Theatre

This programme is 30 minutes, starting at 6:30, 7:15, 8:00, and 8:45 and comprises of three artists - Natalie Roe, Carl Woods and Wersha Bharadwa.

Carl Woods - Rob Oliver

Short Documentary Film

Carl Woods is a young local filmmaker who passionately believes in the ability for film and storytelling to change the way we see the world. Having taken his craft across Africa, Asia, and even on Everest, Carl resides between Birmingham and London, where he works as a commercials and documentary director. His stories open our eyes to incredible people living ordinary lives, capturing their voices in entertaining and cinematic films. Having met Rob several years ago, Carl reached out to him just before the Paralympic Games in 2021. After a catch up, Carl saw that there was a very unique and interesting message from Rob, that audiences hadn't heard before. While many stories about Paralympians focus on the athlete's disability, Carl saw a story with Rob that would resonate with any audience; and give an insight into the conflict and drama that goes on when competing on a world stage.



I want to create a cinematic piece that really utilises the explosive and impactful visuals of Rob's sport, helping to alleviate the film's story through the stark contrast of sporting action, and 'regular mundane life'. While we want to create an aesthetic that puts a disabled story in the same league as other commercially made films, this is a doc where the focus is not on a disabled person 'overcoming' their disability. I feel that it is incredibly important that the film approaches Rob as 'just another guy', focusing on his character, and the choices he makes, rather than pitying him because of his perceived 'disadvantage'.

I hope to add another film to the growing cannon of work that is moving away from seeing disabled people as 'inspirational'. Instead, through focusing on character, this film represents disabled people without pity, and only with humility and empathy.

 @robolivergb |  @zedmillfilm | zedmill.com/roboliver

PERFORMANCE - Theatre

This programme is 30 minutes, starting at 6:30, 7:15, 8:00, and 8:45 and comprises of three artists - Natalie Roe, Carl Woods and Wersha Bharadwa.

Wersha Bharadwa – Solihull Stories: Ugandan Asian Exodus – Marking 50 Years

Theatre Reading

Wersha Bharadwa is an award-nominated author, playwright and writer with works featured in The Guardian, The Independent, Cosmopolitan and Glamour. She also lectures in Creative Writing and Journalism at Birmingham City University. Wersha's digital play 'What We Are Made Of – The Untold Stories of British Asian Women of the African Diaspora' was a hit at the Migration Matters Festival, amassing over 9k viewers worldwide during the livestream premiere week. Her debut collection of short stories, 'The Birmingham Collection', is published by Patrician Press and is available on Amazon Kindle. Wersha's debut play, 'I Go Home Now' was presented by Kali Theatre and in 2019, her short story 'Living History' was adapted for stage and presented at The Birmingham Repertory Theatre. She is currently writing a novel and several scripts.



'The Ugandan Asian Exodus – Marking 50 Years' is the working title of writer Wersha Bharadwa's new verbatim play in development exploring the personal histories of refugees who settled in Britain after dictator Idi Amin's expulsion in 1972. Wersha will deliver a live public reading of a first stages/ early script-in-progress extract based exclusively on interviews with those who settled in the West Midlands from Uganda, their lives before expulsion and the legacy Ugandan Asians have created for their children and the wider community. The reading will be followed by a brief Q&A session on Wersha's research so far and her plans to develop an exciting new full-length play for August 2022.

 @wersha_bharadwa |  @wersha | Wersha.co.uk

PERFORMANCE - Studio

This programme is 50 minutes, starting at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:15 and comprises of four artists - Calico, Liz John, CreezOn and Amber Gollay.

CreezOn

Rap

Born Cree Amory-Reid in Birmingham of both Caribbean and African heritage, CreezOn is a musical artist: rapper, lyricist, singer, and producer. CreezOn delivers soul shaking music with deep, conceptual subject matter.

CreezOn's content, flow variation, soul touching melodies and consistent recognisable idiosyncratic deliveries put him heads and shoulders above other artists not just his age, but in the UK Rap scene and beyond. He brings lyricism, melodies and meaningful delivery to his tracks that resonate with various audiences.

"I describe myself as an infinite artist, as creativity is infinite. Creativity and infinity are the same thing. I'm not boxed by genre. There's No Laws to Infinity. My artistry can't be boxed."



PERFORMANCE - Studio

This programme is 50 minutes, starting at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:15 and comprises of four artists - Calico, Liz John, CreezOn and Amber Gollay.


Liz John – Under the Knife

Theatre

Liz John writes for BBC Radio's The Archers, as well as theatre and screen (BBC Doctors plus award-winning/nominated short films). Her theatre work has been produced across the Midlands and nationally, ranging from serious drama such as Perversion of Science about WW1 gas warfare, to interactive co-written comedies Calling for Help and Invisible which toured to 4-star reviews. Liz is also a member of BOLDtext Playwrights who regularly present regional site-specific work. She is also an experienced trainer and workshop facilitator, delivering online and in-person sessions for all media.



Under the Knife is a monologue which may form part of the stage play I'm developing concerning the devastation caused by notorious surgeons like Ian Paterson, well-known in our region. For my research, I want to explore 'God Complex' in (female) consultants and what lies behind such cases of malpractice and how a perpetrator might attempt to justify their crimes. I'm particularly keen to hear feedback on my approach from local people in Solihull, as it's an extremely sensitive subject affecting a huge number of our families, which deserves to be aired regionally.

 @LizJohn_1 | <https://lizjohn.wordpress.com/>

PERFORMANCE - Studio

This programme is 50 minutes, starting at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:15 and comprises of four artists - Calico, Liz John, CreezOn and Amber Gollay.

Calico (Martha Harris and Daz Scott) – Last Wednesday

Dance Theatre

We are Calico, a Midlands-based dance theatre duo, with a drive to devise movement-driven work that facilitates important social conversations. Our work normally starts with a question; whether it's 'What did you do last Wednesday?', or 'What would you do if men had a curfew?' and is choreographed to a score of verbatim answers from as many people as we can reach. We mould our work around the people and places it is for, and have performed in shopping centres, car parks, cemeteries, reservoirs, and even on trains. We are all about elevating community voices, which often means working across dance, theatre, and film, and finding new and exciting ways to bring to life the stories we uncover.



Last Wednesday is a dance theatre piece that celebrates the mundanity of everyday experience. Using verbatim voice recordings of individuals describing what they did 'Last Wednesday', it is a mosaic of movement, theatre, clowning, verbatim voice recording and music, which brings out the beauty and peculiarity in the variety of extraordinarily mundane experiences happening at one moment. It is about perspective, about existing in your own bubble and widening your outlook, and about capturing the weird and wonderfulness of plain existence. We'll take the audience on a journey of chaos, confusion, and serendipity as we get through the hump day of the week together, starting and ending with a simple question: what did YOU do last Wednesday?

 @CalicoTheatre |  @CalicoTheatre | Email: calicotheatre@gmail.com

PERFORMANCE - Studio

This programme is 50 minutes, starting at 6:00, 7:00, and 8:15 and comprises of four artists - Calico, Liz John, CreezOn and Amber Gollay.

Amber Gollay - Sit With Me

Theatre

Amber is a 2020 MA Acting graduate from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and 2019 BA Drama and Theatre Arts graduate from the University of Birmingham. She has just completed a run of 'James and the Giant Peach' with Blue Orange Arts, where she played the titular role of James. She has also recently worked with Freelancers in the Dark, exploring through devised performance how Covid-19 has affected Freelance artists. Amber's previous one woman show, 'LIVE in Lockdown', was commissioned by the West Midlands Democratising Creativity and Culture Festival, in 2020.

Whilst at university, Amber founded and was president of the UoB Panto Society. She is also an avid singer, stand-up comic and ice hockey player. Amber is very excited to be presenting a snippet of her one woman show, 'SIT WITH ME', and would like to thank Parrabbola for giving her a platform to help develop this piece of work.



'Sit With Me' is a one woman show, in the style of La Ronde, which follows 4 separate characters of various statuses and professions as they meet up on a park bench and share interactions. They are all, however, closer than they think, despite their class differences... Through a series of monologues, we see these various encounters from characters who all claim to have just had the worst day of their lives and hilarity ensues. The story follows the encounters between the bin man and the stripper, the stripper and the teacher, the teacher and the doctor and the doctor and the bin man. In this performance, I will be presenting the first monologue (the bin man meeting the stripper) from the start of the show. I hope you enjoy!



@Amber Gollay | <https://www.spotlight.com/4773-5644-7469>

Small is Beautiful has been developed by Solihull Council, working with the Parrabbola team (Philip Parr and Skylar Mabry). We're grateful to all the staff at The Core for their cooperation and assistance.

To keep in touch with what's happening with this project and with future cultural programming, follow @solihullculture on Instagram and twitter, and to sign up to the mailing list, send your contact details to our email address culture@solihull.gov.uk

THE CORE

Thank you for visiting The Core Solihull
and supporting the artists involved.



When he took out the terracotta
forgetting to leave its core
already rooted to the bottom
Hence forty odd years
not believing
I could do anything right

Programme written by Parrabbola