

Julian Abraham 'Togar' *REXONCILIATION*

Large Print Exhibition Notes

24 May – 8 September 2024

Julian Abraham 'Togar' (b. 1987, Indonesia) facilitates meandering encounters in which an ensemble of sounds and voices come together, inviting audiences to listen, talk and create sound collectively. Togar encourages us to reconcile our relationship with our surroundings by actively listening. By transforming the gallery into a social composing device, and inviting its guests to participate, Togar attempts to underscore its function with the possibilities of collective improvisation and action.

In the months leading up to this exhibition, Togar undertook a research residency in Nottingham to generate encounters, connections and collaborations with members of Nottingham's communities. The residency led to one enquiry sitting at the heart of this

exhibition – what kind of hosts are we? In *REXONCILIATION*, this question acts as a prompt to explore a sense of coexistence, commonality and alternative ways of holding space together. At the same time, it prompts us to consider hospitable and generative ways of collective listening.

At the core of the exhibition is Togar’s ongoing *OK Studio* (2020 – present), an immersive sonic environment emanating from a chorus of kinetic sculptures, and automated and playable musical instruments offering audiences a space to co-experiment, co-imagine, and co-produce. At Nottingham Contemporary, Togar brings together all the past lives of *OK Studio* from previous presentations, while simultaneously mixing in new sounds to create an open and shared acoustic space that breathes life back into the gallery. Togar sees this act of bringing “all the works from different times, contexts, and relationships to the current *OK Studio* as an attempt at reconciliation.”

Alongside the components of *OK Studio* are a series of typographic posters and signs that play at the intersection of sound and prose. Referencing a multitude of the artist's thoughts associated with sonic culture, they fuse Togar's interests in mediation and citation, poetry and notation. Through these works Togar attempts to prod, test and defy categorisations. Moving between words, sounds and phrases, Togar explores possible alternate meanings that can be found in lagged syncopations*, amplified mistranslations and elongated pauses. As a continuation of this idea, several newly commissioned rugs designed by Togar give homage to the Indonesian writer, artist and mystical realist Danarto, whose work contributed to the field of visual acoustic poetry. References to Danarto's poetry book, *Habis Tak Sudah (Over Yet Undone)*, can be unearthed in the design of the rugs.

A newly commissioned video work, *One Jam per Week Will Do You Youth (2024)* recorded in Nottingham Contemporary during the installation of

REXONCILIATION, documents a rehearsal in which the Robin Hood Youth Orchestra ‘jam’ with the artist. During the session the orchestra responded to compositions created by the jamming collective Nayamullah, whose members include Togar and musicians, artists, designers, researchers, comedians and historians from across the archipelago of Indonesia. Other video works displayed on various screens and monitors include *Drummer’s Gonna Drum* (2017 - present) and *Rocker’s Gonna Rock* (2021) which highlight the artist’s considered experiments with sound and environment whilst also contributing to a sonic interplay with the kinetic elements in the exhibition.

Deriving from Togar’s ongoing work creating shared acoustic spaces, the exhibition is accompanied by a series of live events titled *Feedback Loop*, consisting of listening sessions, informal gatherings, performances, jam sessions and conversations. Over the course of the summer the exhibition will evolve through the participation of collectives, communities,

creatives and audiences who will be invited to shape and activate the gallery, adding to the layers of sound within it. By generating a communal space where sound is the main medium and the roles of 'host' and 'guest' are intertwined and subverted, an engagement through call and response takes shape. In *REXONCILIATION*, words and sounds infuse into one another, and all become one continuous rhythm.

*The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines syncopation as a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat

RELATED EVENTS

Feedback Loop

Fri 31 May – Sun 8 Sep

An event series hosted in *REXONCILIATION* and consisting of listening sessions, informal gatherings, performances, jam sessions and conversations,

reflecting on the question “what kind of hosts are we?”.
With contributions from Andrea Zarza Canova, Brother
Portrait, Qaa’Sim Uhuru, Chan Fagan, David Soin
Tappeser, Dipesh Pandya, Guohan Zheng (Running
Circle Records), Mac Collins, Masimba Hwati, Natasha
Soobramanien, NWAkke, Paul Nataraj, Paul Pryce,
Robin Hood Youth Orchestra, Shamica Ruddock, Sōy
Division, Ubuntu, Waste Paper Opera, Yazan Khalili.

Exhibition Walkthroughs

Sun 2 June, 12pm

Andrea Zarza Canova, archivist, curator and
researcher.

Wed 5 June, 12pm

Welcome Walkthrough

Explore the exhibition with our team and community
partners Ubuntu, followed by refreshments and
conversation in the café.

Wed 5 June, 2pm

Sound bath with Nila Shah, Ubuntu.

Wed 12 June, 1pm

Curator's Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary's curators for a tour of our summer exhibitions.

Wed 3 July, 1pm

Dr Lucy Lopez, curator and writer.

12.30 Talks

12.30pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, starting Tuesday 4 June.

Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of one of our current exhibitions.

Artist Talk

Thurs 6 June, 1pm

Yos Clark in conversation with Dwayne Church-Simms.

Presented in partnership with FABRIC as part of

Transform, a city takeover to celebrate and amplify Global Ethnic Majority talent.

Performance: Ideal Life

Sat 15 June, 6.30pm

A live performance by artist Yos Clark. Presented in partnership with FABRIC as part of Transform.

Summer Solstice Party

Sat 22 June

Join us to celebrate the summer solstice and our fifteenth birthday with a day of events, performance and activities.

The Screen at Contemporary

Our strand of arthouse, cult and classic cinema continues in August and September.

Free Family Activities

Spring Half-Term: 28 - 30 May

Summer Holidays: 30 July – 22 Aug

Explore the themes in the exhibitions through making and play.

For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:



Julian Abraham 'Togar': *REXONCILIATION* is generously supported by the British Council, and the Julian Abraham 'Togar' Exhibition Circle: ROH, Natasha Sidharta and those who wish to remain anonymous.

The exhibition is co-devised by Canan Batur, Niall Farrelly, Ali Roche, Amanda Spruyt, Klara Szafrńska, Salma Tuqan, and Julian Abraham 'Togar'.

Special thanks to members of the Robin Hood Youth Orchestra, Ian Burton and the team at Nottingham Music Service, and Elias Anastas.

Togar's residency in Nottingham was hosted by Primary.

The Refugee Piano in *REXONCILIATION* has been gifted by the Jon Rumney Estate. Following the close of the exhibition, it will be gifted onwards to the local community.

Exhibition graphics by Studio Marie Lusa.

Cover image courtesy Julian Abraham 'Togar'.

Photo: Julian Abraham 'Togar'.

If you would like a quiet space to reflect during your visit, please visit Gallery 0 (room adjacent to Gallery 1).

If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible versions on our Access Wall beside Reception.

Environmental: Nottingham Contemporary is committed to advancing sustainability within the organisation and aims to explore and embed sustainable working practices and habits within our workplace and across the sector. This includes standardising environmental considerations at all stages of decision making.

The artwork in *RECONCILIATION* has been transported by sea freight. During Togar's residency and exhibition, instruments, materials and exhibition furniture have been loaned, re-purposed and re-used. This document is printed on FSC Mix paper (Forest Stewardship Council ® certified products manufactured with a

variety of sources including FSC-certified virgin fibre, controlled wood and/or recycled materials). Please return to a member of staff or recycle should you not want to keep after your visit.

Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters. Donate today to directly support our ambitious exhibitions, and the vital work we do with artists, schools, young people, and our local community.

Suggested donation: £5