

AFTER MATH

22 / 23 May 2021

Nottingham Contemporary

Artists

James Briggs

Melisa Cerriku

WooSun Choi

Luke Knight

Janhavi Sharma

Amy Sidebotham

Klara Szafrńska

Aftermath is an annual collaborative project between Nottingham Contemporary and Nottingham Trent University. Postgraduate students have worked together to produce, design, create and document a new art exhibition. This project gives students the experience of working within a rich team, sharing ideas, peer-learning and professional experience.

Fine Art students researched the recent exhibitions *Grace Before Jones: Camera, Disco, Studio* and *Jimmy Robert: Akimbo* to develop new work, taking inspiration in various ways from themes and media. Interior Architecture students designed the exhibition, a Photography student documented the making of the exhibition and the graphic design was carried out by an International Fashion Management student.

Aftermath 2021 is a group exhibition of seven artist's works, in a range of media including sculpture, sound, installation and painting. Over recent months, the artists have re-imagined their fine art practices and faced challenges in making new art. Through mostly virtual explorations and discussions, this new material body of artworks represents how individual artists have combined interpretation with developing their practice.



Drape

James Briggs

My work raises the viewer's awareness of their surroundings and deconstructs the space around them so they can also become part of the narrative.

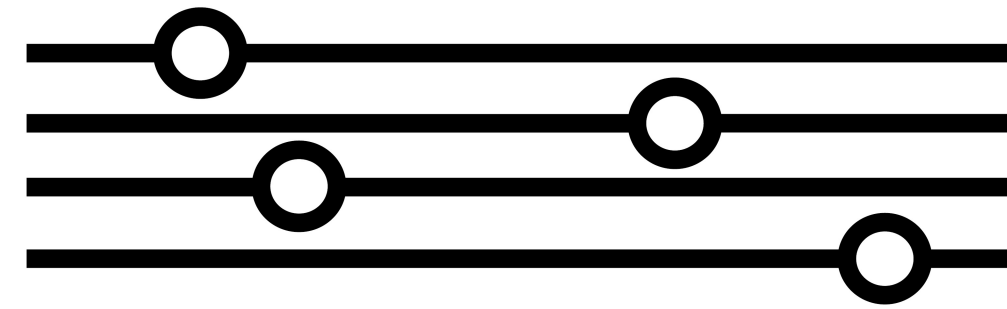
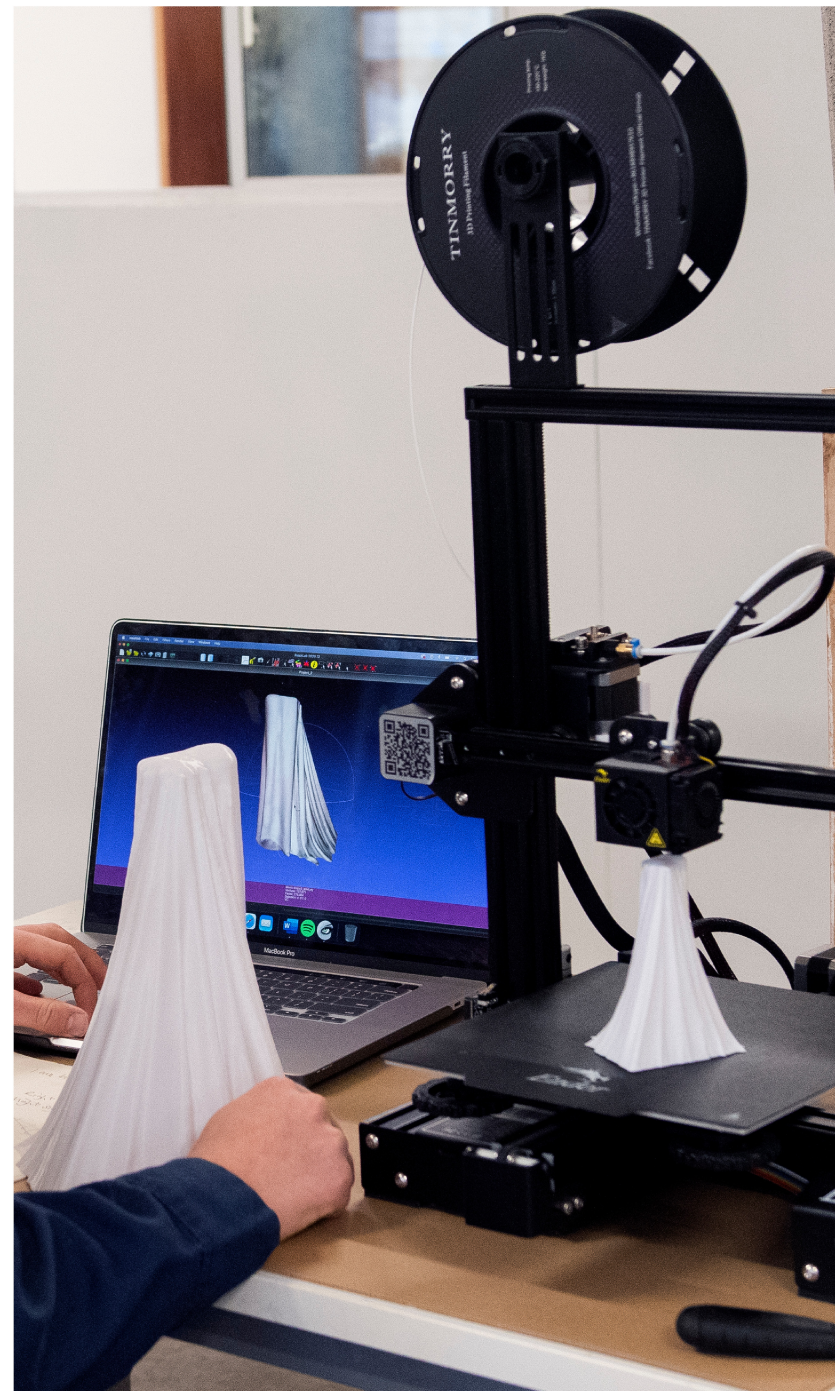
I was initially interested in the visibility through the raw construction and the PVC curtain as featured in the exhibition *Grace Before Jones: Camera, Disco, Studio*: the staging of the disco; the podia and the shifting light sequences; the film of catwalk models wearing the metal sheets folded on their bodies, opposite two ghost-like garments worn by Grace Jones. It felt as if the exhibition was draped over you, depicting both the space and one's movement, effectively becoming a performer too.

In Jimmy Robert's exhibition, I enjoyed the appropriation of objects, the subtle print on fabric, and imitations of the well-known pieces by Charles Ray.

As a group we were interested in the direction of travel around the exhibitions, the nature of the information and how much artwork was on show. One thing we have taken from the exhibition is a sense of discovery into who Grace Jones is.

Listening to the curators really helped to form my method of responding to the exhibition. I was fascinated with the ghost-like forms draped over the dance platforms and I initially documented one of the garments using photogrammetry. I created a 3-D print from this, experimenting with resolution and rendering, and replicating the folds that drape 'just so', over and around the mannequin. Essentially, I deconstructed a form in order to reconstruct it. I feel the use of material is very important in creating the illusion of form.

I hope viewers experience the emotions I felt from the exhibition, the curtain changing what is visible and invisible. Viewers may see the 3-D print as an abstract yet beautiful object preserving a moment in time.



Through the Phases

Melisa Cerriku



I observe how the emotional and psychological effects of sound can heighten awareness of the space occupied within my work.

As an Albanian artist based in Nottingham, my practice is centred upon creating uncomfortable sonic environments, interrogating the ideology of social depression, dark emotions and suppression. I work with invisible themes of sadness taken from the human condition and situations involving great disappointment.

This project is heavily rooted in the theme of identity, a self-reflective process of who I am, exploring the importance of identity in our society. The word 'identity' has a double meaning, referring to social categories and the sources of an individual's self-respect or dignity. My work in this show consists of snippets of sound recordings, a journal in which the protagonist spells out her inner struggles in a self-reflective way.

The exhibition **Grace before Jones: Camera, Disco, Studio** is a massive influence for an artist like me who struggles with the concept of identity. The Jamaican model, singer, and songwriter's clothes are an essential aspect of who she is, never seeming to shy away from self-exposure. The exhibition prompted me to think about the way we perceive one another.

As a group, we are interested in the idea of the performance of life - the way Jones built her persona and the way her performance was made as a coherent part of her being. She found herself through choreographed and carefully constructed appearances, performances in ever-changing styles. Our exhibition acknowledges different approaches and points of reference to the exhibitions, and is the start of ongoing conversations and exchange of ideas between artists.

With the challenges of the pandemic, creating new work has been complex, with imposed limitations and the need to revise ideas. My work is process-led, so I allow time to listen and create an intimate relationship between the viewer and the artwork.

Through my artwork visitors might reflect upon their sense of self. In sharing grief and desolation, a heaviness is held within the piece; uncomfortable and discreetly holding attention.

Flowing

WooSun Choi



Movement

I am interested in the challenge of harmonising the internal and external spaces of the canvas. I use 2-D images to recreate an imaginary world, giving the canvas itself a sense of movement so that it can be seen as three-dimensional. Reformation in my work simply means going beyond the viewer's point of view. I explore what happens, what is buried, and what remains in the gaps between visual space. The world of re-shaping that I have created can either flatten or raise, depending on the perspective.

For this exhibition I experiment with the stereoscopic potential of each image. Exploring possibilities for movement, the images can be cut, bent, overlap, or be separated. I create new three-dimensional states by combining sculpted images within and beyond each canvas. When displayed, the space around where the extended image is placed becomes part of the visual experience.

It is my intention that the viewer sees some of the process of making the art, not simply an exhibition of completed works. I am interested in extending my imagination to the viewer. I imagine visitors standing in front of my virtual world, asking questions about size, distance and perspective of the painting extending out of the canvas. I want people to ask 'What are we really looking at?' and to enjoy the blend of 2-D and 3-D.

THE ADVENT OF

Luke Knight

LIBERTY

As an aspiring artist, I have begun to make paintings, finding a language within abstract expressionism using painterly and mark making mediums.

The act of making the paintings is governed by the immediacy of mark making. I treat the paintbrush as a charged instrument to deliver expressive tendencies upon the canvas.

My process of painting is very much governed by an innate creative tendency which is vented upon the substrate of canvas using both mark-making mediums and painterly mediums.

When I viewed the works presented in each exhibition – **Grace Before Jones; Camera, Disco, Studio** and **Jimmy Robert: Akimbo**, I was inspired by the curatorial qualities of the gallery spaces. The influence of space encouraged me to generate a sizeable painting for The Space at Nottingham Contemporary.



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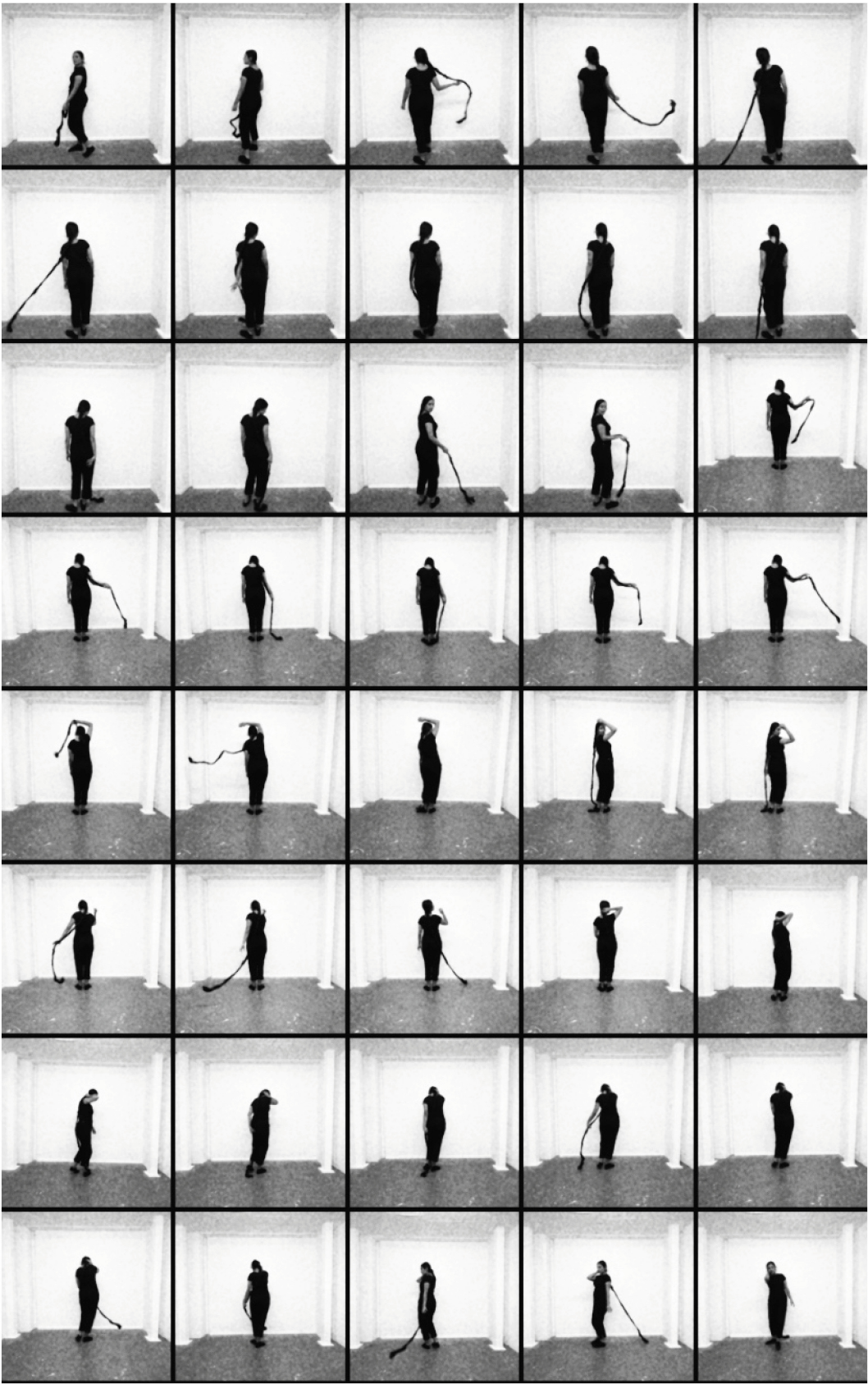
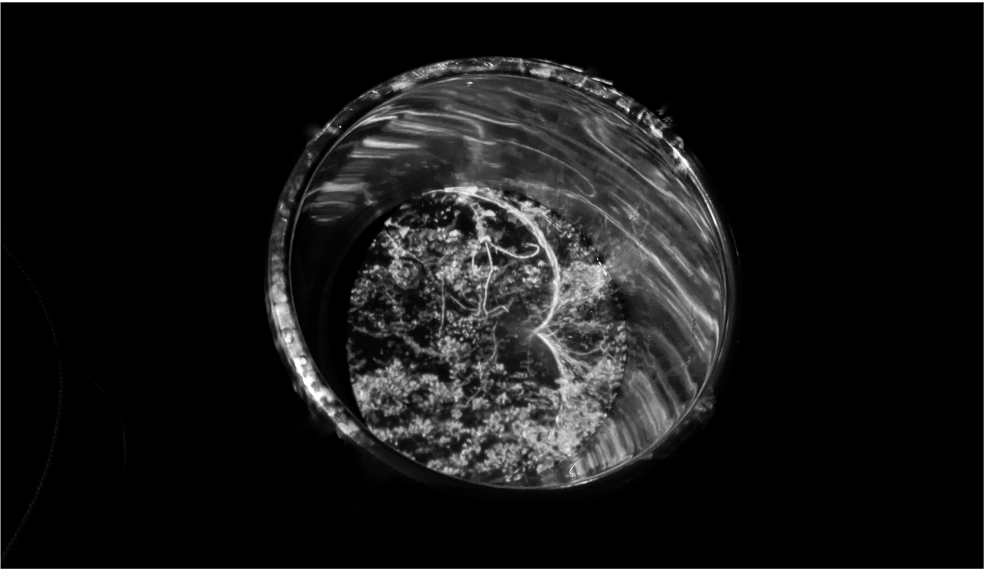
Remember to Forget a Pinch of Salt

Janhavi Sharma

Remember to Forget a Pinch of Salt is a multi-material installation that attempts to revive and reassemble conversations of remembrances associated with maternal histories. It asserts the gendered politics of food, with careful stratification of organic materials and ingredients that have been consistently repeated in the staple diet for many years. The externalisation of personal memories refers to common routines of sustenance and preservation that revolve around the kitchen, which when scrutinised, seem to hold within them vital subversions and defiances against the capitalist patriarchy.

This work also responds to Jimmy Robert’s description of “Slippages between the image and language, object and image, materiality and representation.” It explores the hybrid nature of ambivalent memory where both triggers and memory coincide: recollection and forgetfulness.

Deliberately overlooked contributions of women in domestic and environmental contexts have been recreated using the tools of performativity and fiction. They can be found faintly etched and rapidly fading between the textures, tastes and the olfactory elements of the work.



Untitled

Amy Sidebotham

I am a casting and mould-making artist with a passion for sculpture and an aim for precision. I focus my work around self-trauma, ranging from past childhood experience to the current effects of living as a disabled artist.

My work links to Jimmy Robert’s exhibition, in particular his work entitled *Silks* (2015). I connected with this work as I appreciate how the light passes through and creates images around the gallery. I also like the simplicity of the line-drawn women; I found this approach made them appear more delicate.

When it comes to making my own artwork, I tend to ask myself which particular part of it I wish to be the most significant. I then consider how I can translate this feature back to the human body, and my own body and the feelings it evokes within me. Essentially, I question whether I am able to connect with the work in a personal and emotional manner.

I am trying to interpret the idea of translucency, reflection and shadow and would like visitors to experience a sense of immersion in relation to the work. Their movement around the work is part of the work itself. I appreciate the importance of the bond between artist and viewer. I would also particularly like women to feel a connection with and understanding of the work.



Kathleen Stewart

I am a Northern Irish photographer based in Nottingham. My practice is mainly about nature, focusing on mythology, memory and the deeper meanings concealed within landscapes. Recently, I have explored the effects of trauma and memories by submerging plant roots in water. The plants symbolise one's own mind and the roots act as a metaphor for the absorption of memories. The roots also act as a cage, as a constraint for memories that, at times, lay dormant or forgotten.

Within the *Aftermath* project I worked with MFA, MA Interior Architecture and MA International Fashion Management students, photographing their progress in making new artworks and designing an exhibition and publication. I captured their responses and chosen references while photographing the design and creation of the exhibition.

This collaboration between artists and designers enabled students from a range of courses to produce very diverse pieces, coming together to learn and discuss ideas. Being part of this has allowed me to become more involved with local artists and has shown me how other artists respond to an exhibition. I've enhanced my knowledge of working in a contemporary gallery and have visited the artists' studio spaces as well as the exhibition space itself.

Due to the varied group of artists I am working with, my approach has been to photograph them from multiple perspectives; then, using their feedback, ensure that their work and their process is depicted sensitively. With my work, I hope to shine a light on the processes each individual goes through when creating new work and allow visitors to experience what goes on behind the scenes whilst simultaneously viewing the resulting exhibition.

ALEXANDRA CRACIUN

I am a Romanian graphic designer and aspiring art director. Most of my work explores themes of identity while using visual storytelling to bring concepts to life.

My process started by looking at the artists' interpretations and points of reference. I then built a mind-map of all the words they used to describe their approaches and from where they take their inspiration. The words have been then translated into striking imagery, bold typography and exciting visual layouts.

From a group perspective, it was fascinating to witness everyone's creative process. Coming from different life paths and sharing our personal experiences through all our work, enhanced the overall collaborative aspect for me.

I would want the viewers to leaf through the pages of the publication and think of each page as a representation of the artists themselves, while discovering their unique personal traits and exploring their artwork.

Dina Hegab

I am an Interior Architecture and Design Master's student at Nottingham Trent University. I grew up in Egypt and completed my undergraduate degree in Environmental and Interior Design at Syracuse University, New York. My transition from one country to another has fed my passion to explore different cultures and learn to see things through diverse lenses. With an instinctive eye for details, I combine ideas and use various design elements to create designs that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. I believe in the power of interior design to create experiences for people in the environments that they live and interact within.

Being part of the *Aftermath* exhibition has been a fantastic experience, in which I collaborated with creative people and widened my design knowledge and culture awareness. My objective for *Aftermath* was to design a space that helps the artists tell their stories, deliver their message through their artwork, and create a memorable experience for visitors.

The exhibition design process started with visits to Nottingham Contemporary to view and understand the space and its navigation, as well as meetings with the artists to understand their approaches and aims. My role was to collaboratively produce a digital model to visualise the artwork in the space, to propose different design layouts, and to use design elements such as lighting to achieve the desired experience for visitors walking through the gallery. It was essential to consider the scale, media and concepts of the artworks to find connections, and design a space that supports the story-telling of *Aftermath* 2021.

Qin Zheng

I am an MA Interior Architecture student from China and this is my first experience of joining a collaborative team.

After meeting on screen, it was very exciting to listen to students on different courses learning how to collaborate. With each meeting, I saw other people's lovely smiling faces which made me feel positive emotions, especially in the time our city was locked-down and we needed to stay in our homes.

Aftermath is a brilliant platform to learn how an exhibition is imagined, conceived and completed, inspiring my interest in exhibition design. Being part of this project offered the perfect opportunity to learn from others.

Each of our artists have their own style, so it was interesting to understand what they are thinking. I learned new skills in how to record our working process using photography, and I have gained knowledge of producing and publishing print.

It was interesting to work with fellow Interior Architecture and Design student, Dina Hegab, producing hand sketches to record our exhibition design process and making a physical model to see what could happen inside The Space.

COLLABORATORS

FETISH OR THE WOMAN WHO BUILT HER OWN STATUE

KLARA SZAFRAŃSKA

KLARA SZAFRAŃSKA IS A POLISH MULTIMEDIA ARTIST BASED IN NOTTINGHAM.

HER PRACTICE IS CENTRED AROUND CREATING ENVIRONMENTS OF META AND HYPER-REALITIES THROUGH SCULPTURE, VIDEO AND PERFORMANCE. IT EXPLORES METAPHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL KITSCH ESPECIALLY THE THEMES OF METAPHYSICAL DESIRES, NEEDS AND FETISHES MANIFESTED IN SYSTEMS.

FETISH OR THE WOMAN WHO MADE HER OWN STATUE USES SZAFRAŃSKA'S RESEARCH ON THE METAPHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL KITSCH TO EXPLORE STATUARY, THE NOTIONS OF SELF-MYTH AND CREATING NEW NARRATIVES FOR SELF AS A POLITICAL ACT.

SZAFRAŃSKA'S INTEREST IN **GRACE BEFORE JONES: CAMERA, Disco, Studio** FOCUSES PARTICULARLY ON THE WORKS DOCUMENTING THE PERFORMANCE OF LIFE – THE NON-EXISTENT LINE BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC. SHE IS FASCINATED BY THE WAYS GRACE JONES BUILT HER PERSONA – THE PROCESS OF CONTINUING CREATION OF SELF THROUGH CHOREOGRAPHED AND CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED APPEARANCES IN SPACES; AS WELL AS HOW JONES' PERFORMANCE WAS ESTABLISHED AS A COHERENT PART OF HER BEING.

THE WORK IS PROCESS-LED. IT IS A SCULPTURE AND A MOCKUMENTARY IN WHICH THE PROTAGONIST SPELLS OUT HER IMAGINED CHARACTER AND NARRATIVE, AND QUESTIONS HOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND LEGITIMISE IT WITHIN THE SYSTEM. IN THE MOCKUMENTARY, THE PROTAGONIST EXPLORES AND REALISES THE NEED FOR ERECTING A STATUE OF HERSELF. THE VIDEO DEPICTS HER PROCESS STARTING WITH IMMEDIATE DESIRES, MOVING TO ACTIONS SUCH AS 3-D SCANNING HERSELF, TRYING TO OCCUPY SEVERAL, PUBLIC, **DOMESTIC** AND VIRTUAL SPACES AND FINALLY ERECTING A STATUE OF HERSELF IN NOTTINGHAM.



Dear exhibition guests, please take away a small statue.

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