

## Curators Statement

*Bloc Projects, Sheffield.*

Since joining Bloc Projects in February this year, I've had the privilege of developing and delivering a pilot public programme of talks, workshops and artist 1:2:1's funded by Making Ways<sup>1</sup>, to complement an existing dynamic billboard and exhibitions programme led by curator David Mcleavy. Unfolding in terms, the entirely free and multidisciplinary nature of the Salon '18 programme looks to strengthen our commitment to local professional development - eliciting conversation and nurturing inclusion.

Salon '18 has welcomed a breadth of innovative and passionate contributions, necessarily placing an emphasis on the work of women in the arts who have defied the odds<sup>2</sup> to develop and maintain extraordinary and urgent practices within disciplines which have included sculpture, textile design, activism, curating, creative writing and performance. Memorably, back in March artist Sean Roy Parker launched our Spring Term with a Lactofermenting Workshop whilst Rebecca Davies discussed the local, gentrification and participation with a talk and Workers Life Drawing Workshop over at DINA. More recently we welcomed the thoughtful and passionate contributions of Jasleen Kaur, a Talk and Materials Workshop with recent Slade School graduate Florence Mytum and a collaborative musical evening with Emily Pope and Liv Fontaine - who both explore the history of feminist performance within their work.

Our upcoming Autumn/Winter term will acknowledge an expansive creative sector with 'Diverse Industry Insights', featuring Hospital Rooms (Niamh White and Tim Shaw) who bring extraordinary site-specific art commissions to secure mental health units across the country as well as Brixton based design collective Resolve whose architectural work addresses diverse social challenges.

A recent six week programming break, has afforded precious time to measure impact and evaluate visitor feedback, we've also been developing funding strategies to secure the future of the talks, workshops and exhibitions programmes. This month I gratefully embarked on an ACE research trip to the US - visiting community led archives which

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<sup>1</sup> Salon 18 forms part of Making Ways, a new programme supported by Sheffield Culture Consortium through Arts Council England to showcase, celebrate and develop the exceptional contemporary visual art produced in the city.

<sup>2</sup> Based on persisting negative comparable representation and pay statistics for women in the arts (PANIC! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries, 2018) (Representation of Female Artists in Britain, Freelands Foundation, 2016).

urgently preserve and celebrate marginalised voices. Along the way I was humbled by the generative commitment to accessibility demonstrated by Brooklyn Museum<sup>3</sup> as well as the dignity and cultural pride afforded to the local community through Theaster Gates' Stony Island Arts Bank in downtown Chicago.

Research conducted on the trip will inform the evolution of the public programme into a dynamic peer-led model. This structure will continue to support local creative professional development, facilitating high quality learning experiences and a greater frequency of opportunities for people to come together. With the arts recognised as inherently exclusionary, we hope the format will represent a radically transparent, community orientated vision.

Personally, it has been renewing to move to such a vibrant and networked city, learning and working amongst an established and thriving contemporary arts community. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to our visitors who have supported individuals and families through a time of crisis by generously and thoughtfully donating 66.5kg of food and basic toiletries for S2 foodbank in the last six months. A further sincere thank you to design collective Du.st and Our Fave Places for supporting the development of Salon '18, DINA venue and Gloam Gallery for hosting elements of the programme, the staff and service users at ArtWorks Sheffield for the laughter and artist Pete Martin for capturing the conviviality.

**Kerry Campbell**  
Public Programmes Curator

[www.blocprojects.co.uk/salon-18/](http://www.blocprojects.co.uk/salon-18/)

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<sup>3</sup> Pay what you feel entry, conservators welcoming discussion and working within public spaces, visible storage of the collections and an app to ask art historians questions in real time, [brooklynmuseum.org](http://brooklynmuseum.org) .