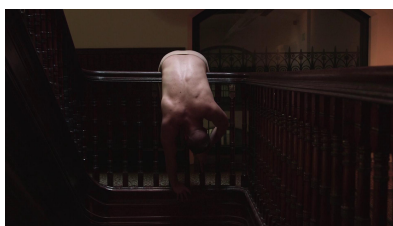


PIVOT

PRESS RELEASE: issued 22 October 2020

Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery announce inaugural PIVOT artists for new artist development programme in the North West of England

Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery are delighted to announce the five inaugural PIVOT artists **Pat Flynn (Manchester), Garth Gratrix (Blackpool), Bridget O'Gorman (Manchester), Salma Noor (Liverpool) and Chester Tenneson (Manchester)**. The artists selected range from early mid-career to over 20 years in the field of visual arts and their practices include rendered photography, installation and sculpture, painting performance and digital collage.



Images (clockwise from top left): Garth Gratrix, *Shy Girl*, In Collaboration with Tanning Chatum (Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes). *After Vlatka Horvat' Minor Planets*, 2020 Image courtesy of Matt Wilkinson | Pat Flynn, *Healer (detail)* 2015 | Chester Tenneson, *Out here on the mountain top*, 2018 | Bridget O'Gorman, *A Constitution of Iron*, (performance still) 2017 Salma Noor, *Bood Yaan Lagu Boobin*, 2018

PIVOT is a new scheme delivered in partnership by Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery. Both organisations share the vision that the North West of England is a place where artists are

able to live and work whilst experiencing national and international success. With over five years experience and a strong track record in the field of contemporary visual art, each artist has been awarded a £5000 bursary and access to a programme that supports their practice over an 18 month period, starting in November 2020.

Over 120 artists applied to PIVOT from across the North West of England. The breadth and quality of applications was outstanding. The inaugural PIVOT artists have been selected by a panel comprising artists Simeon Barclay and Chara Lewis with curators at Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery, and a representative from the scheme's core funder, Brian Mercer Trust. For Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery the process has reinforced a strongly held belief in the quality and ambition of visual art being produced in the region. PIVOT will deepen and extend both organisations' longstanding commitment to the development of artists in the North West at a challenging time for so many creatives across the UK.

Marie-Anne McQuay, Head of Programme, Bluecoat said:

"PIVOT is an important part of Bluecoat's artist development programme. Shortlisting to a final five from 120 applications was a difficult but hugely rewarding process. We have a renewed understanding of who is practising in the North West and the sheer quality of work, as well as the needs of mid-career artists which we will continue to support. I'm looking forward to starting PIVOT, collaborating with Castlefield Gallery and getting to know Pat Flynn, Garth Gratrix Bridget O'Gorman, Salma Noor and Chester Tenneson, while delivering Bluecoat's wider support for artists which includes residencies, studio bursaries and new commissions."

Helen Wewiora, Director / Artistic Director, Castlefield Gallery said:

"Launching PIVOT is a milestone in Castlefield Gallery's 36-year commitment to developing the work of artists in the North West of England. We are excited to be delivering this programme with our partners Bluecoat and cementing a dynamic regional partnership. The number and quality of applications stands as testimony to the wealth of creative talent living and working in the region. The selection panel had quite a job to arrive at the final group of artists and we are very grateful to them as well as the PIVOT funders. Huge congratulations to Pat Flynn, Garth Gratrix, Bridget O'Gorman, Salma Noor and Chester Tenneson. We are looking forward to working with the inaugural PIVOT artists across 2020-22 as they take their work to the next level and address very real development needs."

Developed to support those experiencing the long mid-career - whether established or just past emerging - PIVOT recognises that existing artist development support is dominated by

early-career opportunities for UK artists. PIVOT will support the participating artists with bespoke strands, tailored to each individual's needs, including specialist mentoring. The artists will engage in a core development programme that includes 1-2-1s with the PIVOT team at Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery, group crit and Creative Professional Development sessions, artist coaching, specialist communications advice and peer learning.

PIVOT is a pilot programme and will test new methodologies to support contemporary visual artists at a mid-career stage in the North West region. PIVOT has been shaped by the combined knowledge, skills and experience of Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery, resulting from their commitment to artist development over the last three decades, as well as consultation with artists and academic research. PIVOT will progress the recommendations from a report by Rebecca de Mynn, produced as part of a collaborative doctoral award between Castlefield Gallery, Manchester School of Art and Manchester Metropolitan University: de Mynn, R (2016) Artist Development at Castlefield Gallery: Policy Change through the Counterpublic? Manchester School of Art at Manchester Metropolitan University & Castlefield Gallery, Slater, A.

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For further information, images and interviews please contact Catharine Braithwaite on +44 (0)7947 644110 or cat@we-r-lethal.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

Artist biographies:

Pat Flynn

Born in Leigh and based in Manchester, Pat Flynn uses 3D software to create digital photography that deals with consumer culture and belief. He has had solo exhibitions at Manchester Art Gallery, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff and Marion Scharmann Galerie, Köln.

Garth Gratrix

Garth Gratrix's work uses strategies of queering to reveal ways that materials, language and spaces can be playful, curious and 'slippery'. The artist draws on tensions between hard and soft, camp and controlled, formal and playful. He combines sculpture using wood, concrete, metal and paint with performances and installations. Gratrix's recent solo exhibition, *Shy Girl*, at the Grundy included collaborations with Jez Dolan, Nicola Dale, Harry Clayton-Wright and Channing Tatum (Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes). Gratrix is based in Blackpool where he is co-founder of Abingdon Studios.

Bridget O'Gorman

Bridget O'Gorman works with video, sculptural installation and live events to explore the instability of bodies and objects. She is interested in the politics of access and disability, and how the global

pandemic might foreground these concerns. O’Gorman is based in Manchester and has had recent solo exhibitions at The Lab Gallery in Dublin and Galway Arts Centre as well as group exhibitions at Hyde Park Arts Centre in Chicago and Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin.

Salma Noor

Based in Liverpool, Salma Noor’s practice uses the digital platforms to interrogate the structures of power that we inhabit and those which inhabit us. She splices historical imagery, often sourced from familial archives, into GIFs, computer animated collages and immersive installations. Noor is the founder of the Black Womxn’s Conference and is a member and in-house designer of the Radical Womxn’s DANCE Party - a Liverpool-based collective which organises events that protest Womxn’s struggles within wider anti-capitalist, resistance movements. She was recently commissioned to produce augmented animations for *Redistributing Power: The Art Market is Structured Like a Plantation*, an event organised by Creative United. In 2019 her work was featured in *you feel me*, a group exhibition curated by Helen Starr at FACT in Liverpool.

Chester Tenneson

Chester Tenneson uses sculpture, print and performance to explore the absurdity of institutional design and to question its authority. Tenneson often analyses gendered objects and gestures and uses his work as a means of playful critique. His work has been exhibited by In Certain Places at University of Central Lancashire, HOME in Manchester and Trans Creative. In 2018 a selection of his work was acquired by Galerie Nivet-Carzon in Paris. Tenneson has also curated the online exhibition exploring trans masculine contemporary art, *Found in Translation*.

Bluecoat, Liverpool’s centre for the contemporary arts, has a rich artistic heritage having been founded by artists in the turn of last century. We offer a year-round programme of exhibitions and events. As custodians of a historic building we are home to around thirty artists, collectives, arts organisations and creatives, as well as print and dance studios.

Our ambition is to become an artists’ hub for the North and wider UK, increasing the visibility of and opportunities for the region’s artists and internationally recognised for our residency and exchange programmes. Of equal importance is our role in connecting artist practices to audiences.

Bluecoat has supported and championed UK artists across the decades including Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, John Akomfrah, Jeremy Deller, Mark Lecky, Larissa Sansour, Grace Ndiritu, Elaine Mitchener and Sean Edwards as well as with leading artists from the North such as Jade Montserrat, Frances Disley and Emily Speed.

Within our wider artistic community we have Blue Room - Bluecoat’s inclusive arts programme. Bluecoat established Blue Room over ten years ago to provide weekly inclusive opportunities for neurodiverse adults to access high quality arts experiences. Supported by artist facilitators, this ongoing project has led to opportunities for Blue Room artists to collaborate with others and to share their work both nationally and internationally. This includes UK and international solo exhibitions for members Joshua Henderson and Veronica Watson. Our commitment to artist development is enduring and inclusive.

Bluecoat is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and a Liverpool City Council partner.

<http://www.thebluecoat.org.uk>

At **Castlefield Gallery** (Est. 1984), we make new art possible. We are dedicated to the advancement of contemporary visual art. Set up by artists, we are artist-facing. We work with artists and creatives in Greater Manchester and beyond, at all career stages. We support them to develop their practice and careers, and to find ways not just to make art, but to make a living. We do this through: our gallery, and its free exhibitions and events that are open to all; through tailored career and practice development support; through our 200-strong artist Associates scheme; through the provision of low-cost studio and project space; through commissions and co-commissions; and through collaboration with universities, including annual graduate programmes that provide mentoring, coaching and more. For 35 years, we have supported young and older artists, new graduates right through to established artists, connecting them to each other, and to our international network of curators, arts organisations, artists and collectors. Castlefield Gallery's international work is focused on exchange between artists in the North West of England, and the rest of the world. We have an established track record in public art commissioning and public realm animation and activation. We are a female led organisation and a registered charity.

For Castlefield Gallery, artistic and career development informs the organisation's approach to its exhibition and commissioning programme, as well as its research, residency and exchange activity. Alongside this and often intersecting with exhibitions and commissions, the gallery has operated a number of schemes dedicated to artist development. PIVOT forms part of Castlefield Gallery's commitment to artist development, taking a sharp focus on the mid-career stage, with other Castlefield Gallery schemes including: Castlefield Gallery Associates and Castlefield Gallery New Art Spaces (pop-up, project & production spaces across Greater Manchester and the North West available to artists and collectives to incubate their practice at minimal or no cost); bOlder; the University of Salford and University of Salford Art Collection's Salford Scholars co-managed by Castlefield Gallery; Manchester School of Art Mentees; Creative Industries Trafford (CIT) Castlefield Gallery Crits; Venture Arts partnership.

Castlefield Gallery is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and Manchester City Council Cultural Partner. Our Artist Patron is the celebrated Ryan Gander, OBE.

<https://www.castlefieldgallery.co.uk/>

PIVOT is supported by Brian Mercer Trust, The Fenton Arts Trust, The Granada Foundation, Estate of Fanchon Fröhlich, Castlefield Gallery Commissioning Patrons



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Gallery funders:



Supported using public funding by
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