

**PRESS RELEASE: Issued 23 November 2022**



El Morgan, *Tale of the frozen bits*, video still, 2022.

## **Tale of the Frozen Bits**

***A solo exhibition of new work by El Morgan***

**Exhibition dates: 12 February - 12 March 2023**

**'I need urine, fresh urine, I need all the urine in the world!'**  
*The Discovery of Nuns' Urine - El Morgan (2022)*

**Tale of the Frozen Bits** is the first major solo exhibition of work by El Morgan.

Incorporating sculpture, sound, video, text and animation work, the exhibition explores the rich and surprising history of fertility drugs, a witches brew of ingredients that laid the path for our modern day medicines. Gallons of nun's urine, multiplying hamster cells, horse glands and millions of frogs appear in a playful narrative that opens up our relationship with the bodies of women and the often ethically controversial branch of medicine. At a time when reproductive rights are being curtailed across the globe and innovations in medical science are occurring at a rapid pace, this bold exhibition attempts to make the clinical tangible, unpacking progressive science and complex legal and ethical responsibilities.

Taking inspiration from her own experiences, having recently received a bill of £350 from a fertility clinic to continue to store some of her embryos, Morgan attempts to explore her frozen bits in their suspended state, to begin to unpick the medical and social structures that have enabled their pausing. Against a backdrop of domesticity Morgan replicates, experiments and questions the materials and systems she unearths - from recording the sound of her own urine to conversations with researchers on the sex lives of frogs and

discussions with embryologists working in Greater Manchester (home of the first ever IVF baby). Read together, her collection of new works present an unseen history of fertility.

**"I call the fertility clinic to ask how the frozen bits are doing, and what happens if the freezer breaks. I am passed from one uncertain woman to the next."**

*EI Morgan (2022)*

Within the exhibition Morgan will be selling a number of affordable limited edition artworks including screen printed sweatshirts and play scripts that celebrate the unconventional history of fertility medicine. Profits of all sweatshirts sold will be donated to Women's Aid.

Alongside the exhibition Castlefield Gallery will be sharing a series of GIFs and sound recordings made by Morgan. Look out for these glitches and footnotes to the exhibition which will unravel its research threads across our social media platforms.

**Tale of the Frozen Bits** was selected from proposals submitted by Castlefield Gallery Associates by guest selector, artist Harold Offeh, Castlefield Gallery Curator and Deputy Director Matthew Pendergast and Castlefield Gallery Associates Coordinator Laura Mansfield.

**A programme of in person events at the gallery will include:**

(all dates to be confirmed)

- **Frogs, fertility and climate futures.**  
An afternoon of activity around frogs - from their historic use to test for pregnancy to contemporary conservation efforts to protect endangered frog populations' own fertility.  
The afternoon will include an in conversation with Dr. Lottie Stocker from the University of Chester, Matthew O'Donnell, Curatorial Assistant in Herpetology at Manchester Museum and Eleanor Morgan. We will also be getting hands on with Matthew, showing some of the museum's live frog species and discussing the climatic conditions they are kept in to aid breeding.
- **An Open Table**  
Part of Castlefield Gallery's ongoing collaboration with Corridor 8, Open Tables invite practitioners to respond to the gallery programme, sharing their text based or performative works in a public event. Artists Hannah Leighton Boyce and Bridget O'Gorman will be sharing responses.
- **Podcast with Professor Jon Aplin** from Tommy's Maternal and Foetal Health Research Centre at the University of Manchester. Aplin will discuss his interpretation and reading of the works from the perspective of contemporary foetal medicine.
- **Written fictions**  
Workshop with Hannah Knowles exploring storytelling and the more than human narratives in the exhibition.

Ends//

**For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact: Leslie Remonato at Castlefield Gallery on [leslie@castlefieldgallery.co.uk](mailto:leslie@castlefieldgallery.co.uk) or 0161 832 8034**

## Notes to editors

### More on Castlefield Gallery:

We are a contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation. Established in 1984, we've led the way in artist development for almost 40 years. We provide creative and career development, exhibition opportunities and commissions for artists and independents. We work from our galleries in Manchester, off-site, online and in the public realm. We create long-lasting impacts in our city region, North West and beyond. Our national and international activities focus on artist exchange. Castlefield Gallery's public and participation programmes provoke new ways of thinking, bringing together artists, creatives, communities and audiences to explore the art and issues of our time. We believe when artists and communities come together they can help shape a better world.

We support more than 250 Castlefield Gallery Associates and a host of creatives through person-centred development programmes. Castlefield Gallery New Art Spaces provide affordable making and project space in the North West of England, including on the high street. We are a home for artists and creatives. We are advocates for what we believe in. We believe in the power of new art. We make new art happen.

Ryan Gander OBE is Castlefield Gallery's Artist Patron. We are a registered charity, supported by Arts Council England and Manchester City Council.

### El Morgan:

El Morgan is an artist and writer exploring our entanglement with other species. This has included serenading a spider, making a diamond from the dead creatures of the River Thames and embracing a giant green sea anemone. Recent exhibitions include *Visions in the Nunnery*, Bow Arts, 2022; *Le Mostra della Laguna*, Sale Docks, Venice, 2022 and *100 ways to say we*, Venice Architecture Biennale, 2021. Her book *Gossamer Days: Spiders, Humans and Their Threads* (Strange Attractor press, London: 2016) was chosen by *The Guardian* as one of their favourite books of the year. She studied Fine Art at the University of British Columbia and received her PhD from the Slade School of Art in 2013.

**Exhibition Title:** Tale of the Frozen Bits

**Public Preview:** Thursday 9 February, 6-8pm

**Saturday Slow-Preview:** Saturday 11 February, 12 noon – 5:30pm (pre-booking required)

**Exhibition Dates:** Sunday 12 February - Sunday 12 March 2023

**Venue:** Castlefield Gallery, 2 Hewitt Street, Manchester M15 4GB

**Tel:** 0161 832 8034

**Web:** [castlefieldgallery.co.uk](http://castlefieldgallery.co.uk)

**Email:** [info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk](mailto:info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk)

**Opening Times:** Wednesday to Sunday, 12 noon – 5:30pm

The gallery is fully wheelchair accessible, including provision of an accessible bathroom.

With thanks to Harold Offeh.

### Castlefield Gallery Funders and supporters



Supported using public funding by  
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