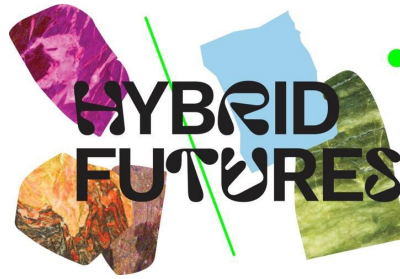


**CASTLEFIELD
GALLERY**



Press release

April 2023

Hybrid Futures: The Poetics of Water

25 June 2023 — 24 September 2023

Artists: Jessica El Mal, Parham Ghalamdar

Castlefield Gallery is proud to be working in partnership with **Grundy Art Gallery** in Blackpool, **Touchstones Rochdale**, **University of Salford Art Collection** and **Shezad Dawood Studio** on **Hybrid Futures**: a pilot project that aims to act on climate change by introducing sustainability in commissioning, exhibiting and collecting art for their region.

The Poetics of Water opens 25 June-24 September 2023 at **Castlefield Gallery** featuring new work by **Jessica El Mal** and **Parham Ghalamdar** that is motivated by the effects of colonialism, corruption and capitalism on the natural environment.

Through a series of ceramics and colour-saturated oil paintings of dystopian landscapes, Ghalamdar is reflecting on a recurring theme in Persian mythology: the struggle to prevent the separation of soil and water and the repression of growth and knowledge that this causes. This struggle has echoes in our popular culture and the discourse around the climate crisis. For Ghalamdar the narrative takes on an absurd tone as we repeatedly fail to make significant positive change.

El Mal's work includes imagery made by coating sheets of paper with cyanotype solution (a slow-reacting photographic printing formulation sensitive to ultraviolet light) and exposing them to rainfall in Morocco. The resulting prints and fabric works will be accompanied by a sound piece made with fragments of poetry and field recordings, also made in Morocco. Like Ghalamdar's paintings which are reminiscent of cartoonish film set backdrops, these works implicate the viewer in a scene, a stage set for contemplation and encounter.

Elsewhere in the gallery, a video work by El Mal features a local guide explaining how industrialisation, colonialism, neo-colonialism and climate injustice have affected the water supply in Mhamid El Ghizlane - one of the last Oases before the Sahara. Ghalamdar will also present a text work which references the Iranian government's suppression of climate change rhetoric. In places, **The Poetics of Water** enables visitors to engage directly with

different perspectives and lived experience of the climate crisis, but on the whole the exhibition aims to be poetic rather than prescriptive; offering a more emotional and expansive experience of the subject matter.

A shared point of reference for El Mal and Ghalamdar is contrasting attitudes towards rainfall, particularly between Manchester (where regular rainfall is a common source of complaint) and Morocco and Iran (where droughts and water shortages are an increasingly serious problem). Together their works invite visitors to look across landscapes, borders and centuries and to think deeply about our relationship to these fundamental elements of soil and water.

ENDS //

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

Hybrid Futures Programme:

Shezad Dawood's Leviathan: From the Forest to the Sea (3 June – 12 August 2023) at Touchstone Rochdale launches Hybrid Futures with the premiere of the latest instalment in Dawood's film series *Leviathan Cycle*. ***Episode 8: Cris, Sandra, Papa & Yasmine*** was developed remotely, in collaboration with Guarani scriptwriters, directors and activists Carlos Papá, Cristine Takuá, Sandra Benites and Brazilian artist and researcher Anita Ekman. This film not only expands the collective and horizontal filmmaking method that has become a central feature of the cycle's second half but reduces its own environmental impact through an intimate yet remote co-authorship.

As part of **The Grundy** at **Lightpool Festival**, 20-28 October 2023, a new commission from **RA Walden** and a newly acquired work by **Shezad Dawood** will be presented at Blackpool's festival of light. In collaboration with physicists and climate scientists, RA Walden will create a series of equations that intertwine the sick body and the sickness of the planet, looking at the ways in which energy, consumption, extractivism and capital function, in relation to both the smallest of particles and the expanse of space.

The University of Salford Art Collection will bring together the work by **Shezad Dawood**, Jessica El Mal, **Parham Galamdar** and **RA Walden** in Hybrid Futures (23 March – 22 September 2024), a group show at **Salford Museum and Art Gallery**. The exhibition will be accompanied by a national symposium, where learning from this pilot project will be shared (date tbc).

The partnership will also be working with **Collective Futures**, a group of people from their local communities with a shared concern about the climate crisis. This group will investigate

how creative production can help to shine a light on these issues and create solutions to the problems caused by the changing global environment.

Notes to editors:

Hybrid Futures is a multi-part collaboration focusing on climate, sustainability, collaborative learning and co-production between Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, Touchstones Rochdale, University of Salford Art Collection and Shezad Dawood Studio, and is generously supported by Arts Council England and Art Fund.

Hybrid Futures explores collective and more sustainable ways of working by pooling expertise to influence how the partnership commissions, exhibits and collects new work by visual artists. This change they consider will benefit and be more relevant to their audiences, now and in the future. This pilot will be used to provide a framework that can be shared with other public galleries and collections in the UK.

More information at <https://hybrid-futures.salford.ac.uk/>

Jessica El Mal is a British-Moroccan artist and curator with a particular interest in ecology and care. Her work addresses global structures of power through critical research, multidisciplinary projects, and speculative future imaginaries. She works internationally, having had projects with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, Manchester Museum, Esmat Publishing Ciaro and MAMA Rotterdam to name a few. In the UK, she runs arts programs in nature for people with experience of migration, as a way of addressing accessibility of green spaces whilst also building community networks. Jessica is also the co-founder of A.MAL Projects, an art and research initiative between Europe and North Africa, dedicated to providing paid opportunities for artists.

Parham Ghalamdar is a painter with a background in graffiti. He studied MA in painting at Manchester School of Art, specialising in oil painting. Ghalamdar expanded his painting and drawing practice into the digital realm in 2020 and has recently finished two short animations/films in collaboration with the director Martin Cooper, commissioned by the Oscar-winning artist, animator and filmmaker, Joan Gratz. He is a member of the Workplace Foundation's Community of Artists. Recent solo exhibitions include Painting: An Unending HOME Manchester, Fig.1 at Caustic Coastal, A Fine Kettle of Fish at Granada Foundation Galleries HOME, Manchester and Against the Absurdity of Life at Maria Behnam-Bakhtiar Gallery, Monte-Carlo. Recent group exhibitions include The Lowry, Salford, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London, London Paint Club, Floorr Magazine, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, Manchester Art Gallery, the Whitworth, Manchester, Beep Painting Biennale, Swansea, Asia Now Art Fair, Paris. His work is also in University of Salford Art Collection.

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.

Exhibition Title: The Poetics of Water

Exhibition dates: 25 June 2023 — 24 September 2023

Preview: Thursday 22 June, 6-8pm

Slow Saturday Preview: Saturday 24 June, 12noon – 5.30pm

Images available [HERE](#)

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

Tel: 0161 832 8034

Web: castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Email: info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Opening Times: Wed to Sun 12noon – 5:30pm



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