

Press Release - November 2025

Alana Lake, *Fallout*, 2025. Image courtesy of the artist



Broken Ecologies

An exhibition about power, protest, memory and survival by Alana Lake and Deeqa Ismail

This exhibition proposal was co-selected from proposals by Castlefield Gallery Associates by Castlefield Gallery's Head of Programmes, Matthew Pendergast and guest selector, Curator, Cultural Producer, Art Consultant & Writer Cindy Sissokho. Sissokho is the Associate Program Director (Africa & Europe) at [KADIST](#), she was the co-Curator of the [French Pavilion](#) at the Venice Biennale (2024) and recently worked as a Curator at the Wellcome Collection, London.

15 March 2026 - 19 April 2026

Through large-scale print works, film and sculpture, this exhibition reflects on power, protest, memory, and survival. Exhibiting together for the first time, Ismail and Lake's works weave together narratives that are at once personal, political and historical. Their work is as vibrant as it is fragile, with layers of texture and imagery inviting us

to consider how histories of erasure and survival continue to shape the present - especially in a moment marked by war, censorship, and the criminalisation of protest.

The artists say: *“Against a backdrop of climate crisis, social inequality, political unrest, and the erosion of human rights, the proposed exhibition asks: what is the role of the artist in times of crisis?”*

Printmaking frequently acts as the starting point in Ismail’s work, which explores speculative ecology, memory, and the repetition of erased or hidden histories. Drawing on family archives and on her investigation into what she describes as Somali culture’s ‘stuck-ness,’ Ismail reflects on the feeling of living within recurring histories and carrying them across generations. For this exhibition, Ismail is producing a new series of large-scale woodblock prints, layering imagery, wood grain patterns and cosmic textures, treating the carved surface as an astral plane. Figures emerge moving through multiple worlds at once, forming a threshold between the living, the lost, and those preserved in remembrance.

Lake’s works combine glass, marble, waste materials, metal, concrete and wax to explore themes of compulsion and risk, whilst exposing the fragile architectures that shape contemporary life. Her work with glass invokes themes of instability and precarity. In places, flecks of green uranium glass melt into pools of deep red and copper hues that resemble blood or bodily fluids. The colour palette evokes environmental degradation, war, contamination, and the depletion of natural resources. Shaped by a working-class, post-industrial upbringing, she gravitates toward materials that carry social and emotional density: fractured car parts, cast wax, hand-blown glass, and waste fragments that bear the marks of labour and use. Through sculpture, she investigates how objects are ritualised, fetishised, and invested with symbolic weight, tracing the connections between personal experience and broader contemporary conditions. Lake’s piece, *With Force* (2025), a cast glass police truncheon, reflects on the shifting boundaries of state power, public voice, and the right to assemble and protest. While her marble baseball bat aligns contemporary violence with the material language of classical sculpture.

Ismail and Lake have curated a dynamic public programme to accompany the exhibition

The exhibition has been devised alongside being a site for a public programme of events. This programme will transform the artworks into something collective, activating the gallery as a space of refusal, care, and shared experience.

Guided by this ethos, the exhibition is taking shape as an evolving dialogue expressed through materials, gestures, and forms, between the artists, their works, and the audiences who move among them.

Public Programme of Events

A screening of films by [LOkesh Ghai](#), an artist and researcher working with marginalised heritage craft communities in India, and [Mohammad Ali Sheida](#), an award-winning Afghan filmmaker and photographer living in exile in Manchester, UK. Founder of Rowzana Production, a company dedicated to Afghan culture and women's rights, he is known for works such as Four Seasons of Bamyan and Right to Ride.

A performance and screening by [xhi Ndubisi](#), a visual artist, writer, and curator, whose work explores storytelling, oral tradition, and the Black female body through performance, installation, and socially engaged practice.

A performance by [mandla](#), a Zimbabwean-born, Manchester-based queer writer, performer, and curator known for their powerful, autobiographical work exploring race, trauma, migration, and LGBTQ+ identity.

Please see Castlefield Gallery's website in the coming months for a full schedule and bookings.

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

More on the artists

Deeqa Ismail

Deeqa Ismail (b. 1988, Hargeisa, Somalia) is a Somali-British artist based in Stockport, Manchester. She works with printmaking, sound, video, and installations, often incorporating analogue processes and Somali sonic archives. Her work explores both shared and personal experiences of hybrid identity and the in-between spaces. Through film, prints, sculpture, and sound, she creates spaces for reflection and imagination. Her practice reveals how hidden systems of colonialism connect with normalised crises, often drawing inspiration from nomadic traditions throughout her work.

Ismail's engagement with time, ghosts and aliens informs her work and installations, which function as openings into reconstructed worlds. Recent exhibitions include How to be in the Future, Salon for a Speculative Future (SFASF), Chisenhale Art Place, London; checked out at Wilko, Sheffield; Numbi Fest at Whitechapel Gallery, London; Future Practice Research Symposium, Manchester Metropolitan University; Srishti at Hot Bed Press, Manchester; and The Mirror at Night, curated by Peter Suchin, at Cross Lane Projects, London.

deeqaismail.com

Alana Lake

Alana Lake (b. 1981, Tamworth, UK) is an artist working with glass, ceramic, metal, and salvaged industrial fragments to explore cycles of repetition and material transformation. She is completing a practice-led PhD at Manchester School of Art. Her doctoral research, *Towards a Pathology of Desire*, examines how craving, fixation, and pleasure become embedded in materials, spaces, and cultural forms. Lake has exhibited in London, Milan, Turin, Berlin, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Šiauliai, New York and Zurich; including exhibitions at Frontviews, Berlin, the Aubin Gallery, London and the Museum of Contemporary Art, (MOCA) London. Lake is currently part of the Yorkshire Sculpture Network (2025). Recent exhibitions include *Labours of Love*, curated by Gemma Rolls Bentley and Ricardo Reveron Blanco, Treadgolds (2025), *Humor my Love*, Galerie Adlershof, Berlin (2025), *The Omnipotence of Dream*, Salford Museum and Art Gallery (2024). Recent awards include a DYCP from Arts Council England (2024), the Andrew Stewart Artist Award (2023), Research Scholarship from Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa (2022), Studio Funding Award from BBK, Berlin (2021), NEUSTART Stipendium from Deutscher Künstlerbund (2021).

alanalake.com

More on Castlefield Gallery

Castlefield Gallery is a contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation, established by artists in 1984. We provide creative and career development opportunities focused on commissioning and exhibiting new work on-site, off-site, online, and in the public realm. With galleries in Manchester (UK), New Art Spaces across the North West (affordable making and project spaces), and over 300 Castlefield Gallery Associates, we are a home for independent creatives. Our programme provokes new ways of thinking, bringing people together to explore the art and issues of our time, including action on climate change and care for our natural world

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

More on Castlefield Gallery Associates

Castlefield Gallery Associates is a membership scheme for artists, writers and independent creatives working in the field of contemporary visual arts, living and working in Manchester, the city region, North West of England and beyond. It provides artists and creatives with information, resources, practice, skills and career development opportunities. Castlefield Gallery Associates acts as a hub, bringing together creative practitioners and facilitating a space for critical dialogue and exchange. The gallery hosts monthly in person and online events that are programmed in response to the needs, requests and interests of artists and creatives.

Exhibition Title: Broken Ecologies

Exhibition dates: 15 March 2026 - 19 April 2026

Preview: Thursday 12 March 2026 from 6 - 8pm

Slow Saturday Preview: Saturday 14 March 2026, 12noon – 5.30pm

Easter weekend closing: 3 April 2026 - 5 April 2026

Images available here: [images for press](#)

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

Castlefield Gallery Funders and supporters



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A stylized landscape graphic consisting of a series of connected peaks and valleys.
THE HAWORTH TRUST