

CASTLEFIELD GALLERY

Press Release - February 2026



Adam Rawlinson, *Some trees are so tall, while others they stay small* (2025) 160x200cm, Oil on Canvas. Image courtesy of Michael Pollard

Out Here

3 May - 19 July 2026

Artists: **Ashleigh Beattie, Shezad Dawood, Emelia Hewitt, Steve Sutton, Adam Rawlinson and Keziah Thomas-Mellor**

Out Here brings together artists exploring our relationship with nature through drawing, film, painting, performance, photography, prints, sculpture and site-specific artwork. Their practices are grounded in researching the interaction between the human and non-human, often spending time going out into nature or working directly with natural materials.

The exhibition also demonstrates our commitment to placing artists at different career stages side by side, in order to open up new dialogue between their works. **Out Here** sees internationally renowned artist Shezad Dawood return to Castlefield Gallery, continuing his longstanding relationship with the gallery, alongside artists living and working in the North of England.

The exhibition will feature *Episode 7: Africana, Ken Bugul & Nemo* (2022), part of **Shezad Dawood's** expansive film series *Leviathan Cycle*, an integral element of Dawood's long-term multimedia project *Leviathan* (2017–ongoing). *Leviathan* looks at the intersection of both human and non-human ecologies in relation to climate change, migration, and mental health. *Episode 7: Africana, Ken Bugul & Nemo's* fluid journey through Senegalese landscapes moves in tandem with accounts by the writer Ken Bugul and the lawyer and community organiser Africana, who are both actively concerned with de-colonial practices. Bugul and Africana were invited to imagine themselves as their future selves reflecting on what changes have occurred in the world. The film blends fact and speculative fiction, narrative and documentary, enacting the unique, sliding temporal scale that underlies the entire *Leviathan* project, connecting deep time to tentative futurity.

For **Out Here**, **Ashleigh Beattie** will be covering several surfaces of the gallery with clay dug from her garden where she lives in Manchester. Originally from Zimbabwe, the work references Beattie's experiences of both displacement and belonging, as well as making a connection between the land where she now lives and the land that was used to produce tobacco, cotton and maize under Britain's colonial rule. The work's title *Cracked Earth* (2026) recognises the lasting negative ecological and economic impacts of the introduction of these crops to Zimbabwe.

Emelia Hewitt's work combines various photography techniques with textiles and illustration. She is interested in the history of photography from its documentation of everyday life in the 19th and 20th century to early photography's intersection with the sciences, investigating and categorising the natural world. Recent projects have seen her exploring the photographic and natural history collections of museums and galleries. Her works often feature insects, plants and animals, at times using macro photographic techniques to reveal the minute details of her subject matter. Recent works have seen Hewitt experimenting with cameraless photograms such as cyanotypes, anthotypes and chlorophyll printing as well as making more sustainable development fluids with natural ingredients and fewer chemicals. Like Beattie's work, these works merge their subject matter with their materials, producing imagery of the natural world with dyes and solutions made from berries, herbs, coffee, beetroot and turmeric.

Adam Rawlinson is an abstract painter, predominantly working with rich layers of oil paint on canvas. His practice is underpinned by research into lichens, taking interest in their often unnoticed and underappreciated significance within our ecology. Whilst walking through forests and wild landscapes, he records his experiences and observations with oil pastels on paper. His studio painting is informed by these sketches as well as photographic imagery, from close up details to aerial and satellite imagery. Encountering Rawlinson's large-scale paintings, and his combining of micro and macro view points, we have the opportunity to consider individual and collective experiences of what it means to be alive and in the world. Rawlinson's breathtaking paintings are an attempt to confront and embrace the ineffable in nature, to deal with what is beyond the ability of our everyday language to describe.

Steve Sutton works with naturally occurring found materials such as fallen trees, beach pebbles, and animal remains, as well as appropriated materials discarded by other people. His work is influenced by a longstanding physical relationship with the land. Years spent

working with wood and other materials to maintain a farm have earned him many skills and experiences that inform his art practice. He responds carefully to the characteristics and possibilities of his materials, bringing them together with a mixture of labour intensive techniques and delicate but purposeful placement.

Keziah Thomas-Mellor's work translates experiences of walking and climbing through the UK landscape into drawings and sculptures made in the studio, and live performances in gallery spaces. Her meditative drawings with repeated marks relate her experiences of moving through landscapes to more general experiences of time, loss, impermanence and the body. The results of her spiral drawing performances are reminiscent of the rings of a tree or giant fingerprints. For Thomas-Mellor there is something hopeful and insightful in the mixture of symbolism associated with the spiral that she also finds in nature's own tensions between growth and cyclicity, impermanence and boundless flow, power and vulnerability, continuity and transformation. *Lost in the Uplands* (2023-) is a series of landscapes drawn in biro onto found coffee cup lids. These works are intended to be installed high up in the gallery space and viewed through a pair of binoculars. The work is critical of littering but also suggests there is more to see when it comes to our relationship with nature, if we look beyond the rage bait debates. The campaign for the Right To Roam points out that there is a right to roam in only 8% of England and cites the negative impact of this reduced access to nature on people's physical and mental health. Perhaps there is a way in which we should be more like these coffee lids, climbing up and trespassing into nature, despite the restrictions imposed by the land owning class.

At a time when it may feel difficult to grasp the scale of our problems, the artists participating in **Out Here** train our gaze on what could be dismissed as lesser details of the world. Their work encourages us to consider what meaning the ground beneath our feet holds for us, to wonder at the way spiral geometry repeats in nautilus shells, cyclones and galaxies, and be reminded that the small patches of lichen growing along a tree branch are a crucial part of our ecology. The result is an exhibition which invites us to see history, politics and possibility in these encounters between the subtle and the sublime.

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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 Castlefield Gallery

We are a contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation. Established in 1984, we've led the way in artist development for 40 years. We provide creative and career development, exhibition opportunities and commissions for artists and independent creatives. 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 300

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 RA is Castlefield Gallery's Artist Patron.

We are a registered charity, Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and Manchester City Council Cultural Partner.

Exhibition Title: Out Here

Exhibition dates: 3 May - 19 July 2026

Preview: Thursday 30 April 2026 from 6 - 8pm

Slow Saturday Preview: Saturday 2 May 2026, 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

Castlefield Gallery Funders and supporters



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A stylized line-art graphic of a landscape with hills and a horizon line.
THE HAWORTH TRUST



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian Mercer'.
BRIAN MERCER TRUST

With thanks to **Castlefield Gallery Patrons & Guardians.**



Castlefield Gallery is an Active Member of the Gallery Climate Coalition.

Leviathan Cycle, Episode 7 (2022) was commissioned by Toronto Biennial of Art and Leviathan - Human & Marine Ecology. Courtesy of the artist and UBIK Productions.