

STAFFORDSHIRE ST

PRESS RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 2022

Bag, Pedestal, Rabbit, Potato

Carrier Bag Collective

2 September - 11 September 2022

Opening: 1 September 6-9pm

Staffordshire St, London SE15 5TJ

Alia Hamaoui, Steph Huang, Emily Moore, Ulgen Semerci, Lara Smithson, Holly Stevenson, Olivia Strange, Serra Tansel, Sophie Vallance Cantor, Jessica Wetherly.



Staffordshire St presents the Carrier Bag Collective inviting 10 artists to reflect on the idea of the collective and containment inspired by Ursula Le Guin's seminal text Carrier Bag Theory.

Born from a series of weekly zoom meetings by the curators during the pandemic where these womxn discussed personal histories and experiences of womxnhood. A collective was formed as a means of survival and space for sharing and processing - a modern day campfire with the absence of heroes and violent battles won but rather a messy and intertwined collection of stories about struggle and survival. An endeavour grounded in collective healing and opening the conversation out to a wider group of artists to explore more stories of our shared realities.

The title of the show takes the words directly from Ursula Le Guinn's text 'Bag, Pedestal, Rabbit, Potato' which speaks to the long standing patriarchal narrative of heroes and hierarchy. In Le Guin's carrier bag theory of fiction all things are equal, an intertwined cosmos of things that are leaky and disordered. It de-privileges the spear and penetrative acts of violence to make way for a landscape of storytelling and sharing. A vessel for

collective healing that prioritises gathering and holding over domination and binary thinking around themes of identity, existence and survival.

The show questions how people tell stories, how myths are created and how folklore is born and how we document the human experience of creation and transformation. As Le Guin states, 'It is hard to tell a really gripping tale of how I wrestled a wild-oat seed from its husk, and then another, and then another, and then another, and then another, ... it does not compare, it cannot compete with how I thrust my spear deep into the titanic hairy flank while Oob, impaled on one huge sweeping tusk, writhed screaming, and blood sprouted everywhere in crimson torrents'.

The show is an exploration of storytelling, holding words, an attempt to bear meanings. These ten artists collectively speak of what it means to wrestle the wild oat through our sense of individual and collective identity. From mysticism, queer ecology and identities, interspecies relationships, virtual transcendence, pleasure and affinity, they imagine and materialise objects that reflect ways of becoming and surviving.

For further information please contact: info@staffordshirest.com

Events

7pm Tuesday 6 September

Supperclub hosted by Steph Huang.

7pm Friday 9 September

Collective Dreaming Workshop with Serra Tansel.

Artists Biographies

Alia Hamaoui (b. 1996) is a British/Lebanese artist based in London. Hamaoui received her BA (Hons) Painting from Camberwell College of Arts in 2018. Hamaoui's multidisciplinary practice weaves together layered fragments, haptic textures and lost histories that typically manifest itself through sculpture and image-making.

Steph Huang lives and works in London. She received her MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art in 2021. Poetically charged, her work expresses autobiographical narratives through a process of layered storytelling. Rooted in the close observation of incidental details, the relationships objects have to each other, as well as in the eccentric moments in everyday life.

Emily Moore (b.London, UK) is a painter that lives and works in London. Moore has created her own term 'wildness' in contemporary painting which she feels speaks both to her approach within her practice but suggests the state of contemporary painting through the lens of art history and its current context within the immediate conversations surrounding painting. Black Roses saw Moore expanding the language of 'Wildness' in the form of her creating her own visual coded language.

Ulgen Semerci was born in Istanbul. Central to Ulgen's practice are landscape, memory and relativism. She believes artworks, much like selves, are constituted in and through relationships. Her landscapes are an ecology of the inner world, open-ended narratives that take shape in relation to others.

Lara Smithson, Smithson's interdisciplinary practice spans: drawing, costume, video and installation. Lara's drawings reference medical imaging that expose connections between neurological and

anatomical systems. She is interested in how historical examples of divine healing relate to how we treat the mind and body today.

Holly Steveson, Central to Holly STEVENSON's practice is the ongoing sculptural project *Sigmund Freud's Ashtray* about which she was recently interviewed in Elephant "Holly Stevenson: Freud's Ashtray and Cigar Lit a Creative Fire in Me". The artist analyses the father of psychoanalysis' favourite ovular ashtray and last cylindrical cigar as though they were a bodily metaphor as she repeatedly reconfigures the two forms into a figurative clay language of her own.

Olivia Strange, Strange's multi-disciplinary practice spanning sculpture, painting, installation, moving image and poetry, is characterised by a layered narrative and highly visceral aesthetic. The work is concerned with disarming patriarchal descriptors via exploration of her Italian roots and draws on themes of Greco-Roman mythology, the female body & jouissance to portray an empowering image of queer female subjectivity.

Serra Tansel (b.1989, Istanbul) currently lives in London. Serra Tansel's practice engages with the ways in which we settle into our world and draw the boundaries of our cities, houses, bodies and the structures, the relationships we establish within them. She utilises a wide range of media to infiltrate into mainstream cultures in order to create twists. She is a member of the music collective Makkam and one of the faces of Hayırlı Evlat.

Sophie Vallance-Cantor, (b.1993 Scotland) lives and works in London. Vallance depicts encounters from her daily life, in conversation with the world around her where the real and imagined collide. An invitation to see the world through the artist's eyes. Memories and scenes are often exaggerated, domestic cats become tigers and panthers, anxieties become real as monsters laying in the shadows.

Jessica Wetherly (b.1989, UK) works with sculpture to explore narrative. She makes installations that draw on the fragility of landscapes to build new mythologies that explore the deceptive impact of human intervention within ecosystems. Her practice reflects a fascination with science and symbolism, presenting creatures in curious and surreal landscapes.

Notes

Staffordshire St <http://www.staffordshirest.com>

Staffordshire St is an independent project space in Peckham, South East London. The venue facilitates arts and cultural events and provides affordable studios for artists, makers and designers. The venue was recently established as an art gallery, before then it was for many years a community centre and originally it was built as a Methodist Hall. Staffordshire St will build on the established record of these histories, opening up again to the neighbourhood and developing a welcoming interdisciplinary arts space. More information on upcoming events at : info@staffordshirest.com or [@staffordshirest](https://www.instagram.com/staffordshirest)

Admission: FREE

Thursday–Friday 12-8pm

Saturday - Sunday 12–6pm or by appointment

49 Staffordshire Street, London SE15 5TJ

Transport: 12 minute walk from **Queens Road Peckham** or **Peckham Rye**

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