

12.3-29.5.2021

Rebecca
Huxley

Faisal Hussain

It might be
nothing,

but

Jamara
Kametani

it could be
something

Alejandro
Acín

Chloe Sami

Eastside Projects

Eastside Projects
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During exhibitions our (FREE) gallery is open
Wednesday to Saturday, 12–5pm

Director Gavin Wade
Associate Director Ruth Claxton
Offsite Curator Zoë Sawyer
EOP & Public Programmer Amelia Hawk
Artist-Curator Trainees Candice Nembhard, Yas Lime
Saturday Assistant Polly Brant
Finance Administrator Neisa Reid
Graphic Design Rosen Eveleigh
Technician Suzi Osborn



Eastside Projects makes art public. We are an artist-run multiverse, commissioning, producing and presenting experimental art practices and demonstrating ways in which art may be useful as part of society.

Using Birmingham as a case study for broader developments and issues in urban planning, counter-terrorism and security this project considers how research can both inform and benefit from artistic exploration and seeks to encourage critical conversations by exposing and challenging prevailing assumptions about what—if anything—can make us feel more secure in urban spaces.

The exhibition presents diverse research developed by artists through *(In)security* — a collaborative project between academics, led by Doctor Katharina Karcher, from the Humanities, Engineering and Social Sciences at the University of Birmingham, and a group of five artists based across the UK. Originally it was imagined the project would be presented in the public realm, but as the challenges of 2020 have revealed themselves, the artists have instead developed works for the gallery and online.

Alejandro Acín's *Duty or Freedom*, explores the malleability of the Terrorist definition in the UK legislation as something vague, broad and widely criticized by experts, courts and academics. Here, the law becomes a metaphorical knife which can be used as a tool but also as a weapon to shape historical narratives or slice civilian rights with problematic counter-terrorist measures.

Using text, sculptural objects, photography and video, Acín highlights the blindspots of what can be considered a terrorist suspect, the work juxtaposes a case of State Terrorism in the UK (The Iraq War) which hasn't been accounted for, with current counter-terrorist measures like the 'Stop and Search' programme which has been widely criticised for its racial bias.

Faisal Hussain's works incorporate, isolate and re-present academic reports, which analyse the PREVENT/CHANNEL de-radicalisation processes. *Stop colonizing our futures*, the illuminated sign installed on the front of Eastside Projects, builds on eight years of working in the context of the public urban space; disrupting the everyday and questioning perceived threats. The set of illuminated bollards which guide your route through the exhibition space are representative of the reordering of cities for 'protection'; repositioning and reconceptualising their purpose and function. The text chosen evokes emotive responses and questions the terminology and often racialized nature of the legislation.

Rebecca Huxley's live research website (www.gt.lightdark.space) explores how our understanding of darkness, and its relation to safety, is compiled from our social, cultural, geographical and historical experience. Her work examines what kind of knowledge these experiences produce, by experimenting with an adapted methodology for 'ground-truthing' during Covid-19, which combines data analysis, image processing, storytelling, archival practices and field studies.

Through this process Huxley has been considering how these collective processes might create alternative practices of care and ontologies for addressing light pollution and its impact on both human and more-than-human. The website will be continually updated with new material throughout the exhibition, responding to environmental and location-based constraints, with content including audio tours, visual essays, and a publication created over the duration of the exhibition.

Tamara Kametani's work is informed by 'Project Champion', when in 2010 over 200 CCTV and ANPR (Automatic number plate recognition) cameras were installed in two predominantly Muslim areas of Birmingham. Paid for by central government's counter terrorism fund and presented as an endeavour aimed at combating crime and improving the safety of the area, the project's actual purpose was not disclosed to the local council and was subsequently met with severe backlash from the community.

Kametani's work produced throughout this research project reflects on the language and the peculiar methods used in the aftermath of this surveillance crisis, employed in the effort to undo the damage and regain the trust of the community.

As part of her *(In)security* research residency, Chloe Sami interviewed a group of women living in Birmingham about their feelings around personal safety and terrorism in the city with a goal of understanding their personal perspectives. Through the interviews it became evident that, for the majority of the interviewees, terrorism was much less of a concern than the perceived threat from men in their day-to day experience of walking around the city and their local area.

A trained opera singer, Sami used four of the interviews to create an operatic score, setting fragments of each of the women's interviews to music in 'Rondo' form. A reoccurring ostinato of

"*Shall we ever see the end of all this?*", inspired by Menotti's opera *The Consul*, repeats in-between each story, linking them with the same underlying emotion that the women share.



More information on the wider University of Birmingham research project can be found here: www.blog.bham.ac.uk/urbterr.

Biographies

Alejandro Acín

Alejandro Acín (b. 1984, Spain. Lives and works in Bristol) is an artist, designer and educator based in the United Kingdom. With a background of working in archival institutions, he uses his personal practice to investigate contemporary uses of visual archives. His work has been exhibited in the UK, Italy, Spain and Colombia. He is founder director of IC Visual Lab, an artist-led organisation based in Bristol (UK) and in 2016, he founded ICVL Studio. His publications have been internationally recognised by outlets including TIME Magazine, PDN Online, Photoworks, FOAM, British Journal of Photography and Aesthetica Magazine. He is currently associated lecturer in Documentary Photography at the University of South Wales and Engagement + Education Director at Bristol Photo Festival.

www.alejandroacin.com

Faisal Hussain

Faisal Hussain (b. 1977, Birmingham. Lives and works in Birmingham) creates work that questions perceptions, undermines lazy stereotypes and highlights missing histories and overlooked facts. Whether in music, in a gallery or a sign outside a kebab shop, his cross-disciplinary practice is often presented in varied environments to engage with diverse audiences.

www.faisalhussain.com

Rebecca Huxley

Rebecca Huxley (b. 1983, Stoke-on-Trent. Lives and works in London) is an artist and researcher. She received an MA from the Centre for Research Architecture in 2019 and a BA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art, UAL. Rebecca's artist practice

involves investigating social, ecological and political conditions relating to human and more-than-human experience of nighttime. Rebecca is a co-director of Lumen Studios—an art and science collective based in Bethnal Green and Margate.

www.rhuxley.com

Tamara Kametani

Tamara Kametani (b. 1988, Slovakia. Lives and works in London) is a visual artist based in London whose research includes border politics, surveillance, internet and the proliferation of technology. She is particularly interested in the role that technology plays in the construction of contemporary and historical narratives and the new experiences it enables. Solo and group exhibitions include: *TransLocal Cooperation*, Furtherfield, London (2020); *Digital Diaspora*, Centrala, Birmingham; *Swayze Effect*, curated by AGORAMA, Platform Southwark; *The Photographers' Gallery*, London; *404—Resistance in the Digital Age* with RAGE collective, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Art, Manchester (2019); and [ENTER], Triennial of Photography Hamburg, Hamburg (2018). She has been awarded placements on the British Council run Connect for Creativity residency in Athens, Off Site Project Google Maps Artist Residency, the AGORAMA Artist Residency at Raven Row and the Florence Trust Artist in Residence programme.

www.tamarakametani.com

Chloe Sami

Chloe Sami (b.1991, Lambeth. Lives and works in Winchester) is a holistic creative, based in Hampshire. An opera singer, artist and writer, Chloe has performed operatically in venues all over the UK, including The Royal Festival Hall and Cadogan Hall, in London, and the Birmingham Symphony Hall and Manchester Bridgewater Hall. Her immersive artworks meld together themes of identity, belonging and journeys. Chloe is currently a Hay House Publishing mentee with Hay House's global Diverse Wisdom Programme, and is writing a book about creativity and expression.

www.chloesami.com

Women—(In)Security Piece Structure Transcript
Music Composed and Performed by Chloe Sami

- Woman 1: Shall we ever see the end of all this?
Am I seen in the same way as others?
Are they scared of me?
I don't know. If am seen as neutral. Just walking along.
Or if I am a threat.
But then I see a man. I judge him. Instantly. It's like I can't help it.
That he has the propensity to hurt me.
And that scares me.
No one likes feeling frightened do they?
So they do things to stop themselves from being hurt.
But is he fearful of me? Maybe me or my family.
We are not white.
Do I frighten him? In some deep unknowing way?
- Woman 2: Shall we ever see the end of all this?
Terrorism. I'm definitely more aware of it than maybe I need to be.
Maybe that says more about me, than the state of being at the moment.
It does make you have, at the back of your mind, a feeling of oh my
gosh, are we really safe?
There is a bigger police presence, which does make me feel safer.
As soon as I see a police presence, I do feel safer.
If anything were to happen, there are people on site, immediately there
to help.
I feel safer in my little village, than in the city.
Getting on the train is the beginning of my anxiety.
But it's time of day. When I'm coming back really really late at night
through town.
Obviously I don't feel safe.
- Woman 3: Shall we ever see the end of all this?
You often find yourself walking long distances.
And it's not necessarily well lit.
And there's not many people.
And I personally feel safer when there's more people around.
Whether it's day or night.
It's not really terrorism that impacts my safety,
it's just, you know, everything else that's going on day to day.
If you look at it from a male and female point of view, there's some
woods behind my house.

And I love going to the woods. It's beautiful.
I go running there.
But you would just not go there at night time. It's such a shame.
Is that because we're female?
Why should we feel like that?
Or would a man not go there at night time?
I don't know.

- Woman 4: Shall we ever see the end of all this?
I think it depends on situations.
But there are definitely times of day that I wouldn't be in the centre
of town.
I felt less safe in the city, after dark, even after I'd lived away from
home.
When before I'd felt fine. Maybe it's an age thing?
That you get a little more jaded.
On threat. Is it too broad of me to simply say men?
Specifically groups.
They're probably fine. But I would cross the road to avoid them.
It's definitely my personal safety.
I don't think terrorism would ever enter my head at all.
Big groups of men being intimidating.
I wouldn't hold someone's hand, walking down the street.
It catches you off guard with heckling.
You kind of just accept that it's the way it is.
Because you don't want to consider that.
It doesn't have to be.

NOTES

In the UK, 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse and 1 in 5 sexual assault during her lifetime [www.homeofficemedia.gov.uk].

The Crime Survey of England and Wales estimates 20% of women... have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims [www.homeofficemedia.gov.uk].

An estimated 3.1% of women (510,000) aged 16–59 experienced sexual assault in the year of 2018 [www.homeofficemedia.gov.uk].

The annual chance of being injured (through a UK terrorist attack)... was 1 in 496,464 per year, but only 1 in 1.4 million per year over the last decade [GTD, RAND, www.CATO.org].

List of Works

Faisal Hussain

- 1 *Stop colonizing our futures* (2020)
Double-projecting sign, vinyl adhesive image, 80×80×20cm
- 2 *Insecurity Proves Itself* (2020)
Internally lit illuminated plastic bollard, vinyl text, 80×120×40cm
- 3 *It might be nothing but it could be something* (2020)
Internally lit illuminated plastic bollard, vinyl text, 80×120×40cm

Chloe Sami

- 3 *Women—In (security)* (2020)
Audio, 10:19min

Rebecca Huxley

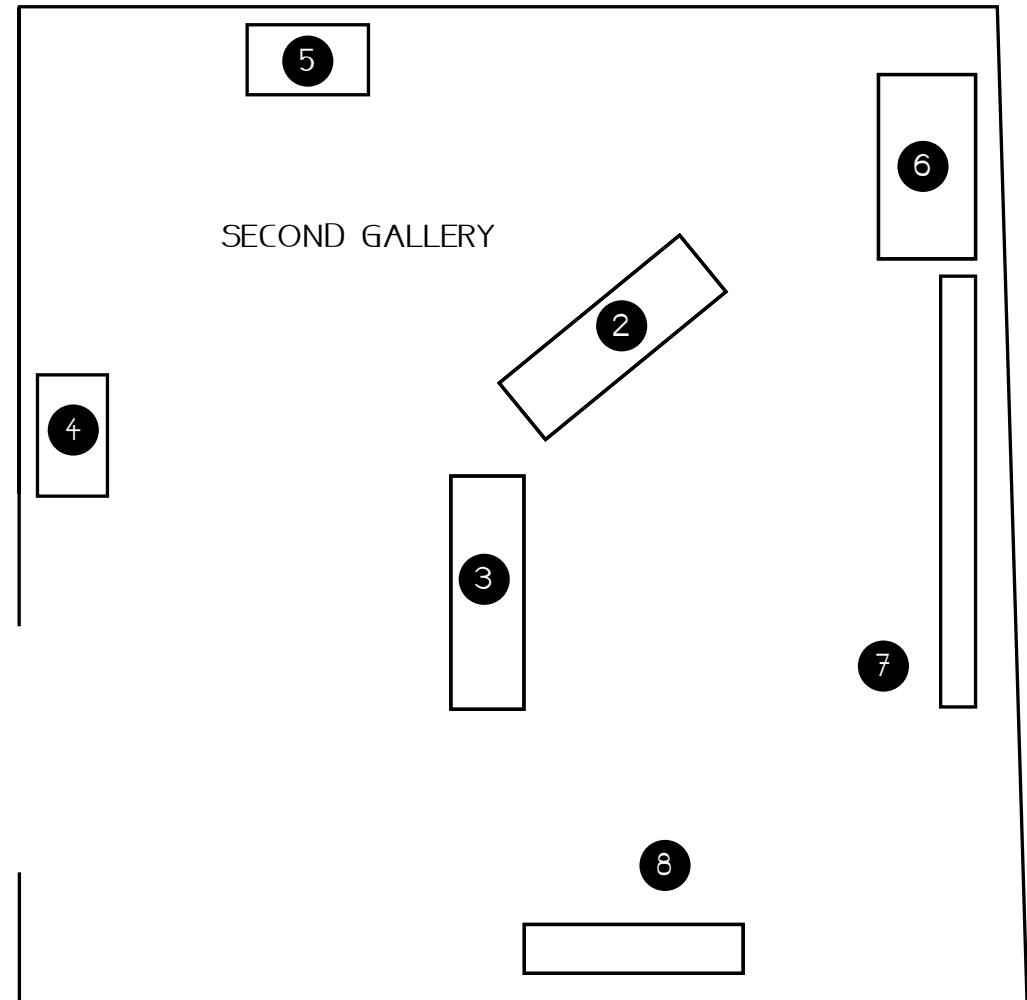
- 4 *www.gt.lightdark.space* (2020)
Screen recording of research website

Alejandro Acín

- 5 *Duty or Freedom* (2020)
Hand-crafted paper knife, 96 A4 sheets printed legislation remnants, knife sharpener, 8 engraved sharper stones
- 6 *Duty or Freedom* (2020)
Video with sound, 05:37min

Tamara Kametani

- 7 *Failed Monuments* (2020)
Video with sound, 02:04min



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(Installed on the facade of Eastside Projects)

