



ArtCore

Partition Parables

Featuring Artists:
RACHEL MAGDEBURG
TARLA PATEL

LAUNCHING

25th
NOV

5pm - 7pm



About Artcore

Artcore is an international centre for contemporary art and creativity based in Derby, UK and home to Artcore Gallery, studios and workspaces as well as a shop and café. A vibrant hub for commissioning, production, presentation, and debate, we offer opportunities for diverse audiences to engage directly with creative practices through participation and discussion. We believe that contemporary art and creativity are central to the development of people and places.

We have an extensive exhibition and residency programme which helps support early, mid-career and established artists to create work which deals with pressing social, political and environmental issues. Each year we welcome people from all sections of the diverse communities of Derby and beyond to experience inspiring, innovative, and high-quality exhibitions and events. Over 25 years we have developed links all over the world, building a global creative community that helps us support aspiring artists in the contemporary art world.

Scan below QR Code to visit artcoreuk.com and find out more.





About Partition Parables

An artist residency followed with an Exhibition of artworks produced by two artists Tarla Patel and Rachel Magdeburg. The residency stemmed from the sombre remembrance of the 75th anniversary (1947-2022) of the Partition of India. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which were together as the British Indian Empire till August 14, 1947, were first partitioned according to the lines drawn by Cyril Radcliffe on religious lines creating a mass migration, displacing more than 14 million people.

For the present residency, we are taking this important landmark in the colonial history of England as a starting point to cultivate idea of Partition; 'Partition' of various kinds – actual, familial, psychological, physical, natural.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has also

created 'Partitions'. Families in the war-affected zones fleeing, leaving behind their homes and all the beautiful memories associated with them, it has forced them to leave their motherland and find refuge in lands.

In Britain, we have experienced the effects of Brexit. Neither people and goods can move as freely across country borders as it was so easily possible earlier, creating major trade and talent constraints, and these have quickly filtered down to affect the ordinary lives of the British people in small yet significant ways.

All 'Partitions' involve a separation of sorts. Unfortunately, they are often very difficult to bridge. However, it is the sustained efforts to want to build those bridges that is the all-important narrative.

For the residency Partition Parables at Artcore, artists Tarla Patel and Rachel Magdeburg have, in different ways, explored the relationship between humans and plants. Through their individual projects, the artists have examined the theme of 'Partition Parables' and explicitly and subtly responded to the site and activities of Artcore, and the objects and communities of Derby. Tarla Patel presents her installation Seeds to Home through photography, sound and video, and Rachel Magdeburg presents a new series of paintings Under the Walnut Tree: Cryptic Painting using a range of media.



Artist – Tarla Patel

Tarla Patel is a Contemporary visual artist based in Coventry, completing an MA in Contemporary Arts at Coventry University in 2019, her practice incorporates a multidisciplinary approach that stems from photography and film. She is the custodian of the Masterji Estate, a photography archive that has been recognised as providing a social documentary of fellow migrants coming to Coventry, UK from the Indian Sub-continent during the post war era to the millennium. Her work has been greatly influenced by the archive and her direction of work primarily run through the ideas of memory,

space, and identity. Her arts practice investigates the stories of migration and how it connects through generations, and shapes our sense of belonging in the world we live in. Patel retells these stories through photography, film, audio and new technologies.

Tarla Patel is from Coventry, a diverse and ever-changing city of cultures. Her artwork is a way to communicate stories of the past to present.

<https://linktr.ee/tarlapatel>



Seeds to home

Is a project that looks at our connections of home, heritage and belonging through shared memories of plants and vegetables. How shared experiences connect people from different continents and keep alive the memories of those separated.

Through interviews in Coventry and Derby, as part of my Artcore residency I have collected personal stories that show a connection through the domestic growth of plants, trees to the gifting of fruit and vegetables.

This project has been developed through my own interest in how my family and those of a similar background; second generation child/children with parents from of another country have stories of their links to farming and how the gifting or bringing over of food and plants create relationships with distant relatives*. My mother is the daughter of a farmer, her relationship in helping and growing crop, to the fresh produce eaten as part of her childhood have travelled from India to the UK. Growing of

mangos', mints, garlic, and onions to her love of flowers is her way of keeping the memories of her childhood alive. These domesticated stories are unwritten pieces of history that are fragile, and fleeting, have been retold to me.

*Bringing over foreign plants, seeds and foods is discouraged due to serious affects it can have on the native plants and vegetation of that country.

This subject also leads to questions of how migrants settled in post-war Britain, from the former commonwealth; housed in the urban cities and towns, due to the need of work and resources. Their previous lives and their connection to the countryside displaced. Fruit and vegetables from their home countries were seen as luxuries and gave fond memories of places, practices and people left behind.

My work looks at this separation, and how oral history of places and the physical action of giving and growing, gives us connection. This exhibition is a mix media of work, from sound, film and photography.



Reflections on how we remember

This collection of work has been created from small sections of transcribed interviews. Placing small sections of dialogue into an Artificial Intelligence software application called Dall-e. Dall-e takes text-based descriptions and creates an image. Some of the text I used from the transcripts include:

- My family's Jamaican grandparents in the summer, my friend's dad would always bring up box every day.
- I started growing vegetables that that connection to the earth and that connection to growing food in particular. Just feels like part of my heritage and part of my identity.

These images are to me, are impressions of memories. These images are imperfect, AI generated artwork is still in development and the images created use algorithms that access millions if not billions of images and reference points. The images generated are unfinished, unpolished, they blur or look out of place, but have a realistic quality. In relation to our memories becoming less detailed the older we get, correlates to the imperfection of these images from the Dall-e app.

The world map shows, the origin for some of these stories and their connection to England. A demonstration of how stories cross borders and seas.



Title: They were the most delicious mangoes from Jamaica



Title: My father used to take me to work at the church, and there were foxes and badgers. I was glad we had our dog with us.



Artcore Cabin portraits and landscapes of nature

During the Diwali festival in November, I was able to set up a small studio in the Artcore cabin. With a portable background and lights, I invited people to have the photograph taken and tell me a story connected to the Seeds to Home project. In this way I was able to create a relationship with the sitter through storytelling. The photographs, show a wonderful mix of visitors, they have been

displayed alongside photographs of plants and nature. The photographs of farming land have been taken by my mother Ramaben Patel, on her visit to her childhood farm in India.

Through this work, the stories will be available in as an audio recording and through written transcript. A short film has been created to explain my thoughts about the project.



Title: India - hidden woman, Ramaben Patel (1999)



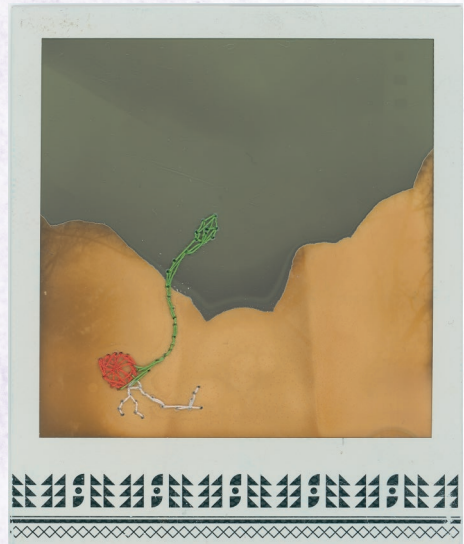
Polaroid threads : experimental pieces

Throughout this residency, I've listened to the stories people have shared with me, influenced by the art on the themes of migration, identity, place, and memory. The threads that keep these memories alive can be easily cut or lose their definition over time. Threads of time is saying that has a commonality in most cultures. Using Polaroid photographs, which is a medium that is already known for recording fleeting and special moments, have been used with sewing thread to show the pieces of these collective memories and experiences.

I have followed the form of nature and created geometric forms as a way of changing and evolving

from the original shape. A metaphor for how the cultural landscape is changing with the transition of people through migration and settlement.

Working alongside Rachel Magdeburg, as part of the residency; we shared conversations on what our influences and interests were with regards to the work we were making. Both of our work has a connection to humans and nature. I decided that I would use the image of the walnut that she had photographed as part of my work, in creating an image that merges traditionally non-native UK plants, with the walnut tree that stands behind the Artcore cabin.





Mentor Darryl Georgiou is an internationally known artist and a former Associate Professor in Media Arts at Coventry University (2000-2021). Founder of Arts International Lab with Artist Rebekah Tolley-

Georgiou. I have chosen this mentor as they have worked on the subject of 'historical memory'. They are known for 're-negotiating the archive 'by mining image and sound to construct new contemporary artworks'.

A SOUND PORTRAIT
COVENTRY'S
RILEY
SQUARE

BBC
RADIO
3

27 03 22-23:30 *Slow Radio*
WITH RECORDINGS BY
GEORGIOU & TOLLEY

PRODUCED BY MELVIN RICKARBY
A MUST TRY SOFTER PRODUCTION

the space



Artist - Rachel Magdeburg

Rachel Magdeburg is an artist and writer based in Wolverhampton. She is currently finishing a PhD by art practice, researching the concept of the Anthropocene through contemporary painting. Rachel's paintings are conventional and sit within painting's expanded field. They constantly metamorphose and change, using a wide range of media, techniques and supports. Rachel's practice responds to and critiques different types of visual representation; digital and popular culture; and early and modern European and North American painting. The representation of 'nature', and the complicity of being a consumerist subject within neoliberal capitalism are persistent dilemmas for the artist.

Rachel has undertaken public commissions and residencies,

and has exhibited across the UK, including at the Royal Academy of Arts, London; Ikon gallery, Birmingham; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; Oriel Davies, Newtown, and her work has been acquired by the New Art Gallery Walsall's Twenty Twenty collection.

Rachel is an active researcher and has presented academic papers at many international conferences. She has written about the expedition paintings of Alexis Rockman, and her satirical text *Milvus milvus: The reCAPTCHA* was published in *The Clearing* by Little Toller Books. Rachel has a chapter in the forthcoming book *The Climate Catastrophe: A Creative and Critical Survival Guide*.

@rachelmagdeburg

<https://www.axisweb.org/p/rachelmagdeburg>



Under the Walnut Tree: Cryptic Painting

A caterpillar or spider that perfects a resemblance to bird-dung is like a Dutch still-life artist lovingly recreating the texture of folded velvet

— Peter Forbes, *Dazzled and Deceived: Mimicry and Camouflage*, p.128

For the residency Partition Parables, artist Rachel Magdeburg took her cue from the partition in capitalist consumerist society between 'nature' and culture, which is arguably culpable for the exploitation of the natural world as it is deemed separate from humans. Rachel explored this division through the loose thematic of camouflage and mimicry, which are strategies used in the natural world, art and warfare. Crypsis involves an organism concealing itself in different ways, or mimicking another. Equally, illusionistic painting disguises itself in order to evoke something else. Zoological

camouflage, aposematism and mimicry find correspondences in aspects of painting, including *trompe l'oeil*, figure-ground dynamics, form and colour disruptions, and imitation. Furthermore, modern painters helped develop and design military camouflage in the First and Second World Wars. Correspondingly, biblical parables draw allegorical comparisons between things, cloaking spiritual and moral meanings in everyday stories and objects; appearing to narrate one message whilst simultaneously telling another.

Rachel has taken an explorative, intuitive and snowballing approach to these ideas, combined with reading texts on camouflage. As an ad hoc visual method of notetaking, the artist has also been photographing people donning camouflage pattern as streetwear. Rachel has created a new body of paintings specifically for this residency, working from her studio in Wolverhampton, Artcore's Cabin, and in-situ in Artcore's gallery. She has used watercolour, computer printing inks, high pigment water-based paints and chromakey pigment (used in greenscreen technology), and responded to each media's material qualities.



The raw canvases implicitly reference their deployment in concealing military equipment during the Second World War, and their use by American Colour Field painters. Rachel has painted a diverse range of found and bought objects from Derby and Wolverhampton, including walnuts that dropped from the tree above Artcore's Cabin, graffiti on tree bark in Wolverhampton, vegan mince, and wilting sunflowers. Some of the depicted objects suggested further ideas. For instance, the walnuts signalled towards their resemblance to human brains, and their shells called to mind wooden veneers, a staple of the *trompe l'oeil* tradition. Sociologist Jean-Didier Urbain, defined the 'crypto-image' as a 'sign that oscillates between the desire to be disclosed (to be an image) and the temptation of the void satisfied by utter defacement (being a non-image)' (Urbain in Gamboni, 2002, p.17). For the purposes of this project, cryptic paintings probe the relationship between an object and its background through (mis)use or absence of shadows, cut outs, overlays, dissolution and standing out, and an object's semblance to other things.

Rachel has been mentored by

Wolverhampton-based artist Julia Burns (Instagram: @juliaburns88). Burns possesses a wealth of experience in painting and exhibition praxis, gleaned from her professional career as a lecturer in art over many years, and continuing prolific output as an artist. Through informal conversations and installation visits, Burns has helped Rachel realise her ideas.

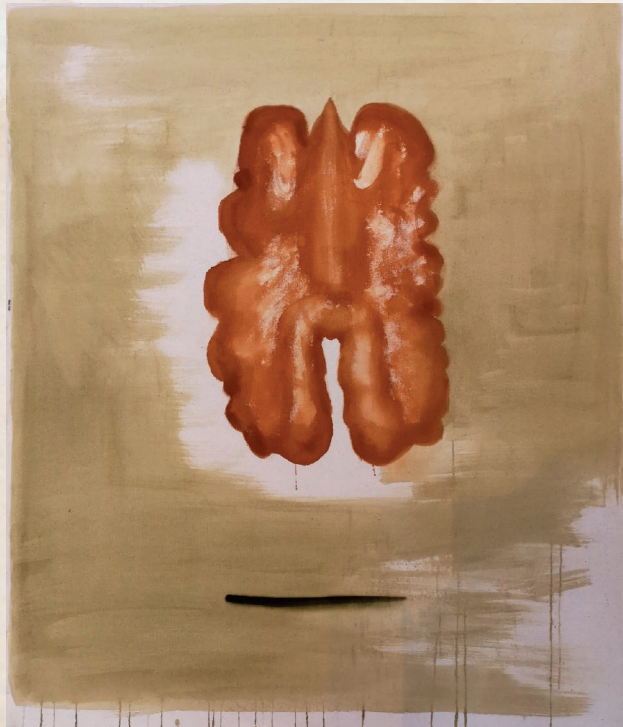
The selection and curation of the paintings was a particular focus for the mentoring process. Specific attention was paid to Artcore's gallery space and how the paintings worked together in different combinations and arrangements. Magdeburg and Burns exchanged ideas on the display and presentation of the paintings and the particular visual effect the chromakey green painted wall had on the other artworks in the exhibition. Deciding which paintings to include and which to leave out was especially difficult, yet they all contributed to the ideas and concepts surrounding the residency.

Contact Details:

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Rachel Magdeburg, *Background Picturing*, 2022, watercolour on paper, 57 x 70 cm



Rachel Magdeburg, *Old Walnut*, 2022, water-based high pigment paint on un-stretched, raw canvas, 31 x 37 cm



Rachel Magdeburg, *Walnut-Brained*, 2022, water-based high pigment paint on un-stretched, raw canvas, 114 x 98 cm



Rachel Magdeburg, *Omio and Fatima*, 2022, watercolour on paper, 76 x 56 cm



Rachel Magdeburg, *Vegan Mince* 2022, water-based high pigment paint on un-stretched, raw canvas, 132 x 112 cm



Rachel Magdeburg, *Rueful*, 2022, watercolour and computer printing ink on paper, 56 x 76 cm



Painting by mentor Julia Burns, *Storyline*, 2022, acrylic paint on paper, 120 x 120 cm



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