

WAWAW | Writing Art Writing Art Writing

When Language Becomes Material

WITTA x Spike Island, Bristol

27 June 2026



WAWAW | *Writing Art Writing Art Writing: When Language Becomes Material* explores different approaches to working with language as material. It emerges from shared interests in the use of language as an affective and creative material for inhabiting, performing and developing ideas.

Across the symposium, the performance salon and the accompanying exhibition, WAWAW considers the myriad forms, influences, strategies and concerns percolating this dynamic field of practice.

The event and exhibition also coincide with the major artist's book fair, BABE (Bristol Artist Book Event), and Spike Island's exhibition, *Several Chickens Later* by Nancy Lupo.



Her practice and research explore the materiality and musicality of language and evolve across multiple interconnected work zones – conceptual writing, performance, new musical composition, artist-publishing, curating: manifesting as literary, poetic, and sonic compositions, occasions for their activation (installation, performance, workshop) and resulting image, drawing, text, or sound works.

Her music and scores are distributed by Wandelweiser editions. Her book works are held in collections including V&A, The Tate, the Poetry Library at Southbank Centre, The Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, Centre Des Livres d'Artistes, Saint-Yrieix-La-Perche.

This programme of events has been devised by WITTA (Writing In / To / Through Art), a research initiative supported by UWE Bristol that brings together artists, writers, practitioners and researchers whose work resides at the crossovers between writing and art.

WITTA was founded by Lizzie Lloyd and is co-run by Lizzie Lloyd, Kit Poulson and Sara O'Brien. Find us at witta.org. One of our aims for WITTA is to provide a network of support and opportunity so sign up to our mailing list – WITTAmail – for infrequent updates on WITTA activity and new WITTAmail:



This event is supported by



www.witta.org

Schedule

Symposium

- 1.30pm Welcome | Lizzie and Sara introduction
- 1.45pm Katrina Palmer
- 2.30pm Break & Cake | Exhibition: When Language Becomes Material
- 3.15pm *When Language Becomes Material*: Artist discussion with Jo Lathwood and Marianne Mulvey, Huma Mulji, Amak Mahmoodian, and Mary Hurrell.
- 3.45pm Roy Claire Potter
- 4.30pm Q&A | Closing discussion
- 5.00pm Comfort break

Evening Performance Salon

- 5.30pm Meal Start*
- 7.15pm Meal End
- 7.30pm Sam Hasler
- 8.00pm Lydia Davies
- 8.30pm Anna Barham
- 9.00pm Milling
- 9:30pm End

* The meal includes a welcome snack followed by sweet potato dahl and salad. It includes one free drink and the bar will be open throughout the evening to purchase extras.

Huma Mulji draws on place, as both site and subject. She considers artworks as timekeepers, marking emotional histories: of sorrow, hope, solidarities and humour. The works stand as inconvenient witnesses, intentionally uncertain, across the plural worlds that she inhabits. In a recent work *Bombay Duck*, she critically explores material and form, using breath to blow glass objects that scorch the surfaces that host them. Paradoxically remaining fragile and being shaped by the scaffold of mangrove wood, they serve as metaphors for the strength and vulnerability of exiled bodies.

Mulji's participation in recent exhibitions includes *For the Time Being*: Kochi-Muziris Biennale, (2025), *Manzar*: National Museum of Qatar, Doha (2024), *Aftermath*, KitForm, Bristol (2024), *Proposals for a memorial to Partition*, Twelve Gates Gallery, Philadelphia, USA (2023), *Your Tongue in My Mouth* (solo), Mirror, Plymouth (2022), *Can you Hear my Voice?* Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, Australia, (2021) *Skyfall*, (solo) Karachi, Pakistan (2020). In the Open and in *Stealth* MACBA, Barcelona, Spain (2018), *Witness*, Karachi Biennale (2017), *welcome to what we took from is the state*, Queens Museum, New York, USA (2017), *A country of Last Things*, Koel Gallery, Karachi, (2016), *The Great Game*, Irani Pavilion, Venice Biennale, (2015) and *Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, (2014). In 2012 Mulji was awarded the *Abraaj Group Art Prize*, and the *DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm* for Visual Art 2024-25.

She is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

Emmanuelle Waeckerlé

Emmanuelle Waeckerlé is a London based academic, artist, composer, experimental vocalist, and improviser interested in the materiality and musicality of language. She is Reader in Fine Art and Relational Practices and director of bookRoom at UCA Farnham.

17 Midland Road (16 October to 17 November) was shortlisted for the 2026 Deutsche Börse Photography Prize

Marianne Mulvey

Marianne Mulvey is Senior Lecturer and Subject Leader, MA Fine Art: Curating at the University of the West of England. She was previously Tutor, Curatorial Practice at the Royal College of Art (RCA) and prior to that, Curator, Public Programmes at Tate and a Trustee of Fierce Festival of Performance, Birmingham. The focus of her curatorial work is largely public programming and performance. She is also experienced at collecting, preserving and exhibiting object and screen-based art practices.

In 2018 Marianne was inaugural Thinker in Residence at The Feminist Library, Hobart, Tasmania and Curator in Residence at Helsinki International Artists' Programme in 2016. A Collaborative Doctoral Partnership award between Tate and RCA supported her PhD thesis 'Becoming Public(s): Practising the Public Programme in the Contemporary Art Institution' (2016-21).

Marianne's UWE New Starter's Research award (2022-25) supported 'Working The Workshop', an exploration of the role of artist-led workshops in contemporary art and institutional practices. This led to a UWE Vice Chancellor's Early Career Research award (2025-27) for 'Writing The Workshop', producing and testing the value of creative and critical writing about workshop experiences. Her writing has been published in academic journals and performed in gallery spaces; the latest research and collaboration with Jo Lathwood is a natural extension of this practice.

Huma Mulji

Investigating borders, migrant memory and collective remembering, material culture, globalization, displacement and fragmented histories, within the realm of sculptural installation,

Biographies

Katrina Palmer

Katrina Palmer's publications and exhibitions use storytelling and covert physical presences including found sites and unsettled objects. She was the 2024 Artist in Residence at the National Gallery, culminating in her exhibition and book *The Touch Report*. Among her other solo shows are *Four-Story, Flat-Roofed Complex in a Somewhat Expressionist Style* at A Tale of a Tub, Rotterdam in 2026, *What's Already Going On* at the Mead Gallery in 2023, *Hello*, for England's Creative Coast in 2021, *The Necropolitan Line* at Henry Moore Institute in 2015 and *End Matter* was produced by Artangel and BBC Radio 4 in 2015. Her other books are *Black Slit*, *The Fabricator's Tale*, *End Matter*, and *The Dark Object* (Book Works, London), and she has contributed to publications including The Whitechapel MIT Documents of Contemporary Art series.

Palmer received the Paul Hamlyn Award for Artists in 2014 and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sussex in 2023. She holds a PhD from the Royal College of Art and after teaching at Ruskin, University of Oxford, she joined Slade School of Art, University College London, in 2022 where she is Head of Undergraduate Sculpture. Her artworks are represented in collections at Touchstones Gallery, Southend Borough Council, The University of Leeds Special Collection, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Arts Council England. In 2024 the National Gallery published a career survey monograph, *Want to See Something Real*.

Palmer's presentation is titled '*The Queen is dead. The Gods Ecstatic.*' *Rewriting fantastical power relations.*

Roy Claire Potter

Roy Claire Potter (they/them) is an artist writer whose multidisciplinary practice spans experimental writing, vocal

performance, drawing, sound and installation. They build stories from fragmented, intense images of moving bodies, domestic scenes and architectural settings, shaped by an interest in communication constraints, subtext and narrative sequencing. Their performances, publications, audio works and drawings have been presented internationally, and they often collaborate with musicians and sound artists for radio and music festivals. Roy is currently developing a long-form artist writing project with EVA International as an adjunct Artist Researcher, and is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Liverpool John Moores University.

Sam Hasler

Sam Hasler is an artist and writer based in Cardiff, South Wales. His work uses printed text, voice, performance. The work tries to hide the experimental forms in readable fiction, mimicking genre fiction and low brow culture. Sam has presented work at galleries across the UK and Europe. His novel *O* was printed by Book Works UK. He has also published *The Gob*, a late night radio transcript, with Landfill Press.

Sam will read from the beginning of his new book *Insults to Rome*, which is a muddled puzzle, in part a goofy comedy, in part a paean to the contemporary city of Rome and at the same time a meditation on anxiety, age, youth, and the nighttime. Titled 'Rome is layered like a verruca', this opening section observes the city as both an affliction and a fiction.

Lydia Davies

Lydia Davies is an artist and writer based in London, working across moving image, performance, painting and bookmaking. Lydia is preoccupied with interpersonal dynamics, bodily gestures, and the shifting registers of voice and narration. Her work draws attention

biennials in the USA, Canada, France, Belgium, Lithuania, and Austria.

Lathwood studied Fine Art Sculpture at the University of Brighton, graduating with First-Class Honours in 2006. She co-directed the travelling bronze foundry Ore and Ingot from 2012 to 2018 and served on the EARTHart Council at the University of Bristol from 2017 to 2024.

She maintains a studio at Spike Island in Bristol and is Chair of the Board of Trustees at BRICKS. She is currently the Freelands Fellow at Bath Spa University (2026-2027).

Amak Mahmoodian

Amak Mahmoodian (born 1980, Shiraz, Iran) is a multidisciplinary artist. She began her career in 2003 as a research-based photographer in Iran at the Art University of Tehran. Since 2007, she has been living in the UK where she practices as a visual artist and senior lecturer in Photography at the University of the West of England.

In 2015, she completed a practice-based PhD in photography at the University of South Wales. Working with photography, text, video, drawing, archives and sound at the intersection of conceptual and documentary photography, Amak's artistic practice explores the presentation of gender, identity and displacement, bridging a space between personal and political. Amak's projects are produced across installations, books and films. Her work has been shown extensively and has won numerous awards. It is held in collections and museums, including the Tate Modern and Victoria & Albert Museum in the UK. She has published two books, *Shenasnameh* (RRB- ICV Lab, 2016) which was shortlisted for The Author Book Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles 2016 and *Zanjir* (RRB, 2019) which won the Photo Text Book Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles 2020. Her exhibition *One Hundred and Twenty Minutes* at

Hong's recent solo exhibitions have been held at Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2025); Spike Island, Bristol (2024); Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerp (2023); Exeter Phoenix (2018); the Korean Cultural Centre, London (2017); and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2015). Her performances have been presented at the Seoul Museum of Art (2022); the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (2019); Arnolfini, Bristol (2019); Spike Island, Bristol (2017); Block Universe, London (2017); and the 10th Gwangju Biennale (2014). In 2019, Hong was shortlisted for the Korea Artist Prize.

Mary Hurrell

Mary Hurrell (South Africa/UK) is an artist based in Bristol working fluidly between experimental music and performance. Her practice explores forms of language, movement and voice in relation to physical and psychological experience. Mary released her debut album FORMATIONS in 2024 and has performed live nationally and internationally at En Masse Festival, Bristol Beacon, Strange Brew (Bristol), Cafe OTO, Corsica Studios, IKLECTIK (London), The Old Hairdressers (Glasgow) and Jupiter Rising Festival (Edinburgh). She has presented performances and projects with motor dance journal, Nicoletti Contemporary, Flat Time House, The Roberts Institute of Art, South London Gallery (London) and fluent (Spain). Recent artist residencies include PRAXIS (Spain); BrittenPears Arts (UK); Gilfélagið (Iceland) and Yamakiwa Gallery, (Japan). She is currently a Studio Artist at Spike Island, Bristol.

Jo Lathwood

Jo Lathwood is a queer artist whose practice spans drawing, sculpture, moving image, and large-scale installation works for both galleries and the public realm. She has exhibited widely across the UK and internationally, undertaking residencies and participating in

to the ways in which selves are both sustained and undone through their relations.

She has recently developed live performances for Fruitmarket (Edinburgh) and David Dale Gallery (Glasgow), and will present a new live-to-air performance with Radiophrenia in September 2026.

'The glass' is a 25-minute performance using storytelling and vocal improvisation. The voice describes a series of charged and porous moments of closeness. Eyes and hands lock, red velvet curtains drop, intentions are misplaced, and a series of selves hypnotically slip. As the voice playfully loses its footing, a woman's shoes fall from up high.

This work draws on an early modern belief that 'vision rays' from our eyes carried blood vapours into another's eyes, producing an infectious and affective theatre of relational bodies.

'The glass' riffs on a selection of short stories and poems from 'The glass with the fingers dipped in', and was commissioned by Fruitmarket, Edinburgh (2025) as part of a solo exhibition of the same title.

Anna Barham

Anna Barham is an artist working with sound, video, text and installation. Her work employs mishearing as a way of thinking that produces meaning as language moves between bodies, technologies and material forms. Current and recent exhibitions include ZYX, Matt's Gallery London, and *delirious mantra*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe.

Barham will give a live reading of a "two-and-fro" text that explores how voices bring figures and selves into being and how meaning is shaped and negotiated.

Lily Frances

Lily Frances has been commissioned by WITTA to produce a creative response to the symposium. Lily's work will be published via WITTAmail after the day's events. Lily is an artist and poet whose practice explores intimacy and distance, among other things. She works across video, sound, and oil painting. Lily is in the second year of her practice-based PhD at the University of Bristol, researching Belgian director and artist Chantal Akerman. Her thesis explores sound and feminine subjectivity in Akerman's films, through a focus on background noise and bodily memory.



Exhibition

When Language Becomes Material

Spike Island: The Corridor

26 June – 2 July

(access via Spike Island reception)

When Language Becomes Material is an exhibition devised by Lizzie Lloyd and Kit Poulson which explores the material possibilities, traces and manifestations of language in art. The exhibition, in which words materialise and dematerialize, includes work by Huma Mulji and Emmanuelle Waeckerlé, Young In Hong and Owen Lloyd, Jo Lathwood and Marianne Mulvey, Mary Hurrell, and Amak Mahmoodian.

Artist Biographies

Young In Hong

Born in Seoul, Young In Hong lives and works in Bristol. Her multidisciplinary practice spans drawing, sculpture, installation, sound, textile and performance. Her practice often engages with undervalued cultural traditions such as endangered craft. She explores modes of equality by dissolving the boundaries between the sacred and art, human and animal sensibilities, in order to unsettle the long-standing hierarchies embedded in anthropocentric history. In recent years, Hong has increasingly examined notions of inter-species communication, symbolism and the hybridity of sound, movement and objects.