

Press release – COLONY, The Platform Graduate Award 2024

For immediate release

Next generation of contemporary artists presented in Platform graduate showcase at Aspex Portsmouth this Autumn

Press View 24 October 2024, 9.30am – 12pm

Exhibition 25 October 2024 – 12 January 2025



Toyotas and Cigarettes 04, Ellie Svrlanska, 2024.

The Platform Graduate Award returns to Aspex Portsmouth this October 2024, as a new exhibition celebrating the region's most exciting emerging artistic talent launches at the gallery.

COLONY (The Platform Graduate Award 2024) proudly presents the work of ten recently graduated artists as they embark on their professional artistic careers.

Aspex Portsmouth's selected artists for 2024 include: Ian Golding and Jessica Babbini-Baker (Winchester School of Art, Southampton University), James Coombes and Ben NJ (Solent University), Isobelle Munckton and Hima Bijoy (UCA Farnham), Danielè Balsyte and Eliska Svrlanska (University of Portsmouth), Prajvi Mandhani and Lynne Williams (University of the Arts Bournemouth).



Hive (Close Up), Isobelle Munckton, 2024.



MOLT (degree show installation view), Hima Bijoy, 2024.

The exhibition serves as a pivotal platform for the artists to share their work to a wider audience whilst responding to important issues through their practice, with responses to colonialism threaded through each featured artwork.

For thousands of years, colonies have spread across civilizations, bringing chaos, corruption, civil wars, violence, and the destruction of indigenous cultures. In nature, colonies like beehives and ant nests show how insects form communities to survive. This division and control of land is a shared issue in both social and insect studies. Using these two diverse perspectives, the exhibition explores the (im)balance of colony formations.

Visitors to the exhibition can immerse themselves in a compelling collection of visually-engaging and thought-provoking contemporary art works. Featuring social documentary photography, textile sculptures, and large-scale installations,

the exhibition invites audiences to think about and better understand the rationales and repercussions of contemporary coloniality.

Launched in 2012, the Platform Graduate Award is a unique initiative celebrating emerging artistic talent in the South East and South West regions. Designed to provide crucial support to graduate artists at a key moment of transition in their careers, the award offers opportunities for exhibitions and professional development. The initiative is supported by Aspex Portsmouth, Modern Art Oxford, Phoenix Art Space, and a collaboration between Arts University Plymouth, University of Plymouth and Falmouth University. In recognition of the ongoing challenges faced by artists in establishing their artistic practice post-university, this year's award will provide selected artists from each participating gallery with a £500 bursary and six months of mentoring support.

Joanne Bushnell, Director of Aspex Portsmouth, said:

"The Platform Graduate Award exhibitions at Aspex and our gallery partners across the South East and South West provide a critical and timely opportunity for recent graduates to step into the professional arts sector. This year, for the first time our exhibition has been themed with 'Colony' used to express the interconnected interests and concerns of emerging artists today."

Oliver Sumner, Manager of CVAN South East, said:

"CVAN South East has made some positive changes to the Platform Graduate Award this year, recognising the very real conditions faced by graduating artists in 2024, as well as for arts organisations and universities. I'd like to thank our wonderful partners who once again have shown their deep commitment to this scheme. Good luck to all the exhibiting artists."

COLONY (*The Platform Graduate Award 2024*) is on display at Aspex Portsmouth from Friday 25 October 2024 – Sunday 12 January 2025. More information can be found here - <https://bit.ly/3MO4p7b>

Aspex Portsmouth will be hosting a preview event on Thursday 24 October from 6pm-8pm, where the recipient of this year's award selected by Aspex will be announced. The event is pay what you can with tickets ranging from £0 – £8. Tickets can be booked on Eventbrite by following the link - <https://bit.ly/3ZrCnG5>

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition Listing information:

COLONY (The Platform Graduate Award 2024)

Jessica Babbini-Baker, Daniele Balsyte, Hima Bijoy, James Coombes, Ian Golding, Prajvi Mandhani, Isabelle Munckton, Ben Ng, Ellie Svrlanska, Lynne Williams

25 October 2024 – 12 January 2025

Aspex Portsmouth, The Vulcan Building, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3BF

Free admission / Donations welcomed

Further information: <https://bit.ly/3MO4p7b>

Preview, COLONY (The Platform Graduate Award 2024)

24 October 2024, 6pm–8pm (artists & creatives from 5.30pm)

Aspex Portsmouth, The Vulcan Building, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3BF

Pay what you can

Further information: <https://bit.ly/3ZrCnG5>

Aspex Portsmouth opening times:

Wednesday – Sunday, 11am – 4pm

Closed Monday & Tuesday

Further information: www.aspexportsmouth.org.uk

Instagram: [@aspexportsmouth](https://www.instagram.com/aspexportsmouth)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/aspexportsmouth/

X: [@aspexportsmouth](https://www.x.com/aspexportsmouth)

About Aspex Portsmouth

Aspex brings new art and ideas to the heart of Portsmouth. Our mission is to cultivate art and creativity rooted in community. We believe art brings joy, broadens minds, facilitates learning and nurtures our communities.

We create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience contemporary visual art – from looking and discussing, to making and curating. We achieve this by delivering an exciting and varied programme of exhibitions, off-site projects and participation events.

About the Platform Graduate Award

Led by the Contemporary Visual Arts Network South East (CVAN South East), Platform focuses on artists in the first year after graduation – a critical time when the loss of the university support structure and financial pressures can test an artist’s dedication to their practice. For the participating partners, Platform provides a way to keep in touch with the most promising emerging artists and encourages a connection to creative higher education institutions. More broadly, the scheme aims to stimulate artist networks outside of London and encourage artists to stay in the South East and West regions.

In 2023 the award was won by Zahra Khanum, a graduate of University of Plymouth, in recognition of her work exploring British and South Asian identities.

About CVAN South East

CVAN South East aims to be an effective network for the sector in the South East region by working in partnership on strategic projects and programmes, and by sharing learning and information to maximise expertise and creative thinking.

The network is concerned with developing critically engaged art practice, and dedicated to promoting a visual arts ecology that thrives on the inter-dependence of many stakeholders, including artists and art professionals, local government, higher education, not-for-profit and commercial sectors.

CVAN South East is one of the nine regional networks in England that make up [CVAN](#) (the Contemporary Visual Arts Network). CVAN South East is supported by Arts Council England.

For all press enquiries, please contact:

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