



Soft Tissue: Feeling-through Precarious Times

Press Release

Exhibition Copy

Soft Tissue: Feeling-through Precarious Times **25th Nov- 10th Dec, Metroland Cultures, London**

As we delve into the dark and chilled months in ever darker and chilling times, we warmly invite you into the squidgy, fuzzy folds of the Squishy Collective.

Step into a circle of sculptures, materials, films, sounds and texts that offer and open up gestures, rituals and ideas for navigating precarious times. Can material be used to metabolise harm? Can physical processes help us sense inner emotional worlds? What constitutes 'safe' touch? How can touch be used to rehearse different ways of being and doing? Can a text be tactile...and why should it be?

The Squishy Collective are a research group-circle-coven who formed in April 2021 and have been meeting online ever since, convened by artist and Metroland studio resident Becky Lyon. Comprised of sensuous ecologists, fizzy researchers, haptic writers, mermaid-whisperers, clay-crafters and generative gesturers, together they share methods drawn from art research to explore the intersection of touch, tactility and practices of care as part of a toolkit for navigating precarious times.

Exhibits and invitations will *touch* on milky motherhood, uncanny bodies, visceral clay,

fleshy language, haptic ice and visibilising atmosphere among other subjects and are generously offered by: Abigail Fletcher–Drye, Amanda Rice, Anastasia (A) Khodyreva, Becky Lyon, Catherine Monahon, Eliza Bennett, Georgia Perkins, Natasha Sabatini, Rhona Eve Clews, Rosina Godwin and Kate Langrish–Smith.

Come cosy up with us over a hot tea, leaf through texts, take part in quiet invitations, meditate over tactile films or join a rich and playful programme of activities designed to soften, fizz and feed you. Bookings to the private view are now available – stay tuned for a super-bumper events programme coming soon!

Programme

[Tickets on *Eventbrite here*](#)

Fri 24 Nov	- 6.00pm - 9.00pm -	Private View
Sat 25 Nov	- 1.00pm - 2.15pm -	Air Tasting, Mattering A Hot Breath w/ Becky Lyon
Sat 25 Nov	- 2.30pm - 3.30pm -	Haptic Ice w/ Anastasia (A) Khodyreva (not yet live)
Sun 26 Nov	- 11.00am - 12.00am -	Breakfast Reading & Research Club (not yet live)
Sun 26 Nov	- 1.00pm - 3.00pm -	Cast Your Line: Photographic image-divining with Fisherwomen w/ Rhona Eve Clews and Eliza Bennett
Wed 29 Nov	- 8.00pm - 9.30pm -	Kitchen Yin: Body & Material Winter Workshop (online) w/ Catherine Monahon and Rhona Eve Clews
Sun 3rd Dec	- 2.00pm - 4.00pm -	Intestinal Knitting w/ Rosina Godwin

More to be announced soon!

Exhibition Details

Location

Metroland Cultures

91 Kilburn Square, London, NW6 6PS

Go down the alley next to Argos and you'll see us across the square. Ring the bell to get in. [See the map here.](#)

Dates: 25th Nov– 10th Dec

Open days and times

Fri 24 Nov – 6–9 (opening night)

Sat 25 Nov – 11–4

Sun 26 Nov – 11–4

Tue 28 Nov – 11–5

Thu 30 Nov – 11–5

Fri 1 Dec - 11-5
Sat 2 Dec - 11-4
Sun 3 Dec - 11-4
Tue 4 Dec - 11-5
Thu 7 Dec - 11-5
Fri 8 Dec - 11-5
Sat 9 Dec - 11-4
Sun 10 Dec - 11-4

Accessibility

The gallery is wheelchair accessible with step free access. There are wheelchair accessible toilets.

Contact

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[@squishysessions](#)

Participating Squishies: Works and Bios

Anastasia (A) Khodyreva

Offering: *A Gut Feeling*

A gut feeling is a sentimental audio-visual poem that contemplates unacknowledged labour, unease, and the embodied but impersonal sensuality of and commitment to friendship. It is infused by Alva Gotby's *They Call It Love: The Politics of Emotional Life* (Verso Books, 2023) (and a million texts and conversations which I should also acknowledge) (that, from a feminist (often Marxist) perspective, calls out cis-heteronormativities of relationships and, among other matters, spotlights both emotional labour and pleasure of friendships (which are my primary relationships). Friendships tingle, stain, occasionally hurt, saturate, infuse; they burn and pull 'forward,' they hold - only if all bodies commit to holding back. Reciprocity, relationality, non-linearity, a-muse-ment, endurance, and at times romanticism, commitment, companionship, which I know in my guts.

The poem follows a daily ritual of making a cup of turmeric-ginger tea. The qualities of this tea-making process are central to the hapticity and synaesthetics of the poem: the tea spicing away and easing inflammation - allergic, overall, physical, but also figuratively spicing away socio-political one. Friendship is making one's breath more facile. In other words, the tea figures friendship as a feeling in one's guts, labour/matterwork and sensuality that altogether take one through a day. The poem enmeshes the act of

making tea with other biographically meaningful synaesthetic references to tingling and spicing: curvy ice squeezed in one's palm or/and melting under warm water, needles piercing fabrique in loops while embroidering with beads and creating a shimmering (beads embroidery is one of my companion processes).

Keywords and objects: friendship, guts, turmeric, ginger, blues, shimmer, beads, tingle and tickle, spice, ice, ink, ritual, loops, synaesthetics, commitment, emotional labour.

About:

Anastasia (A) Khodyreva is a researcher, theorist, and writer held by artistic ways of knowing. Their practice involves terraqueous curiosities, non-binary world-making, bodying, haptic encounters with shimmery bodies, polaroiding, feeling unsurefooted, co-labour-ation, noticing how brilliant bodies we live are and reading-reading-reading. In their doctoral project, they thought of interstices, critical elsewheres co-bodied with human and non-human others through the spiky thickness of the dominant (Western) world. They lecture in gender studies and feminist environmental humanities—always with arts.

Contact:

@awaitingbody

Abigail Fletcher

Offering: *Wet Nurse*

I created the sculptures as my breastfeeding journey was coming to an end. Wet nurse is a series of sculptures that contemplate the role of my body as a container for milk. The works evolved directly from two things: my squishy session on 'containers for care' and my new role as a mother. The soft sacs are both inviting to touch but also frustratingly void of content. The faux fur textures are simultaneously familiar and absurdly ineffective in their function. The organ-like shapes speak to a long history of the use of entrails as a form of containment and the act of holding as a mode of care / support / restraint / suffocation.

About:

Artist/teacher/sessional tutor. London. Current PhD candidate Reading University, University of Oxford MFA 2016. Newcastle University BA Fine Art 2015

Contact:

@abigailfletcherstuff

Amanda Rice

Offering: *The Flesh of Language*

The Flesh of Language is a research film which examines an expanded notion of archive and choreography as an attempt to understand the non-human world. The film mediates between three bodies of knowledge; zoologist Andrew Kitchener's experiments from the 1980's which aimed to provide an anatomical explanation as to whether the extinct Irish Elk, *Megaloceros Giganteus*, could have used its antlers in battle. Parapsychologist Konstantin Raudive's 1960s investigation of anomalous voice-like sounds found on tape recordings, thought to be spirit messages from the dead and an interview with a media archivist who outlines the challenges of media preservation and decomposition.

About:

Amanda Rice (b.1985, Mayo, Ireland) is an artist and filmmaker living and working in London. Recent shows and screenings include 'The Flesh of Language' (Solo) curated by Miguel Amado, SIRIUS (2023), 'The Sun Gives Without Asking', curated by Sean Lynch at the Irish Film Institute & AEMI (2023) 'Intelligence Debiased', Exposed Art Projects, London (2022) 'An Ecstasy All Their Own', CCA Glasgow (2021), TULCA, 'There Nothing Here but Flesh and Bone, there Nothing More' curated by Eoin Dara, Galway, Ireland (2021), 'No One Can Ever Embargo the Sun' at M8 Space, Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland (2021) Upcoming screenings include the aemi 2024 touring programme. She is the recipient of Next Generation Award, awarded by the Arts Council of Ireland (2019).

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Becky Lyon

Offering: *Mattering A Hot Breath*

Matters of Hot Breath is the first in a series of explorations for a new research project, *I'm Weather Under the Feeling*. This offering for *Soft Tissue* explores different ways of materialising and making hot breath sense-able. I'm interested in 'atmosphere', in this case hot air/breath, as both a medium and feeling. The effects of raised temperatures are unevenly distributed and heat is experienced differently by different bodies - the weather is not 'gorgeous' for everyone. Suffering from both claustrophobia and

heat-anxiety, how might understanding the relationship between the breath of my body and the breath of the planet help me keep my cool and re(air)condition for survival in increasingly off-beat seasons and prolonged high heat? For *Soft Tissue* I attend to the so-called 'feminine' senses of thermoception, inhalation, listening and tasting to make my breath *matter*.

About:

Becky Lyon is an English-Jamaican artist, based in London. Her art practice dwells in the sticky intersections of bodies, sensing, power relations, rhythms and phenology, feminist philosophy, softness, the inbetween and earthly curricula. She's interested in art practice as a tool for re-bodying back into the vibrant, tangly messwork of our ecology which she tunes into as a sourcebook for co-flourishing in times of ruin and growing liveable worlds. Her work manifests as tactile installations, rituals, sensory artefacts, analogue moving image, word-foolery. She is interested in alternative forms of ecological stewardship that resist the current dominant paradigm and is Grounder of Ground Provisions - an artist-led, schooled-by-the-forest for grown ups hosting participatory gatherings, walks and sensory seminars for a range of audiences. She founded Squishy Sessions, an art research collective exploring the intersections of facility, touch and care. She has an MA Art & Science from Central Saint Martins and an MA Art & Ecology from Goldsmiths University and is a volunteer London National Park City Ranger.

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Catherine Monahon

Offering: *Centerspace*

Centerspace is a soundsketch and audio-visual poem inspired by fifteen minutes spent centering a mound of spinning clay on the potter's wheel with my eyes closed. Materials include vibrations from sculptures at Mass MoCA and Art OMI, magma cooling, lava erupting, underwater soundscapes, a creek, hummingbird wings, nocturnal frogs, a heartbeat courtesy of james_longley, the artist's own voice and breath, bells, guitar strings and desert wind. The diptych on the screen features visuals pulled from grounding moments and memories in my day-to-day life alongside a space where the viewer's internal footage might go. I associate these textures with connecting to a collective spirit through the material world. Close your eyes, press your hands onto the spinning mound of clay before you and give yourself the gift of fifteen spacious minutes.

About:

Catherine Monahon is an audio storyteller, arts facilitator and entrepreneur based in Oakland, California. Using the intimacy of sound and the sensuality of materials, they create experiences that invite creative impulses, bodies, and internal worlds to connect. They run Waveform Ceramics, a clay classroom in Oakland specialising in beginners; they also produce Material Feels, a podcast celebrating the intimate relationships between people and the creative materials they fall in love with. Their writing has been published in The New York Times, The Leonardo Journal and The British Medical Journal; their artwork has been exhibited throughout the United States at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Omni Commons and Gallery 51.

Contact:

www.cxmproductions.com, www.waveformceramics.com.

@materialfeels (podcast, insta)

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Eliza Bennett**Offering: *Mère-Mer***

This body of work originates in the landscape of the Staffordshire Moorlands, at the height of the global pandemic. It combines an imaginative interaction with local myth, mermaid folklore and the writings of Astrida Neimanis; interweaving traces of situated and displaced histories within the active materiality of land and cosmos. The works result from an exchange between myself and the mythical land-locked mermaid of Blackmere. Our collaboration presents a speculative fiction which casts their watery body as, gestational entity and universal element present in all living beings - on a journey from land to sea.

About:

Eliza Bennett (b.1980 UK) is a multi-disciplinary artist offering propositions for ways of being, reading and viewing, attuned to both emergence and loss. She is consistently intrigued by visual signifiers that communicate on a non-verbal level, finding inspiration encountering the difference between what can be consciously articulated and what must be sensed. The space that exists between our experience and comprehension, perpetuates her desire to translate and record such essentially ineffable phenomena. After several years producing costumes and props for theatre & film, the support of a Leverhulme scholarship enabled an MAFA at City & Guilds of London Art School. Her

works have been included in several arts publications and selected for exhibition worldwide. She currently lives and works in the West Midlands.

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Georgia Perkins

Offering: *Archive Table*

Georgia is curating an archive table of words, notes, stories, books and references that have inspired our research.

About:

Georgia Perkins is a doctoral candidate in the Visual Cultures Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, teaching fellow at Winchester School of Art, and curatorial fellow at SIRIUS, Cork. Her research critically examines the molecular scale, indeterminacy and the sensible. At SIRIUS, she has worked on numerous exhibitions and events with artists and writers such as Daniela Ortiz, Chila Kumari Burman, Shen Xin, Marie Brett, Anton Vidokle, Gregory Sholette, Amanda Rice, and The White Pube. She is currently a researcher connected to the Spatial Practices in Art and Architecture for Empathetic EXchange (SPACEX-Rise) EU Funded Project, and is undertaking secondments with the Royal College of Art, Coventry University and University of Northampton. She is a core member of the Liquidity Cohort and Counterfield Collective. She was recently a Guest Lecturer for the HILMA Network for Gender Studies and has given papers at conferences for the LSFRC research group (2020), University of Dundee (2020), Université de Montréal (2022), and The Photographer's Gallery/LCC (2022).

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Kate Langrish-Smith

Offering:

Posture 2 – Body in Landscape and Haltere I

A female body is laid in a prone position over a moss-covered rock, the wrist is supinated and holding onto a singular terracotta re-interpretation of an ancient Greek 'Halteres' made by the artist. The ceramic 'haltere' form is based on depictions of these

ancient Greek physical culture objects, they are thought to be the origins of modern day dumbbells, which would have been carved out of stone. Originally used as a pair – this performance to camera is exploring the relationship of the body to both the landscape, and the placement of a crafted, re–interpreted physical culture object – provoking surreal interpretations and playing with assumed functionality and purpose. The contrasting bodies of matter are juxtaposed in the landscape, balancing, holding and exploring each other's surfaces.

About:

Kate Langrish–Smith is a trans–disciplinary artist who's practice intersects art, design and craft, and explores the fusion, balance, and harmony of textured, poised, haptic and chromatic compositions, images, and sculptural assemblages; what she likes to refer to as 'tactile tensions.' She is currently based in Sheffield at Yorkshire Artspace Studios, is an Associate Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University and London College of Fashion on MA Design programs and is a part–time practice–based PhD candidate in Art research at Leeds School of Art, Leeds Beckett University. As a sculptor she is captivated by the transformative properties of the materials she works with, the liquid to solid states and the magic of chemical transformation through heat, time and atmosphere as well as the contributing affect, force, presence and biases of both maker and place in this choreography of materiality.

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Natasha Sabatini

Offering:

Unfolding

A series of drawings that focus on connecting with my internal sensations. I close my eyes to dive deep within the meanderings of my body. I search not through the lens of the eye but through the movement of my mind, noticing what is happening inside, imagining an interior word. Responding while I move across with marks on the paper, each gesture encapsulating a feeling. Slowly that inner world expands.

About:

Natasha Sabatini is a visual artist based in London. In this series she explores sensing the self through drawing and mark making to reflect on the interconnectedness between the internal and external experience.

She graduated from a BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Art from Cardiff Metropolitan University in 2012 and a MFA in Fine Art from Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts London in 2015. She recently completed a PgCert in Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication from UAL.

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Rosina Godwin

Offering:

Oomycetes

Oomycetes destabilises the comforting persona of knitting by sculpting it into monstrous alien forms derived from fungal networks, internal organs and parasitic creatures. Mixing cuddly textures with visceral discharges, the piece is influenced by science fiction films exploring animation and metamorphosis.

"Mycelium is a body, without a body plan", Merlin Sheldrake

Featuring a disparate collection of neon yarns, ceramics and other materials, the intestinal structures interweave through the womb-like vessels, and is positioned within the weird, grotesque and incongruous.

About:

I have a First Class BA Hons degree in Fine Art, and am currently studying for an MA in Fine Art at the University of Reading. Over the past few years, I have exhibited at Retrospect (Sweet 'Art, London), The Playful Turn (Degrees of Freedom, Espacio Gallery, London), The Great Divide (OVADA Gallery, Oxford) and Stuffed (K6 Gallery, Southampton). I have also run over 50 experimental knitting workshops both online and across the country, including Darn for Yarn (Great Get Together, Queen Elizabeth Stadium, London), Creature Dis-comforts (Leyden Gallery - part of Whitechapel Gallery's 2019 Nocturnal Creatures), and Greenbelt festival.

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Rhona Eve Clews

Offering:

Heatwave

Photographs made in relationship with body, Begonia, Water lily from Hampstead

Women's Pond, leaves from Flamingo Plant and photocopier

About:

As an Artist, Ecologist and Healer, I draw upon growing up a working-class hippie, re-situating photography, writing and filmmaking into somatic, eco-feminist practices to contribute to wider ecologies of care. As an MFA graduate from Slade School of Fine Art, with a Bachelors in Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Photography, I teach, speak and co-curate, with exhibitions including the eco-feminist, bodily and botanical 'you're mulchy green, you're verdant matter.' Blending autobiography, humour, fiction, materiality and trauma theory, I have exhibited extensively and performed for Black Mountain College Museum and Creative Time, USA. Collaboration is a vital part of my practice and I'm a lively member of three art collectives and a co-founder of The More-Than-Human Book club at Barbican library. I am studying a Diploma in Environmental Humanities at The New School of The Anthropocene.

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Social handles

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