

## **Anna Barham** **ZYX**

**3 - 28 June 2026, Weds-Sun, 12-6pm**  
**PV Sunday 31 May, 2-5pm**

Matt's Gallery is pleased to present *ZYX*, a new audio installation by Anna Barham, her second exhibition at the gallery.

Barham works with sound and installation, treating mishearing as a way of thinking that produces meaning as language moves between bodies, technologies and material forms. *ZYX* centres around a voice recounting a psychedelic experience accompanied by a spatial soundscape of incidental, bodily, and environmental sounds. The listener's body becomes part of the acoustic field, while lighting and material staging contribute to a heightened sense of perceptual instability, echoing the hallucinatory atmosphere of the narrative itself.

A woman's voice moves between clarity and fractured, associative phrasing, which she does not register as error. At times, language tumbles into rhythmic fragments suggesting thought unfolding through sound as much as sense. A small misunderstanding leads to an intense psychedelic experience; time loosens and events become difficult to order. She remembers "feeling up off the surface" and repeating the alphabet backwards as a way of keeping time. The world vibrates - a "delirious mantra chorussing through the grass".

The work brings human and machine perception into dialogue by thinking through hallucination, contrasting hallucinatory states associated with grief or psychedelics with speech-to-text misrecognitions and fabrications of language. Barham created an audio filter to force such machine "hallucinations" by emphasising paralinguistic features of speech (hesitations, repetitions, breath, accent, and vocal strain) shifting attention from semantic meaning to the material qualities of voice. Algorithmic mishearings generated through this process became source material for the script, blending machine error with embodied recollection.

For Barham, it is precisely these textures and mishearings which hold the relational potential of the voice. What initially seems like a misheard text becomes in reality a new way of thinking and writing—in radical opposition to automatised, standardisation and authority.

*ZYX* is supported by The Elephant Trust, and Ruskin School of Art

**Anna Barham** (b. 1974) lives & works in London

### **Education**

**2026** DPhil Fine Art, Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford **2001** BA Fine Art, The Slade School of Art, University College London

**1995** BA Mathematics & Philosophy, University of Cambridge

### **Selected solo exhibitions**

**2026** Delirious Mantra, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe **2023** Magenta, Emerald, Lapis, The Tanks, Tate Modern, London **2022** Seasferic, Whitstable Biennale **2021** /S/T/R/O/B/E/////L/C/K////, Flat Time House, London; p-ool-s o-f-t-he ou-t-l-ine-s, Chelsea Space, London **2020** Light Swathes Crossing, Arcade, Brussels **2018** Sick Ardour, Ex Libris, Newcastle **2016** A sentence can be ours and ours, Playground Festival, Museum M, Leuven **2015** Skw, Composite, Brussels; Fig-2 30/50, ICA Studio, London **2014** Double Screen, Site Gallery, Sheffield **2013** Not quite tonight jellylike, Arcade, London; Suppose I call a man a horse or a horse a man, Site Gallery, Sheffield **2012** White City, Art on the Underground Commission, London **2011** Warp and Woof (with Bea McMahon), CCA, Glasgow

### **Selected group exhibitions**

**2022** Des Voix Traversées, Institut D'Art Contemporain Villeurbanne / Rhône-Alpes; BiblioTech, NeMe, Limassol & Exhibition Research Lab, Liverpool **2021** Town Hall Meeting of the Air, Baltic 39, Newcastle; Our Silver City, 2094, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham **2020** In the castle of my skin, Eastside Projects, Birmingham **2018** Liquid Crystal Display, Site Gallery, Sheffield & MIMA, Middlesbrough; Is it language they're after? (no one replied), Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna **2017** These Rotten Words, Chapter, Cardiff; Flat Time House: Living Sculpture, Flat Time House, London; Digital Narratives / Calculated Selves, Raum\*Station, Zurich **2016** Secret Surface, Where meaning materialises, K-W, Berlin; This is a voice, Wellcome Collection, London **2015** Un Nouveau Festival 2015: Air de jeu, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Diding an interior that remains exterior, KM- Graz

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