

## Adventitious Encounters

**Exhibition dates:** 9 – 22 March

**Opening hours:** Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-7pm

**Location:** 4th Floor, Whiteleys Shopping Centre, Queensway, London W2 4YN

**Private View:** 8 March, 6.30-10pm, featuring performances by Joshua Leon and Himali Singh Soin at 7.30pm and 8pm, followed by a DJ set by Cedric Bardawil

**Artists:** Volkan Aslan, Augustine Carr, Alex Flick, Mustafa Hulusi, Soojin Kang, Radhika Khimji, Anton Lapov, Joshua Leon, Kate McMillan, Sarah Meyohas, Suzanne Moxhay, Goia Mujalli, Alexandre Mussard, Samuel Padfield, Paloma Proudfoot, Anna Skladmann, Magda Skupinska, Himali Singh Soin, Sigrid Viir, Chloe Wise

**Curated by:** Huma Kabakcı and Anna Skladmann

**Collaborations:** Block Universe and Conservatory Archives

With sponsorship from: Bermondsey Tonic Water, Doluca Wines, Jensen's Gin, Meyer Bergman, TPI Sound, Warrior Capital

**Programme:** A programme of events will accompany the exhibition, featuring performances by **Joshua Leon** and **Himali Singh Soin**, a curatorial discussion with artists and brunch led by **Huma Kabakcı**, a conversation between **Anna Skladmann** and daffodil expert Johnny Walker, and a site-specific radio walk by current Delfina resident **Anton Lapov**.

**Open Space Contemporary** presents **Adventitious Encounters**, a group exhibition with 20 internationally acclaimed, emerging and established contemporary artists. Co-curated by Huma Kabakcı and Anna Skladmann, the exhibition is held on the sky-roof of the historic Whiteleys Shopping Centre, a space rarely open to the public.

**Adventitious Encounters** explores the interwoven processes of human production and consumption in response to nature as an object of desire; a nature of which we are an intrinsic part. Yet 'nature' is no longer pristine; we are now living through the Anthropocene, a time when human activity has begun contributing to failing ecosystems, rising sea-levels and climatic change. In turn, these negative effects are driving mass human migration; as a species, we are forced to re-think historical assumptions and the ways in which we register these dramatic changes, which are not only affecting the whole of humanity, but all existing planetary life.

If we examine the transition of Whiteleys from a Victorian department store to bygone shopping centre and onward to future development, we find a multiple-use space in which new possibilities and realisations can crystallise. With respect to the building's heritage, **Adventitious Encounters** invites the audience to experience multi-sensory stimulation, akin to William Whiteleys's unrealised botanical vision.

In its original design, the uppermost floor of the department store was organised around a dominant octagonal glass dome, in part inspired by the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851. This dome was envisaged to be at the centre of an elegant formal "Italian" garden, flanked by water ponds and reminiscent of classical orangeries; a distillation of nature in miniature.

The exhibition proposes to map out our dependence on nature through an extended sensory means that art and technology provide. Today, technology allows us to perceive hidden environmental process. Consequently, humanity is able to soberly survey the situation, which notably marks the gap between the role of the human being as an observing subject and as an observed object. As a result, we now have vast power at our disposal to explore this relationship and recreate nature according to our own desires. Scents, colours, textures and emotions elicited through art allow for the aesthetic reinterpretation of nature, consequently revealing our own entanglement with it. **Adventitious Encounters** looks into the novel production of sensual desire and the re-combination of material reality.

**Adventitious Encounters** will feature a collaborative installation with Conservatory Archives and a programme of performances and events, including a partnership with Block Universe. Andrew Osborne, who is a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths and currently works at the Royal College of Art, has contributed to the catalogue essay *Anthropsensory: The New Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, which forms an integral part of the exhibition material.

### Notes on the programme:

#### 8 March 2018 7.30pm: Joshua Leon, *Breath Turn*, 2018

Joshua Leon's performances hypnotise and seduce through a production of sound and theatrics, setting the scene for a metaphorical and abstract contemplation of everyday life. As he writes; I exhale. And lie down.

#### 8.00pm: Himali Singh Soin, *Silicontology*, 2017

"What if we deployed metaphor itself as a means of grasping alien objects' perceptions of one another?" (Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*). Performed for the first time at *Adventitious Encounters*, *Silicontology* is a coined portmanteau that fuses the world of integrated circuits and data bytes with sea sponges and shimmering sands. It is an idea that zooms far out to the celestial—the astronauts of Apollo 11 left a piece of silicon inscribed with messages from Earth on the moon—then zooms in to the earth's sediment and further still, to the aesthetic realm of poetry. Performed by **Nephertiti Schandorf** and programmed in partnership with Block Universe.

### 11 March 2018

#### 11.15am – 12pm: Brunch

12 – 1pm: **Garden of Eden**: An exploration of female agency, nature and materiality A moderated talk by Huma Kabakçı in conversation with artists Kate McMillan, Goia Mujalli, Paloma Proudfoot and Anna Skladmann. 1 – 2pm: Mustafa Hulusi & Andrew Osborne in conversation with a special guest

**17 March 2018**

**2pm: *The Man With The Midas Touch - A Botanical Index of Narcissus***

Conversation between the artist and curator Anna Skladmann and Johnny Walker, 24 years gold medal winning daffodil specialist, whose field of expertise is in new breeds at Walker Bulbs. The dialogue will address different aspects of breeding nature, the history of photography and the myth of the Narcissus flower. 4pm: Himali Singh Soin, *Silicontology*, 2017

**18 March 2018**

**4pm: Anton Lapov**, a site-specific trajectory Artist, curator and museologist Anton Lapov will create spatial trajectories in dialogue with the site-specificity of Whiteleys and the area of Queensway. Lapov is currently in residence at Delfina Foundation with support of Gaia Art Foundation.

**Notes to editors:**

**Open Space Contemporary** is an itinerant contemporary art platform that promotes cross-cultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange through international projects with artists, curators and other practitioners. It responds to the site-specific qualities of different spaces, and its projects range from exhibitions to performances, talks, symposia, screenings and publications. Open Space Contemporary is also an ideological space that accommodates the needs of different practices and media, with the aim of advancing artistic and curatorial discourse through collaboration. Founded by Huma Kabakçı in 2014, Open Space Contemporary exists primarily between London and Istanbul. <http://www.openspacecontemporary.com/>

**Huma Kabakçı:** Graduated from BA Advertising & Marketing at London College of Communication in 2011 and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art at Royal College of Art in London, Kabakçı worked at various galleries, museums and auction houses, both in the UK and Turkey, including Sotheby's New Bond Street (Contemporary Art Sales department), The Albion Gallery (London), Pera Museum (Turkey), as well as three major collection exhibitions in museums during the 2010 Ruhr & Pecs Capital of Culture project. Since graduating from Royal College of Art (London), Kabakçı founded Open Space Contemporary and has been collaborating with different projects and organisations including Alt, Artkurio, Block Universe, IKSU, Pera Museum, The Art Department and SALT. She also contributed to publications such as the Guggenheim Blog, IAN (Istanbul Art News), Past meets Present Exhibition Catalogue and SYRUP Magazine. Kabakçı has been involved in the following art institutions and foundations as a patron: AWITA (Association Women In the Arts), Delfina Foundation, Gasworks, Royal Academy (Young Patron) and SAHA Foundation.

**Anna Skladmann** is a Visual Artist and Curator. She has attended Parsons School Of Design and the Royal College of Art, and her work as an artist has been nominated for the Prix Pictet and Paul Huf award. She has won the Arles Photo Folio Prize, and published her first monograph 'Little Adults' in 2011. Her photographic projects have been shown in exhibitions and festivals, including the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, Museum of Modern Art in Moscow, Fotofest International in Houston, Unseen Photo Fair in Amsterdam and the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg. Skladmann is interested in the archive and categories produced and re-produced as well as being embedded in literature and mythology. 'Adventitious Encounters' is Skladmann's debut into the curatorial part of her practice in which she is interested in working outside the conventional gallery space and study a building through its history, mythology and possible future to create a multi-sensory art show.

**Block Universe:** London's International Performance Art Festival is an annual festival that brings together a new wave of cutting-edge performance art at the cross-section of contemporary visual art, dance and music in major institutions and unique venues across London. In pioneering new artistic platforms, Block Universe aims to position London at the forefront of the dialogue surrounding performance art internationally. This year Block Universe returns for its fourth edition from 26 May – 3 June, exploring themes that act as a counterpoint to the current divisiveness created by contemporary politics, focussing on and critically questioning utopian ideals of community and collectivity. Addressing the ways that we relate to one another, this edition of the festival will respond both to the larger fabric of society that binds us and our intimate interpersonal relationships. <http://blockuniverse.co.uk/>

**Conservatory Archives:** An indoor plant specialist based in East London, creating environments that transform urban spaces into plant havens. The team delivers installations that are fresh in design and collaborates with a variety of clients to creatively push boundaries within the industry. <https://www.conservatoryarchives.co.uk/>