

# HARBOUR

Across two days, *Harbour* will foreground research, art practices and pedagogies that focus on decolonising and diversifying the arts and art education. The event features art sharing sessions, workshops and presentations by staff and research students from ECA and guests working in the arts in Scotland who explore alternative pedagogical or institutional models.

Whose knowledge, voices, materials and methods are valued and validated within education and arts institutions? Envisaged as a space of gathering and knowledge exchange, *Harbour* will offer a supportive space for dialogue, learning, and making connections, and aims to open conversations about future possibilities.

Organised by the Decolonising and Diversifying the Curriculum Working Group at ECA:

Penny Travlou, Senior Lecturer in Cultural Geography and Theory

Agnese Sile, Lecturer in Design and Screen Cultures

Julie Louise Bacon, Lecturer in Art

Inge Panneels, Lecturer in Service Design

James Clegg, Curator, Talbot Rice Gallery

Supported by Edinburgh College of Art Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion committee



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
*Edinburgh College of Art*

# 18 May 2026

Edinburgh Futures Institute - Room 1.50

*Coffee will be served from 9.45*

**10.00: Introductions / Arrivals (Agnese / James)**

**10.15: Workshop (Hosted by Inge)**

**JAKE WATTS – *Capacities and Forces***

**Lecturer in Contemporary Art Theory, Programme Director of BA (Hons) Fine Art**

Jake will conduct an exercise initially established by BFAMFAPHD (a collective that formed in 2012 to make art, reports, and teaching tools to advocate for cultural equity in the United States, Jahoda & Woolard et al. 2020). The exercise is a form of consciousness raising activity and will ask participants arriving to the event to consider their positionality, the capacities and networks they have, or are a part of, and the forces acting upon them.

To participate you will need a pen and paper or a computer to make notes with.

**11:00: Sharing Sessions (Hosted by Julie Louise)**

**KATO'ONE KOLOAMATANGI (Kolofo'ou, Kingdom of Tonga/Auckland, New Zealand) – tit *Fehokotaki* – *connection***

**Artist, MA Contemporary Art Practice**

Kato will be presenting current artworks that utilise steel and mark making on *ngatu* (traditional Tongan bark cloth). She hopes to incite dialogue around the importance of diasporic positionality and cultural practices for indigenous peoples (Polynesian descent) through storytelling and Oceanic methodologies.

**VERÓNICA ZELA VALDEZ - *New geography lessons: putting "nature" to rest***

**Artist, PhD Candidate**

The modern/colonial project has historically taught people to put "nature" to work through capitalist extractivism. In this session Veronica will share a series of drawings made from fragments of Peruvian school textbooks, through which she explores ways of producing a sense of strangeness around how we are taught to commodify lives within life. Through these

works, she reflects on the relations between discourse, coloniality and learning, as well as on the possibilities of unsettling colonial legacies.

### **11.45: Presentations (Hosted by Inge and James)**

#### **KIRSTEN MCKEE – *Holding Dissonance: Heritage, Landscape and Environmental Justice***

##### **Teaching Fellow**

Engaging with heritage, colonial legacies, and climate justice, this session uses landscape to question whose histories are centred while unsettling authorised narratives, foregrounding marginalised voices and connecting past to contemporary climate challenges through participatory approaches.

#### **TIFFANY DANG – *Teaching Decolonial Histories in Landscape Architecture***

##### **Lecturer in Landscape Architecture**

In professional design programmes, the history survey course provides students with important exposure to history, cultural studies and the humanities; this makes it an ideal place to introduce students to decolonial thinking. Using the canonical history textbook as an ‘artefact’ for discussion, Tiffany will share how she has introduced decolonial pedagogies into first-year undergraduate landscape architectural history course, *Landscape Theories: Histories*.

#### **M ANUSAS - *Teaching colonial pasts persisting in present matters – materials and media***

##### **Lecturer in Design & Screen Cultures (Cultural Anthropologist)**

Myk’s talk will address their teaching of colonialism and racism to students as matters which persist through ecologies and/of materials and media. That is, engaging students to consider how colonialism and racism are not only located in a past history or a limited idea of the social, but are persistent through contemporary ecologies and structure and systems of materials and media; and so requiring consideration in the shaping of contemporary creative works.

### **12.30: Lunch**

**13:30: Presentation (Hosted by Julie Louise)**

**SOPHIA YADONG HAO - *The Ignorant Art School***

**Director & Principal Curator, Cooper Gallery**

Asserting the curatorial as a mode of critical inquiry that transforms the exhibition space into a laboratory for activating collaborative and/or collective agency, the talk will delineate *The Ignorant Art School: Five Sit-ins Towards Creative Emancipation*, a five-phase exhibition and event programme (2021–2026) initiated and curated by Sophia as an ‘event/moment of knowledge’ outside the institution in which hegemonic inequalities of access and power can be unlearned.

**14:15: Presentation (Hosted by Penny)**

**SHAIRA VADASARIA – *Balfour’s Legacy of Imperial Violence: Past and Present Institutional Encounters***

**Senior Lecturer in Race and Decolonial Studies, School of Social and Political Science**

This intervention situates how the University of Edinburgh has been implicated in the so-called Question of Palestine both historically and to the present day, through epistemic and material links - including its ongoing investments in Israel’s political economy of settler colonial dispossession in Palestine. Examining how empire’s past remains present, the talk will cover the significance of the key recommendations of the Race Review report and why failure to implement them prohibits meaningful redress, beginning with the core reparatory principal of cessation of harm and non-repetition.

**14:45 – Presentation (Hosted by James)**

**KILLIAN O’DOCHARTAIGH – *Colonial Debris, Decolonial Horizons: Attending to Silences***

**Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism**

This talk frames a year-long series confronting colonial legacies in architecture and education, while signalling institutional silences, indifference, and complicity, asking whose knowledge is valued and how design practice might engage more critically with urgent political realities.

**15:15: Round Table / KILLIAN O’DOCHARTAIGH / SOPHIA YADONG HAO / SHAIRA VADASARIA / JAKE WATTS (Chair: Agnese)**

# 19 May 2026

Edinburgh Futures Institute - Room 1.50

*Coffee will be served from 9.45*

## **10.00: Introductions / Arrivals (Penny and Julie Louise)**

## **10.15: Workshop (Hosted by James)**

### **ANTHEA MOYS – *Unwinnable Games as Decolonial Method***

#### **Artist and practice researcher**

*What else is created when no one can win?* After a short presentation of artistic practice that explores this question through live art and practice-as-research over 20 years, Anthea invites us to enter the unwinnable game as a temporary container to explore power, doubt, joy, uncertainty and any other sense-making or non-sense-making processes that may emerge. You will need paper and pen.

## **10.45: Presentation (Hosted by Inge)**

### **RACHEL HARKNESS – *Other Ways are Possible, and Exist!* *Blending the Designerly and the Anthropological***

#### **Senior Lecturer, Design Ecologies**

Rachel's contribution shares reflections from a perspective of blending the designerly with the anthropological in an attempt to produce and facilitate needed unlearnings and important inclusions, whilst also fuelling imaginations for how things might be (different/ly).

## **11.15: Presentation (Hosted by Julie Louise)**

### **ADAM BENMAKHLOUF - *Voice as Material and Method***

#### **Lecturer in Fine Art**

Adam will reflect on the expansive possibilities made possible by activating demotic voice within research, and specifically its capacity to enhance writing as an accessible, social and collective medium. They will present a series of interconnected reflective accounts of recent teaching activity, artist's writing, public workshops and programming.

## **11:45: Sharing Session (Hosted by Adam)**

### **ALVI ÖSTGÅRD - *Kith and (sheeps)kin***

#### **Artist, MA Contemporary Art Practice**

Through culturally significant material and handcraft, Alvi challenges the scientific understanding of the world as "a collection of objects" through the anima of the material and ritualistic art-making. Through historical knowledge of species and crafts, she offers a contemplation on the abandonment of culture, mythology and ecological kinship and its relation to our modern-day upbringing.

### **NILSU ALTUNOK - *A Thick Diffractive Map that Activates Speculative Fabulation***

#### **Architecture by Design – PhD candidate**

Nilsu reflects on how her Architecture by Design research shifts from film to fabulation while working with an exhausted landscape in northern Istanbul, where extraction and infrastructural interventions have radically transformed the ecosystem. Returning to the first situated recording of this site — an architectural essay film — she begins to fabulate through diffractive drawings that thicken relations between multiple agencies, opening the work toward decolonial ways of seeing and knowing.

## **12.30: Lunch**

## **13:30: Presentation (Hosted by Agnese)**

### **CLAUDIA HOPKINS - *Translation and Decolonisation***

#### **Personal Chair of Art History, Editor of Art in Translation**

The talk considers 'translation' as a critical instrument in the decolonisation of art history. It draws on examples of collaborative research and publishing initiatives associated with the ECA and Getty-funded journal *Art in Translation*, with a particular focus on Spanish-speaking contexts situated at the margins of the field.

## **14:00: Conversation (Hosted by Penny)**

### **JAMIE FORDE – *Painted Books of Pre-Colonial Mexico***

#### **Lecturer in Pre-Modern Art**

Prior to European invasion, Indigenous peoples of central and southern Mexico created elaborate folded 'books' or screen-fold manuscripts that recorded creation stories and the histories of ruling dynasties, and others that were used to predict the future in practices of divination. Rather than being recorded in language-based writing, these books

employed a form of 'picture-writing' or pictography that was not based in language, but still highly complex and codified. These books have sometimes been likened to graphic novels, comic books, or other forms of 'sequential art.' Engaging students with these materials encourages them to think more critically about the relationships between writing and other forms of graphic communication, and how we think about history through decolonial perspectives.

**ALFONSO VALDES MALDONADO - *Drawing Otherwise: Layering the [Un]seen***

**Architecture by Design – PhD candidate**

Decolonial thinking can be embedded in architectural research through drawing and design-led methods. This project uses layered representations to reveal contested histories and suppressed spatial knowledge in Northern Mexico, expanding how knowledge is constructed and validated.

**GLAIRE ANDERSON - *Working with Video Games for Positive Social Impact***

**Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art, Founding Director,  
Digital Lab for Islamic Visual Culture & Collections**

Dr Glaire Anderson helped bring 9th c. Baghdad to life for millions, providing her expertise in medieval Islamic history, art, architecture, archaeology and civilisation Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed Mirage, which has surpassed 10 million players. She'll discuss her work with the video games industry as decolonial practice for positive social impact.

**15:00 – 15:45: Conversation / Coffee (Hosted by DDtC Working Group)**

The working group will share some ideas from the two days, providing questions to discuss over coffee.

## **16:00 to 17:00: Talbot Rice Gallery Visit**

### **JAMES CLEGG – *The dead don't go until we do***

#### **Curator**

James will provide an overview of some of the decolonising work undertaken at Talbot Rice Gallery , followed by an introduction to the current exhibition *The dead don't go until we do*.

This exhibition brings together artists from marginalised communities who work to represent the strength and debt owed to previous generations. The tour will end with time to experience the work of MADEYOULOOK, including a text work questioning the European landscape tradition and *Mafofofo*, a sound work promoting embodied relationships to the land inspired by the remains of the *Bakoni* settlements in South Africa.