

JERWOOD ARTS

PRESS RELEASE – OCTOBER 2022

Announcing the Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator Fellows: 11 early-career curators shaping the future of the visual arts



From top row, left to right: Aimee Harrison, Ben Urban, Cecilia Graham, Georgina Johnson (photo by Edvinas Bruzas), Lee Cutter, Aliyah Hasinah (photo by Ashanna Hodge), Candice Nembhard (photo by Katrina Singleton), David Cleary, Katherine Murphy, Thomas Wells

- The inaugural Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator Fellows are announced as Aimee Harrison, Aliyah Hasinah, Ben Urban, Candice Nembhard, Cecilia Graham, David Cleary, Dhelia Snoussi, Georgina Johnson, Katherine Murphy, Lee Cutter and Thomas Wells
- Designed and delivered by Jerwood Arts, Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator is a pioneering 12-month curatorial and leadership development programme for exceptional early-career curators from working class/low socio-economic backgrounds
- The initiative addresses the lack of social mobility and economic, gender and ethnic diversity in senior leadership roles across the visual arts sector in the UK, supporting future leaders of tomorrow

Today, 06 October, Jerwood Arts announces the 11 Fellows selected for the inaugural edition of Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator (JCA), a pioneering programme to support curatorial and leadership development for exceptional early-career visual arts curators from working class/low socio-economic backgrounds.

Responding to the lack of diversity in visual arts leadership in the UK, JCA aims to tackle the barriers to creative progression faced by curators from low socio-economic backgrounds. It acknowledges the important role of curators as gatekeepers to the diversity and breadth of art that is programmed and visible publicly.

The selected JCA Fellows each bring unique experiences and perspective to their practice. Working across different formats, their curatorial work is highly engaged and explores the relationship between arts and a wide spectrum of social and cultural issues including social and climate justice, race and gender identity, LGBTQ+ experience, mental health, and the institutional and cultural marginalisation of vulnerable communities. The group includes curators based in Belfast, Birmingham, Glasgow, Hastings, Liverpool, London and North Wales, creating a new UK-wide peer network.

The JCA Fellows are: **Aimee Harrison, Aliyah Hasinah, Ben Urban, Candice Nembhard, Cecilia Graham, David Cleary, Dhelia Snoussi, Georgina Johnson, Katherine Murphy, Lee Cutter and Thomas Wells.**

JCA brings together a peer group of the most exciting curatorial voices in the UK today with a network of seven 'Host' visual arts organisations: Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry-Londonderry, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Peak Cymru, Somerset House, Turner Contemporary and Yorkshire Sculpture International. The Hosts represent a network of organisations across the UK committed to increasing diversity in curatorial practice who will share research, knowledge, and ideas, to continue improving access to curatorial roles.

The fully funded 12-month programme runs from July 2022 to July 2023 and is structured around a series of bespoke in-person visits to each Host organisation, supporting JCA Fellows to develop new research, networks and knowledge of visual arts practice in the UK. Led by the individual Host organisations, the visits will enable access to innovative approaches to practice and place, while also fostering symbiotic exchange about the critical curatorial issues facing the visual arts sector today.

Alongside this, JCA Fellows will develop their individual leadership skills and curatorial vision through dedicated mentoring, training and developmental activities.

Lilli Geissendorfer, Director of Jerwood Arts says: *"We are delighted to welcome the inaugural cohort of Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator Fellows, as they embark on a 12-month programme to further their curatorial and leadership skills, working with some of the most highly regarded visual arts institutions in the UK. The 11 Fellows were selected from a strong pool of over 180 applicants, and come from every corner of the UK, each bringing their unique interests and independent curatorial voice to the programme."*

The JCA Fellows are:

(Read their full biographies [here](#))

- **Aimee Harrison** is a curator and producer from Liverpool, currently working as Curator of Learning at [Liverpool Biennial](#). Her work is shaped by people and frameworks of care; with an interest in organisational representation of intersectional working-class culture.

- **Aliyah Hasinah** is a curator and director of Bajan and Jamaican heritage who founded the organisation [Black Curatorial](#) in 2020. Her work focuses on expanding the curatorial imagination and possibilities of play for Black communities and documenting everyday lives through a decolonial praxis.
- **Ben Urban** is the co-founder and current director of creative-led arts organisation [Flatland Projects](#) in Bexhill-on-Sea, leading exhibitions, education and an early-career studio programme at Beeching Road Studios. Previously Ben worked at the De La Warr Pavilion and co-curated the AiRM Festival, Romney Marsh with Phoebe Cripps.
- **Candice Nembhard (okcandice)** is a writer, artist-curator, poet and musician based between Birmingham and Berlin who is a co-founding member of the collective [poet & prophetess](#) and founder of the queer film series [ALL FRUITS RIPE](#). Their multi-disciplinary practise explores grief, love, queer identities, and oration in Black cultures through the production and preservation of archival materials.
- **Cecelia Graham** is a curator based in Belfast who is currently a Co-Director at [Catalyst Arts](#) and Curator-in-Residence with collaborator Grace Jackson at [PS2](#). In her independent practice, Cecelia explores community-based, participatory knowledge gathering in order to challenge notions of hyper-productivity, disciplinary borders and power structures.
- **David Cleary** is a curator and artist based in North Wales who is currently Curator of Learning and Engagement at [Mostyn](#), Llandudno. Previously employed at Humber Street Gallery in Hull, he works across exhibitions, collaborative projects and public events programmes, with recent projects including an offsite rural engagement and digital commission with artist Frances Disley and a collective of local North Wales plants and community groups.
- **Dhelia Snoussi** is a curator and researcher with a background in arts education and youth work. She is currently Youth Culture Curator at the [Museum of London](#), working on the museum's contemporary collecting project, Curating London. Dhelia is a trustee at [Granville Community Kitchen](#) and authored the report [We Are Ghosts: Race, Class & Institutional Prejudice](#) with Runnymede Trust and the Centre for Labour and Social Studies.
- **Georgina Johnson** is an artist, curator and futurist dedicated to transforming our creative ecologies. As a thinker her practice explores race and mental health; as a publisher and commentator she interrogates the relationship between environmentalism and social justice, and as a printer and collagist she blurs the lines between memory, fiction and fact. Her first book, the intersectional environmentalist anthology [The Slow Grind](#), came out in 2020 to resounding acclaim.
- **Katherine Murphy** is an independent feminist curator and producer based in Glasgow. Her *Unfolding Project* works closely with, and learns from artists to manifest a feminist, independent, sustainable curatorial practice to develop projects and realise exhibitions. Recent project include guest curating a solo exhibition [Galalith](#) with artist Lauren Gault at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, Dublin.
- **Lee Cutter** is an artist and exhibitions producer, interested in overlooked communities, unearthing hidden voices, and the role art can play towards shaping social change. Recent projects have offered

creative insights into the culture found within the prison systems across the UK and he is currently working with artist Ai Weiwei on [Freedom](#), Koestler Arts annual exhibition at Southbank Centre.

- **Thomas Wells** is an artist and curator based in Belfast, currently working as a programmer for the [National Museums Northern Ireland](#). Collaboration sits at the centre of their practice, and in 2020, they launched [SAM'S EDEN](#), a LGBTQ+ arts publication featuring collaborations between artists and writers.

Jerwood Arts received over 180 applications from all over the UK to a national call for entries and nomination process in Spring 2022 (read more about the process [here](#)). Applicants to the programme identified key barriers to their curatorial career development as including: a lack of access to peer networks and critical feedback, limited funding for travel to develop networks and research, few paid career development opportunities, rare funding opportunities to experiment and test ideas, and difficulties accessing roles/opportunities with public institutions (particularly for independent curators).

Although the programme has no educational requirement to take part, only 6% of applicants had not attended university for either undergraduate or postgraduate study. This reinforces that there are currently few routes into the curating profession that do not include formal study, which is increasingly expensive to access. JCA Host organisation Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art recently launched the UK's first combined masters and higher degree apprenticeship (HDA) in Curating, expanding opportunities for fully-funded education and training to those employed in the cultural sector. Find out more [here](#).

Harriet Cooper, JCA Programme Director reflects that: *"In designing Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator we were confident of the need for such a programme to support and diversify the future of curatorial practice and visual arts leadership. The application process for the programme demonstrated to us the strength of independent curatorial talent in the UK and the barriers that curators from low-socio economic backgrounds face in progressing and realising their ambitions - including access to funding, networks and developmental support. The definition of being a visual arts curator today is broad, and it is essential to support a diversity of curatorial voice, thought and experience to lead an innovative and inclusive future for the sector."*

As key decision makers for commissions and exhibitions, curators play an important role in developing a more diverse and inclusive programme of arts in the UK. Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator challenges accepted barriers in curatorial practice, which will help to build a cultural sector that reflects our society. By supporting early-career curators from underrepresented and non-privileged backgrounds and developing a diverse curatorial infrastructure, the programme aims to impact future programming across the sector, as well as celebrate a diversity of perspectives and voices as a vital ingredient to inclusive and enriching cultural life.

The programme has received £100,000 funding through Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership Programme, through which Jerwood Arts is also delivering the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries programme 2020-22, and a WJCB Alumni Fund, alongside £50,000 from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and in-kind support from Art Fund.

ENDS

For further information about Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

Jerwood Curatorial Accelerator (JCA) is designed and delivered by Jerwood Arts, with funding from Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and Art Fund support. Host partners include Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry-Londonderry, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Peak Cymru, Somerset House, Turner Contemporary and Yorkshire Sculpture International. The programme has specialist support from people make it work, Dr Dave O'Brien and Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd.

JCA is part of Arts Council England's Transforming Leadership Programme, through which Jerwood Arts is also delivering the [Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries Programme](#) and Alumni Fund 2020-22. JCA Fellows will participate in the programme from July 2022 to July 2023.

Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting early-career UK-based artists, curators and producers to develop and thrive. We enable transformative opportunities for individuals across art forms, supporting imaginative awards, fellowships, programmes, commissions and collaborations. We are committed to supporting artistic freedom of expression and being as inclusive as possible across all our work. We present new work and bring people from across the arts together through our exhibitions and events across the UK and online. jerwoodarts.org

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.96 billion Culture Recovery Funds. Find out more at artscouncil.org.uk/covid19

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve our natural world, secure a fairer future and strengthen the bonds in communities in the UK. We unlock change by contributing everything we can alongside people and organisations with brilliant ideas who share our goals.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. In 2020, we provided £53.5m in grant funding towards work in support of our aims and our emergency response to COVID. We also have a £45 million allocation to social investments for organisations with the aim of creating social impact. www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and

inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £3.6 million in urgent funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 131,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 is Firstsite in Colchester. artfund.org

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