

SITE GALLERY

Press Release

Thursday 5 September, 2019

REWRITING THE FUTURE

(27 September 2019 – 26 January 2020)

SOPHIA AL MARIA, URSULA MAYER AND NEW COMMISSIONS BY SONYA DYER AND
VICTORIA SIN



IMAGE: ATOM SPIRIT 2017, URSULA MAYER. THREE CHANNEL VIDEO, 16 MM ON HD 20 MIN. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

- Public Preview at Site Gallery Thursday 26 September, 6 – 8pm
- Exhibition dates: 27 September 2019 – 26 January 2020
- New artistic commissions by Sonya Dyer and Victoria Sin

This Autumn Site Gallery presents an exhibition of new and existing moving image, performance and sculpture by Sophia Al Maria, Ursula Mayer, Victoria Sin and Sonya Dyer in *Rewriting The Future*, opening with a public preview event on 26 September at 6pm.

In an age where wealth controls our systems of power and the world is ruled by patriarchal societies, feminist speculative perspectives can offer new insights, predictions and even possible alternatives. Speculative and science fiction have always been spaces where futures are explored, questioned and proposed and, as with many disciplines, is an area where many creative and talented women, trans and queer perspectives have been overlooked.

Feminist artists and writers have long been presenting new angles on gender, power, ecology and community – *Rewriting the Future* explores some of these narratives.

Sonya Dyer's new commission projects us into the future, building on *Hailing Frequencies Open* (HFO) – an ongoing project which intersects the pioneering work of Nichelle Nicols through her astronaut recruitment activism, the dubious genesis of 'HeLa' cells and the Greek myth and galaxy of Andromeda. Combining social justice with speculation, fantasy with the political, the work imagines a world where a sculptural space vessel *Anarcha 2* carries HeLa Cells to the Andromeda Galaxy. The galaxy becomes a metaphor for the neglected stories of Black women of mythology both past and future.

Victoria Sin will present a new sound piece, imagining a world that is non human-centric – one in which humans are merely vessels to enable reproduction, subsumed by giant orchids and locked into a cycle of parasitic behaviour. How might the world look and feel if nature took back control and we no longer controlled the earth?

The visceral, luscious near-future speculations of Ursula Mayer's large-scale film installation *ATOM SPIRIT* create a place where race, gender, post-colonialism and technology intersect. It emphasises the need for us to reform our relationship with the environment, non-human entities and each other – re-imagining our shared techno-natural future.

Sophia Al Maria's iridescent, hyper-colour moving image work *A Magical State* explores the extraction of fossil fuels from the desecrated land as a kind of ritualistic, violent exorcism imposed on the abject 'female' body. Through the body of a young Columbian native woman, half demon, half heroine, the ancient spirit of crude oil unleashes her rage against the desecration of the earth, a metaphor for oppressed and suffocated women.

Angelica Sule, Site Gallery Curator says: 'This exhibition is both a warning and a vision of hope. It is not the usual blockbuster science fiction, rather a more nuanced speculative fiction extrapolating and exploring new worlds and futures.'

The exhibition will be accompanied by a digital publication compiling new speculative fiction writing from some brilliant feminist minds.

With support from the Elephant Trust.

ENDS

For more information, images or interviews please contact Kirsty Young
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LISTINGS

Site Gallery

1 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS

Opening hours:

Tuesday-Wednesday: 11am - 6pm

Thursday: 11am - 8pm

Friday-Saturday: 11am - 6pm

Sunday: 11am - 4pm

Entry price: Free

Website: www.sitegallery.org

Facebook: facebook.com/sitegallerysheffield

Twitter: twitter.com/site_gallery

Instagram: instagram.com/sitegallery

ABOUT SITE GALLERY

Pioneering emerging art practices and ideas, Site Gallery works in partnership with local, regional and international collaborators to nurture artistic talent and support the development of contemporary art and its appreciation.

At the heart of what Site does, is to connect people to artists and to art, inspiring new thinking and debate through exhibitions, talks, events and other public activity.

Site Gallery provides new opportunities for young people in the region to engage with contemporary art through a range of activities across the city. By participating in regular groups; one-off events and collaborations with contemporary artists, young people play a pivotal role in the gallery and its relationships with wider communities.

Site Gallery works with early career to established artists to commission new work, produce solo and group shows, deliver residencies, performances, events and community programme. Through diverse programming, they reveal the process of making art and invite audiences and participants to engage, explore and connect.