



BETWEEN MYTH

SELF INDEPENDENT CURATORIAL PROPOSAL

Tianyi Chen

s2670174@ed.ac.uk

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EXHIBITION

PREFACE

Between Myth explores how myth evolves in response to industrial decline, ecological change, and diasporic identity. Presented at Collective's City Dome and Hillside Galleries on Calton Hill, the exhibition gathers works from the last two decades that reimagine inherited narratives and examine the shifting role of myth in contemporary life.

The selected works include three experimental short films and a podcast-based audio project. They show how moving image and sound intersect with installation, performance and digital media, challenging traditional boundaries of medium. Fergus Carmichael's *Rhadinace* blends eco-horror with Scottish folklore to reflect on post-industrial landscapes. Asmaa Jama and Gouled Abdishakour Ahmed's *The Season of Burning Things* draws on East African myth and Islamic imagery to explore migration and memory. These works present myth as a living, adaptive force shaped by experience. Other works, such as Matthew-Robert Hughes's *The Tides of Kilpeck* and Legion Projects' *Ploughing Old Patterns, Raising New Ground*, challenge the idea that folk culture is fixed. Instead, they show it as fluid, evolving and open to reinterpretation.

Grounded in collaborative and interdisciplinary methods, *Between Myth* invites reflection on translation, hybridity, and identity. Rather than offering fixed meanings, it opens a space for reimagining how cultural stories move through time—bridging past and present, the seen and the unseen, the remembered and the retold.



Akash. Roman. View of Edinburgh from Calton Hill. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://unsplash.com/photos/green-grass-field-WisiUi-0G84>.

CORE CONCEPT



Saha Association. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://www.saha.org.tr/en/participants/sophie-j-williamson>.

Sophie J Williamson
Curator (Exhibitions) and writer

“The most appropriate approach to take with the conundrum of heterogeneous cultural translation: allow art the potential to remain indeterminate and its interpretation undirected.”

On Cultural Translation.
Art Monthly, no. 406 (May 2017).

Drawing on Sophie J. Williamson’s vision of exhibitions as “open platforms of exchange,” this project adopts a diversified media strategy to dissolve rigid formal boundaries. It integrates experimental film, sound art, digital interactivity, augmented reality, projection mapping, and participatory installations to construct an environment where myth and cultural narrative remain fluid and open to negotiation. Juxtaposing historical references with contemporary technologies, the exhibition offers a framework that bridges past and present, turning spectators into active participants in meaning-making.

This curatorial approach rejects any single, authoritative interpretation. Instead, it offers a pluralistic space for critical engagement with identity, memory, and cultural experience. Through interdisciplinary practices, the exhibition fosters dialogue among artists, audiences, and communities, encouraging collective exploration and co - creation. In doing so, it meets the evolving demands of today ’ s cultural landscape and shows how contemporary art can reshape shared understandings of myth, history, and social transformation.

ARTISTS & ARTWORKS

Rhadinace

Short Film (8 mins), 2024.

Camera, Editing: Fergus Carmichael

Sound Design, Music: Cameron Graham



Carmichael, Fergus, and Cameron Graham. *Rhadinace*. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://camerongrahammusic.com/rhadinace>.

Rhadinace explores an oil rig graveyard in northern Scotland, blending industry with local tradition through a fictionalised retelling of the Clavie burning. Echoing eco and folk horror cinema, the film reflects on extraction, community, and nature, revealing complex socio-ecological entanglements through sound, myth, and cinematic tension.

Fergus Carmichael

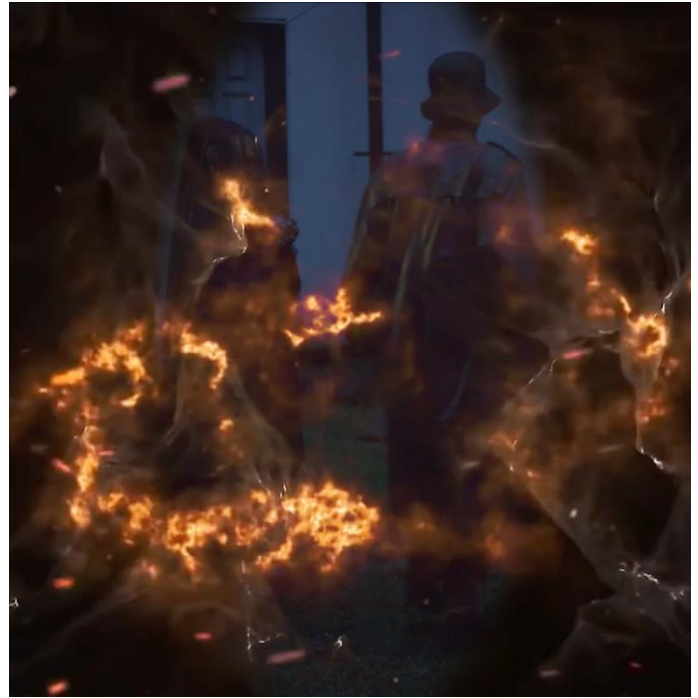
Fergus Carmichael's moving image practice explores how communities connect with landscapes and traditions, revealing their deeper environmental and political resonances through immersive, long-term projects rooted in local identity.

Cameron Graham

Cameron is an intermedia artist and composer combining sound, performance, and film. He lectures in music, composes for major orchestras, and co-directs DOKCULTURE, producing work across arts and brands.

Curatorial Rationale

Rhadinace explores the intersection of community memory, ritual, and industry within specific landscapes, offering a compelling perspective on heritage and collective transformation.



Girls in Film. *The Season of Burning Things*. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://www.girlsinfilm.net/videos/the-season-of-burning-things>.

The Season Of Burning Things

Short Film (9 mins), 2021.

Asmaa Jama & Gouled Abdishakour Ahmed

The Season of Burning Things explores migration, myth, and impermanence through archival textures, experimental sound, and surreal sea imagery. Ghostly figures and shifting realms evoke themes of displacement, memory, and transformation.

Gouled Abdishakour Ahmed

Gouled Abdishakour Ahmed is a Somali visual artist based in Addis Ababa. Their multidisciplinary practice spans visual art, styling, costume design, and writing, often exploring themes of identity, migration, and cultural memory.

Asmaa Jama

Asmaa Jama is a Somali artist, poet, and filmmaker. Their poetry has been shortlisted for the Brunel African Poetry Prize and the Wasafiri Writing Prize, and longlisted for the National Poetry Competition.

Curatorial Rationale

The Season of Burning Things has a poetic and visual synergy. asmaa's lyrical text enriches the film's rhythmic, thought-provoking feel, while gouled's visual language deepens the exploration of identity, migration, and myth.

The Tides of Kilpeck

Short Film (12 mins), 2021.
Matthew-Robert Hughes

The Tides of Kilpeck explores the mythic carvings of Kilpeck Church—such as the Sheela-na-gig and Green Man—through a cinematic lens. Blending performance, landscape, and symbolism, the film revives ancient beliefs and imagines the site as a space of ritual, memory, and spiritual continuity.

Ceramics

Matthew's ceramics evoke myth, playfulness, and nature, drawing inspiration from Small Films. Several pieces also appear as props in his film *The Tides of Kilpeck*.



Hughes, Matthew Robert. Ceramics. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://www.matthewroberthughes.com/ceramics>.

Matthew Robert Hughes

Matthew Robert Hughes is a filmmaker and artist exploring land, magic, and folk culture through film, photography, podcasts, and exhibitions. He founded Legion Projects, producing acclaimed interdisciplinary work with institutions across the UK and internationally, often rooted in spiritual feminism and queer mythology.

Curatorial Rationale

The Tides of Kilpeck for its profound exploration of land, mythology, and spiritual memory, which aligns with my exhibition's focus on cultural heritage and collective identity. Matthew-Robert Hughes' multidisciplinary practice draws on themes of folk culture, witchcraft, spiritual feminism, and queer magic, offering a contemporary reimagining of ancient rituals and beliefs.





Ploughing Old Patterns Raising New Ground

A series of audiovisual commissions about British folk culture, 2023-2024.

Matthew Robert Hughes, Producer & Host.

Ploughing Old Patterns, Raising New Ground is a podcast series by Legion Projects exploring British folk culture through experimental audio works. These commissions reinterpret tradition as dynamic and evolving, reflecting contemporary life through story, sound, and place. Available online and via major podcast platforms throughout 2023.

Curatorial Rationale

This podcast series will be looped in the exhibition space, creating an immersive sound environment as visitors enter. Its exploration of myth, memory, and rural identity complements the exhibition's themes, offering a sensory introduction and grounding the experience in contemporary interpretations of folk tradition and collective cultural imagination.

FORMAT OF DELIVERY

Workshop

Duration: 1 August 2025, 3pm - 5pm
Free

On the first day of the exhibition opening (1 August 2025), We will have a group viewing of Fergus Carmichael's work *Rhadinace*, followed by a light-hearted artist Q&A with Fergus Carmichael moderated by the curator. The session will explore:

- (1) The interplay between industrial decline and local traditions in Scotland.
- (2) How the Clavie Burning Ceremony carries community memories.
- (3) Dialogues between extractives, myths and the natural world.
- (4) Following the discussion, participants of all ages are encouraged to take part in the activity "Mapping Your Own Mythological Landscape".

This activity not only introduced evocative themes from the film, but also embodied the participatory spirit of the exhibition, inviting everyone to deepen their exploration of myth and memory together.

Exhibition

1 Aug 2025 — 14 Aug 2025
10am – 5pm, Weds – Sun

The core of the project is a 10 days (two weeks) exhibition featuring three experimental films alongside a curated selection of podcasts played on a continuous loop. Each film delves into themes of myth, memory, and cultural transformation, while the ambient soundscapes create an immersive environment that bridges visual narrative with layered audio experiences. Together, these works forge a dynamic space where cinematic and auditory elements converge, inviting viewers to reconstruct and reimagine fragments of collective identity and memory.

Online Programme

Duration: During the exhibition, ongoing project

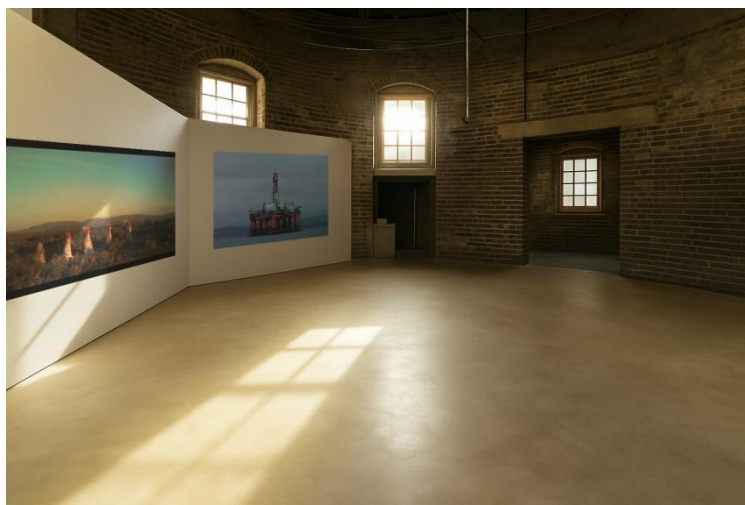
During the exhibition, visitors can scan QR codes to listen to specially commissioned audio works that explore themes of myth, landscape, and folk memory. They are also encouraged to leave comments or upload their own recordings in response. After the exhibition, we plan to collaborate with the original podcast production team to host these works on an online platform, where they will remain accessible for public listening, reflection, and continued creative exchange.

SITE

City Dome Gallery, Hillside Gallery and the Library at Collective
38 Calton Hill, Edinburgh, EH7 5AA



Nolan, Tom. Collective Gallery. 2019. Photograph. Accessed April 17, 2025. <https://www.collective-edinburgh.art/s>



Indoor exhibition projection effect, City Dome Gallery.

Collective is a leading contemporary art centre at the historic City Observatory on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. Established in 1984 as an artist run initiative, it is renowned for commissioning and presenting innovative exhibitions, public programmes and educational projects. Its blend of heritage architecture and expansive city views provides an ideal context for experimental art.

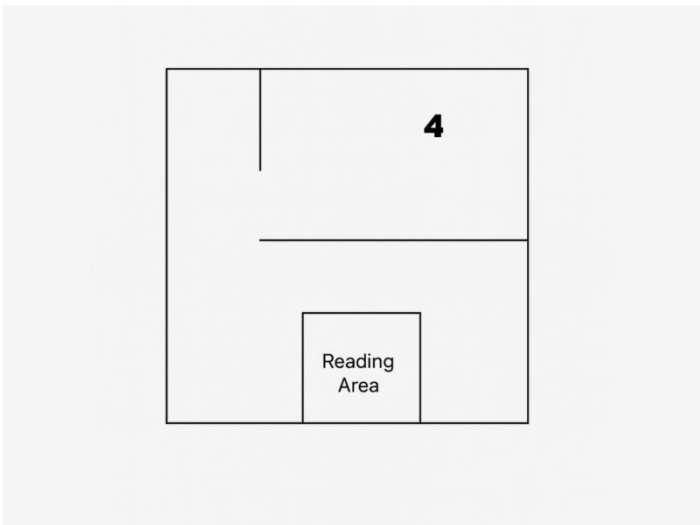
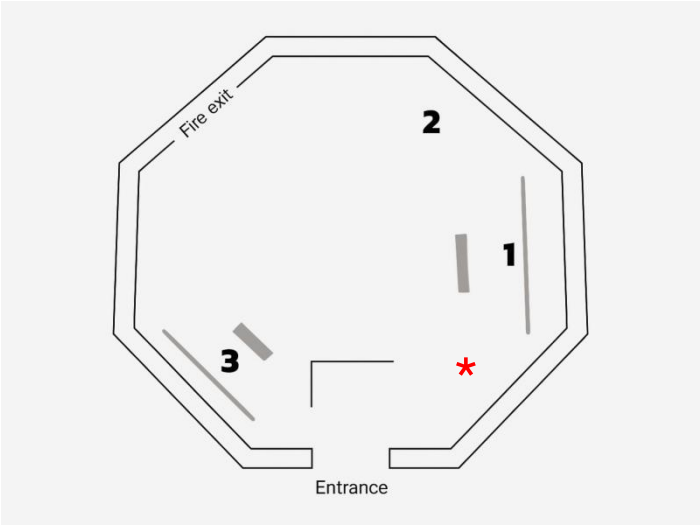
The Hillside Gallery features a dedicated darkroom and adaptable projection system for immersive film and sound presentations. Multiple indoor galleries accommodate moving image works, audio installations and participatory media. Nearby outdoor spaces on Calton Hill enrich the exhibition themes by connecting the show to landscape and ritual.

Collective's curatorial team has strong experience in artist-led programming, supporting interdisciplinary work through residencies and public events. This aligns with our aim for participatory, accessible curation. All planning and events will follow Occupational Health and Safety protocols, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for both collaborators and audiences.



Screening roomHillside. Gallery and the Library at Collective.

Exhibition Floor Plan



Exhibition Floor Plan. City Dome Gallery, Hillside Gallery and the Library at Collective.

1. Matthew Robert Hughes, *The Tides of Kilpeck*.
2. Matthew Robert Hughes, untitled ceramic works.
3. Asmaa Jama & Gouled Abdishakour Ahmed, *The Season Of Burning Things*.
4. Fergus Carmichae & Cameron Graham, *Rhadinace*.

*Immersive looping podcast from *Ploughing Old Patterns Raising New Ground*.
Reading Area: Further information on the contents of the exhibition. (Artist publications, journals, books, etc.).

Equipment list

| Item | Quantity | Purpose / Notes |
|--------------------------|----------|--|
| Projector | 3 | For displaying experimental short films |
| Projection Screen | 3 | Paired with projectors for optimal image clarity |
| Speaker (Portable/PA) | 3 | 2 sound plays for podcasts (City Dome Gallery) 1 film sound play for Hillside Gallery |
| Headphones (Over-ear) | 2 | For listening to 2 films in City Dome Gallery |
| Chair | Multiple | For visitor seating in film and reading areas |
| Table | 2 | For setting up reading/study area |
| Display Plinth | 2 | For presenting ceramic works |
| Noise-canceling earplugs | Multiple | For neurodiverse visitors. |

EDI & ETHICS

The exhibition is based on a commitment to ethical practice and the principles of EDI, not just adherence to them. It endeavours to create an empathetic, respectful and reflective curatorial framework which includes female, non-Western and non-white artists and invites participants from a wide range of backgrounds. Drawing on the values articulated by the British Council as diverse, inclusive, open, welcoming and experimental (British Council, 2022), the project uses accessibility as a logistical strategy and conceptual foundation through workshops, live QR feedback and an open digital platform.

Curatorial Ethics

The exhibition embraces art's indeterminacy and invites open interpretation. Respect for artistic agency guides every aspect of our practice: all wall texts, podcast scripts, and digital brochures are co-developed with the participating artists, ensuring their intentions and positionalities shape the narrative. We reject linear, geographic or chronological sequencing in favor of a thematic, non-linear layout that places British folk culture alongside East African myth, fostering intertextual dialogue rather than "othering." "The problem lies not in our hormones or skin color, but in our institutions" (Reilly Maura, 2018). By centering marginalized voices and critically examining exclusionary structures, the exhibition enacts a genuinely inclusive curatorial strategy.

Accessibility

Guided by Carolyn Lazard's (2019) belief that "accessibility is a speculative practice" (Commitment and Practice, p. 10), the exhibition views accessibility as a dynamic, evolving process. According to Collective's official website, detailed accessibility information such as step heights, seating types and washroom signage is provided to support informed, inclusive participation. "Audio description is an important tool for bridging the gap between visual content and sensory inclusion" (p. 13). All films in the exhibition will be accompanied by audio description, developed in collaboration with blind and partially sighted people to ensure clarity and depth.

AUDIENCES

The exhibition *Between Myth* is designed to engage diverse audiences through inclusive curatorial strategies that reflect contemporary practices in participatory and socially engaged art. The project targets four primary audience groups:

1. **Artists and Creative Practitioners:** Individuals working with experimental moving images, sound, and narrative forms rooted in myth and memory.
 2. **Contemporary Art Enthusiasts and Critics:** Audiences interested in interdisciplinary and immersive media experiences.
 3. **Educators and Students:** Those in the fields of art, cultural studies, folklore, and heritage seeking innovative pedagogical tools.
 4. **Migrant and Diasporic Communities:** Individuals whose lived experiences resonate with themes of displacement, memory, and cultural reinvention.
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Accessibility and Experience Design

Claire Bishop (2012) identifies the shift from passive spectatorship to active participation as central to contemporary art practice, particularly in participatory contexts. *Between Myth* adopts this ethos by inviting diverse audiences to co-create meaning through an accessible and inclusive curatorial approach.

The venue, Collective, offers step-free access and flexible gallery layouts to accommodate visitors with mobility needs. Sensory provisions include audio transcripts, noise-canceling earplugs for neurodiverse visitors.

To support linguistic accessibility, all interpretive materials and signage will be available in English and Gaelic, ensuring broader cultural resonance. Digital elements, such as the podcast archive and interactive content, will comply with WCAG 2.1 standards (2024), offering screen reader compatibility, adjustable font sizes, and keyboard navigation.

Cultural Sensitivity

Engagement with migrant and diasporic communities will be conducted with cultural sensitivity, ensuring respectful representation of rituals and traditions. Activities like "Mapping Your Mythological Landscape" will be designed to accommodate various expressive preferences, including non-verbal participation methods.

TIMELINE

The production process of the *Between Myths* project

[illegible]

Exhibition Schedule

| Phase | Date | Description |
|--------------------------|------------------|--|
| Information Release | 15-Jul-25 | Exhibition information, poster, and workshop registration announcement published on the official website and social media platforms. Community-wide participation encouraged. |
| Installation (Set-up) | 29–31 July 2025 | On-site installation at Collective, including projection setup, sound system testing, reading area and plinth arrangement. Accessibility and safety requirements will be followed. |
| Opening Day & Workshop | 1-Aug-25 | Opening remarks. Introduction to the curatorial concept and key exhibiting artists. Special introduction of Fergus Carmichael. |
| | 15:00–15:30 | Opening remarks and artist introduction. |
| | 15:30–15:40 | Group screening of Rhadinace. |
| | 15:40–16:10 | Q&A and dialogue session with artist Fergus Carmichael. |
| | 16:10–17:00 | <i>Mapping Your Own Mythological Landscape</i> : creative workshop (writing, drawing, photography, or audio). |
| Public Exhibition Period | 2–14 August 2025 | Open to the public Wednesday to Sunday, 10:00–17:00. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Accessible for students, working individuals, and families. |
| De-installation | 15-Aug-25 | Technical team and artists will dismantle equipment, collect materials, and restore the venue. |

BUDGET

| Item | Price (£) |
|---|-----------|
| Venue Rental Fee | 1000 |
| Installation Materials Costs | 100 |
| Artist fees (Commission & Artists Talk) | 500 |
| Equipment Rental fee (Borrow from UoE) | N/A |
| Artwork Rental (Films Agreement/digital copyright) | 3864 |
| Exhibition Opening & Workshop (Beverage, Snacks, etc.) | 100 |
| Print and publicity | 100 |
| Reading room resources (artists' publications, books, etc.) | 100 |
| Total (£) | 5764 |

FUNDING

| Item | Price (£) |
|--|-----------|
| Creative Scotland (National Lottery Open Fund for Organisations) | 5700 |
| Own Resources | 64 |
| Total (£) | 5764 |

Creative Scotland Funding

Creative Scotland is the national agency responsible for supporting the development of the arts, screen, and creative industries across Scotland. Funded primarily by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery, it invests in a wide range of initiatives to strengthen Scotland's cultural landscape.

Through its funding programmes, Creative Scotland supports organisations and individual practitioners, enables the creation of new work, and delivers collaborative projects with partners that have cultural and social impact.

READING AREA

The reading area is designed to support deeper engagement with the exhibition’s core themes—myth, materiality, ritual, and migration—by offering a curated selection of interdisciplinary texts. These resources invite visitors to follow their own interpretive paths, tracing connections between folklore, migration, and sensory experience.



To support accessibility, the reading area offers adjustable tables, varied seating, and clear lighting. Texts come in standard and large-print, with QR codes for audio versions. Braille summaries accompany key books. Colored overlays are available to assist visitors with dyslexia, ADHD, or visual stress, ensuring inclusive engagement across physical, sensory, and cognitive needs.

List of reading areas (TBD)

| Title | Author | Year | Relevance |
|--|----------------------|------|--|
| <i>Sheela - na - Gigs: Unravelling an Enigma</i> | Barbara Freitag | 2004 | Comprehensive study of Sheela - na - gig carvings, offering crucial context for Hughes’s <i>The Tides of Kilpeck</i> and its medieval sculptural |
| <i>A Geology of Media</i> | Jussi Parikka | 2015 | Foundational text on “media geologies,” informing the ecological - material critique in Carmichael’s <i>Rhadinace</i> |
| <i>The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain</i> | Ronald Hutton | 1996 | Detailed exploration of ritual calendars (including Clavie - burning), situating folk ceremonies within broader seasonal and political cycles |
| <i>Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora</i> | Nuruddin Farah | 2000 | Oral histories of Somali refugees, resonating with displacement and “ghostly” migration themes in Jama & Ahmed’s <i>The Season of Burning Things</i> |
| <i>Medievalism, Politics and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages</i> | Andrew B. R. Elliott | 2017 | Examines how medieval imagery is repurposed in contemporary culture, paralleling the speculative archaeology of Hughes and the exhibition’s non - linear narrative |
| <i>Foclóir Gaeilge – Béarla</i> | Patrick S. Dinneen | 1927 | Seminal Irish - English dictionary; supports linguistic explorations of names (“Sheela - na - gig”) and multilingual signage |

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