

Ecnoof Petals in the Dark

PRIL 2025

Yiran Gu

GHOST ART NON-PLACE UNDERGROUND LO-FLINTERVENTION

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Curatorial Statement



The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

—Ezra Pound, In a Station of the Metro (1913)^[1]

The exhibition *Echo of Petals in the Dark* unfolds in the transient corridors of Telfer Subway, a historic underpass in Edinburgh. Inspired by Pound's imagist verse, the title reflects the fleeting nature of transit spaces and the momentary appearance of informal, elusive artistic gestures—works that surface briefly, without institutional framing, before vanishing into the fabric of the city. This exhibition seeks to explore such ephemeral practices and their spectral presence in overlooked urban spaces.

This exhibition introduces the term Ghost Art as a curatorial framework grounded in the intersection of non-place and poor image theory. The concept responds to artistic forms that emerge spontaneously within the lost spaces of supermodernity—spaces marked by transience, anonymity, and cultural invisibility, as theorized by Marc Augé. [2] Telfer Subway, a utilitarian underpass defined more by movement than memory, exemplifies such a site. The framework also draws from Hito Steyerl's theory of the poor image, embracing low-resolution, widely circulated, and degraded visual content. [3]

Ghost Art refers to a range of ephemeral, informal, and unauthorized artistic practices that resist institutional frameworks and surface briefly in the margins of the urban landscape. Nomadic and unclassifiable, this form of art navigates between visual culture and social structure, challenging hierarchies of visibility, authorship, and aesthetic legitimacy.



Figure 1-2. Photograph of Telfer Subway. Photo by Yiran Gu, taken on 15 February 2025.

It operates as a resistance to institutional control, artistic tradition, and formal aesthetics, occupying the spectral zones between disappearance and exposure.

The exhibition features artworks by Maria Arena, Tan Xu, Boris Achour, Hannah Black, The Diggers and Lisa Fabian Mondlane that embody Ghost Art and respond directly to the spatial and material conditions of Telfer Subway. These include experimental film and videos, underground publishing, sound installation and installation sculptures, which are integrated into the site's existing textures—damp concrete, residual graffiti, and echoing corridors.

Rather than beautifying the space, the exhibition aim to activate its latent visual and acoustic memory, appearing subtly and momentarily. Often camouflaged or only partially visible, these interventions encourage a mode of encounter grounded in accidental discovery rather than passive viewing. For those attuned to wandering and observing the city—the urban flâneur—Ghost Art may offer a fleeting yet intimate aesthetic experience embedded in the everyday.^[4]

Format of Exhibition and Schedule

Exhibition Dates: 1-30 May 2025 Opening Hours: Tue- Sat, 11:00-19:00

Echo of Petals in the Dark is a cross-media site-specific exhibition in Telfer Subway, featuring videos, installations, sound, and underground prints. The exhibition follows a non-linear, decentralized structure without fixed routes or sections.

O1 Exhibition Opening Event Date: 1 May, 14:00-15:30



Figure 3. Photograph of Telfer Subway. Photo by Yiran Gu, taken on 15 February 2025.

Publishing Programme: *Telfer Subway Memoirs*Date: 30 May

This zine gathers memories and oral stories from Telfer Subway users—residents, performers, commuters. It includes fragments, maps, and unofficial archives, forming a counter-narrative of marginal space. Free copies will be shared on closing day and online.

For: independent publishers, urban researchers, memory scholars, community curators

Public Programme:
Stroll around Telfer Subway
Date: 4, 18 May, 14:00-15:30

This walk invites visitors to slowly move through Telfer Subway and its surrounding streets. Led by the curator and resident artists, it explores Ghost Art through memory, sound, and local history. Participants become urban flâneurs, engaging with marginal visibility and informal space.

For: Urban flâneurs, local residents, history lovers, field researchers

Exhibition Website Project: Echo Archive Launch: May 2025

Echo Archive is a digital platform extending the exhibition. It features a 360° virtual tour, artist files, video records, publications and artist residency archive—offering ongoing access to Ghost Art's themes of marginal visibility, informal media, and urban memory beyond the physical site.

For: visual culture researchers, curators, art students, audiences interested in Ghost Art.

Format of Exhibition and Schedule

05

Artists Residency Programme | Duration: June

Project 1: CAT Yiran Gu - Poor Image Flash Mob

Yiran Gu is a curator and MA Contemporary Art Theory student at ECA. Her work explores curating as art, using lo-fi video and bodily perception. This residency converts her body's movement through Telfer Subway into a degraded digital projection—a brief, anonymous visual glitch. The projection appears only during early commutes and is documented on DV as a "ghost archive."

For: art students, experimental video audiences, sociallyengaged practitioners—those interested in the intersection of body, image compression, and curatorial action.

Project 3: Sound Artist Dayson Yang - Body Echo Improvisation

Dayson Yang is a Peabody Institute composer working with acoustic and electronic sound. In this project, he records body sounds in the tunnel and recomposes them into a site-specific piece played during evening commutes. The work reflects on bodily resonance, hunger, and internal perception in public space.

For: sound artists, improvisers, and sensory researchers interested in acoustic experience and embodied listening

Project 2: CAP Keyi Ju - Non-Place Encounters

Keyi Ju is an ECA CAP student with a background in photography and journalism. She constructs a fictional government broadcast about Telfer Subway, projected as a bureaucratic hallucination. Using low-resolution video and simulated announcements, the work explores power, language, and passive spectatorship in institutional space.

For: researchers of spatial politics, media theorists, critical practitioners those interested in state language, urban control, and spatial perception.



Figure 4. Photograph of Telfer Subway. Photo by Yiran Gu, taken on 15 February 2025.

Artists & Works

Spanning experimental films, sculptures, sound, and underground prints, the selected works explore supermodern marginality and spectral visibility. Referencing Ghost Art, they use lo-fi aesthetics and informal strategies to activate Telfer Subway.

Artists were chosen for conceptual relevance and accessibility. Maria Arena and Lisa Fabian Mondlane work in experimental circuits. Tan Xu, an alumnus of the curator from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, enables collaboration through collegial connection. Boris Achour's flexible gallery, Hannah Black's academic precedents, and The Diggers' publicdomain archive ensure ethical, small-scale feasibility.



Figure 6. Peephole (2000) (left) and Made at Home in China (Part 1, 2, 3, 5) (1997–1999) (right), Tan Xu.

Image source: Video Bureau, https://videobureau.org/artist/xu-tan?lang=en



Figure 5. *Gesu è morto per i peccati degli altri (2014)*, Maria Arena. Image source: e-flux, https://www.e-flux.com/film/652859/gesu-e-morto-per-i-peccati-degli-altri/

1. Maria Arena

Gesu è morto per i peccati degli altri (2014)

Medium: Experimental film 90'00", sound, color

Maria Arena is a Milan-based filmmaker and professor. Her documentary follows trans sex workers in San Berillo, exposing how urban renewal displaces marginal lives. Through Ghost Art's lens, the work foregrounds contested visibility in a non-place erased by power.

2. Tan Xu

• Peephole (2000)

Medium: single-channel video 10'56", PAL, 720 x 576, sound, color Made at Home in China (Part 1, 2, 3, 5) (1997-1999)

Medium: Single-channel video 4 videos: 28'12", 24'29", 33'57", 30'16", PAL, 768x576, sound, color

Tan Xu (b. 1957, Wuhan) is a founding member of the Big Tail Elephant Group and taught at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. His conceptual video works explore language, urban change, and everyday surveillance. Peephole (2000) uses voyeuristic framing to expose shifting public-private boundaries under supermodernity. Made at Home in China (1997–99), a lo-fi series shot across four cities with a Hi-8 camera, documents intimate domestic spaces amid rapid development. Both works reflect Ghost Art's interest in fragmented visibility, informal aesthetics, and peripheral image-making beyond institutional control.

Artists & Works



Figure 7. Free City Publishing (1967–68) and The Digger Papers (1968), The Diggers. Image source: Diggers Archive, https://www.diggers.org/free_city_sheets.htm

3. The Diggers

- Free City Publishing (1967-68)
- The Digger Papers (1968)

Medium: Underground print media Dimensions variable

The Diggers were a 1960s San Francisco activist group blending street performance and radical print. Their DIY publications challenged capitalism through free distribution, forming underground media networks. These works embody Ghost Art's concern with informal circulation, counterinstitutional visibility, and political communication beyond control.



Figure 8. *Bastille (2020)*, Hannah Black. Image source: Arcadia Missa, https://arcadiamissa.com/hannah-black/

4. Hannah Black *Bastille (2020)*

Medium: Sculptural installation bricks, pages from Marquis de Sade's The 120 Days of Sodom, 1785, dimensions variable.

Hannah Black is a New York- and Berlinbased artist and writer. Bastille responds to Telfer Subway's bricked-up stairwell with a walled structure embedded with torn pages from de Sade, evoking institutional violence, colonial memory, and blocked circulation of meaning through language and space.

5. Lisa Fabian Mondlane "I hear her call: Salome...? Dane...? Come ah-come..." (2024)

Medium: Archival radio broadcast, originally aired on Radiophrenia (Glasgow) Duration: 2 x 30', stereo, digital audio archive

lLisa Fabian Mondlane layers processed voice and ritual echoes into ghostly sound fragments, evoking buried presence and emotional residue beneath fractured listening.



Figure 9. "I hear her call: Salome...? Dane...? Come ah-come..." (2024), Lisa Fabian Mondlane. Image source: Radiophrenia, https://radiophrenia.scot/artists/commis sions/mondlane-lisa-fabian/

6. Boris Achour

• *Gyrophare* (1997)
Medium: Installative sculpture
Siren, plastic bag
35 x 22 x 11 cm

• Conatus: Bande-Annonce (2006)

Medium: Sculptural installation, light, text, sound
Dimensions variable





Figure 10-11. Conatus: Bande-Annonce (2006) (left) and Gyrophare (1997) (right), Boris Achour. Image sources: https://borisachour.net/conatus-bande-annonce-conatus-trailer-2006-ok-eng/ (left); http://www.galerieallen.com/en/artistes/oeuvres/1093/boris-achour (right)

Boris Achour (b.1966, Marseille) is a Paris-based artist working across video, installation, and language. Gyrophare and Conatus: Bande-Annonce reframe the police siren as a fragile, suspended object—detached from institutional function. Both works respond to Telfer Subway as a space of marginal control, where symbolic power flickers between authority, absurdity, and decay.

Exhibition Site: Telfer Subway

Telfer Subway is an underground pedestrian underpass in Edinburgh's west district, connecting Fountain Park and Dundee Street. Dating back to the mid-19th century, it once featured a stairway to the Caledonian Railway Dalry Road Station. ^[5] After the station's closure in 1974, the stairwell was sealed with bricks—its blocked entrance still visible today. ^[6]

Over time, the subway has become a marginal space. Its dim lighting, poor safety, and frequent closures make it a place many locals avoid. [7] Yet this forgotten, edge-like character has turned it into a fertile site for Ghost Art.

Since March 2024, anonymous visual interventions (graffiti, Fragmented text, and photographs) which have quietly appeared in the tunnel. These informal acts resist fixed meaning or authorship, forming a visual response to urban indifference. Telfer Subway thus becomes both the physical site and the conceptual core of this exhibition.



Figure 12-14. Photograph of Telfer Subway. Photo by Yiran Gu, taken on 7 April 2025.

Exhibition Site: Telfer Subway

As Telfer Subway is a public urban space, its management falls under the jurisdiction of Edinburgh City Council. This project proposes a simulated contact with the Council to request temporary exhibition use, following current event permit policies.

According to Edinburgh City Council's publicly available guidelines, all public space events must provide the following documentation:

• Public Liability Insurance (PLI) Organisers must secure PLI of no less than £10,000,000 to cover potential personal injury or property damage. Proof of insurance must be submitted four weeks before the event. The exhibition will arrange short-term insurance through a specialist broker (e.g., Keegan & Pennykid), with an estimated premium of £1,000.

Health and Safety Assessment

A detailed risk assessment must outline visitor flow, artwork placement, and emergency response measures. The exhibition will appoint a project coordinator to prepare this document, covering audience movement during peak hours, equipment safety, cable layout, and lighting control.

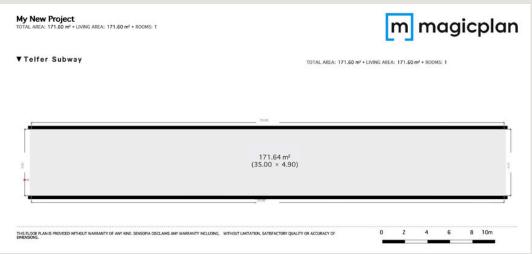


Figure 15. Floor plan of Telfer Subway scanned using Magicplan. Digital measurement conducted by Yiran Gu, February 2025.

Site Scan: Telfer Subway Dimensions

Using the Magicplan app, the tunnel was digitally scanned to assess exhibition feasibility. The space measures approximately 35.00 meters in length and 4.90 meters in width, totaling 171.64 square meters. This linear, enclosed underground site provides a focused and immersive environment for installing multi-sensory works.

Exhibition Visual & Floor Plan

This exhibition respects the original spatial character and public function of Telfer Subway. Following a principle of non-intrusive intervention, the curatorial and display strategies emphasize site memory, visual traces, and free movement.

Bidirectional Access

Given that Telfer Subway allows passage from both ends, the exhibition has no fixed entrance or exit. Visitors may enter from either side and navigate freely, breaking traditional linear viewing orders and encouraging a drifting, flâneur-like experience.

Visual Design Concept

The exhibition's visual identity draws from Edinburgh's ubiquitous scaffolding structures. Aluminium tubing is used to install artworks, echoing the city's themes of maintenance, reassembly, and temporary intervention. The system is mobile and stable, symbolizing spatial repair and reactivation.

Non-obstructive Display Principle

All artworks are suspended or placed near the underpass's central axis, avoiding wall-mounted presentation. This ensures that existing graffiti and anonymous photography on both walls remain visible—demonstrating respect for the site's spontaneous visual culture.



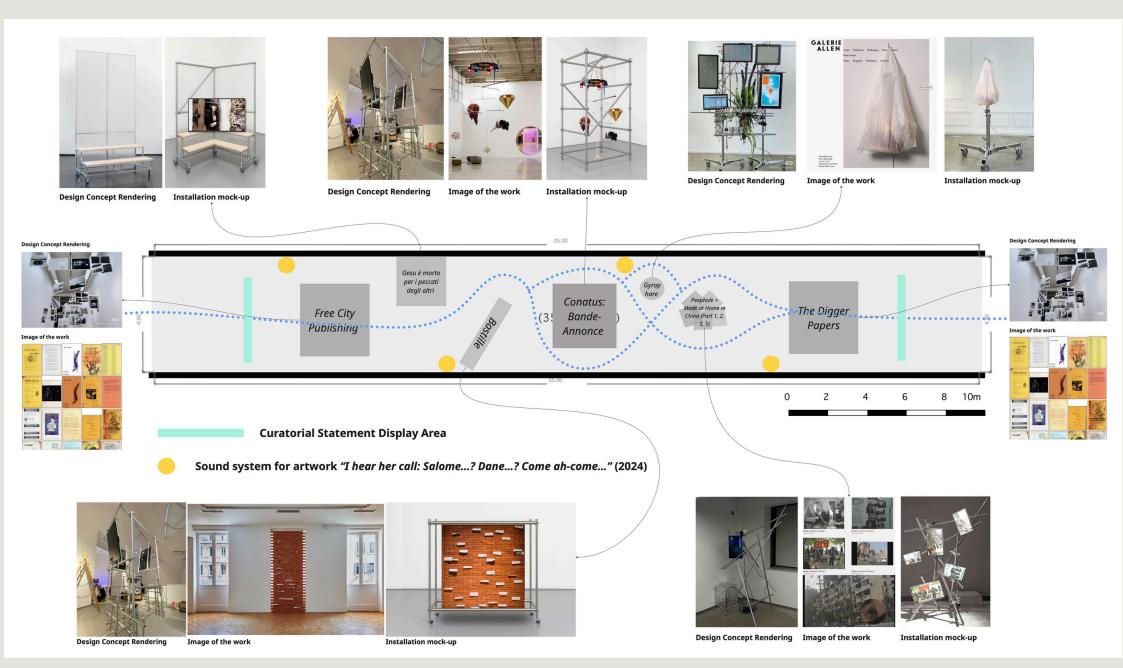
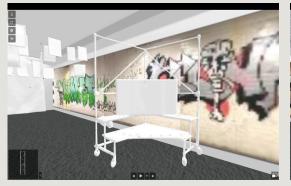


Figure 19. Exhibition floor plan of Echo of Petals in the Dark, with visual references and installation mock-ups of featured artworks. Designed and compiled by Yiran Gu, April 2025.

Link to 3D Model: https://www.artsteps.com/view/67f5311a4bb9db1d5fb6457d

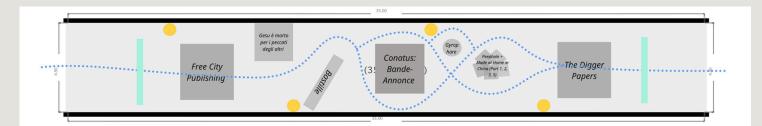






Exhibition 3D Model Overview Free City Publishing

Gesu è morto per i peccati degli altri Bastille











Bande-Annonce

Gyrophare

Tan Xu's 5 Vedio works

The Diggers Papers

Figure 20-27. 3D Model View of Echo of Petals in the Dark, showing spatial arrangement and artwork placement in Telfer Subway. Rendered by Yiran Gu, April 2025.

Ethics and EDI

Collaborative Curating & Interdependent Ethics

This exhibiton rejects the independent curator narrative and embraces curating as a collaborative and interdependent process. ^[9] It centers co-creation through engagement with urban flâneurs and nearby residents. The exhibition includes existing tunnel visuals in its design, rather than removing them. The public programme Stroll around Telfer Subway fosters knowledge through walking and dialogue. The publishing project Telfer Subway Memoirs invites residents to co-narrate the space. Every participating group contributes to meaning-making within the curatorial structure, reinforcing a model of shared authorship. ^[10]

Care and Accessibility Design

The exhibiton treats care as an ethical curatorial act by embedding accessibility into its design. [11] As the under passway is a daily route, detour signage will be placed at both ends. Spatial planning considers the impact of stairs and narrow areas. Trained staff will assist visitors and provide wheelchairs if needed. [12] By embedding bodily difference into the structure, accessibility is not treated as compensation, but as a response to structural asymmetry—acknowledging how diverse bodies navigate public space differently. [13]

Cultural Sensitivity & Reflexivity

The exhibition continually adjusts within institutional limits and cultural sensitivity, using Turning method to respond the curatorial logic. ^[14] It prioritizes the ethics of who speaks, and who is seen. In presenting Maria Arena's Gesu è morto per i peccati degli altri(2014), the exhibition explicitly avoids sensationalism or moral frames. It highlights visibility crises through respectful language, refusing to reproduce queerness as otherness, and instead adopts a context-based, experience-driven curatorial approach. ^[15]





Figure 28–29. Photograph of Telfer Subway. Photo by Yiran Gu, taken on 7 April 2025.

Project Timeline

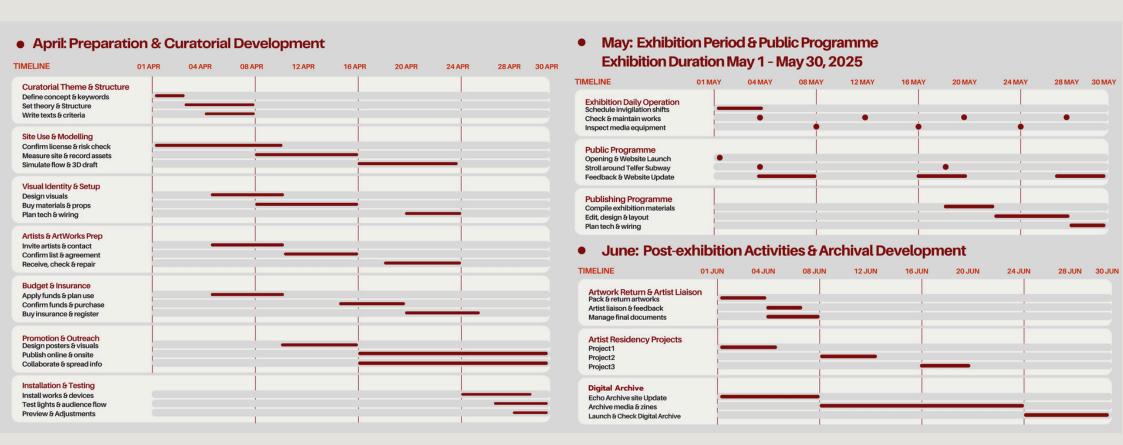


Figure 30-31. Project timeline showing the exhibition planning, implementation, and post-production phases from April to June 2025. Created by Yiran Gu, April 2025.

Budget and Funding

Budget Notes

This budget is developed with reference to the funding thresholds and guidelines of Creative Scotland's Small to Medium Project Funding and the Hope Scott Trust, both of which support small-scale, research-led or community-engaged visual arts initiatives.

Artist fees are calculated based on the a-n (The Artists Information Company) 2022 guidance on standard day rates for visual artists. While artist Tan Xu, a former professor at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and an undergraduate mentor of curator Yiran Gu, has kindly agreed to contribute works without a formal exhibition fee, a token honorarium is still reserved as a gesture of professional appreciation. All artists participating in the residency programmes contribute on a voluntary basis and do not receive fees.

The estimated cost of Public Liability Insurance (PLI) is based on current short-term exhibition rates offered by Keegan & Pennykid, a UK-based specialist broker for cultural projects.

Income						
Category	Project	Amount (£)				
1. Project	Creative Scotland Small Project Funding	2,000				
Funding	Hope Scott Trust Funding	2,000				
alf saland For	Fundraising Activity: Exhibition Merchandise	500				
elf-raised Fur	Self-funded and Potential Partner Sponsorship	500				
Total		5,000				

Expenditure					
Category	Project	Amount (£)			
	Installation materials (wall-mount, recycled steel structure)	500			
1. Production & Equipment	Exhibition equipment rental (projection, sound, lighting)	0			
	Exhibition visuals (posters, directional signs, guide brochures)	50			
	Maria Arena (1 video work)	600			
	Tan Xu (5 video works)	450			
2. Artist Fee	Boris Achour (2 installations)	600			
	Hannah Black (1 installation)	500			
	Lisa Fabian Mondlane (1 sound work)	500			
	The Diggers (2 sets of prints)	0			
3. Personnel & Site	Volunteers technical & invigilation support (food subsidy)	200			
4 Bublic Bus sussesses	Open event snacks & drinks	100			
4.Public Programme	Stroll volunteers support	30			
5. Publication Programme	Zine design	0			
5. Fublication Flogramme	Printing cost	50			
	Yiran Gu	0			
6. Artist Residency	Keyi Ju	0			
7 10/-11/ 41-1	Dayson Yang	0			
7.Website Archive	Echo Archive & 360° Tour Tech	300			
8. insurance	Public Liability Insurance (PLI)	1,000			
Total		4,880			
Contingency Fund (<10%)		120			
Balance		0			
Figure 22.22 Books	talela continua construta de la const				

Figure 32-33. Budget table outlining projected income sources and expenditure categories for *Echo of Petals in the Dark*. Prepared by Yiran Gu, April 2025.

Technical and Production

Equipment Sources

- Screens, speakers, and lights from ECA Bookit (free loan)
- Aluminium frame reclaimed and adapted by curatorial team
- Backup rentals possible via suppliers (e.g., Vision Events

Team Roles

- Curator: Plans layout and tech setup
- ECA Volunteers: Assist with transport, install, and testing
- Invigilators: Rotate daily for space checks and support

Equipment	Quantity
Small Monitors	5 units
Medium Monitor	1 unit
Directional Speakers	4 units
Portable Spotlights ¹	10 units
Modular Aluminium Frame ²	1 set
Clear Polycarbonate Panels ³	2 panels
Swivel Caster Wheels⁴	3 sets (4 wheels/set)

Figure 34. Budget table outlining projected income sources and expenditure categories for Echo of Petals in the Dark. Prepared by Yiran Gu, April 2025.

- ¹ Portable spotlights will be mounted on the aluminium frame structure for flexible directional lighting within the tunnel.
- ² The aluminium frame is adapted from reclaimed scaffolding used in city maintenance, structurally verified for safety before installation.
- ³ Clear polycarbonate panels will be used to build the display frame for the film *Gesu* è morto per i peccati degli altri (2014).
- ⁴ Swivel caster wheels are used for assembling movable display stands for artworks.

Other Considerations

Archiving & Copyright

All video, sound, and publishing content remains the property of the artists. Project materials will be archived on the exhibition website for research use.

Audience Response & UGC

Feedback and anonymous survey will be provided. Selected responses may be included in the digital archive with permission.

Language & Accessibility

All texts will be available in English and Simplified Chinese. The website allows future expansion to other languages.

Future Collaboration Opportunities

The project may develop into talks, publications, or academic research. It is adaptable for future collaborations or re-exhibitions.

Sustainability Considerations

Reclaimed materials (e.g., scaffolding, panels) will be used. Structures and prints will be reused or recycled after the exhibition.

Notes

- [1] Ezra Pound, Personae: The Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound (London: Faber & Faber, 2001).
- [2] Marc Augé, 'From Places to Non-Places' (United Kingdom: Verso, 2009).
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- [5] Traynor Kim, 'Geograph:: Telfer Subway © Kim Traynor Cc-by-Sa/2.0', accessed 31 January 2025, https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2559634.
- [6] 'Dalry Road RAILSCOT', 2018, https://railscot.co.uk/img/63/63837.
- [7] 'Petition Plea for CCTV in Telfer Subway The Edinburgh Reporter', accessed 31 January 2025, https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2011/11/petition-plea-for-cctv-in-telfer-subway/?print=print; 'Telfer Subway Closed for Urgent Wall Repairs', Edinburgh News, 10 July 2018, https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/telfer-subway-closed-for-urgent-wall-repairs-277360.
- [8] Richard Webb, 'Geograph:: Telfer Subway © Richard Webb', accessed 31 January 2025, https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7480745.
- [9] Danielle Ayelet Aldouby-Efraim, 'Ethics of Care in Collaborative Art Practices', Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education 2024, no. 1 (18 December 2024), https://doi.org/10.17077/2326-7070.33856; Povilas Gumbis, Curating as Collaboration: Conversation with Rupert Resident Amy Watson, 8 January 2024, https://echogonewrong.com/curating-as-collaboration-conversation-with-rupert-resident-amy-watson/.
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- [11] Amanda Cachia, Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023); Molly Joyce and Sandy Guttman, 'Perspective: Highlighting Disabled Experience through an Interdisciplinary and Socially Engaged Art Project', 1st ed., vol. 1 (Routledge, 2023), 99–110, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003171935-10; Kirsten Maar, 'How to Do Things with Care: Feminist Curating in Dance ONCURATING', ONCURATING, no. 55 (January 2023): 31–36.
- [12] Johanna Hedva, 'Disability Access Rider', 1st ed., vol. 1 (Routledge, 2023), 289-92, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003171935-29.
- [13] Grant H. Kester, Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2014); Irit Rogoff, 'Turning', E-Flux, no. #00 (November 2008), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/.
- [14] Laus Katrine Østergaard, The Caring Curator: Exploring Conditions for Care in Curatorial Practices, 2023, https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-221701.
- [15] bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom (New York: Routledge, 1994).

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