Language - Art Project 2020-21

Showcasing a global collaboration between UAL students across the world exploring the possibilities of language.

The Language-Art Project explores the many facets of this beautiful, crazy, exasperating, subtle, potent and magical thing we call 'language'.

The project brings students together from across UAL to share and discuss all things linguistic – and to create language-themed art. This art has been produced collaboratively or as solo works, and in any viable medium. The first Language-Art exhibition was held at Central Saint Martins in December 2019. Since then, the transition to online (for joining up, meeting, collaborating and exhibiting) has presented not only the inevitable challenges, but also scope for adventure and experimentation. The range of media used in this year’s exhibition is strikingly rich and varied.

The project is cross-college, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural. It includes Home and International students, Undergraduate and Postgraduate, and encompasses a stunningly diverse range of inspirations, interests and expertise.
The poetry of combined language(s)

Laura Erviti
Eva Brá Barkardóttir
Francesca Barizza
Esmeralda Momferratou
Himarni Moonasinghe
Marine One
Débora Caro Reyes
Yulin Huang
Madina Masimova
Claudia Sambo
Jack Carr
Tanya Hlavatskykh.

Language, space and place

Fatima Rodriguez Montañez
Madina Masimova
Yulin Huang
Yu Shao Lo.

Graffiti art: multi-layered, multi-vocal

Kuba Karczmarczyk
Aarony Bailey.
More than just meaning

Alberte Agerskov
Shivani Mathur
Nibras Al-Salman
Nina Żuk
Roberta Borroni.

See projects →
More than just meaning

Memory, storytelling, testimony

Alberte Agerskov
Ona Telos (Tanya Hlavatskyh/ Glavatskix)
Zichen Wang
Donna Poingdestre.

See projects →
Memory, storytelling, testimony

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the exhibiting artists for their enthusiasm, skill and imagination (and for being so generous with their time):

Aarony Bailey, Alberte Thorning Agerskov, Claudia Sambo, Débora Caro Reyes, Donna Poingdestre, Esmeralda Momferratou, Eva Brá Barkardóttir, Fatima Rodriguez Montañez, Francesca Barizza, Himarni Moonasinghe, Jack Carr, Kuba Karczmarczyk, Laura Erviti Estruch, Madina Masimova, Marine One, Nibras Al-Salman, Nina Żuk, Roberta Borroni, Shivani Mathur, Tanya Hlavatskyh, Yulin Huang, Yu-Shao Lo, Zichen Wang

...and thank you to all other students who joined our group, came to our virtual gatherings, shared knowledge and insights, and generally supported the project.

Karen Harris
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International Student Experience Programme
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The poetry of combined language(s)

Mindscapes
Sound art, digital art. Video, 2 minutes.

This piece talks about the language soundscapes of the mind. In particular, the Mindscape of our two minds.

We have written two pieces of automatic writing: the surrealists used it to loosen the boundaries between subconscious and conscious mind. To get in the state of relaxation and focus on the mental landscape, we have written them after meditation. Different languages of thought coexist in us: English and our native tongues Catalan, Spanish and Icelandic. To recreate our thoughts as they are, we recorded our pieces in each language that inhabits ourselves.

Juxtaposing sentences from both pieces, we wrote a Surreal Poem, with all our languages sounding together.

Artist bios
Laura Erviti and Eva Brá Barkardóttir
Laura Erviti is studying MA Fine Arts Digital at Central Saint Martins. She is particularly interested in the subconscious dialogues of dreams, and how culture affects our futures.

She speaks fluent Catalan, Spanish and English, and B1 level of French and German.

Eva Brá Barkardóttir is an Icelandic artist and recent graduate from MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art. She is interested in dissecting and inspecting human nature, often through the lens of an absurd, parallel universe.

Link to video work: https://vimeo.com/536473385
Still from Listen to you through your eyes by Francesca Barizza, Esmeralda Momferratou, Himarni Moonasinghe, Marine One

Listen to you through your eyes

Video, 2 minutes.

Coming from four different countries, we were interested in exploring how language derives from the need to define meanings, and how language in turn affects the interpretation of a meaning itself. This notion was explored through repeatedly translating a text between our mother tongues, until its meaning became obscure. After some initial experiments, we used an Italian poem by Nicola Coppola which was translated consecutively by each of us to our own language, then to English using Google translate, and so on. We visualised these different interpretations (artificial/our own) using video, distorting the words, voices and images in a literal way to reflect the alteration of the text's meaning.

Initial experiments (Word 40KB).

Artist bios
Francesca Barizza, Esmeralda Momferratou, Himarni Moonasinghe, Marine One

Francesca Barizza is studying BA Graphic Design at Camberwell College of Art. Her practice is focused on editorial design and illustration. She is Italian but has lived in Spain and France as well, and she is interested in how languages mix and create new meanings through translation.

Esmeralda Momferratou is studying MA Fine Arts Digital (Year 1) at Central Saint Martins. In her practice she combines documentary filmmaking, video projection sculptures, and installation. She is from Athens, Greece.

Himarni Moonasinghe is studying MA Art and Science following undergraduate studies in Neuroscience and is learning/relearning her mother tongue, Sinhalese.

Marine One, from Japan, is studying MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins. Her practice varies from painting to digital art. She is interested in how language influences our self representation.

Link to video work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sxhwB8R4c8
Somewhere in the flyway

Hand-bound book, 16cm x 12cm x 0.4cm.

Somewhere in the flyway is a hand-bound book that presents an instinctive dialogue between two artists, sparking from a collective archive of photographs taken of either a) an object, souvenir or b) a fleeting moment captured through the window of a car, bus, train. These fragments of the land reflect an exchange of memories that only exist in each respective language, attached to the time and place, untranslatable. In turn, an abstract space is created from the absurd mix - where there is true freedom in drifting along the flyway.

Artist bios
Débora Caro Reyes and Yulin Huang

Débora Caro (she/her) is a Chilean visual artist currently studying MA Publishing at London College of Communication and works with the concepts of resilience, childhood and home. She speaks Spanish, English and German.

Yulin Huang (she/her) studies MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martin and is intrigued by the concept of memory vs. documentation. She is Taiwanese/Kiwi and speaks English and Mandarin.

See the book →

Somewhere in the flyaway by Débora Caro Reyes and Yulin Huang

Link to video: https://youtu.be/lIAK4hZLOyc
Poetionally

Poetionally is a poem and virtual gallery that celebrates the re-contextualising of language fragments when taken from others’ conversations.

The poem was born out of the collected digital conversations from the five artists - undergoing numerous stages of adding, cutting, and reconfiguring by anyone in the group at any point in time.

Through analogue processes such as drawing and hand-writing, these ‘physical’ fragments were made from our individual interpretations of the collaged text, and displayed eerily in the shared space.

See the poem and web VR gallery.

Artist bios

Madina Masimova, Yulin Huang, Claudia Sambo, Jack Michael Carr, Tanya Hlavatskykh

Madina Masimova is a Spatial Designer, Artist and Creator. Her practice focuses on creating and designing spaces and environments in the conjunction of technology, art, and science. She has great interest in outer space design.

Yulin Huang (she/her) studies MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins and is intrigued by the concept of memory vs. documentation. She is Taiwanese/Kiwi and speaks English and Mandarin.

Claudia Sambo has recently completed an MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art. Her practice engages with failure and the futility of effort. Through language she explores the fallibility of communication and the unintentionally poetic.

Ona Telos (the artist name of Tanya Hlavatskykh/Glavatskix) is a recent MA Fine Art graduate at Chelsea. Her works explore information and art philosophy. She grew up in a bilingual Ukrainian-Russian family and speaks five languages.

Jack is a performance student at Wimbledon, a passionate storyteller, enjoying books from all over. Though not fluent, he finds fragments of different languages and frequently makes up his own.

See the gallery → Poetionally
Language, space and place

Ginnet
Digital collage/photography.

Ginnet: a passageway between two spaces. A narrow strip often between terraced houses, a space considered to be a medium of communication between its residents. Now a space occupied by waste. What does this suggest for the online space as our current mode of communication? Communication no longer relies on words or on our physical presence. We now exist and cohabit in the online. What does this suggest for language?

Words become meaningless just as places become obsolete.

Artist bio
Fatima Rodriguez Montañez

Fatima Rodriguez Montañez is studying MA Performance Design & Practice (Year 1) at Central Saint Martins. She uses performance as a vehicle for exchange and experimentation, where she binds the space between the staged and the imaginary. Her first language is Spanish.
Poetic Spaces

VR immersive world, poetry, 3D, digital. View the Poetic Spaces VR world.

Have you ever wondered of how poems looked like if they were spaces? Poetic Spaces are transformations of poems, written by Madina, into spaces. Having great interest in exploration of spaces, she investigated spatiality of language and ways to create environments by envisioning poems. Every time she writes a poem, she is imagining worlds behind them. There are stories and feelings in each poem expressed by language. Now, she is expressing language through spaces and invites you to visit them.

Artist bio

Madina Masimova

Madina Masimova is a Spatial Designer, Artist and Creator. Her practice focuses on creating and designing spaces and environments in the conjunction of technology, art, and science. She has great interest in outer space design.

See the work ➔
Poetic Spaces
Imaginative Lives of Signs
Photography, collage, 3D.

Imaginative Lives of Signs is a portraiture of language in architecture, insight into Cities of Signs. Cities of Signs is a type of cities described by Marco Polo in Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino. During travelling inside her home country, Azerbaijan, Madina noticed similarity to the Cities of Signs in a city Sheki. Looking into signs, she imagined them turning into spaces and reflected on the power of language. What if one uses signs as inspirations for creating architectural entities? Thus, she created spaces Imaginative Lives of Signs in her own vision. She presents a journey of signs becoming modern spaces through her imagination.

Artist bio
Madina Masimova
Madina Masimova is a Spatial Designer, Artist and Creator. Her practice focuses on creating and designing spaces and environments in the conjunction of technology, art, and science. She has great interest in outer space design.
The Train is an Anxious Space

Digital drawing and text.

The Train is an Anxious Space is a reflection on the extraordinary and strange space that is the everyday train. The text undergoes a pseudo-analysis of why the mode of transport evokes such uneasy impressions whilst referencing Foucault's elaboration on heterotopias in his essay Of Other Spaces.

Artist bio

Yulin Huang

Yulin Huang (she/her) studies MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins and is intrigued by the concept of memory vs. documentation. She is Taiwanese/Kiwi and speaks English and Mandarin.
Taipei Poetry Map

Digital drawing and text. Explore the artwork.

- Click on the map markers to activate each 360° view.
- Turn on the sound of your device.
- Hover your mouse over the lettering that pops out from the images, to hear the various sentences spoken. These can combine to form a poem.
- Download the poem text.

This artwork allows visitors to explore a number of different 360° panorama views of busy streets in Taipei, where you are invited to collect sentences from people talking and then use those sentences to make your own poem which can be downloaded.

This artwork is for desktop only.

Artist bio
Yu Shao Lo

Yu Shao Lo studies MA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins. The art practice is mainly site-specific installation in the urban environment. Yu Shao Lo is a Taiwanese artist and speaks English, Mandarin and Taiwanese.
Graffiti art: multi-layered, multi-vocal

Language and Accent Medley

Mixed media on paper
1.5m x 1.5m

The artwork is a response to people completing a questionnaire on how they perceive languages and accents. I photographed between individual layers that represented a person's answers and created a time-lapse to emphasise the laboriousness. The nature of a graffiti wall is that it gets overlapped with anything from beautiful art to nonsense, so I embraced these qualities in the process. I created the piece motivated after discussing ideas with Aarony Bailey. I am pleased with my drawing instincts after several months of no practice and the engagement from the 20 people contributing to my layers who provided insightful and fascinating answers.

Artist bio
Kuba Karczmarczyk

Kuba Karczmarczyk studies Fine Art Photography at Camberwell College of Art (Year 2). He is interested in how others perceive the world based on the languages and accents they know. Kuba is Polish and speaks fluent Polish, English and basic Spanish.

Time-lapse documenting the process.

See the work →
Language and Accent Medley
Bathroom Stall
Cardboard box, 15cm x 15cm x 23.5cm

I wanted to look at language as a way of communication, more precisely, how young people socialise with one another and how we choose to speak when we’re anonymous. This led me to the idea of a school bathroom littered with graffiti, a place where teens can hide behind a pen and write whatever they want. I wanted to focus on youth slang and particular words/phrases that are popular within my generation (Gen-Z). I further developed my idea with Kuba Karczmarczyk, who also wanted to explore graffiti, but with a focus on bilingual/multilingual people as opposed to youth culture.

Artist bio
Aarony Bailey

Aarony Bailey is a BA Fine Art (Year 1) student at Central Saint Martins. She is a Black British artist whose work often revolves around youth and pop culture.
More than just meaning

egaugnal on no yromem

Interactive PDF (containing web links)

The letter is a letter to a letter that I once wrote. Or many letters that I wrote many times, that we wrote, that were made up of letters and together created a bundle of letters, with words, without words, thoughts, sounds, lines. The letters all had a meaning, a message, a direction, but often came from within without a higher literal linguistic sense, sensation. The letters now finally maybe make some sense, and can be understood only by engaging with touch towards a tentative eroision of taxonomic control of thought.

Artist bio

Alberte Agerskov – in collaboration with Adam Muscat, Anna Petermann, Min Zhang, Moyu Yang

Alberte Agerskov is studying MA Fine Art (year 1) at Central Saint Martins. Her practice is currently researching a non-anthropocentric consciousness of the landscape and the human body tied to a search for the new role of the object, within and with a double sided understanding of matter that is both physical and spiritual.

Alberte is from Denmark, but lives in Italy and speaks French and Italian.

*Please note the Interactive PDF with web links is no longer available*
Dialogue

Dialogue is a collective of four short videos that emerged from silent dialogues. The dialogue began with artist Shivani Mathur, silently sharing her works with her colleagues, co-artists, friends and indeed strangers during lockdown.

The dialogues lead to self-reflection, friendships and inspiration and very quickly the artwork shared was no longer the focus - the dialogue itself became the art - a currency and the language to inspire and to stay inspired.

Artist bio
Shivani Mathur

In her practice, Shivani explores what happens if we focus our awareness on that which is 'invisible'. Can focussing on the unspoken, the unobserved language be the path to rise, to awaken and to be free? Shivani Mathur is at Central Saint Martins, MA Art and Science.

Dialogue 2. The language of the elements.
Anita Chanda in dialogue with Shivani Mathur
https://youtu.be/DSO1uGlu2as

Dialogue 3. The currency of inspiration.
Shivani Mathur in conversation with a fund manager who prefers to stay anonymous.
https://youtu.be/1k9vpN8HO5M

Dialogue 4: Impermanence- the language of beauty.
Shivani Mathur - a dialogue with herself.
https://youtu.be/J_8cBByo2kE
**In between**

**Interactive PDF**

This work began as an exploration of the power of misunderstanding: as far as pronunciation is concerned, it became evident how – theoretically – there is a clear ‘right’ and a clear ‘wrong’ way of pronouncing a word. However, in real-life, subjective experiences, we often find ourselves in an in-between where ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ lose their meanings. This is the space where the awkwardness of misunderstanding takes place.

**Artist bios**

**Nina Żuk and Roberta Borroni**

Nina Żuk is an MA Publishing student and BA Modern Languages graduate. She is passionate about the encounter of different languages and dialects, travel, literary translation, and graphic novels.

Roberta Borroni is an MA Fine Art student at Central Saint Martins. Some of the ideas she is particularly interested in are process, encounter, and exchange. Roberta’s native language is Italian.

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**Arabic calligraphy series**

**Artist bio**

**Nibras Al-Salman**

Nibras Al-Salman is studying for a BA Ceramic Design (first year) at Central Saint Martins.

**In a dream**

In this piece I tried to explore the synergy between decorative patterns on middle eastern ceramic pieces and Kufi Arabic calligraphy. I was interested in the abstract forms on the ceramic pieces that resembled calligraphy forms. Like the other piece in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.
Arabic calligraphy series continued pt. 2

Facing my history

My aim was to create luminous colours jostling for space on the page. The piece is a melange of southern Asian textile prints and highlights of Arabic calligraphy. Digitally manipulated to bring to the fore the colours imbued in the layered images. Like the other pieces in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.

The March of Letters

The image is reminiscent of light shining through layers of transparent objects. Calligraphic forms are dissolved into layered images from painted textile pieces. Like the other pieces in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.

Blue is not just a colour

I started with southern Asian geometric and organic patterns extracted from textile prints and masks. These were overlayed with 9th century Arabic calligraphy. The images were digitally manipulated to accentuate certain colours and create interplay between the patterns and the calligraphy. Like the other pieces in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.
Arabic calligraphy series continued pt. 3

When Days Have Colours

The image is reminiscent of light shining through layers of transparent objects. Calligraphic forms are dissolved into layered images from painted textile pieces. Like the other pieces in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.

The Colour of Memories

The objects and patterns that I amalgamated on this image are evoked by distant memories of my early years. I tried to bring to the fore and brighten faded images from the deep recesses of my mind. Arabic calligraphy forms an integral part of the patterns decorating the objects making this image. Like the other pieces in this series, it celebrates the patterns of calligraphy as forms rather than the meaning expressed by the words. I intend to communicate with the patterns to a wider audience than those familiar with the language.

Artist bio

Nibras Al-Salman

Nibras Al-Salman is studying for a BA Ceramic Design (first year) at Central Saint Martins.
Memory, storytelling, testimony

ACCRETION

Film
4 minutes 13 seconds
Director: Alerte Agerskov

What happens when you are between languages? Between memories? Between places? What happens when you are inside connections with other humans, yet somehow feeling more connected with another reality, just as potent? Earth? Rocks? Dreams? Does there, underneath our constructed languages that are used, misused and constantly translated, mistranslated and misunderstood from one to another, lie other relations, other ways of communicating? The short film, Accretion, evolves around matter and mind accumulating between us and on the surface of the earth. Thoughts on our abstract understanding of reality, in a distortion of time and space.

Artist bio
Alerte Agerskov

Alerte Agerskov is studying MA Fine Art (year 1) at Central Saint Martins. Her practice is currently researching a non-anthropocentric consciousness of the landscape and the human body, tied to a search for the new role of the object, within and with a double-sided understanding of matter that is both physical and spiritual.

Alerte is from Denmark, but lives in Italy and speaks French and Italian.
Types without a title
(2021)

Wooden types, plywood
44cm x 44 cm

A panel made of wooden letters that were found at a burnt-out printing house. It is composed of different-sized letters of the Ukrainian and Russian alphabets chaotically mixed with each other, but making up a single integral composition. It is a meditation on what it means to be born into a bilingual family. The artwork also reflects on how to survive a traumatic experience when the two countries from which these languages originate are in a state of insoluble conflict and war.

Artist bio
Ona Telos (Tanya Hlavatskykh / Glavatskix)

Ona Telos (the artist name of Tanya Hlavatskykh/ Glavatskix) is a recent MA Fine Art graduate at Chelsea College of Art. Her works explore information and art philosophy. She grew up in a bilingual Ukrainian-Russian family and speaks five languages.

Untitled/20210415

Video
4 minutes

How could a Story be told? Or how could a narration be present? The text-based video installation simulating a typewriter and projecting on the artist's body explores the possibility of narration. A story told through a third-person perspective. A journey presents how "she" misrepresented herself and struggled with her identity. It shows how "she" and people around her are deeply affected by gender binary thinking and misogyny culture in China. In the video, "she" thought only boys could be strong, indicating that girls always be seen as fragile by default and girls are mostly judged by appearance, whereas boys are not. These deep-rooted thoughts and oppression prompted her "afraid of being a girl."

Artist bio
Zichen Wang

Zichen Wang is studying MA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art. Text and video have been central to her practice. Zichen is Chinese and speaks Mandarin and English.

See the work
Untitled/20210415

Still from Untitled/20210415 by Zichen Wang
My Knees Own Arms Contact

Acrylic, gouache, paper on wood panel
30 x 30cm

I have been exploring objects as witnesses which stemmed from a broken record I received at the beginning of my MFA that belonged to my mother whom I lost as a child over 40 years ago. This record's functionality is compromised as it is broken but is treasured as my only connection to her. Through this project I revaluate my position as a mother of three grown children within the maiden mother crone analogy through the combination of testimonial writing, scratching of surfaces and image also implying marks of cleaning, scrubbing.

Artist bio
Donna Poingdestre

Donna Poingdestre is studying MFA (year 1) at Central Saint Martins. She is currently combining personal writing and exploration of objects as witnesses within her painting practice.
Additional links

• Read more on **Student reflections on the Language Art Project**

• Listen to the **Post-Grad Community Open Studios Podcast Series: Language Art Project**

If you have any questions regarding the Language-Art Project, please contact Karen Harris (k.harris@arts.ac.uk)

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