

Title: Shoreline

Date: 24 May - 18 July

PV: 7 - 10 pm, Friday 23 May 2025

Artists: Maria Thereza Alves, Rachael Louise Bailey, Seana Gavin, Bianca Hlywa, Yulia Iosilzon, YaYa Yajie Liang, Hannah Rowan, and Rain Wu.

Shorelines are places of constant, visible change, perceivable over hours instead of millennia. They were the location of the tetrapod's uncomfortable, wriggly and exhausting first steps or slithers within the intertidal zone between 390 - 360 million years ago, and they continue to shape the evolution of life today, serving as dynamic habitats where organisms must continually adapt to shifting tides and changing climates.

*Shoreline* is an exploration of this unique part of our world and its significance to humans, highlighting the ecological, geo-political, and aesthetic significance of coastal environments whilst understanding them as natural thresholds and areas of contamination-as-collaboration.

Providing us with hardy, diverse ecosystems and natural boundaries, Shorelines operate in contrast to our human understanding of a boundary or border – the limit of an area or designated separation – and instead are thresholds marked by ceaseless negotiation. “It is a site of arrivals and departures, of safe harbours and hostile intrusions. At once embedded in local traditions and subject to industrial development, it hosts encounters between different populations and environments, the terrestrial and the aquatic.”<sup>[1]</sup>

These connection points are incubators for a huge variety of life and a strong example of surviving and living together through collaborative and symbiotic means. As a space of constant change and therefore constant vulnerability, Anna Sting's notion of contamination as a collaborative act holds relevance as it is a space reliant on the unfolding relationships and encounters of different species, human and non-human. For instance, the tides help naturally regulate crab

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<sup>1</sup> Erika Balsom (<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/114/366065/shoreline-movements/>)

populations by allowing birds partial access to eat them; and the Gulf of Bothnia, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf are all examples of designated borders created naturally by coastlines, some of which are seeing escalating crises partially exacerbated by shipping channels.

Having grown up in a seaside town in the UK, Hannah Rowan has had a longtime fascination with water and its role in connecting humans to earth. The works *Undersea* (2023) and *To Hold an Ocean* (2023) materialises Rowan's research around marine ecosystems and the intertidal zone, looking at notions of time and memory in water, and the fragility and resilience of aquatic lifeforms. Comfortably fitting into the palm of your hand, oyster shells have been used to encapsulate her research as they hold "atmospheric memories" carried through water encoding time and events in calcite layers, like the strata in rocks. They also improve water quality, increase marine biodiversity, and protect shorelines from flood surges, playing an important part in their self-regulation.

Maria Thereza Alves's short film *Along the Coast* (2003) documents a walk taken by the artist whilst on a residency. Having seen no animals for the entirety of her time spent there, Alves captures the moment she sees a dolphin in water contrasted with a dolphin balloon being sold nearby. Alongside the environmental commentary of this juxtaposition, the film regards the notion of cuteness in nature and our obsession with protecting animals or locations that have aesthetic appeal; coastal areas regularly fit into this category for their idyllic imagery that has become a common trope in media.

It is by no means an accident that *Shoreline* has been chosen to be realised on the island Mallorca, surrounded by 555 Kilometres of coastline. Rain Wu's series *The Sea Rises and Totally Still* maps islands in seawater and chalk on blue fabric. The artist's interest in mapping stems from her background as an architect and the 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries 'Age of Exploration' in which maps created of discovered locations served political agendas and disregarded its native inhabitants and nuanced geological forms. Producing these works from perishable materials further highlight a coastlines or a map's

changing state and their inability to provide non-isolated traits of a world.

YaYa Yajie Liang's striking, large-scale paintings capture moments of metamorphosis between human, animal and mineral. These transformations can be likened to the changes and flux of shores, where land and sea continuously reshape one another. Liang's work resonates with the concept of assisted evolution, where adaptation is accelerated by both natural forces and human intervention. Her improvised technique further embodies the unpredictability of life in these areas, with fluid, expressive brushwork and layered textures mirroring the ever-shifting boundaries between forms, species, and environments.

Highly unique, Bianca Hylwa's experiments with SCOBY's (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast) are barely believable. *Trek Trax* features a dried SCOBY cut out into an anatomical drawing of a figure flipping backwards. The figure is partially anatomical and partially clothed with hip bones, ribs, a femur, flesh, socks and running shoes. These shapes merge with the imagery of a coastline in the background. The work refers to the balancing forces of nature – decay and erosion. In the ground or on the shore, both commodities and bodies are treated equally as materials, stripped of their connotations or histories.

Seana Gavin's work explores memory and altered realities through surreal collage compositions. Her dreamlike landscapes evoke elements of shorelines and natural boundaries, showing complex multiplicities in which segments are interrelated through fluidity and transition. *After the Floods* (2017) is a more literal exploration of our changing climate and the impact that it is and will be having on our coast and land, showing through found images the aftermath of erosion and flooding.

Presenting two new paintings on paper, Yulia Iosilzon conjures up a world that lives between fantasy and reality inhabited by amorphous figures. Her paintings are idealistic notions of nature filled with potential and vibrancy that challenge us to look for the beauty that we so often miss in the 21st Century. As our world becomes more polluted and damaged, we need reminders of what we are missing,

particularly in relation to coastal areas where this type of degradation becomes so obvious.

Rachael Louise Bailey's environmentally charged practice has engaged with a specific marine pollutant she has been researching since 2015 self titled "The Black Stuff". These spliced inner tubes of repurposed car tyres are used internationally as part of oyster sea farming equipment. Unfit for purpose they break loose in the sea and what does not sink into the seabed arrives back upon the shoreline. Her works *Cohabitation* (2017) and *Rest* (2019) are two pieces from this series.

In *Rest* (2019), moved by the experience of clearing the contents of her cousin's home weeks after his sudden death, the artist was struck by the sheer volume of plastic waste destined for landfill. From this material -remnants of a life shaped by consumption and unsustainability- a skeletal figure began to take form: a coat hanger collarbone, a bike helmet chest, an alarm clock heart, fingers made of pens. Clothed in his smartest suit, wearing a favourite Father Christmas hat, and mummified in a polyester bedsheet, the figure was laid to rest in a plastic inflatable bed and encased in woven 'black stuff'. This sculptural work reflects on grief, memory, and the persistent presence of the synthetic in life -and after.

Maria Thereza Alves (b. 1961, Sao Paulo, BR). She has exhibited internationally at institutions and biennials including: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA; ICA - Institut D'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes, FR; 4th Lagos Biennial Lagos, Nigeria; Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, China; MAMAC, Nice, FR; CCA, Derry-Londonderry, NI; Madre Museum, Naples, IT; Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia; NIRIN, 22nd Biennial of Sydney, AU; Migros Museum, Zurich, CH; Toronto Biennial of Art 2019, CA; MIMA, Middlesbrough, UK; Sharjah Biennial 13, Tamawuj. Sharjah; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK; Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art 2015, Russia; MUAC, Mexico City, MX; Taipei Biennale 2012, Tiaan; dOCUMENTA 13 and 15, Kassel, DE; Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; 29th and 32nd Sao Paulo Biennial, BR; Crac, Alsace, FR; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR, Guangzhou Triennial 2008, Guangzhou, China; Fondazione Sandretto Re

Rebaudengo, Turin, IT; Kunsthalle Basel, DH; Kunsthalle, Lund, Norway; Liverpool Biennial 2004, UK; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, DE.

Rachael Louise Bailey (b. 1975, Whitstable, UK) lives and works in Kent, UK. Her recent exhibitions include: The Horniman Museum, London, UK; Attenborough Arts Centre, Attenborough, UK; An Lanntair, Stornoway, UK; Alice Black, London, UK; XXII Bienal Internacional de Arte de Cerveira, PT; Villa Nova de Cerveira, PT; Fondation Francois Schneider, Alsace, FR; Oxo Tower, London, UK; A la K's Gallery, Tokyo, JP; Clerkenwell Gallery, London, UK.

Seana Gavin lives and works in London, UK. She holds a BA in Visual Arts Drawing from Camberwell College of Art, London, UK. Gavin has exhibited internationally at institutions and galleries including Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK; The Wellcome Collection, London, UK; Somerset House, London, UK; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Nobel Prize Museum, Stockholm, SE; Serralves Museum, Porto, PT; Galerie PCP, Paris, FR; Koppel Project, London, UK; The Hole Gallery, NYC, USA; Orleans House Gallery London, UK.

Bianca Hlywa (b.1992, Canada) lives and works in London, UK. She holds a BFA in Fine Art from Concordia University, Montreal, CA and a MFA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London. She has exhibited internationally at galleries including: Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL; The Norsk Teknisk Museum, Oslo, NO; The Barbican Arts Group Trust, London, UK; The Gallery Of Alberta Media Arts, Calgary, CA; PHI Arts Center, Montreal, CA; FOFA Gallery, Montreal, CA; VERTICALE Artist Run Center, Laval, CA; St.Chads Gallery, London, UK; Gossamer Fog, London UK; The Young Artists Association, Budapest, HU; Trauma Bar Und Kino, Berlin, DE.

Yulia Iosilzon (b. 1992, Moscow) lives and works in London, UK. She holds a BA in Fine Art from Slade, London, UK and an MA in Fine Art from Royal College of Art, London, UK. She has exhibited internationally at galleries and institutions including: Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, RU; South London Gallery, London, UK; Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, UK; Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK; Foundry, Seoul, KR; Bertnson Bhattacharjee, London, UK; Carvalho Park,

New York, USA; Sapling, London, UK; De Brock, Knokke, BE; Huxley-Parlour, London, UK; Frieze Cork Street, London, UK.

YaYa Yajie Liang (b. 1995, Henan, CN) lives and works in London, UK. She holds an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London, UK and a BA in Fine Art from China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, CN. She is currently a PhD researcher at the Royal College of Art, London, UK. She has exhibited internationally at gallery including Thaddaeus Ropac, London, UK; Josh Lilly's Gallery, London, UK; Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK; Galerie Kandlhofer, Vienna, AT; Lyles & King, New York, NY; Cob Gallery, London, UK; Unit, London, UK; Luce Gallery, Turin, IT; BLANK Gallery, Shanghai, CH; HdM Gallery, London, UK.

Hannah Rowan (b. 1990, Brighton, UK) lives and works between Brighton, UK and Brooklyn, USA. She holds an MA in Sculpture from Royal College of Art, London, UK and a BA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, London, UK. She has exhibited internationally at galleries including: Banff Centre for Arts, Alberta, CA; Seventeen Gallery, London, UK; Arcadia Missa Gallery, London, UK; Galerie Sebastien Bertrand, Geneva, CH; Thameside Studios, London, UK; Arusha Gallery, Bruton, UK; C+N CANEPANERI, Milan, IT; Galerie Sébastien Bertrand, Geneva, CH; Belo Campo, Lisbon, Portugal; Assembly Point Gallery, London, UK; White Crypt, London, UK; Well Projects, Margate, UK; Andrew Reed, New York, USA; Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK; HIAP Gallery Augusta, Helsinki, Finland; Contemporary Sculpture Fulmer 7th Edition, UK; Science Museum Trento, IT; Spazio Musa, Turin, IT; Easy Day Institute, New York, US; Wuhan Biennale, Qintai Art Museum, CA.

Rain Wu (b. 1987, Tainan, TW) lives and works in London, UK. She has exhibited internationally at galleries and institutions including: Hong-gah Museum, Taipei, TW; Sharjah Biennial 13, UAE; Fondation Thalie, BE; The Palestinian Museum PS; Informality Gallery, London, UK; Manar Abu Dhabi, UAE; GroundWork Gallery, King's Lynn, UK; Porto Architecture Film Festival 2022, PT; 2020 Istanbul Design Biennale, TR; Spazio Nobile, Brussels, BT; Walk&Talk, Azores, PT; Corridor Project Space, Amsterdam, NL; Asia Now 2018, Paris, FR; Woodruff Arts Centre, Atlanta Design Festival; USA.

William Noel Clarke (b. 1994, Solihull, UK) is a curator who lives and works in London, UK. Clarke initially studied as an artist in Leeds, UK, and then went on to study on the MFA Curating course at Goldsmiths, University of London. During this time he curated independent exhibitions at spaces such as Paradise Works, Enclave Lab, and Cubitt. From 2018 until 2023 he worked as Director of VITRINE – a commercial art gallery with spaces in London and Basel that focused on artistic experimentation and emerging interdisciplinary practices – where he managed and ran the programme. Over 2024 he worked as Curator at Glyndebourne, an opera house in Lewes, UK, where he oversaw their 90th Anniversary exhibition programme including an ambitious presentation of Conrad Shawcross RA. He is now working as Studio Manager for artist Zinzi Minott.