

MANCHESTER

14th–17th June 2023

Opening:
13th June,
5-8pm

Socially Engaged Curating

A collaboration between
Videocity and Manchester
School of Art

Curators:

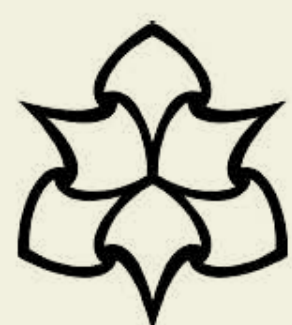
Rowan Bell
Birce Cennetoglu
Jenna Eady
Nia Palmer

Artists:

Charlie Black
Nick Delap
Molly Dickens
Habiba El-Sayed
Corrie Francis Parks
Sam Meech
Ian Rawlinson & Nick Crowe
James Stephen Wright

Project Leader:

Polina Chizhova



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

MANCHESTER
SCHOOL OF ART

PAHC



Socially Engaged Curating

As part of a placement at Videocity, four students – Rowan Bell, Birce Cennetoglu, Jenna Eady and Nia Palmer – on the current MA in Curating cohort at Manchester School of Art were invited to curate two video works on a socially relevant subject in launching its second collaborative edition. The resulting four student-led exhibitions showcase a variety of situated approaches and curatorial positions.

The exhibitions can be seen at K-House and other locations in 70 Oxford Road building, as well as in the café at [SEESAW](#).

[Videocity's website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)



Unnatural World

Curator:

Rowan Bell

Artists:

Nick Crowe & Ian Rawlinson
and Nick Delap

Location:

SEESAW

86 Princess St
Manchester M1 6NG
United Kingdom

How can we square expanding urbanism with our increasing dislocation from nature? The exhibition situates Manchester as a local microcosm for a wider issue to investigate, ie. is flourishing urbanism, although framed in a 'green' frame, the correct aim for our society. In this exhibition, Manchester-based artists Ian Rawlinson & Nick Crowe and Nick Delap explore the relationship between nature and contemporary life. In the nineteenth century, the famous John Ruskin lobbied for city workers in Manchester to have



access to both nature and art, as he believed them to be vital aspects of life. *Unnatural World* aims to bring the ideas brought up by Ruskin into our time and our times renewed push for urbanism. World aims to bring the ideas brought up by Ruskin into our time and our times renewed push for urbanism.

Is there an absurdity in how we live and do we need to return to more natural, folkloric roots? Can we connect to nature through new digital means? What is technology's part to play in a potential new environmentally conscious world? Perhaps new technology can connect us to nature and become, as Donna Haraway explained in the 1980's, 'chimeras' of the natural, human and technological.

The selected works are twenty years apart in their creation. The gap in time shows how issues around nature and green space have changed or more accurately, grown.



Ripple Effect

Curator:

Birce Cennetoglu

Artists:

Molly Dickens and James Stephen Wright

Location:

70 Oxford Road
Manchester M1 5NH
United Kingdom

Everything in the universe is moving towards disorder. A single event or action can have far-reaching and unpredictable consequences. It's like dropping a stone into a still pond, creating ripples that spread out in all directions. In the context of AI, specifically generative AI, entropy can refer to the complexity of the neural network architecture and the degree to which it is able to learn and adapt to new information. The hidden layer in AI models is particularly important in this regard, as it is responsible for processing and transforming input data in complex ways. *Ripple*



Effect explores themes of entropy, chaos and randomness relating to the Hidden Layer in generative AI models.

By incorporating themes associated with AI models such as entropy and randomness into their artistic practice, the featured artists, James Stephen Wright and Molly Dickens, navigate the fine line of tension for creative exploration in the digital age.

Hito Steyerl raised concerns about the power dynamics embedded within AI systems, whereas Boris Groys suggests that generative AI art can serve as a catalyst for discussions on the relationship between humans and technology, inviting us to question the boundaries of authorship, creativity, and agency.

In this context, the selected artworks in *Ripple Effect* become critical interventions, prompting viewers to consider the ethical implications of relying on AI systems to generate artistic outputs.



Ancient Cycles

Curator:

Jenna Eady

Artists:

Habiba El-Sayed and Corrie Francis Parks

Location:

70 Oxford Road
Manchester M1 5NH
United Kingdom

The complexities of the planet and its changing environment are present in our cultural collective memory today. Collective memory is reflected in our society, in our ability to represent our personal heritage. Human heritage is a product of selection by society, how different cultures have chosen to represent themselves through artefacts, rituals, song, language, and traditions. But there is also natural heritage, culturally significant landscapes, and biodiversity that represents the long history of the natural planet. Our impact on the natural world has never been more informed and



discussed. And yet, we are stuck in this repetitive cycle of denial. What would be the point in trying to preserve our cultural heritage when the natural heritage is being destroyed and in turn destroying us?

Ancient Cycles represents the fragility and perseverance of the natural planet and what that means to the survival of us and our heritage. Our repetitive cycles of destruction impacting our future. Climate change has altered much of the world's landscape, but it also has a detrimental effect on our health. The narrowing life sources have begun to limit our life's capacity. By reflecting on ancient methodologies and natural landscapes these works represent the anxiety of humanity, El-Sayed and Parks reflect our impact on this ancient land and its ability to restrict our capacity for life, a repetitive cycle that it may be too late to break.



Uncertain Futures

Curator:

Nia Palmer

Artists:

Charlie Black and Sam Meech

Location:


K – House

70 Oxford Road

Manchester M1 5NH

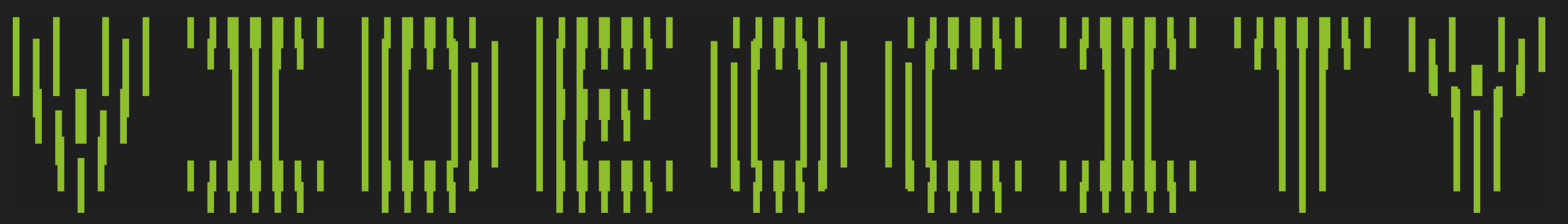
United Kingdom

Over the course of the last decade, Manchester has undergone an extensive transformation. The skyline has changed at a rapid rate with several new cranes appearing in the city centre every year. ‘The Northern Powerhouse’ – Manchester’s new title given by the Conservative government in 2016, to mark plans of economic growth and a flourishing private sector to cement Manchester on the map. However behind these optimistic plans are developers looking to get their hands on the last of Manchester’s empty buildings and green spaces. Instead of these effects this has on Manchester, allowing the



spaces being transformed into affordable housing (of which Manchester is in desperate need), they are most often built into expensive flats, that attract international investors rather than locals, offices or hospitality venues. This gentrification of the city is resulting in rising living costs meaning locals and independent businesses are being priced/forced out of their neighbourhoods.

Uncertain Futures responds to the current social and political climate of the UK, in particular the gentrification of the North. Manchester has been the site of rapid development over recent years, causing the displacement of its current inhabitants in the process. Artists Sam Meech and Charlie Black refuse to shy away from these issues, protesting and spreading awareness through their practice. Their works are built on the knowledge and understanding of social issues from within, challenging cultural power structures.



About Videocity:

Videocity is a public art project initiated in 2013 by the curator Dr Andrea Domesle to discuss current social issues and connect art with everyday life. Founded in Basel, Switzerland, Videocity is now an international network with its team based around the globe in different Swiss regions, Germany, Austria, UK, South Korea, UAE, Mexico, Czech Republic and other locations.

Every year, Videocity's curatorial team prepares cycles of over 50 video works on a socially relevant subject, which are reinterpreted and tailored to each exhibition location. The various formats in which the cycles can be screened let the environment influence our perception and guide the interpretation of the works is shown, be it outside in shop windows, on house walls or electronic billboards, or inside in galleries, media libraries, lecture halls and online.

VIDEOCITY

Imprint:

**Thanks to the artists and SEESAW
for hosting the exhibition.**

**© The concept and name of
Videocity: Andrea Domesle.**

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Strange Quark Creative.**

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