

# SEIZED BY THE LEFT HAND

Exhibition Notes | Sat 14 December 2019 - Sun 22 March 2020

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**DCA**  
Dundee Contemporary Arts

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Scottish Charity No. SC026631

Open daily 10:00-18:00  
Open late Thu 20:00  
Admission free  
[www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk)

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS IN THE GALLERIES

Welcome to *Seized by the Left Hand*: an international group exhibition which takes as its starting point some of the ideas contained within American writer Ursula K. Le Guin's 1969 novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

Written 50 years ago, this masterpiece of feminist science fiction is set on an icy planet called 'Gethen' (which translates to 'Winter') whose inhabitants shift and change gender continuously throughout their lives. We as readers are told the story of Gethen from a human perspective through the eyes of protagonist Genly Ai, an envoy sent to the planet to attempt to convince Gethenian governments to join an interplanetary trade coalition.

The book had a profound impact on the sci-fi genre at the time of its publication and remains hugely relevant to the world around us today, posing serious and challenging questions about gender, sexuality, the environment, language, communication, power and empire.

Using *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a lodestar of sorts, and invoking Le Guin's generous spirit in thinking through the possibility of an exhibition inspired by her writing, we are drawing together a community of different artistic voices from all over the world to fill our galleries across the winter in Dundee. We hope to explore some of the questions and ideas thrown up by Le Guin half a century ago that are still urgently being debated in contemporary society.

This multifaceted project, curated by **Eoin Dara** and **Kim McAleese**, combines artforms such as painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and film in the galleries, with performance, poetry and writing taking place through our publishing and public programmes in the building.

In **Gallery 1**, you will find a series of works by New York-based artist **Tuesday Smillie**, drawn from a wider body of work and research collectively titled *Reflecting Light into The Unshadow*. Smillie has been making close analytical studies of *The Left Hand of Darkness* in different ways for a number of years: most obviously through the production of exquisite watercolour and gouache paintings depicting physical copies of the book as it has been reprinted since 1969. These to-scale studies illustrate the various editions of *The Left Hand of Darkness* published in different countries at different times, and by capturing the intimate details of well-worn covers and creased pages, the artist alludes to the readers who have leafed through these much-loved objects.

Smillie has also produced an unlimited print for audiences to take away with them, resembling a page torn from a 1980 paperback edition of *The Left Hand of Darkness*. The narrative captured on this page focuses on Genly Ai's description of what his companion Estraven calls 'the Unshadow' – a dull yet

all-encompassing atmosphere in the snowy wilds of Gethen where one becomes unable to perceive anything beyond a 'whitish-gray' void for miles around.

In a further framed print work, the artist considers the shifting cultural significance of this text over the years as societal conceptions of gender continue to be reshaped. Smillie focuses here on two texts written by Le Guin in 1976 and 1988 in response to criticism from feminists at the time who challenged the author on her presentation of gender and sexuality in the book (for example, through using only masculine pronouns to describe Gethenians and denying the potential for overt homosexual representation in the narrative). Smillie further outlines Le Guin's capacity for generous self-criticism and public learning in a new essay we are publishing as part of the project, which interrogates the book from a contemporary transfeminist perspective (see further information on p.13).

Beyond these works in the gallery is a collaborative film installation by Qatari-American artist, writer and filmmaker **Sophia Al-Maria** and Canadian artist, writer and performer **Victoria Sin**. Their work together steps off from the speculative fictional elements of Le Guin's wider writing and considers the use of narrative as a feminist project. In the film we watch Victoria Sin floating in intergalactic space, speaking directly to the viewer of imagined spaces where we might abolish hierarchical structures that divide people according to attributes such as gender or race (not unlike Le Guin's imagining of Gethenian people in *The Left Hand of Darkness*).

Set within a beautifully poetic text musing on ideas of collective identity and our place in the universe, they ask gigantic questions of us such as, "How many stars? How many worlds? How many ways of being alive?" This work breaks down a construction of Self into atomical detail: imagining bodies, cells, enzymes and molecules merging through nuclear collision and abstraction to move into an unknown future state together.

As you step into **Gallery 2**, you will encounter several of Mexican artist **Manuel Solano**'s raw and vivid paintings. In 2013, Solano became blind due to complications connected to a HIV-related infection and since then has developed unique methodologies to continue an art practice which explores ideas of queer memory and selfhood. These works push forward conceptions of gender and identity as perpetually in flux, building up what is arguably an ongoing series of self-portraits based on visual memories of family, loved ones, friends and strangers, as well as figures from cinema and pop culture. In their wonderfully exploratory work, Solano suggests to us that perhaps the self is crafted through and supported by a whole range of people and personalities we each encounter at different times in our lives.

Another artist using familiar figures from pop culture to destabilise our understanding of identity is Singaporean **Ming Wong**. In his film works he builds

layers of cinematic language, social structures and conflicting identities to offer up complex retellings of western cinema and Hollywood culture. In *Bloody Marys* he stages a glitchy, psychedelic re-enactment of the siren song 'Bali Ha'i' from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*. In this problematic musical, this song is delivered by the native matriarch Bloody Mary – a Tonkinese (North Vietnamese) character described by Wong as “concocted by her creators out of the colonial swamp of migrants in the Pacific Islands” during World War II. She speaks of a mysterious island on the horizon beyond the reach of US military sailors occupying the area; an exotic, alien place of unknown treasure and possibility.

In the artist's restaging of this song 16 'Bloody Marys' are woven together, mostly from internet footage of amateur and high school musical productions which have then been interlaced with footage of both Wong's own rendition and the original Bloody Mary version from the 1958 film (played by Juanita Hall). This mesh of 'Marys' reveals a casting spectrum of Black, Asian, Pacific Islander and other forms of 'unconventional looking' women, further complicating the narrative of patriarchal empire building and conquest in the Pacific Ocean across the 20th century.

Irish artist **Emma Wolf-Haugh** makes work that intervenes in public spaces, using architectural devices and constructs to draw attention to overlooked cultural narratives from a working-class queer feminist perspective, often asking the question “what is missing?” For *Seized by the Left Hand* she has constructed a new sculptural installation hanging in Gallery 2 that recalls the work of Irish modernist architect and designer Eileen Gray. Wolf-Haugh's spatially interrupting room divider made from modular panels of quilted denim, velvet and pvc, deliberately misappropriates similar screens that Gray produced throughout her life and infuses them with queer writing and other paraphernalia. The work seeks to challenge the patriarchal legacy of modernism, breaking it down and making it soft and permeable in order to allow for future pathways to be imagined by other bodies previously not able to move through these kinds of architectural spaces.

Another major intervention in the gallery has been made by French artist **Flora Moscovici**, who has crafted an expansive painterly environment for audiences to step into at the rear of Gallery 2. Moscovici is known across Europe for her site-specific responses to architectural interiors, painting directly onto the walls of galleries and museums to create ephemeral works that appear and disappear in a deliberately transient way.

Moscovici spends a great deal of time observing and analysing any project she is invited to participate in. In thinking of the icy landscapes that permeate *The Left Hand of Darkness* as well as the cold Scottish winter that the exhibition is taking place within, she has produced an explosive scene of warmth breaking through the ice. The work specifically references images of volcanic eruptions in

glacial landscapes, where hot reds, yellows and oranges burst forth for a moment to mingle with cool whites, blues and greens. The title, *Crossing the Kargav*, is a specific reference to the beginning of Genly Ai's long trek through the Gethenian wilderness in the book.

Close to the edge of Moscovici's imagined environment is a new film by Glasgow-based artist **Andrew Black**, considering a place much closer to home on the West coast of Scotland. In alignment with Le Guin's ecological and anti-capitalist concerns throughout her career, his work puts forward an experimental queer fantasy set on the Isle of Skye. It specifically counters the deeply commercialised and exploitative visions of Scotland pushed out through tourist platforms and broadcast media in recent years.

In thinking of how we as a species connect to our own surroundings, the film wallows in descriptions of bodily acts and gestures, connecting a playfully erotic voiceover with footage of the island and the plants and animals who also inhabit it. It is a deliberately 'grubby' work, where the artist wishes to draw our attention to the messy, complex reality of this place, and not simply focus on some impossibly pristine and untouched fiction of the land offered up for consumption by privileged holiday makers.

Not far from the livestock, insects and marine life depicted in Black's new work is a curated display of specimens from the **D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum** here in Dundee, highlighting and celebrating close and distant relatives across the animal kingdom who defy normative conceptions of gender, sexuality, bonding and kinship. These remarkable creatures, some of whom we might think of as otherwise banal (such as the humble earthworm or the common chicken) fly in the face of our narrow human understandings of things such as copulation, reproduction and family building. They are perhaps the nearest thing we have on this planet to Le Guin's fictional constructions of alien species in books like *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

The exhibition also offers audiences a rare chance to see a selection of drawings by **Abel Rodríguez**, an elder from the Nonuya ethnic group from the Cahuinarí river in the Colombian Amazon. These two series of works are made entirely from memory, focusing on recalling the indigenous flora and fauna that precariously inhabit the region. Now in his 70s, Rodríguez has recently been forced to move and resettle on the outskirts of Bogotá, after being displaced from his homeland by guerrilla militia forces and corrupt government structures that are facilitating the exploitation and destruction of the precious rainforest ecosystems in South America.

Along from Rodríguez's work you will find a room containing British artist **Isaac Julien**'s film installation *Encore II (Radioactive)*. This work is inspired by a character from the writings of Octavia Butler, another remarkable sci-fi novelist

and peer of Le Guin's, best known for her recurring explorations of race, genetic manipulation, contamination and hybridity. Julien's film manipulates a wintry Icelandic landscape and its surroundings, imbuing them with a visual and sonic electronic aura that dislocates the setting from a specific time and place, and centres our attention on an enigmatic cyborg protagonist portrayed by Vanessa Myrie who moves through these spaces.

Calling our attention to much more insidious manipulations of landscapes elsewhere, **Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa** is presenting her film *Promised Lands* at the furthest end of Gallery 2. In this video essay, the artist addresses the migratory flows of bodies throughout Uganda and Kenya at various points in history, and looks at how these lands have been exoticised and subsequently exploited by western powers.

Set on the banks of Lake Victoria, the work is a fragmentary meditation on art, fact, fiction, memory and displacement. It features the voices of the artist, her uncle Patrick Wanambwa and Theodor Hertzka, a 19th century Austro-Hungarian economist, who was one of many Europeans who tried to establish a utopian settlement ("Freeland") in East Africa. It also makes reference to the thousands of European refugees who found sanctuary in Africa during World War II and to the violent ongoing realities of internal and external displacement. In her practice more widely, she regularly examines differing worldviews in the wake of colonialism in East Africa, excavating the structures of coercion and power within the region's cultural, political, and aesthetic engagement with Europe.

Finally, in 2019, as we actively think and work towards expansive conceptions of gender in society that protect, support and celebrate trans and non-binary communities, we are delighted to be able to publish the first edition of Orcadian writer **Harry Josephine Giles**'s zine *Wages for Transition* as part of the exhibition. This work forms a manifesto of sorts, demanding that we understand acts of transition as labour that ought to be acknowledged and supported in our society. It articulates a nuanced call for solidarity and resistance, stating that "when we seize workers' control of the production of our genders, we are struggling towards a transition beyond capital, and kin beyond the family."

The zine is available for you to take in return for a contribution to trans healthcare costs here in Scotland: all donations collected over the course of the project will be distributed by the Edinburgh Action for Trans Health Solidarity Fund. It is of the utmost importance to carve out space within this project to highlight contemporary writers such as Giles who are at the forefront of advancing contemporary discourse on subjects such as gender from an anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist position.

In drawing together this new community of voices in the galleries here at DCA we hope to champion artists and writers who, much like Le Guin was, are engaged in

the vital act of radical imagining: crafting alternative spaces and worlds that hint at ways in which we all might better live, love and care for one another. In these uncertain times it is imperative that we work towards a better future together, and that we actively resist together the structures around us that seek to hold us back. As Le Guin herself said so eloquently in 2014: “We live in capitalism, its power seems inescapable - but then, so did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art.”

## GLOSSARY

**Capitalism:** An economic system in which trade, industry, and profits are controlled by private companies, instead of by the people whose time and labour powers those companies.

**Colonialism:** A set of conditions and experiences resulting from a history of subjugation (such as colonial rule in many parts of the world) or from the experience of living under oppressive social systems (like capitalism, white supremacy, or compulsory heterosexuality).

**Cyborg:** This is short for ‘cybernetic organism’ – a being with both organic and human-made body parts.

**Feminist Science Fiction:** This is a subgenre of science fiction focused on theories that include feminist themes including gender inequality, sexuality, race, economics, and reproduction. It is political because of its tendency to critique the dominant culture.

**Kinship:** Historically the institution of kinship refers to a set of relationships and relatives formed, based on blood relationships or marriage. We are referring to a more recent set of ideas put forward by cultural anthropologists, who have chosen to focus more on the symbolic aspects of kinship, such as how perspectives on personhood, the body, and gender inform kinship ideas and practices of supporting one another.

**Modernism:** This refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the 20th century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life.

**Non-binary:** A gender identity outside of the binary of ‘woman’ or ‘man’. Also known as genderqueer.

**Normative:** A term meaning to create or state particular rules of behaviour, relating to a norm, especially an assumed norm regarded as the standard of correctness in behaviour, speech and writing.

**Patriarchy:** This term describes a general structure in which men have power over women. Society is the entirety of relations of a community, and a patriarchal society consists of a male-dominated power structure throughout organised society and in individual relationships. Power is related to privilege, in a system in which men have more power than women, men have some level of privilege to which women are not entitled.

**Queer:** A term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting perceived norms within a LGBTQI community in relation to racism, misogyny, classism, and ableism.

**Speculative Fiction:** This is a broad genre encompassing fiction with certain elements that do not exist in the real world, often in the context of supernatural, futuristic or other imaginative themes. The term has been used by some critics and writers dissatisfied with what they consider to be a limitation of science fiction: the need for the story to hold to scientific principles.

**Trans:** An umbrella term to include people who identify as transgender, transsexual, and other identities where a person does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Used in contrast with cis or cisgender, which refers to someone whose self-identification aligns with their birth-assigned gender.

**Transfeminism:** This term has been defined by scholar and activist Emi Koyama as “a movement by and for trans women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond.” Koyama notes that it “is also open to other queers, intersex people, trans men, non-trans women, non-trans men and others who are sympathetic toward the needs of trans women.”

## **ABOUT URSULA K. LE GUIN**

Ursula Kroeber Le Guin (October 21, 1929 – January 22, 2018) was born in Berkeley, California. She is an author best known for her works of speculative and science fiction. She was first published in 1959, and achieved major critical and commercial success with *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968) and *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969). For the latter volume, Le Guin won both the Hugo and Nebula awards for best novel, becoming the first woman to do so. Her literary career spanned nearly 60 years, yielding more than 20 novels and over 100 short stories, in addition to poetry, criticism, translations, and children's books.

Le Guin's novels and stories explore questions of sexism, racism, nationalism, and the ambiguities of technological progress. She is notable for her willingness to revisit earlier works in response to her own maturing thought and especially her growing feminism.

## **ABOUT THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS**

*The Left Hand of Darkness* was first published in 1969. It takes place on an icy alien planet called Gethen (translated as Winter), and follows human Genly Ai on his mission as an envoy of the Ekumen, a peaceful confederation of planets, to recruit Gethen to join an interplanetary trade coalition.

As the book starts, that mission is failing. Ai has trouble understanding Gethenian culture, where people change and shift gender throughout their lives. After a year in Ehrenrang, the capital of the kingdom of Karhide, Ai finally obtains an audience with the King – only for him to reject the Ekumen. Ai then crosses over into Orgoryen, a communist-style republic and the only other major nation on Gethen. In the capital Mishnory, Ai seems to get more understanding and support than in Karhide. But he is eventually arrested and sent to die in a work camp in the far north. Ai is saved by Estraven, the deposed prime minister of Karhide. Both flee across the northern Gobrinn ice sheet back to Karhide, where the story concludes.

In a 1994 interview with writer Jonathan White, Le Guin herself calls the book a feminist thought experiment. She notes that in the 1960s, “everybody was asking, ‘What is it to be a man? What is it to be a woman?’” *The Left Hand of Darkness* is her attempt to answer these questions, proposing a world where gender has been eliminated in order to “find out what would be left.”

The book had a profound impact on the sci-fi genre at the time of its publication and remains hugely relevant to the world around us today, posing serious and challenging questions about gender, sexuality, the environment, language, communication, power and empire. It is a warning against sexism, misogyny and xenophobia and is a call for radical collaboration and feminist care.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **SOPHIA AL-MARIA**

Sophia Al-Maria is an Qatari-American artist, writer and filmmaker. She studied comparative literature at the American University in Cairo, and aural and visual cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. For the past few years, she has been carrying out research around the concept of Gulf Futurism. Her primary interests are around the isolation of individuals via technology and reactionary Islam, the corrosive elements of consumerism and industry, and the erasure of history and the blinding approach of a future no one is ready for.

### **ANDREW BLACK**

Andrew Black lives and works in Glasgow. His practice involves drawing, painting, writing and video, often starting from research into local ways of being, and queer writing about place, memory and the body.

### **CACONRAD**

Poet CACONRAD grew up in Pennsylvania, where they helped to support their single mother during Conrad's difficult youth. Influenced by Eileen Myles, Audre Lorde, Alice Notley, and Emily Dickinson, Conrad writes poems in which stark images of sex, violence, and defiance build a bridge between fable and confession.

### **HARRY JOSEPHINE GILES**

Harry Josephine Giles is a writer and performer from Orkney, now living in Edinburgh. They have lived on four islands, each larger than the last. They have an MA in Theatre Directing from East 15 Acting School and are studying for a PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Stirling. Their work generally happens in the crunchy places where performance and politics get muddled up.

### **EMMA WOLF-HAUGH**

Emma Wolf-Haugh is a visual artist and educator based in Dublin and Berlin. Working across disciplines she weaves together installation, performance, publishing and collaborative workshop techniques. She is interested in re-orienting attention in relation to cultural narratives and develops her work from a working class-queer-feminist questioning of *what is missing?* A continued engagement with club culture and dyke aesthetics informs the collective making of temporary, autonomous spaces.

## **ISAAC JULIEN**

Filmmaker and installation artist, Isaac Julien CBE RA, was born in 1960 in London, where he currently lives and works. His multi-screen film installations and photographs incorporate different artistic disciplines to create a poetic and unique visual language. His 1989 documentary-drama exploring author Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance titled *Looking for Langston* garnered Julien a cult following while his 1991 debut feature *Young Soul Rebels* won the Semaine de la Critique prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

## **HUW LEMMEY**

Huw Lemmey is a writer and author of *Chubz: The Demonization of My Working Arse* and *Red Tory: My Corbyn Chemsex Hell*. He produces the weekly newsletter *utopian drivel* and writes regularly on culture, sex and cities for Tribune, New Humanist and Architectural Review, amongst others. He is also the co-host of the history podcast Bad Gays.

## **FLORA MOSCOVICI**

Flora Moscovici is an artist living and working in Paris. She approaches painting using the extremely varied possibilities of the medium, including its contours. Her interventions change the perception of space and call up other temporalities: pictorial gesture, site memory and history of painting between the sacred and the vernacular. The painting underlines some features of the site and at the same time takes the space elsewhere, and turns it into a fantasy space.

## **ABEL RODRÍGUEZ**

Abel Rodríguez is an elder from the Nonuya ethnic group from the Cahuinarí river in the Colombian Amazon. Rodríguez has an extensive ancestral knowledge of the indigenous plants of the region, passed to him by his uncle and shared with western botanists whom he guided through the jungle for Tropenbos, an NGO concerned with tropical rainforests. His drawings have been made from memory since he moved from the region over 20 years ago and he now conveys his knowledge of the flora and fauna of the Nonuya region in detailed images that depict the intricately intertwined ecosystem of the rainforest as it shifts through the seasons.

## **VICTORIA SIN**

Victoria Sin is a Canadian artist using speculative fiction within performance, moving image, writing, and print to interrupt normative processes of desire, identification, and objectification. Drawing from close personal encounters of looking and wanting, their work presents heavily constructed fantasy narratives on the often unsettling experience of the physical within the social body.

## **TUESDAY SMILLIE**

Tuesday Smillie is a visual artist living in New York. She works in a variety of mediums, including collage, textiles, watercolours and printmaking. At the core of her work is a question about the individual and the group: the binary of inclusion and exclusion and the porous membrane between the two.

## **MANUEL SOLANO**

Manuel Solano studied at the National School of Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking in Mexico City. In 2013 Solano became blind due to complications related to an HIV-related infection. Since then, Solano developed unique methodologies to continue an art practice which includes painting, video, and installation, and which explores memory and identity, as well as balances the autobiographical with pop cultural imagery.

## **EMMA WOLUKAU-WANAMBWA**

Born in Glasgow in 1976, Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa studied Literature at Cambridge University and Art at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa's recent / current exhibitions include: Bergen Assembly (2019), 62nd BFI London Film Festival (2018), *Women on Aeroplanes* at The Showroom Gallery in London and Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (both 2018–19), 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2018), *A Thousand Roaring Beasts: Display Devices for a Critical Modernity* at Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo – CAAC in Seville (2017) and *Kabbo Ka Muwala* at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Makerere University Art Gallery and Kunsthalle Bremen (all 2016).

## **MING WONG**

Born in Singapore, based in Berlin and Stockholm, Ming Wong builds layers of cinematic language, social structure, identity and introspection through his re-telling of world cinema and popular culture in his videos, installations and performances, often 'mis-casting' himself in multiple roles, interconnecting concepts of gender, representation, culture and identity.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS AND EDITION

It would be impossible to undertake a project inspired by Le Guin without championing new forms of writing, poetry and storytelling and we are thrilled to be able to publish three new chapbooks as part of the exhibition, containing texts by CAConrad, Huw Lemmey and Tuesday Smillie. Each chapbook also contains an introduction by co-curators Eoin Dara and Kim McAleese. Copies are available to read in the galleries and the Information Space, and to buy online and in DCA Shop.

In addition, exhibiting artist Andrew Black has been working with DCA's Print Studio team to develop a new, limited edition print. This will be available in the new year to view in our Editions Space and purchase from DCA Shop.

## INFORMATION SPACE

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you will find a video interview with the curators, alongside a selection of books (listed below) that have been influential to their thinking.

## READING LIST

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 1969

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Wave in the Mind*, 2004

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Words Are My Matter*, 2016

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, 1988

Sophia Al-Maria, *Sad Sack*, 2019

CAConrad, *While Standing in Line for Death*, 2017

Huw Lemmey, *Red Tory: My Corbyn Chemsex Hell*, 2019

Harry Josephine Giles, *The Games*, 2018

Nat Raha, *Of Sirens, Body & Faultlines*, 2018

Nisha Ramayya, *States of the Body Produced by Love*, 2019

Samuel Delany, *Dhalgren*, 1974

Consuela Francis (Ed.), *Conversations with Octavia Butler*, 2010

N. K. Jemisin, *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?*, 2018

Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 2003

## TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information visit  
[www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk)

### **Meet the Curators: Eoin Dara and Kim McAleese**

Fri 13 December, 18:00 – 18:30

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

Join us to hear DCA's Director, Beth Bate, in conversation with Eoin Dara and Kim McAleese, co-curators of *Seized by the Left Hand*. They will discuss the radical work and continued cultural impact of writer Ursula K. Le Guin; why they have chosen her 1969 novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a text to delve back into and interrogate at this point in 2019; and introduce the artists, writers and performers drawn together as part of this international group exhibition.

### **Seized by the Left Hand: Opening Performance by Quinie**

Fri 13 December, 18:30 – 19:00

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

*Seized by the Left Hand* will launch with a performance by Scottish artist and singer Quinie, whose feminist amalgamation of unaccompanied modal melodies, children's rhyme, story poems and ancient ballads create extended blurrings of narratives rooted in an imagined Scotland.

### **CAConrad Performance**

Fri 13 December, 20:45 – 21:00

Gallery 2

Free, drop in

Poet CAConrad will close the exhibition preview with a reading of their new work commissioned as part of the project.

### **Exhibition Tours**

Daily 11:00 and 15:00

Free, drop-in

Meet at the gallery entrance

Interested in knowing more about the works on show? Join our friendly Visitor Assistants for a guided tour of *Seized by the Left Hand*.

### **Radical Transfeminism: A Workshop with Harry Josephine Giles, Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift**

Sat 18 January, 14:00 – 17:00

Create Space

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

How are trans people struggling for radical social transformation? What is the past, present and future of Trans Liberation? What does it mean to build a feminist politics around gender transgression, resistance to racial capitalism, and abolition of police, prisons and psychiatrists?

This discussion session with Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift, hosted by Harry Josephine Giles, is for trans people and their accomplices who want to remake a transfeminist world. [radicaltransfeminismzine.tumblr.com](http://radicaltransfeminismzine.tumblr.com)

**In the Evening There is Feeling:  
Reading *The Left Hand of Darkness***

Mon 20 January, 18:00 – 19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

*In the Evening There is Feeling* is DCA's Exhibitions reading group. It takes its name from Gertrude Stein's 1914 book *Tender Buttons* and focuses, in an informal and welcoming way, on feminist and queer texts from the worlds of art and literature.

This session will introduce and discuss some of the ideas contained within Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

Copies of the book will be available to purchase in DCA shop and it is also available to borrow from public libraries in Dundee. In addition, we have three copies to lend to interested readers who may be unable to access the book in other ways. If you would like a loan of one of these copies, please email [exhibitions@dca.org.uk](mailto:exhibitions@dca.org.uk) after booking your ticket for the session.

**Expedition: Gethen**

Thu 23 January, 18:00 – 19:30

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance.

Traversing the literary landscape of *The Left Hand of Darkness* with Nicole Brandon, Ari Brin, Caryn Liz Fauerbach and Joshua Thompson

It's been 50 years since the publication of *he Left Hand of Darkness* and this book remains a

catalytic text, triggering reinterpretations of our own planet and countless imagined ones that have influenced millions of readers across the world. Join us for a lively expedition across the literary landscape altered by this novel, guided by postgraduate English & Sci-Fi Literature students from the University of Dundee.

This open roundtable conversation will focus on the incredible capacity within Le Guin's writing to incite empathy, argument, excitement, new thinking and old heartache.

Each speaker will share brief insights into their own research on the novel before opening up to a wider conversation, inviting the audience to add their own thoughts, theories and questions relating to this remarkable work of fiction. Expect conversations about the history of science fiction, feminism, colonialism, queer studies, sociolinguistics, and transhumanism in a welcoming and informal environment.

Organised in partnership with the University of Dundee's MLitt in Science Fiction programme.

**Senior Citizen Kane Gallery  
Tour and Workshop**

Tue 28 January & Tue 25 February,  
10:30 – 12:30

Galleries and Create Space

Free, drop in.

Aged 60+? Join Senior Citizen Kane Gallery Tour and Workshop. We will explore the exhibition with one of our friendly Visitor Assistants, then there's

the chance to take part in a creative workshop making work inspired by the exhibition. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be on hand to fuel your creativity and chat.

### **Non-human Kith and Kin: A Zoological Tour**

Wed 5 February, 18:00 – 19:00

Gallery

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

Included in the exhibition is a curated display of artefacts from the D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum, housed within the University of Dundee. This display highlights specimens from the animal kingdom that beautifully resist normative categorisation when it comes to gender, sexuality, bonding and kinship.

Join us for a tour with the museum's curator Matthew Jarron, beginning in the galleries at DCA before moving to the University's Zoology Museum (five minutes' walk) to see further fascinating specimens from around the world, most of them collected by renowned Scottish biologist, mathematician and classics scholar Sir D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1860 – 1948).

### **States of the Body Produced by Love: Nisha Ramayya and Sarah Shin in Conversation**

Thu 20 February, 18:00 – 19:00

Gallery 2

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

Nisha Ramayya's debut poetry collection *States of the Body Produced by Love* is a modern

mystical journey through love – a many-headed snake twisting through devotion, sacrifice and the dream of returning home.

By way of Tantric ritual and myth, Ramayya conjures an opalescent world where thousand-petalled lotuses bloom inside skulls, goddesses with dirty feet charm honeybees, strains of jazz standards bleed into anti-national anthems. Weaving essays, poetry and images together to offer fierce meditations on diasporic identity, language and resistance, from grief to bliss, this book explores the many states of the body seized by love in an incantation that never leaves its hold.

Following readings from *States of the Body Produced by Love*, Ramayya will be discussing tantra and non-dualistic belief systems in her work in conversation with Sarah Shin, and the influence of Taoism in *The Left Hand of Darkness* and Le Guin's broader work.

### **In the Evening There is Feeling: Reading Selected Essays by Ursula K. Le Guin**

Mon 2 March, 18:00 – 19:30

Create Space

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

Following on from the first winter reading group looking at Le Guin's novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, this session will introduce and discuss some of the ideas contained within Le Guin's non-fiction work. We'll specifically focus on selected texts from two recent collections: *The*

*Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader, and the Imagination* and *Words Are My Matter: Writings About Life and Books*.

Digital copies of selected texts will be available and sent out to all participants after booking a place.

### **Curators' Tour of *Seized by the Left Hand***

Wed 18 March, 18:00 – 19:00

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

During the last week of the exhibition, join curators Eoin Dara and Kim McAleese for a guided tour through the gallery spaces where they'll be talking about working together over the past two years to develop this major group project inspired by the life and work of Ursula K. Le Guin.

### **Echo + Sgàire Wood**

Thu 19 March, 18:00 – 20:00

Galleries

Free, but ticketed. Please book in advance

Echo is an evening of multidisciplinary presentations set within the exhibition *Seized by the Left Hand*. A longstanding part of the exhibition programme at DCA, Echo is designed to throw new light on the works displayed in our galleries by inviting other artistic voices into the building to respond to each show.

As part of this instalment, we have invited Irish interdisciplinary artist, designer and performer Sgàire Wood to respond to the exhibition. Through lip-sync and spoken word performance, she carves out

ephemeral spaces for meaningful interpersonal connection and necessary emotional exorcism. With a combination of costume, makeup, set and choreography, Wood uses artifice and anachronism to achieve moments of honesty and authenticity and employs facetious humour to deconstruct societal taboos around mental illness, psychological trauma, gender and sexuality.

In advance of Woods' response, there will be opportunities for other voices to present ideas. In past events, participants have presented a wide variety of new and existing works that they have made in response to, or think is relevant to the work/themes in our exhibitions. These have included drawings, sculptures, short films, poetry, text readings, dance, music, and performance. If you would like to share your creative response to the work on show, please submit a short proposal (no more than 300 words) to [exhibitions@dca.org.uk](mailto:exhibitions@dca.org.uk) by Mon 9 March 2020.

## CINEMA SCREENINGS

### **Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival**

Tue 18 February, 18:15  
Dir. Fabrizio Terranova

Feminist thinker and historian of science Donna Haraway is perhaps best known as the author of two revolutionary works: the essay *A Cyborg Manifesto* and the book *Primate Visions*. Both set out to upend well-established 'common sense' categories: breaking down the boundaries among humans, animals, and machines while challenging gender essentialism and questioning the underlying assumptions of humanity's fascination with primates through a post-colonial lens.

*Story Telling for Earthly Survival* features Haraway in a playful and engaging exploration of her life, influences, and ideas.

### **Double-bill: *Pumzi* and *Born In Flames***

Tue 25 February, 18:15  
Cinema

***Pumzi***  
Dir. Wanuri Kahiu

It's now 35 years since World War III, and in the Maitu Community in East Africa water is extremely scarce. The outside world has become a barren, toxic wasteland, or so the powers that be maintain. At the Virtual Natural History Museum, Asha receives a mysterious package which contains a soil sample that may provide hope for the future. Haunted

by her recurring dreams of trees and water, Asha escapes Maitu, armed only with a compass and a tiny seedling, in search of life outside.

Kenya's first sci-fi film, *Pumzi* offers a chilling but believable dystopian vision of the future that brings today's environmental issues into sharp focus.

***Born in Flames***  
Dir. Lizzie Borden

Lizzie Borden's 1983 social drama explores how direct action can confront sexism, racism and class discrimination.

Set in New York, ten years after the peaceful 'Social Democratic War of Liberation', the film follows two groups of women as they respond to the death in police custody of political activist Adelaide; her death is officially labelled a suicide, but others in the movement believe there has been a cover-up.

Constructed using faux talk shows, news reports, documentary footage and surveillance tapes – and directed, produced and edited by Borden herself – *Born in Flames* is an urgent, futuristic vision of a post-revolutionary United States.

## FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

### Family Art Lab

Sat 25 January, Sat 15 February  
& Sat 14 March, 13:00 – 15:00

Create Space

Suitable for ages 5+, all children  
must be accompanied by an adult.

Free, drop-in but please arrive at the  
start.

Time for creative exploration and  
making together: join our artists to  
explore the exhibition in the gallery  
with time to chat about what you  
see and then to create your own art  
together. We will be re-designing  
future human beings or animals,  
imagining life on other planets and  
painting our flora and fauna from  
memory. Each session lasts two hours  
but you don't have to stay the whole  
time.

### Create Space

Open daily unless being used for  
a workshop – **do phone ahead to  
check if you are making a special  
trip.** Free, drop in. An adult **must**  
accompany children at all times.

DCA Create Space is a wee gem; a  
comfortable and imaginative space  
right next to the gallery designed for  
younger visitors and family groups to  
pop in and enjoy on a visit. You can  
have a go at DIY art activities, browse  
our excellent children's art library and  
make connections with the artists in  
the exhibitions.

You can have a go at new DIY art  
activities exploring what life and  
society might be like on other planets,

thinking about how to improve  
humans for the future and drawing  
our precious flora and fauna from your  
own memory.

Take your artwork home, leave it on  
display or photograph and share it  
online using **#helloDCA** or  
**#DCAmakes.**

## JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting [www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk) or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

### Douglas Gordon: k.364

11 April – 19 July 2020

Douglas Gordon is a Scottish artist who creates work that questions the complexities of memory and perception, both from an individual and collective position. This exhibition focuses on his major film installation *k.364* and marks the premiere of this work in a public gallery in the UK.

*k.364* focuses on two Israeli musicians of Polish descent (Avri Levitan and Roi Shiloah) traveling to Poland from Berlin by train. Shown on multiple screens and with layered audio, the film follows the two men through a desolate landscape in a country whose tragic and violent history is barely resolved for them. Gordon films the musicians on this personal journey, isolating intimate moments when their passionate love of music seems to move between them.

The journey concludes with the musicians' performance, at the Warsaw Philharmonic concert hall, of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major* (also known as Mozart's *Köchel Composition k.364*, from which the title of this piece is derived).

This work is an intimate document of the relationship between individuals and the power of music, against the subtly drawn backdrop of a dark and unresolved social history.