

14th August – 26th September 2020

London & across various locations in Zimbabwe

arebyte

# POWERPLAY

arebyte Gallery x The National Gallery of Zimbabwe





arebyte Gallery and The National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo are pleased to announce POWERPLAY, a group exhibition featuring artists working within digital media, moving image and technology. Co-commissioned by London-based arebyte Gallery and the National Gallery Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, with support from the New Art New Audiences grant from the British Council. The first showing of the exhibition will be presented at arebyte Gallery in London, before travelling to the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo. POWERPLAY will be the first exhibition of digital and new media art at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, Harare and Mutare.



#### **Addresses:**

*arebyte Gallery*  
7 Botanic Square, London City Island, E14 0LG

*National Gallery Zimbabwe Bulawayo*  
Joshua Nkomo St, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

*National Gallery Zimbabwe Harare*  
20 Julius Nyerere Way, Harare. Regional

*National Gallery Zimbabwe Mutare*  
122 Third St, Mutare, Zimbabwe

#### **Featuring works by:**

*Mr Color*  
*Tito Aderemi Ibitola*  
*Vincent Bezuidenhout*  
*Scumboy*  
*King Debs*  
*Mbakisi Sibanda*  
*Kumbirai Makumbe*  
*Isaac Kariuki*

**Virtual Reality exhibition iteration**  
**made by Christopher MacInnes.**



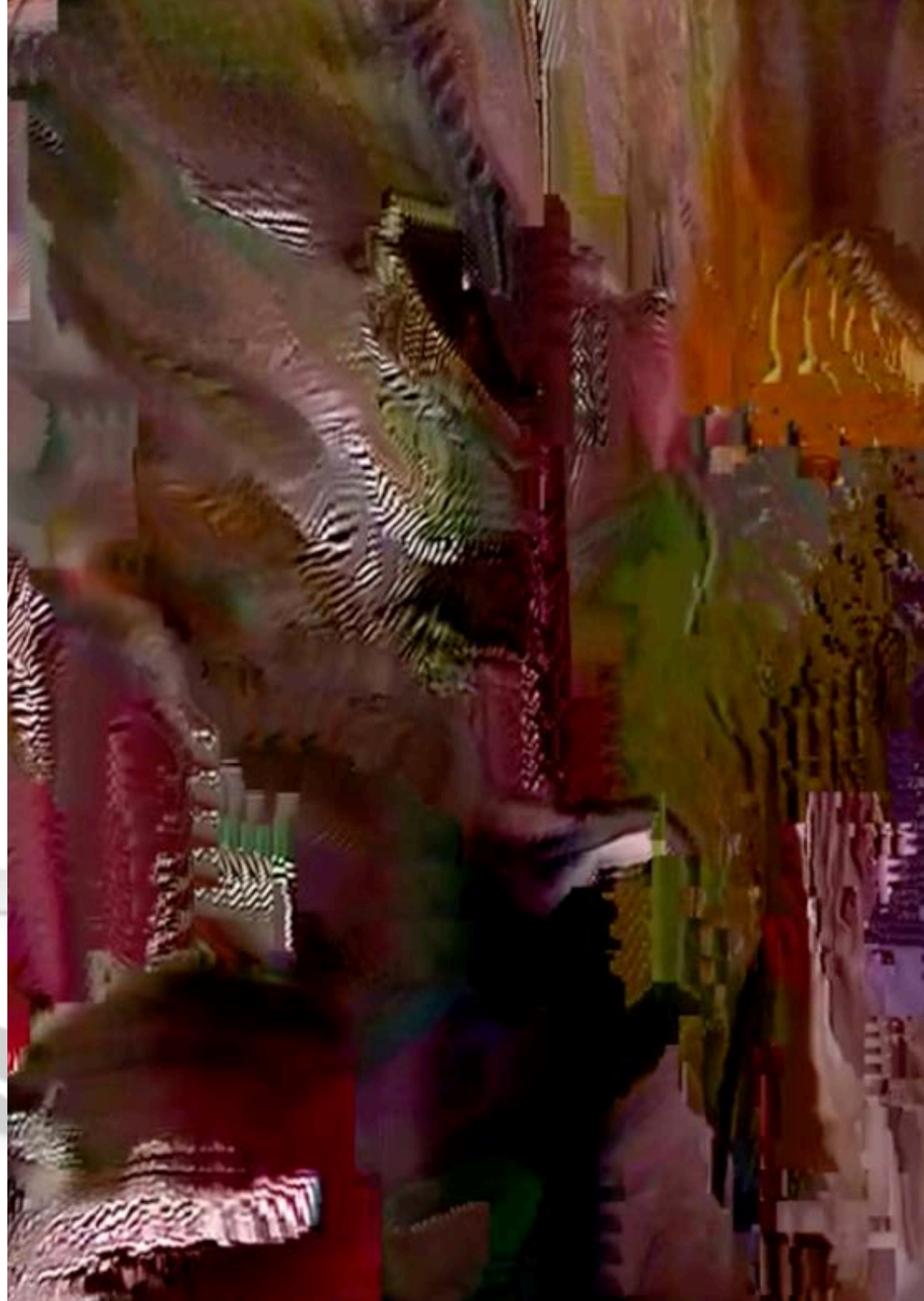
*POWERPLAY* foregrounds the digital arts scene in Africa and presents work by digital artists who are from or based in Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the UK. Discussing the use of technology in creating a sense of identity and place within a digitised world, the artists in the exhibition look at the relationships of power experienced in varying ways. The works address isolation and alienation; societal bias around gender and race; transformation of being; the politics of borders and migration; dark markets of trade; and communities who work outside of mainstream economy. Taking place both online and offline, the multi-sited exhibition format brings to light the fluidity between the virtual and the real – how is power asserted over our decisions and movements, what are the consequences, and how can we think about control differently?



Through newly commissioned and re-imagined work, *POWERPLAY* explores the nuances of working with digital media in a digitised world. The exhibition looks into the reproduction and commodification of the self, consent and surveillance online and offline, and the exploitation and censorship of data, ideas and behaviours. Through the use of existing infrastructure within the gallery and around the city, as well as the pseudo-advertisement aesthetics seen in the CGI printed works and the Virtual Reality iteration of the exhibition, the artworks proliferate and infiltrate this system to question our agency and power over surveillance and capitalism.

From politicians threatening to use military or economical power as coercion, to the underlying systemic structures of bias built on the oppression of race, gender and sexuality, plays of power are prevalent throughout online and real life interactions by way of social hierarchies and the monopolising of markets. Plays of power are also widespread in chat rooms, online community forums, and gaming worlds, often with users spreading hate speech with methods of mental manipulation to initiate formations of groups of like-minded people who are hostile to those with differing opinions.

Technology can be used as a tool to demonstrate power – from data collection by black-box algorithms to major tech companies dominating the market – the ways we converse, vocalise our opinions and integrate are becoming increasingly more digitised and therefore unstable. Technology can seem intangible and removed from a sense of personability, however it can also reinforce a sense of place and identity – this is formalised in the exhibition through a reconnection to the physical world by challenging the traditional modes of display, and incorporating screen based works with physical ephemera, alongside a virtual reality version of the exhibition, where the work is stretched beyond its physical or material limits.



Overall, the various creative technologies, software and hardware in the exhibition are used with purpose and intent to address the tensions and consequences of producing work linked to immateriality, the individual and the collective, and the misrepresentation of words and meaning. Technology creates an interrelated mesh of connections in a global network, which is solidified in the artists' various locations across Africa, Europe and America, but is also conceptually linked in the subtleties of each work.

Tito Aderemi Ibitola uses GIFs as a medium to make connections between migration and desirability of space, playing on the political categorisation of the term "alien" and how the artist feels her own black body is read. This links to Isaac Kariuki who makes comparisons between the sale of (counterfeit) goods on the blackmarket to the displacement of people living outside of the mainstream economy. Here, a connection to life and living is made between online and offline connections, whereby the inside and outside of normative roles are examined through Google Maps and trading on the darkweb.

Also questioning copyright as a tool of power is Vincent Bezuidenhout and his work *DVDRIP* which originated during the rise of illegal file sharing, or 'pirating' of movies online. In the spirit of Harun Farocki's 'operative images' and aesthetically reminiscent of Glitch Art, screen captures are employed in the work in order to highlight this phenomena of the corruption of digital information. His other work *Jsoc\_pics* consists of images appropriated from the Instagram accounts of members of Joint Special Operations Command, USA. The images are imbued with all the characteristics of traditional masculinity but the faces of the soldiers in these photographs are redacted by the artist. This act of censorship reveals elements of fear and shame often disassociated with toxic masculinity. By printing the images on the most basic elements of American consumerism (mugs, jigsaws, keychains etc), Bezuidenhout reduces the images to commodities and undermines the meaning of this kind of proliferation of the 'selfie' in the process.

Scumboy's work shows avatars in various states of entrapment; both physically and mentally. Human emotion is expressed in two ways here through a writhing body unable to comprehend the situation and through positive movement in a body dancing in the acceptance of being powerless. Dance is brought into a different space with King Debs' work whereby the power of gender and race is interrogated in a ritual performed by a woman figure through the artist's male gaze. In the work, Lerato who is a young Tswana Queen, seen draped in a crimson and black garment, dances to appease the Bantu ancestors. The work opens and challenges the dialogue of the maltreatment of black women, who are instead celebrated in the video in the form of respect and appreciation, and poses the learning/unlearning of the male gaze to the female body.

Utilising language in the form of calligraphy, prayer and shapes is seen in both King Debs' work and Kumbirai Makumbe who posit new ways of understanding a transcendence

of the human. For Kumbirai, an unnamed protagonist talks to Eywa, an artificial intelligence, who assists in 'ascension' of the body into code. The work more broadly looks at a non-exclusionary to new ways of being, with an anti-hierarchical approach to interconnectedness of people, ideas, and speculations on the future of society.

Mbakisi Sibanda's work portrays the feeling of being isolated online whilst also being hyper-connected; the contradiction here plays out in the form of a new video work and accompanying print identifying the dark nature of how the internet affects mental and physical health, as well as social disintegration and social anxiety. Also taking an emotive response to power, Mr. Color's large banner print tells the story of the creation of a new type of android, one with consciousness and sentient feelings, where energy particles formed from shared consciousness and transfer of energies between bodies. The work questions collectivity, and how positive and powerful energies can combine to create new ways of thinking.

The artists' works will be shown as a 6 week multimedia installation in arebyte Gallery, London. Throughout the duration of the physical exhibition, interviews with the artists will be available to view on arebyte on screen (AOS), arebyte Gallery's digital art channel, as well as a virtual tour of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo gallery space made using Unreal software by UK based artist Christopher MacInnes. Viewable 24/7 via a dedicated screen and Virtual Reality headset in arebyte Gallery's window, the virtual tour will also be broadcast on dedicated monitors located in the NGZ in Harare and Mutare, as a way to further promote the artists and the exhibition. Visitors will be able to interactively explore the different works through a Virtual Reality headset allowing them to navigate the multimedia installation originally proposed for NGZ later this year. The Virtual Reality version of the exhibition will then travel to the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Mutare and Harare.

The exhibition is part of arebyte Gallery's 2020 programme *systems* which discusses the erratic interplay between global infrastructures and economics, computer and technological systems, which have become the carrier for emotional, political and ecological agendas.

This exhibition is made in partnership with the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo, and is supported by the British Council's New Art New Audiences grant.



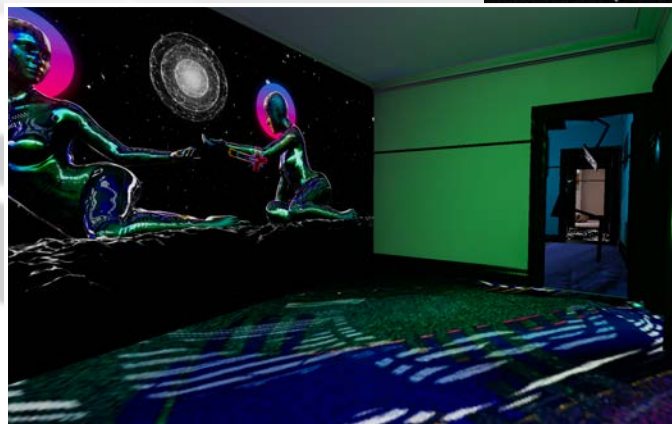
# MR COLOR

Niyi Okeowo is an Art Director, based in Lagos, Nigeria. Mr.Color is an ongoing personal expression inspired and influenced by Futurism, Colors, Spaces and themes of isolation and Serenity.



## THE CREATION

Inspired by the creation story and the creation of Adam, *THE CREATION* tells the story of the creation of a new type of android, one with consciousness and sentient feelings, energy particles formed from shared consciousness and transfer of energies. It also shows how shared energies can be the birth of something new and powerful, sharing resources to start a common good.



# BOLATITO ADEREMI IBOTOLA

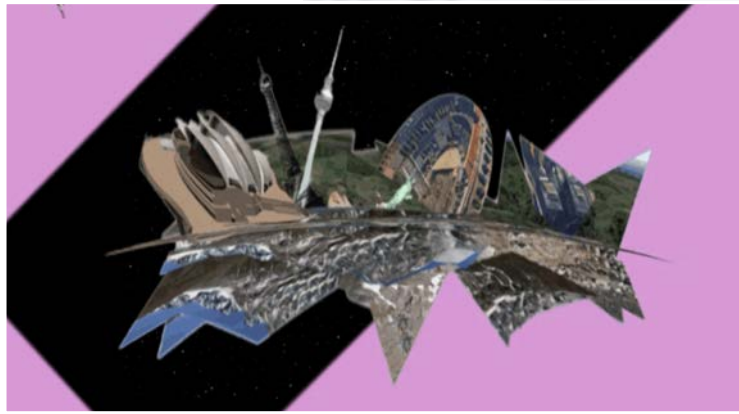
Bolatito Aderemi-Ibitola is a trans-disciplinary artist working primarily in time based art, interactivity and performance.

Along with her artistic practice, Aderemi-Ibitola also works as a devised theatre practitioner, performance studies scholar and teaching artist. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, she immigrated to the United States in 2000. She returned to Nigeria in 2014 where she is now living and working.

Bolatito Aderemi-Ibitola earned her Masters in Performances Studies from Tisch School of the Performing Arts, New York University and a Bachelors in Communication Arts with a focus in Television/Film Production and a minor in Political Science from Allegheny College

## I Was Here

*I Was Here* originally functioned as a commentary on migration, access, and desirability of space, as the artist considered the restrictions on travel placed on countries in the 'third world', such as her home country Nigeria, and the desperate means many must utilize to enter spaces which allow for a more equitable life. At the time of the project's conception (2016), Europe was struggling with an "immigration crisis" and navigating the consequences of neocolonialism and its colonial legacy. The artist plays on the political categorization of "alien" and constitutes herself as an invader who gains unrestricted access to the 'first world' through the utilization of satellite imagery technology. Now, Europe is navigating a new crisis with the global outbreak of COVID-19. Restrictions on movement, travel, and access are unilaterally imposed. The work takes on new relevance as the world collectively considers how to navigate spaces when the only means of access is through the digital realm.





# VINCENT BEZUIDENHOUT

Vincent Bezuidenhout is a South African born artist whose work spans image-making and investigative documentary practices. His research-based process employs narratives and histories to examine the psychology of power in relation to identity.

He has been awarded grants and fellowships from The National Arts Council of South Africa, The Goethe Institut, The Tierney Fellowship, Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, School of Visual Arts - NYC and the National Research Foundation of South Africa. Residencies include the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris and Photoglobal at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Bezuidenhout holds a Master's Degree in Fine Art from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, is a published writer, and have lectured widely. from Allegheny College

## #Jsoc\_pics DVDRIP

*DVDRIP* originated during the rise of illegal file sharing, or 'pirating' of movies online. This imperfect process often led to the corruption of digital information which would briefly flash across the screen as abstract geometric patterns, large brightly colored pixels and image artifacts. In the spirit of Harun Farocki's 'operative images' and aesthetically reminiscent of Glitch Art, screen captures were employed in order to create a photographic representation of this phenomena. The video work is a live recording where Bezuidenhout scrubbed through the footage, consciously shifting between certain points in the timeline, and similar to a DJ, creating a new narrative with the existing material.

*Jsoc\_pics* consists of images Bezuidenhout appropriated from the Instagram accounts of members of Joint Special Operations Command, USA. The faces of all the soldiers in these photographs have been redacted, before being posted online. These images are imbued with all the characteristics of traditional masculinity, yet the act of self censorship reveals elements of fear and shame. Bezuidenhout created an online shop where the images are used on cheap commodities like mugs and cushions, disarming the photographs by reducing them to the most basic elements of American consumerism.





Oliver Hunter Pohorille ( AKA Scum Boy ) is a transgender 3D artist and motion graphic designer in Cape Town, South Africa. His work has been exhibited in various galleries around the world and he has worked with multiple artists of various disciplines. He mainly creates still renders for gallery exhibitions and prints but also has a large body of video art. His art is centered around the human form and its interaction with the world. Oliver uses the principle of 3 dimensional art to warp reality into a world of his own creation.

### **I can't no, no, no yeah, okay**



The three pieces I made for the POWERPLAY exhibition are based around the idea of the human condition and how we as humans deal with being trapped and devoid of external influence. These pieces are all connected via their entrapment but are separated by how they deal with being trapped. These pieces are all about human emotion expressed through the lack of power.

*"I can't"* shows one phase of the human condition and how it deals with being trapped. This piece shows a melancholic feeling, the character is trapped and helpless. There is no effort to escape.

*"no, no, no"* is an expression of anger and desperation. This piece is fueled completely by human emotion on the opposite spectrum of *"I can't"*. There is pure emotion and fear.

*"yeah, okay"* is the final phase of the human condition within a loss of power. There is pure emotion, much like the previous works, however, the strongest emotion shown here is acceptance. The character portrayed has learnt to deal with the loss of power and therefore he is given power.







King Debs is a multimedia artist based in Cape Town, South Afrika. Working primarily in 3D digital art and his self-developed calligraphy, King Debs creates a unique aesthetic to transpose his ideas on identity and Afrikanism. His work deals with the notion of post-humanism within an Afrikan context. He is inspired by 'trans-humanist' ideology and the dystopian convergence of man and machine..

## Ritual Dance 0001

*Ritual Dance 0001* is a fully CGI art film developed in 2018. In essence, it is digital augmentation of Afrikan traditions of song and dance as a means of attaining spirituality. The very short film speaks to the idea of translating primitive, and traditional practices in the new age of information and technology. It is meant to unpack the idea of Afrikan people having the liberty to be open, and familiarise themselves with the past, present, and future within the mixed reality space.

The artwork is meant to be a celebration of identity, the internet, and digital media as tools that can even-out the playing field for the socio-political climate.

The film features an Afrikan princess by the name of Swazi. She is clothed in charcoal and crimson regalia, which is meant for healers and shamans. Her face is partially obscured with a silky headpiece cascading down her face. This is meant to shield her view from worldly interferences, but still be able to see some light in her trance-inducing dance.

The calligraphy on the back wall, written in yellow /gold paint is meant to further summon the ancestors in the metaphysical realm, to join and guide the healer in prayer. 'The Lord's Prayer' is what a keen observer would read upon deciphering the cryptic glyphs with the calligraphy.









# MBAKISI SIBANDA

Mbakisi Sibanda was born in 1995 in Bulawayo and is a designer by profession, having ventured into commercial design back in 2013 working for advertising and signage companies throughout his career. Sibanda also specialises in creating 3D virtual mockups and visualization.

## ISOLATION

The project was inspired by the name *ISOLATION* hence the environment of the scene. The people around that are outside the box represent society. There's a question mark above the head of one of them and a halo on the other. These elements represent society's curiosity about the digital technologies our world has come to invent, the halo represents its innocence.

The large faces with glowing eyes represent power. Yes, as we know it the internet is an entity, it is like a god and it has come to control the individual lives of people and it has a great grip on them and on society as we know it. The large faces are "idols".

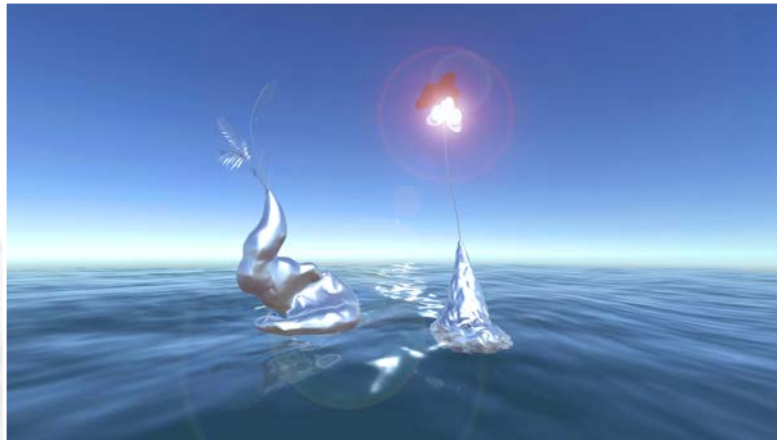
The Box. The box is a space that the person that has been influenced by the idols is trapped within, that is why the two large cables are connected to the box and the two idols are connected to it; they feed the box with their control. They also tell the person in the box how to live, how to talk and interact, but the person in the box is alone. This is the ISOLATED person, longing for a connection to the outside world but bound by the grips of his fears (Octopus Tentacles represent predators) and they won't let him out. The world outside wants to connect with him but it is phased with his surroundings, he can't get out because of the control of what he worships.

In conclusion, *ISOLATION* explains the present-day sufferings people go through day to day, broken relationships, being victims of ransomware, hackers and social disintegration, the world is disconnected yet so connected. The video explains this with sequences on glitch and the spider's control.



# KUMBIRAI MAKUMBE

Kumbirai Makumbe believes in the transmutation of the intangible yet experiential. They are enticed by the materiality of digitally generated matter with their work residing at the intersection of art, technology, and the ethereal. They place significant effort into speculative explorations of alternative modes of being and thinking that could negate exclusionary acts and ideologies. Their work continually interrogates the multi-dimensionality of blackness, exclusionary acts, and notions of inclusion, 'in-betweenness', 'caring' and transcendence. They are situation-dependent, transform & metamorphose to ceaselessly take on various forms and maneuver through a diverse range of spaces.



## It Was A Mix of Things

*It Was A Mix of Things* follows the journey of a human undergoing the process of 'Ascension', resulting in their transformation into an infomorph, a biological entity or consciousness existing online. This is all in an attempt to formulate effective alternative transcendental politics. One that doesn't involve the 'malpractices' and disheartening utilizations of technology currently evident in our socio-political landscape

Have we made it apparent that we as humans cannot cognitively conceptualise and actualise a wholly inclusive and sustainable future for ourselves? ....

It seems we've positioned technology and nature as opposites where one is assumed to prevail over the other? What if the merging of technology and nature could be our gate to transcendence as cyborgism has shown us.

How about we consider technology is a means to an end instead of the end.





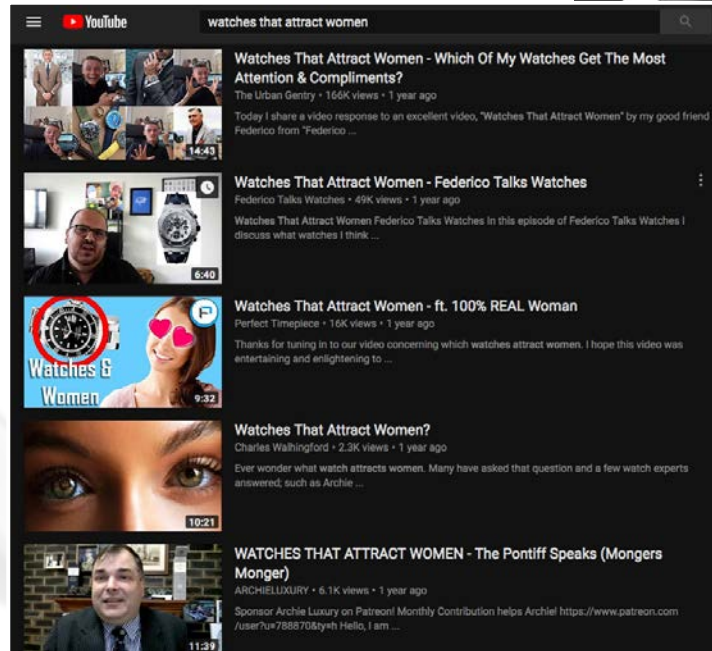
# ISAAC KARIUKI

Isaac Kariuki is a visual artist and writer living between London and Nairobi. His work centres on technology, surveillance and internet culture as it relates to the global south and marginalised groups. He holds an MA from Central Saint Martins with a concentration in digital art. He is the founder of Diaspora Drama, a three-part publication exploring creative people of colour with overarching themes of the internet and technology.

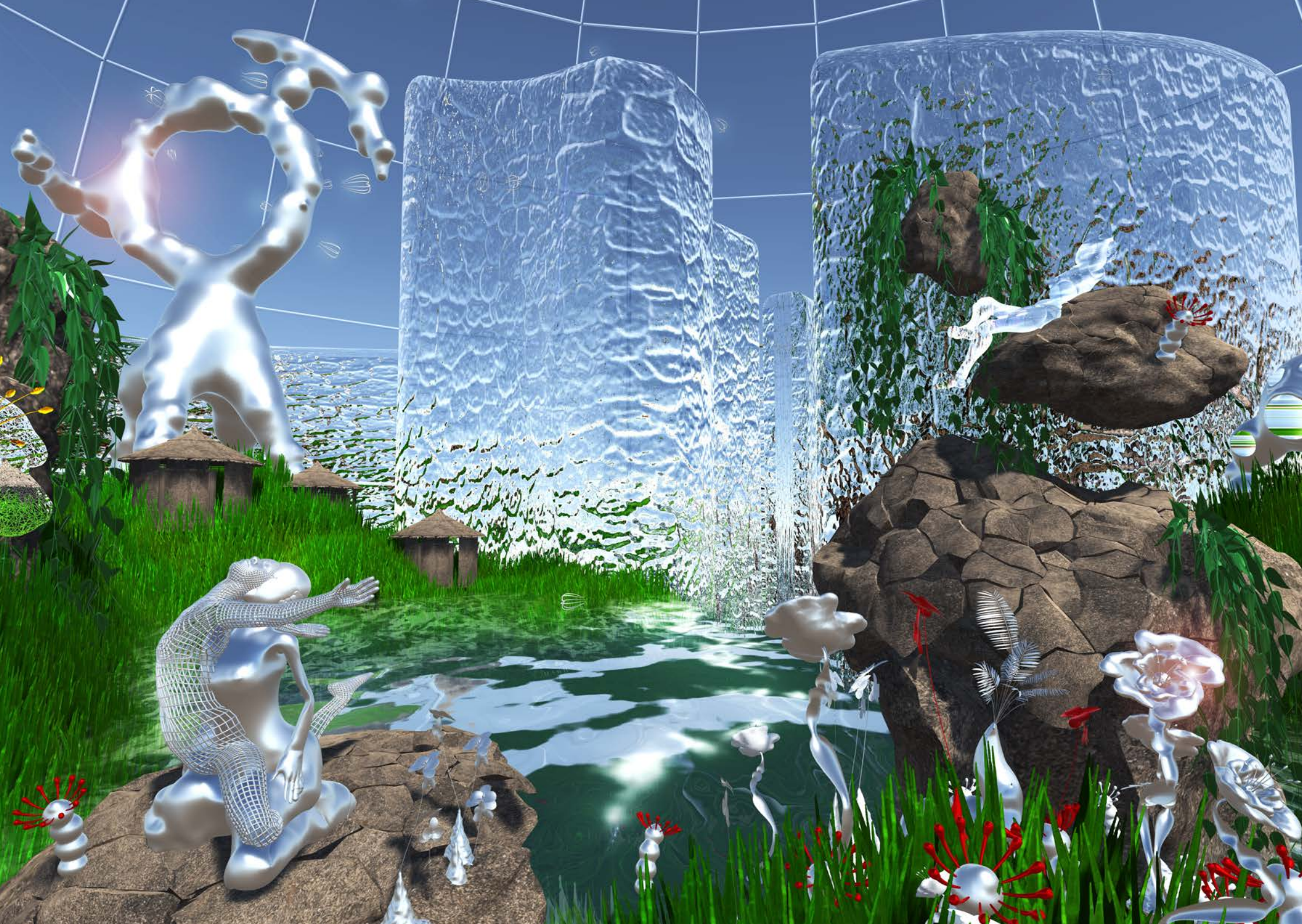
## Precious Metals / I Come Here Every Day

Falling between the cracks of what's legal and illegal is the grey market, a loose term for goods bought and sold outside of authorised distribution channels, like a warehouse worker selling off excess inventory of cell phones, or the mafia refers to handbags, electronics and groceries as 'fallen off the truck.' For socioeconomic and geopolitical reasons, many people are encircled within the grey market every day, living in illegally rented homes, working unregulated jobs that do not ask for identity cards, or, using a family member's information instead.

*Precious Metals / I Come here Every Day* considers this dichotomy as not just arbitrary rules placed upon the less fortunate, but a space that is in a constant state of flux. Displaying wristwatches containing, or, wholly made from metals bought through the dark web, and the grey market, the project displays the meticulous and often volatile nature of watch making as well living in the grey market. Such is the case for an experienced watchmaker, as well as the person selling it off the street.









## Exhibition dates and key information:

*POWERPLAY at arebyte Gallery, UK (London):  
14th August - 26th September, 2020*

*POWERPLAY at National Gallery Zimbabwe (Bulawayo):  
October 2020 - TBC*

*POWERPLAY (Virtual Reality walkthrough piece only)  
at National Gallery Zimbabwe (Harare):  
TBC*

*POWERPLAY (Virtual Reality walkthrough piece only)  
at National Gallery Zimbabwe (Mutare):  
TBC*

## Addresses:

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122 Third St, Mutare, Zimbabwe*

*arebyte Gallery  
7 Botanic Square, London City Island, E14 0LG*

## Team:

*Nimrod Vardi*  
Founder and Creative Director, arebyte Gallery

*Claudel Goy*  
Managing Director, arebyte Gallery

*Rebecca Edwards*  
Curator, arebyte Gallery

*Edward Martin*  
Curatorial Assistant, arebyte Gallery

*Butholezwe Kgosi*  
Regional Director, National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo

*Cliford Zulu*  
Curator, National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo

*Thabiso Mohare*  
Southern Africa Arts Project Manager, British Council



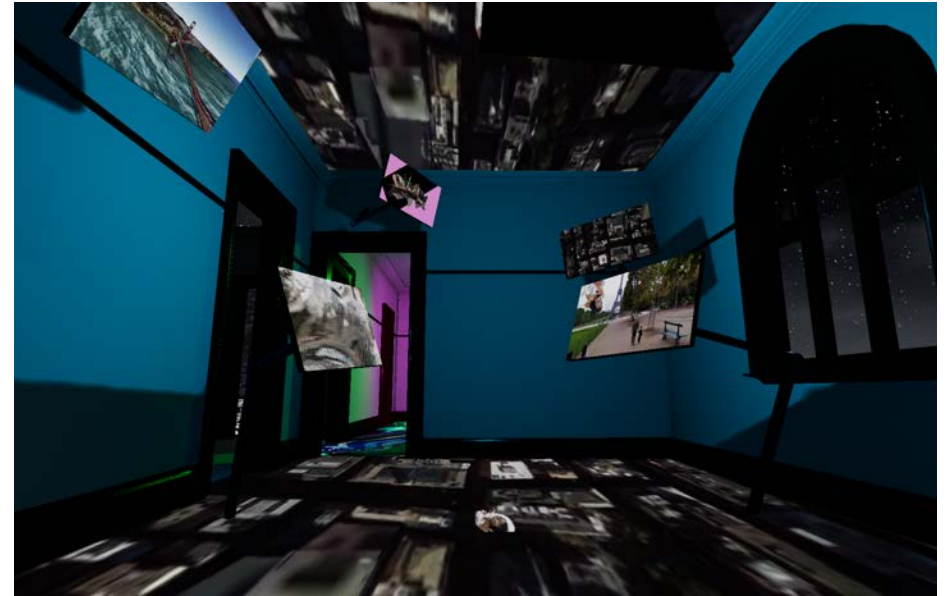


**National Gallery of Zimbabwe  
CURATORIAL STATEMENT  
POWERPLAY ITINERANT EXHIBITION**

The National Gallery of Zimbabwe (NGZ) in Bulawayo is pleased to see the realisation of a digital art exhibition at Douslin house commissioned in partnership with UK partners arebyte Gallery and the British Council. *POWERPLAY* is a group exhibition featuring artists from Zimbabwe UK and South Africa working mostly with digital media. The exhibition is coming at a time when the NGZ is refocusing the presentation of exhibitions amidst the economic challenges and the COVID19 pandemic.

Since 2006 when patronage declined due to migration and paucity of the tourism industry, efforts were made to reach out to new audiences and assist artists migrate to digital platforms for purposes of marketing their work. In 2012, Bulawayo artist Berry Bickle presented a digital artwork titled *Zi*. At the inaugural Zimbabwe Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2011 title *SEEING OURSELVES*. In 2012, Berry Bickle conducted a video art training titled *YOU HAVE 90 SECONDS* to resident artists at the NGB and this saw local artists Aubrey Bango, Danisile Ncube and Fisani Nkomo explore digital art as a medium. Realising the need and power of digital art, the Gallery partnered in 2010 with Bulawayo radio station Radio Dialogue in an exhibition titled *The truth will set you free*. A total of 15 laptops were presented to Bulawayo visual artists to further explore digital art.

One of the biggest challenges faced by digital artists in Zimbabwe has and still remains access to the internet. The inability to commercialise digital art further dissuades active uptake of the medium by artists. The Gallery space is also not designed to present optimal presentation of digital art shows. The lack of digital equipment compounds the challenges. There is also confusion between graphic art and digital art, the former being widely offered by most tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. It is for these reasons that the NGB has historically not pursued digital art vigorously.



However, the donation of computers to the Gallery by the Embassy of Netherlands in 2013 served to provide tools for artists to explore digital art. Internet provision by Liquid Telecom has further improved access to internet by resident artists at the Gallery. The Alliance Francaise of Bulawayo has also supported the Gallery by hosting our website thus creating an avenue for promotion of digital art to the global community. On its part, the Gallery set up the John Knight cinema whose purpose is to show digital content by local artists and filmmakers.

Through *POWERPLAY*, the NGB is turning a corner and digital art will systematically be integrated in our curatorial framework. This full scale and inaugural digital art exhibition is the catalyst to enable Zimbabweans to experience digital art on a different level. As the world re-opens after COVID19 induced lockdowns, more than ever, the digital platforms are presenting a great wake up call to the local practitioners and consumers.

We look forward to the digital now and the digital future.

**Cliford Zulu**  
NGB Regional Director  
13 July 2020



Since 1974, the National Gallery in Bulawayo (NGB) has established an indelible mark in promoting art and artists' growth in the south western region of Zimbabwe. As the foremost visual arts institution, the NGB has the unique role and mandate of preserving and promoting the visual heritage of the region. Over the years, the NGB has emerged as an arts facility in broader service of the creative needs of the public.

The NGB prides itself as a versatile and transformative organisation. We have in the last year invested time and resources to self-introspect and redefine ourselves and our mandate. Provision of the best artistic experience is our cause and passion. Informed and inspired by emerging and established international contemporary art trends, the NGB has since 2019 embraced digital technologies in curation and exhibition making. We seek to position the NGB as a creatively vibrant arts establishment.

Zimbabwe's demographic profile shows that approximately 68% of the population are young people below the age of 35. Aware that digital media mostly attracts the youth, the NGB is desirous to attract young people for purposes of building long term art audiences.

The NGB is delighted to partner with arebyte gallery in presenting the PowerPlay exhibition. The exhibition is a deliberate effort to present 'new art' to attract 'new audiences'. PowerPlay is a significant exhibition for the NGB as it is the first full scale digital art intervention. We are equally pleased that the exhibition is international in character and features artists from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria and the United Kingdom. We consider cultural diversity an important attribute in enhancing audience experience. Through digital art, the NGB is opening up to international audiences for purposes of actively promoting Zimbabwe's cultural heritage.

Galleries of the future are being reimagined as 'galleries without walls'; the NGB is aligning with the dictates of the fourth industrial revolution. PowerPlay signifies and symbolises the NGB's diversification to incorporate the digital art world.

Noteworthy is that the exhibition is being unveiled in the context of COVID19, a virus that has jolted arts institutions into accelerated digitisation and protracted use of social media platforms, a path the NGB will pursue with greater vigor and tenacity.

The NGB expresses gratitude to arebyte for the partnership and commitment to be our partners in the ongoing digitisation process.

A hearty thank you is also extended to British Council Southern Africa for the grant.

**Butholezwe Kgosi Nyathi**  
NGB Regional Director





*arebyte* is a London-based art organisation which supports the development of contemporary artists working across digital and emerging artforms. Following in the long tradition of artists experimentation with new technologies, arebyte Gallery, has led a pioneering programme since 2013, to much acclaim. The gallery commissions new works from emerging, as well as more established artists, across the UK and internationally, supporting multiple voices in digital culture, and bringing innovative perspectives to art through new technologies.

[www.arebyte.com](http://www.arebyte.com)



*National Gallery Zimbabwe* in Bulawayo is a unique facility, which holds invigorating and challenging exhibitions. Douslin House where the Gallery is housed is more than 100 years today. Its architectural splendour makes evident the gallery's own goal of aesthetic appreciation and artistic aim.

As custodians of a growing Zimbabwean heritage, we are tasked with the creative and intellectual discipline to select, to nurture and commend outstanding works of visual art, to select and display pivotal works, to generate and improve upon existing talent, to train and develop artistic skills, to educate, to empower, to mediate, and mostly to celebrate.

Freed from some of the influences and concerns, which dominate other provinces in Zimbabwe, the unique thrust of the National Gallery in Bulawayo is its desire to dissolve barriers between art and its audience, to establish a consistent dialogue and intimacy. The personality of this gallery is embodied in its transparent windows in the Lower Gallery, which allow passers-by to view current exhibitions while going on about their daily business.

[www.nationalgallerybyo.com](http://www.nationalgallerybyo.com)

## arebyte 2020 Programme

# SYSTEMS

arebyte's 2020 programme takes the notion of Systems as its point of departure. Systems discusses the erratic interplay between the systems we encounter on a daily basis, and how we might use parts of these systems to reconfigure our understanding of the world. From global infrastructures of economics and finance, to organic and environmental systems of growth and reproduction; from computational and technological systems, to collaborative and interdisciplinary systems of discourse and pedagogy, the way our world functions will be brought into conversation, opening up a dialogue for critique and exchange.

Continuing from the 2019 theme Home, Systems invites artists to respond to the networks and structures at play in the digitised world. The networks which have become carriers for emotional, political and ecological agendas are critiqued through group exhibitions, residencies, off-site projects and newly commissioned work.

The networks we live among are “sites of exchange, transformation, and dissemination...conveying a sense of a spare, clean materiality” \*, but they're also part of a larger world-system, convoluted and undefined through the proliferation of information and opposing agendas. These networks that have become so entangled and entwined with everything we buy, consume, read, think and act upon are broached in Systems through cryptocurrency and sovereignty with Helen Knowles; through critique on data packets, point-to-point latency and internet protocol with Olia Lialina; through software subculture and open sourcing with Alan Warburton; through emergent technologies, creative Artificial Intelligence and algorithms with Luba Elliott; and through discourse surrounding the artist residency and intervention within the physical and virtual gallery space with Going Away.tv, Goldsmiths University Computational Arts Department and AOS (arebyte on screen).

The artists in Systems confront our current world systems of varying scales, and posit alternative ways of thinking about the underlying systems present throughout our histories, presents and futures.

\* N. Katherine Hayles, *Cognitive Assemblages: Technical Agency and Human Interactions* (Critical Inquiry Vol 43, no. 1 Autumn 2016) p32-55



2020

[www.arebyte.com](http://www.arebyte.com)

[www.nationalgallerybyo.com](http://www.nationalgallerybyo.com)



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