

# Syllabus



Syllabus VII Artists during a workshop with melissandre varin, Eastside Projects, 2024: Photo by Ruth Claxton

## **SYLLABUS VIII INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

Wysing Arts Centre, Eastside Projects, New Art Exchange, PS<sup>2</sup>, Spike Island, Studio Voltaire and Site Gallery invite applications from artists for Syllabus VIII.

Syllabus is a codesigned learning programme in its eighth year, supporting ten artists across ten months.

Syllabus offers time for artists from across the UK to discuss ideas, work, life and approaches to practice, while building community and taking risks. Syllabus creates an environment of mutual learning and exchange between the artists that is responsive to each cohort.

Beginning in June 2025, Syllabus VIII will be built around a series of six intensive in-person weekend gatherings and an online programme. The ten selected artists will collaboratively develop the curriculum, with curators and artists from partner organisations, the Syllabus Coordinator, and Syllabus VIII Artist Advisor, Wingshan.

Artists will benefit from:

- The opportunity to rethink individual practices through an intensive programme of in-person gatherings and an online programme, hosted by the partner organisations.
- Working together to collaboratively shape and develop a reflexive, experimental, and collective learning experience.

- Critical conversations about ideas and work in progress with a supportive, national network of artists, curators and organisations.
- Becoming part of a new network of artist peers.
- Introductions to, and connections with, arts organisations, communities in cities across the UK and access to new networks, expertise and resources.
- Two gatherings at Wysing Arts Centre and gatherings at Eastside Projects, New Art Exchange and PS<sup>2</sup>.
- An online programme.
- A gathering with this year's guest partner, Site Gallery.
- Two 1-2-1 mentoring sessions with Syllabus VIII Artist Advisor, Wingshan.
- Two 1-2-1 mentoring sessions with a partner organisation.

To support participation in Syllabus VIII, artists will receive:

- A bursary of £1,250 for accommodation and travel.
- A £75 budget per artist to support learning on the programme, e.g. books, or exhibition entry fees.
- An access budget available upon request (see 'COSTS' section on page 5 for guidance on what this could cover).

As in previous years, gatherings will include content generated by the cohort itself, and so we are looking for participants who want to proactively bring forward ideas to the programme and contribute to its design and delivery across the ten months.

Syllabus VIII aims to reach artists with a range of practices and artistic approaches and bring together individuals from across the UK who have not yet had access to similar programmes. We are particularly keen to support people who are currently underrepresented in the visual arts including artists those with Global Ethnic Majority heritage, those who have faced socio-economic barriers, artists who identify as LGBTQ+, and those with disabilities. We ask applicants to make this clear when applying, if applicable.

## CONTEXT

Syllabus offers an alternative learning model where artists can practice together. We organise the programme in a way that is responsive to artist needs, not outcome driven, and encourages deep work. We hope the programme can be contribute towards a [life-affirming sector](#).

We are developing the programme to ensure it is as artist-led as possible – this work is ongoing.

## BACKGROUND

In 2021, Freelands Foundation agreed a landmark £500,000 grant to fund Syllabus as part of its multi-million-pound commitment to support the work of organisations addressing racial inequality in the arts. With this grant, the future of Syllabus is secure for the next chapter.

Find out more about Freelands Foundation [here](#).

We relaunched Syllabus in June 2024 with a newly expanded programme, including bursaries for artists, access costs for artists, an online programme, an annual guest partner, robust evaluation and a dedicated Syllabus Coordinator.

Read about the current cohort Syllabus VII [here](#).

Previous iterations of Syllabus have involved contributions from a wide range of artists, writers and curators. Applicants to Syllabus VIII will have the opportunity to access similar networks. Contributing practitioners have included Larry Achiampong, Ruth Beale, Monster Chetwynd, Shortwave Collective, Celine Condorelli, Chan Fagan, Adam Farah, Nav Haq, Nadia Hebson, Anthea Hamilton, Andy Holden, Evan Ifekoya, Shama Khanna, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Mark Leckey, Richard Long, Modern Clay, Sofia Niazi, Katrina Palmer, Keith Piper, Holly Pester, Saziso Phiri, Rory Pilgrim, Morgan

Quaintance, Nicola Singh, Tai Shani, Rosalie Schweiker, Cally Spooner, Linda Stupart, melissandre varin, Richard Wentworth, Jonathan P. Watts, Keith Wilson, DM Withers, Rehana Zaman and Andrea Luka Zimmermann.

We have received additional input and support from John Akomfrah, Benedict Drew, Kathy Noble, Eddie Peake, Marinella Senatore, Yinka Shonibare and Mike Sperlinger and have arranged visits to Documenta Athens and Glasgow International.

Artists Barby Asante, Sonya Dyer, Jade Montserrat, Andy Holden, Milly Thompson, Jesse Darling, Harold Offeh, Uma Breakdown and curators Helen Nisbet, Amanprit Sandhu Louise Shelley and George Vasey have led the Syllabus as Artistic Advisors in previous years, engaging with and supporting participating artists over the course of the programme.

You can view our archive [here](#).



Syllabus III at S1 Artspace, 2018

## PEOPLE

Key individuals and organisations who will collaborate with the Syllabus VII artists, and who will be involved across the ten months, are:

- Wingshan: Artist Advisor
- Wysing Arts Centre: Natasha Ruwona, Syllabus Coordinator; Rosie Cooper, Director
- Eastside Projects: Ruth Claxton, Artist-Maker
- New Art Exchange: Michael Radford, Head of Neighbourhoods; Saad Eddine-Said, CEO and Artistic Director
- PS<sup>2</sup>: Ciara Hickey, Artist Development Curator; Jane Morrow, Co-Director
- Spike Island: Carmen Julia, Curator; Saphia Venner, Assistant Curator: Artist Development and Engagement
- Studio Voltaire: Dot Zhihan Jia, Curator (Studios and Residencies)
- Site Gallery: Laura Clarke, Head of Programme; Robyn Haddon, Producer

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme will be structured around a series of gatherings which all participating artists will be required to attend. During the first retreat at Wysing, Syllabus artists, individuals connected to the partner organisations, the Syllabus Coordinator and the Artist Advisor will collaborate to identify broad themes for the programme and discuss ways of working together. This may include: sharing practices, creating a collaborative code of conduct, discussing communication styles, approaches to conflict resolution, and alternative economies. These will form the starting point for an evolving, responsive curriculum that will support individual and collective artistic development and provide access to networks and knowledge across the next ten months. Subsequent weekend gatherings will be hosted at partner venues in August, September, November and January usually running from Friday to Sunday. Syllabus VIII will conclude with a final gathering at Wysing in March.

Syllabus VIII will draw on the skills, talents and experiences of the cohort itself as a key resource, combined with carefully chosen external contributors. We are looking for artists who are willing to take an active role in leading and contributing to elements of the curriculum, from sharing skills and experiences to organising workshops and leading reading groups for the wider group.

During periods between the gatherings, an online programme will maintain contact between artists, and the Artist Advisor will support and advise participating artists through a series of planning sessions and 1-2-1 conversations.



Syllabus VI at Wysing, September 2020

## PROGRAMME TIMETABLE

### Online onboarding session, April 2025

### 18 to 22 June 2025 - Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire

A four-day retreat, with onsite shared accommodation and food provided, that will introduce everyone who will be involved in Syllabus VIII to one another. Led by the Syllabus Coordinator and Artist Advisor, this gathering will enable selected artists, curators and programmers from the partner organisations, to come together, share practice and begin collaboratively planning the curriculum for Syllabus VIII.

**8-10 August, Host TBC**

**19-21 September, Host TBC**

**7-9 November, Host TBC**

**23-25 January, Host TBC**

**19 to 22 March 2026, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire**

**Online Programme, October, December and February**



Syllabus VII at Eastside Projects, August 2024

## **COSTS and ACCESS BUDGET**

Access to the Syllabus VIII programme is free.

Each participating artist will receive a £1,250 bursary towards travel and accommodation. Sessions are planned well in advance to give time for participants to book this at a low cost.

In addition, we have ringfenced an annual budget to support access costs across the cohort. In the past, this has been used for childcare (during and between the gatherings), a support worker, or additional travel costs to attend in-person gatherings, for artists who face geographic barriers to participation.

The partners are happy to write letters of support for participants who wish to make applications for professional development or travel grants.

Here are links to some funders who have supported previous participants:

- [Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice](#)
- [Creative Scotland Open Project Funding](#)
- [Arts Council Wales](#)
- [Oppenheim-John Downes Memorial Trust](#)

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

- Applicants **must** have been out of formal education for at least 4 years. This includes art and non-art related programmes, and both academic and practice-based PhDs. We are also interested in hearing from artists who have not progressed through formal art training routes at all.
- We aim to establish a cohort that represents a diversity of cultural perspectives and artistic practices.
- We are looking for applicants who want to both develop their own work and actively contribute to the collaborative development of the curriculum for Syllabus VIII.
- Applicants are expected to make a significant contribution to shaping the programme and must commit to attending all gatherings, plus any relevant online planning sessions.
- Applicants should attend monthly online check in sessions where possible to stay connected to one another between gatherings.
- Applicants will be interested in building a community of practice by skill sharing, leading activity for others in the cohort, and contributing to a caring environment.
- Applicants will ideally have an interest in alternative learning models and holistic approaches to making and working.
- Syllabus VIII is open to artists based in the UK.
- Applications may be made via video or audio, rather than written form.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please provide:

1. A statement. Tell us why you would like to participate in Syllabus VIII and why now is the right time to do the programme (max 500 words);
2. Initial ideas for contributions to the programme. This could include ideas for workshops, skill shares, reading groups, or other collective activities as well as methods of collaboration, themes to explore as a group or external contributors to invite. Please describe what this could bring to Syllabus VIII and why it is important to you and your work (max 350 words);
3. Information on your work and interests. This could include an artist statement, a text written by another person or some thoughts on what you would like to do next. (max 350 words)
4. A current CV (max two pages);
5. Examples of your work. You can upload a portfolio or individual images or can provide links to a website or to individual works (vimeo/youtube/soundcloud). We advise sending three key works, but you may submit up to five if appropriate to your practice.
6. Information relating to your personal circumstances, if you feel these have acted as a barrier to your participation in similar programmes, including formal education. This might include information on your financial circumstances, your cultural background, gender or sexuality, or details of any access needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. (100-200 words)

- **Applications must be made online** at Submittable [here](#).

The deadline for applications is **Midnight, Monday 10 February**.

Interviews for Syllabus will take place on Zoom **on Tuesday 4, Friday 7, and Monday 10 March**.

## FIND OUT MORE

**14 January, 1–2pm, Online Information Session with Syllabus Alumni, Wysing Arts Centre**

To read a FAQ, click [here](#).



Syllabus III visiting Glasgow International with Studio Voltaire, April 2018

## ARTIST ADVISOR BIOGRAPHY

Wingshan is an artist, curator, and witch based in Nottingham, UK, whose practice blends magical, feminist, and decolonial methodologies. Her work explores how storytelling and world-building can re-enchant the ways we imagine identities and futures, creating spaces for ritual, community, and collective healing. She crafts immersive experiences that open up new ways of being, together. Recent projects include *Betwixt* (Freelands Foundation, London, 2024), *Each Begets Each* (Primary, Nottingham, 2024), *Joy of Destruction* (Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, 2023), *Supernormal Festival* (Braziers Park, Oxford, 2022) and *Chaos Magic & The Curious Tower* (Chaos Magic, Nottingham, 2021-2024). She is thrilled to join Syllabus VIII as Artist Advisor, supporting artists in collaborative, transformative journeys.

## PARTNER BIOGRAPHIES



**Wysing Arts Centre** is based in rural Cambridgeshire, UK, ten miles from central Cambridge city. Set across 11 acres and comprising studios, accommodation, fields, a woodland, ceramics and recording facilities, Wysing supports artists through residencies and commissions, engaging publics of all ages through workshops, events, online activity and gatherings. Wysing celebrates the freewheeling imagination; it supports ideas and practices that shape the world. More can be discovered about Wysing's programme and history at [wysingartscentre.org/](https://wysingartscentre.org/) and [wysingbroadcasts.art/](https://wysingbroadcasts.art/)



## Eastside Projects, Birmingham

**Eastside Projects** is an artist-run multiverse based in a free public gallery in Digbeth. We say multiverse because

'organisation' or 'space' are not enough. We mean that we imagine Eastside Projects as a process, as a place where multiple narratives and experiences coexist, where we make visible an evolving set of possible realities.

<https://eastsideprojects.org/about/>



NEW ART EXCHANGE

### **New Art Exchange, Nottingham**

New Art Exchange is a ground-breaking, award-winning and internationally recognised creative space in the heart of Hyson Green, Nottingham. We are dedicated to promoting excellence in culturally diverse contemporary arts through our exhibitions, events and engagement initiatives.



### **PS², Belfast**

PS² = Paragon Studios x Project Space, an artist-led organisation established in Belfast in 1994. We support artists through the provision of nine artists' studios, three workspaces for our annual in-residence programmes for a writer/s, collective, and curator/s and multi-annual artist development programmes. We welcome audiences and artists to our city-centre Project Space: an extension of the studios which offers an open, temporary gallery for experimental enquiries. We also undertake creative projects offsite in urban, suburban and rural locations throughout Northern Ireland, including PeasPark: our outdoor community garden and art project in North Belfast.

<https://www.pssquared.org/>

## **Spike Island**

### **Spike Island, Bristol**

Spike Island is more than just a building; we're a public space where people can discover and connect with art, feel inspired, and learn something new or unexpected. We celebrate the very best of international contemporary art in our museum-scale gallery spaces, while also supporting artists to develop, produce and present innovative work throughout their careers. We want to make Bristol a great place to see and make art. That's why Spike Island provides a home to a community of over 70 artists, designers, makers, artist-led organisations and creative businesses, right in the heart of the city. <https://www.spikeisland.org.uk/>

## **STUDIO VOLTAIRE**

### **Studio Voltaire, London**

Studio Voltaire is one of the UK's leading not-for-profit arts and education organisations. Championing emerging and under-represented artists, we commission and produce exhibitions, collaborative projects, artist development programmes, live events and offsite projects. Studio Voltaire is a registered charity and part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio. We fundraise for our work through the kind support of individuals, sponsors, public funders,



charitable trusts and foundations, and sales of our renowned limited edition artworks from House of Voltaire.

<https://studiovoltaire.org>

# SITE GALLERY

## Site Gallery, Sheffield

Site Gallery is Sheffield's international contemporary art space, specialising in moving image, new media and performance. Pioneering emerging art practices and ideas, we work in partnership with local, regional and international collaborators to nurture artistic talent and support the development of contemporary art.

We connect people to artists and to art, inspiring new thinking and debate through our exhibitions, talks and events. We work with early career to established artists to commission new work, produce solo and group exhibitions, host residencies, deliver performances, lead workshops and co-produce our young people's programmes.



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