

Syllabus

SYLLABUS - WHAT IS IT?

- Syllabus is a collaboratively produced alternative learning programme for artists.
- Syllabus supports ten artists across ten months.
- Syllabus VIII is led by Wysing Arts Centre (Cambridgeshire) and jointly delivered with Eastside Projects (Birmingham), New Art Exchange (Nottingham), PS² (Belfast), Spike Island (Bristol), Studio Voltaire (London) and Site Gallery (Sheffield) as guest partner for Syllabus VIII.

WHO IS IT FOR?

- Artists with a range of practices and artistic approaches at a critical point within their practice.
- 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 with Global Ethnic Majority heritage, those who have faced socio-economic barriers, artists who identify as LGBTQ+, and those with disabilities.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

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
- PS²: 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; Efea Rutlin, Assistant Curator (Studios and Residencies)
- Site Gallery: Laura Clarke, Head of Programme; Robyn Haddon, Producer

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

Online onboarding session, April 2025

Monthly online check ins

The programme will be structured around a series of gatherings which all participating artists will be required to attend:

18 to 22 June 2025 - Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridgeshire

A five-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. This gathering will also focus on ways of working together including; communication styles, identifying shared values

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, Host TBC

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- The opportunity to rethink individual practices through an intensive programme of in-person gatherings and an online programme, hosted by the partner organisations.
- A dedicated programme budget for each gathering to enable external creative practitioners to join the process and exchange knowledge and practice with the group.
- Working together to collaboratively shape and develop a reflexive, collective learning experience. Artists will take turns to coproduce the gatherings in small groups.
- 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.
- Experiment with alternative models of learning with others.
- A £75 budget per artist to support learning on the programme, e.g. books, or exhibition entry fees.
- Introductions to, and connections with, arts organisations, communities in cities across the UK and access to new networks, expertise and resources.
- Evaluations of the Syllabus tell us that one of its greatest strengths is the peer network forged each year between the participating artists. We expect the programme to remain focused on this peer network and for participating artists to make pro-active contributions to the programme.
- Two gatherings at Wysing Arts Centre and gatherings at Eastside Projects, New Art Exchange and PS².
- An online programme.
- A gathering with this year's guest partner, Site Gallery in Sheffield.
- An Alumni Gathering hosted by Studio Voltaire, London.
- Two 1-2-1 meetings with Artist Advisor, Wingshan, over the course of the year.
- Two 1-2-1 meeting with a partner organisation.

To support participation in Syllabus VII, artists will receive:

- A bursary of £1,250 for accommodation and travel
- An access budget for those who need it.

WHAT DOES A GATHERING LOOK LIKE?

An example of one day at a Syllabus gathering:

Breakfast (9am-10am) | Visit to exhibitions (10am-1pm) | Lunch (1pm-2pm) | External Facilitator session on collaboration (2-4pm) | Reflective session led by some of the artist cohort (4-6pm) | Dinner (6-6.30pm) | Public Sharing Event – Optional (6.30pm onwards)

Other examples of previous gatherings can be viewed through Wysing Arts Centre's website here: <http://www.wysingartscentre.org/archive/retreats/>

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- Access to the Syllabus VIII programme is free.
- Each participating artists 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.

WHAT IS AN ACCESS BUDGET?

- We have ringfenced a budget to support access costs for the cohort for those who may need it.
- 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 those who may face geographic barriers to participation.
- This budget is limited, but we can offer support to identify other potential funds where possible.

HOW IS SYLLABUS FUNDED?

- In 2021, Freelands Foundation agreed a landmark £500,000 grant to fund Syllabus as part of its multimillion-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: <https://freelandsfoundation.co.uk/>
- In addition to the Freelands funding, Syllabus is part of Wysing's National Portfolio Organisation agreement with Arts Council England. Syllabus VIII partners make a significant in-kind contribution of staff time, space and other resources.

WHAT CHANGES CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE FREELANDS FUNDING?

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
- A dedicated Syllabus coordinator

CAN I APPLY FOR SUPPORT?

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](#)

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Applications to the programme are made through an open call from December 2024.
- Applications may be made via video or audio rather than written form.
- If you require any further support to make your application, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at info@wysingartscentre.org. Natasha Ruwona (Syllabus Coordinator) is also available for a phone call to answer questions or to discuss the application process further.
- We are hosting an Information Session on Tuesday 14 January. Book here: <https://www.outsavvy.com/event/24115/syllabus-viii-online-information-session>

ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS?

- **Applicants need to have been out of education for at least 4 years when the programme starts.** This means you will have completed your course in or before 2021, including art and non-art related programmes, and both academic and practice-based PhDs. This is because Syllabus has been designed to provide opportunities for artists who have been developing their practice outside of formal structures and who may have been unable to access the kind of critical support and input Syllabus offers. We also welcome applications from people who are self-taught or who have not followed a conventional route into art.
- We will be looking to establish a cohort that represents a diversity of cultural perspectives and of artistic practices and applicants need to be willing to both develop their own work and actively contribute to the development of the curriculum.
- We cannot support international travel so if you are not based in the UK, you would need to be able to commit to attending the sessions at each location throughout the ten months. We encourage participants to follow environmentally sustainable travel options.
- Please visit Wysing's website at www.wysingartscentre.org and click on Opportunities to find out more about how to make an application to Syllabus VIII.

WHO HAS BEEN PART OF SYLLABUS SO FAR?

2015: Simon Bayliss, Noel Clueit, Susie Green, Mathew Parkin, Rory Pilgrim, Jessica Sarah Rinland, Tom Salt, Lucy Steggals, Tom Varley and Rafal Zajko.

2016: Mira Calix, Faye Claridge, Mike Harvey, E. Jackson, Tyler Mallison, Nika Neelova, Tom Smith, Dylan Spencer-Davidson, Thomas Whittle and Laura Wilson.

2017: Frederica Agbah, Chris Alton, Conor Baird, Ilker Cinarel, Phoebe Davies, Freya Dooley, Rose Gibbs, Jill McKnight, Ben Sanderson and Karis Upton.

2018: Scott Caruth, Libita Clayton, Jessica Coleman, Bettina Fung, Laura Hindmarsh, Beth Kettel, David Lisser, Alicja Rogalska, Kirsty Russell and Abigail Sidebotham.

2019: Sophie Blagden, Juliet Davis-Dufayard, Yuxin Jiang, Hwa Young Jung, Sarai Kirshner, Jack Lewdjaw, Sarah Maple, Duncan Poulton and Aliaskar Torkaliaskari

2020: James Clarkson, Lauren Craig, Ufuoma Essi, Bettina Furnée, Olga Grotova, Helen Hamilton, Elsa James, Freya Johnson Ross, Daniel Trivedy and Sam Williams.

2024: Omid Asadi, Maggie Campbell, Katrina Cobain, Sophie Gresswell, Sahjan Kooner, Yoojin Lee, Natasha MacVoy, michael., Alexis Parinas and Moira Salt.

WHAT HAVE ALUMNI THOUGHT OF SYLLABUS?

“I came into this with an idea to share and think, what has evolved during my time with Syllabus is the capacity and imagination for us to build, make, record, re-imagine the ways we gather to share and think. This process has made me appreciate the subtle shifts in the way artists can congregate and make something in the ruins of a sector and reflect on the conditions of what made those ruins possible.”

“In all honesty I expected this year to make me more professional - but it has made me more honest, raw, personal and added an energy to my work that I think my undergrad and working in the art sector had begun to numb out of me.”

“I feel like I have developed as an artist in ways that I could not have envisaged a year ago. I feel much more confident, particularly in terms of breaking media boundaries and working more conceptually. I feel that The Syllabus has acted as a reliable and focused audience for my work and ideas, and has made me more aware and confident about how these connect within a wider field. I generally feel much more connected and supported outside the South West, which is an exciting prospect”

“One of my aims when applying for Syllabus was to increase my network beyond the bubble I had been working in - to meet artists practicing elsewhere in the country and find out what was going on with them. These expectations have been completely exceeded.”

“Looking back at the variety, depth and sheer complexity of each retreat, it has been an immensely challenging and illuminating experience. The generosity of all the partners and contributors has been amazing – the level of commitment and care has been deeply inspiring and motivating”

“I found the Syllabus an excellent test bed for new ideas and work. The constant of my fellow participants and the addition of a new audience at each retreat meant I was confident in taking risks that I would

have otherwise reconsidered. This opportunity to fail is enormously useful when you are trying to figure out how far you can push different aspects of your work."

"I was extremely shy and socially anxious at the beginning of the program and struggled greatly with public presentations of all kinds. Having to repeatedly do these things and being occasionally pushed out of comfort zones was really helpful. I still have to work a lot at these issues, but Syllabus has made me much more confident that I can and that this is worthwhile."

"It has given me encouragement to continue my practice at a time when it's felt difficult to do so..."

"As someone who did not receive formal art training and therefore interested in alternative art education, Syllabus provided an invaluable experience. It gave me dedicated time to learn amongst artists and opportunity to work with arts institutions. Being able to visit different parts of the UK and meet local artists was beneficial. I will say that I have gained confidence since being on the programme and came out of it with fresh ideas and desire to continue cultivating artists/peer-led support and development."