

PRESS RELEASE

THE COLUMBIA RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

SUMMER 2020 RESIDENCY EXHIBITION

THE EDGE

Private View:

Thursday 10 September 2020, 6 - 8 PM

Exhibition:

Friday 11 September - Sunday 13 September 2020

Opening Hours:

Friday, 10 AM - 6 PM

Saturday - Sunday, 12 PM - 5 PM
and by appointment

The Columbia, 97 Lancaster Gate, London, W2 3NS (access via side entrance)

Roman Road in partnership with The Columbia is pleased to present *The Edge*, a group exhibition featuring varied works by the seven participating creatives of The Columbia Summer 2020 Residency: Carla Borel, Tommy Camerno, Thomas Hjelm, Jack Laver, Angélica Lèbre, Tia O'Donnell, and Shaquéelle Whyte. Traversing different disciplines, including painting, photography, sculpture and creative writing, the display unveils new bodies of work produced or completed by each of the creatives during the six-week residency programme.

The Edge discloses a narrative that navigates the line between the inside and the outside, the hidden and the revealed. For the last six months, as the pandemic has been spreading across the globe, entropy has prevailed as we have been confronted with an uncertain and unpredictable existence. This end of residency group show is a response to the chaotic nature of the world we live in.

To reflect on the very notion of chaos, the creatives in residence have investigated and experimented with a variety of mediums to further extend their practices. Each of their distinct and divergent oeuvres looks beyond the initial definition of 'chaos' to a more complex nexus of hidden, protected and layered connotations. With symbolic references to what lies beneath the surface or behind closed doors, *The Edge* presents a mysterious interpretation of the 'truth' that we choose to conceal. As the American writer and artist Henry Miller famously stated, "Chaos is the score upon which reality is written."

The Edge opens on Thursday 10 September and will be on display until 13 September 2020.

ABOUT THE COLUMBIA

The Columbia is a proudly independent, family-owned hotel, overlooking Kensington Gardens. A hotel, cultural house and event space in the heart of West London. The Columbia is set across five Victorian townhouses built in 1856 and has a rich and colourful history, with many well-known music icons passing through its doors in the 80s to early 2000s. The Columbia continues to be a home for creatives and supports, promotes and invests in art and new talent through its ongoing residency programme and dedicated exhibition spaces, creating an inclusive and diverse arts community in a non-traditional space.

ABOUT ROMAN ROAD

Roman Road, founded by Marisa Bellani in 2013, grew organically from a project space to a gallery through establishing itself as a space of reference for contemporary art and photography. Since the end of 2019, Roman Road has become a platform for collaborative exhibitions and has recently redefined itself with a more fluid and cooperative approach. After closing its doors to the public in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Roman Road has taken this time to reform and realise a marked shift in its activities. The context of 2020 has accelerated the director's decision to close the physical premise and to make Roman Road a gallery without walls. Roman Road has opened its network of artists and clients to collaborations and its expertise and experience to implementing an arts programme in new and diverse structures.

For all press and general enquiries, please contact: romanroad@thecolumbia.co.uk



ABOUT THE CREATIVES

Carla Borel (1973, Paris) is a photographer whose work addresses themes of transience, identity, community, isolation and loneliness. Taking influence from the 50s and 60s, nostalgia is an important element of Carla's photography, with her work often looking to the past, through "quite melancholy, romantic eyes". During the residency Borel is using The Columbia as a basis for exploring memory, transience and traces of past guests such as Genesis P-Orridge, using photography and items from the hotel's archive. A self-taught photographer, Borel works with film and analogue cameras. She is not engaged in technical excellence and perfection, but an intuitive and organic relationship with the lens. Primarily working with black and white film, Borel is fascinated with the drama and mystery this medium evokes. This ardour is reflected in her photographic influences which include John Deakin, Ida Kar and David Bailey. Selected exhibitions: Group show with Art on a Postcard (2020); solo show at Le Roi Fou, Edinburgh, (2020); Club Culture, Fabric London, (2019); 209 Women, Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament, London, travelling to Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, (2018-2019); The Old Bank Vault 1 year anniversary show, London (2018); LONDON CALLING, The Photocopy Club at V3, London, (2018); Homme Libre, A22 Gallery, London (2017); Salon 17, Four Corners, London (2017).

Tommy Camerno (b.1992, London) is a visual artist whose work looks at the historical development of elegance and desire. Using wrought iron as an inspiration, Camerno's current work highlights the contrasting elements of light design and heavy material. During this residency Camerno will take the opportunity to push forward his practice repurposing used furniture to explore the relationship between architectural space and psychological states. Utilising found material at The Columbia whilst the building undergoes renovation, Camerno's paintings, installations and other works reflect the way in which objects and space are understood as a way to investigate how our felt experiences are affected and structurally contained. Camerno works and lives between London and Berlin. He is currently completing an MA in painting at the Royal College of Art (RCA), London (2019-ongoing) and previously studied at The Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), Berlin, (2019) and Chelsea College of Art (UAL), London (2010-13). Recent exhibitions include: Against the Wall, HVW8, Berlin (2020); WIP show, RCA, London (2020); Bad Romance, Gusglasshalle, Berlin (2019); Invisible Realness, PS120, Berlin (2019); The Outside Wall, UdK, Berlin (2019); and recent performance Andromeda Drape Crew Neck at Reitvelt Academy, Amsterdam (2018) and Plus Dede, Berlin (2018).

Thomas Hjelm (b.1992, London) is an internationally exhibited artist, who lives and works in London. Hjelm is preparing two paintings that respond to the building's architectural framing and a large diptych for The Columbia Residency Programme show which opens on the 10th of September. Using a combination of modified printers and scanners, Hjelm creates physically engaged works pertaining towards an alternate or absent digital space - the 'error state'. The sculptural elements of his work act as a framework, to highlight and give bodily weight to unattainably flat, scanned imagery; a discourse in synthesis between digital and physical presence. A prevalent motif for Hjelm is the use of hands, often paired with equivocal text that raises questions surrounding ubiquitous presentations of communication. The fragmented nature of the imagery pulls together disparate traces of the individual, accumulating into a residue of gesture that is built up over a fixed period of time. Hjelm attended Chelsea College of Art for Foundation and his BA Hons in Fine Art before moving on to the Royal College of Art for an MA in Print. Solo Shows include: ALWAYS, Marylebone, London (2017); An Ontological Investigation into the Life and Work of Thomas Hjelm, Soho Revue Gallery, London (2015). Selected exhibitions include: Isolation, Soho Revue Gallery, London (2020); Connection Lost, Dyson Gallery, London (2020); In Review, SPG- Southwark Park Gallery, London (2020); 2020 INSIGHT, Soho Revue Gallery, London (2019); WIP Show, Royal College of Art, London (2018); #91SELECTS Public Display, Truman Brewery, London (2017); Whitechapel Alternative Gallery, London (2014).

Jack Laver (b.1998, London) is an artist and musician, working within printmaking and painting. He explores the fringes of these mediums, creating experimental works that utilise techniques commonly perceived as errors to create images. His work communicates an obscured view of the world that we live in, adapting everyday scenes and objects to make strange of the mundane. For the residency at The Columbia, Laver is working with glue to create compositions that appear like cracked, barren land. The complex layering and drying process draws upon his education as a printmaker, where he focused on etchings, drypoint and mono-prints. This exploration has led him to approach the mediums he uses in a unique way and create work that holds a mysterious energy. Exploring the bridge between abstract and figurative art is an on-going theme in his work. Obscuring the human figure within landscapes creates abstracted images with a hint of normality, allowing the work to be situated in a recognisable world. Through this, our reality is merged with surreal, misplaced and un-recognisable elements and the barriers between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic are blurred. This creates an obscured view of the mundane, and challenges pre-conceived associations that are ingrained within us to reveal new meanings. Laver works and lives in London. He previously studied a BA in Illustration and Visual Media, London College of Communication (UAL), 2017-2020; and a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design, Kingston University (KUL), 2016-2017. Recent exhibitions include: One More Slope, Alexander James & British Fashion Council, London (2020); Themselves, the Warehouse Festival, London (2019); Through the Sand into The Dirt, Forty Seven LDN, London (2017). Illustrator for The Blues Comes With Good News by Sonny Hall (2019).

Angélica Pina Lèbre (b. 1983, Recife, Brazil) is a creative writer primarily focused on short stories. During the residency at The Columbia, Lèbre has started to write poems inspired by conversations with the other artists in residency. She is interested in anthropomorphising numbers and after visiting several rooms in The Columbia she is writing a story inspired by one of them. Lèbre is also interested in different versions of the same story and she is experimenting with ways of conveying her stories through different surfaces. Lèbre is a writer based in London. Her journey as a writer started through the visual arts about two years ago. She writes short stories inspired by artworks where she immerses herself in a single work of art and lets it inspire the story. Most of her stories are permeated by the surreal and the absurd. She likes to contemplate the unrealistic, the ridiculous and the dream-like. Lèbre also finds inspiration in children. The unexpected, implausible and fantastic things that children come out with. In addition to short stories she has also written about two-thirds of a novel where the complexities of child abuse, revenge and the intricacies of the relationship between a mother and a daughter are explored.

Tia O'Donnell (b.1997, London) produces work in a wide variety of media including painting, sculpture, film, photography and illustration. O'Donnell looks to raise awareness about mental health and art's ability to be employed as a form of therapy for children. Centred around the concept of the mask, the façade and the alter ego, O'Donnell is producing four paintings for The Columbia Residency Programme. Playful and vibrant, these artworks will translate the idea of a forced smile. O'Donnell uses her creativity as a tool to express her own battles with mental health. She depicts fighting inner demons and overcoming self-destruction. Using predominantly acrylic and canvas she depicts a world of colourful childishness with a contrasting dark and heavy message. In her work she is transparent, she is unapologetically herself and wants to break the stigma of vulnerability equalling weakness. O'Donnell aims to raise awareness on issues that are considered taboo. She believes it is important to shine light on topics such as mental health struggles, jealousy and validation, creating pieces that "cut open a wound and let it talk". O'Donnell's ambition is to host a series of creative workshops for children in order to educate future generations on mental health. O'Donnell undertook a BA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins (CSM) in 2017. Solo Exhibitions include: MIND FULL, Colebrooke Row, London (2020). Group Exhibitions include: Girls Talk/Elle Magazine, Saatchi Gallery, London (2019); Project 5-50-5, Joseph Froissart Gallery, Paris (2019); Looking For Validation, Nayland Rock Hotel, Margate (2019); OFFLINE, Spike+Earl, London (2018); FOUNDATION, The Letherby Gallery, London (2018); SHO-HO, 100 Greek Street, London (2017); SOMETHING TO HATE ON, Groucho Club, London (2017).

Shaquéelle Whyte (b.2000, Wolverhampton) is a painter and photographer whose work aims to explore intimate moments and the fundamentals of the human condition. The subjects portrayed within his work are carefully directed in order to create a fictional narrative which in turn reflect himself. He hopes to take this further and expand the world that he has created by introducing new personas and motion into his compositions during his time at The Columbia Residency Programme. Whyte explores a world of disrupted realism in order to look at the human condition. Through paint he directs his subjects as if they were actors and the canvas a stage, manoeuvring and moulding stories that reflect his own thoughts, feelings and observations as he grows and changes. In order to achieve this he pushes the functions of oil paint through layering alongside oil pastel, in turn experimenting with how 'finished' a piece of work has to be before it is complete. In 2018 Shaquelle undertook a BA Hons Fine Art at Slade School of Fine Art (UCL). Recent exhibitions include: 'INTERIM SHOW' Slade School of Fine Art, London (2020); 'Savage 2020 Exhibition' The CRYPT Gallery, London (2020); 'Reclamation Exhibition' The Ugly Duck, London (2019). Residences and Projects include: 'Denise Israel Scholarship', Rome Art Programme (2021); Alvaro Barrington Collaboration in Hackney studios. Spaceship Dungeon Zoo, (2019).