

PRESS RELEASE

BSR Fine Arts Talks
TALK JUSTICE

To talk about justice would be to open up a vast philosophical discussion, to which this series can only gesture. The practices of the artists selected for this coming year's Fine Arts Talks (2019–20) bring up questions connected to social or political justice in the world today. If you google justice, the first page of results is about lifestyle and taste: 'justice' is both an expensive trendy clothing brand and an electronic music duo. In terms of an internet search, which is how most things are judged today, the idea of justice appears to have been co-opted by riot chic, perhaps because it is increasingly a rarefied ideal, a concept that is hard to grasp in a world where social, political and environmental injustice reigns.

The series will start with **John Smith**, whose short films are known for their formal ingenuity, wit and oblique storytelling and have been widely shown internationally for over 30 years. Initially inspired by conceptual art and structural film, but also fascinated by the immersive power of narrative and the spoken word, Smith has developed an extensive body of work that defies classification, blurring the perceived boundaries between documentary and fiction. Often rooted in everyday life, his meticulously crafted films playfully explore and expose the language of cinema. For this event Smith will present and discuss a varied selection of his short films made between 1976 and 2019.

The second event will be a conversation between artist **Phoebe Boswell** (Bridget Riley Fellow 2019) and **Dr Angelica Pesarini** (NYU Florence). Pesarini, whose research is dedicated to the analysis of the intersections of race, gender and citizenship in colonial and postcolonial Italy will respond to Boswell's work, which is anchored in a restless state of diasporic consciousness. Combining draftswomanship and digital technology, Boswell creates immersive installations and bodies of work that layer drawing, animation, sound, video and interactivity in an effort to find new languages robust yet open and multifaceted enough to house, centre and amplify voices and histories which, like her own, are often systemically marginalised or sidelined as 'other'.

Video artist and 2012 Turner Prize winner, **Elizabeth Price**'s (ACE Helen Chadwick Fellow 2010-11) recent works include *FELT TIP* and *KOHL* which were presented at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis in 2018. In these pieces the artist reflects on the politics of sexuality and the #MeToo movement. Price combines a fascination with the materiality of the image with an interest in issues of labour, race, gender and social class. By looking at the relationship between the material versus the digital image and by migrating images between different contexts and categories, Price brings contemporaneity to life through archival research. **This talk will be the 2020 Felicity Powell Lecture.**

Mark Wallinger (Henry Moore Fellow 1998) is known for his engagement with ideas of power, authority, artifice and illusion. Using epic narratives, lyrical metaphors and ardent punning, the artist interweaves the mythological, the political and the everyday. His installation *State Britain* won him the 2007 Turner Prize, while *Ecce Homo* (1999–2000) was the first piece to occupy the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square. He represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2001. In 2018, the permanent work *Writ in Water* was realised for the National Trust to celebrate the Magna Carta at Runnymede, and 'The World Turned Upside Down' was unveiled in 2019 for the London School of Economics.

Goshka Macuga's use of archival material raises questions of censorship and the way in which historical references can recontextualise the reading of our time. Macuga works on a large scale with epic installations such as *To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll* at Fondazione Prada in Milan in 2016 and *The Nature of the Beast*, an installation that included a loan of a tapestry replica of Picasso's *Guernica* from the UN building in New York City exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery between 2008 and 2009. That same year Macuga produced *Plus Ultra* for the 2009 Venice Biennale. In 2017, she collaborated with Ahmet Öğüt on *The Show is Over* at the Witte De With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. In Macuga's work, mediated records of past events are used and reused throughout history, gaining or losing in significance.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

John Smith | Wednesday 9 October 2019

Phoebe Boswell and Angelica Pesarini | Thursday 24 October 2019

Elizabeth Price | Wednesday 7 February 2020 | **FELICITY POWELL LECTURE**

Mark Wallinger | Wednesday 18 March 2020

Goshka Macuga | Monday 20 April 2020