

CREATIVE HUB

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JANUARY EDITION

Welcome to your monthly update on all things creative in Exeter. In our January edition, we find out more about the works currently in Gallery 333 and the Platform space, hear from Scratch alumni Eliza Fraser about her upcoming work-in-progress piece, and chat to the musicians performing at the BBC Introducing South West Showcase.

What have you been up to this month?

Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message and we'll include what we can in future editions.

We have a new Instagram account!

Follow us @exeterphoenixcreativehub to get even more updates, stories and opportunities in Exeter.



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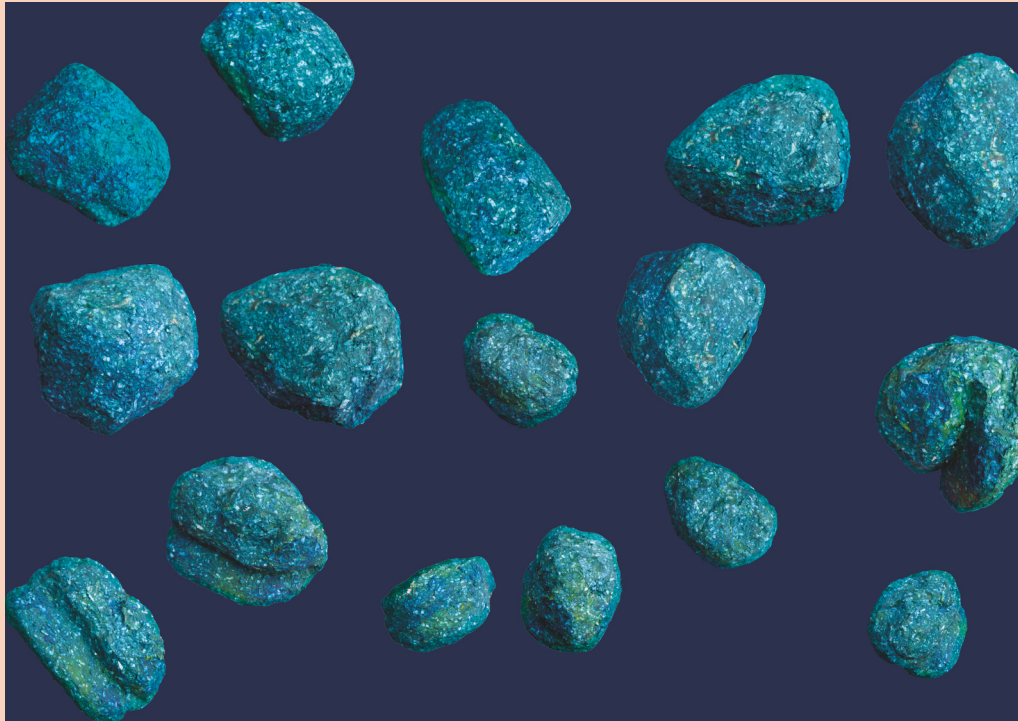
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Laura Robertson: Stella's Ground Clouds

Devon-based artist Laura Robertson adds a new iteration of her print series **Stella's Ground Clouds** to the evolving artists' paste-up space PLATFORM at Exeter Phoenix. We asked Laura about the making of the work and how the process relates to her wider practice.



“Titled to incorporate the ground, the clouds and the interstellar, Stella's Ground Clouds reaches between these horizons. I think of her as an ever expanding cosmology that encompasses the various attempts at world building I navigate in the studio.

Sloppy and tactile materials are my favourite. Particularly the kinds I find readily available in my surroundings. For this series, I photograph sculptures made from pulped waste paper and collage them over a deep blue background — resulting in a watery-like galaxy.

I'm interested in what it means to be a body in an unstable world. Stella's wet geological cosmology uses, in a prop like way, the innate

fluidity of rock (a sculptors material with a poignant history) as a stand in to challenge ideas such as monumentalism and hierarchical structures.

The physical quality of an actual, in the world, body differs from a digital rendition. When I watch old analogue sci fi films, a city visibly built from cardboard has more of a presence—is more tangible—than a comparable image built from binary code. It might be a rough shod maquette of an idea but I can enter into this physically rendered imaginary better than I can a digital version. It's about being embodied as a multi sensory being in contact with other bodies. I could reach out and touch a cardboard city. Its surfaces would have weight, texture and make a sound. It's in contact—more or less—with other physicalities; those of its makers, gravity and humidity for example. All of these qualities give it presence and position in relation to our only experience (being in the world). Stella's Ground Clouds utilises the benefits of free floating digital collage combined with object making in the same way a prop artist would work — to make it physical.



“Another similarity I have to a prop artist is that there is a sense of urgency to my making. I usually choose materials that are fast, accessible and changeable in order to keep with the ever shifting pace of things.

I enjoy things tangibly present in the current moment that are slippery and embrace complexity. Some of these interests morph into characters and props existing outside popular paradigms, whose voices then become the directors for alternate cosmologies staged within exhibition spaces — where multiple bodies and materials overlap as protagonists of the same story.”

You can see Stella’s Ground Clouds outside the main gallery at Exeter Phoenix until the 4th of February.

Check out more of Laura’s work [here](#)



BBC Introducing: South West Showcase

On [Thursday 01 Feb](#) we are hosting a big showcase of the best new bands in the South West, curated by Daniel Pascoe of BBC Music Introducing. Four upcoming artists will be performing on stage, and ahead of the evening we’ve asked them what they enjoy most about the music scene in the South West!

Saff Juno

What do you enjoy about the South West music scene?

I enjoy the community of the South West music scene. A lot of us meet through gigging and support slots, so it's nice to get to know the familiar faces of other musicians!

How have support networks like BBC Introducing South West supported you & your music career?

BBC Introducing have always been very supportive of my releases, which makes me feel like one day I can make my dream of being a full-time musician a reality. The network offers so many opportunities to reach new ears, and I'm honoured to have been put on the lineup for the showcase this February.

What’s the best gig you’ve been to in the SW?

The best gig I've been to in the South West was Gong in the Exeter Phoenix, which my dad dragged me to (being one of his favourite bands) and I ended up being really blown away by it. Their stage presence was mesmerising and I loved the musicality of the songs - truly a night of energy and fun!

What advice do you have for aspiring musicians?

For anyone hoping to build their career in music, my advice would be to get a good idea of who you want to be. Really get to know yourself and have fun with writing! Staying true to yourself is the most important thing in such a saturated market of unsigned musicians all trying to make it work. Of course, I'm still trying to figure it all out too, but this is what helps me stay on track!

Liang Lawrence

What do you enjoy about the South West music scene?

Everyone I've met making music from the South West is so down to earth. Maybe it's the seaside and country side air but everyone just seems to be writing from a place that seems to be coming from just a genuine love for music. I think we get some really cool indie artists down here that are just doing what they love.

How have support networks like BBC Introducing South West supported you & your music career?

The BBC Introducing team in the South West have honestly been so so good to me from my very first release in 2020, which was a super stripped back single called 'Santa Cruz', to now the more produced tracks in my debut EP 'letters to myself'. Even with quite a shift in sounds they've shown me so much support and I couldn't be more grateful. Dan Pascoe has honestly just been such so amazing on both a radio presenter level but also just as a friend! He's featured all my songs, even made '(not) a love song' upload of the week when it first came out. Cannot say thank you enough.

What's the best gig you've been to in the SW?

I saw Lime Cordiale at Exeter Phoenix in 2022 and it was amazing. I love Lime Cordiale, first of all, such a fun band and everyone was just there to have a sick time. I'm a big band person and the South West gets quite a fun selection of them coming through I feel.

What advice do you have for aspiring musicians?

This is like the most cliché answer but it has stuck with me since I've started. Just stay true to your art and what you want to be creating and sharing. It gets really easy to play a comparison game but I promise it's always just going to put you in a headspace you don't want to be in. There truly is space for everyone. And to add to that, if it all seems daunting, which it definitely is - fake it till you make it. You don't have to have it all figured out and you don't have to have all the answers just take it day by day. I never know what I'm doing and every day I'm learning new things, especially as someone who never grew up in or even around the music industry.

Catch Saff Juno and Liang Lawrence alongside Tors and Pattern Pusher on Thu 01 Feb!



Spawning Degenerate - written by Maria Teresa Creasey



Image credit: Vincenzo Albano

The beginnings of **Degenerate** came over a bottle of wine in Greece, all the best ideas do, on my family's first-holiday post-pandemic. (My husband loves these ideas...) So, I messaged Rebecca Reeves (the director/co-creator) right away and said: "I've got this crazy idea for a show. Let's go try some open mics and work some material there. I mean, what's the worst that could happen?"

My reasoning was it would give us a place to get on stage and force our hands to start creating again and in doable bite-sized chunks. Most importantly, it wouldn't require full days of rehearsal because, with four small children between us (and jobs), full-day unpaid rehearsals were not a luxury we could afford.

So we started working, wrote our first five minutes and got the bug. I went on stage that first time and I kid you not, the fear, THE FEAR. I mean I have been on stages before but this was different, weirdly exhilarating and new. It was like jumping off a cliff, but willingly, and it still is! But that is how the seed of Degenerate was planted. It also turned out to be a completely new approach to working for us and a very swift learning curve as well.

Rebecca and I met during her time at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama when she was working on her PhD. I had just finished three years in Glasgow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and had been working as an actor in various film/theatre/television bits, and voiceovers. I was recommended by a friend to come and meet Rebecca for some R&D work and the rest, as they say, is history.

We continued working together at Central on very serious things like Chekhov and Gertrude Stein. Looking back at it, we always had a comedy/standup backbone running through the work – we just weren't aware at the time. Full disclosure: we both share an unhealthy love for Stewart Lee. (Don't tell him.) So, yes, we were doing Chekhov, but we always leaned into the laughs and the humour.

We had our first (and last) public performance at Camden People Theatre during the Calm Down Dear festival, when I was eight months pregnant and ready to pop. That was over six years ago and afterward, we took a break. Turns out that having two babies and finishing a PhD takes a lot of your attention, not to mention a pandemic... who knew?

At the tail end of lockdowns, as schools were opening again, we got to work. We started writing feverishly over Zoom (between nappy changes, chicken pox, Covid, and school drop-offs), called ourselves 'this is not a test', and started taking those bits to open mics. We learned so much and loved it.

We're both pretty proud of where we have come since this idea. We have loved playing, failing, killing and learning in this new work of stand up. Some small remnants of those initial bits are still in the current incarnation of the show, but every time we put it in front of an audience it finds new feet.

In its current form, Degenerate is a show that directly responds to what we were going through, in real-time, when we were making it. The show is about going back to work, approaching midlife, staying relevant, ambition as we age, and taking back the narrative. It's a dark comedy about a woman (sometimes funny), her vampire (kills every night) and the reality of ageing in a youth-obsessed culture, we like to say think The Very Hungry Caterpillar meets David Lynch (sort of).

We are beyond excited to take it to the amazing Exeter Phoenix! We hope it speaks to the power of transformation at any age... with a little bit of bite. Like we always say, let's get batty.

This preview of [Degenerate](#) takes place at the Exeter Phoenix on Saturday 13th January, at 7pm.

Eliza Fraser: Before Helping Others

Eliza Fraser performed in our May 2023 Scratch Night and is back at Exeter Phoenix with a brand new work-in-progress piece. Eliza has written about her experience of the Scratch Night and how her work has developed since.

“It’s actually through standup comedy that I now find myself bringing a work-in-progress piece to Exeter Phoenix in January; my first foray into writing for theatre having previously had an on/off relationship with comedy.

In May, I was encouraged by Charlotte Evans and Will Adamsdale to take part in the Scratch Night at the Phoenix; a relaxed and supportive evening that offers performance time for both companies/performers working towards tours or festivals, and those- like me- who want to give something a try without pressure. New material/scratch nights are a regular part of standup comedy, but aren’t so routine in the theatre, and a night that opens up the scene, as well as providing a professional and respectful atmosphere is incredibly precious to less-experienced theatre-makers.

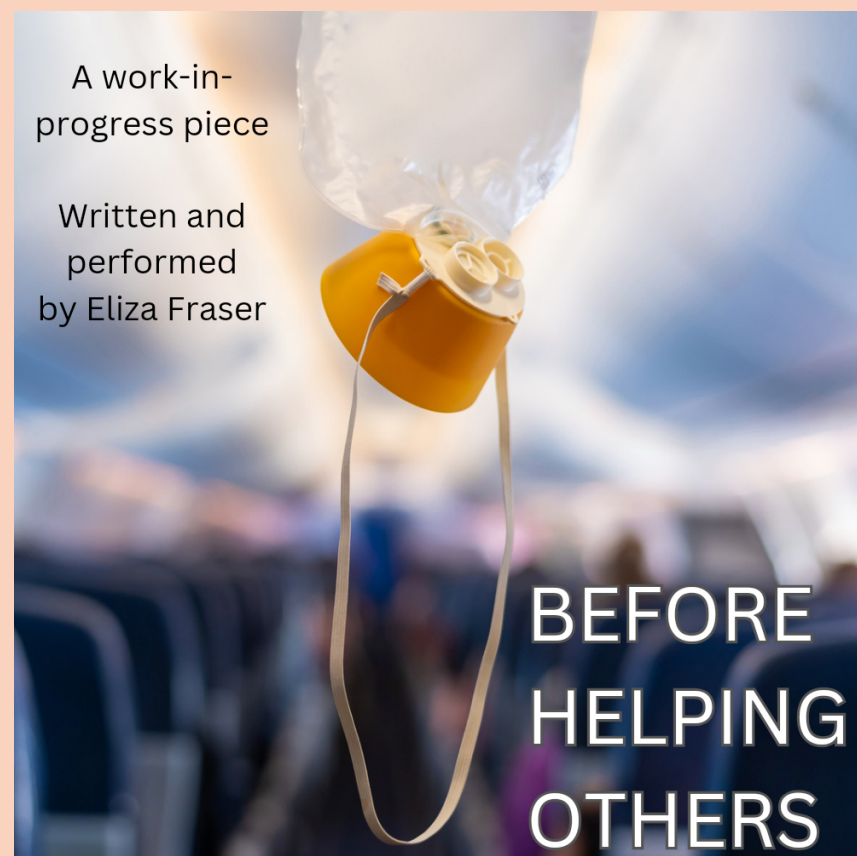
If you have an idea for something and simply need something to work towards, head to the Scratch Night page of the Exeter Phoenix website and apply- all it takes is a google form!

As someone who finds it hard to know where to start with theatre performance- and is well versed in procrastination and lack of confidence- having this date to work towards is indescribably helpful. It’s a chance for me to try something new and build my confidence as a writer and performer. It’s also an opportunity to learn what works, what doesn’t... or whether I should stick to comedy!

The piece I’m working on is about stalking. It’s a topic I’m interested in as it’s still hugely misunderstood. This piece is a way of exploring the theme more and to a creative end.

I hope this piece will continue evolving until it’s fully realised, but for now I’m excited to bring it (in whatever form it will be in a months time) to Exeter Phoenix!”

[Watch](#) this inaugural performance of **Before Helping Others** on Fri 19 Jan. To assist with its development, there will be a short Q&A/ discussion session afterwards where any feedback would be greatly appreciated.



Max Silliton: Gallery 333



Currently showing in Gallery 333, our window gallery for micro-installations and sculptural interventions is Max Silliton. Max is a Bristol-based artist who is interested in the curation of installation and numerous processes within fabrication. Here's a bit about the exhibition and how his work and art practice have influenced each other.

"I find that tech work and my own practice are linked closely, for me they are both about being physically active, drawing on this idea of learning by doing. It's this process of being immersed within Art, talking about work and assisting others that really inspires me to create.

This became apparent to me during February of last year when I assisted with Will Cruickshank's solo show at The Exeter Phoenix Three Moons, this was my first time outside of University assisting an installation. Being present whilst decisions about curation and installation took place really inspired me to pursue further tech work. Following on from this I have managed to find further freelance tech work at the Arnolfini and other smaller galleries.

Thankfully after my time at University I have managed to continue to make work thanks to the Spike Island Fellowship scheme, I now share a studio with four other emerging Bristol based artists. This experience has really helped to boost my confidence within my own practice but also strengthened this belief of how important it is for me to be around other creatives.

Image credits: Dom Moore and Max Silliton (studio photo)

My most recent project 'One man's trash is another man's treasure' is about the idea of harnessing the beauty within everyday discarded materials, particularly items found within the studio bins at Spike Island.

Take a minute to imagine what these offcuts could be, how could you use them? When you see value where there isn't it can create something special, I like to collect these items, not knowing what or when they will come in use. This outlook gives these discarded materials new value.

Sometimes changing the space around an object can add value to it. Allowing the item to breathe in a space can add to its atmosphere, a mundane chopping board hung on a gallery wall turns into a painting curved with a knife. This idea makes you slow down, thinking sensitively about the everyday objects around us.

It's this openness and sensitivity to materials that allows my work to have meaning. Combining this material led approach with processes within carpentry and installation allows my work to form naturally."

Max's [installation](#) will be in Gallery 333 until 04 Feb.



OPPORTUNITIES

Exeter Phoenix Creative Hub: Workshops and Socials Survey

In 2024, Exeter Phoenix are hoping to deliver a series of short professional development workshops followed by socials for emerging and established artists and creatives. We would be very grateful if you could use this form to offer your feedback and ideas to help us shape these sessions and ensure their relevance and usefulness.

[Share your opinion here](#)

Welcome Building, Temple Quarter - Call for public artwork proposals

Deadline: 10am, Fri 05 Jan

Bricks are pleased to announce an open call for proposals for a new major public artwork. We are seeking proposals that will resonate with this bold new landmark building, at a prominent gateway site into Bristol.

The artwork should support a welcoming and socially responsive environment, reflecting contemporary and future ways of working and living.

Find out more and apply [here](#)

Applications to perform at January's Scratch Night are now open!

Deadline: Mon 08 Jan

Applications to perform in our January Scratch Night at Exeter Phoenix are opening soon! The successful applicants will receive a rehearsal space, the opportunity to perform their work in front of an audience and £150 to support their practice, which they can use however supports them best.

[Apply here](#)

How Can I Stay? - Hosted Gatherings Callout | Deadline 21 Jan

Visual Arts South West are looking for proposals from artists and programmers to host an in-person gathering for other creative practitioners in rural contexts.

This is part of 'How Can I Stay?' an 8 month programme aiming to support creative people in the South West who face barriers due to a lack of cultural and public infrastructure, access needs, isolation and injustice.

Budget: £4500

Activity to take place between March - October 2024.

More information on how to apply can be found [here](#)

A New Artist Commission for public libraries in Torbay | Deadline 5pm Mon 22 Jan

Libraries Unlimited, the charity that runs the public library service in Devon and Torbay, is seeking to commission an experienced artist with a passion for libraries to engage with Torbay's four public libraries and their communities in Brixham, Churston, Paignton and Torquay. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced artist/s to find inspiration in libraries by engaging with library teams, library resources, and with new and existing library customers, and community groups. We ask that the artist/s enhance our existing library programmes, influence new directions using their professional expertise and leave a legacy of collaborative work that celebrates uniqueness and connections between the four host libraries and their communities.

[Apply here](#)



Connecting shores - Call out | Deadline Mon 08 Jan

This project aims to explore and document the varying relationships young 'People of Colour' /Global Majority have to the coast, sea, waterways, rivers and related natural environment.

We will explore young people's lived experiences of these environments and the role that family, heritage and culture play in these spaces.

The project will weave together one to one recorded conversations with each participant into 8x 15 min episodes, underscored with a soundscape of nature field recordings. The episodes will then be released publicly on streaming platforms and shared amongst Natural England staff.

Recorded conversations will take place in person in Plymouth on January 22nd - Feb 9th.

Find out more and apply [here](#)

Sound Gallery Studios - Work Experience Programmes

Sound Gallery Studios have two opportunities for young people to gain training and skills in key areas of the music production industry. There are two opportunities for the following ages:

Work Experience programme (15-18 years)

Rising Artists Camp (14-25 years)

[Apply here](#)

Do you have what it takes to make a film in just two days?! Two Short Nights' 48 Hour Film Challenge is back! | Deadline Wed 24 Jan

The Challenge will take place on Saturday 27 - Sunday 28 January 2024. Teams can register from Fri 15 December.

Filmmakers of all abilities are welcome to take part in this inspiring challenge. No previous film experience needed. Teams just need a good imagination, plenty of energy and a camera. You can take part from anywhere in world.

Films made within the 48 hours will have the chance to be screened at our Two Short Nights Film Festival at Exeter Phoenix on Friday 09 Feb 2024.

[Sign up here](#)

Empowerment workshop - Exeter Phoenix Expression of Interest

Chloe Wade Productions, a theatre company presenting the show As SHE Likes It to Exeter Phoenix on Monday 4 March 2024, is gathering interest for an empowerment workshop to be held on the afternoon before the show.

The 90-minute workshops will explore the themes of the show using theatre, drag, comedy, performance, and self-defence techniques and are designed to develop participants' confidence, teach new skills, and inspire creativity and self-expression.

We'd be grateful if you could fill out this to help us determine the level of interest in the workshop.

[Fill out the survey here](#)

OPPORTUNITIES



Events

- [Online Screening: James Paddock: Life Could Be Done So Much Better](#) | Wed 10 Jan, 6.30pm - 7.30pm | Free | Online
- [DOCLAB Development Lab](#) | Wed 24 Jan, 7pm - 9.30pm | Free | Exeter Phoenix
- [Scratch Night](#) | Tue 30 Jan, 7.30pm | Exeter Phoenix
- [Artist's Talk: James Paddock in conversation with Lisa Slominski](#) | Sat 27 Jan, 1.30pm | Free | Exeter Phoenix
- [Workshop: An Absolute Write Off, Volume 1](#) | Wed 31 Jan, 7pm | Free | Exeter Phoenix
- [South West Showcase with BBC Introducing](#) | Thu 01 Feb, 7.30pm | Exeter Phoenix

Exhibitions

- [James Paddock: Life Could Be Done So Much Better](#) | 18 Nov - 04 Feb | Exeter Phoenix
- [Hollow Earth: Art, Caves and the Subterranean Imaginary](#) | 23 Sep - 7 Jan | RAMM
- [Janet Sainsbury: Points in a Constellation](#) | 21 Nov - 19 May | RAMM
- [Landscapes of Progress?](#) | 11 Nov - 03 Mar | Hestercombe Gardens
- [Ben Sanderson: Ouroboros](#) | 19 Jan - 22 Mar | MIRROR
- [John Akomfrah: Arcadia](#) | 30 Nov - 02 Jun | The Box
- [Mikhail Karikis: Acoustics of Resistance](#) | 13 Jan - 09 Mar | Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Would you be interested in attending a social for artists and creatives at Exeter Phoenix?

We are hoping to deliver a series of short professional development workshops followed by socials for emerging and established artists and creatives in 2024, and want to know what creatives in the area would find useful and interesting.

Fill out the [Exeter Phoenix Creative Hub Workshops and Socials Survey](#) to have your say!

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Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message on the [Creative Hub Facebook page](#) and we'll include what we can in future editions.



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