

Anousha Payne





Working in sculpture and painting, Anousha Payne's preferred materials are ceramics, textiles, wood, rattan, metal, and watercolor. Her work explores the human pursuit of spirituality in object form, as a mode of cultural expression distinct from religious symbolism. Payne's work processes the boundaries between personal experience, fiction, and myth; exploring how information is both lost and gained through the transition from drawing and painting to three-dimensional works, particularly ceramic sculpture. Often deploying reptile skin, her ceramics are intended as hybrid objects, a reminder of the fluidity and shared qualities between humans, animals, the natural world and inanimate objects. Ceramic sculptures are adorned with jewelry and textiles, acting as cultural signifiers while questioning material hierarchies and values. This process seeks to establish an aesthetic dialogue and personal visual language as a meditative interaction. Informed by Indian folk stories and personal fiction, she plays with ideas of the performative power of objects and chance, the combination of moral dilemmas and magic alongside characters with transformative qualities.

Anousha Payne, b. 1991 in Southampton, UK, graduated from Camberwell College of Arts, lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul (2025), Newchild, Antwerp (2024/25), Sperling, Munich (2024); Arnolfini, Bristol (2023); Deli Gallery, New York (2023); Super Super Markt, Berlin (2023); Stellarhighway, New York (2023); Public Gallery, London (2022); Alkinois, Athens (2022); Cooke Latham, London (2021); Paradise Row, London (2021); Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh (2021); Indigo Plus Madder, London (2020); ISLAND, Brussels (2020)

Murmurations
Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul
2025







Anousha Payne scratches through the layered fabric of Istanbul, a city that never erases the past but builds over, around, and alongside it. Beneath the surface of immediate perception, she reveals new identities and stories—much like the discovery of the frescoes in the cold sections of Zeyrek Çinili Hamam and the cistern below. This investigative process of scratching, building, editing, and adding is carried through her use of ceramics and other materials across the exhibition. Working intuitively, Payne offers a poetic reading of the archaeological process, filling in historical absences with sculptural drawings that suggest imaginary narratives around unearthed but incomplete fragments. Her material explorations include hammered brass—echoing traditional hammam bowls—alongside found objects, textiles, canvas, and sculptural media. These figures emerge from the architecture, imagined as ancient or mythical inhabitants of the cistern—beings shaped by water and time. By populating the space with these spectral forms, Payne reanimates the Byzantine cistern, inviting viewers to reconsider the layered histories of the hammam through a contemporary lens. Murmurations inaugurates a new series of contemporary art programs curated by Anlam de Coster, inviting international artists to produce site-specific works that engage deeply with the history, architecture, rituals, and symbolism of this unique cultural landmark.

Curated by Anlam de Coster

The Small Things / From the Lowest Land
Sonja Ferlov Mancoba & Anousha Payne
Newchild, Antwerp, 2024







"The exhibition stems from an affinity and an ongoing conversation; the striving to depict the 'inhumanly human, humanly inhuman.' I first encountered Sonja Ferlov Mancoba's work five years ago at her retrospective at SMK in Copenhagen. I was initially drawn to what I would describe as her sculptures of 'prehistoric emojis'—a kind of universal, simplified version of a face, abstracted to the point of being unplaceable in time. These forms could belong to 2024 or 1604. Her aim to create images that transcend temporal and cultural boundaries, offering a universal language of human connection, deeply aligns with my own practice. Mancoba's interest in imagery from other ages and cultures sought to convey the human body as a universal presence, embodying experiences that extend beyond the individual. This resonates with my own work, as I strive to develop shared codes and languages that connect to the essence of what it means to be human.."

Anousha Payne

« Grandmother »

I haven't seen my father in many years. Last year he sent me a fossilised baby shark tooth in the post. It came nestled in old newspapers and tied with a green organza ribbon, packed neatly inside a shoe box. The shoe box was an unreasonably large container in which to hold such an item.

A small hand-written note was also in the box; in his neatly looped script he informed me that this tooth belonged to my grandmother. By belonged to he meant it was once part of her mouth. I wasn't sure what to make of his claim. He had either lost his mind, or become deeply spiritual. I thought at first he was joking, but there was a sincerity to the tone in his letter that I couldn't shake.

That night I have a strange dream; I dream of a young woman. She's hunting for treasure in a dried out stream, alone in the midday desert sun. Her brown skin is turning a deep maroon in the blistering heat. She spots the fossilised tooth that my father gave me. As she reaches down towards the tooth to pick it up, an acid orange serpent slides out from under a rock. The snake slowly makes its way towards her, cautiously beginning to wind itself around her leg. It holds contact with her eyes; they have a mutual understanding. Her leg pulses as the snake winds its way tighter around her ankle. She isn't sure if the snake is her father or her grandmother, holding her tight. The snake squeezes tighter and tighter, before eventually dissipating, leaving behind nothing but a crackle of skin and a shocked mark on her leg.

When I wake I roll over and switch on my bedside lamp; next to the switch is the small newspaper parcel from my father. I open the parcel and take the fossilised tooth between my fingers, holding it up to the light so that an elongated shadow appears on my bedroom wall. Petrified by the power it holds over me, I take a glass of water from my bedside table and swallow the tooth in one gulp. Of course as it begins to slide down my throat it scratches uncomfortably. I catch my reflection in the mirror, and watch as the tooth carves a faint orange glowing pattern down my long neck. It will not be defeated (my grandmother's spirit lives on).

<https://www.sperling-munich.com/exhibitions/a-faint-glow-a-stone-and-a-sharks-tooth>

Young Tree, 2024, glazed ceramic stoneware, approx. 35 x 30 x 20 cm
Body: paper pulp, pigment, natural dyes, wheat glue, modrock, bramble, bronze







Young Shell, 2024, glazed ceramic stoneware, bramble, approx. 40 x 45 x 30 cm
Body: paper pulp, pigment, natural dyes, wheat glue, modrock, bramble, bronze

Anousha Payne (solo)
Sperling at Liste Art Fair, Basel





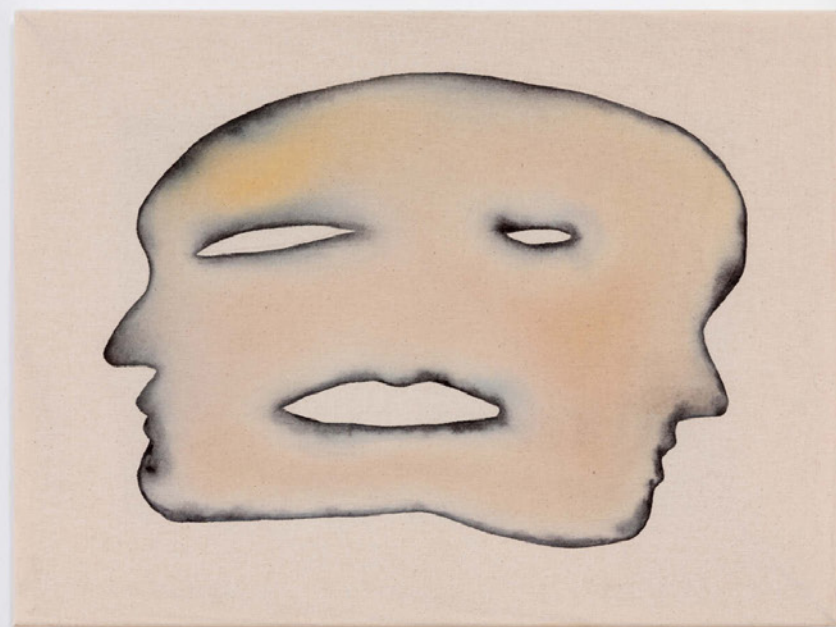
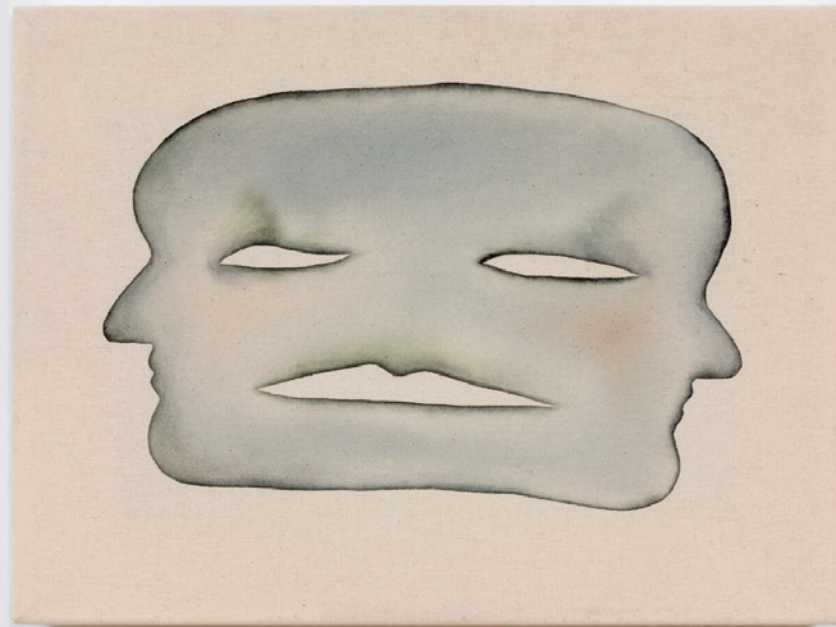
Anousha Payne
Bird Woman, 2024
glazed stoneware ceramic, pewter, stone,
bronze
33 x 50 x 3 cm

AP/S 16



Anousha Payne
Pareidolia, 2024
watercolour and gel medium on stretched
cotton
120 x 150 x 5 cm

AP/M 2

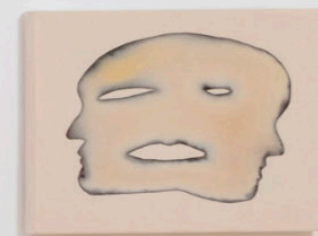
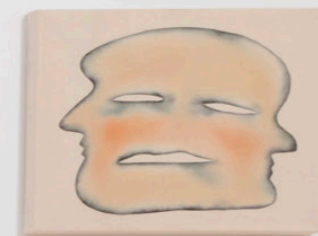
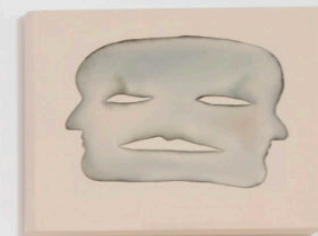
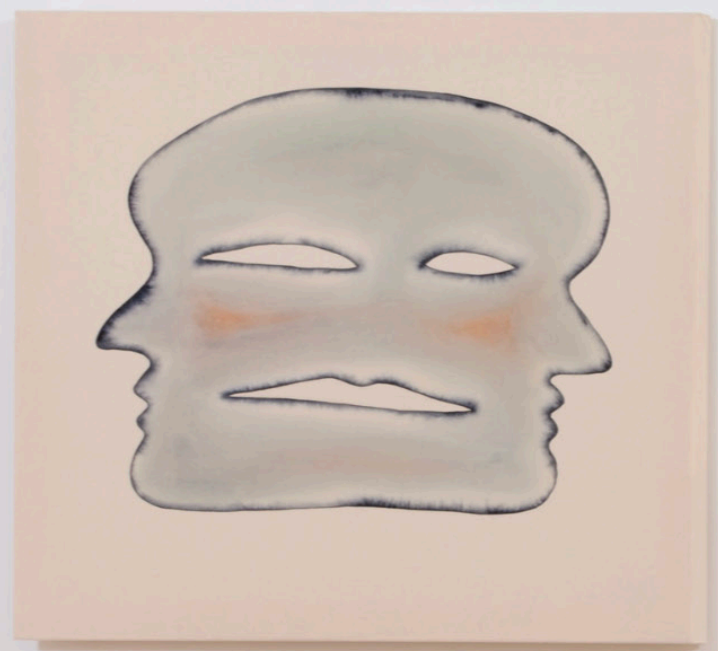


« thick mud slowly oozing » 2022, Stellarhighway, New York

Stellarhighway presents *thick mud slowly oozing*, the first solo exhibiton in the US by London-based artist Anousha Payne, which borrows its title from 'The Passion According to G.H.,' a novel by Clarice Lispector about self-realization and self-transformation. This show continues Payne's investigation into the boundaries between lived experiences, fiction and myth with a new series of quasi self-portraits based on the Corleck Head, a three-faced Iron Age sculpture from Ireland, in a shift from the artist's usual emphasis on Tamil folklore.

<https://stellarhighway.com/thick-mud-slowly-oozing>

Self portraits as Stretched Corleck Heads, 2022, Watercolours and pigments on cotton





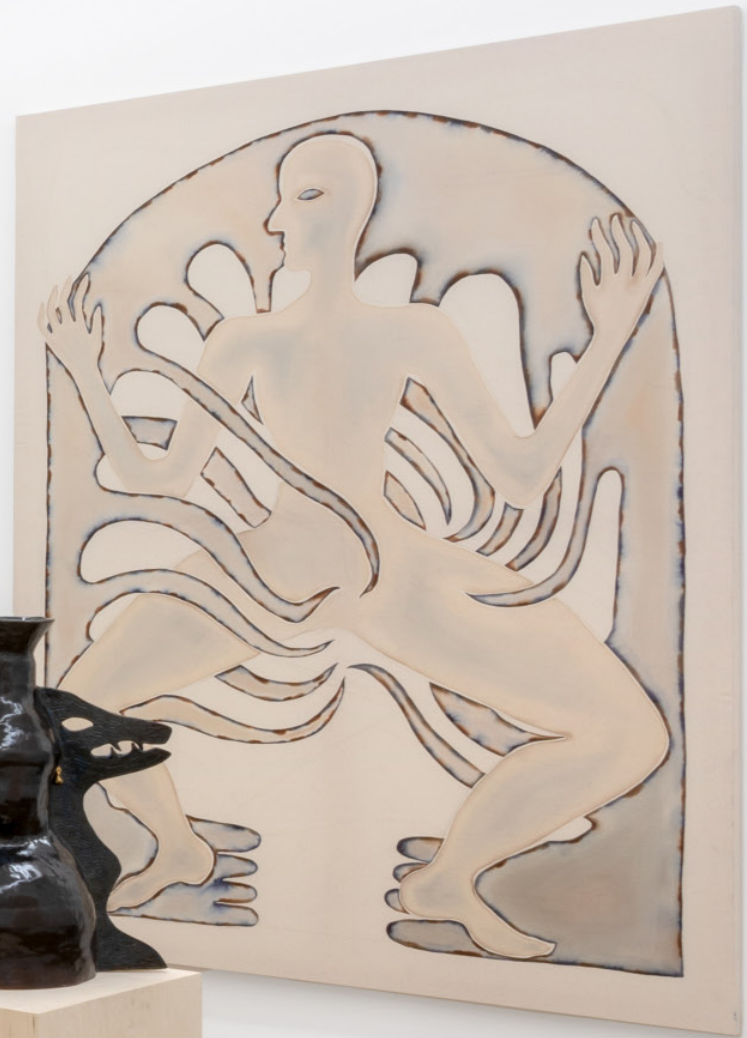
« Tangled toes, twisted ears » 2022, Public Gallery, London

with Leila Tara H

Tangled toes, twisted ears, a duo exhibition by London based artists Anousha Payne and Laila Tara H, presents a new body of work by both artists exploring the act of storytelling. Dissecting the linear narratives to which their practices and characters have been bound, they in turn reveal an unrestricted freedom of identity. Both artists' practices are rooted in heritage, Payne's being oral tradition and Laila Tara H's miniature painting, which forms a large part of their cross-over. Payne examines Indian folklore, carrying these stories through her practice and nurturing them into her own visions. Her hybrid ceramic sculptures are adorned with jewelry and textiles, which act as cultural signifiers, shapeshifting between matriarchal humanoids, transpersonal artefacts and animalistic performers.

<https://public.gallery/exhibitions/tangled-toes-twisted-ears>

Surahonne (vessels for fulfillment), 2022, Glazed stoneware ceramic, earrings, 65 × 50 × 40 cm







« Hawala » 2021, Paradise Row, London

Curated by Shezad Dawood

Hawala takes as its starting point the parallels between the eponymous informal, decentralised, and ledger-based system of money exchange prevalent in South Asia and its diasporic communities, and the structure and functionality of block-chain technology. The show brings together a group of London-based artists of South Asian descent, Chila Kumari Singh Burman, Shezad Dawood, Sunil Gupta, Haroun Hayward, Harminder Judge, Jasleen Kaur, Haroon Mirza, Anousha Payne, and Rithika Pandey, selected to highlight hyperlinked connections that run throughout their practice, either through a contemporary updating of mythic constellations, or an archiving of subcultures or ecologies.

<https://paradiserow.co/exhibitions/9/>

Surahonne (a flowering jacket), 2021, Glazed stoneware, found metal, rattan, and wood, 94 x 70 x 5 cm



« As She Laughs » 2021, Cooke Latham Gallery, London

Anna Perach and Anousha Payne have collaborated to create an immersive installation in which their contrasting aesthetic practices are united by the shared themes and concepts that permeate their work. In *As She Laughs* the gallery is populated by four large sculptures which dominate the space, three figurative works and a giant head which hangs suspended by chains in the center of the gallery. On the walls are painted the distorted and elongated shadows cast by the sculptures. Hinting at firelight, ritual and magic the shadows unite the artworks, a sculptural coven of female forms.

<https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/22-anna-perach-and-anousha-payne-as-she-laughs-chapter-1/works/>

Anna Perach and Anousha Payne, BACKWARDS EYES, 2021, wood frame, rattan, ceramic, tufting, frame 207 x 109 x 3 cm



Anna Perach and Anousha Payne *As She Laughs*, Cooke Latham, London, 2021



Makara, 2021, Pigment and watercolour on stretched cotton, and glazed stoneware ceramic

« Bathing Nervous Limbs » 2021, Arusha Gallery, London

Ella Walker, Ithell Colquhoun, Naomi Workman, Anousha Payne, Nina Royle, Francesca Blomfield, Emelia Kerr Beale, Kate Walters, Angus McCrum, Jessie Whiteley, George Ridgway, Leo Robinson, Melloney Harvey, Paloma Proudfoot, Bryony Rose, Zoe Williams, Danny Leyland, Tahnee Lonsdale, Jame St Findlay and Natalia González Martín

Traditionally, the Makara is a mythological Tamil sea creature, often depicted as a hybrid animal (elephant/crocodile/deer and then part aquatic), and is considered a guardian or protector of the sea. Sometimes depicted as the vehicle for the Hindu river goddess Narmada. A version of the Makara is imagined here as part crocodile, the water has become part of the her; her body now fluid and transparent, disguised within and as part of the sea. The crocodilian scales bring the Makara close to a familiar place, but she remains very much an elusive creature with protective powers. Waves are inverted within her body, curling inwards; she has become a body of water. The flow, lick and tickle of the waves creates a forward flowing motion, allowing her to move with more power. Her purpose is to guard and protect.

<https://www.arushagallery.com/exhibitions/62-bathing-nervous-limbs-edinburgh-art-festival-2021/overview/>





« Eating a Peach (A hair's breadth escape) » 2020, Cooke Latham Gallery, London

I look on into the distance and watch as she bites into a peach; a flat (donut) peach to be specific. As she bites down, her lip blisters, red boiling lumps shining in the sun.

She continues to eat, oblivious to the scene that her skin is making. It ripples and glistens bumpy and irregular, oscillating between concave and convex, flowing through her entire body until it reaches all the way to her toes.

She looks down at her scaled feet, shivering and shaking off the illusion. She returns to her normal/human form, but as she turns to face me I see her eyes are not human but serpent-like slits. She acknowledges that I have witnessed her temporary shuddering transformation, then returns her attention to the peach. An ordinary woman laying out on a faded red beach town in the sun, eating a peach as she looks out to sea.

by Anousha Payne

<https://www.cookelathamgallery.com/exhibitions/14-anousha-payne-eating-a-peach-a-hairs-breadth-online/overview/>

His face scrunched with laughter (the jasmine prince), 2020, Glazed stoneware, 37 x 36 x 5 cm



« Vessels, on body fluids » 2020, ISLAND, Brussels

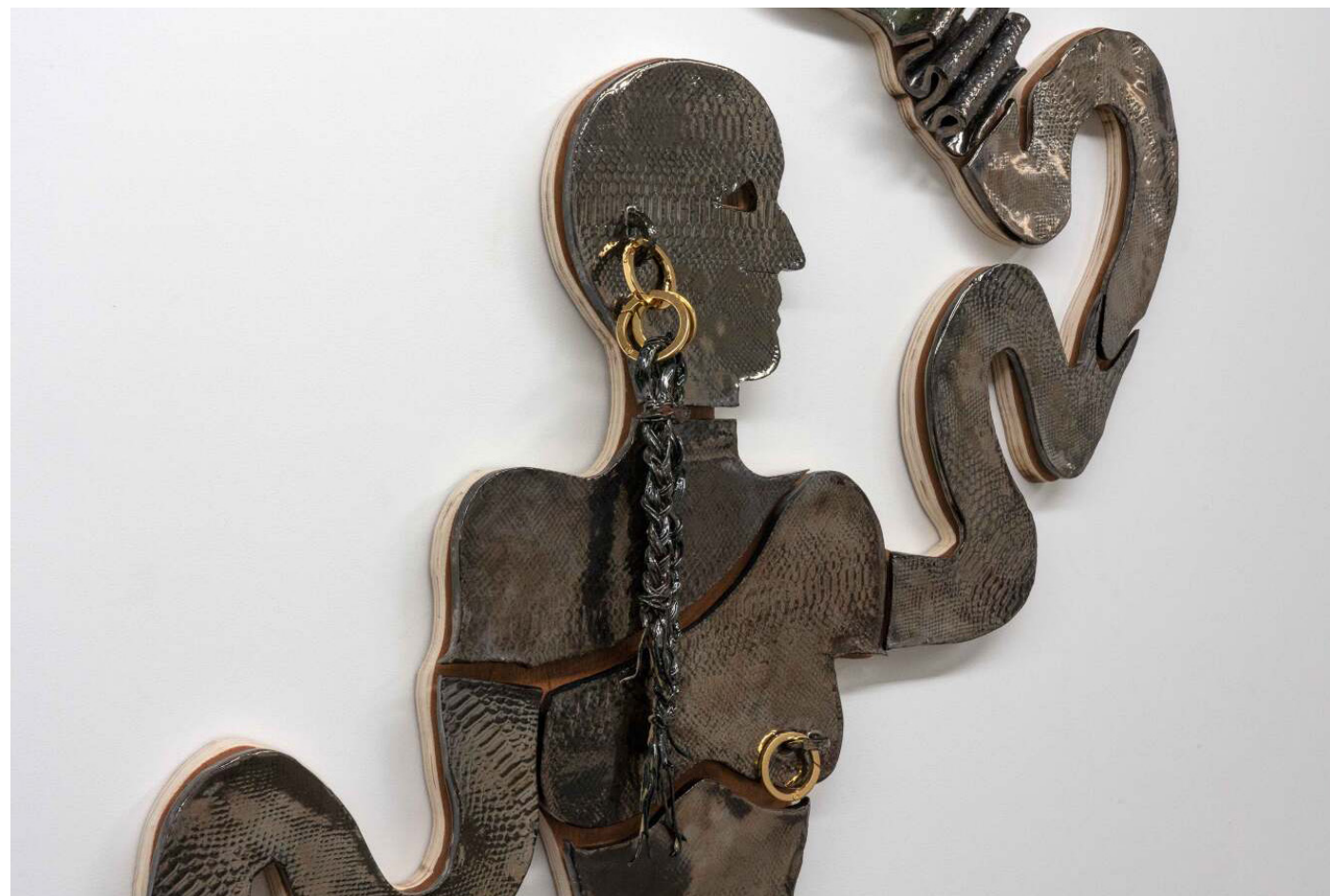
a group show presented by Alix Janta-Polczynski

Aline Bouvy, Emeline Depas, Maisie Cousins, Eloïse van der Heyden, Marie Jacotey, Alix Marie, Lindsey Mendick, Anastasia Pavlou & Anousha Payne

<http://www.islandisland.be/vessels.php>

Anousha Payne, Squeezing, she entered, and stuttered into a rhythm, 2019, Water colour on stretched cotton, 85 x 95 cm

On the walk home she transforms herself, her skin rippling off in the sun, 2020, Glazed ceramic stoneware, sisal fibres and silk organza dyed with logwood, metal, 45 x 42 cm



« Our ashes make great fertilizer » 2020, Public Gallery, London

Curated by Saelia Aparicio and Harminder Judge

Rebecca Ackroyd, Saelia Aparicio, Huma Bhabha, William Darrell, Shezad Dawood, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Mandy El-Sayegh, Harminder Judge, Temsüyan-ger Longkumer, Tian Mu, Alex Pain, Anousha Payne, Gulam Rasool Santosh, Tai Shani, Gray Wielebinski

<https://public.gallery/exhibitions/our-ashes-make-great-fertilizer>

The snake maiden (stronger than a leaf), 2020, Stoneware ceramic, plywood and metal, 170 x 109 x 7 cm



« And here she dwells » 2020, Indigo Plus Madder, London

Anousha invites us into an intimate and enigmatic space where day-to-day objects and fantastical creatures converge. It is an alternate spiritual dreamscape, and at its centre, lies a clearing which is imagined as the maternal origin of all matter, where transformative movement from 'becoming' to 'being' happens. In this central space resides She, a mythical being inspired by creatures from Tamil folklore— half-human and half-crocodile, her knees and breasts emerging from water. Flowing out of this core, are mysterious smells, memories, stories and ancient objects. This multitude forms the surrounding layers, where ancient and modern hybrid relics regenerate, transforming from animal- to human- to thing, and carry along with them ancient myths, legends and folklore. They occupy a paradoxical space, both living and non-living; visible and invisible.

Krittika Sharma

<https://indigoplusmadder.com/london-art-exhibitions/2018/10/27/anoushapayne>

YOUR HEART TASTES LIKE APPLES (THE CROCODILE'S WIFE), 2020





« Léopoldine » 2019, sans titre, Paris

with Evgeny Antufiev, Hélène Bertin, Robert Brambora, Clémentine Bruno & Ruyin Nabizadeh, Beth Collar, Lucile Littot, Lindsey Mendick, Wobbe Micha, Ron Nagle, Anousha Payne, Paloma Proudfoot, Real Madrid & Kasia Fudakowski, Lukas Thaler, Tom Volkaert

<https://sanstitre.gallery/exhibitions/leopoldine-paris>

front: Anousha Payne, New Animism (rutile lizard arm), 2018, stoneware glazed ceramic
& New Animism (mahogany lizard arm), 2018, stoneware glazed ceramic

behind: Ron Nagle, Captive Morgan, 2012

Sperling, Enhuberstr. 6, 80333 Munich, Germany
+49 89 54849747, mail@sperling-munich.com
www.sperling-munich.com

Anousha Payne

*1991 in Southampton, UK, lives and works in London, UK
2014 BFA Camberwell School of Art, London, UK

Solo & Duo Exhibitions

- 2025 Murmurations, curated by Anlam de Coster, Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul, TR
The Small Things / From the Lowest Land, with Sonja Ferlov Mancoba, Newchild, Antwerp, BE
- 2024 A faint glow, a stone and a shark’s tooth, Sperling, Munich, DE
- 2023 Tender Mooring, Deli Gallery, New York, US
- 2022 Thick mud, slowly oozing, Stellarhighway, New York, US
Tangled toes twisted ears (w. Laila Tara H), Public Gallery, London, UK
- 2021 As she laughs (w. Anna Perach), Cooke Latham, London, UK
- 2020 and here she dwells, Indigo Plus Madder, London, UK

Group Exhibitions

- 2025 Carbon, Carbon Everywhere, curated by Maria Hinel & Indira Dyussebayeva-Ziyabek, at Hypha HQ, London, UK
Flora’s Cloak, Huxley-Parlour, Wiltshire, UK
The Volcano Lover, curated by Anlam de Coster, Galerist, Istanbul, TR
- 2024 Chimera, curated by Karolina Wisniewska, Fundacja Alina, Warsaw, PL
- 2023 Snakes in the Grass, NEWCHILD, Antwerp, BE
Threads, Arnolfini, Bristol, UK
Isabella Ducrot, Anousha Payne, Leila Tara H, Super Super Markt, Berlin, DE
New Ancients, Guts Gallery, London, UK
Potheads, Swivel Gallery, New York, USA
Cheirometa (Things Made by Hand), Dominika Dobiášová, Ádám Horváth, Anna McCarthy, Pakui Hardware, Anousha Payne, Hamish Pearch, Sperling, Munich, DE
- 2022 Stronger than Language, Romero Paprock, Paris, FR

Sperling

I take what is mine, Arusha Gallery, New York, USA
It is better to be cats than be loved, Tabula Rasa, London, UK
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Alkinois, Athens, GR
Two Sisters, Roman Road (offsite), London, UK
An Ode to Orlando, Marcelle Joseph Projects at Pi Arts, London, UK
Body en Thrall, Rugby Art Gallery & Museum, Rugby, UK

- 2021 Hawala, Paradise Row Projects, London, UK
Beyond Skin, Tube Culture Hall, Milan, IT
Vessels; on bodily fluids, Alkinois, Athens, GR
Reality Check, Anderson Contemporary, Guts Gallery
Bathing Nervous Limbs, Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh, UK
A New Art World, Guts Gallery, London, UK
- 2020 Vessels ~ on body fluids, ISLAND, Brussels, BE
Our ashes make great fertiliser, Public Gallery, London, UK
Into the Soft, C4 Projects, Copenhagen, DK
- 2019 Léopoldine, with Evgeny Antufiev, Hélène Bertin, Robert Brambora, Clémentine Bruno & Ruyin Nabizadeh, Beth Collar, Lucile Littot, Lindsey Mendick, Wobbe Micha, Ron Nagle, Anousha Payne, Paloma Proudfoot, Real Madrid & Kasia Fudakowski, Lukas Thaler, Tom Volkaert, sans titre, Paris, FR
- 2018 Something Else, TriumphGallery, Moscow, RU
Wild Encounters, curated by La Wayaka Currents, Guest Projects, London, UK
Hardest Hue to Hold, HKS Architects London, UK
HOT MILK, Post_Institute, London, UK
If You Can’t Stand the Heat, Roaming Projects, London, UK

Grants & Residencies

- 2025 Cité internationale des arts, Paris, FR
- 2023 Jana Koya residency, Landers, CA, US
- 2022 Numeroventi, Florence, IT
London Bronze Editions, Bursary/Fellowship, UK
BLANK100 Residency, Craveiral, São Teotónio, PO
- 2019 Fibra, Oaxaca, MX
- 2017 ‘Darling, Look’, online commission for The Absence of Paths, in conjunction with Tunisia Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, IT

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