

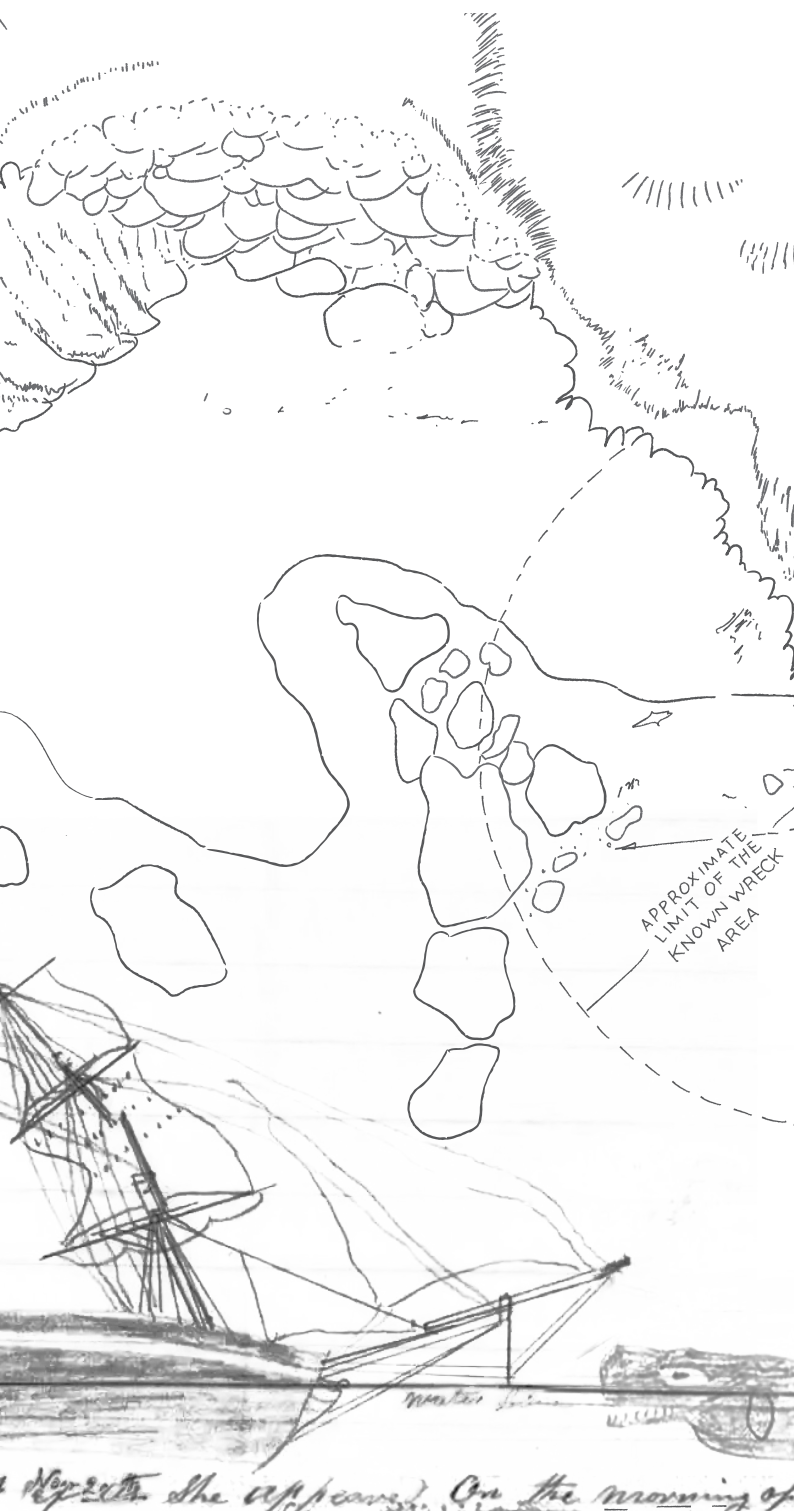
STOVE BY A WHALE

19 APRIL – 5 MAY 2024

STEVEN HE
& SEONGEUN LEE

Opening 18 April 6–9pm
5–8pm Thurs, Fri, 12–6pm Sat, Sun

STAFFORDSHIRE ST



Staffordshire St presents *Stove by a Whale*: Momentarily onto Neither Land nor Sea, a collaboration between Steven He and Seongeun Lee curated by Jiayue He. Together, they draw inspiration from their different journeys. Steven explores the peculiar ways in which our attention can be drawn, he aims to tease out the mechanisms that help these ideas plant themselves in our minds whilst Seongeun translates the harsh realities of life into the language of dreams. Jiayue brings these two together to explore the notion of contemporary archives questioning how individuals connect to their roots and claim their identities.

A space where tides change, and the ground isn't firm.

Steven and Seongeun have been larking in the mud, collecting objects from Thames beaches and their living environments to construct and combine materials where time and history differs & shifts with the moving tide. The site specific installation embodies the transient nature of immigrants, weaving a fictional story involving water, a whale and a ship.

The show is titled after the first-hand account of a whale attack in 1820 by a crew member of the *Essex*, a ship that later inspired Herman Melville to write his 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*. Considering the ship as both a historical and folklore version of the classic, cosmopolitan city; the site of shipwreck serves as a reminder of the bittersweet nature of settling down and exploring the invisible, conditional identities travellers must adopt to live a life in a foreign land. Land is synonymous with boundaries and borderlines, evoking feelings of security and belonging, yet simultaneously denoting seclusion and differentiation. The whale represents the blurred dreams that are absent from the scene.

Audiences are invited to walk around the space, speculating on the site of ruins while discovering new living entities within. From far to close, utopian dreams may fracture after arrival, but in doing so, they also leave space for potential rebirth. The show connects border-crossing journeys between the water and the land, encouraging viewers to contemplate the complex nature of contemporary immigration.

Steven He (b.1994, Shanghai, China) makes installations, sculptures and paintings centred around cultural fluidity. He employs ambiguity while tracing the source of ideas, divisions, and contradictions back to their origins. By reflecting on the blurred lines and inherent uncertainties of the way we communicate, he aims to advocate for a more straightforward and inclusive approach to how we express our inner selves, ideas, and stories within a wider community.

Seongeun Lee (b.1994, South Korea) captures the experiences of those marginalised in the modern urban landscape. Through video and installation, she constructs and unfolds narratives that reflect the movements and struggles of these individuals. Her art delves into the homogenization of urban spaces, transforming them into indistinguishable templates. Lee's work challenges viewers to contemplate the contrast between the idealised visions of urban development and the stark realities faced by those who reside within these spaces.

Jiayue He is a curator, mediator, and researcher based in the UK and Shanghai. Her research focuses on understanding the infrastructures of public cultural institutions, exploring how cultures and artefacts are institutionalised, collected, displayed and further influence our perceptions and knowledge system. Her work values emphasise the situations and scenarios of individuals who, for various reasons, are lost in translation from dominant histories and exhibition-making processes.

EVENTS

STST MAKES : THE ARRIVAL: WHAT'S IN MY SUITCASE?

Sunday 20 April, 2-4pm

Join the artists and curators to explore the journeys made by our ancestors in their search for a home. The workshop will explore the exhibition, creating object responses that will become part of the installation.

STST MAKES : CONSTRUCTING FUTURE MAMMALS

Saturday 27 April, 11am-1pm

A creative writing workshop exploring immigrant identity, hosted by the artists and curators. We will imagine new mammals and make a mural scroll. An afternoon session continues at Southwark Archives.

STST MAKES : COMMUNITY DRUMMING WORKSHOP

Saturday 4 May, 2-3pm

This free workshop will introduce participants to the history and significance of Afro-Brazilian drumming to communities. The session will be the perfect activity for families with children to enjoy a musical afternoon. Open to all, family friendly.



More information on upcoming events:

staffordshirest.com
info@staffordshirest.com
[@staffordshirest](https://www.instagram.com/staffordshirest)

Opening Hours:

Thurs – Fri 5 – 8pm
Sat – Sun 12 – 6pm

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