

PIPE DREAMS

25 JULY – 11 AUGUST 2024

JIMI FAMUREWA
& MADELEINE FAMUREWA

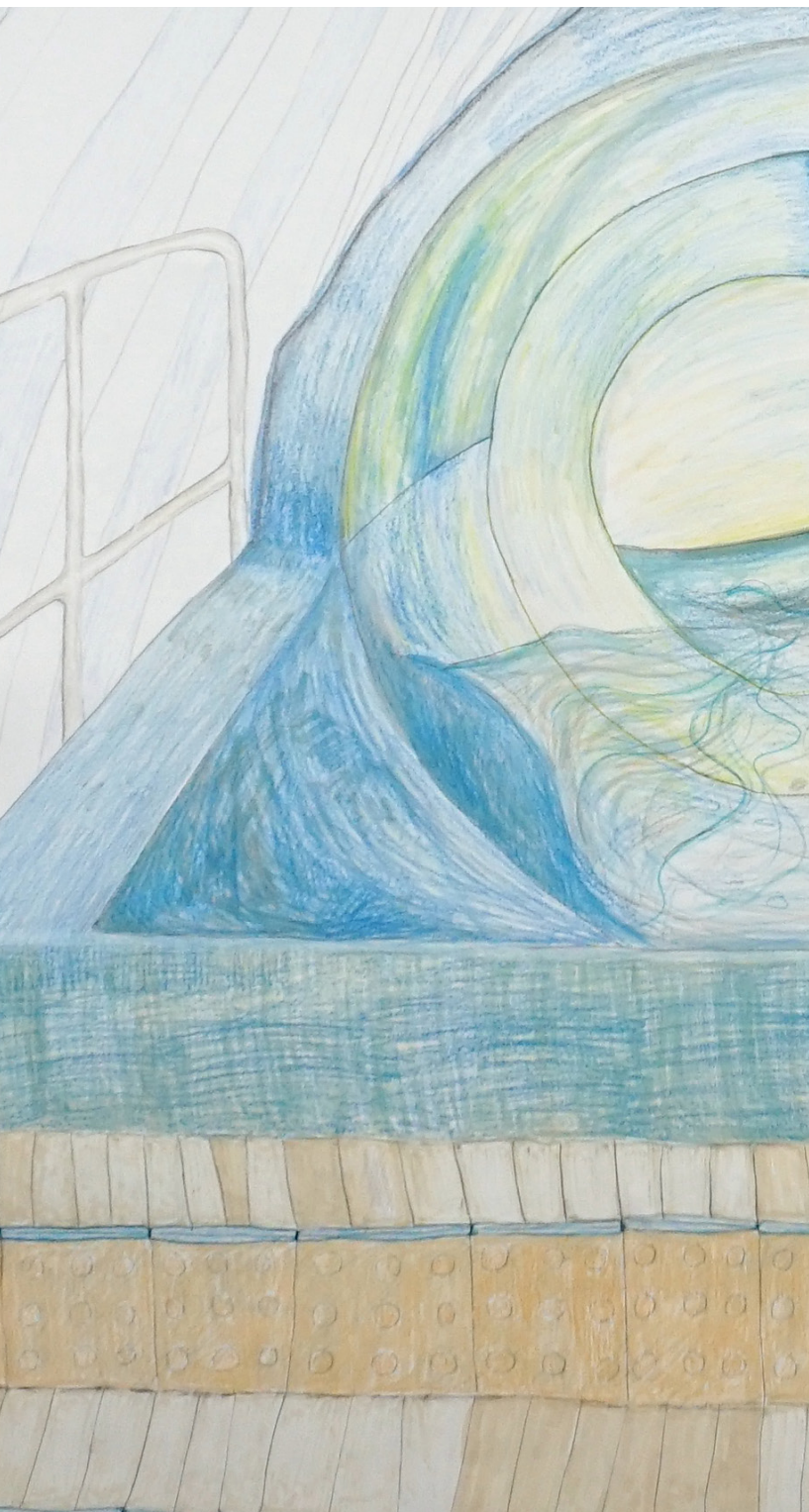
Opening 25 July 6–9pm
Weds – Sun | 12–6pm

STAFFORDSHIRE ST

Prepare to be transported to the aqueous, forgotten fantasia of a London orbital waterpark in the mid-1990s. The siren of the wave machine; the fug of chlorine and deep fat-fryers; the connective ridges of the water flume on your back. Consisting of sculpture, immersive sound installation and large-scale drawings, this collaborative, multidisciplinary exhibition explores the social significance, evocative power and formal playfulness of these lost leisure spaces. This plays out in the space as an exploration of nostalgia, escapism and the hazy memories of an unverifiable, pre-internet age. The range, variety and communal spirit of the work invites us to consider the value of these fantastical, urban oases, and youth-centred sites of play, at a time when economic pressures and shifting tastes have put them increasingly under threat.

Looming at the figurative heart of the exhibition is *Fantaseas*: a sprawling, wildly ambitious Floridian-style waterpark that operated at sites in Chingford and Dartford in the early 1990s. The parks captured the imagination of a generation, and then abruptly closed amid whispered rumours of adolescent misbehaviour, building subsidence and financial mismanagement. Here, *Fantaseas* and its Greater London counterparts – a chlorinated constellation including Woolwich Waterfront, Wavelengths in Deptford, Croydon Water Palace and Hemel Hempstead Aquasplash – are the springboard for a droll, lively interrogation of these cathedrals for imaginative play. A central sculpture repurposes found objects to evoke gravity-defying, serpentine slides and people shrunk down to restive pets. Drawings depict an intestinal tangle of jutting, outdoor flumes in profile, highlighting the contrast between the magical and the mundane. A gaping ‘Black Hole’ slide threatens to both cocoon and consume; a meditation on risk, exploration and the waterpark’s integral sense of controlled danger.

Elsewhere, oral history recollections and field recordings from leisure pools that are still operational swirl and echo in the space. Here is the blare of the wave machine siren and the excited screams that always accompany it; here is the jet engine roar of hair dryers in the changing room. And here is an eclectic chorus of voices – from former lifeguards and lapsed lazy river obsessives to *Fantaseas* regulars and flume-addicted seven-year-olds – talking about the youthful independence, utopian architecture and ephemeral thrills that turn a waterpark into such profound, formative environments. The sound installation repeats, shuffles and invites you to explore the space, all while considering the importance of play, the transporting

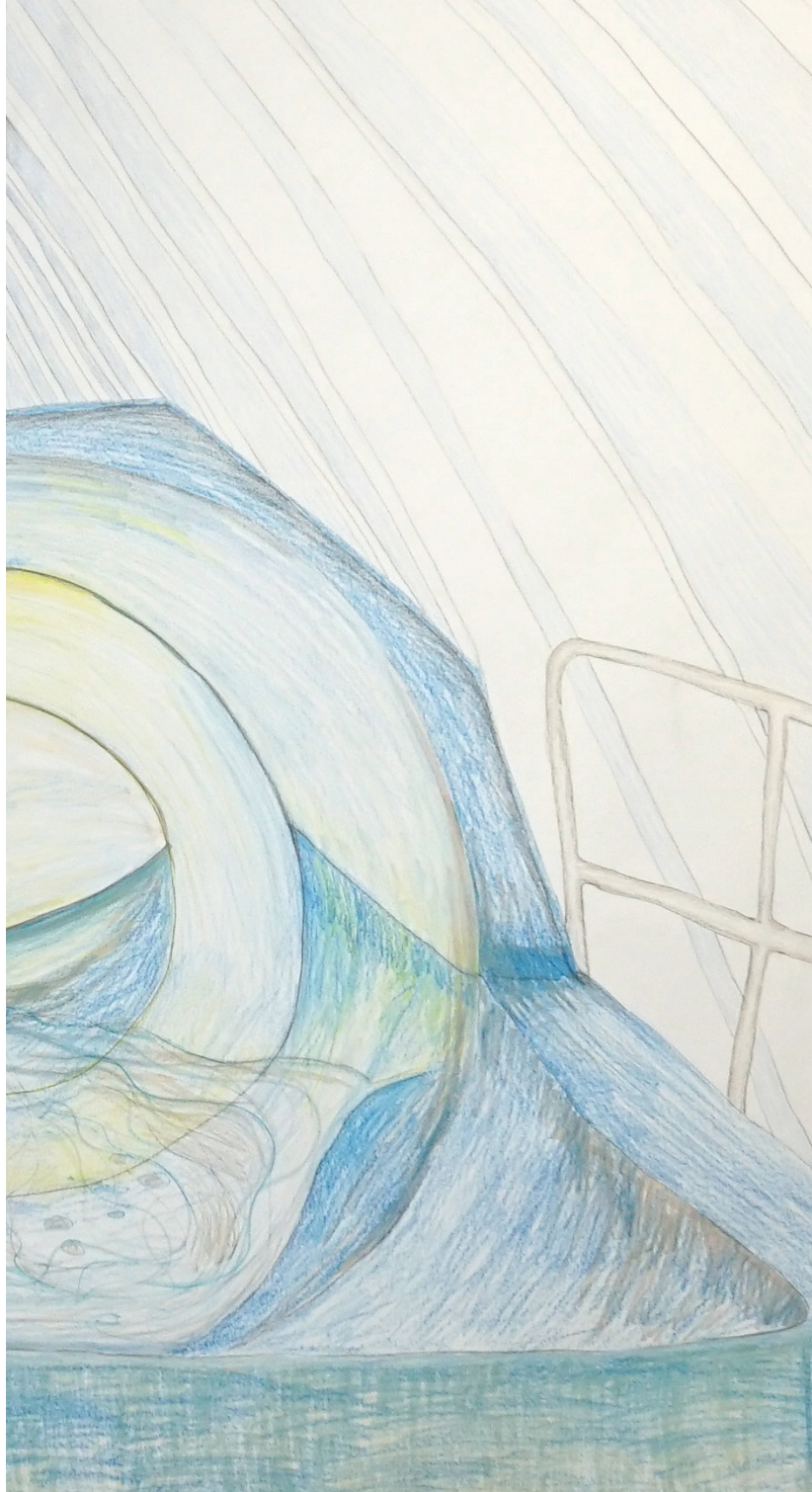


power of water, and the giddy, dreamlike loop of an infinite, half-remembered flume.

Alongside this, the themes of the exhibition will spill over into a highly collaborative, community-minded program of events. A family-oriented day will feature a making workshop, plus local swimming experts and advocates sharing tips and talking about the benefits of getting in the water. 'Open Water', a separate evening event, will feature a hosted panel discussion with notable swimming creators Jenny Landreth and Olivia Smart about the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in swimming culture.

Jimi Famurewa is a British-Nigerian author, broadcaster and freelance journalist. His writing has appeared in the Guardian, Wired, GQ, Empire and Time Out London. He is the restaurant critic for the Evening Standard, regular guest judge on the BBC One series MasterChef, has appeared on Top Chef and was also one of the lead judges on Channel 4's The Great Cookbook Challenge with Jamie Oliver. He is the host of the culture and heritage podcast 'Where's Home Really?', and, in 2021, he won Restaurant Writer of the Year at both the Fortnum & Mason Awards and the Guild of Food Writers Awards. His first book, Settlers: Journeys through the Food, Faith and Culture of Black African London, was published by Bloomsbury in 2022 and was shortlisted for Foyles Non-Fiction Book of the Year.

Madeleine Famurewa studied a BA in Fine Art at Falmouth College of Arts graduating in 2002. During this time she was awarded the Denis Mitchell Prize for Sculpture. From 2006-2007 she studied a PGDIP in Theatre Design at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Alongside a 15 year career in the waste intensive world of theatre and retail, she is constantly questioning the use of raw materials in her practice which motivates her to unravel unwanted old clothes, textiles and furniture, exploring their meaning and thinking about who made them and how. She explores family and community networks and what it means to be at the heart of them as a Mother at a crossroads between the old and the young. From 2021 - 2023 she studied for the MFA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths. Madeleine was selected for the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2021. In 2022, she secured a residency and group show for her Goldsmiths cohort with Hypha Studios at the former Peacocks in Catford, London. In 2023 Madeleine was selected for the Art and Sustainability exhibition at Willesden Gallery, Procreate Project's Digital Archive and Textiles Fantasies at Open Gallery, Halifax.



Staffordshire St is an independent project space in Peckham, South East London. The venue facilitates arts and cultural events and provides affordable studios for artists, makers and designers. The venue was recently established as an art gallery, before then it was for many years a community centre and originally it was built as a Methodist Hall. Staffordshire St will build on the established record of these histories, opening up again to the neighbourhood and developing a welcoming interdisciplinary arts space.

More information on upcoming events:
staffordshirest.com
info@staffordshirest.com
[@staffordshirest](https://www.instagram.com/staffordshirest)

Opening Hours:
Weds - Sun | 12 - 6pm