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The Big Draw announces four new Digital Residencies with UK artists

Four new Digital Residencies with five UK artists are due to take place with The Big Draw, with activity spread over June and July 2021.

Hana Ayoob, has been awarded a residency with her submission, *UnCharismatic Critters*. Hana’s residency will draw attention to the lesser known and lesser liked animals which we share our planet with. Hana will explore these animals through drawings in her sketchbook, a large piece of artwork, interviews with scientists and how-to-draw sessions.

blkmoodyboi was selected with their submission, *Blind Faith*, an illustrated anthology series featuring the stories of six Trans people of colour in the UK. This anthology will serve as an archive that raises the voices of people of colour with a Trans experience, their stories, thoughts and lives.

Sam Metz and Sian Morrell were awarded a residency with their collaborative submission, *Drawing as Stimming*. This residency will explore legitimising non-verbal communication. Sam and Sian look to create a time where stimming can happen, and how drawing and mark-making can support non-verbal communication and exploration, whilst also providing space to stim.

Merlin Summers has been selected for a residency after submitting an impressive portfolio of work, from hand-drawn animation to 3D models. Merlin will explore his artistic process and how he creates his art in *Machines, Monsters & Mayhem*, working in all things from physical construction to digital manipulation.

In April 2021, The Big Draw announced its first ever digital residencies, inviting all UK-based artists to create a submission that responded to The 2021 Big Draw Festival theme, *Make the Change*. Funded by Arts Council England Culture Recovery Fund, The Big Draw encouraged UK-based artists who feel disadvantaged, overlooked or underrepresented to apply.

Kate Mason, Director of The Big Draw said: “The Big Draw is so very proud to announce these four new digital residencies. Hana, blkmoodyboi, Sam, Sian and Merlin all shared innovative and engaging proposals, offering insight into their work, thinking and creativity, and we are very excited to work with them over the coming months. Each of our artists come from different creative backgrounds and it will be wonderful to share their journeys and creative practice with our international audience over the coming weeks.

"The Big Draw is delighted to be able to offer funded opportunities to support artists during this difficult time and work to encourage under-represented artists in the creative sector."

Learn more about the artists selected below:
Hana Ayoob is an illustrator and science communicator with a background in zoology. Hana draws inspiration from the weirder parts of the natural world and a childhood surrounded by traditional Indian art. She has illustrated 3 books and works on science-inspired commissions for a range of clients. Alongside her illustration work, Hana produces and speaks at events, runs creative workshops and provides science communication consultancy and training.

| blkmoodyboi is a Non-binary trans self-taught illustrator that centers Black and Brown trans people in their art. Inspired by comics, anime, friends, and community, blkmoodyboi crafts their own unique style. Through their work, they aim to showcase love, tenderness, and softness as a form of radical resistance against white cis-het patriarchal capitalism. Their art aims to bring joy to QTIBIPOC, to celebrate them and archive them. Sharing body-positive representations and aligning their imaginings with the natural world, their work forms space to aid mental wellbeing and to remind us to be good to ourselves and others, to nourish one’s self and community, and that trans Black and Brown people have always been here. |

| Sam is an interdisciplinary artist inspired by movement. Sam’s work researches, creates and reflects on the concept of what they refer to as ‘choreographic objects. A ‘choreographic object’ is any work Sam creates that has, through the process of making or in the way it looks, a relationship to the body and movement. As a neurodivergent artist with sensory processing differences, the objects allow Sam to work in non-verbal ways, which is a key part of their practice. As an artist with an unpredictable body (due to both Tourette’s and the disability EDS, a connective tissue disorder) the creation of visual, sculptural objects for choreography and alternative forms of notation have allowed the artist alternative methods of communication with artists. |

| Sian is based in Derby where she co-directs 10pm Print Club, a DIY design and screen print studio with Niall McGonagle and Ste Furey. She is part of art and music collective, Shady Cow, a LGBTQIA+ live music showcase, and label Year of Glad, producing artwork, merch and videos for music artists. Sian’s practice is largely digital based, from 2D typography, motion and 3D illustration. She also enjoys finding ways of blending digital and physical environments in event, exhibition, and workshop spaces; this allows for multidisciplinary explorations utilising projection, augmented reality, and creative coding, combining with traditional processes in mural painting, screen printing and textile work. |
Merlin is an 18-year-old artist based in London. His A-level examinations finished, he is getting set to study animation at university. As an autistic artist with a social communication disorder, this residency enables Merlin to access support and creative development without the pressure of social situations. Something of a Polymath, Merlin is passionate about art and how things work, and he enjoys experimenting with a variety of natural materials and responding to a particular setting.

Sharing his work and creative process in this residency, Merlin wants to set an example for other autistic young artists to demonstrate the work they can create and to show that they can access artistic opportunities and are not excluded because of their disability and difficulty with social skills.

Find out more about The Big Draw Digital Residencies at www.thebigdraw.org/2021-digital-residencies. All five Digital Residencies are funded by Arts Council England’s Culture Recovery Fund.

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#MaketheChange #BDF2021 #TheBigDraw

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Big Draw

The Big Draw is a visual literacy charity promoting the universal language of drawing as a tool for thought, creativity, social and cultural engagement. The Big Draw (formerly The Campaign for Drawing) was launched in 2000 with support from and spearheaded by The Guild of St George, the charity founded by John Ruskin in 1871 - becoming an independent arts education charity in 2006. The charity leads a diverse programme of advocacy, empowerment and engagement, and is the founder and driving force behind The Big Draw Festival – the world’s biggest celebration of drawing. The Big Draw manages collaborative research projects, campaigns and educational conferences on visual literacy, digital technology and STEAM. The charity supports professional and emerging artists through its national contemporary art prize, The John Ruskin Prize and exhibition, and through events, awards, and competitions, creates platforms for anyone who wants to draw.

www.thebigdraw.org | Charity no. 1114811

The Big Draw Festival

Launched in October 2000, The Big Draw Festival has encouraged over five million people back to the drawing board. It has notched up two world records – for the longest drawing in the world (one kilometre) and the greatest number of people drawing simultaneously (over 7,000). The first Big Draw Festival in 2000 attracted 180 partner organisations. Since then, the number has risen to over 1,000, with over 500,000 people participating each year.
What began as a one-day celebration of drawing in October 2000 in the UK, is now an annual month-long festival of drawing across the world.

**Arts Council England**

Our recent programme has been supported through funding from The Cultural Recovery Fund: Arts Council England. Arts Council England is a government-funded body dedicated to promoting the performing, visual and literary arts in England. Since 1994, Arts Council England has been responsible for distributing lottery funding. This investment has helped to transform the building stock of arts organisations and to create much additional high-quality arts activity.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)