

Chelsea College of Arts Blog

Fine Art graduates exhibit at Peckham Festival

SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 • BY ISABELLE GRESSEL • NO COMMENTS

Having graduated in July 2016, a group of Chelsea BA Fine Art graduates recently got back their first exhibition post-degree show. They will be exhibiting as part of the Peckham Festival in September, alongside artists, makers and creators based in SE15, London.

Recent graduates Nikoleta Martjanova, Flora Duley and Elisabeth Prentis explained their motivation and the ideas behind their group exhibition Draft which will take place at Safehouse 2 in Peckham.

Image courtesy of the artist Nikoleta Martjanova

How did this exhibition come about?

Flora: I booked the space while preparing for the Chelsea Degree Show (June 2016) so that I could think beyond the importance of the degree show and think beyond Chelsea. I also knew that some of the graduates were involved in setting up a Peckham Arts Festival so I booked the Safehouse 2 exhibition space in order that I could be involved in a bigger event.

Most of us graduated from Chelsea BA Fine Art 2016, and have just left the Chelsea 'nest'. This is our first group show following the degree show.

Can you explain why you chose the title Draft?

Flora: Draft was a way of not getting too serious or bogged down with the idea of a finished, polished artwork. It's an experiment, a first instance, an improvised situation, a sketch... The Safehouse is a bit of drafty building, so it worked!

Image courtesy of the artist Rachel Egan

Safehouse 2 space is a derelict gallery space, how has that affected the different artists who are exhibiting? How do you respond to the space?

Nikoleta: Well, at first I was only thinking about the word 'draft', but after seeing the space I decided to but select some of the work directly in response to the space.

It's not often you get to work with the context of space as opposed to the absence of it in 'white cube' type of gallery. It's not a massive challenge, I just personally find it more interesting to work with the space. I am putting up to ten drawings in the show. At first I was so sure I wanted them framed, but here the unframed works better with the story of the building, appearing as if they were left behind. Leaving the drawings frameless would never have worked if we were exhibiting in a more traditional gallery.

Image courtesy of the artist Nikoleta Martjanova

Do you feel it is important for graduates to work together and create opportunities for themselves and others? Do you have any advice?

Elisabeth: It's so important to keep in contact after graduating, because it can feel so overwhelming

putting on shows. No matter how big or small, putting on shows is a way of keeping the conversation you were having in school alive. Finishing school can feel a bit like reaching a 'full stop', but to discuss projects helps while you adjust making work in a new context, one where making art is not necessarily your main priority anymore with rent and bills to pay, finding paid work, etc. Doing shows helps to keep you sane in transition from art school life into real life... as well as it being fun and a chance to see what people are working on.

I want to try to launch a studio project in Poland over the next few years, keeping in touch with graduates from Chelsea is going to be key to making it work. Being able to afford spaces in London is becoming increasingly difficult so finding alternatives is something we are all interested in. Setting something up elsewhere is far easier when working together.

Following the exhibition, do you have any future plans?

Flora: Not just future plans – we already have dates and venues! We'll have a show entitled 'Settle' at the Crypt Gallery by Kings Cross from 1st to 6th of November 2016 and then there's a course...

Image courtesy of the artist Reka Ritt

'[Draft](#)' exhibition, Safehouse 2, 137 Copeland Road, Peckham, SE15 3SN

Open:

Thursday 8th September: 6pm – 9pm

Friday 9th September: 11am – 9pm

Saturday 10th September: 11am – 9pm / PV 6pm – 9pm

Sunday 11th September: 11am – 5pm

You can also follow the set up of the show on their [Instagram](#).

Find out more about the [Chelsea BA Fine Art](#) course.

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