

decriminalised futures

HISTORY AND CONTEXT BEHIND THE EXHIBITION 'DECRIMINALISED FUTURES' AT THE ICA LONDON, 15/02/2022 – 22/05/2022. CURATED BY ELIO SEA AND YVES SANGLANTE

At the end of 2019, Decriminalised Futures made an open call for artists to propose new work around themes of survival, resistance and visibility for an exhibition and chapbook publication, which would also be included here in our online archive. A list of topics from SWARM's Festival of Resistance were provided as a thematic prompt and we asked that the proposed work be easily translatable to print for the chapbook and uncomplicated to install for the exhibition.

Deadline for proposals was January 2020. We received close to 90 submissions. In mid-January a selection panel gathered to discuss submissions and ultimately chose 10 final projects. This panel included E Sanglante, Imani Robinson, Jay Bernard, Morgan M Page and Hello Rooster.

Each project was assigned £1000. Decriminalised Futures suggested that a maximum of £250 be used on production of the artwork, with £750 kept as payment. The initial deadline for final works was June 2020.

To support the selected projects, Decriminalised Futures arranged with ICA London that four curators from their team would act as mentors to the commissioned artists. Each project (individual artist or collaborative pairs) would have up to 1 hour with their mentor per month. Mentors were asked to provide feedback on developing work, connect their mentees with other artists and curators who might be relevant to their work, and to provide

resources in the forms of invitations to exhibitions, suggested readings, or suggesting other artworks that might be relevant to the artists' work or process.

Artists were introduced to their mentors via email and encouraged to communicate via email, phone or video call. We also organised drop-in meet-ups in the ICA's studio room which were initially scheduled for February, April and May. These were optional and artists not based in London were welcome to join via video call. We successfully held our first meet-up in February 2020 and many of the artists were able to meet for the first time.

When the COVID-19 pandemic developed and lockdown began in the UK in late March 2020, we switched the meet-ups to virtual group video calls and extended submission deadlines. Artists were informed that their work was not expected to be submitted until the end of the year, and that any changes to their work due to the circumstances were understandable. Mentor support has remained available to the artists throughout. At the end of October 2020, we were able to provide a small amount of extra financial support to the artists for additional access costs they may have incurred working on their projects. Each project was invited to claim up to £200 for anything they would identify as an additional access cost.

We are thrilled by the work the artists involved in this project have been able to make, often under difficult circumstances.

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