

CREATIVE SCOTLAND &
COUNTERPOINTS ARTS

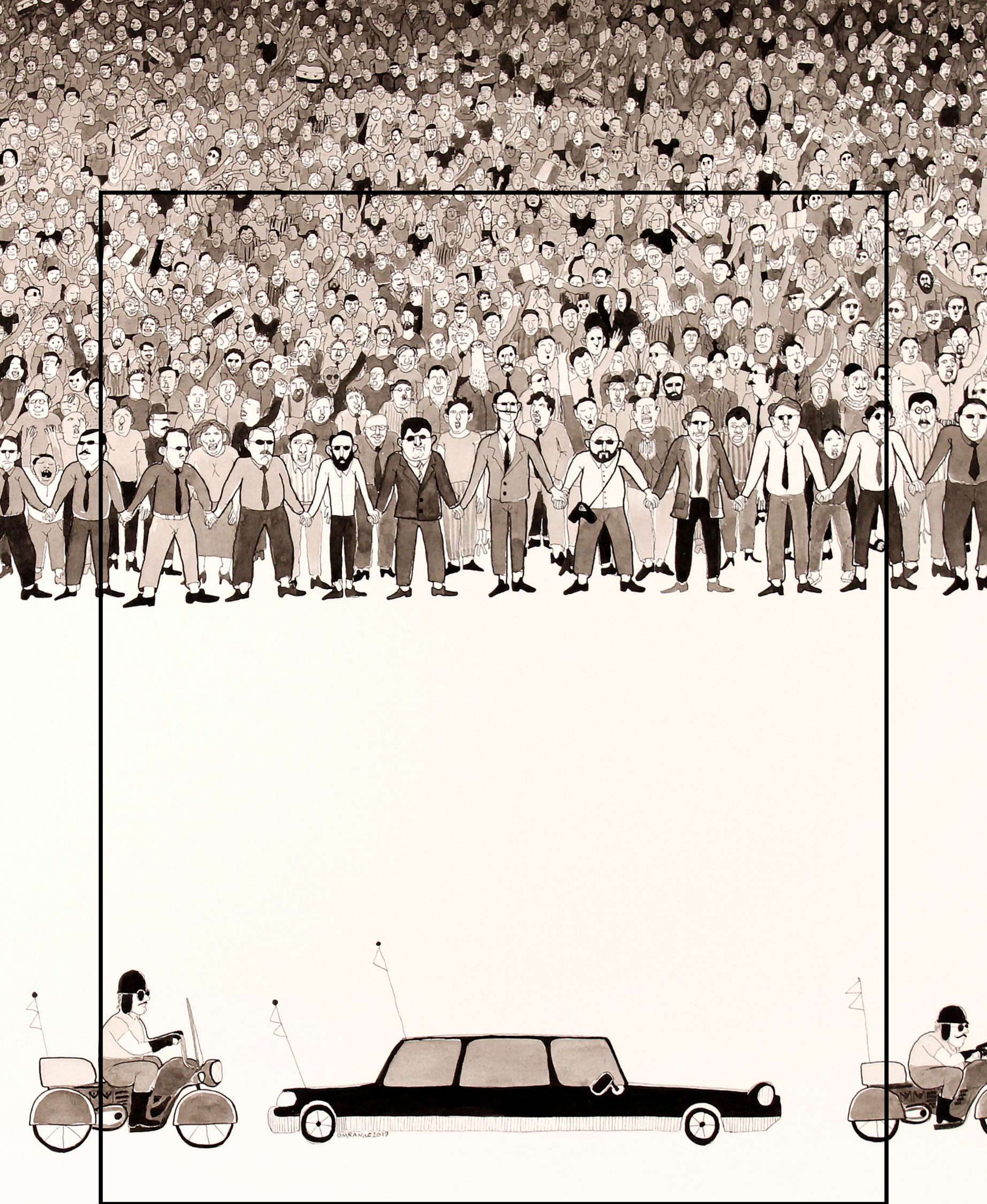
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**MUTUAL
AFFINITIES**
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LEARNING LAB

JUNE 2022
PROGRAMME



COUNTERPOINTS.



Assemblage, Mohamad Omran

WELCOME TO THE MUTUAL AFFINITIES LEARNING LAB

The Mutual Affinities Learning Lab charts new ground in the arts sector in Scotland. It privileges the lived experience of displacement and the values of equality and diversity as central to the artistic process – as catalysts for understanding our culturally diverse and complex worlds.

The Mutual Affinities Learning Lab is a space for thinking, lively conversation and imagination.

Inviting you to slow down and pause the pace of your practice, ‘mutual affinities’ infers exchange, collaboration and different forms of co-learning and listening. This pilot programme is the first of its kind, offering the potential to nurture connections and shared sympathies about future projects between artists and between artists and organisations.

We will collaborate with facilitators from international locations to help foster a sense of openness and solidarity across borders; with the aim of cultivating a series of interconnected conversations encouraging us to continue to learn and unlearn with each other.

Selected artists work across a range of art forms, including visual arts, live performance, music, film, mixed media plus site specific installation. Many are engaged in and are exploring the politics of identity, belonging and place in projects that often incorporate community engagement and participation.

Artists: **Mousa Al-Nana; Shatha Altowai; Saber Bamatraf; Paria Goodarzi; Basharat Khan; Francisco Lines; Iman Tajik; Ako Zado.**

The organisations contributing to the programme are located across Scotland and are navigating cultural diversity, access, inclusivity and cultural rights through the prism of people and place.

Organisations: Rachel Disbury, **Alchemy Film and Arts**; Alison McMenemy, **Highland Print Studio**; Tim Nunn, **Govanhill Baths**; Natalia Palombo, **Deveron Projects**; Helen Trew, **Art27**

Visiting facilitators bring experiences of working across borders with displaced communities in addition to communities in small places and neighbourhoods; several have built international networks supporting artists and organisations through visionary curatorial and digital programmes.

Facilitators: **Abdullah al Kafri**, Ettijahat – Independent Culture, Beirut, Lebanon; **Kit Braybrooke**, Habitat Unit at Technische Universität, Berlin; **Dominik Czechowski**, International Curator, Researcher and Writer UK/Poland; **Nike Jonah**, PACE (Pan-African Creative Exchange); **Elham Khattab**, Out of the Circle, Cairo and the Cross Commons Curatorial Collective; **Isabel Lima**, Gresham Horse Project, Newcastle, UK; **Natalia Palombo**, Deveron Projects, Huntly, Scotland; **Sally Watkins**, B-Side, Isle of Portland, UK.

The timetable is divided into a series of learning blocks, with approximately half the programme taking place online via Zoom; and the final half delivered in situ at Deveron Projects in Huntly, Aberdeenshire. We’ll also communicate and collaborate in-between sessions via Slack.

Director: Áine O’Brien, Curator of Learning and Research and Co-Founder Counterpoints Arts; **Producer,** Isabel Lima with support from **Stuart Cameron**, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Creative Scotland



Kamra-E-Faoree, Farhad Berahman

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The Mutual Affinities Learning Lab presents us with tools for sharing a diversity of experiences and the means to look beyond national borders. Open, accessible, and egalitarian peer-learning is no longer a luxury or a far-off ideal: it is now an outright necessity. Mutual Affinities creates an ideal platform for sharing new perspectives and the opportunity to engage in inclusive, progressive dialogue about the future we hope to realise together. It is an initiative of paramount importance in the context of post-pandemic development for artists and cultural actors and as a space for meaningful exchange and learning.

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Abdullah AlKafri, Executive Director,
Ettijahat - Independent Culture
(Beirut/Brussels)

MUTUAL AFFINITIES:
PROGRAMME AND TIMELINE

3 JUNE 2022

10:00 - 12:00 pm Welcome/introductions and Overview of Programme - Who are We? Exchanging Stories – Breakout Rooms Introduction to the Mutual Affinities Challenge (MA) Group Conversation/Discussing the MA Challenge 12:00 – 1:00 pm Lunch and break from the screen 1:00 – 2:30 pm Digital cultures for regeneration? Mutual aid and resistance in the Anthropocene Visiting practitioner: Kit Braybrooke, Digital Anthropologist, Habitat Unit at Technische Universität, Berlin	2:45 - 4:30 pm Modes of networking and infrastructures - new ways of working across and with communities to build local/global solidarities. Visiting practitioners: Nike Jonah, Executive Director of PACE (Pan-African Creative Exchange) in conversation with Elham Khattab, Director, Out of the Circle, Cairo and a member of the Cross Commons Curatorial Collective. 4:30 – 5:00 pm Wrap-up Conversation/Discussing the MA Challenge A mix of presentation, group conversation and break-out groups
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Double Vision, Ibraheem Ramadan

MUTUAL AFFINITIES: PROGRAMME AND TIMELINE

10 JUNE 2022

10:00 - 12:00 pm

Neighbourhoods and diversity of place - why is place-based work increasingly important; what 'place' might mean to artists and communities who have experienced displacement

Visiting practitioners: Abdullah al Kafri Director, Ettijahat - Independent Culture, Beirut, Lebanon in conversation with Sally Watkins, Co-Artistic Director, B-Side, Isle of Portland, UK

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Lunch and break from the screen

1:00 - 2:30 pm

Cooperation, Participation or Collaboration and the Role of Curation

Visiting Practitioners: Isabel Lima, Gresham Horse Project, Newcastle, UK;

Respondent, Dominik Czechowski, International Curator, Researcher and Writer, UK/Poland

2:30 - 4:30 pm

Wrap-up Conversation/ Discussing the MA Challenge

A mix of presentation, group conversation and break-out groups



Under One Sky - Clashmach Walk, Iman Tajik

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Being a global citizen is difficult because of borders, laws and visa restrictions. Yet artists dream of having their own spaces, where they can find creativity while building a diverse international community together with arts organisations. The Mutual Affinities Learning Lab creates a space for ‘them and us’ to connect, learn and collectively dream of such shared places and spaces.

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Elham Khattab, Director, Out of the
Circle (Cairo) and member of the
Cross Commons Curatorial Collective



Smelling Workshop, Irineu Destourelle and Clara Weale

MUTUAL AFFINITIES:
PROGRAMME AND TIMELINE

16 JUNE 2022

6:00 PM

Deveron Projects - Welcome
Dinner

@ DEVERON PROJECTS

17 JUNE 2022

10:00 - 12:00 pm

Garden Workshop

Lindy Young, Project Gardener

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Cooking

Kawther Luai, artist/chef

1:00 – 2:00 pm

Friday Lunch (Refugee Festival
Scotland)

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Opportunities/Challenges of public
commissioning when the "town is
the venue".

Natalia Palombo, Director of Deveron
Projects

5:00 - 6:00pm

Wrap Up Conversation - Part I

6:00pm

Dinner

18 JUNE 2022

9:00 AM

Wrap Up Conversation - Part II



Separation, Randa Maddah

MUTUAL AFFINITIES CHALLENGE:

WHAT IS A RESIDENCY?

Artist residencies are as old as the hills. Historically they have provided opportunity for artists to live, temporarily, outside their usual environments, providing them with time and space to reflect, research or produce work. Likewise residencies enable organisations to host artists with the possibility of their practice contributing to and informing an institution's profile and programming.

The **Mutual Affinities Challenge** aims to explore the concept of the 'mutual' in artist residencies with the goal of implementing equitable and sustainable relations and conditions between artists who have experienced displacement, host organisations and surrounding communities.

We are particularly interested to learn from artists and organisations about how and why new residency models might be re-imagined with a view to embedding social justice and change in a period of increasing uncertainty. What might be the 'look and feel' of residencies, mutually shaped by the experience of displaced artists and the everyday practicalities and challenges of organisations working alongside communities of place?

We've set some initial questions to jumpstart your collective thinking and for you to pick and choose.

Our aim is to agree on some shared principles and actions at the end of the Mutual Affinities Programme. This is an exploratory process so feel free to re-shape the questions. And to think big thoughts; it is an opportunity to step into the 'what if' and venture outside our everyday spaces to imagine the (im)possible.

*Please note that the Mutual Affinities Challenge is simply a catalyst to get us thinking about how new models of residencies might materialise with the mutual input of artists and organisations. Facilitating a form of collective and cooperative thinking, which we will communicate back to Creative Scotland at the end of the programme.

•Who sets the terms and conditions of residencies and to what end?

•What is the 'value' of a residency and for whom?

•What is the nature of a residency exchange between artists, organisations and communities?

•In relation to artists who are displaced and have lived experience of being outside their usual environments - what might it mean to be an 'artist in residence'?

•How do we interpret the dynamic of hospitality with the artist as 'guest' and organisation as 'host'?

•What does it mean to have a residency in a very local place with low net migration?

•What do organisations expect of artists who do socially engaged practice (a form of practice that connects with communities) and who have also experienced displacement - when inviting them to a residency?

•What do artists expect of organisations who are acting as 'host' when taking part in a residency programme?

•How might artists who have experienced displacement bring an international lens to a residency - through their practice and lived experience - and how might that impact on organisations working in local places and neighbourhoods?

•How can residencies move beyond one-off, short-term engagements - how can they be made more sustainable; and, at the same time, keep the door open to emerging artists?

What do we want to **preserve**?
What do we want to **transform**?



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MUTUAL AFFINITIES: PROGRAMME AND TIMELINE

GROUP AGREEMENT

How can we collaborate and work together.

Code of Conduct

Please take note of the following:

- + Sign in on time
- + Be respectful
- + Listen actively
- + Be aware of language diversity
- + Be honest and act in good faith
- + Be collaborative and generous
- + Respect privacy
- + Ask permission to share info, record or videotape beforehand
- + Handle disagreement constructively
- + If you want to intervene in the conversation raise your hand and let facilitator/moderator signal you can proceed (Raised Hand feature on Zoom)

Because we are conducting this programme partially online, we will also need to be mindful of time limits and practicalities. In order to prepare for scheduled Zoom sessions, please be sure to do the following:

- + Have a computer charger and drinks at hand before you start;
- + Try and find a quiet space for the meetings. If not possible, consider muting yourself when others are talking;
- + Mute your phone;
- + Mute messages alerts on your computer.

Values

Respect; Generosity; Confidentiality; Solidarity; Creativity; Learning; Communication; Honesty, Listening; Patience

Forgotten Enlightenments, Out of the Circle, Elham Khattab



MUTUAL AFFINITIES:
PROGRAMME AND TIMELINE

<u>Abdullah AlKafri</u>	<u>Elham Khattab</u>
<u>Kit Braybrooke</u>	<u>Isabel Lima</u>
<u>Stuart Cameron</u>	<u>Áine O’Brien</u>
<u>Dominic Czechowski</u>	<u>Natalia Palombo</u>
<u>Nike Jonah</u>	<u>Sally Watkins</u>

FACILITATORS