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Returning for its tenth iteration, the unthemed 2024 Glasgow International (GI) biennale of contemporary art included a fascinating, rich amalgam of practices and projects, showcasing international exchanges between Glasgow-based artists, artist-run spaces, projects and organisations, widely placed across the city. Since its inception in 2005, GI has innovatively showcased differing geographies and ecologies of exchange, with this year's edition presenting poignant and politically astute moving image artworks with innovative, inspiring approaches to sound and mixed-medium editing.

Coordinated by its project, event and curatorial team, this is the first edition to take place under Director Richard Birkett (formerly of the Institute of Contemporary Arts London) who took over the post in 2022. Emerging from challenging restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted GI 2021, the emphasis across GI 2024 was on 'interactions between people' (GI, 2024b). Discursive spaces such as the free Gatherings talks programme and the inaugural Maud Sulter Memorial Lecture¹ considered 'points of exchange' across the festival, an approach evident in the beautifully designed festival identity created by artist Matthew Arthur Williams and graphic designer Maeve Redmond (GI 2024a). The physical programme and related online materials mixed red-hued images of gardens and buildings along with archival documents and typefaces drawn from research into the social and material histories of Glasgow's environment. These photomontages often include texts and maps, juxtaposing moments in the city's industrial and architectural evolution and showcasing design and writing as parallel modes of research, reflection and connection. Printed in the programme, the essay and sound work (available online) *Teneu* by the collective Rosie's Disobedient Press was collaboratively written by Adrien Howard and Lisette May Monroe with Gaelic performance/translation by Cass Ezeji. This multilingual remediation emphasised journeys to GI events, between the north, east, centre, south and west of the city, as visitors traverse and form unique geographies of the city – 'Tha mòran dhrochaidean, cabhsairean, fo-rathaidean, slighean cùil. Mar gum biodh bràthair no piuthar òg air a h-uile _sràid' [There are many bridges, alleyways, underpasses, back-lanes] (Rosie's Disobedient Press, 2024).

Providing a healthy dose of humane, DIY and collaborative projects and pop-ups, the inclusion of smaller gallery spaces and other locations, including libraries, Glasgow School of Art and music venues, spoke to crossovers between artforms and intersecting, social creative ecologies. These were important topics in a number of inspiring moving image works, which used a combination of decolonial critique and personal reflection to examine how land is used and governed. Many of these works included soundscapes that considered the 'act of listening as a social and political force' (GI, 2024b), an important wider emphasis at GI, which has a long-established habit of making space for sonic as much as visual practices. Listening and our perception of place are closely connected to the 'rituals, practices and forms of memory that define individual and collective identities', as outlined in the description of the *Gatherings* events, with many practices and works exploring our 'material associations with the world around us' and how these are deployed through art making and interaction (GI, 2024b).

At GI 2024, the music-oriented social infrastructures of the city were conceptually re-formed via site-specific events. An iteration of Kali Malone's organ recital was staged in Glasgow Cathedral, curated by the curatorial duo Cento. Using the traditional set-up of the organ, located behind the audience, attention was displaced from the performer. In Malone's adapted compositions, the situated, transformative rituals facilitated by buildings where worship and deep listening entwine, foreground individual and collective reflection and experience beyond the aura of the artist. Another durational audio-focused experience, Martin Beck's 13-hour video work *Last Night* (2016) was staged in SWG3's Warehouse space. Based on 119 songs played by DJ David Mancuso at the legendary loft space 99 Prince Street in New York during the 1970s, Beck's large-screen installation showed records up close as they played out in full, restaging these lore-laden sets long into the evening. Elsewhere, the characterful, welcoming rooms of the artist-led Listen Gallery – a festival highlight – included two immersive installations as part of the *Listening for Love* duo exhibition: in the first room, the rose-coloured fabric walls and domestic serenity of Cindy Islam's installation featured a water fountain, postcards and other pictures alongside an audio-interview with Iraqi-Scottish artist Luna Issa. In the second space, the dark, fog-filled atmosphere of Kyalo Searle-Mbullu's abstract, deconstructed club-worthy soundscape featured English, Swahili and Kikuyu conversations played forwards and backwards with murky moving image projection light and strobe flashes. Elsewhere, for *Radio International* a Volkswagen Polo (owned by and driven to Glasgow from Germany by one of the participating artists) occupied a space in King Street Car Park near local music hub Mono. Listeners were invited to sit inside the vehicle and experience a looping programme of short radio pieces, played through the car speakers. Created by students from Dresden University of the Arts and Glasgow School of Art (who also supervised access), this programme of soundworks included a contribution from their tutor, artist Susan Philipsz (whose previous GI installation *The Lowlands* won the Turner Prize in 2010). Tracing filmic and broadcast-based starting points, *Radio International* was inspired by an online archive of Radio Interval Signals and Jean Cocteau's 1950 film *Orpheus* (a retelling of the classical myth) in which the protagonist is 'obsessed with the coded messages and abstract poems that are transmitted from an unknown station to [their] car radio' (GI, 2024c). At each of these very different sites, varied hauntological fragments from pop culture iterated through remediated technological formats – stone tapes and spatial amplifiers created by inhabiting these specific locations.

The spatiality of sound, its ability to collapse and transcend time and the immediacy of its presence were likewise taken up in many moving image works at GI, with a particularly striking cluster shown at 5 Florence Street (formerly the Adelphi Terrace Public School). The moving image presentation by Bobbi Cameron and Owain Train McGilvary entitled *I'm attended as a portal myself* adopted a social curatorial approach, bringing together two different film works based on the artists' friendship. Cameron's meditative single-screen 16mm film *for the first words of a dreamworld* (2024) was projected in a darkened room: a non-linear, paralinguistic array of voices and field recordings heard over coastal imagery of the Slate Islands (off the west coast of Scotland). Across the hallway, McGilvary's red-tinted room *Seeing Red* (2024) centred on The Three Crowns, the only gay bar in north Wales, which was destroyed by an arson attack in March 2014. Cycling bilingual Welsh/English voices and texts on the colour red, this beautifully weird, queer layering mixed footage of the site today with archival Facebook uploads, vivid subtitling and digitally abstracted sequences. Language was also fundamental to the enormous sculptural extravaganza downstairs by artists Josie KO and Kialy Tihngang, *fir gorma*. (2024). Taking its name from an old Irish Gaelic term meaning 'blue men', which is thought to refer to North African people enslaved by Vikings in the Ninth Century, this bold, playful installation presented a newly imagined story (and language) in which the *fir gorma* escape and form a clan on a Scottish island. Inhabiting the huge central space

of the open multi-level hallway, the blue, sparkling, cis-female figure had a wide skirt, under which an iridescent blue, glittering grotto fountain and luminous circular moving image projection of the clan's journey were shown. The figure also wore a cross-body sash saying 'from the river to the sea', resituating discourses on sea/land ownership and belonging, whilst connecting this reimagined prehistory to the urgent context of Palestinian land rights and genocide in which it was staged.

Upstairs in the same building (5 Florence Street), the single-screen film *Wah Yen* (2024), named after the first Chinese restaurant to open in Glasgow (in around the late 1940s), was shown in a darkened room, accompanied by a monitor on the floor displaying archival colour footage of shipyards. A dystopian letter-film mixing animation, fictionalised writing, archive and personal histories made by artist Wei Zhang, its fragmented narrative moves between a fictional love story set in 1970s Glasgow and striking drag-performance in Scottish mountains and glens, drawing on the collective insights of artists Clarinda Yung Tse 雍記 and Katherine Ka Yi Liu who perform the drag sequences in boglands, wearing bulbous, sinewy costumes, and artists Siyao Li, Wei Zhou, Xuan Gao, Eye Suriyanon, Yifan Lan and LingLong Wang. The very different, revelatory photography of Edinburgh-based artist Sandra George, shot in the 1980s, was also shown in other rooms on the top level of the building at 5 Florence Street, more evidence of the intriguing curatorial juxtapositions at play in the unthemed festival programme. George's candid self-portraits and photos documenting the communities with which she worked (such as Shakti Women's Aid) create an empathetic and personally political documentation of lesser-known histories, made more acute by the fact that when George passed away in 2013, much of her work was unseen.

A stand-out at this year's festival, the duo exhibition *Anticipate, sublimate* featured works by Alexis Kyle Mitchell and Ima-Abasi Okon curated by Mason Leaver-Yapp. Shown in St Margaret's Church Hall at 83 Portman Street – an old community space found by the artists – this bisected room bore visible traces of its different uses: mismatched walls and wood panels. Another socially curated show, it included two discreet works by artists who are also friends, that stemmed from a longer dialogue between them. Okon's framed sculptural wall-hanging was shown in one room, lit by the long Scottish summer daylight. Made from a locally manufactured and preserved ox-tail stew, it was displayed opposite certificates verifying this material as fit for human consumption. Next-door, Mitchell's versatile moving image and sound work *The Treasury of Human Inheritance* (2024) was shown in a darkened screening space with multi-channel sound and seating. Tracing patterns of biological and familial connection and physically mapping locations in Glasgow and Canada, this compelling film created and explored modular networks and spiritual connection – movingly depicting multiple parallel stories from Mitchell's family history, showing conversations about day-to-day life and living with genetic disease, physiotherapy exercise sessions via video call and a tarot reading alongside accounts of different forms of modular networking – communicated via spoken by voiceovers, acousmatic and diegetic sound clips or the display of on-screen sources and subtitles. The hour-long single-screen film is sonically and visually rich, encompassing further collaborations and friendships, including the voice of Glasgow-based artist Charlie Prodger. The multichannel sound surrounded and spatially shifted viewers' perceptions of these complex elements, with evocative modular synth soundscapes created in collaboration with Glasgow-based artists Luke Fowler and Richy Carey. Utilising bold, visually rich photochemical processing effects and iterative images of trees and organic/synthetic networks, it juxtaposed seemingly unrelated elements with alchemical aplomb. Shot on 16mm and digital media when the artist was living in Glasgow, we see photochemical effects warp images of abandoned urban architectures teeming with natural growth, as the dense montage and repeating stories enact somatic rituals, merging video calls and home

movie footage and mimicking patterns from nature on the exposed, bleached surfaces of celluloid sections.

Access to space, the politics of land ownership, constant urban change and the romanticisation of nature – all longstanding themes in the Scottish political psyche – were a recurring presence in many differing shows and projects at GI. From Keith Haring's salvaged subway graffiti panels at the Modern Institute and Northern-Irish artist Cathy Wilkes' lonely cypher figures depicting moments of violence, loss and domesticity at the Hunterian Art Gallery to Delaine Le Bas' installation room of evocative layered textile paintings and assemblages *Delainia: 17071965 Unfolding* at Tramway, exhibits involved a vibrant sculptural performance of the personal and political – particularly evident in Le Bas' (who was nominated for the Turner Prize 2024 for an earlier separate exhibition), aligning Romani experiences and perspectives on land, movement, gender, and discrimination. In the east of the city, the garden/orchard *Peace Arbour* by Reiko Goto Collins opposite Glasgow Women's Library was built in record time by volunteers, acting as tree nursery and discussion forum, with both the library and garden providing sites of learning and performance of Goto Collins' leaf-reading, musical backpack instrument *Hakoto Speaking Leaf* (Reiko Goto Collins and Tim Collins), set alongside Yoko Ono's *Wish Tree* series. In Glasgow, a city infamously bisected by motorways and subject to huge social relocation in the post-war period, there is a complex relationship between expectation, need and planning, as examined in Joey Mitchell's project *Beyond the Forbidden Gate*, for which dense archival stories of urban development in North Glasgow were collaged onto display walls in the repurposed Mitchell Library. Elsewhere, Cameron Rowland inverted the idea that art and festivals open city spaces, with artwork *Obstruction* using a silver chain and padlock to bar entry to Ramshorn Cemetery in the Merchant City area of the city for the duration of the festival. The cemetery contains the tombs of merchants whose fortunes were made when Glasgow monopolised trade in tobacco and sugar goods produced by enslaved people on plantations in Jamaica, Maryland and Virginia after the 1707 Acts of Union (through which the Scottish and English parliaments were combined to create Great Britain), when Glasgow became known as the 'second city' of the British Empire. This unauthorised closure was a powerful reminder of memory as a material construct and presence in the city infrastructures around us, symbolising ideological structures that still need to be dismantled as well as the constant material presence of long-dead perpetrators whose acts continue to directly affect the world today.

Many projects and works at GI 2024 questioned and confronted continuing systems of exploitive commerce. At Tramway, Camara Taylor's examination of entangled, racial capitalism in the exhibition *[mouthfeel]* enacted a striking, sculptural play on height and light, presenting recomposed and new works made collaboratively with 饒桐 (Ai Túng), Sharif Elsabagh and Slag Hammers. A silent two-channel moving image film showed looping mouths on monitors, as viewers watched footage of the last gold coin to be produced by the Scottish Mint (which commemorated the country's colonial Darien scheme) dissolving on a human tongue. Switching between ingestion and expelling, the images on these monitors were reflected in the glossy surfaces of large prints, reminding us of the visceral qualities of language as an invisible but powerful bodily product. This and other works at the festival utilised varied media to examine the nature of supposedly free labour and how histories of art perpetuate structural inequality – including its systems of funding, the materials it uses and the visual imagery and languages it forms. In Ashanti Harris' exhibition *A Burial* at the Centre of Contemporary Arts, the film *Black Gold* (2024) foregrounded human and geographical presence in relation to the fossil fuel-reliant economy of Scotland, considering the recent twinning of Aberdeen, an international oil and gas industry hub, with Georgetown in Guyana

in 2019. Indeed, today, many companies operating in Scotland provide services to oil and gas economies all over the world, with resources off the coast of Gaza (UN, 2019) adding new, urgent dimensions to critique of these systems. The ongoing GI project by collective All Walls Will Fall recently published the vital, powerfully articulated 'An Anticolonial Call and Response for a Free Palestine', emphasizing temporality and the frameworks through which we listen to and witness ongoing atrocities.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's series of three performance lectures moved between several venues in the city (Galvanisers at SWG3, Audio and the Barrowlands), creating a complex engagement with performance, time and place. The first, *Air Pressure* focussed our ears to the sky above Lebanon in 2019, a site of aggressively audible Israeli military activity before and since this time. As Hamdan reveals, presence in airspace is a particular form of sonic violence, an incursion and occupation that erodes and recreates geographical perception over a long period, a discussion that echoed the escalation of violence on/in Lebanon and the physical and cultural erasure happening in Gaza whilst the festival took place. Hamdan's numbers, tracking incursions into Lebanese airspace by Israeli fighter jets documented by the UN several years ago, and his critical examination of the social, physical and emotional effects of these events on people in Lebanon, expose longer stories of inaction and awareness of the increased physical and sonic atrocities and incursions being committed in the wider region today compared to when Hamdan first wrote/performed these lectures, emphasized by his asides, reminding the audience that these numbers were from a few years ago.

As outlined by Rose Higham-Stainton in their reflection on GI 2024, in many works there was a parallel framework of care, likewise evident in the collaborative focus of programming, which examined the 'structures that hold us in place, or down, [and that] imagine solidarity with another body – another city, another land – as the kind of radical empathy that impedes the steadfast idea of sovereignty, or at least a nation state' (2024). Decolonial awareness of site was important in the extremely beautiful exhibition *Offerings for Escalante* by Enzo Camacho and Ami Lien at Glasgow Museum of Modern Art (GOMA). This interrelated installation-exhibition encompassed several works, forming a compelling biological, narrative ecosystem within the space. Exploring the socio-political history of Negros, an island in the Philippines, the works used natural materials from the island as well as technologies of memory (in this case moving image), 'exposing' the social, environmental and political legacies of the sugar plantations that dominate this area, where a hacienda style colonial monopolisation of land and labour has taken place over an extended period (originally driven by a Glasgow-based company). The central single-screen film-work, *Langit Lupa* (2023) is a visually stunning essayistic examination of activism and memory. Featuring abstract photochemical patterns and colours created by exposing celluloid images, interspersed with footage of the island and the people that live there, it weaves personal testimonials, documentary and symbolic rituals together to portray deeply moving first-person accounts of the Escalante Massacre in 1985, when protesting farm workers were violently suppressed and murdered during the state regime of Ferdinand Marcos (active between 1972 and 1986). The hand-painted 16mm stop-motion film, *Decomposition Animation*, explores the transformation of cultural symbols and icons, allowing natural materials to taint the film, processes also evident in the carefully assembled shadow projections and handmade paper collages that surround the room, which utilize iconography native to the region and local organic materials like banana stalks and coconut husks. The exhibition zine *The Angry Christ* (2024, available online) provides a further connection to these stories and the artists' processes long after visitors have left the room. By creating new symbolic frameworks for materials, Camacho and Lien symbolize the deep connection between the land and its people,

highlighting issues of food sovereignty and environmental degradation to create a revelatory space for reflection, grief and potential action, forging completely original, renewed and enriching connections between ideas of contemporary, historical and collective memory.

Many of the works described in this review, as well as numerous more it was not able to describe, used a collaborative approach to create striking, highly original formal and material innovations, revealing new practices of storytelling and remembrance. It is the juxtaposition of works and this research-led approach to dialogue and community formation that makes GI a unique, refreshing and necessary festival, with GI 2024 indicating exciting potentials and directions in expanded, mixed-format moving image, as part of which sound plays a fundamental role in creating complex situated, politically engaged, culturally adaptive and socially unique dialogues, all of which are vital in enabling us to share and process the past and the present.

Notes

1 This newly established annual lecture aims to celebrate the work of artist, photographer, writer, poet, curator and organiser Maud Sulter (1960–2008), the internationalism of her practice and her roots in Scotland. The inaugural lecture was delivered on 20 June 2024 at Glasgow School of Art by Scottish poet, playwright, novelist, and former Makar (Scotland's poet laureate), Jackie Kay, who discussed Maud's artwork and approaches to bringing the past into the present artistically. Documentation is due to be made available online via Glasgow International.

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