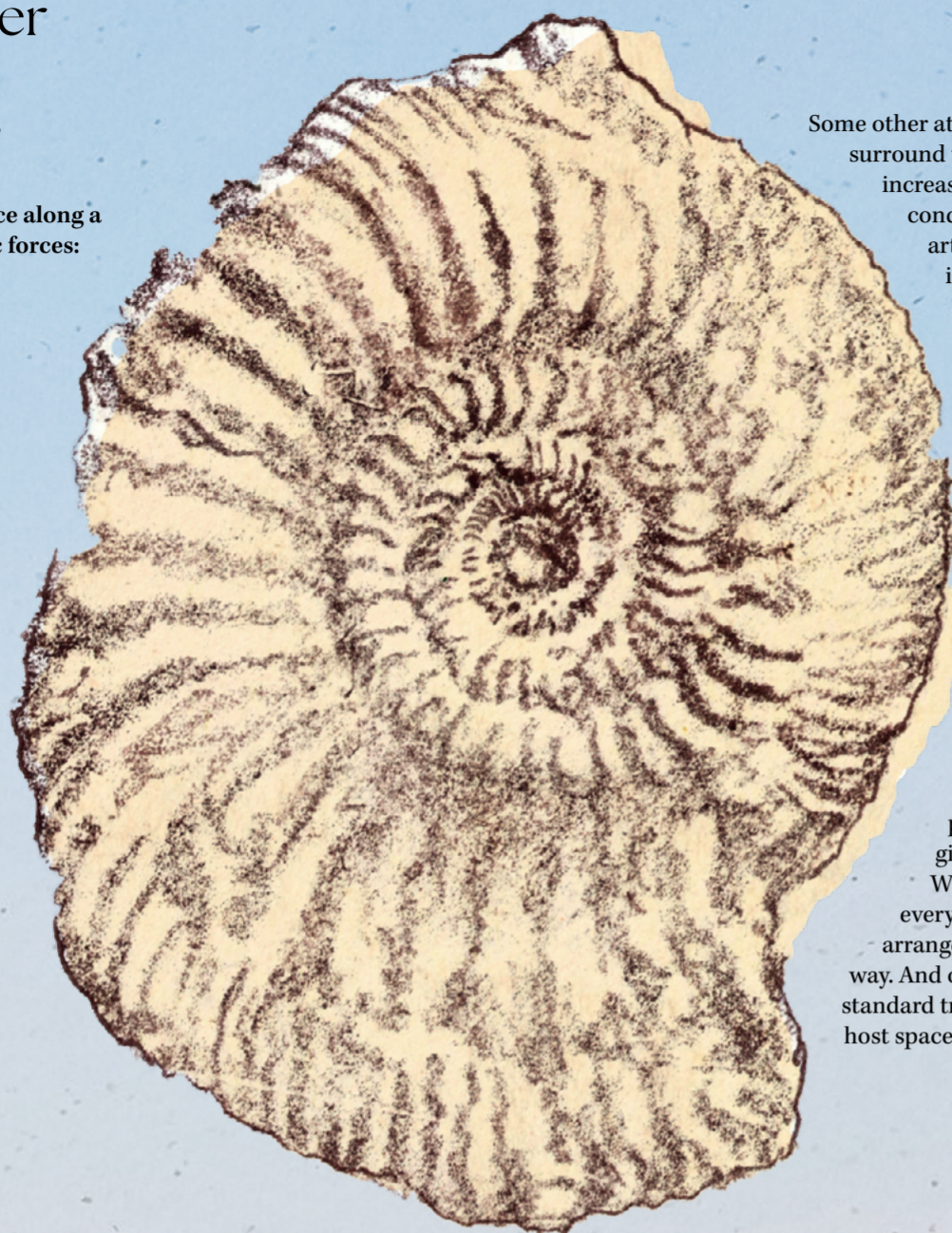


## Running Order

- Arrive, looking and reading, refreshments
- Sue and Sheila's performance along a table sharing 7 atmospheric forces:
  1. An Arrival
  2. Time, the billions of years
  3. My car my car, I'm in love with my car
  4. The mysterious air, the things that move through it, and the things it can do
  5. Human wanting, getting, spending, taking
  6. The feeling of endings
- A short break
- 7. The company of other people, their words their thoughts
- Today, we are joined by



Some other atmospheric forces surround this work too - the increasingly difficult conditions of making art right now, the increasing heat of the world, ill health and pains, things being broken. Because of this, through the making process we have asked two intertwined questions: How do we want to live? How do we want to make?

Our objects are largely from our studios, our homes, previous artworks, gifts, inheritances. Words are used by everyone, we've just arranged them in this way. And our three tables are standard trestle tables from the host space.

We've also held onto these two gems:

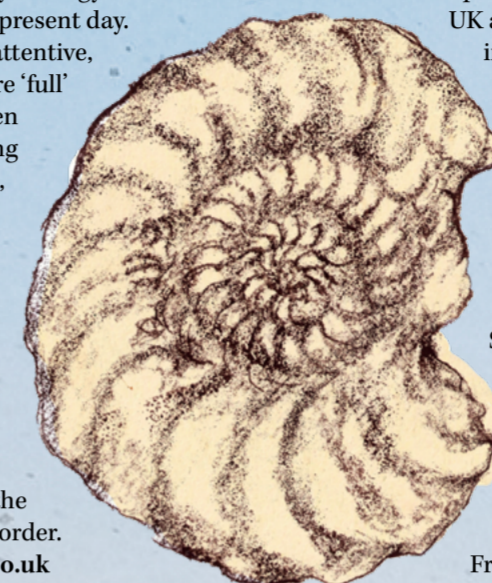
- 'We do not always create "works of art", but rather experiments; it is not our ambition to fill museums: we are gathering experience', Josef Albers, *Leap Before You Look*, 2015, Black Mountain College, Helen Molesworth, p33
- 'A series of invocations because nothing else works' Kathy Acker, *Algeria*, 1984

Back in 2022, we met at the Natural History Museum in London. As we headed to the rocks and gems area, we realised it was darker than we expected. Around the corner we found a large display covered in dust - amethysts, fluorites, calcites - everything that we thought would sparkle was powdery grey.

Lights were out, cables broken, disorder and strangeness. The display was in a time warp. We couldn't work out what was going on - what was going on? It was as if we were the only ones who could see it. Children ran past. It was an atmospheric force.

## Artist Bios

Sheila Ghelani is an artist of Indian / English mixed heritage, whose solo and collaborative performances, social art works, installations, texts and videos seek to illuminate and make visible the connections between identity, ecology, science, history and the present day. Since 1995 her attentive, detailed and care 'full' practice has been cross-pollinating ideas, materials, people and places in order to un-settle dominant narratives and make space for those that are (or that which is) in-between, on the edge, in the middle, at the border. [sheilaghelani.co.uk](mailto:sheilaghelani.co.uk) @sheilaghelani



Sue Palmer is an artist and producer working across media and form, often making art with other people arising from context and place. She began collaborating as a teenager in a girl punk band, going on to work in live performance in the UK and internationally, including as a Lecturer at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. Commissions include work for festivals and non arts organisations. Sue also works in community-building on a health and climate programme in her home town of Frome, Somerset, as the lead for Edventure's Future Shed. Sue also convenes an experimental online Art Club with artist Joff Winterhart. [inquilines.com](mailto:inquilines.com) @suepalmer\_23

We first collaborated as part of Sheila's *Rambles with Nature* project in 2014, developing *Common Salt*, an experimental work evidencing the history of forgetting. Both of us work collaboratively with institutions, places and people, and found mutual interests and artistic approaches together.

*Common Salt*, a show and tell about the intertwined stories of nature, colonialism, money and collections, toured to museums, libraries and arts venues from 2018 to 2024. The table top work used the hedge to tell a 400 year connected history from the first Enclosure Act to the Great Hedge created by the East India Company. The book *Common Salt* was published in 2020 in partnership with the Live Art Development Agency.

In 2020 we began developing *Atmospheric Forces*, a sister piece to *Common Salt* exploring the air we breathe and the ground beneath our feet, through the University of Reading's *Work in Progress* - a joint Arts Council England funded project between Reading's Department of Film, Theatre & Television and South Street Arts. *Atmospheric Forces* is the second in the *Elemental* quartet of works in development by Sheila.

Impacted by the pandemic, the research and development took place largely online. We connected with academics and researchers in Meteorology, Architecture and Design at Reading, curating an online public event in June 2020 with guest speakers Jane Trowell, Deepa Bhashti, Andrew Charlton-Perez, Harshavardhan Bhat, Marlene Creates and Ollie Douglas, responding to the question 'What does atmospheric forces mean to you?' As part of this residency at the University of Reading, we shared a 'socially distanced' work in progress in October 2021, continuing to open up the themes of climate, colonialism, memory and connectivity.

Through 2024, supported by Arts Council England funding, we committed to finishing making the work through four residencies with open studio sharings. With this work, we are interested in joining our home towns, with places of research particularly around climate and geology.

We are sharing our show and talk in 4 places in 2025:

South Street Arts, Reading, Silk Mill Studios, Frome, Customs House Exeter & in Loughborough in the autumn.

## Credits and Acknowledgments

*Atmospheric Forces* is supported by:

- Arts Council England
- UAL: Wimbledon College of Art
- Radar, Loughborough University
- South Street Arts, University of Reading Theatre, Film and Drama Department & Arts Committee
- University of Reading
- Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester
- Lancaster Arts

*Atmospheric Forces* has been made through a series of week-long residencies in four locations:

- UAL: Wimbledon College of Arts (School of Performance and CCW Research)
- Somerset Earth Science Centre
- University of Reading's Department of Film, Theatre & Television in partnership with South Street Arts
- Radar/LUArts in Loughborough

Associate Producer - Sally Rose  
Design / Print - John Hunter / RULER  
Responder / outside eye - David Williams

ual: wimbledon college of arts

Supported by Arts Committee University of Reading

RADAR Loughborough University

SOUTH ST THEATRE AND VENUE

Lancaster Arts

University of Reading

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

## Thanks to

University of Reading: Professor Andrew Charlton-Perez, Dr Laura Baker, Dr Lisa Woyrnarski, Dr Lucy Tyler  
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Miranda Laurence  
Dr Florian Roithmayr  
John Luther at South Street Arts  
UAL: Wimbledon: Professor Jane Collins, Professor Adrian Kear and the students and staff who attended the open studios

Saffie Pluck, UAL: Central St Martins  
Adel Avery, Dr Gill Odolphie and Peter Hardy at Somerset Earth Science Centre  
Dr Lucy Lopez, Lisa Pickford at Radar / LU Arts  
John Kirby at Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester  
Modern Painters, New Decorators in Loughborough  
Paula Crutchlow, Art Works Exeter and Pile Up  
Jane Mason, Carl Lavery, Rosie Spooner  
Ruth Hecht, Joff Winterhart, Lisa Hawes, Anne Hipperson, Edventure Frome, Lalit Ghelani, Gareth Evans, Stephen Clarke

how do we want to live?

how do we want to make?

atmospheric forces

A performance along a table  
A show and talk

sue palmer  
sheila ghelani



Stone  
Sea  
Air  
Soil  
Dust  
US  
Dead

### Artworks

We like to invite other voices in, to include other artists - ways out and around the themes we're exploring. We invited drawing artist Joff Winterhart to 'draw some atmospheres'. And we asked the writer Deepa Bhashti 'What does atmospheric forces mean to you?'

**Joff Winterhart** is an illustrator, writer, occasional film-maker/ animator, and drummer and songwriter in the long-standing Bristol-based band Bucky. Joff has written and drawn two graphic novels, *Days of the Bagnold Summer*, shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award in 2012, and *Driving Short Distances* (2017). His new book *Dear Historian* will be published in 2026 by Jonathan Cape.

**Deepa Bhashti** is a writer and an award-winning literary translator living and working in Kodagu, southern India. Her cultural criticism, essays, columns and journalism have been published in several Indian and international publications, including *The Paris Review*, *Himal Southasian*, *MOMUS*, *The Guardian*, *MOLD*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Caravan*, *The Hindu* and *Literary Hub*. Deepa's published translations from Kannada include *Banu Mushtaq's Heart Lamp* which has been shortlisted for the International Booker Prize 2025.



### Sound used in the work

Dr Gill Odolphie, Somerset Earth Science Centre

Professor Andrew Charlton-Perez, University of Reading

Big Thief *There is a Vine* (feat. Jeff Tweedy and Twain, 2017, by Connie Converse)

Brian Eno *By This River* (1977, *Before and After Science*)

Russ Abbott, *Atmosphere*, (1984)

The Fleetwoods *Unchained Melody (A Cappella Version)*, (1975)

Other sounds and images harvested from the internet and apps

## In the Forests of the Night

(After Kuvempu)

Up the hill that I live by, there once roamed wild jackals. Come night, they howled the call of the wild, and now, thinking of those decades ago time, I know what the jackals said to the wind were words in their language.

Faint lights from the town, far far away, lit up when the power came on intermittently.

Fireflies, up this tree, up that tree. There, here, and then there, all around, little flames that lit the forest could burn the world.

I tell you the tale of a little girl in the mountains.

The little girl is not me. The little girl was me.

The little was not-not me. She was, is me.

Not important, never mind.

This little girl grew up in a house by the tallest mountain in her little town. Stone Hill, a stone's throw and some way away, looming over her wide eyes like a comforting giant teddy, constant, steady, dependable. The wild that roamed its faces were raised by her imagination.

When a little girl, she knew a dark that was impenetrable, black the shade of the blackest black. Black was a shape that became a dog whose name, she'd learn years later, was Huliya – an unlikely tiger. Black was beloved, safe and filled with sounds that made music for her days.

Black nights like deep inky blue for her Hero pens. Black dotted with yellow-bummed little insects on trees and at times sat on her palm. Black like the jackals – gulle nari – she was friends with, the jackals that never came to the valley of her house.

But she knew they must have watched her like she knew them. Night's shapeshifters. Some days, black was the darkest of thoughts too.

One day far into the adulthood she would be part of, she'd rediscover a novel so extraordinary that it would be like being pushed back by a force. The force was like coming home, it was like language under the skin shimmering and rustling up time from long past. It was like the skin, that artificial

barrier for life and work and habit that the little girl-not so little had cloaked around herself, it moulted, and beneath grew fresh thoughts.

There in that life giving language she was inhaling, dark meant bad. Black meant ignorance and oppression and cruelty and violence. Black meant nothing nice, it meant a tiger's roar, bone chilling cold, slavery, injustice. It also said that there could still be love. Black nights versus the darkness of humans.

To her, these were the Malenadu nights. So familiar and loved and inseparable from her girlhood. So distant now and impossible to find in those old places.

Black was Blacky, the goodest boy there ever was; was silence; was fireflies in the breeze perfumed by the renje flowers. Black was crow. But mostly black was the family of greater racket-tailed drongos that housed themselves up the tree right in front of the studio, briefly every spring, putting up a show, rowdy-ing the other big birds.

Favourites. I, the paparazzi they didn't know they had.

And then came the day. With it, sun. Then came the roads and on long enough highways, a mirage at the end, shining-shining like water. She told someone that she imagined the gray snaking roads to be moulted skin smoothed out never endingly, and on which their jeep was driving and driving. Did they hurt, those snakes in her imagination?

Then came the day. With it, development. And roads and cars and lorries and houses and concrete and treelessness and more and more and more and more, and screens of all kinds. And in many ways, there lay the night of ignorance.

In the forests of the night, Hate, Hate, burning bright.

Deepa Bhashti

