

**W.H.Y. SOLO SHOW
PRESS RELEASE 2023**

FIVE YEARS GALLERY
UNIT 2B
19-15 ELTHORNE ROAD
(ENTRANCE ON BOOTHBY ROAD)
LONDON
N19 4AJ



Private View 08/06/23 18:30pm - 21:30

08/06/23 18.30-22.00 P.V. including

19:00 - 'Litany of Survival' Performance by W.H.Y. (Zara Truss Giles)

&

20:00 - 22:00 "Rain falls like tar on my skin" Performance by W.H.Y. (Zara Truss Giles), in collaboration with Jody DeSchutter (BAG), Laima Leyton (Inner Swell)

08/06/23 18.00-21.00 P.V. including 'Litany of Survival' Performance by W.H.Y. (Zara Truss-Giles)

07/06/23 - 18:00 to 20:00 - Distribution of Power Synthesiser Workshop - Please contact Zara if you would like to attend as access is limited.

10/06/23 - 13:00 - 18:00 - We Exist Screen-printing workshop / studio day - Please contact Zara if you would like more information as access is limited.

W.H.Y. is Zara Truss Giles, a cross-disciplinary artist and founder of Distribution of Power, which is a learning collective that delivers free-to-access workshops to people from marginalised backgrounds, teaching analogue audio/visual design, synthesisers, circuit-bending possibilities interrogating sustainable and socially responsible practices to diversify experimental and analogue performance, production, arts and music.

In 2020 Zara co-founded a beloved new art project alongside a dear friend who is sadly no longer with us, but whose spirit lives on within the work. Her fire meets their rage, and in this way, she continues to burn bright in the sound, words and video work. The project is called W.H.Y., which stands for Who Hurt You, or conversely, Who Heals You.

In early 2022 W.H.Y. went live with its first project 'A Litany for Survival' which takes inspiration from Audre Lorde's poem of the same title. Lorde (a self-described "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet") describes the constant fear that marginalised communities experience in a prejudiced society and the way such relentless fear can silence any dissenting voices.

Zara's friend and collaborator (whose name was Sophie) was a working-class trans woman, and Zara a working-class non-binary Black queer person. Their different yet combined lived experience has informed some of the work (W.H.Y. is an experimental project which references activists, political figures, and theorists) but beyond that, the project is rooted in queer and trans magic, informed by their shared love of folkloric storytelling, interest and belief in witchcraft.

Sophie and Zara came together through their love of magic (hers rooted in the folklore of Ireland, and theirs in their maternal Jamaican-Jewish heritage) and it is this magic that fuels this work.

W.H.Y. is an experimental archival project that references activists, political figures and theorists. W.H.Y. celebrates those that have and still prop up community and social/human rights movements from Black, queer, feminist activists, witches and folklore storytelling, psychogeography, working-class histories and popular culture.

The first body of work under W.H.Y. is called "A Litany of Survival". A live a/v performance combining experimental video using video synthesisers, archival footage, dronescapes and techno beats, with vocals steeped in horror, satire and pain. In the piece you hear Zara's writing and voice respond to Lorde's work as breaths, screams and haunted spoken word, with layers of modular synth beats, sharp hi-hats and piercing snares, exploring psycho-geographic sound design.

"Rain falls like tar on my skin" Performance by W.H.Y. (Zara Truss Giles), in collaboration with Jody DeSchutter (BAG), Laima Leyton (Inner Swell) takes inspiration from Audre Lorde's poem "New Years Day" and W.H.Y.'s "A Litany for Survival" where W.H.Y. imagines a conversation with Lorde. Lorde addresses issues of racism, sexism, and societal oppression, emphasising the need for social justice and equality. Lorde's writing ends with

"I am deliberate
and afraid
of nothing."

W.H.Y. considers the quantum position of nothing as everything and the entangled position of "nothing" (everything) from a queer/trans/woman/black/Jewish/working class & neuro-divergent/disabled perspective. Here, W.H.Y. explores the history of tattoos concerning print and ancestral symbolism and the entangled cultural connections to Indigenous ways of knowing and viewing the world, as well as a practice to document histories of family, society, and place. Jody DeSchutter (BAG) & Laima Leyton (Inner Swell) collaborate with W.H.Y.'s text from 'Litany of Survival' to create an artwork which they will tattoo on W.H.Y. live during this performance. They will think about the flux and connection by performing live on analogue video and audio synthesisers during each artist's tattoos on W.H.Y.

Jody DeSchutter (BAG) - DeSchutter is a multi-disciplinary artist, embracing diverse media which loop back on and into each other. Surface, form, and sound celebrate a lack of singular origin, they embrace paradox and recontextualise hypocrisy.

Her work collides with the familiar and the unknown, inviting the viewer down unarticulated corridors of mutating ideas. Using cues and scaffolding indebted to established modalities or traditions, DeSchutter twists, grasps, and signals towards otherness, the not-yet-known, and the unknowable.

Born in Lake Country, BC, Canada, she received a Bachelor's in Visual Arts in Victoria, BC. DeSchutter now lives and works in London, UK. Her work spans spoken word, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and tattoo.

Laima Leyton (Inner Swell) *Laima Leyton is a London-based Brazilian artist, activist, musician, mother, and performer. After many years spent working at the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, Laima dived fully into music, whilst continuing to connect with arts and education via producing exhibitions and workshops. In the past 15 years, she has DJed around the globe, produced music, and been on tour playing keys and backing vocals with Soulwax. She has remixed and collaborated with artists such as BAG and Buraka Som Sistema. In 2019 she released her conceptual album "Home", addressing issues of motherhood and domesticity. From there she became represented by Richard Saulton Gallery and started a practice with video, installations, and ready-made. Laima is also a resident artist at Gasworks Gallery. More recently, Laima became the Musical Director of GRRRL, and has been a significant supporter and collaborator of In Place of War for many years.*

Special Thanks To:

Kiera Truss | Laima Leyton | Jody DeShutter | Steve Barrett | Chris Christodoulou | Phoebe Davies | Carson McColl | Jo Alloway | Mellisa Mehrtens | Chloe Baines | James Crump | Tas Ellias | Alex Waldron | Ivor Waldron | Caroline Burnett | Luka Vilaj | Emmet Murray | Jack Savidge | Jon Cornbill | June Lam | Eaton Fund | Stephen Bass | Casper Clarke | Claire Wilson | Lauren Kemp | Cath Conway | Dom Bastyra | Heta Dobrowolski | Clayton Wright | Emma Sutton | Joe Goddard | William Reid | Patch Point | Margo Broom