

G I N K G O

MAYK

## PRESS RELEASE



Image: Paul Blakemore

‘Four artists explore the ever-changing landscape of Bristol city centre in new residency programme, *Confluence*.’

This autumn, Bristol-based producing organisation MAYK has been commissioned by public art producers Ginkgo Projects for a new residency that explores how Bristol's city centre is changing for an exciting initiative, created for The Glassworks, Redcliffe's newest student accommodation managed by Fresh.

Taking an innovative and proactive approach to cultural programming for new building developments, MAYK has invited four artists to create imaginative, personal responses to the idea of a changing city. *Confluence* offers unique and fresh perspectives to the discourse around the future of the centre of Bristol, and offers opportunities for audiences to contribute their experiences and thoughts.

Using Bristol's rich musical heritage as inspiration, MAYK will use the idea of an album to bring together four artists – Asmaa Jama, Verity Standen, Travis Alabanza and Ryan Convery-Moroney – to develop new ideas that have emerged through conversations about the changing demographic of the city.

Each of the artists selected has a close personal relationship to Bristol and represent a diverse mix of artform and background. Composer and performer Verity Standen has a long history of making work in collaboration with MAYK, most recently with polyphony which was part of Mayfest 2022. Film-maker, photographer and visual artist Ryan Convery-Moroney was an Artist in Residence with MAYK in 2021. Asmaa Jama is a writer and visual artist who recently exhibited an acclaimed new film work at Spike Island, and writer and performer Travis Alabanza has been blazing a trail in the theatre world with shows such as *Burgerz* (touring) and *Sounds of the Underground* (Royal Court).

Each artist will contribute a 'track' to the album, be that film, performance, photography or sound. Together with the artists, MAYK will share the outcomes of the residency with audiences through a weekend programme in a city centre location (TBA) between 1 – 3 December 2023.

Matthew Austin, Co-Director of MAYK said “*Confluence* is such an exciting opportunity for MAYK to do what it does best: explore bold, exciting new ideas with inspiring artists, but to do that within the wider context of a changing city. Bristol is at a turning point, where there is a real chance to seize the opportunities that regeneration offers to place culture at the heart of our future city. The ideas we're developing with artists are fizzing with potential and offer provocative and meaningful contributions to this vital conversation.”

Tom Littlewood, Director of Ginkgo Projects said “Working with our clients we continue to champion the role and value of artists' practice within major developments across the city. We are thrilled to have commissioned MAYK to lead this unique artist residency in this historic area of Redcliffe at an exciting point in its development. *Confluence* and its visionary artists will engage local communities, providing fascinating opportunities for hidden stories to emerge and for new ideas to spark.”

[MAYK](#) is one of the UK's leading live performance producing organisations, with a mission to make important, unexpected, revelatory work with visionary artists that changes our experience of the world and each other. Led by Kate Yedigiaroff and Matthew Austin, MAYK was established in 2011, MAYK curates and produces Mayfest – Bristol's international festival of theatre, and are based at St Anne's House in Brislington.

[Ginkgo Projects](#) is an independent public art and cultural producer. Creating opportunities for artists and designers to work closely with clients and communities, Ginkgo Projects build and reveal places that have a sense of narrative, distinctiveness and identity. From large to small-scale projects, the team connects people with place by taking a holistic approach to strategy development, cultural partnership building, art curation and public realm design.

*Confluence* is a production by MAYK, commissioned by Ginkgo Projects for The Glassworks with the support of Fresh.

**The four commissioned artists are:**

### **Asmaa Jama**

[Asmaa Jama](#) is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and filmmaker based in Bristol. Their work explores myth-making and story-telling amongst migrant communities – how people who have made Bristol their home tell each other stories of the places from which they arrived, and how those stories help us understand personal history and the changing demographic of the city.

Their solo exhibition *Except this time nothing returns from the ashes*, made in collaboration with Gouled Ahmed, was presented at Spike Island, Bristol in 2023. Jama's first film work *Before We Disappear* (2021), was an interactive moving image piece commissioned by BBC Arts, followed by *The Season of Burning Things* (2021), also made in collaboration with Ahmed, was commissioned by the Bristol Old Vic (2021). Their work has also been presented at the Venice Architecture Biennale in collaboration with the Goethe Institute and Theatre Neumarkt's 100 Ways to Say We Programme (2021), and was the official selection at Blackstar Film Festival, Aesthetica Film Festival and Sharjah Film Platform 5 (2022).

Jama's writing has been commissioned by Jerwood Arts, Hayward Gallery, Arnolfini and Ifa Gallery, Berlin. Their written works have been published in places like The Poetry Review, Nataal and Magma. In theatre, they have written for, and are performing in, Dorothee Munyaneza's Mailles, and have written for Radouan Mrziga's Akal. They were a Film London FLAMIN fellow (2022); are a resident artist at Somerset House Studios and a Barbican Young Poet.

### **Travis Alabanza**

[Travis Alabanza](#) is an award-winning writer, performer and theatre maker. Born in Bristol and recently relocating back to the city, Alabanza is fascinated by how the city is changing and about the things that will never change. Whether creating theatre, live art, or poetry, the performer's work shows those with marginalised identities deserve to be both seen and heard.

Alabanza's writing has appeared in the BBC, Guardian, Vice, Gal-Dem, in numerous anthologies including Black and Gay In the UK, and previously had a fortnightly column in the Metro. After being the youngest recipient of the artist in residence programme at Tate Galleries, Alabanza's debut show *Burgerz* toured internationally to venues including The Southbank Centre, London, UK; Mostra Internacional de

Teatro de São Paulo, Brazil; HAU Berlin, Germany; and the Edinburgh Fringe where the show won the Total Theatre award (2019).

In 2020 their theatre show *Overflow* debuted at the Bush Theatre to widespread acclaim and later streamed online in over 22 countries, and most recently their new show *Sound of the Underground* was staged by the Royal Court in London (2022). Their work surrounding gender, trans identity and race has been noted internationally, including talks given at the University of Oxford; Harvard University; and the University of Bristol. Noted for their distinct voice, in 2019 the Evening Standard listed them as one of “the 25 most influential under 25-year-olds”; as well as being listed in the Dazed100; The Guardian asking if ‘they are the future of theatre’, and recently listed in the Forbes “30 Under 30” List.

## **Verity Standen**

[Verity Standen](#) is an award-winning artist, composer and choir leader who works with trained and non-professional singers to create rich, beautiful soundscapes and performances. She likes to play with vocal music in ways that ask us to listen differently, gathering people together to sing, and exploring different ways that people can experience music.

Her projects take a range of forms – concerts, theatre pieces, films, installations, community events – but they always start with the voice. A lot of Standen’s work explores the relationship between music and intimacy, such as *HUG* (2015), *Symphony* (2016) and *Undersong* (2018).

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Standen spent time playing with the possibilities of intimate recorded voice. She created, with sound designer Yas Clarke, an installation built out of audio interviews with people across the country speaking about their voices, which is ‘performed’ by a room full of speakers in polyphony that premiered at Mayfest 2022. Verity Standen Projects is a collaboration between Standen and producer Tom Spencer.

## **Ryan Convery-Morony**

[Ryan](#) is a Bristol-based young portrait and documentary photographer working with still and moving imagery. The foundation of his practice stems from an inherent connection to space and urban planning. He is interested in social structure, psychogeography, spatial practices and the multifaceted use of space. Particularly, Convery-Morony is interested in understanding how we observe, feel, act and behave accordingly to space due to our individual or collective knowledge, intentions and interests.

He was first drawn to photography through riding BMX where he also developed an appreciation of concrete, urban space and architecture. He went on to study photography at Portsmouth and has since relocated to Bristol, and was Artist in Residence with MAYK in 2021-22.

**Notes to editors:**

At the moment, we are just sharing information about the artists selected as collaborators on the project, as well as the dates for the sharing event in December. In November, once we are closer to the sharing, another press release will be sent out with all relevant details, so do keep your eyes peeled for more from MAYK.

Please find a link to the G Drive folder containing artist's images, credits and alt text [here](#).

Any further questions about *Confluence*, email [matthew@mayk.org.uk](mailto:matthew@mayk.org.uk)