



Left to right: Christina Pribichevich Zoric, S. D. Curtis, Jane Duran, Kristina Kuneva, Milton Rahman, Ziba Karbassi, Stephen Watts, Cristina Viti, Souheila Haïmiche, Chris Beckett, Amarjit Chandan, Farah Naz, Vanni Bianconi, Rupak Shrestha and Michael Hutt.

Thursday 22 July: 18:00 – 19:30

WORD/IMAGE/ACTION Part 1

@ Shoreditch Library, N1 6LP

Livestreamed on PEER's YouTube channel

Join us for a panel discussion with publisher Clive Boutle, poet Beatriz Ezkieta, writer and art critic Gabriel Coxhead and poet and translator Stephen Watts. Taking as its starting point Susan Hiller's film *The Last Silent Movie* (2007) currently showing at PEER the panel will explore ideas around endangered and suppressed languages. Their discussion will touch upon a range of issues including bilingualism, language retention and revitalisation, the importance of literature and cultural production, translation and how to improve awareness of language diversity in Europe and in the wider international context.

Wednesday 28 July: 16:30 – 18:00

Calligraphiti workshop with Linett Kamala

@ Shoreditch Library, N1 6LP

Booking essential, please email:

local@peeruk.org

Artist, educator and carnivalist Linett Kamala will run a practical workshop where participants create their own calligraphiti style wall hanging reflective of their cultural heritage. As part of her on-going *Recipe for a Happy Mind* project,

we will take inspiration from the text based traditional Caribbean kitchen scroll, which is filled with words of wisdom and love. Suitable for all ages and no previous art experience is required. The artist is keen to make their workshop fully accessible, so please inform us in advance if you have any particular needs or queries.

Thursday 5 August: 18:00 – 19:30

WORD/IMAGE/ACTION Part 2

@ Online via Zoom. Register in advance at

peeruk.org/swirl-of-words

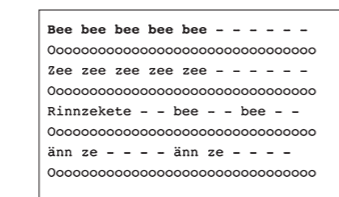
With half of the world's languages estimated to fall silent by the end of the century, what role can art play in activating awareness of this? Join us for a discussion with artists and writers whose work aims to subvert political control, and whose creativity connects audiences with their language cultures. Joining the discussion will be: poet and writer Chris McCabe; linguist, author and educator Mandana Seyfeddinipur; artist and Welsh language activist Ivor Davies and artist Jez Dolan who was instrumental in the Polari translation of the King James Bible, which features in the *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds* exhibition.



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- 1 Susan Hiller, *The Last Silent Movie*, 2007–8, Film still, video projection, 20 mins, courtesy The Estate of Susan Hiller.
- 2 Andro Semeiko, *Vah* (ვაჰ), 2021, Oil on canvas, 170 x 110 cm.
- 3 Effie Paleologou, *Nest #1*, 2021, Graphite wall drawing, 240 x 270 cm.
- 4 Pete Smith, *National Geographic Yellow Poem 16*, 2017, Collage, 25.4 x 18 cm.
- 5 Danh Võ, 2.2.1861, 2009–, Ink on paper, one of a series of unique handwritten texts, 297 x 210 mm.
- 6 Stephen Watts, *drawn poem*, c. 2000, Graphite on paper, 210 x 148.5 mm.
- 7 Fabian Peake, *The Only Thing*, 2018–19, Oil on canvas, 175 x 129 cm.
- 8 Madiha Aijaz, *These Silences Are All The Words*, 2017–2018, Film still, HD video, 15 mins. Courtesy estate of the artist.



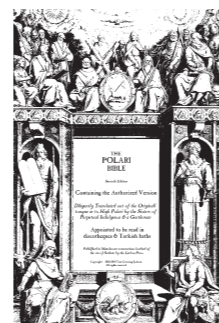
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- 9 Zineb Sedira, *Mother Tongue*, 2002, Three synchronised videos, 4 mins 37 secs each. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris.
- 10 Juan Cruz, *Juan Cruz is translating Don Quijote (again)*, 2005, PEER performance view.
- 11 John Smith, *Steve Hates Fish*, 2015, Film still, HD video, 5 mins.
- 12 Sally O'Reilly, *How to Rewild Your Writing*, 2020, Film still, video, 8 mins 30 secs.
- 13 Kurt Schwitters, *Ursonate*, 1932/2017, Video with vintage 1958 audio recording, 41 mins 32 seconds
- 14 Paul Davies, *'Welsh Not', Wrexham*, 1977, Photographer unknown. Courtesy estate of the artist.
- 15 The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, *The Polari Bible* Frontispiece, Seventh edition, copyright 2003–14 Tim Greening-Jackson.

Thursday 12 August: 18:00 – 19:30
African poetry & Mother Tongues with Victoria Adukwei Bulley

@ Shoreditch Library, N1 6LP. Register in advance at peeruk.org/swirl-of-words

Join us for a screening of Victoria Adukwei Bulley's *Mother Tongues*, a series of four films celebrating intergenerational poetry, translation and the work of contemporary black poets. The screenings will be interspersed with Q&A sessions with Victoria and a series of readings by African poets of their own work and of poems in the *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds* poetry book in Igbo, Shona, Gha and Yoruba. Chaired by poet, playwright and performer, Inua Ellams.

Saturday 14 August: 16:30 – 18:00

Closing Celebration

@ PEER, N1 6QL. No booking required

Join us to mark and celebrate the end of our *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds* project. For the occasion, Stephen Watts will read a selection of his poems, including passages

from his book-length prose text, *Republic Of Dogs/Republic Of Birds*, first published by Test Centre in 2016, and recently republished by prototype. Huw Wahl's artists' essay film *The Republics*, 2020 (black and white, 16mm, 83"), will be available to view on PEER's website from 2 to 14 August. The exhibition will be open at both PEER and Shoreditch Library and refreshments will be available.



Still from Victoria Adukwei Bulley – *Mother Tongues*, 2017

Opening Times

PEER (No booking required)
97–99 Hoxton Street, London N1 6QL
Wed – Sat, 12:00–18:00

Shoreditch Library (No booking required)
80 Hoxton Street, London N1 6LP
Tue – Thur, 10:00 – 20:00, Fri: 10:00 – 18:00 & Sat: 10:00 – 17:00

For more information visit

www.peeruk.org/swirl-of-words or call 020 7739 8080

@peergallery @PEER_UK @hackneylibs #swirlofwords



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ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds is supported by Hackney Council's Shoreditch and Hoxton Arts Fund, created from a levy on developers to support arts and culture programmes that bring different communities together.

Supported by
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PEER's exhibition programme is supported by **Paul and Louise Cooke Endowment** and **PEER Patrons**

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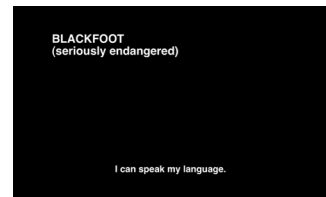
Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds

Exhibition / Programme of Events / Poetry Publication
4 June – 14 August 2021



Madiha Aijaz, *These Silences Are All The Words*, 2017–2018, Film still, HD video, 15 mins. Courtesy estate of the artist.

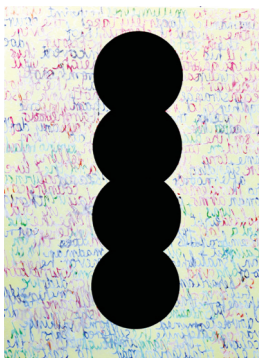
Exhibition and Events Guide – July/August 2021



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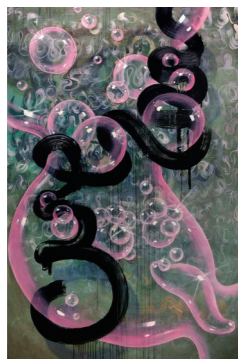
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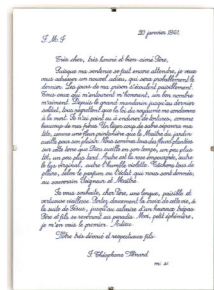
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Over the summer, PEER and Shoreditch Library present *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds*, an exhibition and a programme of live and online events, which arc across and intersect visual arts with the spoken and printed word through the lens of poetry. Alongside this, PEER has worked with poet, translator, and language activist Stephen Watts to produce a book of 116 poems from 94 languages, 3,000 copies of which will be distributed for free to Hackney Library users.

This ambitious project considers the relationship – both expansively, yet intimately – between language and cultural identity. Some



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of the ways that this is explored are through hidden mother tongues within communities; notions of endangered or suppressed languages; English as a second or other language; meaning-slippage and humour in sound or non-verbal communication; and some artistic approaches to the fluidity between word and image.

At the heart of the exhibition are three film installations by Madiha Aijaz, Susan Hiller and Zineb Sedira. In addition, the exhibition will present work by a range of artists many of whom have past connections with PEER as previous exhibitors or as part of the wider artistic community.

At PEER, **Susan Hiller's** film *The Last Silent Movie* (2007) gathers together recordings of voices of the last speakers of extinct or endangered languages. Subtitles translate their utterances while the screen remains black. Neither silent nor a movie in the conventional sense, this work provides the framework for the audience to reflect on the speakers and the complex social, ideological, political or geographical conditions that may have prompted the loss of their language.

In two paintings by London-based Georgian artist **Andro Semeiko**, gestural calligraphic marks directly reference two of his country's acclaimed poets. In *Vah* (2021), the epic 19th Century poetry of Vazha Pshavel – who was active in the National-Liberation movement of Georgia – is celebrated. Galaktion Tabidze (a distant relative of Semeiko) survived torture during Stalin's Great Purge, but suffered great mental illness and took his own life. His work has profoundly influenced subsequent generations of Georgian poets. In *Dreaming Eagles* (2021), lines from the eponymous poem mingle with trompe l'oeil-painted bullet holes.

Effie Paleologou is primarily known for her lens-based work. For PEER she has created a delicate wall drawing from a photograph of precisely arranged twigs and sticks from an abandoned blackbird's nest. Through this process of deconstruction and re-composition, Paleologou creates what appears to sit somewhere between a cardiogram and a kind of arcane avian language.

Pete Smith's *National Geographic Yellow Poems* (at both PEER and the Library) are composed of extracted words and phrases from this iconic magazine of world exploration. These collaged poems appropriate the words of others to create intimate, poignant, and at times funny glimpses into the artist's own world. The bright, golden background creates

a glowing context for these painstakingly constructed gems to reside.

In 2.2.1861 (2009–), **Danh Võ** presents a handwritten letter that has been carefully copied by his father, Phung Võ. The original was the last communication from the French Catholic Missionary, Théophane Vénard before he was decapitated in Vietnam. As with much of Võ's work, there is rich layering of meaning in an apparently simple object to do with biography, authorship, lineage, language, and cultural appropriation.

Integral to poet and translator, **Stephen Watts' wider** artistic practice are his 'drawn poems'. He sees this form of mark-making, whether it be in notebooks as presented here, or as lines in the sand to be soon erased by the tide, as part of the flow and continuity of verbal and non verbal communication.

Both at PEER and at the Library, **Fabian Peake** also has a parallel practice as both a visual artist and a poet. He acknowledges a conceptual blending of these two elements of his work, where word and image is firmly linked, not in the sense of concrete poetry, but more about the unknowability of language and image. The semi-observed reversed script in his painting *The Only Thing* (2019), is meant to be seen but not necessarily read – recognised but not necessarily understood. The black shape hovering on the picture plane in front is an object in space but also a void.

At the Library **Madiha Aijaz's** film *These Silences Are All The Words* (2018) explores the public libraries of Karachi, Pakistan, against the backdrop of the city's changing cultural and linguistic landscape. The artist recorded conversations with both librarians and the library's users as they reflect on the shift of language from Urdu and its poetic and literary history to the ambition and

individualism associated with English. This exquisitely paced and beautiful work offers a perspective on a country sharply divided along linguistic lines.

Also at the Library is **Zineb Sedira's** film *Mother Tongue* (2002), a video triptych in which the artist, her mother and her daughter try to exchange childhood memories in their native languages: French, Arabic and English. The work underscores the difficulty of maintaining a shared heritage across national and linguistic divides and acknowledges the complexity of identity.

Juan Cruz presents an audio work created during a series of performances at PEER in 2005 when over six weeks he presented a live simultaneous translation of *Don Quijote*. The halting and faltering delivery and the absurd enormity of the task make the reading of the book (an edition given to him by his grandmother) resonate in many ways with the delusional adventures of both its protagonist and its performer.

John Smith's acclaimed films are often rooted in the everyday. He interrogates the ordinary with a heightened sense of curiosity as if seeing the thing for the first time, which through new (mis)interpretations often lends humour to his work. In *White Hole* (2014), Smith narrates an episode from a trip to Poland as it was emerging from Perestroika while *Steve Hates Fish* (2015), uses a translation app on his phone to decipher shop signs for French speakers as he wanders up and down Essex Road in Islington.

In the first of two video works by **Sally O'Reilly**, *All the Knowledge in Age UK* (2016), the narrator takes us on the imagined journey of a newly coined word as it is processed through various stages of assessment in order to officially enter the language. In *How to*

Rewild your Writing (2020), O'Reilly takes her cue from instructional videos to provide tips on how to reinvigorate your prose skills.

Another video work is the recitation of **Kurt Schwitters' Dada** sound poem, *Ursonate* (1932), performed by the artist's son, Ernst. The title, which can be translated as Primeval Sonata is a striking example of the artist's belief that poetry is simply letters, syllables, words, and sentences. Like abstraction in the visual arts, language is also able to exist on the very edge understanding.

The freedom to express ourselves through language is a human right. The subject of suppression of language is explored in the image of artist **Paul Davies** holding up a carved railway sleeper with the letters WN, which stand for Welsh Not. This photograph captures his un-programmed performance at the 1977 Wrexham Eisteddfod and refers to the sign that children were forced to wear around their necks if caught speaking Welsh in school.

Polari is a form of English slang, and a secret language used by people who worked in fish markets, theatres, fairgrounds, circuses, the merchant navy, and also gay subculture groups when homosexuality was a crime. **The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence's** *Polari Bible* (2015), which can be browsed by visitors, is a statement about both religious and sexual freedom through language.

July/August 2021 Programme

Events are open to all and free to attend

Monday 5 July: 19:00 – 20:30
European Poetry Festival 2021
in partnership with PEER
@ Hoxton Trust Garden, N1 6SH

A collaborative poetry reading bringing together European and London-based poets to continue our celebration of Hackney's multilingualism and world poetries. Each pair of poets will share new works of reading and performance. Featuring: Stephen Watts; Karenjit Sandhu & SJ Fowler; Kristina Kuneva & Susie Campbell; Vanni Bianconi & Fabian Peake (whose work also features in the *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds* exhibition); and Clover Peake & Vik Shirley.

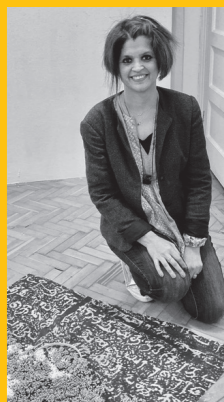
Friday 9 July: 19:30 – 22:00
Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds
at Hundred Years Gallery
@ Hundred Years Gallery, E2 8JD

Livestreamed on PEER's YouTube channel
An evening of music and poetry inspired by the richness and variety of Stephen Watts' poetry collection. During the evening, readings will be interspersed with improvisations by flautist Mikey Kirkpatrick together with Iraqi-Kurdish singer Nawroz Oramari. Two Hackney based poets, Noel Grassy Macken and Abdul Azeez Nasser will read their work. The evening will be set against the backdrop of a text and sound installation by Mary Lemley, *My Life in Hackney – Part Two*.

Saturday 10 July: 11:00 – 13:00
Punch needle embroidery workshop
with Divya Sharma
@ PEER, N1 6QL

Led by artist Divya Sharma and in keeping with the theme of the *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds* exhibition, this workshop will teach

you not only the basics in using this creative technique but also help you see the links between language and working with fabric and threads. Come prepared with a word or phrase in your language of choice and see your artwork come alive! Punch needle kits will be provided.



Divya Sharma

Tuesday 13 July: 18:00 – 20:00
Lucifer Over London book launch
@ PEER, N1 6QL

Join us for an evening of readings to celebrate the launch of *Lucifer Over London* a new anthology of narrative essays written by international prize-winning authors. The book provides a version of London as seen by the immigrants of recent migrations, of deportations to come and from those who create London even as they contradict it.



Left to right: Vanni Bianconi, Saleh Addonia, Xiaolu Guo, Viola di Grado, Zinoviy Zinik and Chloe Aridjis

The following will read extracts from their essays: Vanni Bianconi, Saleh Addonia, Zinoviy Zinik, Chloe Aridjis, Xiaolu Guo and Viola di Grado.