

EXHIBITION GUIDE

UMA BREAKDOWN

20 OCT 2023 - 28 JAN 2024



“THERE IS NO LIMIT
TO THE NUMBER OF
REPARATIVE ATTEMPTS
WE CAN MAKE AT
RETELLING THE
STORY, AT REMAKING
OURSELVES.”

UMA BREAKDOWN
EARTH A.D. 2
20 Oct 2023 - 28 Jan 2024

GALLERY OPENING TIMES
Tue - Sun, 11:00 - 18:00
Free entry

Commissioned by Wysing Arts Centre, FACT and QUAD.



UMA BREAKDOWN EARTH A.D. 2 (2023)

Fiction allows us to explore new understandings of who we might be and how we might live. *Earth A.D. 2* is an expansive body of work by artist Uma Breakdown, spanning immersive installation, writing and video games, and draws on their research into ongoing collective repair. The work explores the structures and history of Gothic narratives, and their creative relationships to time, space, identity and social relations. At the same time it's a science fiction story about trans* solidarity and care across time and space, which is repeatedly told, distorted, translated, lost, and reinvented.

In the gallery, *Earth A.D. 2* can be thought of as a video game 'save room', where players can rest, or hold useful items collected along the way - a quiet, dark storage area of gifts, kept in a high bell tower. The space contains collections of sculptures carefully piled up: things that look like maps, parts of video games, and projections that drift across the space.

Through its explorations of extreme experiences, from fear, horror, and violence, to passion, love, and tenderness, the Gothic genre offers us new understandings of care and intimacy through the intensity of these emotions. A frequent motif is the coffin, viewed as a tool for resurrection or repair, rather than an endpoint. Within *Earth A.D. 2*, we encounter coffin-like structures, and a Dreadnought - a cyborg from the Warhammer game universe, that allows a pilot to live within it. Through this, Uma explores the possibilities of how these narrative devices can keep a person alive indefinitely: sleeping, awoken



Uma Breakdown, *Earth A.D.* (2022). Courtesy the artist and Wysing Arts Centre.

occasionally to share old wisdom or absorb new knowledge, and existing across time on a scale unimaginable to our perception of a human lifespan. With this altered relationship to time and reality, this being becomes an oracle, acting as an anchor to a different sort of community - one committed to building on the best parts of each previous generation, rather than doomed to repeat their worst mistakes.

Uma links this idea with the continuous mutual support and care that has to exist within the trans* community. They refer to this as radical solidarity, an act of looking out for someone without having to know who they are. Elements of our histories can be destroyed, but collective respect and care mean that the generational knowledge and histories will endure.

Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to a range of identities within the gender identity spectrum.

LOW ESTATE (2023)

Online, Uma presents *Low Estate*, an adventure game about the aftermath of 'The Event' - a desperate last act that ended a violent siege, wreaking havoc in the process of wiping out invaders. Playing as the last known survivor - saved from the fallout by working in the depths of a library archive - the aim is to journey to where the Dreadnought is sleeping, and update its databases with the community's history since its last awakening 1500 years previously.

Play the game at fact.co.uk/low-estate

ABOUT UMA BREAKDOWN

Uma Breakdown is a disabled artist, writer, and award winning game designer interested in animals, horror, and queer feminist literature.

Everything they make is about some combination of love, grief, hallucination, and an excess of joy. With Belladonna Paloma they make video games about the divine and occult providence of transfemme existence.

Recent projects include *The Speculative Dismemberment of Agent Leon Kennedy* for Market Gallery (Glasgow, 2022), *Hinterlands* at Baltic (Gateshead 2022), *The Joy of Destruction for Backlit* (Nottingham, 2023), *Elan Vitale* for Container Magazine (Bristol, 2023). They are currently finishing *The Well of Sickness Shimmering*, a video game about holy wells made with Bella Paloma due to launch at the 2023 Overkill festival in the Netherlands.



Uma Breakdown, *Earth A.D.* (2022). Courtesy the artist and Wysing Arts Centre.

WHAT'S ON

Our winter season presents two major solo shows by Jenkin van Zyl and Uma Breakdown. Beyond the exhibitions, our events will delve into the research, references and inspiration behind the artworks, with a series of talks, performances, and film screenings.

EXHIBITION TOUR: JENKIN VAN ZYL

Sat 21 Oct / 12:00 - 13:00 / Foyer
Free, booking required, suitable for all
Join us for a tour of Jenkin van Zyl's *Surrender* (2023), led by the artist and a group of young people.
Jenkin and our Learning team have worked with the group to design a tour that shares their unique perspective on the exhibition.

BIRTHDAY PARTY AND EXHIBITION OPENING

Sat 21 Oct / 17:00 - 20:00 / Foyer, Galleries 1 and 2
Free, drop in, suitable for all
Join us for the launch of our winter exhibitions!
There will be complimentary drinks, food available, and to keep the energy high, our DJs will be spinning tunes throughout the evening.

FILM: LAST DANCE

Sat 21 Oct / 17:00 - 20:00 / Arthouse Square
Free, drop in, suitable for all
For one night only, take a seat inside a limousine parked outside FACT to discover a new short film that expands Jenkin van Zyl's psychotropic world.

AFTER PARTY

Sat 21 Oct / 20:00 - 04:00 / District
Free, booking required, suitable for 18+
After our exhibitions launch, head over to District to bring our 20th anniversary celebrations to a memorable close.
To ensure this event is truly unforgettable, we're partnering with local collectives, performers, DJs, and producers to amplify the sound of the city. And that's not all – get ready for a special headline set by our exhibiting artist, Jenkin van Zyl.

MASTERCLASS: JENKIN VAN ZYL

Wed 22 Nov / 14:30 or 18:30 / Studio/Lab
£5-7.50, suitable for 18+
In an intimate masterclass, Jenkin shares insights into the research, world-building and politics that inform his practice. Join us for the afternoon or the evening.

PERFORMANCE: ENCORE

Thu 23 Nov / 19:00 - 21:00 / Foyer, Gallery 1, The Box
Free, booking required, suitable for 16+
Cast members of Jenkin van Zyl's *Surrender* invite you to an evening of durational performances that mirror the

film's wider themes. Witness athletic gogo dancing, a Wicked Witch of the West performance, and dance with live percussion.

EXHIBITION TOUR: JENKIN VAN ZYL AND UMA BREAKDOWN

Sat 25 Nov / 12:00 / Foyer
Free, booking required, suitable for all
Join us to learn more about Jenkin van Zyl's immersive installation *Surrender* and Uma Breakdown's exhibition spanning installation, writing and video games, *Earth A.D. 2*, led by our Senior Producer Charlotte Horn.

ONLINE DISCUSSION: UMA BREAKDOWN WITH JOSEPH BUCKLEY, DR KAREN DI FRANCO AND DR ALICE REKAB

Thu 18 Jan / 19:00 / Online
Free, booking required, suitable for all
Exhibiting artist Uma Breakdown will be joined by Joseph Buckley, Dr Karen Di Franco and Dr Alice Rekab to discuss the concept of 'relics'. Often defined as an object invested with historical significance or ideology, what happens to our understanding of them when their stories are incomplete or unstable?

FAMILIES: DO SOMETHING SATURDAYS

Selected Saturdays / 12:00 - 15:00 / Studio/Lab
Free, drop-in, suitable for ages 6-12
Inspired by our current exhibitions, our family-friendly workshops investigate the genres of horror and fantasy, and ask you to consider what we need to create spaces of care and support.
This season, workshops will be held in a brand new space made especially for artists (of all ages!) to make and play.
Join us in Studio/Lab on the third floor of FACT on Saturdays 4 Nov, 26 Nov and 9 Dec.

ARTIST SELECTS FILM SEASON

Multiple dates / 18:30 / The Box
Tickets £6-10, booking required
This season, we asked exhibiting artists Jenkin van Zyl and Uma Breakdown to guest curate a film club that unpacks some of the pop-culture references found in their installations.
Kicking off in November, Uma selects John Carpenter's post-apocalyptic cult action sequel *Escape From L.A.* and *Viy*, a must-see for fans of folk-horror and dark fairytales.
Jenkin presents Sydney Pollock's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, a psychological drama about the gruelling dance marathons of the Great Depression and Gasper Noé's psychedelic cinematic dance party, *Climax*.

29 Nov / *Escape From L.A.* (1996)
6 Dec / *Viy* (1967)
17 Jan / *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1969)
24 Jan / *Climax* (2018)

BOOK TICKETS



For more information and bookings, visit fact.co.uk/whats-on or speak to a member of our team.

Discover more events online and in our season guide.