

PRESS RELEASE- 20 April 2015

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[www.jerwoodvisualarts.org](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org)

Jerwood Visual Arts presents a new commission by Alice May Williams.



Alice May Williams, *An Unreliable Witness*, 2015. Courtesy the artist.

***Alice May Williams: An Unreliable Witness***

**11 May – 2 September 2015, Project Space, Café 171, Jerwood Space, London, SE1 0LN**

*An Unreliable Witness* is the first stage in an on-going project exploring alternative and undocumented oral histories belonging to women. This initial phase, a new installation comprising audio and visual works, brings together components of research for a new film. The first arrangement of this film will be completed by Williams' during the duration of the exhibition and screened at Jerwood Space on Friday 26 June.

Stemming from an interest in how individual biographies are constructed, *An Unreliable Witness* attempts to illuminate the overlooked and marginalised narratives of women. The project takes its starting point from a found audio recording of Jessie Ayers, Williams' great-great grandmother who lived in South London from 1865 to 1959. This was originally an attempt by a young man to create an accurate audio document of her life, but, upon being interviewed, Jessie avoids tying the specifics of her life to the historical events that she is questioned on. Instead she weaves a meandering counter history of her own, one full of tangents, exclamations and withholding knowing chuckles. She is a slippery subject who speaks for herself, refusing to allow the male interviewer to tell her personal story.

This original recording has been interwoven with general conversations between the artist, her mother, and grandmother, and is accompanied by a printed script which includes selected transcripts in addition to quotes from Virginia Woolf, whose writings on biography and identity have been central to the development of the project. Williams, by collectively presenting these snippets of recounted personal histories of past and present London, attempts to question how we can accurately represent a full life lived, and the decisions that govern who is a legitimate subject for biographical treatment. A wall drawing, which takes the form of a semi-fictional family tree, connects Williams' female family members to various figures from her research, and printed fabric hangings and Perspex laser cut drawings all act as visual accompaniments to, and large scale illustrations of, the audio and print narrative.

In a wide reaching practice spanning video, drawing, text, music and installation, Alice May Williams' work explores what it means to be part of a social group. Considering both individual and collective identity and identification, Williams questions who 'we' and 'us' might be, through testing the boundaries of, and finding the gaps and overlaps between, gestures, expressive codes, territories and languages.

Alice May Williams has also been announced as one of the winners of the Jerwood/FVU Awards 2016: 'Borrowed Time'.

#### Listings Info

Artist: Alice May Williams  
Title: *An Unreliable Witness*  
Dates: 11 May – 2 September 2015  
Address: Project Space, Café 171, Jerwood Space, SE1 0LN  
Opening Times: Mon - Fri 9am – 5pm, Sat 10am – 2pm  
Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays  
Admission: Free  
Nearest tube: Southwark, London Bridge or Borough

Laser engraving and CNC milling provided by Machines Room, London.  
Fabric printing from FabPad, University of East London.

For further information please contact Jerwood Visual Arts: 020 7654 0179 or [jva@jerwoodspace.co.uk](mailto:jva@jerwoodspace.co.uk) or visit: [www.jerwoodvisualarts.org/projectspace](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org/projectspace)

#### Notes to Editors

**Alice May Williams** graduated from the MFA Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, 2014, and BA (Hons) Fine Art Painting at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, 2007. She is a winner of the Jerwood/FVU Awards 2016. For more information please visit [JerwoodFVUawards.com](http://JerwoodFVUawards.com). Selected solo and group exhibitions include: *PLU 123*, TAP, Southend, 2014; *Sub Cell*, Brighton, 2014; *Anxiety Festival* (with More Utopia!), Bermondsey Project Space, London, 2014; *CYCLICUS*, Bargate Monument Gallery, Southampton, 2009. *Who is the We that We Become* is included in Goldsmiths Special Collections, London. For more information please visit [www.alicemaywilliams.com](http://www.alicemaywilliams.com)

**Project Space** is part of the Jerwood Visual Arts programme and provides exhibition and development opportunities to emerging artists; offering a small grant to develop new experimental work, which is then exhibited within the unique environment of Café 171 at Jerwood Space, adjacent to the main gallery spaces. Since 2004 it has presented new work from artists including Paul Schneider, Rhys Coren, Anna Bunting-Branch, Emma Charles, Alec Kronacker, Meg Mosley, Sara Nunes Fernandes, Johann Arens, Matthew Johnstone, Katie Schwab and Jamie George, Ben Senior, Ralph Dorey, Mindy Lee, Patrick Coyle, Gemma Anderson, Annabel Tilley, Alice Browne, and Holly Antrum. For more information please visit: [www.jerwoodvisualarts.org/projectspace](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org/projectspace)

**Jerwood Visual Arts** is a year-round contemporary gallery programme of awards, exhibitions and events at Jerwood Space, and on tour nationally. Jerwood Visual Arts supports and showcases the work of talented emerging artists, makers and curators. It also aims to make connections and provoke conversations within and across disciplines. The programme is a major initiative of the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. For more information on please visit: [www.jerwoodvisualarts.org](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org)

**Jerwood Charitable Foundation** is dedicated to imaginative and responsible revenue funding of the arts, supporting artists to develop and grow at important stages in their careers. It works with artists across art forms, from dance and theatre to literature, music and the visual arts. For more information on the Jerwood Charitable Foundation please visit: [www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org](http://www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org)