

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 25 MAY 00:01**

## **First details of new commissions for Jerwood/Photoworks Awards by Heather Agyepong and Joanne Coates revealed**

Jerwood Arts and Photoworks are delighted to share the first details of two major forthcoming commissions by Heather Agyepong and Joanne Coates, the awardees of the latest edition of the Jerwood/Photoworks Awards.

The works will be unveiled to the public on 23 September 2022, with a Press Breakfast Preview: 9am - 10.30am and Evening Preview: 4.30pm - 8.30pm.

Heather Agyepong is working on a commission that is deeply personal and universal at the same time. *ego death* is a project about self-discovery, imperfection, compassion, and radical acceptance. Meanwhile, Joanne Coates is building a body of work - *The Lie of the Land* - addressing the erasure of contemporary working-class histories and culture in the countryside, particularly interrogating notions of rurality and women, and the perceived stigma associated with them.



Joanne Coates, from *The Lie of the Land*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

Now in their fourth edition, the Jerwood/Photoworks Awards are a major commissioning opportunity supporting early-career artists working with photography to make ambitious new work and significantly develop their practice at a pivotal moment in their career.

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For the Jerwood/Photoworks Awards, London-based **Heather Agyepong is developing *ego death***, a project inspired by psychiatrist Carl Jung's concept of 'The Shadow'. According to Jung, the shadow is composed of aspects of one's personality deemed inappropriate, that have been shamed and repressed, generally during childhood and adolescence, by family, education, social norms and other external factors. Jung argues that these authentic attributes evolve into specific behavioural patterns in adulthood that attempt to overcompensate for the undesirable qualities, making one more socially integrated and accepted. Agyepong has recently been working to discover and explore her own shadow; confronting, and making peace with it through this body of work.



Heather Agyepong, from *ego death*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist

Exploring techniques including free writing/painting, observation, and self reflection, Agyepong has identified six characters that she confronts in the *ego death* series. These form twelve self-portraits using double-exposure to create an arresting new visual language where her shadow characters are revealed. Also inspired by American playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney's play *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*, Agyepong instinctively chooses to use blue hues as

the colour palette for her self-portraits, symbolising the state of vulnerability and deep truth telling she put herself through in creating *ego death*.



Heather Agyepong, from *ego death*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist

**Yorkshire-based photographer Joanne Coates is creating *The Lie of the Land***, a body of work that explores the social history of the land and narrates a story of gender and class that has long been forgotten - or simply never told - in relation to the countryside of the North East. Coates works at the intersection of socially-engaged practice and traditional British documentary photography, fusing them together in a creative visual language that combines landscape, portraits, still image, and non-photographic elements such as sound. For this commission, Coates has collaborated with twelve women who identify as working class, living and working in rural or agricultural settings, to develop a series of portraits that represent their individual lived experience. Using 'the wander' or stroll as a meditative tool and a notebook as the holder of daily reflections, they also reflect on the changes happening in the rural areas, particularly with the new arrivals of wealthy people, and how this invisibilises the work of those in charge of sustaining life in the rural areas, creating and disseminating a distorted version of what life in the countryside really is.

The characters in *The Lie of the Land* are real people, yet they have been excluded from a mainstream portrayal of the countryside. Through this commission Coates navigates her own personal stories whilst working with communities that she is a part of in the rural Northeast of England - seeing the work as an exploration of unresolved questions, and a process of connections.



Joanne Coates, from *The Lie of the Land*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.





Joanne Coates, from *The Lie of the Land*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

The two artists were chosen by a panel, made up of **Christine Eyene** (Lecturer in Contemporary Art at Liverpool John Moores University and Research Curator at Tate Liverpool), **Joy Gregory** (artist), **Sunil Gupta** (photographer), **Julia Bunnemann** (Curator, Photoworks) and **Harriet Cooper** (Head of Visual Arts, Jerwood Arts). During selection, the panel were unanimously impressed by both artists' powerful proposals which address important current issues while representing a pivotal opportunity for experimentation and development for both artists' own photographic practice. Applicants were long listed prior to the final panel meeting by staff from Photoworks and Jerwood Arts, along with members of ReFramed, a Midlands-based network for Black, Asian and other people of colour interested in producing photographic visual art. Both artists received a £15,000 award (comprising £10,000 fee and £5,000 production budget) with a support package from Photoworks and Jerwood Arts to create new work over a 12-month period.

Previous recipients of the Jerwood/Photoworks Award include: **Silvia Rosi**, **Theo Simpson**, **Alejandra Carles-Tolra**, **Sam Laughlin**, **Lua Ribeira**, **Matthew Finn**, **Joanna Piotrowska** and **Tereza Zelenkova**.

More details of the exhibition will be announced in **summer 2022** and further images will also then be shared.

The Jerwood/Photoworks Awards are a collaboration between [Jerwood Arts](#) and [Photoworks](#), supported by [Spectrum Photographic](#).

**ENDS**

For press information and images or to RSVP to the events in September contact Nicola Jeffs [nj@nicolajeffs.com](mailto:nj@nicolajeffs.com) +44 (0) 7794 694 754

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Heather Agyepong is a visual artist, performer/actor and maker who lives and works in London.** Her art practice is concerned with mental health and wellbeing, invisibility, the diaspora and the archive. Agyepong uses both lens-based practices and performance with an aim to culminate a cathartic experience for both herself and the viewer. She adopts the technique of re-imagination to engage with communities of interest and the self as a central focus within the image.

Agyepong has worked within photographic and performance arts since 2009 with a range of works that have been published, performed and exhibited around the UK and internationally. She has been nominated for Prix Pictet & Paul Huf Award in 2016, 2018 and 2021. Her work exists in a number of collections including Autograph ABP, Centre national des arts plastiques, Hyman Collection, New Orleans Museum of Art, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and Mead Art Museum. She has been commissioned by a number of organisations including the Mayor of London, Photoworks, Artichoke and Tate Exchange. In her television/film and theatre work, Agyepong is drawn to challenging and compelling writing with an intrigue for unique voices. She has previously been an associate artist of black led theatre company Talawa and continues to perform both nationally and internationally. Agyepong was nominated for the South Bank Sky Arts Breakthrough Award 2018, awarded the Firecracker Photographic Grant 2020, was selected as part of Foam Talent and The Photographers Gallery New Talent Award in 2021, and was awarded the Photo London x Nikon Emerging Photographer Award 2021.

**Joanne Coates is a working-class photographer** born and based in North Yorkshire. Working across the North of England, Coates explores rurality, social histories of class, and inequalities relating to low income through photography, installations and audio. Coates was educated first in working class communities, then at The Sir John Cass School of Fine art (Fda Fine Art) and The London College of Communication (BA Hons Photography). Her practice revolves around process, participation, and working with communities. She is interested in questioning stories around power, identity, wealth and poverty.

In 2020 Coates was commissioned as artist in residence at The Maltings and Newcastle University where she developed *Daughters of the Soil*, exhibited at The Maltings in 2022. In

2017, she was one of the artists working in Hull for the UK City of Culture. In 2016, she was awarded the Magenta Flash Forward Top 30 emerging talent in the UK, and in 2012, during her Foundation year, she was awarded a Metro Imaging Portfolio Prize, a Magnum Portfolio Review and The Ideastap innovators award.

### **Jerwood Arts**

Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting UK artists, curators and producers to develop and thrive. We enable transformative opportunities for individuals across art forms, supporting imaginative awards, bursaries, fellowships, projects, programmes and commissions. We are committed to supporting artistic freedom of expression and being as inclusive as possible across all our work. We present new work and bring people from across the arts together through our exhibitions and events at Jerwood Space, London, as well as across the UK and online.

### **Photoworks**

Photoworks champions photography for everyone. We are an international platform, global in reach, and have provided opportunities for artists and audiences since 1995. We do not have a physical venue, but our online channels are always open. Our programme brings new experiences to audiences and opens up new ways to encounter photography.

Photoworks is a registered charity and the only organisation with a national remit for photography in England. Our work is supported by public funding through Arts Council England's National Portfolio. Photoworks is led by Shoair Mavlian, Director.

### **Spectrum Photographic**

Spectrum is a longstanding professional imaging lab specialising in high quality fine art and photographic printing, as well as archival mounting. They are proud of the reputation that they have established for themselves and are known for their high quality, passion, and above all, excellent service to their customers.

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