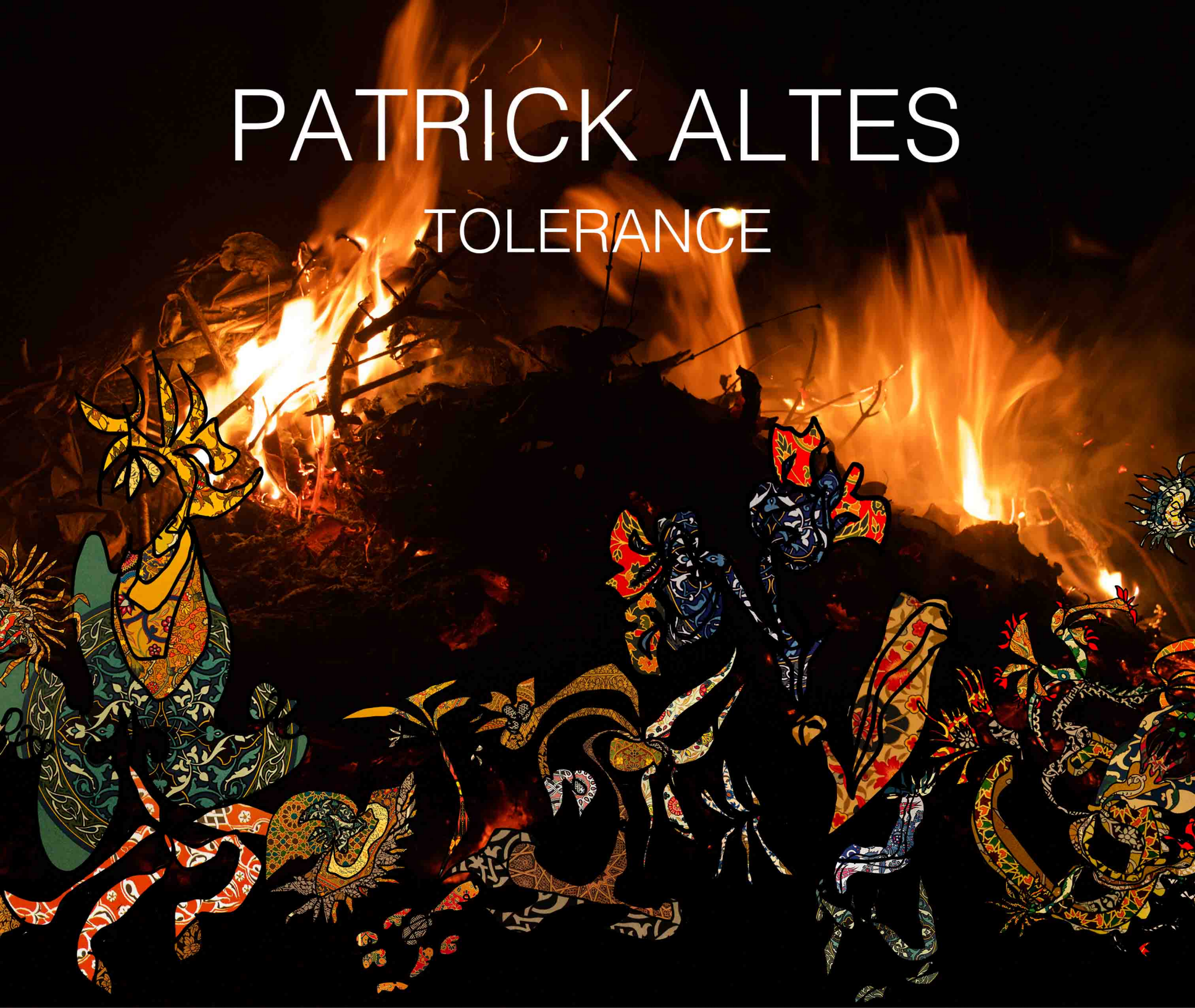


PATRICK ALTES

TOLERANCE



GERALD MOORE GALLERY

PATRICK ALTES

TOLERANCE

CURATED BY JANET RADY



It could be you (2004)
Mixed media on canvas
120x80cm

Foreword

How can we coexist?
Let's not take the obvious route
But look, listen and learn

Life lesson, Elaine Harries

Coming at a very timely moment, I am delighted to have been invited by Patrick Altes to curate his large-scale exhibition 'Tolerance' and would like to thank Gerald Moore Gallery for generously hosting it.

On first inspection, 'Tolerance' addresses and unpacks the unequivocal, empirical codes of social, religious and political conduct to which we aim to aspire. We understand that tolerance is an appreciation of others, respect for the liberties of others, the idea of not harming others, and/or wider considerations of public good and the preservation of appreciated societal norms.

As the academic Raphael Cohen-Almagor states 'Nowadays tolerance is one of the underpinning foundations of liberal democracy, and the practice of tolerance is perceived to be in the core of moral life. Tolerance has been described as a claim of our conscience, part of our conception of justice, a virtue acknowledged of being the distinction of the best people and the best societies'.

Would that life be so easy though. As Altes points out, tolerance is often more nuanced than this. After all the origin of the word in Latin *Tolerare* means support, bear, endure. It's therefore perhaps more a question of suppressing our natural tendency to intolerance and self-interest. Tolerance is not about the pleasantries of life. It concerns very different opinions regarding conduct — action and speech of which we hold strong views. And quite often it seems we fail in our ideals to uphold these principles. After all, being tolerant curtails our personal freedom.

With this in mind, Altes is showing a body of work identifying the tenets of tolerance but with a focus on where it has gone wrong and reminding us of how these failings might be addressed. Comprising works created both specifically for this exhibition, in the case of his commentary on Stephen Lawrence who was murdered nearby the gallery in 1993, and older works dating to the time of the Iraq invasion and war in 2003, through his many paintings, digital collages and powerful installations, we are subtly guided through a lesson of hope in the face of adversity. Perhaps a beacon of light in the seas of intolerance?

Janet Rady, curator



Laser Misguided (2004)
Mixed media on canvas
80x120cm

Introduction

Running the gamut from chromatic opulence to stark black and white, Patrick Altes' paintings, prints and installations offer a dazzling and discomfiting interrogation of the toxic legacy of empire and its ongoing impact on notions of identity, community, sense of place, and ultimately, tolerance. Within Altes' tableaux, markers of universal significance (DNA, the family, aboriginal imagery) clash with warped imperial emblems (faded flags, retouched colonial photographs). Nostalgia and national myths vie for space and relevance with the pressing reality of "othered" bodies, folk memories and populations in motion.

Born in Algeria of French and Spanish parents, Altes' childhood coincided with a period of violent and profound social change that continues to reconfigure the geographical and cultural identities of North Africa and France today. The installation *The Crossing* addresses Altes' own transition from Africa to Europe in the light of the more desperate voyages being made today. The 'vessel' is flimsy. Can its cargo of soil offer any hope of cross-fertilisation or meaningful roots in a new land?

Altes' subsequent periods of residence as a 'Pied Noir' in France, teaching at a black university in apartheid South Africa and working in Latin America and now in the UK compelled his gaze toward the themes of diaspora, migration and belonging that would inform his mission to "dissociate personal nostalgia from its political instrumentalisation".

Throughout the exhibition, bodies of water (the Mediterranean, the English Channel) and walled structures serve simultaneously as membranes, filters, memorials or even graves. In a period of populations on the move, can these elements serve to unify rather than separate? The image *Across the Pond*, with its submerged bodies monitored by a shoal of golden sharks, indicates how Altes' explorations of these themes have converged and how, perhaps, they now work to question his own status, identity and mobility (and that of others) in a post-Brexit Britain and an increasingly nationalistic Europe.

Altes ultimately offers us contrasting visions of tolerance. In the first *Wall of Tolerance* a 'Welcome' mat lies before a doorless wall. Two figures, each at a separate, raised open window appear in conversation, seemingly unaware of the lifeless flattened human in the foreground. In the second *Wall of Tolerance* the wall is indistinguishable from rubble, the landscape uninhabited and the sky glowers ominously.

Nonetheless, tolerance cannot function in the absence of hope. Our attention is drawn back to Altes recurring Aboriginal figure motifs whose raised arms seem to beckon to us from a more ancient and grounded human culture. The motif is omnipresent. Only the viewer can decide whether the gesture is bidding adieu or 'welcome'.



Begotten (2017)
Mixed media on canvas
123x92cm



Propaganda (2004)
Mixed media on canvas
120x80cm







Handwritten text on the wooden chest, possibly a date or location: "1900-1910" and "Cape of Good Hope".

8126 545



The Underdog (2014)
Mixed media on canvas
80x120cm



Collateral damage (2004)
Mixed media on canvas
120x80cm



Pillage (2004)
Mixed media on canvas
120x80cm



Cosmic Hopscotch (2018)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
150x130cm



Tolerance is a Choice (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
150x130cm



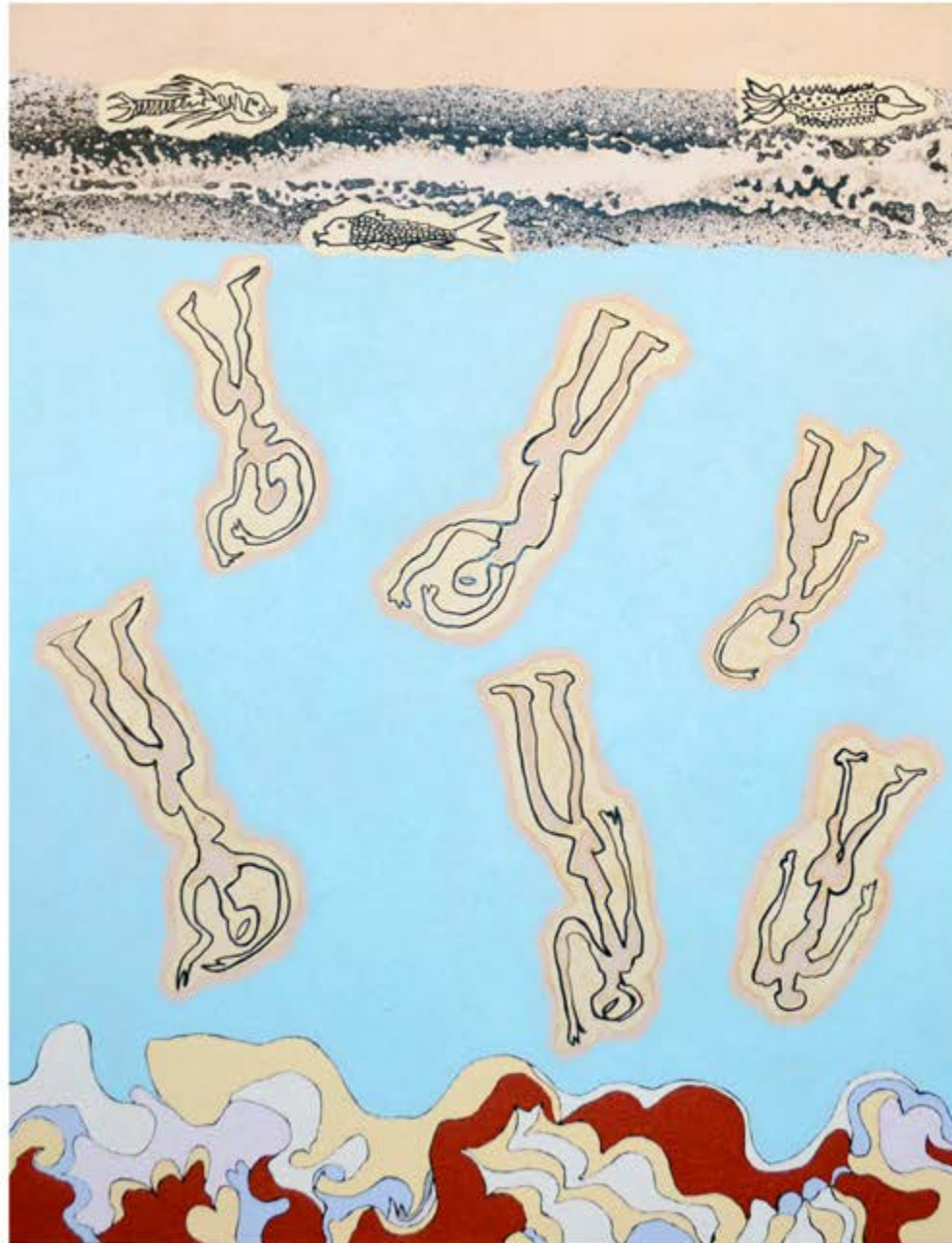
Entre Ciel et Terre (2018)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
150x130cm



Fragmented Society (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
91x73cm



Across the Pond (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
91x73cm



Los Desdichados (2018)
Mixed media on canvas
91x73cm



Debunking the Myth (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
91x73cm



Leaving the Nest (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
91x73cm



Hanging Gardens of England 2 (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
121x91cm



Hanging Gardens of England 3 (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
121x91cm



Hanging Gardens of England 1 (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
150x130cm



Below the Line (2016)
Mixed media on canvas
91x73cm



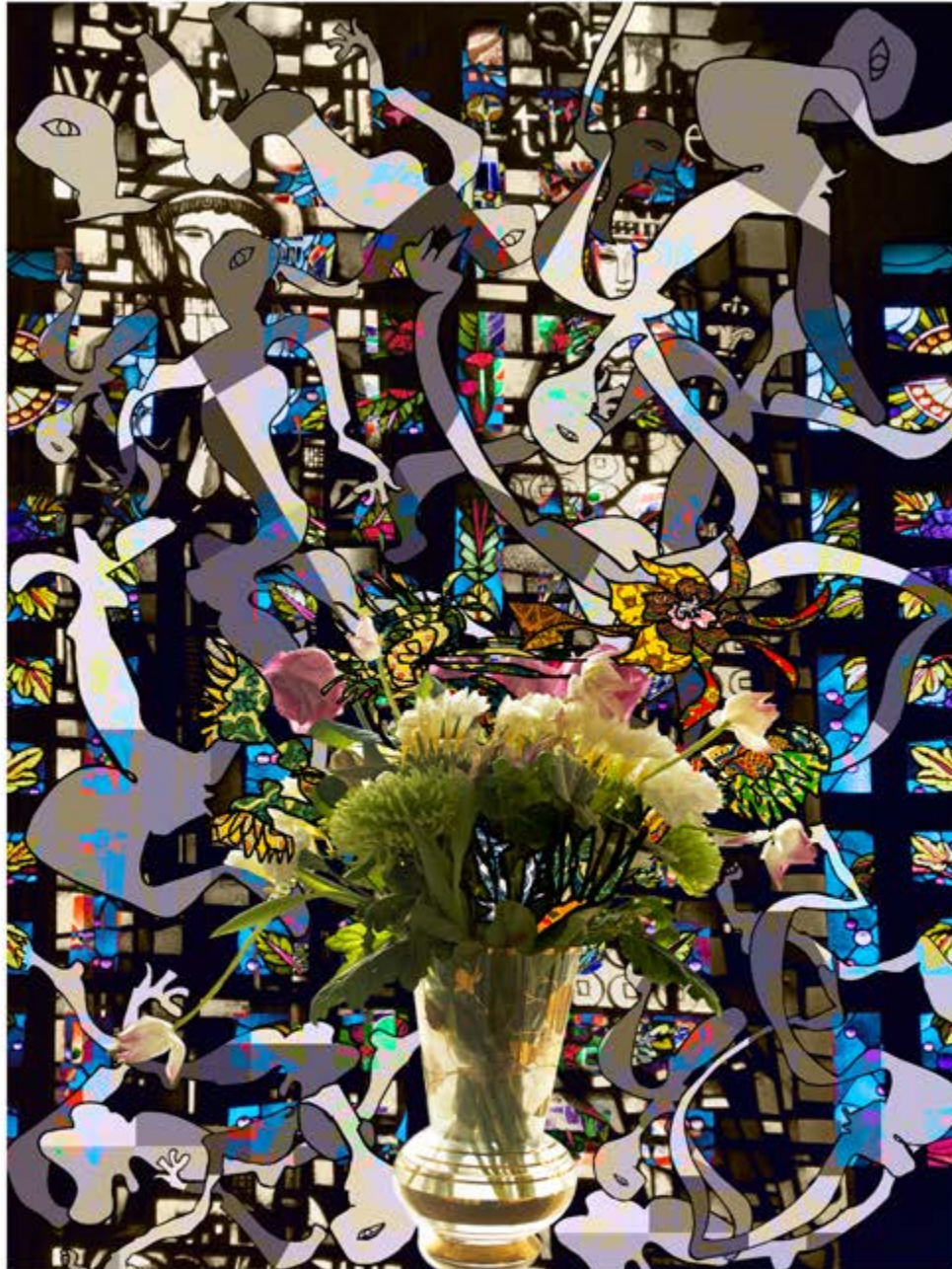
Gondwana (2016)
Mixed media on canvas
150x130cm







Civilisational Flux (2015)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper. Ed of 7
120x90cm

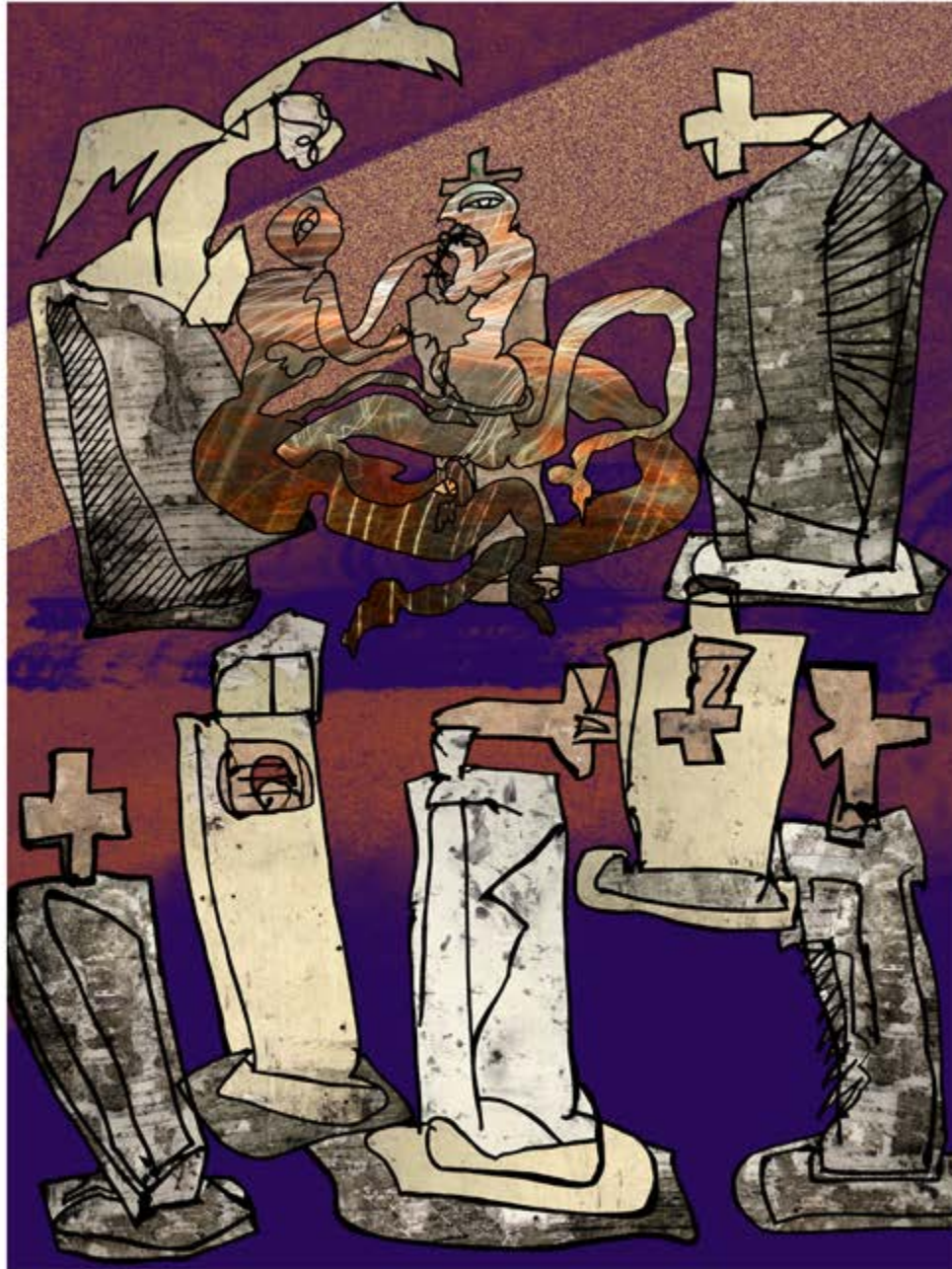


Transcultural Influences (2016)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
120x90cm



Melina Pot (2019)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed. of 7
10,200 cm

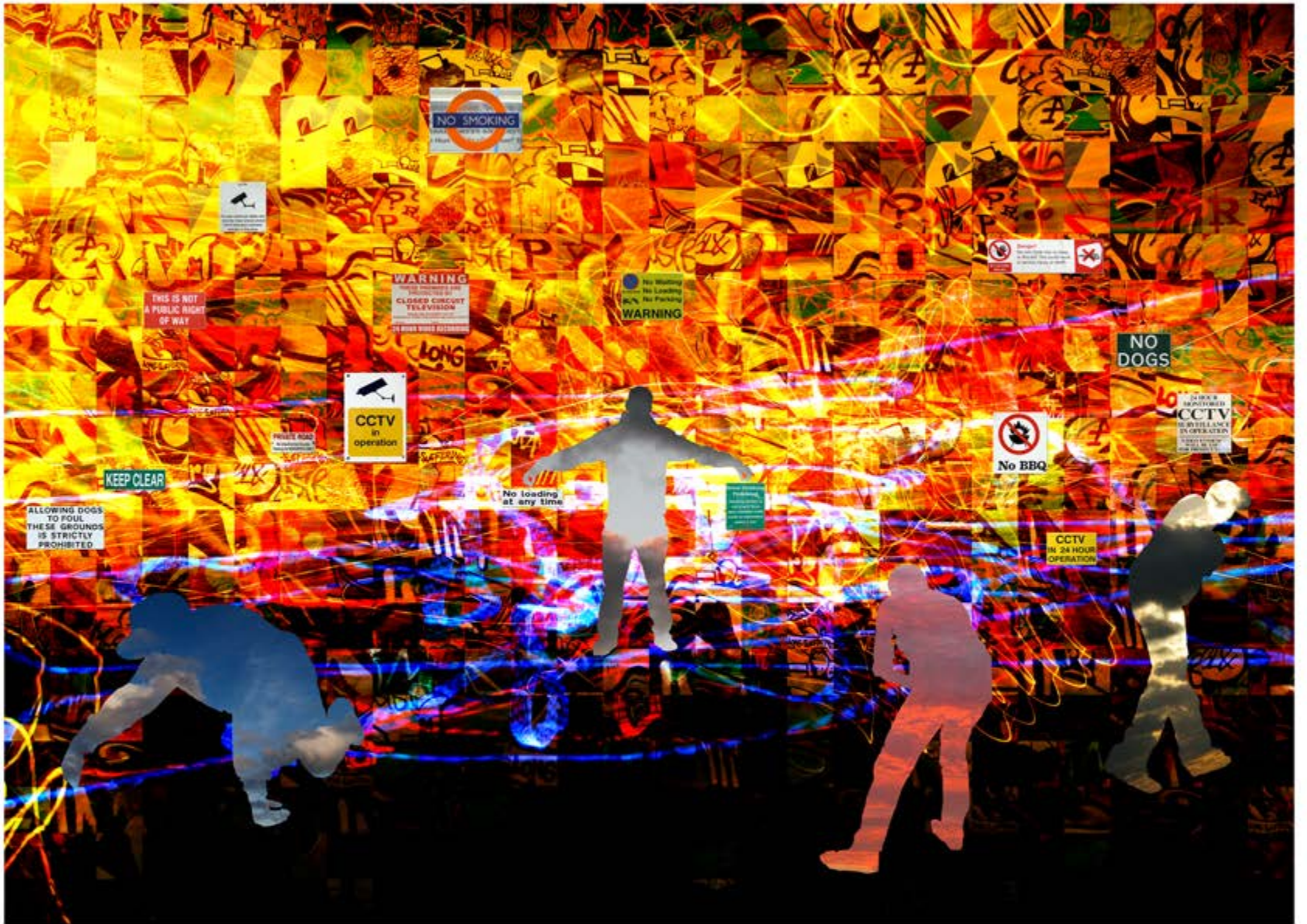




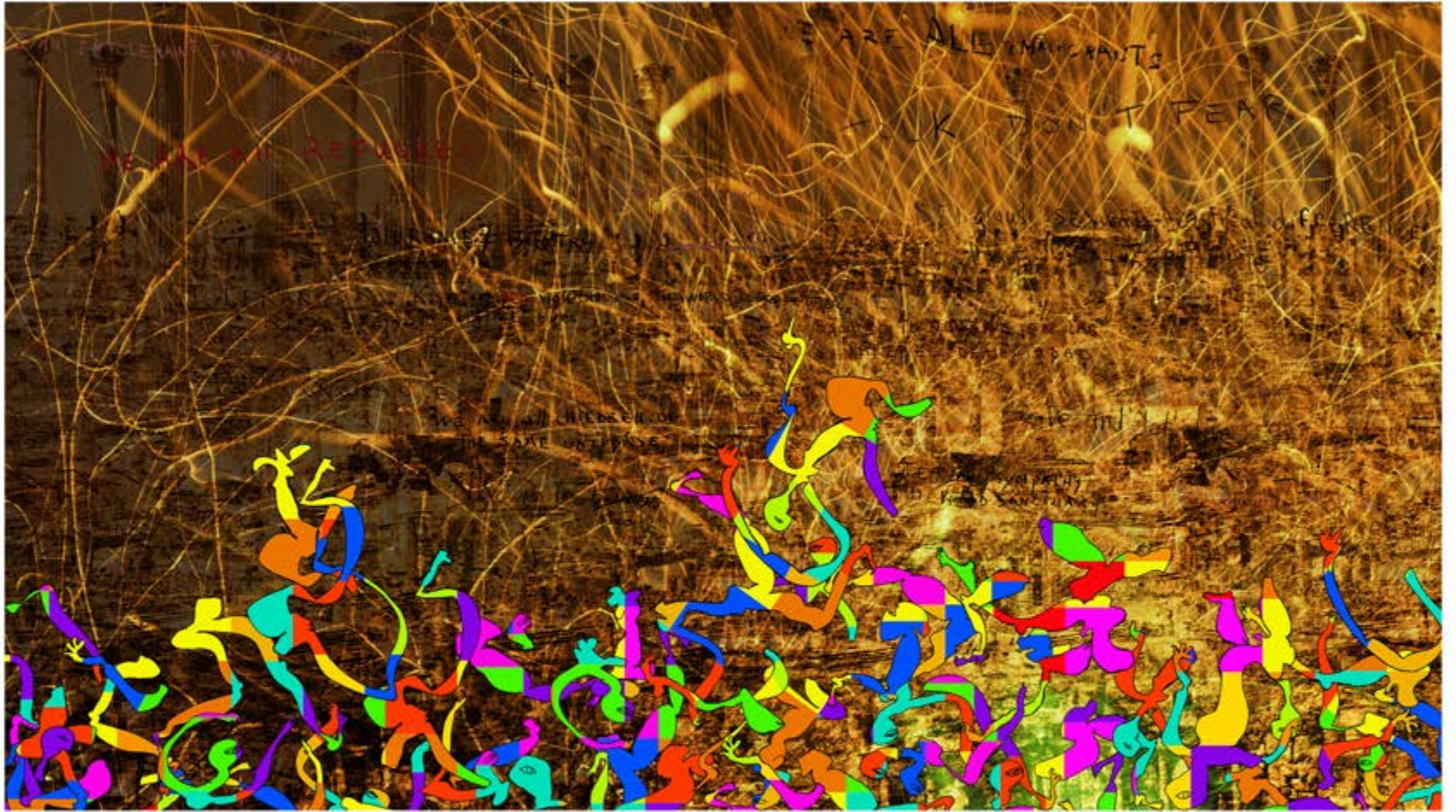
L'Amour Fou 2 (2019)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
80x60cm



L'Amour Fou 3 (2018)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
80x60cm



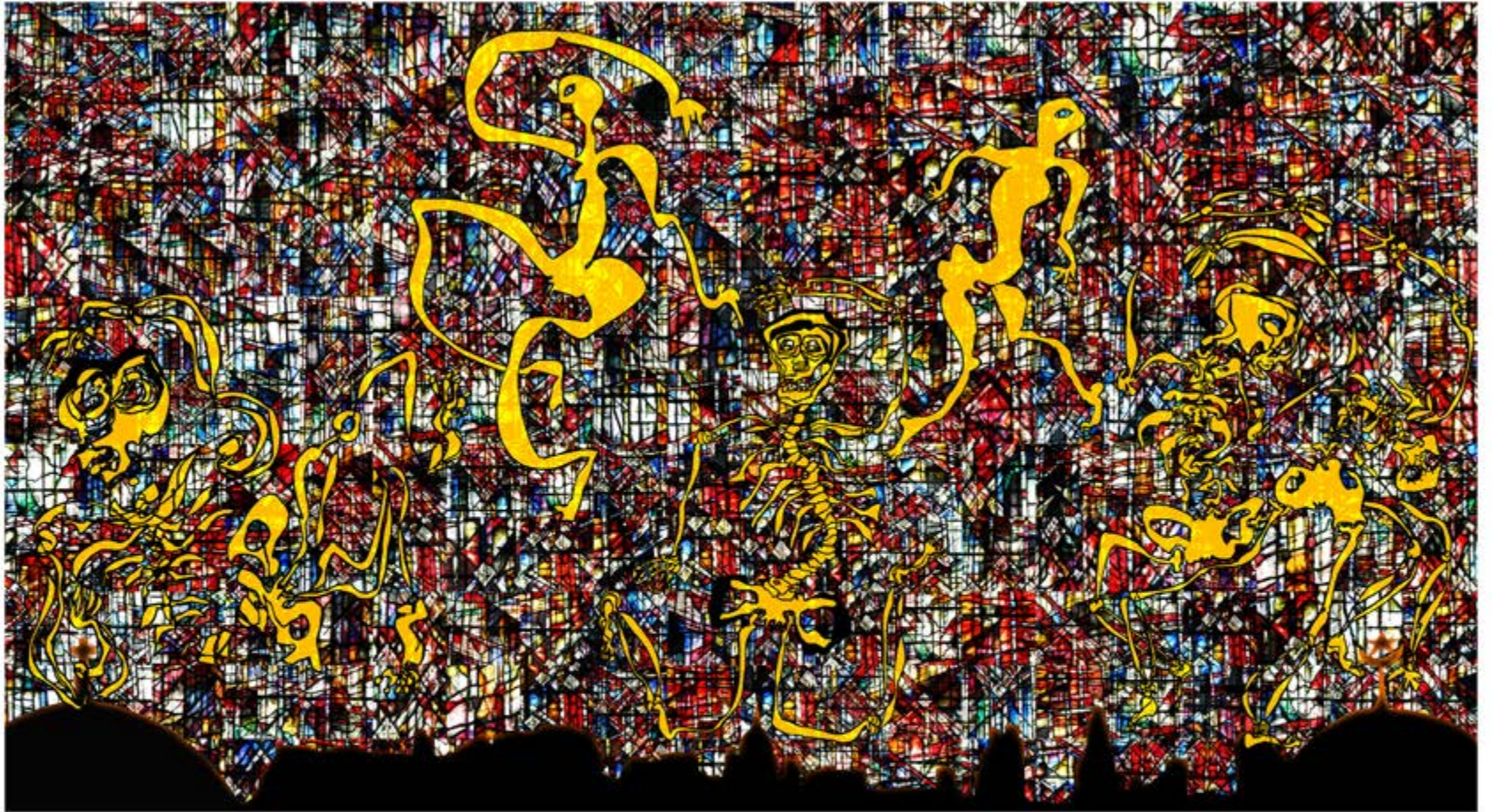
London's Burning 3 (2011)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
59x84cm



Empire and Intolerance (2015)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
110x200cm



Pop Arabesque (2019)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
110x200cm



Ultimate Mediation (2017)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
110x200cm



London's Burning 2 (2011)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
59x84cm



London's Burning 3 (2011)
Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7
59x84cm



The Crossing Installation (2019)

The Mediterranean shores are nexus of civilisations that have traditionally cross-fertilised and influenced each other. Colonial empires are now gone but their toxic legacy remains and influences the way "the Other" is perceived. Migrants are now the unwanted invaders.

Born in North Africa, I moved to France as a kid but the umbilical cord that links me to my continent of birth was never severed. As such and somewhat paradoxically, I am part of an African diaspora that struggles to find its place in Europe.









Stories 2 (2019)
Collage on monoprint
40x50cm



Stories 4 (2019)
Collage on monoprint
50x40cm



Under the Rader (2019)
Collage on monoprint
50x40cm



The Fisherman 3 (2019)
Collage on monoprint
50x40cm



Conflicting Peace Process (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
30x24cm



We, The People (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
73x91cm



Conflicting Thought Process (2019)
Mixed media and collage on canvas
30x24cm



Fake News
Photo/drawings on Baryta paper mounted on board Ed of 100
20x20cm



Patrick Altes is an artist of French/Spanish origins, whose work is deeply informed by his own personal history. Born into a working-class family in Algeria during French colonial rule, Altes' awareness of inequality and repressive regimes grew early. As a young adult, he lived in South Africa for two years under the apartheid regime, working at the University of Fort Hare, a key institution in higher education for black Africans which counted among its alumnae a number of prominent opponents of the apartheid. This experience of a society based on discrimination, repression and deprivation of civil liberties for a large part of the population deeply marked Altes and fuelled his commitment to equality and human rights.

Since moving to the UK in 2006, Altes gained an MA in Fine Art from the University of Brighton in 2008. His work has made a distinctive contribution to post-colonial discourse and the emerging Franco-Algerian art movement. He is interested in the evolving relationship between the contemporary world and our deeper humanity. He was twice recipient of the prestigious Leverhulme Trust Award. He co-curated Algerianism 1, as part of the pan-Arabic Nour Festival in London's Kensington and Chelsea (2015). He also participated in the 3rd Biennale of Mediterranean Contemporary Arts in Oran, Algeria (2014), Art Bahrain (2015), the 7th International Festival of Contemporary Arts (FIAC) at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arts in Algiers (2015), Art 16 London (2016), the 4th Biennale of Mediterranean Contemporary Art in Oran (2017) and London Art Fair, Islington (2020). Some of his work is held by the Museum of Modern Arts of Oran (MAMO), the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arts of Algiers (MAMA) as well as many other private collections.



The Legacy
Photo/drawings on Baryta paper mounted on board Ed of 100
20x20cm

Patrick Altes, *Tolerance*
20th November 2019, 25th January 2020
Gerald Moore Gallery
Mottingham Lane, London, SE9 4RW
www.geraldmooregallery.org

All texts © the authors as credited
Works © the artist
Photos © Joe White, Wave Digital Arts Ltd
All printing services Martel Colour Print

Janet Rady Fine Art
50 Jermyn Street London SW1Y 6LX
+ 44 (0)20 7830 9327 + 44 (0)7957 284 370
janet@janetradyfineart.com
Janetradyfineart.com

Acknowledgements

Patrick Altes and Janet Rady would like to thank Arts Council England for their support and financial help.

We would also like to thank:

Katie Harris, Gallery Manager and Ruth Borthwic assistant at Gerald Moore Gallery for their support and vision.
All the technical members of staff at Eltham College who have contributed to the success of this exhibition.
The United Nations Association, London and East Sussex and Gonzalo Alvarez for their endorsement.
S.I Martin, Nadene Ghouri and Gonzalo Alvarez for their contribution to the panel discussions.
Susan de Muth at A Wave of Dreams Art Lab for hosting the prequel to this exhibition in St Leonards-on-Sea.
Helen Jacey for her contribution to the conceptual development of the project.

Cover image: *We Live in Uncertain Times* (2016), Digital print on Hahnemühle paper, Ed of 7, 60x90cm
Inside back cover image: *Wall of Tolerance* (2020), photo/drawing on Baryta paper mounted on board, Ed of 100, 20x20cm



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



GERALD MOORE
GALLERY

at Eltham College

JANET RADY

FINE ART



