

EXHIBITION GUIDE

SEEMA MATTU
LOCAL SUPERSTAR II

18 SEP 26 - 14 FEB 27

FACT

FACT LIVERPOOL

CT

FACT
88 Wood Street
Liverpool
L1 4DQ

Wed - Sun
11:00 - 18:00
Free entry



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
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SEEMA MATTU

LOCAL SUPERSTAR II

Music shapes many of our lives: whether through transformative listening experiences, as a creative outlet, or as space for collective connection. *LOCAL SUPERSTAR II* brings together sculpture, film, digital animation and music in a new installation by artist Seema Mattu. It follows the formation of Saheli, a sonic entity of five South Asian queer women: Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay, MANI JNX, Ushara Dilrukshan, Zahrah Hutton and Seema. The work's focus on sonic joy, musicality and collectivity stems from Seema's personal experience of musical congregation as seva - Sanskrit for selfless service.

Seema frames her world-building practice as a theme park called SEEMAWORLD, where she explores and subverts systems of caste, queer desire, and the ways technology continually reshapes identity. In *LOCAL SUPERSTAR II*, Seema introduces us to three worlds – the idyllic world, the real world and SEEMAWORLD - alongside fantastical digital depictions of deities, sub-deities and their collaborators. For Seema, these worlds and their inhabitants offer space to imagine new futures, and the possibilities and impossibilities that come with this.

Within the gallery, we are invited to board a tour bus. First shown at Eastside Projects, the work will rest at FACT before travelling on to Focal Point Gallery. Aboard, the speculative film series *she who is a friend* follows the formation of a sonic entity, from audition tapes and interviews through to sonic jams and live rehearsals. We watch as the band begin their journey, navigating the complexities of individual artistry and collaborative musical expression. At the front of the bus, interactive instruments have been unloaded, ready for audiences to collaborate with the band through a brand new sonic game, *(ear)worm's-eye view*. By playing, all can join Saheli on their journey, creating an ever-evolving sonic landscape.

LOCAL SUPERSTAR II marks the mid-point of Saheli's journey; from the formation of a sonic entity, through to the intricacies of navigating an open, porous approach to what community, congregation, and care can mean. For Seema, 'superstardom' means much more than typical global fame - instead, it is the magic of being close to ideas as they brew and spark at a local level, specific to their environment and the people who nurture them. Seema, along with her collaborators - both digital and human - has created a celebratory, self-generating sonic archive that allows space within music to reflect the multiplicities of who we are.

CREDITS

Sonic Council: Amrita Dhallu, Raveena Kaur Jassal, Seema Mattu

Saheli: Zahrah Hutton, Ushara Dilrukshan, Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay, MANI JNX, Seema Mattu

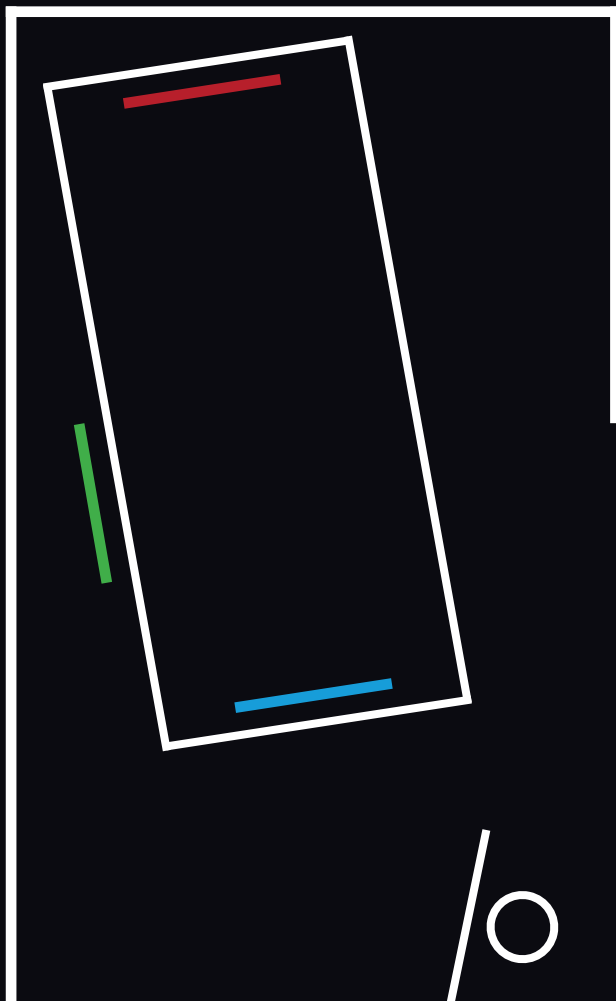
SEEMAWORLD deities were co-designed with artist / illustrator mis.sludge in October 2024.

(ear)worm's-eye view graphics, animation and interactive design by artist Elle Bulger.

Thanks to: Abigail Villarroel, Sahjan Kooner, Karen Dhlamini, HERÁ, Maya Bhardwaj, Juwairiyyah Wali, STEAMhouse, Jason Harris, Trevor Sale, Shereece Storrod, Rupinder Kaur Waraich, Stephen Mattu, Eisha Mattu, Gary Charles, Harry Banks, Sima Gonsai, Ian Braznell, Plane Structure, Megatone Recording Studio, Grosvenor Road Studios and National Express.

Inside and around the congregational space of the *LOCAL SUPERSTAR* // tour bus are multiple films and interactive instruments. Here, we find episodes of the speculative film series *she who is a friend* which follows the forming of Saheli from audition tapes through to sonic jams, interviews and live rehearsals.

A sonic game invites us to join in and jam to Saheli's song *What is the shape of your body?*



FILMS

swiaf.0:
all that
we carry

swiaf.1:
saheliyan
ਸਹੇਲੀਆਂ

swiaf.2:
in the name
of porosity

GAME

(ear)worm's-eye
view

SAHELI

USHARA DILRUKSHAN

Cello, Vocals, Drums

LAGNAJITA MUKHOPADHYAY

Bass, Poetry / Vocals,
Auxiliary Percussion

ZAHHRAH HUTTON

Guitar



MANI JNX

Guitar, Live Electronics

SEEMA MATTU

Dholki, Drums, Percussion

THE SONIC COUNCIL

The sub-deities of IDYLL have appointed a Sonic Council: a sisterhood transcending across multiple worlds to oversee auditions and provide support in forming Saheli.

This is SONIC COUNCIL SEEMA.



For her unwavering sincerity, visual arts expertise, cackle and sonic curiosity, AMRITA DHALLU was invited to join the Council.

For her relatability, musical knowledge, sense of humour and local impact, RAVEENA KAUR JASSAL (aka RX) was invited to join the Council.

Woven throughout Seema's work are worlds, deities and stories. Shapeshifting between human and digital form, they inhabit and traverse multiple realms: parallel universes that open up space to imagine new possibilities.

THE REAL WORLD

In this context, the 'real world' reflects the collective realities of Birmingham, Liverpool, and Southend-on-Sea. Deities, sub-deities and the Sonic Council travel between IDYLL and SEEMAWORLD, their physical forms shapeshifting between digital avatar and human form to suit the environment they are in.

SEEMAWORLD

SEEMAWORLD follows the logic of a speculative theme park, and is hosted by fantastical deities who act as vessels for the stories and worlds within it. A playful rollercoaster of intersecting characters, places and ideas, it represents the complexities of Seema's own multi-faceted personhood, centering intersecting themes of caste, gender expression, queer desire and identity through film, animation, sound and sculpture.



One of the deities within SEEMAWORLD is Syahi, who represents sonic joy, musical congregation and radical kindness.

THE IDYLIC WORLD (IDYLL)

In the idyllic world, sub-deities known as ਕੀ (Ki), ਜੀ (Ji), ਮੀਹ (Meeh) and ਨੀ (Ni) have appointed a Sonic Council.



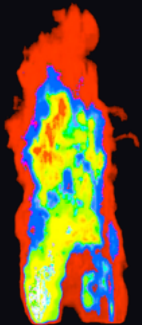
Kato (aka Ki) ਕੀ is a squirrel on Earth and a rat in SEEMAWORLD. In IDYLL, she's somewhere in between. After a welcome transformation from squirrel to rat by the deities of SEEMAWORLD, she is motivated in particular by her bond with Syahi, and wants to spread a similar feeling of liberation and joy in her original world: Earth. But SEEMAWORLD is at capacity and things are busy, so Syahi advises that Ki complete her mission from IDYLL.



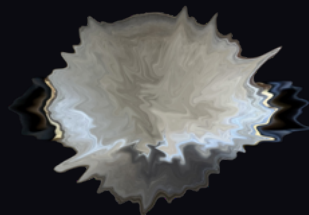
Ni ਨੀ is arguably the most travelled of them all. As a spinning ring worn by Seema in the real world, she's there whether you notice or not.



Ji ਜੀ the Crane is a watchful eye among worlds.



Meeh ਮੀਹ is as watery as she is fiery. As a literal flame, a shape-shifting symbol of energy, passion and renewal, Meeh is the trusty host of this story. With her guidance, it all unfolds.



Si ਸੀ is the newest addition to the assembly of sub-deities in IDYLL. As the mechanical vessel for percussive expression, she is both literally and figuratively striking. Her presence represents what *was*, and what's becoming.

SEEMA MATTU BIOGRAPHY

Seema Mattu is a Valmiki world-building artist, whose multimodal practice follows the logic of a speculative theme park - known as SEEMAWORLD. Through its own internal lore, SEEMAWORLD is hosted by fantastical deities who act as vessels for interweaving strands of output. Rooted in British South Asian culture (and its relationship to Birmingham), speculative storytelling unfolds through immersive real-life environments, sculpture, mixed-media animation, moving image and an emergent folk sound. These works combine filmic, sonic and spatial spectacle to explore and subvert complex themes centring: systems of caste, queer desire and technological iterations (and reiterations) of thing and self.

Seema's work has been shown and supported widely, including projects with Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, New Art City, Blindspot Gallery (Hong Kong), Film London (FLAMIN Fellowship 2021-2022), and Wysing Arts Centre (2023 Residency). In 2021, she was awarded an International Digital Fellowship at QUAD (Derby), leading to her first solo show in 2023. She has been an Incidental Artist at Eastside Projects (Birmingham) since 2024, where the LOCAL SUPERSTAR project first launched, and will be touring to Focal Point Gallery in Spring 2027.



