



PRESS RELEASE*

THE DEGREE SHOW REVOLUTION IS HERE

*SIMMER – BA Fine Art Digital Degree E-vent – University of Leeds – 5 to 20 June 2020
VIP Viewing Party – 6pm on Thursday 4 June*

In the midst of global uncertainty and societal turbulence, 63 graduating artists from the University of Leeds are taking their Degree Show into the virtual realm.

Independently created by final year BA Fine Art students from the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, [SIMMER](#) is an online platform that stands in place of the 'traditional' Degree Show.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the construction of a physical exhibition has understandably not been an option this year.

Refusing to accept defeat, the students have risen to the challenge and have collaboratively created a Digital 'E-vent' upon which to showcase their work.

Opening to the public on Friday 5 June, **SIMMER** is a digital door into a contemporary art renaissance. It joins the first wave of physical digital degree shows moving to virtual platforms; a movement the students are calling 'Cyber Shows'.

The online platform will be accessible until 20 June via a portal on the students' **SIMMER** website and will showcase a range of work, in addition to e-vents and interviews hosted by students.

On entering a virtual *lobby*, visitors will be presented with six *environments*, ranging from the traditional *white cube* to the virtual *void*.

Giving site-specific work a whole new meaning, these environments are virtual replicas of reality. They will allow the graduating artists to situate their work online as decidedly and specifically as they would do so in reality.

Visitors can take their time exploring each environment and observe each work in a purposeful setting as they would in a traditional gallery.

Final year BA Fine Art student Lily Thomson co-ordinated the web team responsible for setting up the online platform. Lily said:

“When talking about the history of our School, our tutors never fail to bring up *The Leeds 13* — a group of final year fine art students who created a media sensation with their end of year Degree Show *Going Places* in 1998. The students planned an elaborate hoax, pretending to have spent thousands of pounds of university money on a holiday to Malaga, when in fact the photos, tickets and suntans were all faked — the students had never left Leeds.

“This year we definitely aren’t going places, but our work is: taken out of the walls of the art school and moved into a new world.

“This Degree E-vent has been pieced together by a slew of posts and memes and countless video calls, in which we have familiarised ourselves with each other’s new static surroundings, watching time pass in the plants, puppies and pickles.

“We, the students, have wrestled a show out of the blank walls of cyberspace, and it feels like something we can all be proud of.”

Kathleen Lagan, a BA Fine Art with History of Art student leading the Marketing Team for **SIMMER**, said:

“In this time of restrictions and rules, there is freedom in our Digital Degree E-vent. There is no order to follow. Visitors may pick and choose which environments to visit at their leisure, in their own time.

“Working towards this e-vent has been a passion-project, powered by the heart and creativity of our collective year. After being presented with the possibility of having no show, we took it upon ourselves to adapt to the current climate and persevere — all the work, conceptualisation and production has been done in house by the students.

“We were determined not be broken by isolation.”

Amy Myhill, a BA Fine Art with History of Art student on the Social Media Team for **SIMMER** said:

“This is the most exciting event I’ve been involved in, working with an incredibly dynamic group of artists. Taking part in the realization of this project has been amazing and unforgettable.

“It’s also possibly the most affordable degree show ever. With only £10 spent on the URL for the online platform, it is amazing how far students can make so little money go.”

Dr Joanne Crawford, Head of the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, said:

“This exhibition is not just about the objects on display, it is also about tenacity, frustration and acceptance. It is about each and every student digging deep within themselves and finding new levels of strength and determination.

“It is also about our students working beyond their usual limits and pushing their creative endeavour into new spaces and materials. They have been drawn into the chaos of ‘now’ in a way unthinkable only a couple of months ago, but they have endured and flourished and as a consequence have made the most amazing, imaginative and intelligent work.

“As a School we will remember this year’s graduating artists with great affection, as a remarkable group of young people. We are sure that they have the brightest of futures ahead of them.”

An online Viewing Party for VIP guests will take place from 6pm on the evening of Thursday 4 June instead of the standard Private View that would in other circumstances have taken place in the studio spaces in the School.

SIMMER opens to the public the following day and will run to 20 June. Access to the Digital E-vent will be via a portal on simmer.leeds.ac.uk — a website which charts the progress of the graduating artists over the past few months.

Follow **SIMMER** on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for a detailed look into the students’ unprecedented journey, including their Simmer Sunday activities on Instagram.

Check out the **SIMMER** YouTube for an in-depth look into some of the artists, their work and creative processes.

Or visit the [SIMMER](http://simmer.leeds.ac.uk) website to keep up to date with the students’ progress and e-vents, to experience the digital fruits of their labour as they *simmer* away under quarantine and to access the Digital Degree E-vent.

In the words of the 63 graduating artists taking their work to new levels:

*We will not be restricted.
We will not be contained.*

*Let it rise to the surface. Show itself to the world in a state of disposition.
Let it rest, burn, destroy, **simmer**.*

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information or for VIP access to the Viewing Party on 4 June, please email **Kathleen Lagan** at simmerleeds@gmail.com

High quality images or interviews available on request.

Further details about student initiatives in connection with **SIMMER** can be found on the [blog](#).

Website: simmer.leeds.ac.uk



Facebook: [simmer.leeds](https://www.facebook.com/simmer.leeds)



Twitter: [LeedsSimmer](https://twitter.com/LeedsSimmer)



Instagram: [simmer.leeds](https://www.instagram.com/simmer.leeds)



[YouTube](#)

SCHOOL OF FINE ART, HISTORY OF ART AND CULTURAL STUDIES

See here for more information about the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds: ahc.leeds.ac.uk/fine-art

IMAGES

For high quality images, please email Kathleen Lagan at: simmerleeds@gmail.com



(Image by Sarah Larby featuring work by Charles Steele, Hannah Woodward, Georgina Davies, Gemma Jones and Louisa Dee from our Degree E-vent)



(Image by Kathleen Lagan featuring work by Sophie Gottlieb, Imogen Dawe, Stephanie Zinonos and Ruby Richards from our Degree E-vent)