

# JEMMA DESAI

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[Portfolio](#)

## current

PHD Candidate at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama developing a practice-based project, across visual arts, writing and performance on abolitionist praxis as form and infrastructure in cultural production.

## fellowships & residencies

2023- Present

[ARTIST IN RESIDENCE] Somerset House Studios

2023-present

[EXPERIENCE FELLOW] Brooklyn Academy of Music

2024-present

[INTERDISCIPLINARY FELLOW] Royal Shakespeare Company 2023 - present

[PROGRAMMER IN RESIDENCE] The Flaherty

2019

[FELLOW] Clore Leadership

## selected keynotes & performance lectures

2024

[PERFORMANCE LECTURE] *A Film worker's search for integrity* Keynote at International Documentary Association, Los Angeles

[PERFORMANCE LECTURE] *Ground Provisions: A reading Camp* at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin

2023

[PERFORMANCE LECTURE] *Yearning for new ways to make and circulate: towards an infrastructure of being longing* Keynote at Abandon Normal Devices

[VIDEO] *Thoughts on Programming Latifah and Himli's Nomadic Uncle* commissioned for ICO's Cinema of Ideas

2022

[PERFORMANCE CONVERSATION] *As We Are Giving We Are Receiving* 12 Hour Sit-in Revel with Barby Asante

2020

[PERFORMANCE LECTURE] *Autoethnography as Refusal* ICA, London

[VIDEO] *What do we Want from each other when we have told our stories?* LUX, London

## select writing

2025

[ESSAY] *A letter, fragments, glimmers and traces on Radio Ballads* (forthcoming), Serpentine

[ESSAY] *For a Cinephilia of the Heart* in Echoes Take One Action Journal of Cinema and Social Justice (forthcoming)

2024

[PROGRAMME NOTES] *The questioned body; a body of questions*, an essay on the films of Imran Perretta LUX

2023

[ASSEMBLAGE] *I do not want what I haven't got: An essay on mothering, dying and Sinead O'connor* Substack

[PROGRAMME NOTES] *John & Jane* dir. Ashim Ahluwalia Batalha Centro de cinema

[PROGRAMME NOTES] *The films of Paula Tomás Marques* Batalha Centro de cinema

[PROGRAMME NOTES] *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* dir Peter Friedman and Tom Joslin for Batalha Centro de cinema

[PROGRAMME NOTES] *Trading Cities* dir Luísa Homem and Pedro Pinho Batalha Centro de cinema

2022

[VISUAL ESSAY] *Care 1 of 54* in Floating Margins Edited by Amrita Dhallu and Priya Jay, INIVA

[LETTER] *The Desire to write about George Green* A Letter to Onyeka Igwe responding to *The Miracle on George Green*, Open City Documentary Festival  
[PROGRAMME NOTES] *Here to stay Here to fight* an essay on Adam Lewis Jacob's exhibition Idrish (ইদ্রিশ), LUX  
[CATALOGUE TEXT] *Pray for a life without plot, a day without narrative: Notes on Moving Bodies, Moving images*, Whitechapel  
[REVIEW] *Permitted to Dream: Reflections on the Brent Biennial* ArtReview  
[ASSEMBLAGE] *What do we want from each other after we have told our stories?* Art Papers 2021  
[DVD LINER NOTES] for Oscilloscope's release of Josephine Decker's first two features *Butter on the Latch & Thou Wast Mild and Lovely*  
*Describe a morning you woke without fear* written with Priya Jay ARTWORK  
[ESSAY] *'M/Othering for Liberation: a Declaration of Independence'* SEEN Issue 002 2020  
[FILM NOTES] *Through The Kyatketi* - on Yashaswini Raghunandan's *That Cloud Never Left*, Alchemy Film & Arts 2019  
[REVIEW] *A Week in Utopia on The Flaherty Seminar*, Sight & Sound VOLUME 29, ISSUE 10, 2018/2020  
[LETTER] *A Letter to Leena about Care* STUART PAPERS

### **selected in conversation & facilitation**

2024  
[CONVERSATION] IDA Panel *How We Gather* with United Screens  
[CONVERSATION] Chisenhale Gallery In conversation with Imran Perretta after a screening of *'The Destructors'*

2023  
[CONVERSATION] *Cinematic Interventions to Freeing Palestine & the Global South Symposium* with Saeed Taji Farouky, An Duplan, Miko Revereza and Nehad Khader  
[PODCAST] Distribution Advocates Presents: *The Truth About Film Festivals* with Abby Sun

2021  
[CONVERSATION] Rehana Zaman in conversation BFMAF  
[CONVERSATION] Jordan Lord in conversation BFMAF  
[CONVERSATION] Suneil Sanzgiri in conversation BFMAF  
[INTERVIEW] *Sentient Art Film - Notes from the Field* with Matt Turner  
[PODCAST] Stance Podcast *(un)learning for liberation* (Guest Editor) featuring Joshua Virasami; Dylan Rodríguez; Sonya Childress; Asher Gamedze; Thenmozhi Soundararajan; Kelsey Mohamed; Camille Barton; Aditi Jaganathan  
[FACILITATION] ARTANGEL In conversation with Paul Maheke, Cecile B Evans, Andrew Hart & Carl Gent  
[CONVERSATION] *Roundtable on the future of cinema and circulation* with Roisin Tappin, Butheina Kazim & Sophie Cavoulacos, Dazed Magazine  
[CONVERSATION] In conversation with Suneil Sanzgiri IFFR  
[PODCAST] In conversation with Jamila Prowse Collective Imaginings podcast  
[PODCAST] *On Art and Friendship: Expanding What Relation Can Be Hear, Now*. Episode 13: Artists' Film International  
[CONVERSATION] *Deconstructing Festivals: How much do we want what we say that we want?* A conversation with Olivier Marboeuf Open City Docs LIVING JOURNAL  
[PODCAST] Best Girl Grip podcast interview with Nicole Taylor  
[CONVERSATION] *NOTES* Online Exhibition & Conversation with Abby Sun and Peter Taylor 2020  
[CONVERSATION] *Creating spaces, sharing spaces* with Jemma Desai, Olivier Marboeuf and Katarina Hedrén Berlinale Forum Expanded Panel discussion:  
[CONVERSATION] Alchemy Film & Arts In conversation with Yashaswini Raghunandan & accompanying essay  
[CONVERSATION] SOAS Festival of ideas, Respondent after performance of verbatim piece 'Decolonisation is not a Buzzword' by Bhuchar Boulevard  
[FACILITATION] Lead Facilitator Tate British Art Network Curating, Care and Community conference  
[CONVERSATION] *Searching and Researching - Dreaming new ways through sharing learning* Dept of Dreams by Civic Square in conversation with Zain Dada

[CONVERSATION] *Solidarity is not just a trend or a market exchange* Blackstar Film Festival, Philadelphia 2019  
[PODCAST] *Revolutionary Mothering Stance* Podcast (Guest Editor) with Angela Garbes; Jasleen Kaur; foodbankmum; Kindness

### **selected workshops**

2024

[WORKSHOP] Letter writing workshop for cultural workers at The Office of Contemporary Arts, Oslo

[WORKSHOP] *After Glissant, an experiential workshop on voice and tremblement* with Adam Benmakhlouf, Hospitalfields

2021

[WORKSHOP] *Back inside ourselves* BFMAF

2020

[WORKSHOP] Online Workshops for young people aged 14-25 on ecologies and ethics of arts production at BRIT School, Croydon School of Art and TURF projects

[WORKSHOP] Autograph ABP PILOT course *Rights, Care and Future*

### **select teaching**

2024

[VISITING LECTURER] - *MRES Exhibition Studies* Central St Martins

2023

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *MA Curating* Chelsea School Of Art

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *MA Creative Producing* Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *BA Experimental Performance* Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

[VISITING LECTURER] *MRES - MRES Exhibition Studies*, Central St Martins

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *BA Film and Screen Studies*, London College of Communication

2021

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *BA Filmmaking*, Kingston School of Art

[VISITING LECTURER] *Cultural Management MA*, Sheffield Hallam University Arts

[VISITING LECTURER] King's College London

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] Online Cinema project course convener & co-designer Westminster

[VISITING LECTURER] *MRES Exhibition Studies* Central St Martins

University

2020

[VISITING LECTURER] *MRES Exhibition Studies*, Central St Martins

[ASSOCIATE LECTURER] *Bad Girls short course*, Goldsmiths

### **select curatorial**

2021 – Present

[PROGRAMMER] Chair of Feature Film Programming Committee *Blackstar Film Festival*

2021

[PROGRAMMER] Head of Programming *Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival*

2020

[PROGRAMME / PERFORMANCE READING] *Correspondences: Films by Alia Syed*, ICA, London

2018

[PERFORMANCE LECTURE] *PYNK as we all go insane*, BFI Southbank

2017

[PROGRAMME] *Free White and 21*, ICA London

2015

[PROGRAMMER] *I am not Like you, I don't Feel Like you - Persona Swapping in Film Programming*, HOME Manchester

[PROGRAMMER] *Two films by Josephine Decker*

2012-2015

[PROGRAMMER] *I am Dora* Self-initiated publication and screening series focusing on female identity through the lens of psychoanalysis, feminist film theory, performance and autoethnography.

## **select employment**

2021

[HEAD OF PROGRAMMING] Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival (BFMAF)

2020

[FACILITATOR & ASSOCIATE RESEARCHER] Sour Lemons

2016 – 2020

[FILM PROGRAMME MANAGER] British Council

2013 – 2020

[PROGRAMMER-AT-LARGE] BFI London Film Festival

2014 – 2016

[FILM PROGRAMMER] Independent Cinema Office (ICO)

2006 – 2008

[PROGRAMME MANAGER] Black Cultural Archives (BCA)

## **boards & memberships**

2021 – 2023

[CO-OP MEMBER] Cubitt Artists

2017 – 2021

[CO-CHAIR] LUX

## **short courses and certifications**

[FACILITATOR] Level I certification *The Resilience Toolkit*

[PRACTITIONER] Level II *Politics of Trauma with Staci K Haines*

[PRACTITIONER] *Embodied Social Justice with Nkem Ndefo & Rae Johnson*

[PRACTITIONER] *Level I Narrative Therapy* with Institute of Narrative Therapy, London

[FACILITATOR] *Advanced Tree of Life* with PHOLA

[PRACTITIONER] Immersion with *Centre for Collective Wisdom*

## **education**

*MA Cultural Heritage Studies* with Distinction University College London

*BA Honours Classical Studies: First Class Honours* University of Bristol (Received Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Scholarship for academic excellence)