

Press release
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Arnolfini announces 2020 programme with focus on stories of migration



Angelica Mesiti, *ASSEMBLY*, 2019 (production still) three channel installation in architectural amphitheatre.
HD video projections, colour, six-channel mono sound, 25 mins, dimensions variable.
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Arnolfini today announces its Winter/Spring 2020 programme. With a focus on experiences and stories of migration, the first season of the year at Bristol's international centre for contemporary art sees the presentation of Australia's 2019 Venice Biennale artist Angelica Mesiti's *ASSEMBLY* alongside emerging, Bristol-based artist Amak Mahmoodian.

The announcement follows the relaunch of the exhibitions programme at Arnolfini in September 2019, with *Still I Rise: Feminisms, Gender, Resistance – Act 3* exploring the role that women have played in the history of resistance movements, as well as alternative forms of living from a gendered perspective. Since opening, *Still I Rise* has attracted 300k+ visitors to Arnolfini.

Following an internationally acclaimed presentation at the 2019 Venice Biennale, Arnolfini is delighted to present Angelica Mesiti's *ASSEMBLY* (18 Jan – 26 April 2020). This three-channel video, installed within an architectural setting inspired by the historical shape of the community circle and amphitheatre, originally formed part of the Australia National Pavilion at the Biennale.

ASSEMBLY begins as an evolving set of translations from the written word to stenographic codes then music, and performance. Filmed in the Senate chambers of Italy and Australia, the three screens

of *ASSEMBLY* travel through the corridors, meeting rooms and parliaments of government while performers, representing the multitude of ancestries that constitute cosmopolitan Australia, gather, disassemble and re-unite, demonstrating the strength and creativity of a plural community.

Amak Mahmoodian's *Zanjir* (18 Jan – 22 Mar) explores complex ideas about identity, home, exile and family. Building on a photobook of the same name, the exhibition will be the first complete gallery presentation of the project, bringing it into a gallery setting in a celebration of a major new voice in Bristol's visual arts scene.

The Winter/Spring 2020 programme will be delivered by Executive Director Gary Topp. It is a wide-ranging programme of exceptional artistic encounters and experiences of internationally significant art, delivered through commissioning, co-productions, partnerships and touring productions. Around these central exhibitions, Arnolfini's spring season will feature a range of projects – residencies, performances, talks, screenings, and collaborations – that unpack and expand the central themes of *ASSEMBLY* and *Zanjir*. This includes music, film and live performance in collaboration with a variety of partners including Forced Entertainment, South West Silents, Bristol New Music, Asian Arts Agency, and Mayfest.

One of the core drivers for Arnolfini in 2020 will be the dynamics of its new relationship with the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), with support from Arts Council England until 2022. This will include an ongoing series of events, discussions, and wider programming that explores the opportunities that combining a major university with a high profile cultural institution, within the setting of such an active and creative city, can generate.

Gary Topp, Executive Director at Arnolfini said:

“We've had a great response to *Still / Rise* this Autumn and we are now keen to broaden our programme further to appeal to even wider audiences. We're opening our first season of 2020 with two powerful exhibitions from Angelica Mesiti and Amak Mahmoodian and we will be working with many partners across Bristol, the UK and worldwide to bring a range of shows and events welcoming more people into Arnolfini.”

- ENDS -

For more information about Arnolfini contact Four Culture.

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Additional images are available [here](#)

Angelica Mesiti (b. 1976) lives and works between Paris and Sydney. She has previously held solo exhibitions at the Palais de Tokyo Paris, MAXXI Rome, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, O Space, Aarhus, Williams College Museum of Art Massachusetts, and Nikolaj Kunsthal Copenhagen. Her work is held in national and international collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, FRAC Franche-Comté France, and Kadist Art Foundation Paris/San Francisco. **ASSEMBLY** was presented at Biennale, Venice in 2019.

Angelica Mesiti is represented in Australia by Anna Schwartz Gallery and in Paris by Galerie Allen.

Amak Mahmoodian is an artist born in Shiraz and lives in Bristol, UK. In 2015, she completed a practice-based doctorate in photography at the University of South Wales, having previously studied at the Art University of Tehran. Her work questions Western notions of identity, expressing personal stories that pertain to wider social issues which draws on her experiences in the Middle East, Asia and the West. Her previous project *Shenasnameh*, was widely exhibited internationally and the accompanying artist photobook won multiple awards and was featured in publications including *TIME*, *Foam magazine* and the *Guardian* amongst others.

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is a pioneer of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious programme of visual art, performance, dance, film and music. Housed in a Grade II listed, accessible building at the heart of the harbourside, Arnolfini is an inspiring public space for contemporary arts and learning, welcoming over half a million visitors each year and offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all. An internationally-renowned institution, Arnolfini supports and develops work by living artists, investigating their influences and aspirations, and celebrates the heritage and wide-reaching impact of the organisation by sharing a 60 year archive of exhibition slides, publications and artist book collection with the public and artists, inspiring new commissions. In 2019, Arnolfini relaunched its major exhibition programme with *Still I Rise*. Arnolfini is an independent organisation and part of the University of the West of England, Bristol.

About UWE Bristol

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) has a global and inclusive outlook, with approximately 30,000 students and strong industry networks and connections with over 1,000 employers. Research at UWE Bristol focuses on real world problems and the University plays a pivotal role in the regional economy. With over £300 million invested in infrastructure, buildings and facilities across all Campuses, UWE Bristol is creating a place for learning that is innovative, ambitious, connected, enabling and inclusive. UWE Bristol is ranked 28th in the Guardian university league table, as well as 11th in the UK for student satisfaction, and has recently been awarded the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 2018, achieving GOLD Standard.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. They support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)