

**EXCLUSIVE: Director Matilda Green on
her love for the Norwich creative scene
and her new project 'Contact Hours'**

Issue 402

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Film

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VENUE
Arts and Culture



Editorials



Lily Taylor
Venue Co-Editor

Sankavi Naresh
Venue Co-Editor

I remember that in my goodbye editorial from last year, I left you all with a quote from Prince himself... 'It's time we all reach out for something new.' Little did I know my 'something new' was going to be taking on the role of Venue Co-Editor this year. I'm not going to lie to you, I did not envisage myself being in this position this year. If it wasn't for accidentally bumping into this year's Co-Editor in Chief Jamie Bryson on the library stairwell back in the May, I probably wouldn't even be here. We had a quick catch-up, and I mentioned that I had decided to stay on at UEA to do a master's (yes, I know, the classic panic master's student). I then went to Campus Kitchen to get some food and heard my phone ping. It was Jamie, asking if I would be interested in being a Venue Co-Editor for the coming academic year.

While I was seriously flattered, I knew it was something I would have to consider. I wasn't even sure I had the capability to do it: although I was Music Editor last year, my InDesign skills were questionable, and I also knew this role would come with a new level of responsibility. Yet, here I am, and honestly, I am so glad I said yes. Working on this issue has obviously come with its challenges, especially since not all of us were back at university when creating it. However, it has shown me what I am capable of, both in terms of creativity and leadership. I am very proud of this issue and excited for the issues to come. I am also looking forward to working closely with my Co-Editor Sankavi, who I am lucky enough to have called a friend before we even started this journey. Together, we aspire to make this year the best year for Venue yet!

Welcome to Venue! I'm Sankavi, one of the Co-Editors of Venue alongside Lily! :) Together, we aim to create a space where creativity thrives and diverse voices in the arts can be showcased. I've always had an overarching passion for the arts, and what better way to indulge in that than through Venue? Whether it's through film, music, literature, or performance, I believe the arts have the power to inspire and bring people together. Venue is more than just a publication—it's a community. We're here to uplift emerging talent and inspire readers. We're dedicated to making Venue a space that reflects the rich tapestry of both UEA and Norwich. This year, we're particularly excited to explore new themes, introduce collaborative projects, and push the boundaries of what Venue can

offer. From exclusive interviews to artist spotlights, event coverage, and more, we want to ensure that every issue resonates with our readers. With this being our first in-print issue, we're excited for you to explore what we've put together. Hopefully, you'll find something here that sparks your imagination or fosters a conversation! I'm incredibly excited for the year ahead and can't wait to see what we'll accomplish together! If you've got any questions, ideas, or contributions, don't hesitate to reach out to me, Lily or one of our section editors. Let's make this an unforgettable year for Venue!

Polly Dye
Venue Senior Writer

Hello, my name is Polly and I am so excited to be the Senior Writer for Venue this year! I am a second-year English Literature student which I once never thought would be the case. In school, I became disheartened by the prevalent societal belief that creative subjects are not valuable and so I convinced myself that I wanted to become a lawyer (I watched Legally Blonde once). Whilst this is an impressive career, I eventually realised that it was not suited to my personality and so I embraced my childhood passion for reading and pursued an English degree. With my writing this year, I aim to remind you, reader, to have faith in the arts and your own creativity. I hope that my passion will inspire yours and I wish to remind you that despite what some may say, the arts are an incredibly precious piece of our society.

Aside from being a bibliophile, I enjoy immersing myself in all sorts of creative media. I love watching films (Period Dramas are my favourite), listening to music, going to the theatre and exploring museums and art galleries. I'm not very artistic, but I do love journaling and scrapbooking and I usually accompany this with a mug of herbal tea. Perhaps I could also describe myself as a photographer, if being a photographer included endless photo-taking of my cat's various adorable sleeping positions!

I am extraordinarily excited to bring these passions and interests to life in Venue this academic year and am eager to expand my own understanding and appreciation by reading and engaging with the work of others. I can't wait to celebrate the arts with you all!

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In Conversation
with Matilda
Green: Page 14



Credit: Matilda Green
(including front cover)

Venue Design by Lily Taylor





What's On

Week Commencing 16th of September

- Ayahuasca & Art of the Amazon at the Sainsbury Centre Exploring the link between indigenous art and ayahuasca from September 14th.
- Power Plants: Intoxicants, Stimulants, and Narcotics at the Sainsbury Centre : A thought-provoking exhibition on the impact of drugs on society from September 14th.
- "Murder on the Orient Express" at Norwich Theatre Royal: A stage adaptation of Agatha Christie's classic mystery novel playing between 17th and 21st of September.
- Pronoun Badge Making - An inclusive crafting event to promote self-expression and gender inclusivity in The Hive on September 17th.
- Societies Fair - Explore UEA's wide range of student societies and find your community at the SportsPark on September 17th.
- Hacker T Dog House Party - A fun-filled evening with the iconic Hacker T. Dog from CBBC at the Nick Rayns LCR on September 17th.
- Wellbeing Dog Walk - Relax and enjoy a walk around campus with adorable dogs –meeting at The Security Lodge on September 18th.
- Live & Local - your monthly chance to catch the hottest new live acts on the local circuit, and luckily for you it takes place right on campus at the Blue Bar on September 18th.
- Fist Club - a queer cabaret and pro-wrestling night, aka your new favourite pastime. Feast your eyes on a dynamite mash-up of fantastical comedy, sensational drag performers & hard-hitting live wrestling from the most exciting grapplers around at the Nick Rayns LCR on September 20th.
- A-List - the biggest and best student night in Norwich, with great music, great people, and great times at the Nick Rayns LCR on September 21st.
- Marston Marsh Welcome Walk - A guided nature walk organized for new students around the UEA Broads and Marston Marsh Nature Reserve on September 22nd.

Week Commencing 23rd of September

- International Students Crafternoon Tea & Film Screening - A relaxed event for international students to enjoy some crafting, tea, and a film screening on September 24th
- Karaoke Night - An evening of karaoke fun at the SU Blue Bar, perfect for students looking to unwind and showcase their vocal talent on September 24th
- Go Global Culture Fest - A vibrant event celebrating different cultures at The Hive, , featuring music, art, and global performances September 25th.
- The Howlers - A gritty indie rock concert at The Waterfront Studio, part of a lineup of emerging bands on September 25th.
- Elles Bailey - Enjoy blues and rock with this talented British artist at The Waterfront on September 26th.
- The Last Dinner Party - A unique live music performance at the Nick Rayns LCR, UEA, featuring alternative and indie sounds on September 27th.
- Kenny Thomas: Behind The Groove Club Night – A soulful night with classic R&B and groove at Epic Studios on September 27th
- Propaganda UV Party - A rock and indie UV-themed party, part of The Waterfront's regular Friday night club events on September 27th.
- Meltdown Alternative Club Night - The region's longest-running alternative and rock night, held every Saturday at The Waterfront on September 28th.
- A-List - the biggest and best student night in Norwich, with great music, great people, and great times at the Nick Rayns LCR on September 28th.
- Tom McRae – The English singer-songwriter will be performing his melancholic and reflective music at The Waterfront Studio on September 29th

Week Commencing 30th September

- The Libertines – The iconic British rock band will be performing at UEA's Nick Rayns LCR on October 4th
- A-List - the biggest and best student night in Norwich, with great music, great people, and great times at the Nick Rayns LCR on October 5th.
- Local Makers Market - weekend-long celebration of local artisans at our Maker's Market, plus street food & DJ's the Shoe Factory Social Club from 4th to 6th of October.

Week Commencing 7th October

- Sea Girls Concert – A lively indie-rock performance by the London-based band at UEA's Nick Rayns LCR venue on October 7th.
- An Evening with Andy Hamilton – A comedy and Q&A session with comedian and writer Andy Hamilton at Epic Studios on October 9th
- ABBA Disco Wonderland – A tribute disco night celebrating ABBA, at UEA's Nick Rayns LCR on October 11th
- Wunderhorse – The up-and-coming indie band will perform at UEA's Nick Rayns LCR on October 12th
- A-List - the biggest and best student night in Norwich, with great music, great people, and great times at the Nick Rayns LCR on October 12th.

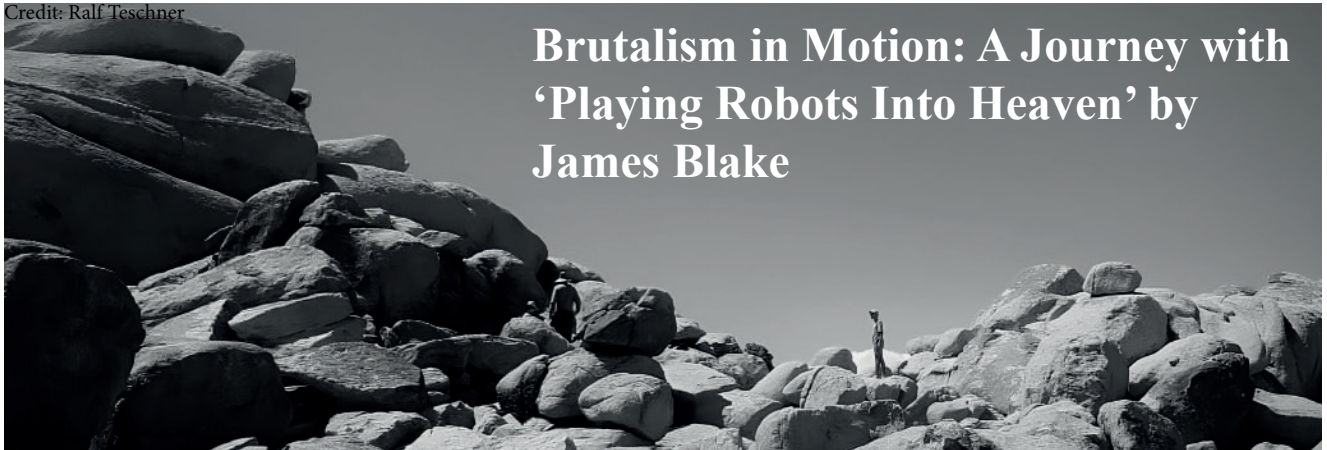
Meet the Editor: Adam Teschner

I'm a film student working as music editor – how does that work? Well, as I dedicate my career to crafting two-hour-long experiences, it's fascinating to me that a musician can deliver theirs in minutes. My brain shouldn't be able to comprehend the essence of an album – it's like you cut up a movie into its individual scenes and gave the consumer the option to buy them separately or as a whole – but this nonsensicality is probably why I gravitate towards them.

I wasn't raised on music in the way many others were, only being fed what the radio played on school runs. So, I quickly acquired a pop sensibility; the first album I listened to was Ariana Grande's *Sweetener*. My burning passion for music was ignited only two and a half years ago, when on a train ride to Brighton I listened to *Graduation*, my first Kanye West album. A whole new world of storytelling opened up to me through the lyricism, production and pop culture history as I worked through Kanye's entire discography (which luckily did not include *Vultures* at the time). To this day, the hip-hop genre comprises most of the 367 albums I've listened to, but I keep my taste open. In other words, I have a healthy mix of Lupe Fiasco, Charli XCX and BTS.

To close, I'd like to reveal to you one of my horcruxes. Below is the story of how a British electronic release became my favourite album of all time.

Credit: Ralf Teschner



Brutalism in Motion: A Journey with 'Playing Robots Into Heaven' by James Blake

By Adam Teschner

September 7th 2023 was a date I had been looking forward to for a while, not only because my dad and I were set to visit Joshua Tree National Park for the first time, but because three album releases had booked my calendar. My dad's taste skews more towards pop, so Olivia Rodrigo's *Guts* got our first listen. The endless desert highways on the way to the park were now coloured with the excruciating turmoil of Olivia's coming of age. Rising star Teezo Touchdown had released his debut album, however his thrashy lead single had left my dad confused when I played it to him the night before. So, as the park's rolling hills and looming boulders started to make their appearance on our voyage, I pressed play on James Blake's new album *Playing Robots Into Heaven*, an experience which stays with me to this day.

James Blake appeared on my radar after a number of high-profile collaborations in the hip-hop world. Blake claimed an ethereal presence alongside the harsh climates of Metro Boomin or Travis Scott works, a contrast that immediately made sense. It was obvious that Blake had come from a singer-songwriter background, so how intriguing was it that he ventured into rap? What direction would he possibly take as a soloist?

I would come to learn that James Blake is an esteemed electronic musician – this album acts as a return to form after years of more commercial endeavours – but *Robots* feels first and foremost like a cinematic work of sci-fi, presenting a deeply affected soul to a cold, synthesiser wall: a world to get lost in. The strange arrangement of words which make up the album's title can function as a literal depiction. Blake's songs become dirges for an android funeral; but these words – *Playing, Robots, Heaven* – conjure up equally vivid concepts in abstraction: ceremony, dance, songmanship; synthesisers, artificial, intelligence; weightlessness, grief, ascension. With such exciting pieces of worldbuilding both in the concepts and visuals, I rushed to contextualise every song: The synth of the lead in 'Tell Me' sounds like an alien distress message beaming down to an Earth unable to decipher it, and who is Blake 'Asking To Break' from? The mythical spirits in the 'Night Sky'?

Like any good work of sci-fi, *Robots* uses its mechanical aesthetics to study the coexistence of man and machine. We see them seamlessly collaborate on 'Loading', streamlining yearning vocals over a pulsating electronic movement to encapsulate the sensory drama of psychedelics – ironic for a robot. Afterwards comes the fallout of their separation: the robots chaotically form 'Big Hammer', while Blake is haunted by a regret-filled relationship with his father on 'If You Can Hear Me'.

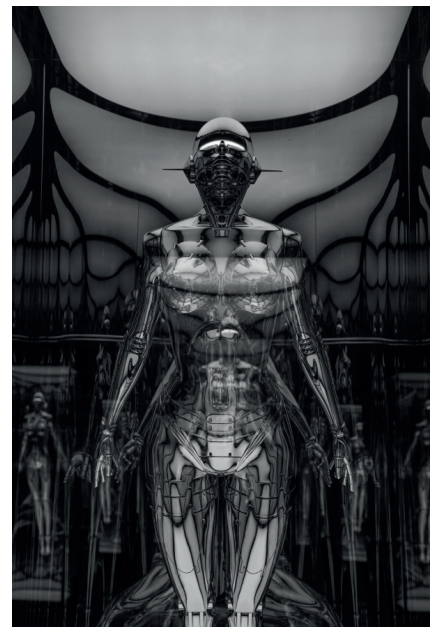
This conflict persists throughout the whole experience but is never resolved: Blake struggles to pronounce his truest emotions through the expressive spirits of 'I Want You To Know' and 'Fire The Editor' that are kept timid by the mortal world, the latter a conceptual ballad about trusting instincts. Blake's deep training with analogue synths allows him to express the nuances of these stories beyond traditional song structures, but he integrates enough genre cues from both electronic and pop to keep the work accessible – these songs sit in an exhilarating uncanny valley.

Finding the man vs. machine dynamic endlessly fascinating, it should come as no surprise then that the hip-hop genre which grew to fill my playlists was not my first love, instead arriving in the form of a famously robotic electronic duo – Daft Punk. Despite being aware of them since my childhood, I only experienced the glitzy chaos of 'Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger' for the first time at 15 years old. After hurrying to unearth their discography, I not only found entertaining music but a fascinating philosophical conversation which took place almost entirely non-verbally. Discovery's world outlined an exciting collaboration between humans and robots as classic funk samples synced harmoniously with warm synths. *Random Access Memories* told a sombre parting of ways, as machines developed consciousness and with it a tragically impossible desire to discover humanity. But perhaps my favourite of their stories comes in their 2005 album, *Human After All*. As the title suggests, the album forged the humble beginnings of RAM's existential line of questioning but in a far more hostile manner. Populated by track titles like 'The Brainwasher' and 'Television Rules The Nation', *Human After All* alarmed that age-old insecurities about technology's global takeover were finally showing signs of truth.

So, it's easy to see why I resonate with the world of *Playing Robots Into Heaven*. There's a tragedy in the fact that robots could construct such an entertaining affair as Blake's 'Big Hammer' or Daft Punk's 'Robot Rock'. On *Human After All*'s closer, simply titled 'Emotion', a fleeting humanity struggles to materialise in a world so devoid of it – this same spirit lives on in the voice of 'I Want You To Know'.

The soundscape James Blake offers is equally beautiful as it is terrifying, with a brutalist aesthetic to fit right at home on UEA's campus. As *Robots* celebrated its first anniversary just over a week ago, I truly understood the idea that this album would stick with me for the rest of my life. Is love truly valuable? What is my purpose? I will be humbled by letting the androids mirror my same existential melancholy, only dressed in metallic wiring. Safe to say, my dad didn't like the album.

Credit: Unsplash





Here's The Thing: Fontaines D.C.'s 'Romance' will be a Favourite for a Long Time

By Lily Taylor

It has been a busy few years for Fontaines D.C. Since bursting onto the music scene in 2019 with their debut album *Dogrel*, the Dublin band have released a string of critically acclaimed albums, including 2020's *A Hero's Death* and 2022's *Skinty Fia*. Combining muddy guitar sounds with frontman Grian Chatten's cynical lyrics and steely exterior, Fontaines have cemented themselves as the gritty Irish punk band this century has been missing. With this in mind, the recent release of 2024's *Romance* is likely not what fans were expecting. Although the record maintains their signature punk style, Fontaines incorporate an entirely new sound into their music which is heavily reminiscent of the Britpop and 90s alt-rock years. These influences are particularly prominent in the hit single 'Starburster', a punchy, aggressive number that is the musical equivalent to a panic attack. The band's new sound is also evident in the spiky 'Here's the Thing', in

which Chatten experiments with his range, hitting anxiety-induced falsettos. Some fans may perceive the shift as an identity crisis for the band, yet this is hard to believe: in fact, Fontaines have never seemed as comfortable as they currently do in their *Romance* era. Chatten himself has described the album as "neon and ridiculous," and festival season saw the Dublin quintet reflect their vibrant new music through their stage presence, with Chatten frequently donning neon green tracksuits and guitarist Carlos O'Connell dying his hair a shocking red. Despite trading their usual muted colours in for the complete opposite, Fontaines have adopted that 90s Britpop ego that makes their album seem like a natural evolution for the band. This charming confidence alongside their energy-fuelled songs on *Romance* elevate them as future stadium stars. *Romance* is particularly striking in its ability to be both hopeful and cynical at the same time, and this is best reflected in the most lyrically

thoughtful tracks. The title track sees Chatten at his most brooding, as he asks, "Maybe romance is a place / For Me / And You." Yet, this endearing question is accompanied by an ominous piano melody and murky, distorted guitar which emphasises the doom surrounding the singer's sense of hope. The track 'In the Modern World' sees a similar contradiction take place, as the singer contemplates feeling numb and alive at the same time. The dreamy quality of this track fuels its romanticising of the world, whilst Chatten's lyrics do the opposite: "I don't feel anything in the modern world." This contrast is thought-provoking and engaging, perhaps acting as the epicentre of all Chatten's emotions explored on the album. However, the most intricate and loveable track comes at the end of the album. The nostalgic 'Favourite' sees Chatten look back on his past with a fondness, with an unforgettable guitar riff that is more playful than aggressive. This song is the most hopeful on the



album, and by closing the album with it we are left with a sense of possibility that leaves us feeling fulfilled.

Fontaines D.C. prove romance really is a place: in between Chatten's brooding we see these glimpses of hope that Fontaines haven't shown us before, and this has made us fall in love with them even more.

The Return of Oasis

By Sankavi Naresh

I won't "look back in anger" at my failure to secure tickets for the long-awaited Oasis reunion tour, but I'm sure the rest of the UK is also up in arms over the unfair pricing of tickets on Ticketmaster. The legendary Britpop band, fronted by brothers Liam and Noel Gallagher, has returned – and it seems ticket touting has returned with them. As Oasis gear up for their highly anticipated reunion tour, there's a buzz in the air that feels distinctly familiar. The long-awaited return of one of the UK's most iconic bands has reignited not only excitement for their music but also a revival of a cultural movement known as "Cool Britannia". Back in the 1990s, "Cool Britannia" was more than just a catchy term — it was a celebration of British art, fashion, music, and identity, with Oasis standing at the epicentre. The movement encapsulated a renewed pride in British culture, Oasis, with their unfiltered North

ern charm, were the poster boys of this cultural renaissance. Their rivalry with Blur, their acclaimed albums, and their outspokenness made them household names. Ticketmaster's pricing system, fuelled by dynamic pricing, has sparked outrage across the nation, leaving many feeling priced out of the opportunity to see one of the biggest British bands of all time. Prices are soaring well beyond what the average fan can afford, making tickets more accessible to resellers and touts than to those who have been waiting decades for this reunion. This isn't just a problem for Oasis fans: ticket touting and unfair resale practices have plagued the live music industry for years. But in a country where Oasis is a national treasure, the current ticketing system feels like a betrayal to those who have grown up with the band's anthems as the soundtrack to their lives. Whether you're a diehard Oasis fan or just going to see a live performance of



"Wonderwall," I hope you had a better chance at nabbing tickets than I have! Across social media, memes have gone viral, with one popular meme imagining fans waiting in Ticketmaster's notoriously long queue, only for a notification to pop up saying "Unfortunately Oasis have split up whilst you were in the queue." The memes are in full force, but it's frustrating knowing that some Oasis fans now face a financial barrier to what might be a once-in-a-lifetime gig. After all, this reunion comes after years of speculation about whether the turbulent relationship between Liam and Noel Gallagher could ever be repaired. Will they make it to

the tour in one piece? Or are we "outta time?" That's what makes this reunion tour such a big deal. It's not just about the music — it's about witnessing history. Oasis was the soundtrack to a generation. Hits like "Champagne Supernova," "Live Forever," and of course, "Wonderwall" are timeless classics that defined Britpop and cemented their place as one of the most influential bands of all time. So, if you were lucky enough to score tickets, congratulations! For the rest of us, we'll have to wait and see if more dates are added — or if the brothers even make it through the tour without imploding.

Who Had 2024's Songs of the Summer?

As the summer draws to a close, we asked our writers which song summed it all up.

'Sandpaper' by Zach Bryan feat. Bruce Springsteen

'Winter was a drag, but spring was a friend. I'll love you 'til the summer comes back again.' Whilst not a chart topper, this electrically nostalgic 'I'm on Fire' inspired track did mark Springsteen's debut on the Hot Country Chart — an achievement in itself for someone who's seen a few more than '27

seasons'. The TikTok Billboard Top 50 might not be where I turn for my music recommendations, but seeing an American icon paired with a country-adjacent songwriter suggests that it hasn't just been a Brat summer, it's been a Bryan summer too. — Daisy Innes

'Girls' by The Dare

The Dare's 'Girls' is a fun, punchy, upbeat tune evocative of the New York club scene of the 90s and early 00s, whose rise in popularity over a year after its initial release

comes in direct correlation with the revival of indie sleaze in fashion, media, and all-around aesthetics. Because of this, The Dare's sound is both the perfect complement to and contrast for Charli XCX's Brat summer. — Micah Petyt

'Good Luck, Babe!' by Chappell Roan

Rising pop star Chappell Roan masterfully combines vulnerable lyrics with vibrant 80s beats in her recent hit, that urges a female

lover to embrace her queerness. Roan tells her kissing "a hundred boys in bars" won't "stop the feeling," creating an empowering message for listeners. Repeatedly trilling "good luck, babe," Roan sarcastically encourages her lover's endeavour, making the song both brutally humorous and devastating. This skilful duality, along with its crippling relatability and jovial rhythms, defines Roan's single as a song of the summer as well as an embodiment of pop perfection. — Polly Dye.



Editor: Isaac Arif

It is hard to explain my love for film in a way that doesn't sound extreme, but I'll give it a go. I've built a life surrounding this medium: Studying film for A-Levels, working at a cinema for two years, and now being here at UEA on the Film Studies and English Literature course. All of this has led me to become the 2024/25 film editor, an opportunity I still can't quite believe I've achieved.

Like most people, I've always enjoyed films, but something shifted when I saw *Lady Bird* (2017, Greta Gerwig). Its simplicity made me appreciate film for more than its entertainment value and

moved me to explore cinema in all its forms – from American indies to global and queer films. In 2020 alone, I watched a whopping 223 films, not even including re-watches. While I was that “over-eager” film student, I'm grateful for that early passion, as it's what brought me here today. Over the subsequent years, working at a cinema and eventually coming to UEA, my love for film has only been strengthened. I've discovered personal favourites like *I'm a Cyborg, But That's Ok* (2006, Park Chan Wook) and *Phantom Thread* (2017, Paul Thomas Anderson), which have defined sections of my early adulthood and

made me the person I am today. Through film, I see myself and the world more clearly, a tool I feel is invaluable. As your film editor, I will bring my passion for art and the power of cinema to celebrate a medium that's still just beginning.

Fresh Favourites: The Most Underrated Films of 2024

By Micah Petyt

Right off the bat, 2024 has been a great year for film so far. Films such as *The Iron Claw* (Sean Durkin), *The Zone of Interest* (Jonathan Glazer) and *Poor Things* (Yorgos Lanthimos) have been widely viewed and critically acclaimed, but others have slipped through the cracks.

All of Us Strangers (dir. Andrew Haigh)

While this received some recognition upon its release, it is one of those that was forgotten when awards season came around. This quiet and emotional film features breathtaking and heart-breaking performances by Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal as Scott's character, Adam, explores his queerness and relationship with his deceased parents while visiting a time-capsuled version of his childhood home. The entire narrative is perfectly tied up in two equally emotional endings, which cement it as one of 2024's best.

Problemista (dir. Julio Torres)

Though highly anticipated prior to its original release date, *Problemista* was severely delayed due to the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, hurting its cinematic release. A surrealist A24 comedy set in NYC, *Problemista* follows Alejandro (Torres), an aspiring toy designer desperate to find a visa sponsor to stay in the US. He starts working for the eccentric Elizabeth (Tilda Swinton), whose artist husband's cryogenically frozen body Alejandro must care for. Cleverly written and brilliantly directed, *Problemista* pokes fun at the

ridiculous number of hoops immigrants need to jump through in order to stay in the US.

Lisa Frankenstein (dir. Zelda Williams)

A love letter to 1980s cheesy horror, screenwriter Diablo Cody's latest film, set in the same universe as her popular *Jennifer's Body*, is quirky, gory, and all-around fun. Lisa (Kathryn Newton) is a high school outcast until the corpse of her graveyard crush (Cole Sprouse) comes to life, and together, they go on a murderous rampage. From Lisa's obsession with *The Cure* to 'On the Wings of Love', which plays during the final kill, *Lisa Frankenstein* encapsulates the kitschy comedy of cult classics that few successfully attain nowadays.

The Holdovers (dir. Alexander Payne)

Considering Da'Vine Joy Randolph's Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role as Mary Lamb, it would be inaccurate to label *The Holdovers* as entirely forgotten. However, the excellence of this movie is something that cannot go without mention. In this soon-to-be Christmas staple, a grumpy teacher, Paul (Paul Giamatti), in New England is tasked to stay at school over winter break to supervise the students who aren't going home. The heart and soul of this film lies in the relationship between the teacher and one of the students, Angus (Dominic Sessa). The New England backdrop is accentuated by the cinematography, which genuinely encapsulates the 1970s. With only a few months left in the year, 2024

has proven time and time again that there is a space in the industry for fresh, creative, and original ideas at a time of constant reboots, sequels, and spinoffs, and the release schedule for the next few years shows that this new era is far from over.

In a time of constant reboots, sequels, and spinoffs, the release schedule for the next few years shows that this new era is far from over. Yet, with only a few months left in the year, 2024 has proven time and time again that there is space in the industry for fresh, creative, and original ideas.

How Studio Ghibli Films Reflect My Resilience

By Patryk Szalanski

Spirited Away (2001, Hayao Miyazaki) sees Chihiro accidentally enter a sea of spirits, where she initially feels powerless without her parents. Later, she learns resilience and inner strength. Similarly, in *My Neighbour Totoro* (1989, Hayao Miyazaki), Satsuki and Mei move house whilst their mum is in hospital. They soon meet Totoro and learn how to cope with difficult times and the loss of parental guidance. Behind these moving stories is Studio Ghibli, the legendary animation

studio that has been producing emotionally complex films since 1985.

During my time at UEA, I have experienced lots of changes due to estrangement, studying, and trying not to become homeless. These pressures have been a massive weight, but gaining resilience, determination, and eventually trust in others has helped. People I've encountered, from local charities and student services to friends across campus, have mirrored

relationships within the Ghibli films. Good people met along the way, some to never be seen again, but valuable in contribution to the journey.

Studio Ghibli's latest, *The Boy and The Heron* (2023, Hayao Miyazaki), helped me to understand my own feelings. Even if that film felt fantastical and surreal to most viewers, to me, it invoked the feelings of needing to rise up and show courage in the face of adversities and reminded me of

the people who sacrificed their time to help my situation. In the end, allowing myself to live a free and authentic life, just like the protagonist Mahito who took a decision to make a change, which, in the end, allowed him to continue his life.

These films perfectly reflect the feelings I have as an estranged student, and I hope to find more of myself in their legendary filmography.

Upcoming Releases: September-October

by Isaac Arif



New Releases:

The Substance (dir. Coralie Fargeat)

Release date: 20th September
The Outrun (dir. Nora Fingscheidt)

Release date: 27th September
Megalopolis (dir. Francis Ford Coppola)

Release date: 27th September

Re-Releases:

The Dark Knight Trilogy (2005-12, Christopher Nolan)

Release date: 21st September
Shaun of the Dead (2004, Edgar Wright)

Release date: 28th September
Showing at Odeon

10 Things I Hate About You (1999, Gil Junger)

Release date: 4th October
Showing at Cinema City

Paddington & Paddington 2 (2014-17, Paul King)

Release date: 11th October
Showing at Cinema City



Cinema City: The Heart of Film in Norwich

By Isaac Arif

Photo Credits: Kelvin Johnston



Only a short bus journey away from UEA, in Norwich's city centre, is the beautiful Cinema City. This quaint 3-screen cinema is the place where film has thrived for decades. Now owned by Picturehouse, Cinema City has maintained its historic passion for film, Norwich and bringing people together. Whether you want to see the latest arthouse film, catch a classic you've waited too long to watch, take your dog along to that blockbuster everyone is raving about (yes, they hold dog-friendly screenings!), enjoy a coffee and study session in their cafe, or take up a screenwriting class in The Sir John Hurt Centre, Cinema City has something for you.

My own love for this cinema started in early 2020, only a month before lockdown. I was lucky enough to see *The Lighthouse* (2019, Robert Eggers) on screen 2, which was amazing, of course. But more importantly, discovering the plush seats, the buzz of excitement lacking at multiplexes and the charm of the building converted me into a loyal Cinema City goer, now getting anyone that will tag along to visit or going by myself a few times a month. In various seats across their screens, I've had the pleasure of watching new favourites, laughing, crying, and finding a deeper appreciation for film.

I feel very lucky to say that below is an interview between myself and Jenny Alison, the marketing manager at Cinema City. We had a chat about the cinema's work, what they can offer to you as students, and how they immerse themselves in the local community.

What does independent film and the highlighting of world cinema mean to Cinema City?

"It's important to us to have a breadth of programming that reflects the Cinema City ethos

and the city's population. Norwich is a diverse

multicultural city, which is becoming more so because of the student intake. Therefore, we are trying to make our programming more inclusive to reflect that diversity. Plus, this is a way for locals to experience different cultures, languages, and countries that they might not have visited before. And, especially now, it's more important than ever for us to empathise with other people, see how others live, and appreciate that just because someone looks different or speaks differently to us, that doesn't mean that we don't have shared experiences."

How does Cinema City bring together film lovers and the wider Norwich community?

"We do that through community engagement projects with organisations such as Knowledge NoW, Norwich Pride, Leeway Domestic Violence & Abuse Services, and lots of other cultural organisations. That's our way of embedding ourselves and becoming vital to the Norwich community. So it's much more than film. We also combine film screenings with talks or hold drinks receptions, so we combine lots of different elements to ensure we are very much at the heart of the community. We've also been hosting more film festivals over the last few years, as they have been growing slowly each year, which is fantastic. This building has only been known as Cinema City since 1978, but before that, there were films exhibited here. The Colman sisters, when they donated it to the city in 1925, did it for the express purpose of enriching the people of the city through films and other events. So it is really important for us to carry that legacy on; it is for the community, and it is about education, film and cultural enrichment."

What can Cinema City offer to students? Why should they visit?

"We've got so much going on at the moment, so starting off with the student membership.

It's £20.00 for a full year, which includes 2 free tickets and so that in itself, you know you're already getting it cheaper. So even if you were to come only that once, you know you're saving money, and you get 25% off food and drinks all throughout the year. We also have a scheme called Under 25, which is for anyone aged 16 to 25. It's free to sign up, giving you tickets for only £4.99 Monday to Thursday. On top of

that, anyone can access our cafe bar, which has free Wi-Fi, and lots of people can sit with their laptops or sit and chat. It's starting to become a cultural hub where people meet, so it's fantastic for that."

Looking back over recent years at Cinema City, what is a stand-out event or screening?

"I've been here for 10 years, so there are many, but the one thing that really stands out was when the National Theatre Fleabag event was taking place. It was live on all three sold-out screens. We had a gin bar set up in the courtyard and pictures of Guinea pigs all over, which was a lovely vibe. It was an amazing night because there were so many people that were excited and lots of new faces, which often adds to the buzz, because they're seeing the building for the first time."

As it is brilliantly put by Jenny Alison, Cinema City's rich history, brilliant programming, and student discounts make it worth visiting during your time at UEA. It is a bucket list essential for cinephiles and casual cinemagoers alike.



Alien Romulus - The Rebirth of Terror in a Sci-Fi Icon

By Jade Drever

SPOILERS AHEAD!

After the disappointing prequels, I was nervous about the latest addition to the Alien universe. Set between *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986), *Alien: Romulus* (2024) fleshes out the canon, revealing what happened to the original xenomorph. It takes the franchise back to basics, without the convoluted philosophy of the prequels, and delivers on its promise of returning to its body horror, jump scare roots. The crew even had to turn their backs while filming the offspring birth scene as it was so gory.

While some found the blatant fan service and forced nostalgia an annoyance, I thoroughly enjoyed the references to the other films. They felt natural and furthered the plot. It is, however, a shame that a film focused on practical effects is ultimately taken down by an uncanny CGI rendering of the late *Alien* actor Ian Holm. While Andy's (David Jonsson) rendition of "Get away from her...you... b*tch." received a mix of

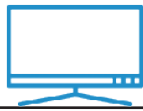
laughs and groans from my screening, I loved that he put his own spin on the iconic quote. Andy was by far the best character. His mix of dad jokes and ability to seamlessly switch from the lovable brother figure to the cold and calculated synthetic gave Jonsson the chance to flex his acting muscles. Isabela Merced also gave a truly 'scream queen' worthy performance, and I hope to see her in more horror.

No new *Alien* movie will ever beat the first two. However, *Alien: Romulus* is successful in breathing a new lease of life into the franchise. It invites a new generation of fans with its cast of up-and-coming young actors while still appealing to its original fanbase through its return to classic sci-fi horror. The design of the xenomorph and the offspring was outstanding and demonstrated that practical effects will always beat CGI in creating the most terrifying creatures.

This is what *Alien* is all about!

Credit: Unsplash





Meet the Editor: Guy Sutton

Greetings everyone. I seem to be the editor of the TV section for this year. It's difficult to discuss my relationship toward Television. I've managed to ably forge the reputation of being the one person who couldn't get into *Breaking Bad*, the person who stopped watching *Game of Thrones* after three episodes, (I will finish it someday), and the person who nonetheless somehow finished the first season of *House of the Dragon*, (I really liked it too!). I can't pretend that I'm an avid viewer of Television, but I'm still compelled by its ability to offer a unique form of storytelling, that other mediums simply can't replicate. If you were to ask me my favourite show, I would probably say those early seasons of *The Simpsons*, (yes, I see the irony, of praising the storytelling capabilities of TV

and loving a show which completely disregards it). I also acquired the reputation of having quite the knowledge of those early years. I've always loved its groundbreaking comedy, attention to characterisation, the supporting cast it builds, and its irreverent take on modern suburban life. Aside from that, I've always had a distant fascination with Television. Something of an outsider, interested in the commentary of shows, but never delving straight in. This is also my first time writing and editing for *Concrete*. So, it's going to be quite the experience. Just getting ready for the first issue had me reflecting, going, "I don't actually know what I'm doing." To be honest I doubt I'll ever get the hang of it. This year will most likely feel like hang-glid-

ing in blustery winds off Snowdon. But that's fine. I think a bit of chaos is natural for people and draws up some of the most interesting work. Plus, it makes everything just that little bit more exciting. I'm hoping that through this unfolding, some work that entertains, informs, compels, possibly re-evaluates (you never know), will be brought to light. Hopefully, you'll get the chance to experience the passion writers have for their favourite TV shows. And through that, indirectly experience how the unique way Television tells stories influences all kinds of people. It should prove to be an exciting year.

Credit: Unsplash



Slow Horses

Shifting the tone from comedy to espionage, *'Slow Horses'* adapts the *'Slough House'* novel series (a series I'm not familiar with). The ever-reliable Gary Oldman leads a group of disgraced MI5 agents relegated to monotonous pencil pushing in Slough House, a governmental dumping group dedicated to workplace drudgery and brainless tedium, where they're expected to retire out of frustration or plain boredom. This show offers you the chance to root for the ultimate underdogs as they get ensnared in corporate espionage and government conspiracy. That underdog nature may become quite appealing and indeed relatable. There's a large sensation going into a first year, that you yourself are an underdog up against formidable challenges. Just maybe, you'll find yourself relating to this rag-tag crew. Only on Apple TV+.

It's important to note that I haven't fully watched those last two shows, so if you hate them, that's on me. The big trouble you'll find yourself combating is the streaming services themselves. It's become a shambles of different sites, difficult to differentiate which ones are worthwhile. Nonetheless, these shows are all worth checking out for your new year.

New Year, New Shows

By Guy Sutton

Starting a new year at an entirely unfamiliar location and starting a new journey part of a massive institution can be an incredibly nerve-wracking moment in someone's life. It's even intimidating for those who are returning for another year. So, you should really start getting prepared for the coming year. Instead of heading out to meet new people, make new friends that will last your time at university, you should be getting your bearing on streaming services and figuring out which shows you would like to watch. Well luckily, I've compiled a list of shows, both ongoing and long since finished, that will hopefully make navigating the tricky business of university life that much more enjoyable and relaxing. Who knows, maybe these shows might become your go-to comfort watching in the future:

Ash Vs Evil Dead

A fantastic continuation of a cult classic horror/comedy franchise that reunites the original creators and its main star to thrust the iconic hero, Ash Williams, on a journey to the end of the world. This show is little-known, most people that I speak to about it haven't even heard of the iconic movie series that spawned it. It was unfortunately cancelled after its third season due to low ratings, despite considerable critical acclaim, finishing at an unfortunate cliff-hanger. However, the show is hilarious, violent, loveable, and audacious. Every episode is bursting with new ideas that are inventive, shocking, and wildly entertaining. This show is available on Netflix and is a great option for the month leading up to Halloween.

Bojack Horseman

An Original Netflix classic, just navigate the first season and you will be rewarded with one of the most thrillingly ambitious, emotionally wrenching yet scathingly funny animated shows of the current era. This show means a lot to millions of people, who watch it and rewatch it constantly throughout the year. It's surreal, satirical humour, and complex depiction of the human condition placed it among the most acclaimed and revered shows in Netflix's tedious backlog of original programmes. The legacy of the show has become apparent not too long after its fantastic conclusion. It has inspired many people to be more open about their mental health with others. The through-line of confronting mental health is an important idea that will resonate with a lot of students. It certainly did for me.

Only Murders in the Building

A highly acclaimed and much-loved Disney Plus series about a group of friends with a shared obsession with true crime podcasts, has just entered its fourth, highly anticipated season, making this the best month to start watching the show. It's a highly unique take on crime fiction, created by comedy legend Steve Martin, that delightfully pokes fun at true crime devotees, while also successfully spinning its own murder mystery. The show has now been renewed for a fifth season that will hopefully be released the next year. It's worth diving into, especially if you're interested in true crime or crime fiction. But it's not just limited to that specific demographic. If you're in need for a quick laugh, then this show will provide you with many for the rest of the year.

House of the Dragon Season Two: The Dragon Fire Burns Bright, but Ultimately Fizzles Out

By Charlie Jones

Summer 2024 saw the much-anticipated return of everyone's favourite dysfunctional TV family. Keeping Up with the Targaryens (or rather Season Two of *House of the Dragon*) came roaring back onto the small screen in June, before trailing off with a whimper in August. Season Two is by no means bad television, but is an unfortunate mixed bag, with explosive flashes of brilliance dampened by the same stagnant characterisation and plot lines that plagued the later seasons of *Game of Thrones*.

Slower, more character driven stories are a welcome reprieve in the franchise after the breakneck chaos of *GoT*'s nosedive, but the momentum sadly halts after Episode Four's *Battle at Rook's Rest*, the series' finest spectacle since *'Blackwater'*, twelve years ago. Yes, not all episodes of a season could (or should) include such an eye-catching, gut-wrenching set piece, but unlike last season, Season Two struggles to create tension when giant lizards are not breathing fire or clawing at each other's throats.

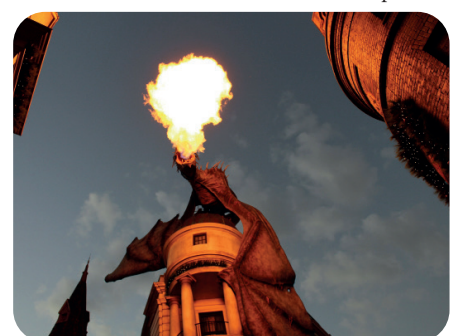
Ironically, where there are no dragons, the episodes are drag-on's, whether this comes from Corlys' painfully awkward catchups with his bastard son Alyn, or Daemon's spooky visions in Harrenhal. Daemon's Haunted Mansion is a particularly frustrating plot line, as there is strong character development here (in addition to the appearance of Brat Summer's unluckiest hero, Simon Strong), but it's stretched over far too many episodes to make his arc worth the wait.

Of course, the performances remain fantastic, with D'Arcy (Rhaenyra) and Cooke (Alicent) shining in their lead roles, but there are moments, particularly the Small Council scenes, where the gravitas of Conisidine's Viserys or the glorious scenery chewing of Ifans' Otto Hightower are keenly missed. Their brief appearances are among the highlights of Season Two and serve as reminders of not only the quality of Season One, but also the large, wing-shaped shadow cast over *HotD* as a whole.

The collapse in quality of its franchise forerunner leaves *HotD* with much to do to persuade its doubters (now including creator George R.R. Martin)

that it will not go the same way. The season finale's inclusion of White Walkers, living (or rather undead) reminders of *GoT*'s shambolic *'The Long Night'*, and the decision to end the episode with merely a trailer for the events of Season Three are bizarre choices, and the fear for fans is that, just as with its predecessor, *HotD* has peaked too soon.

Credit: Unsplash



My Relationship with The Boys Season 4: Learning to Let Go of Anti-Woke Online Criticism

By Guy Sutton

'Woke'. The dreaded term. So overused in online media discourse that it's transcended its original dictionary definition. It's used now to describe films, utilising representation to pander to a certain demographic that agree with this ideology. The repercussions of producing Television or film increasingly motivated by a political agenda is a deeper issue that really needs more than a limited word count to fully explore. But what is certain is the trigger-happy application of the term, lazily used to critique something, has formed a vacuum of shallow criticism that's growing among internet critics.

One of the recent shows dismissed as "insufferably woke" by internet critics, is the recently concluded fourth season of Amazon's "diabolical" satire, *The Boys*. The fourth season has been polarising to say the least, especially on the internet which thrives on arming itself with pre-generated hate over TV shows. Opinions have ranged from cautiously optimistic to aggressively hateful, but it was hard to find people who embraced it as a worthy season. Online critics were primarily upset with the way the show leant further into its satirical critique of right-wing conservative attitudes and gradually abandoned its irreverent depiction of superheroes, (an element that made it such a popular show in the first place). It's hard to deny that the show is leaning into its provocative social commentary more than ever, but to just dismiss it as 'woke' misses the broader context of what its satire aims to accomplish.

Satire, by nature, is meant to be provocative and critical, using humour and irony to expose flaws in individuals, institutions, and ideologies. *The Boys* does this with the contemporary political climate in America, exploring how celebrity worship can easily be exploited to manipulate ideologies. Ignoring what the show has to say about troubling matters, which the show tends to juggle (not delicately, mind you), by tossing it aside as 'woke', encapsulates the current issue tearing through modern criticism. The idea that their opinion does not need to be elaborated further, because 'woke' says all you need to know, dismantling any further discourse.

Even I, a fan who has bothered countless housemates through praising the show incessantly, was disappointed to feel that I was generally mixed on the season. It seemed uncharacteristically aimless and lacked the strong characterisation the show usually has. New characters were introduced only to be immediately forgotten, and plot lines were blurred to the point I could not tell which one was the main focus. When I went online to see what other people were thinking, I was disheartened to find that everyone was preoccupied with pointing out how 'woke' the show had become. "Frenchie isn't gay!!! Why is he dating a man!!!" comment sections ranted. Countless amounts of videos were made discussing the seasons politics - by people who hadn't even watched the season!?

Fans were quick to point out however that the show has always held these views and featured the same commentary toward conservative atti-

tudes. This became the rallying cry for the defenders of the new season. "They didn't realise that the show was commenting on them all along!" But to me, the show wasn't trying to demonise conservatives. It was warning us about letting ideologies grow violent and forceful, how unchecked power can lead to authoritarian violence. The season boxed in a depressing political climate in the United States, while being able to create its own antagonistic response online, almost mirroring both sets of political attitudes on the show. Dismissing the season as 'woke' represents the problem with online criticism — constant conflict over opinions and refusal to understand anyone's way of thinking. It's been unfortunate to watch the internet's effects on criticism. The response to this season offers only further disillusionment.

Credit: Unsplash



The Fast Show: 30 Years Later - Beyond The Catchphrase

By Catherine Flint

"Suit you, sir"
"Scorchio!"

"I freely admit... I was very, very drunk."

Even if you've never seen an episode of *The Fast Show*, it's hard to ignore the impact its catchphrases have had on the cultural landscape. The sketch show celebrates its 30th anniversary this September, and I wanted to find out why it's still so popular today.

As a long-time fan, I paid a visit to the archives to see the scripts, photographs, and memorabilia first hand. It was interesting to see how sketches grew from initial ideas, some from guest writers, including Bob Mortimer, and how much care went into organising the order of sketches for each show.

Lead writers Charlie Higson and Paul Whitehouse met as students at UEA in the 1970s, and it is for this reason that our archives hold a vast amount of *Fast Show*-related material.

However, comedy and script writing make up just a fraction of Higson's collection at the UEA archive. After graduating in 1980 with a degree in English and Film Studies, he published a series of adult thrillers. More recently, he has written popular young adult novels, including the *Young Bond* series, and currently hosts a podcast on the history of the monarchy. The idea for the *Fast Show* did not emerge until the 1990s however, when Charlie and Paul were writing for Harry Enfield. According to Higson, "I just sort of joined in 'cos I had a word processor and [Paul] didn't."

The story goes that while watching a highlights reel, they decided to write a show with just the punchlines; short, rapid-fire sketches one after the other. Other writers and performers were enlisted; Simon Day, Mark Williams, John Thomson, Arabella Weir and Caroline Aherne, and the *Fast Show* was born.

Originally, the show wasn't a hit, being given an obscure slot by the BBC. However, as people started to tune in more regularly, the characters

and catchphrases cemented themselves in pop culture. The catchphrases meant that fans felt that they were 'in' on the joke. By the time the third series aired in 1997, the writers were able to subvert expectations, arriving at the punchline in new ways. For instance, aristocrat Ralph, and gardener and object of his affections Ted, appeared in slower-paced, poignant sketches that highlighted their developing love story and highlighted the acting talents of Higson and Whitehouse, while breaking up some of the faster-paced sketches. In general, *The Fast Show* excelled at the delicate balance between comedy and drama, with the audience given an insight into the lives of characters beyond the catchphrase.

Despite officially ending in 2000, the series has returned several times; as a web series, a documentary, and, earlier this year, a stage show. You can also watch every episode on BBC iPlayer. The *Fast Show* doesn't seem to be slowing down yet... which is nice.

Dance Moms: The Price of Children in Reality TV

By Charlotte Davies

Dance Moms, a reality show starting in 2011, began as a six-episode docuseries following intense stage moms from The Abby Lee Dance Company based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but soon became a global phenomenon. Now gaining new popularity since its addition to All4.

While the intended focus was that of the mother/teacher dynamic between the "dance moms" and Abby Lee Miller, it was the children within the 'elite competition team' which kept viewers wanting more. The unstructured interview style of the early confessionals gave insight to the lives of children in a way that had never been offered before. Despite this, the lack of structure indicated no labour laws in place for children in a reality setting. The result being many of these earlier interviews being done under conditions that manipulated the children into saying

lines to create a "better plot."

Former cast member Melissa Gisoni recalled having to protest after season one to be in the room during these scenes after her eight-year-old Maddie was left sobbing due to the cutthroat editing style of the first episode, claiming she "was being portrayed to be a brat." Many of the young cast (ranging from six to thirteen) have alleged abuse upon their former teacher resulting in an attempted \$6 million lawsuit by the Hyland family after their abrupt exit from the show in season four. Despite this, the Hyland's leaving altercation, described by the children as being "traumatic," is still the most viewed and quoted event throughout the shows thirteen-year run.

While it is commonly stated that humour can be found in the darkest of times, what is it that seems to draw millions to a show that includes children having breakdowns, being gaslit and forced to compete very inappropriate dances which cannot

even be aired anymore? Aside from the humorous and quotable lines from the show, it seems that it is the audiences care and protective instincts for these children that keep them coming back.

After many failed attempts to mimic the format, it has now returned for a season nine but with a whole new lead cast. However, in true *Dance Moms* fashion drama has already surfaced after a solo was assigned to the theme of JonBenét Ramsey – a beauty pageant star whose unsolved murder took place Christmas night in 1996. The performance included a dancer portraying the six-year-olds death as she runs off-stage clutching her neck. By no surprise this sparked outrage, with many calling for this new season to be cancelled although Lifetime have yet to pull the plug. Regardless of former controversies, mocking a child's murder for entertainment purposes is unforgivable and Lifetime are yet to release a statement on the topic.



Editor: Daniel Garcia

Hello everyone! My name is Daniel Garcia, and I am the editor for this year's Books section! Being an editor is an incredibly exciting role that I am incredibly fortunate to have, and I hope that over the coming months you will be able to see what makes the community here at the UEA so special. This section is such a joy to edit for because of the writers – you! I would love to get as many students as possible to write for Books this year, so that it is a section that belongs to all of us. You can really write about anything. So long as it at least tangentially relates to books and you want to write it, then I would love to hear it! I can be reached for article pitches at my email: uxk22zyu@uea.ac.uk.

- Daniel

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

A Warm Welcome to the City of Stories Daniel Garcia

"Welcome to Norwich!"



On behalf of the Books section, allow me to warmly welcome you all to UEA and Norwich, the City of Stories!

It is no wonder Norwich has such an illustrious title. This city is steeped in literary history, being England's first UNESCO City of Literature; the home of Julian of Norwich (the first woman to write a book in the English language), the country's only National Centre for Writing and, of course, the home of the very first creative writing MA courtesy of our own university.

Just a short bus ride away from the University Drive bus stop (or a very nice longer

walk if you fancy it), is the city centre. But look beyond the concrete jungle and you will find a treasure trove of bookshops nestled within the bustling city streets. Hidden away in the cobbled Elm Hill just off the river Wensum is Dormouse Bookshop, a lovely little independent bookshop stacked quite literally floor to ceiling with books old and new. A few streets over is Tombland Bookshop, which is home to more antiquarian second-hand books. Whilst some of the books available might be out of a student's budget, just roaming the shelves here is a great inspiration to read more and immerse yourself in history.

Indeed, if you are interested in the history of literature, then I would highly recommend paying a visit to the Julian Shrine - featuring St Julian's Church and the reconstructed cell of Julian of Norwich. There is also the opportunity to book the shrine's impressive Reference Library in the All Hallows Guesthouse as a quiet, reflective space for personal study.

There are frequent literary events held in the city, such as the crime-writing festival Noirwich every September. The National

Centre for Writing holds events year-round at Dragon Hall (which, fun fact, was a set in the classic television show *Knightmare*), which frequently include author talks and mentoring sessions. The upcoming Norwich Book Festival in late October is a new addition to the city's impressive roster of events, and it looks to be one of its most exciting yet.

Don't feel like going into the city? The university has you covered. Every autumn the university hosts UEA Live, a series of intimate talks with authors. This year we are especially lucky to host Rebecca F. Kuang, Julia Armfield and Emma Flint. We are lucky to have an incredibly active literary community at the UEA, with widely subscribed literature and creative writing societies. I would highly recommend joining these if you are interested, as it is a great way to meet like-minded students in incredibly friendly and supportive environments.

This is, of course, just the tip of the iceberg. Norwich is a city that needs to be explored fully first-hand to really appreciate its place in history and the wider literary world. So, whether you are a new or a returning student, I hope you enjoy discovering all that it has to offer.

Photo Credit: Daniel Garcia

Sequels: Beyond The Final Chapter

"We are all writing sequels for ourselves."

Polly Dye

Have you ever been disappointed when a book you love ends? Fear not, for sequels prove that hope lies beyond the final chapter...

Sequels date back to ancient literature, the most prolific being Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic following the eponymous character's treacherous journey home after the events of *The Iliad*. Though this tale shares some of its predecessor's characters, it mainly focuses on Odysseus, a pivotal soldier, yet not a main protagonist in *The Iliad*. By writing about his other familiar characters, Homer secures the reader's interest, allowing him to enrich Odysseus' character, which subsequently enhances the literary quality of the two epics. As Homer's work holds immense longevity, it is safe to say he cracked the sequel code!

Sequels still thrive in the modern day, thousands of years later. One example is Stephanie Meyer's *New Moon*, a continuation of the pilot book from the infamous vampire saga: *Twilight*. Still following the love triangle between human Bella, vampire Edward and werewolf Jacob, this novel's plot is melodramatic and often borders on ridiculous. However, Meyer's first book is not renowned for its literary-ness, but rather this 'iconic' ridiculousness. Therefore, by creating an equally histrionic sequel, Meyer successfully upholds the cult-classic legacy of her first novel. It is also worth noting that Meyer has released several spin-offs related to the series, such as a gender-swapped version of the first book (*Life and Death*) and a novella exploring a minor character's life (*The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner*).

Meyer's dedication to re-working one story proves sequels do not solely exist as continuations of a book, but as mediums for an author to explore neglected paths from their initial writing process.

However, despite being prevalent since literature's birth, sequels face criticism for often failing the challenge of surmounting their pilot book. Nevertheless, revisiting beloved fictional worlds can still provide comfort and enjoyment, making sequels great reading material for those times when you don't want to read anything 'new'.

As we enter this new academic year, we are all writing sequels for ourselves, writing new chapters abundant with growth and learning. I hope this sequel is a brilliant one!

Book Review: A Sign of Her Own by Sarah Marsh

"Real life is not a perfect speech."

Hannah Jones

Illuminating in its careful intertwining of beauty and power, Marsh's debut, *A Sign of Her Own*, based on her own experience, is a historical fiction that talks back to and resonates deeply with contemporary attitudes.

Set in the late 19th century, we follow Ellen Lark, a fictional protagonist on a journey of growth, devastation and rebuilding as she attempts to navigate the hearing world as a deaf person, having lost her hearing to scarlet fever at the age of four. She becomes a student of Alexander Graham Bell, the (still contested) inventor of the telephone and oralist, who teaches her to speak using his own system of Visible Speech symbols. Underpinning everything in the novel is the battle, at the time, between the increasingly popular Oralism – teaching deaf people to speak, thus allowing their integration into hearing society – and sign language, the inferior status of which resulted in its users' isolation from the hearing world.

Under Bell's tuition, signing is forbidden. But outside the classroom Ellen meets Frank, a deaf man who signs as his first language, and agrees to privately teach him to speak English. In their lessons, she becomes the pupil once again as she is introduced to the deaf world Bell has tried to protect her from, discovering that sign language and connection can co-exist. Her lessons from both the hearing world and the deaf world, and the stories of betrayal, deceit and revenge that unfold within each, ignite an inner battle for Ellen herself as she is forced to decide where her own loyalty lies.

The beauty of this novel is the sense of authenticity and unapologetic imperfection. In all the forms of communication described throughout, the characters make mistakes. Within the first few pages, we see Ellen's misunderstanding in her lip-reading of "speeches" as "peaches", for example, and, much later,

the dangerous confusion between "mystery", "mercury" and "Mr Gray". Ellen's visible speech might be "perfect" as she improves, but it becomes meaningless compared to her imperfect sign language, which is full of mistakes and clarifications. Real life is not a perfect speech.

With so much uncertainty, both of the integrity of others and in interactions, comes Ellen's impatience to know: "How long will they talk for?... I shift on my feet trying to adjust my posture as I feign interest, make some nods, smile at what appear to be timely moments." The frustration is not at her deafness, but at the hearing world's lack of patience and willingness to understand.

Fast-forward nearly 150 years and we have the British Sign Language Act (2022), legally recognising BSL, and the exciting prospect of a BSL GCSE being introduced next year. In 1884, Bell said that "to ask the value of speech... is like asking the value of life." As Marsh explains, "I have hoped to ask that question again, and to show how it might be possible to arrive at different answers." While the fight for inclusivity is by no means over, the moving answer reached through Ellen's journey greatly overpowers the ignorant question and generates new interest and hope for today's readers.

Credit: Alexander Andrews on Unsplash



Keep Calm and Read On: An Academic Survival Kit For Freshers

"There's more to your experience than what hides within the pages."

Abbie Harding

Imagine you've just sat down at your study desk. The rain's pelting outside, you've got an iced latte chilling by your side and the largest army of neon highlighters welcome you to the next three months of study. Amongst that, over 30 books, journals, and articles of content for one module. And you might be looking at that amount of reading and be thinking, now what?

If you're doing a reading-intense course, the amount of set reading might seem daunting, if not terrifying. However, there are ways to make your reading become manageable. Here are some methods to help overcome the dreaded backlog.

CHAPTER 1: PREPARATION

Your first week is the best time to take a look at your modules as a whole. On the module outlines or weekly readings, your tutors might signpost you to what pages are essential to read, and what parts you can skip out. This can help you reclaim reading time for lectures, extra-curricular activities and coffee breaks.

CHAPTER 2: TIME ORGANISATION

The truth is that no semester will be the same. One semester, you might be a night-owl, preferring to stay up till 3am in the warmth of your uni digs. The next se-

mester you might discover that studying at local cafes is your new jam. It's okay to not have your schedule figured out - the best thing you can do is to keep trying until you find something that works for you.

CHAPTER 3: FIND WHAT ENERGISES YOU

For me, this was listening to music. For my friend, this was going on a short walk around campus. For you, this could be anything. Finding ways to spice up your reading through doing things which energise you will be your metaphorical water source over the next few months. Podcasts, dancing, jogging, pomodoro breaks or croissants: there is never one right way to study.

CONCLUSION:

As much as the first semester's academic demands will be daunting, make sure you don't forget to get the most out of the other aspects of university. Friendships, exploring the local area, engaging in societies, or going out clubbing: there's more to your experience than what hides within the pages. And remember, your tutors, academic advisor and the Student Information Zone are always available if you need guidance and advice.



Meet the Editor: Sasha Ouvry

Dear readers, welcome to the September edition of Venue's Creative Writing section! Thank you so much to all the wonderful and talented contributors, whose pieces are based on this month's theme, "I'm glad you called".

This year, Venue's Creative Writing section seeks prose, poetry and creative non-fiction submissions from UEA writers that engage with the theme in insightful and thought-provoking ways, with a refined and considered sense of style, structure and characterisation. If you want your work published this year, head over to the Microsoft Concrete Writers Team linked in our Instagram bio for information about our guidelines, submission windows, and monthly themes! We look forward to reading your work.

FIONA HILL

ON LEAVING THE COTTAGE

October came in evenings. So sweet I could
taste
The undergrowth in every faded blackberry.
I caught them on the tongue. So many.
Until I spoke only of hamlets,
Dead in the dim light, damp in the ferns
And the great wood that waited
Just out of sight.

It would be right to fall into love
With the autumn. And so who could help
If the dog and the dark and I tore thistles
To the great wood and stood shy
As crow call and brittle leaves
Fell through cracks in the stillness
To touch our skin

And in another time I would have stayed.
So rooted I would wait, through the solstices
In sleep. Perhaps play at hiding days,
Folding them to nooks of old oak trees.
I'd wait. To grow blackberries so sweet
They would taste the undergrowth so deep.

But the dog and the dark and I tore thistles
Again. Too late to catch a lead, she'd flee
Through bracken for a burrow scent
And I would call her name to the night
And I would break October with the sound
That we returned to. Its fallow grip
On the air

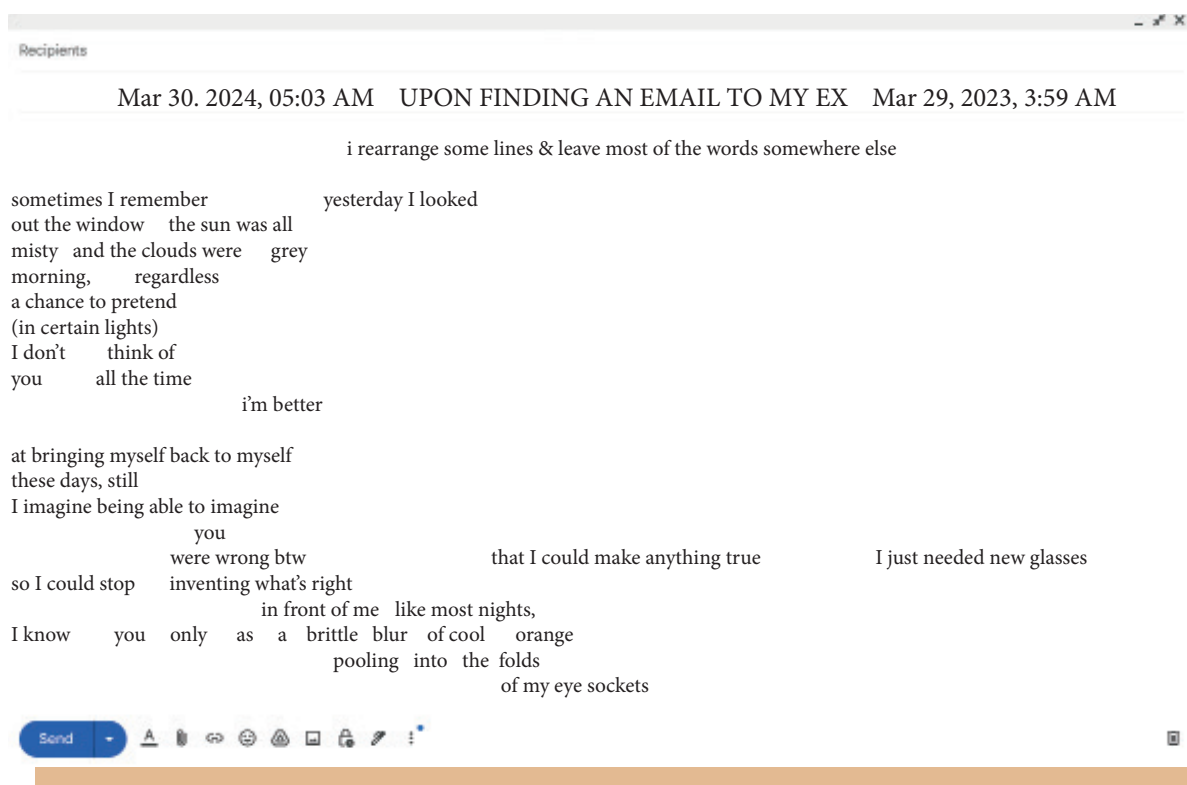
Until the morning and gladness set,
Caught like wax in cool duet.



(Feature image credited to Fiona Hill)

LIVA JEAN

UPON FINDING AN EMAIL TO MY EX





HEBE PURDY

THE RAIN HERE HAS ALWAYS FALLEN FASTER

Have we considered how
the branch and the breeze used to both be green?
That this string used to be tied
from my bedroom mirror right to the feather
and the fear of falling.
And everyone always says I'm a bird.
There's nothing like knowing you were stranded,
there's nothing like this.
The art of forgetting.
I keep mistaking this place
for a fossil. I'm an expert in letting go
and returning. This house has begun to memorise
my mornings. Somewhere in the attic,
I have discarded an old religion and
that pomegranate tree.
One branch burnt and the other
a pregnant promise.
Just out of reach.
And watch me please,
So I don't fall
out of myself. There trickles the curled lip
of childhood. When I was 9
I convinced a girl
I was a god.

So watch me please,
I know trees falling are falling but
if the thunder really does roll right through me,
I'm returning to myself.

ALABASTER

Stitched into the fine print of longing
I find a shade of white that only ever rolled
with your eyes. Striped and flickering
You become dots
Or lines to a song I would rather
Forget. That white.
Placed in a locust of change.
Tied to the dark.
Or the Rattle of my room
Or whatever it is that plucks
its chords against
the edges
of Living. Catching my sleeve on
The bite I didn't taste but
Lodged itself into the ripples
Of a rhyming blue sky. Your silence undresses me.
Presses a torn wing
In, stamps
iterations of glancing lines
Through me and this new cloudlessness,

A virginal quiet.
Settled.
One wing beating.

GRACE SHAW

ROOTS

in an attempt to trace my roots to the source,
i find the place i was born.
an apolitical absence of history -
it is just a building.
and i am struck with a yearning to be held;
to be one with someone again.

my feet fall heavy,
they know my head is too full.
the road cobbled with worry,
the paving stones swirl with thought.
i do not know what i crave
is my life so lacking in connection?

placing pins in my fingers i try to find my coordination on a map,
my true north is skewed,
ripped and stuck back down,
placed in arbitration around me,
to keep me confused.

i am stood
i am still!
i am waiting
please find me.

my elusive meridian,
greet me with a patient smile.



(Feature image credited to Grace Shaw)

Interview ✨



In Conversation with Director Matilda Green: Norwich City, Women's Actors Group and her new project, Contact Hours

Credit: @holliehale.photography

By Lily Taylor

I sat down with Matilda Green, a freelance filmmaker and NUA graduate. We hadn't met before, but I had been drawn to her impressive social media presence that reflected her authentic personality and deep passion for film. I also came across profiles for her creative projects, including Women's Actors Group and the newly founded Contact Hours Norwich, and wanted to explore her motivations for forming these groups and why she believes they are important within the city.

Matilda, 24, formerly lived in Newark, Nottingham, before her family moved to Norwich. The move turned out to be beneficial for them.

'We're a very creative family, and we just completely fell in love with it. We came from a place where people don't say hi to you and we were the only creative people... It was amazing moving to Norwich, as a family we found our people, and we were like, why didn't we move sooner?'

Not long after the move, Matilda enrolled at the Norwich University of Arts and graduated three years later with first-class honours in Film and Moving Image Production. When asked where her love for film had come from, she referred again to her creative family.

'My grandad lectured film at the University of Lincoln. But ever since I was little, I've been using my silly little iPad. I was making videos, YouTube videos, and making films and stuff. I used to want to be a writer. I had all my books that I had written in the primary school libraries, which was very nice of them. So, yeah, when I discovered film and video, I just loved it. I absolutely loved it. I was in hospital a lot as a kid, so film was a great escape. I loved Peter Pan, especially loads of editions of Peter Pan. They just felt so magical, those places, so I just wanted to do that. But also, film and video in general, it's just such a great way to share and get memories in one place, to keep them forever.'

After university, Matilda took on a series of entry-level jobs working for large corporations, including a job in production design for Disney and working

with a graphic shop for the BBC. However, she found herself frequently experiencing mental burnout and losing her love for film.

'We were complaining all the time and working these long hours. And so I stopped doing film for a while, and to just do it for fun takes a lot once you've lost your love for something. It takes a really long break, and it takes being patient with yourself. Matilda has since stopped working for big corporations and is now working as a freelance filmmaker, taking on smaller jobs around Norwich and London which she finds much more enjoyable. Alongside her work, she has been running Women's Actors Group, a Norwich-based group for women aged 18-30 who are interested in acting, looking to collaborate or simply just wanting to meet new people and have fun.

When I mentioned Women's Actor's Group in our conversation, Matilda's face instantly lit up. I asked her about the inspiration behind this project. 'When I was at NUA, there wasn't an acting course. Maybe I would have picked it, I'm not sure. But, yeah, I did film and obviously in film, if there's no acting course everyone's always going to be looking for actors. So whenever anyone was like oh, we haven't cast this film yet, I would always put my hand up. And I realised oh, this is really cool, I really like acting. Then I really liked directing. When I finished uni, the thing that I found the tastiest was directing actors. I just love it, the fact that you can really help them with their performance by just what you say and how you approach it, and the kind of energy that you bring to the set.'

Matilda then explained how she saw Women's Actor's Group as an opportunity to develop her directing skills.

'As a director, it's difficult to practice at home. It's very rare that you can just plonk actors in a room every week and start directing them, there's not many opportunities to do that. I spent a lot of money around uni, paying for acting courses, workshops, and groups, but none of them led anywhere. And I was like, right, why don't I just do it myself? And I set a date and booked a room, so I couldn't procrastinate anymore.'

The first session took place in July 2023, with three people turning up. One of these people was already a friend of Matilda's, while another had met Matilda at a previous acting workshop. The third, however, was a woman who had seen Matilda's poster while waiting for the toilet at the Norwich Playhouse. A year later, and all three women are still attending every week, along with other women who have joined along the way and found solace within the group.

Acknowledging this, Matilda stated, 'I can't believe people still turn up and want to be a part of it and share it, and all the kind words we get.'

I had read several reviews of Women's Actor's Group on the website, all of which were glowing and praising Matilda as a director, but also as a friend. The reviews combined with members' commitment to the group made me think there must be something special about this environment for these women to feel so comfortable returning every week.

'A lot of directors seem to think that directing is very 'I want it to look like this, and this happens, and then you walk over here, and then you look happy,' but it's not. I think actors can get really uncomfortable with that. Acting is... there can be crying, there can be shouting, there can be happy scenes, whatever. Either way, it's vulnerable. It doesn't matter what you're acting, what you're saying, how good you think you are. It is vulnerable because you're allowing people to see behind the eyes what's actually going on behind the words. You have to tap into the reasons why you've been sad before, or things that you've reacted to, and the trauma that you've gone through. So, it's important to set that space. It's a Women's Actors Group partly so that women can practice that in a non-masculine environment. Because you turn up to a film set 90% of the time it's gonna be a lot of men there, which is completely fine, but it's a different vibe. I think for some women, a women's-only space can feel safer.'

I asked Matilda if she had seen a growth in the women who attend her sessions regularly.

'Yeah, definitely. There's one person who has said that her therapist said that she was so much happier since she's been coming to Women's Actors Group



Interview

that her therapist said that she was so much happier since she's been coming to Women's Actors Group which is amazing. There was also someone who has recently moved countries, so we had a big goodbye party for her. She was saying how much it's helped her be creative again and write again. So, yeah, it's just been great, and I'm really proud of all of them. I've watched a lot of these women grow in confidence, in style, and just laugh a lot. They arrive after a really stressful week, just absolutely cackling. And it's great!

Matilda also took the time to reflect on how running the group had benefitted her own mental health. 'I was going through a really tough time a few months ago, and I still had to run Women's Actors Group every week. At the end of every session, I felt so light and happy and refreshed. So, it's made a lot of change in me and allowed me to have some accountability for my creativity in a way that's not stressful or has the really masculine set deadlines. It's been absolutely amazing.'

Women who choose to attend the weekly sessions can expect a variety of activities, including workshops, dance and movement, scripts and poetry. Matilda often bases sessions on chapters of *Directing Actors* by Judith Weston, which she describes as the 'Bible' of Women's Actors Group.

'It's brilliant, she is an amazing director and actor, and she directs in a way that's very feminine and a way that I think is really needed in order to create a really good performance.'

Alongside running Women's Actors Group, Matilda has also started leading a new project named Contact Hours, a creative group for university students and graduates. It is currently taking place every Thursday evening at Space Studios, a bar in Norwich.

We spoke about what inspired her to take on this project too. 'Space contacted me saying they had made this venue, which is an amazing place to be an arts venue, a place for creatives. They asked if I wanted to help make it into a creative space, and I said I'd love to, because I already had loads of ideas for this space, as I already thought it was underused and I just thought it was a beautiful space. Upstairs, in the attic, there's this café-like place with a bar as well, but with an amazing rooftop. And I just thought, wow, it's so lovely, it has little cubby holes and lights and sofas, and it's so cozy. I pitched my silly ideas, and they liked them for some reason. And one of them was Contact Hours.'

One of the things I struggled with at uni was making friends and meeting loads of different people. I was frustrated that I never really got to meet any UEA students at all. And I thought that was weird, that there's no collaboration there. So, I just like to create stuff. If I've struggled with something, or I wish that something was there, I like to make that for my old self or my current self, because I know that means that other people would want that as well. Obviously, I'm not at uni anymore, I graduated a few years ago. So hopefully this helps people who



Credit: Matilda Green

would otherwise not be able to meet people very much.'

While Matilda accentuated her hopes of people making friends and collaborating within her new environment, she also expressed how she wants Contact Hours to be an inclusive space where all students and graduates feel comfortable, no matter their creative capabilities.

'I create things like, if you're a scientist you create things like, if you're a mathematician you create things, so what is a creative person? It's kind of a general, very open thing really. So, if you're lacking in confidence and worry about that, most of the stuff we've made so far are silly little doodles. You just need to be silly and tap into that inner child again, which most of us don't do. It's a very small space, so you're not intimidated by loads of people. If you are really lacking in confidence when you turn up, you can sit in the corner and draw. You can sit in the corner on your phone. You can sit in the corner and read. You can bring your own project to work on, because you can use the space to work on this – if you're trying to build a business, if you're trying to apply for some jobs, if you're trying to apply for a university course or do some research, while wondering what the hell are you going to do with your life? Do it in a social space. Don't do it alone in a room where you're in bed and really depressed. Do it with other people who are going through the exact same thing, the exact same thought process.'

Women's Actors Group – Friday evenings 7-8pm at The Garage, for women aged 18-30. Only £5 to attend.

Contact Hours – Thursday evenings 4-7pm at Space Studios Norwich, meet-up for creatives, uni students and grads. Only £3 to attend.

For more information, scan the QR codes below or visit Matilda's Instagram @tildeefilms.co



Credit: Matilda Green



SPACE
STUDIOS
CONTACT
HOURS



Meet the Editor: Annabel Knill



Hiya, I'm Annabel and the art editor of this section. Although I'm an English literature and philosophy third year here at UEA, I've always had a love for art and strived to pick up a paint brush, or even a crochet hook as of late! Way back in A-Level Art, I was tasked with the coursework of writing an extended article. It was at this moment that I found a true passion for writing as I set out to research and write up my article, which I proudly named The Anthropology of Art. However, I would have to give some credit also to one of my favourite authors, Anne Rice, whose own descriptions and use of artwork in her books further inspired me to look into the world of art. Throughout art GCSE and A level, I came to fall in love with artists such as Waterhouse and Sorolla but also the classics; Botticelli and Rembrandt have always been centre stage to me for the dreamy and transcendent quality they give to the everyday life they capture. However, through this exploration I was introduced to some contemporary artists that can't be forgotten. Maggi Hambling's eccentricity and the Jean-Michel Basquiat's freedom that drew me to them and inspired me to create my own mad doodles as a form of escape. It's easy to say that art and the creation of art is something I couldn't live without, and I hope through this section you too might be inspired to pick up a paintbrush.

The Philosophy of Art: Transforming Our Thinking

By Will Hinch

For the average student, the philosophy of art, also referred to as aesthetics, is perhaps the most relevant branch of philosophy. Everyone now is into film and music and wants to talk about them, fancying themselves a cultural critic. It's hard to attend a social gathering without someone asking you what you think of a new album or film; the more niche or 'deep' it is, the better. The conversation quickly fizzles into an implicit contest to see who can name the most esoteric arthouse films, underground bands or transgressive novels.

Philosophy transforms our thinking about art, allowing it to become interesting and productive again. Many common topics of cultural discussion fall squarely under the purview of philosophy: Is there objectively 'good' or 'bad' art? Is traditional art 'better' than modern art? What is 'art' anyway, or creativity, or beauty, or taste? Is there a difference between art made by generative AI and art created by humans? Is it possible for musicians to 'steal' songs? Is pop music or genre fiction inherently shallow? Does art, and aesthetics generally, have a moral dimension, or social responsibility? Does it matter if an artist doesn't live the lifestyle they rap about? Is censorship ever justified? Do artists have a responsibility to tell the truth?

Philosophising about art simply means taking such questions seriously. Not joylessly or humourlessly, but simply treating them as worthy of our fullest possible attention – and there are few questions more rewarding and satisfying to give our attention to than those concerning works of art and the creative process. Aesthetic philosophy can be analytical, showing us the boundaries of what we can meaningfully say about art; but it can equally be creative, expanding our horizons with useful concepts such as the male gaze.

But I hear some of you protest that philosophy is too distanced from the objects of its study, and eventually leads us away from this world into a realm of abstractions. It's an understandable complaint given popular caricatures of philosophy, but nothing could

be further from the truth. To philosophise means to shake ourselves and wake up from the sleepwalking that characterises our usual existence. The uncritical life, that takes things as they first appear, that forms judgements within seconds and clutches them as if they were truth

us to lift the veils of 'common sense', received opinions, and social conditioning. It lets us pause for a moment to critically adjust our most basic thought patterns and behaviours. In this way it reduces abstraction by letting us apprehend reality in a better way.

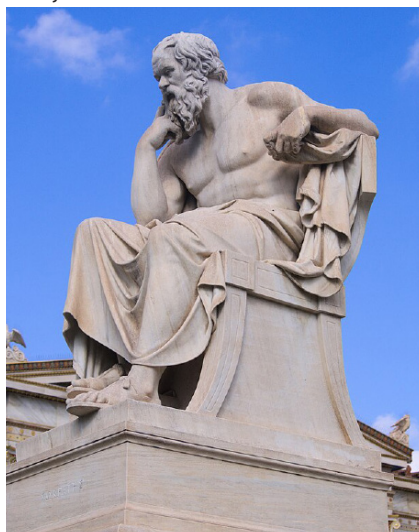
Remember that the night will come soon when you are called upon to become the Plato of the party or the Socrates of the smoking area. You owe it to yourself to be able to intelligently dissect beliefs about the art you and your friends love, and thereby increase your appreciation and enjoyment. But equally you owe it to society to be ready to shatter the arrogance of the snobbish 'softboi' or the insufferable indie guy, to play him at his own game and confront his pseudo-intellectualism. Either way, you had best be adequately prepared.

Like what you've read? Here are some suggested readings :

Aesthetics: A Very Short Introduction, book by Bence Nanay

The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, essay by Walter Benjamin

The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, film starring Slavoj Žižek



Credit: Wikimedia Commons
The Satute of Socrates at the Academy of Athens



Credit Taken by John Fielding, Gery Balding and Kaysgeog

Welcome Freshers! UEA opportunities for you

Welcome to UEA! Freshers week is finally here, and the university is buzzing with events and activities that go far beyond the average pub crawl! Whether you're a seasoned art lover or just dipping your toes into the creative waters, UEA has much to offer what will ignite your passion for culture, creativity and passion.

On September the 17th, UEA will be holding its annual societies fair in the Sports Park, where all students, old and new, get a chance to join new societies. Here you will find different stands for a range of opportunities that UEA has to offer within the art world, and so much more. Just to mention a few, UEA Art Society will be there to introducing the amazing and practical activities you could get involved in, including painting by the lake, life drawing and so much more. If drawing's not your style, UEA Art History Society could be the one for you, where you get a chance to social with like-minded friends, exploring new exhibitions and creative ideas. This year's societies fair has so much to offer, from societies dedicated to music, creative writing, theatre, philosophy and so much more outside of the arts (such as the Taylor Swift society!) get along to see what's for you!



Credit: Unsplash



Credit:Wikimedia Commons - 'Running Along the Beach'

Fast forward a few years and I was extremely happy to find myself in Madrid and able to visit 'The Sorolla Museum.' The Museum holds many of the artist's works, but what takes this museum to another level is the fact that it is housed in his family home, where he worked and lived with his wife and three children until his death. While modern Madrid towers over the house, it remains untouched, squeezed into a corner of the street. Rooms are still furnished as if they were in Sorolla's time, including his studio—his paintbrushes still standing in tall, heavy Spanish styled pots ready to be used. Upon walking into the first room,

the impact was truly wonderful. Seeing Sorolla's numerous paintings spread out on the walls from floor to ceiling took my breath away. His style of work is very 'real,' that is — his subjects are not posed, but appear natural, bursting with colour, light, and movement. His renowned style can be seen prominently throughout his work from bright landscapes under shimmering sunlight to paintings of glimmering seas. He also appears to love his family very much, as they appear multiple times in his work. This, coupled with beach scenes depicting children at play, including

Joaquin Sorolla: The Spanish Master of Light

By Jayne Card

Joaquin Sorolla (1863 – 1923) is not a name known to many. In his day he was extremely popular and enjoyed enormous success. In our day he is forgotten outside of his Spanish homeland, however not completely, as a few years ago I accidentally stumbled across him during a trip to The National Art Gallery, London. I was immediately drawn to one of his works. This was a large oil painting called 'Mending the Sail' (1896). It depicted the most stunning, luminescent scene of dappled sunshine on a group of everyday men and women working to repairing a boat's sails. It created a detailed, everyday scene of a Valencian fishing community's life. Except it wasn't 'everyday'—it was much more than that. The effect of the colour and light along with the subject matter made it mesmerising.

disabled and abandoned children from a hospital asylum, shows his humanity and produced quite an emotional impact. Sorolla was an exceptional Spanish painter, being one of the representatives of Neo-Impressionism and deservedly known as 'The Master of Light.' The Museum is an unexpected joy to visit, an inexpensive day out and has lots of photographs and information about the painter in the upstairs galleries. I spent a good while sitting in the hidden courtyard garden, taking it all in and reflecting on the beauty of his paintings and his home. A real hidden gem in the hot, busy City of Madrid.

Levelling the Canvas: Time to Take a Leaf out of the University of Coventry's book

By Annabel Knill

I would argue that the cause for the creation of art comes down to one singular thing, emotion. It is the attempt to validate each of our own individual, equivocal experiences as a self, surrounded by other individual selves. Art is a hope, often a life-line that strives to connect individual to individual, experience to experience, emotion to emotion. In a world where we are all so trapped inside our own heads, we turn to paint, to clay and the canvas, to strive to fill in the whiteness that separates our own human experience.

But this has not always been the case within the art world, where wealth and money has fuelled the production and eventual the capitulation of art. The art world has long been regarded as an exclusive domain, the system naturally favoured artists from privileged backgrounds who had the time, resources, and connections to pursue formal training, showcase their work, and enter prestigious institutions. Marginalized artists often found their work sidelined or tokenized, while people from lower-income backgrounds were largely excluded as both creators and consumers. The cost of materials, the burden of student loans, and the high cost of living all become factors excluding the creation of art and thus losing the true reason for art as a creative expression.

I'm sure as university students of all backgrounds there have been times when we have all experienced such limitations, from cost and availability to education and access. In an age where walls are ripped down to make a profit out of Banksy and galleries like the Gagosian or David Zwirner have a hold over the art market, controlling the visibility and pricing of contemporary artists. The autonomy and personhood of artists themselves is lost in a name and branding.

Yet, as societal awareness grows around issues of

equity and inclusion, the question of accessibility in the arts has become a crucial topic of discussion. As a university community that fosters creativity and innovation, we have the voice and power to examine how accessible the art world is, and more importantly, how it can become more inclusive.

The University of Coventry have launched a new scheme, entitled "Inclusive Immersive," to create an immersive art experience working closely with young people with learning disabilities. Receiving £50,000 in funding from the Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants, this has enabled the University to reach new steps in the art world as the project aims to lead to new guidance for the arts organisations relating to immersive art exhibitions. Researchers will work with Coventry based Open Theatre along with new technologies to produce installations and performances in venues across Coventry in spring 2025, ending with workshops and symposiums to share their findings and progress.

However, the University of Coventry's new steps is not the only way that the modern world is striving to reshape the art world, bringing art back to its true nature as a creative expression for all people. In recent years there have been significant efforts to address the accessibility gap within the world of art, with technology, social movements, and shifting attitudes toward inclusivity all playing key roles in creating a more equitable space for artistic expression. The rise of digital platforms and social media, such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as online marketplaces like Etsy and Saatchi Art have enabled artists to showcase their work directly to a global audience, reducing financial barriers. Even the horrors of Covid-19 have brought access limitation into the light as the pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual exhibitions, making art more accessible to people who may not have been able to attend physical galleries or museums due to geographic or financial constraints. Movements to



Credit:Photo Taken by Annabel Knill - Banksy's *Swinging Monkeys*

decolonize the art world have challenged the Eurocentric narratives that have historically dominated major art institutions. Museums, galleries, and academic programs are increasingly being held accountable for their lack of representation of artists from a multitude of cultures and backgrounds. Efforts to diversify collections, programming, and curatorial teams are becoming more visible.

Although, this is not to say there is not still work to be done. Creating a truly accessible art world will require a multi-faceted approach that involves institutions, policymakers, and individuals. We, making up the face of universities, hold a crucial power through fostering diverse talent and providing opportunities for students to engage with art in inclusive ways. By doing so, we can bring art back to its truly powerful essence of creating solidarity through creativity, as not just a way of life but as a way of love.

Editor: Dillon Gurney

Credit: UEA Drama and Musical Theatre Society

Fresh Theatre for Freshers: an Introduction to Theatre in Norwich



By Dillon Gurney

Welcome and welcome all to this very exciting edition of Venue.

Norwich has a fantastic display of theatre and UEA is no exception. The amount of theatre in Norwich is staggering with theatre venues, all different sizes; from the Theatre Royal, including Stage Two and the Playhouse, to the Maddermarket theatre, and our very own UEA Drama Studio, hosting a variety of university productions. One of the companies that often uses the drama studio is the Minotaur Theatre Company. Minotaur Theatre Company has always been a staple of the drama department and is focused on giving drama students the opportunity to act outside of the academic field. Although Minotaur is not a society, meaning outside of being a drama student, most would not be able to participate in production, everyone should be able to come and watch. The numerous productions Minotaur puts on are a real testament to the longevity of the company, first established in 1972. For those who like to write their own plays, the Short Festival is put on yearly in October. Cabaret, a selection of musical driven songs produced in December. A creative writing slot is usually produced at the beginning of the academic year, with this upcoming year's being: This is Not a Drill, written and directed by Joe McCloskey. Minotaur Theatre Company also has ties with the Edinburgh Fringe, with a slot to write a theatre production, and put it on at the Fringe. This year's production was Tweeds, written and directed by Tabs Nixon.

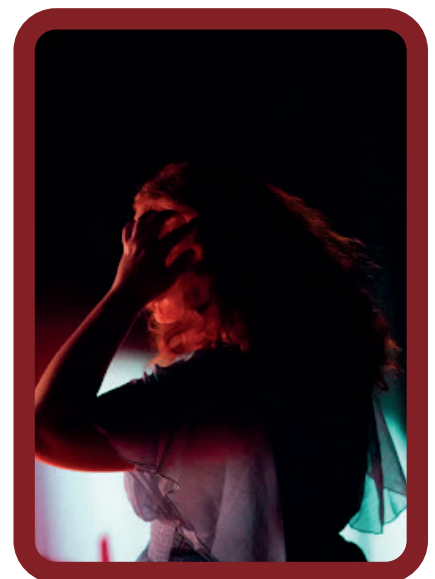
To focus more on societies, UEA societies have something for everyone. From Pokémon to Concrete itself, there's always something to find and enjoy, and theatre is no exception. Drama and Musical Theatre Society (otherwise known as DMTS) is one of the largest societies at UEA. Each month hosting a performance night called Pants, giving the opportunity for anyone to sing and perform, anything from musical numbers to comedy performances to

live music, there's something for everyone. Here we have a statement from the president of the society; Sas Hughes:

DMTS (Drama and Musical Theatre Society) is a place for everyone whether you are a writer, a technician, a performer, interested in the production team or an audience member. We are a place where you can learn new skills, try different roles and get involved with different kinds of performance and have fun doing so. Each year we do an autumn play slot, a musical (previously done have been Be More Chill and Pippin), a new writing slot and a Shakespeare slot. We host monthly showcases of performances and new theatre (PANTS) in aid of Papyrus charity; it's a warm welcoming and supportive place to begin performing at UEA. We strive to create a sense of community both within our society and between others: often collaborating with other performance groups in the University. This year we have a lot planned and we would love to have you get involved. Another theatre society is the Pantomime Society. UEA Pantomime Society is known for their yearly pantomime, held in the LCR. Last year, their production of Merlin, nearly sold out. Past productions have included; Pirates of a Caribbean, Game of Thrones, Lord of the Rings and Star Wars. This year, the pantomime has been chosen as "Spiderman" written by the president of the society; Alastair Kitchener.

Theatre in Norwich is always around, with many venues such as the Norwich Art Centre being a staple for theatre. In May, I saw Kiss, Marry, Kill, performed by the company; Dante or Die. The performance was in The Great Hospital, a beautiful building from the medieval period. Theatre can pop up anywhere in Norwich. Many UEA alumni stay in Norwich and continue to create art. Trial One Theatre is one of them. In October, they'll be performing a series of horror themed plays called FreakFest. A spokesperson from FreakFest has been in contact and released a statement about the upcoming performance; FreakFest is a Short Play Festival in Norwich

performed at the UEA Drama Studio on 26th October 2024, presented by Trial One Theatre, a local theatre group founded by UEA alumni. Composed of 6 short plays, this festival aims to showcase the works of local creatives. FreakFest explores horror in the conventional and unconventional, with the ghouls being external and internal, real or imagined. A key motif to a lot of these plays is the reclaiming of a narrative and giving a voice to those whose voices have been taken from them. At the heart of FreakFest is a love of theatre and storytelling. Come along for an evening of horror, laughter, celebration and surprise. Expect the political, the emotional and the utterly bizarre.



Credit: UEA Drama and Musical Theatre Society

Flash Review: *Art @* Norwich Theatre Royal

By Dillon Gurney

Art tries to bridge the gap between what can be considered “Art.” Although it doesn’t (nor will there ever be an answer to what people consider art), it certainly tries to with the help of the three actors. Seann Walsh, Chris Harper and Aden Gillett bring this performance to life. Perhaps in the first few minutes, their lines and diction seemed to be stilted, but for the benefit of the doubt, this was the opening night and the rest of the performance was phenomenal. By the hour mark, I was fully invested in the production, Aden and Chris – known as Marc and Serge – play two intellectuals. Marc plays the classical, modernistic intellectual with such a smug tone, it’s difficult to tell what he could be thinking. The same is applied to Serge, a postmodern intellectual who spends £2000 on a white painting. Both play their parts superbly, butting heads throughout. Yvan (Seann Walsh) is the main character, someone that the audience can understand and relate to. He had an incredible monologue and received a standing ovation from the crowd. From that moment, he never let his character just be the middleman but elevated his performance to be one of the best characters in the production.

The dramatic action was strong with this production, everyone had a clear goal, yet the thought and meaning behind that goal was not presented to us but scattered in the quick wit of the dialogue. The set design was beautiful, it was small but detailed, with colour scaling up the misshapen walls, able to move between set changes. Overall, it was a great and practical set.

Back to the acting and directing, the inner monologues of the characters were a great edition to the production. They provided laughs and more detail into what these characters were like. The lighting and design were incredible. Initially, I did wish that the sound had been more interesting, there could have been a lot more sound cues. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realised that they didn’t need to try and do much with sound, as the diegetic sounds of the performance, and the material of the performance was more suited for a naturalistic style of theatre, apart from the fourth wall breaking for the monologues.

As the performance finished, an older woman whom I sat next to asked if I understood the play. I said that I would have to think about it. In terms of understanding the plot and the philosophy behind the play, I understood it. Yet, to understand what is and what is not art is a question that will forever be verily unanswered.

Why *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie* Means So Much To Me

By Lily Taylor

I have never been the theatre kid of the family. I am one of four, and both my twin sister and my youngest brother are massive musical theatre lovers. They have both been in a wide variety of theatrical performances themselves, and I can’t count on my fingers how many times I have walked into the kitchen to find them both rapping ‘Guns and Ships’ from Hamilton.

When my sister first mentioned about wanting to see *Everybody’s Talking About Jamie*, I didn’t really know anything about it, apart from the fact that it was about a schoolboy who wants to become a drag queen. However, my mum bought me a ticket and the three of us went to see it on the West End in 2019. I have to admit, I was hooked from the very first number. The first scene takes place in lead character Jamie New’s classroom, where his fiery teacher Miss Hedge is leading a careers lesson. When asked what he wants to be when he is older, Jamie starts daydreaming about becoming a drag queen, which is where the song ‘And You Don’t Even Know It’ comes in. It is the perfect opening performance with Jamie and his classmates dancing on light-up desks as Jamie sings about

becoming famous. The energetic, celebratory atmosphere of the number is such a joyous watch, and hilariously contradicts his dull reality sitting in school being told he is destined to be a forklift truck driver. When Miss Hedge brings him back into reality, it is clear to the audience the extent in which Jamie New must hide his identity at school to fit in with perceived normality.

Growing up queer, I found myself resonating with Jamie’s forced repression of his identity. As a result, I was rooting for him from the very start of the musical. Despite having obstacles in his way, such as Dean (the school bully) and his distant, homophobic father, Jamie has a support network around him in the form of his mother Margaret, her best friend Raye, and Loco Chanel, a retired drag queen. Jamie is also supported by his best friend, Pritti Pasha, who faces her own challenges at school due to being one of the only Muslim students. These supporting characters are where the best songs within the musical can be found. Margaret has a powerful number in the second act after an argument with Jamie, titled ‘He’s My Boy,’ in which she expresses her love for Jamie despite finding it hard to always understand him. Furthermore, Loco Chanel and the other drag queens have a hopeful number titled ‘Over The Top’ where they encourage

Credit: Unsplash



Jamie, who is suffering from stage fright, to go on stage and perform his drag set.

The song that resonated with me most, however, came after the main dilemma of the play. Jamie has a run in with his father, in which he finds out that the birthday card that he allegedly got from his father was written by his mother, and that his father wants nothing to do with him. He goes over to Pritti’s house and repeatedly refers to himself as ugly and stupid. In response, Pritti, sings a song titled ‘Beautiful.’ The song is comprised of one single, delicate guitar melody and Pritti’s voice, and every time I hear it, it makes me cry. I think this is because this song is the epicentre of everything Jamie stands for: it is such a celebration of human love and uniqueness, which is so important to me as a fellow queer

Fashion



Meet the Editor: Robyn Srikandan

Hello! My name is Robyn Srikandan and I am the fashion editor for Venue in 2024-25. I am a third year English Literature student here at UEA – and if any of you reading this are curious about what I look like, if you ever see someone walking around campus with fishnets, a tartan skirt, and neon coloured hair (which changes regularly, but is currently orange), that is probably me! It may sound like an exaggeration, but I

honestly have been interested in clothing and fashion since before I knew how to tie my own shoelaces. When I was eight years old, I was obsessed with a game on my Nintendo DS where I ran a clothing store and dressed up the shoppers, and even at that tiny age I was imagining a life where that was my reality. Of course, more than a decade has passed since then and these days I have much more of an interest in looking

closely at the world I live in via the medium of dress – so having the freedom where I could express and share this interest felt like a dream to me, and though it has not been long yet, I'm already loving being this year's fashion editor.

Pantsuits and Politics: Kamala Harris and the Branding of an Electoral Campaign

By Micah Petyt

Politics are all about appearance. Trump isn't Trump without his bright red tie and Queen Elizabeth II wasn't the Queen without her matching hats. Since announcing her run for presidency, Kamala Harris' team has made it clear that they understand the importance of branding, but for Vice President Harris, her clothes are much more than a fashion statement.

During Biden's initial presidential campaign, Kamala Harris dressed professionally and solemnly. Often appearing at Biden's side in grey or navy blazer-trouser combos, the former US senator demonstrated classic Democrat colours while dressing less maternally than Clinton in 2016, bringing a breath of fresh air to the male-dominated, boomer-ruled presidential election.

Since stepping into the role of vice president and – more recently – presidential candidate, Kamala Harris has allowed a wider range of clothing options, most famously via her near-constant wearing of Converse. While this choice of footwear may appear arbitrary, it is the carefully curated job of stylist Leslie Fremar. Casual shoes give a sense of relatability to Harris, while denoting the all-Americanness of the classic Chuck Taylor. This search for relatability has since become the centre of Harris' presidential campaign, as can be seen through her team embracing Charli XCX's "Kamala IS brat" tweet in their social media, or through the merch available on her official website, which now sells a series of t-shirts representing various pride flags using cutouts of her pantsuits.

However, the clothing decisions made by Kamala and her team are about a lot more than simply appearing relatable or professional, as might be the case for previous presidential candidates. As a woman of colour, Kamala must act under the assumption that every single one of her words or actions can be used against her, the same going for her clothing.



Credit: Unsplash

Although the way the media functions in the US and the UK is very different, we cannot help but view the treatment of Meghan Markle by British tabloids as a cautionary tale, particularly as her fashion was pit against Catherine, Princess of Wales.

A similar treatment was given to Michelle Obama, both during and after her time as First Lady. Trashy comic strips repeatedly stripped her of her femininity, compared her to an ape, and pushed the "angry Black woman" stereotype. Considering the treatment that the opposition will give to a presidential candidate on both sides, it is not a surprise that a candidate such as Kamala Harris must go the extra mile in order to be viewed as "respectable" – a difficult task to pursue when also pushing for relatability.

Although not always for the reason of self-preservation, presidential fashion has been important for decades. For the few presidents not remembered purely because of their scandals or successes, a fashion choice can construct part of a president's legacy. Thus, Lincoln becomes synonymous with the top

hat, Reagan with classic '80s shoulder pads (among other things), and Trump with very specific shades of red and orange.

Outside of the English-speaking world, political fashion is just as important. Zelensky's army green is symbolic of Ukrainian resistance, Kim Jong-Un's memorable black combo represents the strict codes he puts in place in North Korea, and India's Droupadi Murmu appears at international events in traditional dress to counteract Western-centrism.

Clothing is a crucial part of a politician's presentation, and as a woman of colour, Kamala Harris' presentation is doubly important. In her colourful business casual, the Democratic nominee maintains the poise that is expected of women in high-profile positions, while painting herself as inviting and truly American.



Credit: Unsplash

What Should be in your Suitcase for September?

By Jade Drever

I could sit here and tell you to pack your jeans, tops and remember your socks, but would that really be useful? So instead, here is a list of items that are often forgotten from students' suitcases.

Fancy Dress – society and club socials will sometimes provide a theme for nights out so it's best to be prepared. Popular social themes at university are white shirt, sh*t shirt, traffic light party, y2k, and of course Halloween!

A formal dress/jumpsuit/suit – society and club balls tend to specify a formal dress code. Bring a nice pair of heels or flats and smart

shoes.

Clubbing outfits – the LCR does not have a dress code, so stay cool and casual or get as dressy as you like! Think jeans or skirt and a nice top or a cute mini dress. Being comfortable is the most important thing.

Clubbing shoes – remember to bring some old trainers with you that you don't mind getting sticky from the club floor for when you go out. If you don't have an old pair, hit up some of Norwich's charity shops for a cheap alternative.

Gym gear – if you're looking forward to joining the on-campus

Sports Park or any clubs, then you must ensure you bring your gym kit.

Cosy pyjamas – brace yourself for those cold Norwich nights and chill evenings with the flat with some warm pyjamas.

Sliders – it's an unfortunate fact that the floors of your flat will get gross so don't forget your sliders!

Backpack/handbag – make sure you have a good-sized bag to carry your laptop, notebooks, and any textbooks. I especially recommend something waterproof to protect your laptop from the rain!

Raincoat – I won't lie to you,

Norwich is a very rainy city, so be prepared with a warm raincoat and umbrella!

Dressing gown – be ready for that early morning fire alarm with a warm dressing gown on standby so you don't have to stand outside in your pjs!

Interview gear – if you're planning on working while you're at university then remember to bring your interview gear. Think smart jacket, shirt, shoes, and trousers or skirt.

I hope this helps, and we look forward to seeing you in September!



Credit: Thomas Lewis



The Secret Fashion Capital: The Best Places in Norwich for the Style-Savvy

By Robyn Srikandan

London, Paris, Milan and... Norwich? Yes, it's true: this little city is a small epicentre of style that has managed to stay quite secret from the rest of the UK. You may be surprised to hear that the only city in the largely rural county of Norfolk has a whole lot to offer – I certainly was when I first arrived here – but I think that its somewhat tucked away nature allows for a fashion ecosystem to develop that is completely unique from most other cities in England. But allow me to back up my claims before I get ahead of myself. I can't talk about the best spots to shop without firstly discussing the two large shopping centres that Norwich houses, Castle Quarter and Chantry Place. Both house clothing chains you would see in most parts of the country, such as TK Maxx, H&M and Urban Outfitters, but it is not shops like these that highlight the beautiful local style that you can find in Norwich. Chantry Place is home largely to chain stores, however, in Castle Quarter (formerly Castle Mall), thrifters and second-hand lovers can find a haven in the Emmaus and YMCA charity shops, where they can not only can upgrade their wardrobes with upcycled and sometimes even luxury goods for bargain prices, but also know that the money they spend is going to good causes. Another sustainable source for new finds is New-U, in which you can not only buy second-hand clothes but also bring in old and unworn items in exchange for something in their store. However, perhaps Norwich's most iconic shopping area, the Norwich Market, houses

even more unique and unusual places to buy clothes that are also perfect for eco-conscious shoppers. For avid fans of camo print, there is an army surplus store called Combat Zone featuring just about every iteration of camo on every imaginable article of clothing. For lovers of vintage, the market houses multiple stalls that will be perfect for you. Taxi Vintage Clothing is a wonderful place to find authentic clothing that largely dates from the latter half of the twentieth century, so if you want to dress like a true Sixties mod or eighties goth, this is the place to go. Lovering & Co is another excellent vintage stall in which you can find a selection of hand-picked clothing and accessories – with some high-quality items such as authentic Levi's, that you will be able to purchase at a much lower price. For jewellery lovers, Olivia's and Norwich Goldsmith's are two stalls in which have both first and second-hand jewellery. And for those who prefer to make their own clothes, The Yarn & Craft Store is a perfect spot for anyone looking for materials for their next knit or crochet project. For the more luxurious amongst you, Norwich also has a vibrant and sprawling independent department store, called Jarrolds. This intriguing five floor store houses big names like Michael Kors, MAC, and AllSaints, and has been an iconic spot in Norwich since it came into being in 1770, over 200 years ago, whilst managing to remain as a family business the entire time. Though not necessarily the best place to go if you are a bit strapped for cash, anyone that does opt to have a look can certainly have a bit of fun browsing and window shopping.

The Norwich Lanes are another shopping hotspot. Imelda's is an independent shoe and footwear shop, that aims to bring vibrance and colour with everything it sells. It would also be ridiculous of me to not mention Lisa Angel, a small chain that resides in Norfolk, and sells items that could be described exclusively as cute and elegant. They sell a little bit of everything, but one of their more well-known points of interest are their jewellery, which is all gold or silver plated, and can be personalised – but without a super steep price. I have previously bought an engraved bracelet from there for my dad for Father's Day. For those of you wishing to make more permanent alterations to your style, don't think Norwich is short of places on offer. Factotum is a well-respected tattoo and piercing studio, with incredible housing artists that create beautiful work, such as Shani Dean who etches flowing flowery pieces onto people's skin. Indigo Tattoo is another shop featuring fantastic artists, and I myself have upgraded my look with several piercings there and will likely get more because of how friendly the people there are. So, conclusion? If you are new to Norwich and fearing for the state of your wardrobe, worry not. Norwich is home to a tonne of independent, unique places to buy things and level up your look. Everything I have written here only touches the surface, and I must encourage you to explore the city yourself and see what they have on offer.

Looking Hot to Go: Exploring Chappell Roan's Most Iconic Looks

By Raye Whiting

Chappell Roan – the girl who broke the internet in a matter of days. Her work includes sensation songs 'Casual' and 'Good Luck Babe!' which went viral on TikTok, breaking her into the music industry with a bang. Kayleigh Rose Amstutz, otherwise known as Chappell Roan, had been working for years to break through into the mainstream music industry, being signed then dropped, and signed again, she started gaining a cult following on social media and an overnight audience. This led to her playing main stages and sold-out gigs in places such as Lollapalooza and Coachella only a year after her breakthrough album was released. The one unique thing about Chappell is her dress sense. Roan defines her onstage persona as a form of drag, taking inspiration from drag icons and crafting a new, unique and personal aesthetic. Roan has become a voice for the queer community, of freedom and expression, and her outfits reflect this ownership of her sexuality. One of her most iconic looks to date is the 'Statue of Liberty' look for Coachella. Roan was painted green, with the crown, torch, and wig, emerging out of a giant apple and painting her

picture-perfect image of the American icon. Dancing across the stage, she became a caricature of stereotypical American patriotism, while bringing together her audience with her own form of musical expression. She stands for the American self-expression and art. Another contribution to her overnight success is her viral 'Tiny Desk' concert. Roan wore a short hot pink dress, a white painted face, blue eyeshadow, and a tiny tiara situated in a bouffant ginger wig. Again, Roan's use of extremes to portray her character here emphasises this almost perfect prom queen look, but with a smudge of lipstick on her teeth, she's pushing this stereotype to extremes and almost laughing at it whilst still taking inspiration from it. Again, Roan's persona is heavily focused on being bigger than just her singing. Not only is she a very talented vocalist, but her stage act also incorporates dance, clothes, and makeup. Each crowd gets a different look, and each memorable aesthetic is associated with that gig, that point in her career, as it grows and becomes synonymous with her journey upwards. This includes looks such as her 'Wrestler' look at 'Lollapalooza' and her 'Marie Antionette' style ballgown. Roan has brought something new to mainstream pop and her sense of fashion has been

intrinsic to her incredible success. She's willing to be slightly different and to push the boundaries. She is also willing to, like in drag, take beauty to new levels, to emphasise features, and play with the very premise of beauty itself. This is a particularly important value in the world today, where the beauty standard is consistently shrinking to a narrowminded and unachievable stereotype. Roan encourages variation and self-expression, which is quintessential in both her own success and the reinforcement of individuality in today's society.

Credit: Unsplash



Meet the Editor: Abby Eastwick

I am thrilled to be leading the revived Gaming section for Venue 24/25. Whether you're a seasoned player or new to the scene, this section is dedicated to exploring the games that captivate millions.

In a constantly evolving industry, gaming has grown beyond a niche hobby, becoming a cultural phenomenon that influences all corners of art and society. From blockbuster releases that push the boundaries of storytelling and graphics, to indie gems that challenge our perceptions of what games can be, we will explore it all. Our goal is to provide insightful analyses, honest reviews, and the latest news, providing insight into the ever-expanding gaming landscape.

We'll also explore the people and communities behind them—the development process, the competitive scene and the fans who drives the industry forward. Gaming is more than just a hobby - it's a passion, a creative outlet and a platform for connection.

This upcoming year, we will cover all corners of the industry from behind-the-scenes to the games we know and love. The year ahead is going to be an exciting one!

How has Fortnite Managed to Stay Relevant?

By Romy Todd

Since its release in 2017, Fortnite has been one of the most popular video games across the globe. With its free-to-play model, and cross-platform accessibility, there are many redeemable qualities which have helped the game maintain its popularity for all these years. However, after several years and trend cycles, how has Fortnite managed to stay relevant?

Constant Evolution

Fortnite is known for its frequent and consistent updates, which play a significant role in keeping the game fresh for players. There are usually weekly updates, releasing minor changes and hotfixes, also known as 'content updates', as well as seasonal updates, which occur every 10-12 weeks. These typically introduce significant changes into the game, such as a new Battle Pass, exclusive skins, and collaborations.

On top of seasonal updates there are also mid-season updates. These updates include further quests and tasks for high-level players to keep them interested and engaged with the game, and new collaborations like the Avatar collaboration in April-May 2024, which introduced new quests, skins, and weapons. If you completed all the appropriate tasks during the set time period, you received an exclusive Korra skin, with multiple variations the further into the quests you got.

Cross-Platform Accessibility

Epic Games prioritises accessibility to reach their games across multiple different devices and platforms. You can play Fortnite on Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, PC, and mobile. This allows a larger player base to get involved, meaning higher engagement and turnout. People can play together regardless of the different consoles they use.

Community Engagement

The game offers a variety of player modes, even within its classic 'Battle Royale'. These modes include solo, duo, and squads. This means that friends in squads can play together and engage in conversation over a party chat. You can play squads with your

friends or with random players, giving you an opportunity to meet new people!
Variety of Game Modes

Over the years, Fortnite has introduced many new game modes, one of the most popular being 'Zero Build Battle Royale' for people who can't build or simply don't want to use the build feature in their games. Another game mode newly introduced is 'Reload', a mode in duos or squads where you can automatically reboot if you die, making a different, fast-paced game out of a classic 'Battle Royale' structure. There have been some other interesting game mode collaborations such as Lego Fortnite, and Fall Guys parkour lobbies. Fortnite also offers a creative mode, and the opportunity for anybody to develop a game if they wish. Some popular user created games are box PvP rounds, which test players building abilities under pressure, and parkour lobbies, to test players agility and reaction time.

Item Shop & Battle Passes

Although Fortnite is a free-to-play game, there are many in-game purchases that can enhance your experience as a player. You can buy new skins, emotes, vehicles, festival instruments and jam tracks in the item shop. These items are bought with 'V-bucks' which can be purchased in-game (1000 V-bucks cost roughly £6.99). The item shop refreshes every day at midnight, meaning players have a regular rotation of options, keeping their experience interesting. There is also a 'Battle Pass' option each season, which costs players 950 V-bucks, and gives them access to exclusive seasonal skins, emotes, and other rewards including free V-bucks.

If you are a regular player of Fortnite, there is also a subscription-based service called Fortnite Crew, which is a rolling monthly payment of £9.99 and gives players free access to the Battle Pass, a new exclusive skin and 1000 V-bucks free each month. These in-game purchases help keep players interested in the game and allow Epic Games to fund their game developments and continue to release fun updates.

Collaborations

What would make your gaming experience better? Could it be including your favourite movie franchise Marvel? Or perhaps your favourite musical artist Metallica, or Billie Eilish? Well, this is exactly what Fortnite has done for their players. Regular collaborations with popular brands, franchises and artists mean you can purchase skins, emotes, jam tracks, and other in-game elements related to these topics. My favourite so far has been The Weeknd collaboration. From December 2023, Fortnite players and fans of The Weeknd could buy a skin of his, as well as an emote to his song 'Popular' to use and show off in-game.

Nostalgia

Finally, Fortnite has largely managed to stay so relevant for several years because of nostalgia. Fortnite follows a predictable in-game structure which can be comforting for some players, meaning it is easy and enjoyable to come back to and revisit. People may take breaks from playing Fortnite and come back when there is an interesting promotion, or they feel like they want some nostalgia back in their lives. In late 2023, Fortnite introduced an update called OG Fortnite, bringing back old locations and weapons which were popular in the early days of the game's evolution. This promotion brought back millions of players wanting a nostalgic experience and reminded many why Fortnite is still a relevant and enjoyable game to play.

Overall, Fortnite goes down in history as one of the hottest and most successful online games of our generation. It has managed to stay relevant by constantly evolving, offering cross-platform accessibility, engaging the community, and providing a variety of in-game purchases and collaborations.



Ace Attorney makes Reading the Most Exciting Part of Gaming

By Abby Eastwick

To the layman, video games and reading don't appear to overlap much. One is viewed as lazy and mind-numbing, while the other is seen as intellectual and mind-nourishing. However, there is a niche where these two art forms overlap – the visual novel.

A visual novel is a subgenre of games characterised by interactive text boxes, minimal animation and often an element of choice by the player. This is comparable to the more traditional media of a picture book or choose-your-own-adventure book.

Perhaps one of the most notable examples of the visual novel genre is the Ace Attorney series. An idea conceived by Capcom's Shu Takumi, the game series puts the player in the shoes of defence attorney Phoenix Wright as he pieces together clues and examines testimony in the pursuit of finding the case's culprit. One of the central mechanics of the game is cross-examination, whereby the player compares a witness' testimony to gathered evidence to piece together the truth.

As such, this concept lends itself to the visual novel genre; the main storytelling medium is words. Yet

Ace Attorney manages to disguise some sizeable stories behind the exterior of a detective-esque video game. In fact, the original trilogy of games contains around 570,000 words, more than some versions of Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace.

Word count isn't the only area where the Ace Attorney games prompt comparisons to traditional novels. The original Ace Attorney trilogy contains 14 individual 'turnabouts' (chapters) which each have their own phases of set-up, investigation and eventual satisfying conclusion. In each of the games in the trilogy, these chapters form an overarching story, like the way chapters in a book form the bigger picture. From a larger perspective, each of these chapters can fall into a set-up, buildup and conclusion of the main story.

Further to this, there is a clearly established story that runs throughout the trilogy. Put together, these stories form larger and larger stories akin to those created by books. Many of these stories can fit into the traditional seven-point story structure, as first developed by Dan Wells, with multiple high and low points, revelations and developments relevant to each part of the story at all levels, from chapter to trilogy.

It's no wonder that people underestimate the narrative intricacies of a game series which originated

on the Nintendo DS. Within all of this, the Ace Attorney series explores themes of disillusionment within the legal profession, haunting childhood trauma, guilt and deep-rooted manipulation.

All this plot is wrapped up in a colourful art style, humorous dialogue and loveable characters. Despite being tarred with the brush of being a 'brain-rotting' video game, Ace Attorney does what a lot of traditional media fails to do these days: make reading cool. After all,

Photo Credit: Unsplash



Amelia Zabicka

Cosy Gaming - a Genre for Everyone

Gaming is for everybody and if you haven't tried it already, university is the perfect time to start. While gaming is often associated with the hyper-competitive online FPS games (as well as RPG games that need the highest specs possible and often cost way more than the average student can afford), I would like to bring the attention to the category of cozy games, which in terms of accessibility are some of the best games. While cozy games are not a specific genre, they can usually be identified by pastel graphics with cartoon art style and relaxing gameplay. Most importantly, they are accessible for a wide variety of reasons.

While university is a crazy busy time of your life, this is also the time where you will have to learn to be alone as you and your friends will have different schedules, no matter how close you are, and you will have to fill up that time somehow.

Gaming is the perfect way to stop the FOMO doom scroll that often accompanies being alone and leads to comparing yourself to others. On social media, you only see other people going out and making the most of university, when in reality they just choose not to post about the times when they are sitting alone. This down time is important as you need to recharge, and gaming will help you to shape that down time into a relaxing time rather than turning it into a time of anxiety and fears about not doing enough at university. The replacement of social media with gaming means you don't have to overthink things, as video games were made for

us to enjoy and to make us feel positive emotions rather than the anxiety that comes from the scrolling on social media and the constant comparison.

Most popular cozy games are also budget friendly. They usually do not cost more than £20 and while that isn't necessarily cheap, for hours of gameplay they provide, they are a lot more affordable than most video games, especially mainstream RPG games. Therefore, if you are someone that just wants to try out gaming without the commitment of spending a lot of money on something that might not be their cup of tea, then these games are ideal. Many cozy games also have low spec requirements, which means they do not require a big investment into a PC that could potentially be used just for one or two games, they can be run on almost any laptop that most students will have as they already need it for their learning.

Most importantly, these games often have a very low mechanical skill requirement. You do not have to be someone that grew up playing games, as they mostly rely on your ability to think and plan things out. These games also do not punish you to the point where you are discouraged from picking up gaming again if your planning isn't the most perfect and logical or if you forgot something.

Lastly, here are some recommendations of games that I would start with:

A Little to the Left (£13, with additional content packs available) – This is probably the most relaxing

game out of the list. It is a very simple game where you sort things, match shapes or arrange items in an order. This game is perfect for when you want to focus on something very simple when everything else is too overwhelming and complicated.

Stardew Valley (£11, sometimes cheaper on Steam) – You are a farmer, and you are attempting to rebuild Stardew Valley. You must improve and change your farm plot as well as befriend and even romance the residents of Stardew Valley. You get to make a choice if you would like to improve the town through collecting different resources or if you would like to sell out the town to evil Joja-Mart. In my opinion, this is the perfect introductory game as it allows you to set up different short term and long-term goals as well as allowing for different play styles. You might choose to focus on gathering as many resources as possible in the shortest time possible or you can choose the more relaxed route where you complete the storyline alongside any other goals that you have set out.

Cult of the Lamb (£19.50, with additional content packs available) – This might be the most stressful game on the list. While the art style is still cute and cartoonish, this game contains elements of resource management as well as elements of dungeon crawler. You are a lamb that leads a cult, and you must go into the various dungeons to defeat different bosses as well as to recruit more members. The resource management element comes from the fact that you must make sure your cult



Interested in getting involved with Concrete or Venue?

Come along to our open house event on Wednesday the 25th, 19:00 to 21:00 to meet the team and discover more!

You'll be able to find us in and Concrete Office just above the Hive!

P.S Free pizza included...

Could Your Tuition Fees Rise to £12,500?

An analysis by Universities UK has suggested tuition fees need to rise to meet current teaching costs.

David Bryson
Co-Editor in Chief

According to an analysis published by Universities UK (UUK), the average tuition fee in England would need to increase to £12,500 per year to meet the cost of teaching. This is a significant increase on the current average of £9,000.

The analysis, which is based on data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), suggests that the cost of teaching has risen by 10% over the last five years. This is due to a number of factors, including the need to replace textbooks, the cost of running laboratories, and the need to pay staff.

UUK's analysis also suggests that the cost of teaching is likely to continue to rise in the future. This is due to the need to replace textbooks, the cost of running laboratories, and the need to pay staff.

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Media Centre Closes Doors After Eleven Years

Anna Johnson
News Editor

The Media Centre, which has been a part of the UEA student experience for over a decade, is set to close its doors after eleven years. The centre, which was founded in 2004, has been a hub for student media and has provided a space for students to develop their skills and passions.

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