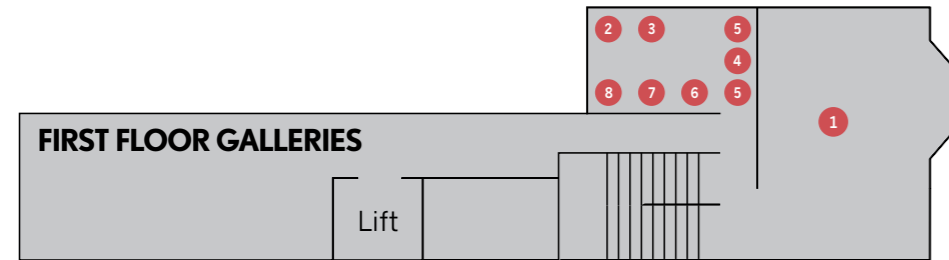


## LIST OF WORKS



### Front Gallery

1.  
Ilona Sagar  
*Correspondence O*, 2017  
Two channel projection  
Stereo  
19 mins 34 secs

### Rear Gallery

2.  
Amateur footage shot by  
Dr Robert Bolton, c. 1940  
21 mins 58 secs  
Courtesy Wellcome Collection

3.  
Cropped reproduction of a page  
from *The Peckham Experiment: a study  
of the living structure of society* by  
Lucy H. Crocker and Innes H. Pearse

4.  
A selection of material from The Pioneer  
Health Foundation's archive.  
Courtesy of The Pioneer  
Health Foundation

5.  
Extracts of interviews with past  
members of The Pioneer Health Centre,  
conducted by Alison Stallibrass in the  
late 1980s  
Courtesy Wellcome Collection

6.  
A selection of material from The Pioneer  
Health Foundation's archive  
Courtesy of The Pioneer  
Health Foundation

7.  
A selection of books written by Lucy H.  
Crocker and co-founders of The Pioneer  
Health Centre, Innes H. Pearse and  
G. Scott Williamson

8.  
A selection of letters referring to  
the Pioneer Health Centre  
Courtesy Wellcome Collection

## ALSO ON AT THE SLG

**Michael Armitage: The Chapel**  
13 Dec 2017 – 23 Feb 2018  
Main Gallery

## SLG

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# ILONA SAGAR: CORRESPONDENCE O

**13 DEC 2017 – 25 FEB 2018**  
**FIRST FLOOR GALLERIES**  
**ADMISSION FREE**

**EXHIBITION GUIDE**

## ILONA SAGAR: CORRESPONDENCE O 13 DEC 2017 – 25 FEB 2018

In her first institutional solo show in the UK, Ilona Sagar presents *Correspondence O*, a new installation and exhibition exploring the history of the radical Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham and its subsequent conversion into a gated community. Sagar's two-channel moving image installation presents the complex, changing landscape of public health and the social shift towards a more egocentric, user-focused and technology-infused understanding of wellness.

The Pioneer Health Centre in south London was founded in 1926 in response to rising public concern over the health of working class people and an increasing interest in preventative social medicine and experimentation. It culminated in the 'Peckham Experiment', a twenty-four year study founded on principles of self-organisation, local empowerment and social connection as fundamental to health. The Experiment took place in a new, purpose-built space designed by Sir Owen Williams, comprising large, airy rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows, which enabled biologists to observe members of the local community as they took part in physical exercise, games and clubs. The Centre closed in 1950 when its innovative approach conflicted with the ideals of the new National Health Service, though its influence continues to resonate.

*Correspondence O* follows a group of young boys and a female protagonist whose position fluctuates across the course of the film between one of authority and vulnerability. The relationship between the woman and boys is left unclear as fragmented, non-linear narrative collapses past into present, melding architectural and human physicality with historical and experimental medical research and archival material.

Embodying the original collaborative nature of the Experiment, Sagar has worked closely with present-day residents of the building on the production and development of the work. Chance encounters with a Building Surveyor and a Personal Trainer led to their appearance in the film and their professions becoming emblematic material components. A LiDAR scanner, instrument of the building surveyor; an MRI scanner, instrument of medical researchers; and a medical grip test, instrument of the scientific researcher, become interchangeable tools exploring the internal and external narrative of the body in relation to contemporary attitudes towards health and past ideas of public wellbeing.

*Correspondence O* is informed by extensive research into the archives of the Pioneer Health Centre held by the Wellcome Collection and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and contemporary medical research conducted by the

Behavioural and Clinical Neuroscience Institute at the University of Cambridge. The rear First Floor Gallery features rarely seen material from the Peckham Experiment archives, including interview transcripts, publications, photographs, letters and other ephemera assembled by the artist. A key component of the archive room is footage shot by Centre researchers. Its amateur quality and method of transposition to archive resulted in films which are a disjointed mesh of body parts, glass, water, rope, architecture, brief moments of interactions and activities. Consequently it is akin to structuralist film, a technique which resonated with Sagar and is evident in this new work.

In conjunction with *Correspondence O*, a publication is being developed which expands the ideas explored in the exhibition. Conceived as an arrangement of text drawn from Sagar's research, the publication presents original photographs and film stills, correspondence and the architectural plans for the Centre amongst other material. The book also includes commissioned essays by writer Owen Hatherley; Professor Paul Fletcher; Bernard Wolfe, Professor of Health Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge; artist Ilona Sagar; Dr Felicity Thomas, Research Fellow on the Cultural Contexts of Health at the University of Exeter; and Dr Nina Wakeford, artist and Reader in Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London.

In parallel to *Correspondence O*, the South London Gallery's young people's forum Art Assassins are exploring the history of the Peckham Experiment and asking questions about its relevance today. Working with historian-in-residence Giulia Smith, heritage experts, and artists including Andrea Franke, Erik van Lieshout, Ilona Sagar and Eleanor Wright, this partnership project will culminate in a series of events and an exhibition at the SLG in September 2018. For *The Peckham Experiment – A Centre for Self Organisation* the Art Assassins are collaborating with the Pioneer Health Foundation, the Wellcome Library, the Science Gallery at King's College and community partners Peckham Vision and the Wilderness Wood.

*Correspondence O* is co-commissioned and produced in partnership with *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. Supported by a Wellcome Arts Award. Sound Partner: Bowers & Wilkins. Special thanks to residents Tom Bell of Mowma Projects and James Hardy of Live Fit for their contributions to the project.

*Correspondence O* will be presented at CCA: Centre for Contemporary Art for Glasgow International, 2018.

THE BALLAD OF PECKHAM RYE  Bowers & Wilkins

### Photography is permitted in the galleries

#IlonaSagar  
#CorrespondenceO  
@ilona\_sagar  
@balladofpeckham

### Artist Biography

Ilona Sagar lives and works in London. Using a diverse range of media spanning moving-image, text, performance and assemblage, she has formed a body of work that responds to the social and historical context found in the public and private spaces we inhabit. A significant aspect of her practice is the broad cross-disciplinary dialogue generated through collaborations across art and scientific disciplines; including dance, architecture and neurology. She has a practice that explores the link between language, surface, technologies and the body through our increasingly mediated encounters in social, political and experiential space. Illusion and material [dis]honesty set the stage for works which seek to seduce, alluding to something familiar yet other.

Recent projects include: HereAfter residency White Building, SPACE Studios, London (2017); solo show, Pump House Gallery, (2016); solo show, Art Licks Weekend with DKUK and Ballad of Peckham Rye (2016); performance commission, The Performance Studio (2016); solo show with performances Tenderpixel, London UK (2015); solo show with performance, Vitrine Gallery, London UK (2015); Arcadia Missa, Bátor Tábo Budapest (2015), STO Werkstatt in collaboration with Tomas Klassnik (2015); Art Rotterdam, Main Section, Rotterdam NL with Tenderpixel (2015). [www.ilonasagar.com](http://www.ilonasagar.com)

### About The Ballad of Peckham Rye

Taking its title and concept from Muriel Spark's 1960 novel, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (TBOPR) uses the text as a starting point for working with artists to commission and produce new work that draws on, imagines or celebrates the distinctive architecture, geological monuments, histories and experiences of the area. Through major commissions and smaller projects TBOPR champion the work of emerging and underrepresented artists, often outside the context of traditional arts venues, to allow the creation of shared dialogues with the local community. Many of TBOPR's projects are an artists' first public solo commission in London. [www.theballadofpeckhamrye.com](http://www.theballadofpeckhamrye.com)

### Thanks

Kelly Diederer  
Paul Fletcher  
Luke Frost  
Mike Keelin  
Adam Laschinger  
Stephen Lee  
Amy Newton  
Tom Nowell  
Seb Nowell  
Michael Ogunseye  
Peckham Vision  
Pioneer Health Foundation  
RIBA  
Seth Scott  
Luca Shea-Green  
Barty Shepherd  
Louis Suc  
Felicity Thomas  
Wellcome Trust & Wellcome Collection  
Hisham Ziauddeen