SHAMICA RUDDOCK
DECRYPTING A BROKEN SYNTAX
8 APR – 12 JUN 2022
GALLERY 1, FIRE STATION
FREE

EXHIBITION GUIDE
SHAMICA RUDDOCK
DECIPHERING A BROKEN SYNTAX

Tracks:
Event A: Inwards Lurking, 5m 1s
Event B: Wading Undergrowth, 3m 45s
Event C: Across from Within, 9m 10s
Event D: Recurrent Thoroughfare, 4m 54s
Event E: Outwards, 4m 48s
Recess, 1m 52s

Following six months as the eleventh SLG Postgraduate Artist in Residence, Shamica Ruddock, presents an exhibition on the ground floor of the Fire Station. A newly-commissioned installation consists of a sound work housed within a purpose-built listening environment. Visitors can travel through sonic and cosmic worlds via the 30-minute soundscape in this meditative space.

Shamica is a research-based artist often working between sound, text and moving image. During the residency, they continued to investigate Black Technopoetics, the relationship between race, technology and sound, looking at the history of Black sound culture through the narratives of speculative fiction. This way of writing becomes a method for thinking of slavery continues to assert itself in the present.”1

Inspiration for the shape of the listening dome comes from a bulbous fruit called the calabash gourd. For at least 10,000 years, the calabash, or bottle gourd, has been used in African Caribbean cultures to eat, create domestic objects and musical instruments. It also has spiritual significance related to cosmogony, the branch of science that deals with the origin of the universe, especially the solar system. Shamica draws from references of Jamaican-born Canadian fiction writer Nalo Hopkinson, whose work draws on Caribbean history, language, and storytelling traditions. Hopkinson writes of the calabash in relation to Afro-Caribbean folk practices, where characters travel to new worlds such as Guinea land, an ancestral spirit world. The curved forms of the calabash echo the shape scientists believe black holes take and are similar to hourglasses. The dome also provides acoustic and enveloping qualities. Being in the dome invokes an experience akin to being in the area just before reaching the dance floor in a music venue, like a corridor or stairwell. Here the architecture channels the music, signalling a physical and metaphysical journey. The installation offers listeners a different space and context to consider the cultural poetics of the sound work, away from typical music venue, like a corridor or stairwell. Here the architecture channels the music, signalling a physical and metaphysical journey. The installation offers listeners a different space and context to consider the cultural poetics of the sound work, away from typical culture and music scenes; an invitation to the listener to discover the meaning of something written badly or in a difficult or hidden way.

House (music): a genre of electronic dance music characterised by a repetitive four-on-the-floor beat. It was created by DJs and music producers from Chicago's underground club culture in the 1980s, as DJs from the subculture began altercating disco songs to give them a more mechanical beat and deeper basslines.

Speculative (Realism): speculative fiction is a broad category of fiction encompassing genres with elements that do not exist in reality, recorded history, nature, or the present universe. Such fiction covers various themes in the context of supernatural, futuristic, and other imaginative realms.

Syntah: the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence.

Techno (music): a genre of electronic dance music that features a fast repetitive beat and synthesised sounds usually without vocals or a conventional popular song structure.

Worldbuilding: the process of developing a coherent imaginary environment to act as the setting for a work of science fiction.