

Alison J Carr



Intimacy Stages, *Cleopatra's Lounge*, *Huddersfield*, *Downstairs*, 2024, photograph printed on velvet, 93cm x 93cm



Intimacy Stages, Cleopatra's Lounge, Huddersfield, VIP 4, 2024, photograph printed on velvet, 93cm x 93cm



Intimacy Stages, *Perfect 10s*, *Preston*, 2024,
photograph printed on velvet, 93cm x 93cm



Intimacy Stages, *Mood Lounge*, *Doncaster*, *VIP 6*, 2024,
photograph printed on velvet, 93cm x 93cm

I work in a studio repurposed from a 1920s department store. My work, though, begins in empty theatre seats and expectant lap dance booths. I'm insatiably curious about the bodies we look at, the women who step into the spotlight. What creates their appeal? What is the inner experience of performing charisma like? I fastidiously research real labour as well as fantasy archetypes: myths and testimonies. I interview chorus girls who witnessed seismic social change in the twentieth century. I hunt for alternative narratives in Hollywood musicals. I inhabit the worlds I conjure: I stage myself copying pin-up poses or taking screen grabs from dancing videos. I'm as curious about interior lives as I am about constructed glamour projected outwards.

My artistic lineage is a private boardroom of rebels. Lee Miller, Louise Brooks, Rita Hayworth, Margaret Morris, Anita Berber. Women who inhabited their bodies as proclamations, who shaped their own images rather than being shaped by them. Their refusals fuel the way I approach my own body in performance and the way I look at others.

Long-exposure photographs capture theatre interiors with uncanny detail. Photos rendered on velvet convey the tactile, secretive promises of strip clubs. The watery wash of a single colour on my tracings of performers blur memories with apparitions. Gold ink on black paper swirled into patterns reminiscent of Klimt I use to describe the aura of charisma that surrounds a stripper on stage.

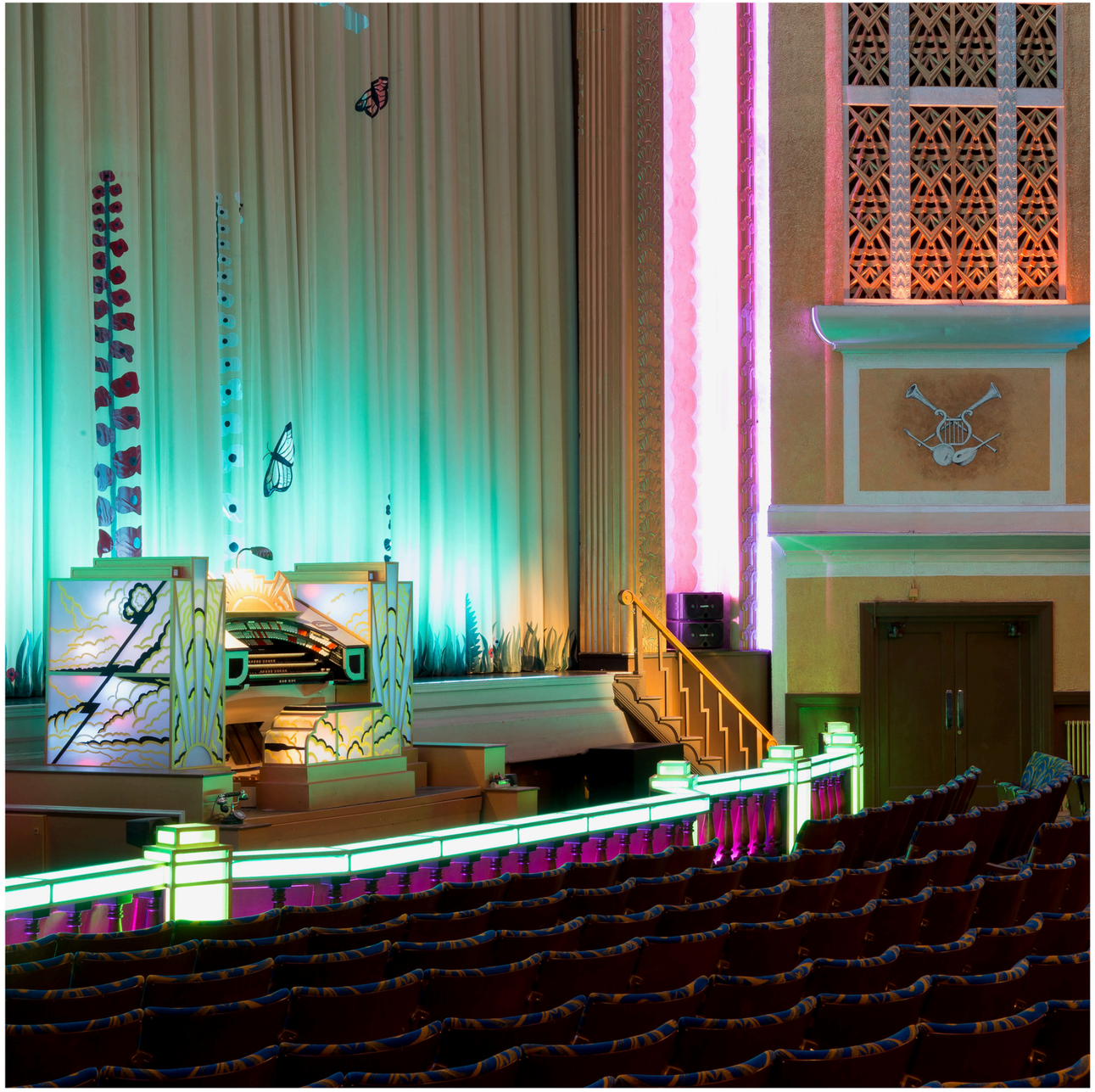
I constantly experiment with ways of working: photography, video, drawing, collage, performance and written pieces, I'm always looking to distil lush sensuality, connection, intention, and ornamentation with refined incision and emotional resonance. When people meet my work, I hope they feel a kind of charge, a recognition that bodies carry history, agency, pleasure, and power. I want my viewers to delight in the truth that all bodies matter.



Ascending A Staircase, *Library Theatre*, *Sheffield*, *1934*, 2019,
giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



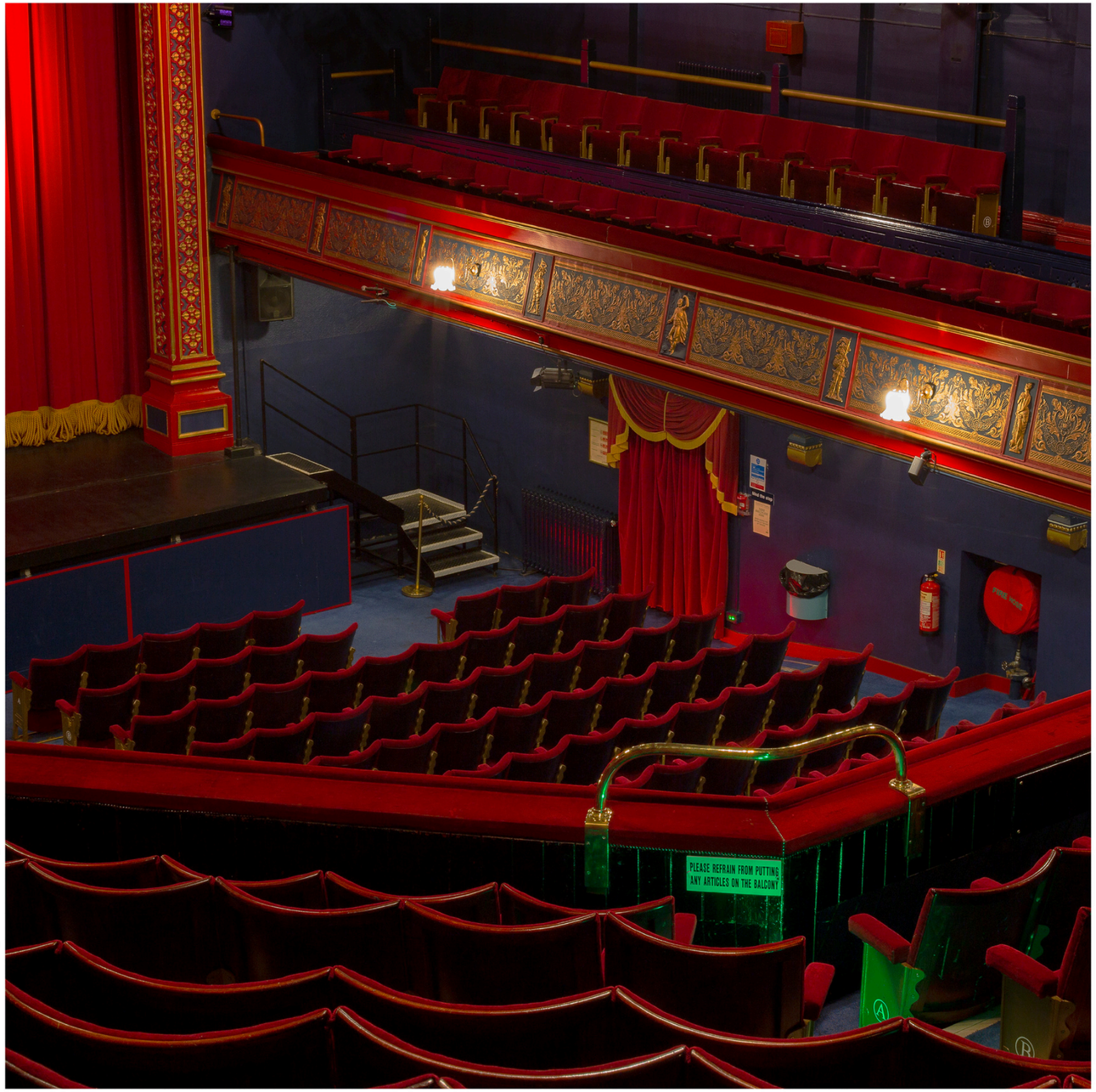
Ascending A Staircase, *Darlington Hippodrome*, *Darlington*, *1907*, 2019, giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



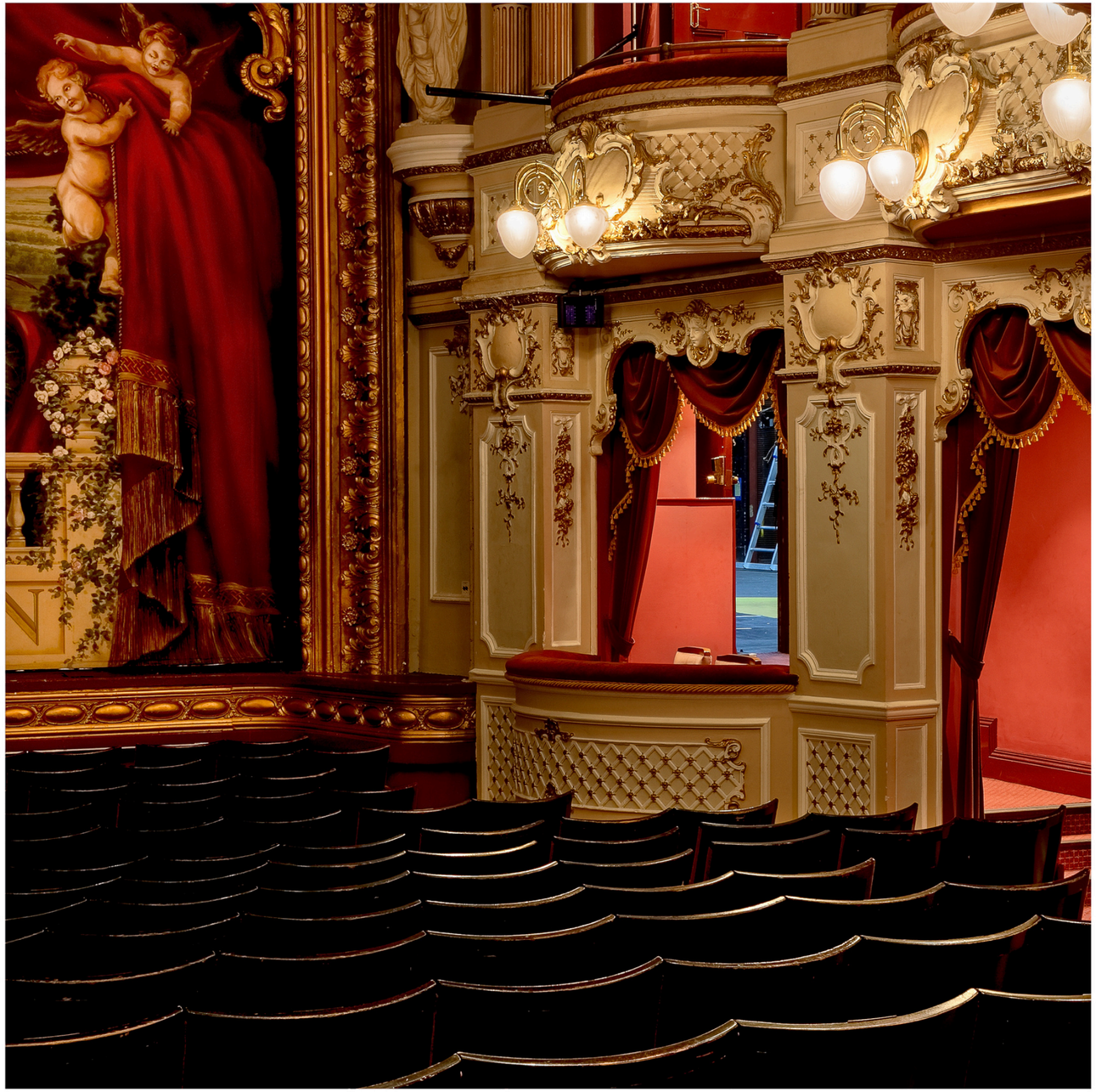
Ascending A Staircase, Stockport Plaza, Stockport, 1932 (green), 2019, giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



Into the Spotlight Bloc Projects, Sheffield, UK, 2019



Ascending A Staircase, *Pomegranate*, *Chesterfield*, *1879*, 2019,
giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



Ascending A Staircase, *Lyceum*, *Sheffield*, *1879*, 2019, giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



Ascending A Staircase, *Funny Girls*, *Blackpool*, *1934 (upstairs)*, 2024, giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



Ascending A Staircase, Harrogate Theatre, Harrogate, 1900, 2024,
giclée print on white cotton rag paper, 84 cm x 84 cm, edition of 5



Theatre Flats, photo mounted on MDF, Three Act Structure, group exhibition, S1 Artspace, 2014



The Muses Are Watching, 2025, digital image printed on velvet, 138cm x 146cm







How Can I Perform As An Image? (Gloss Blob on head, Getty Jasonne) 2022, A4 collage



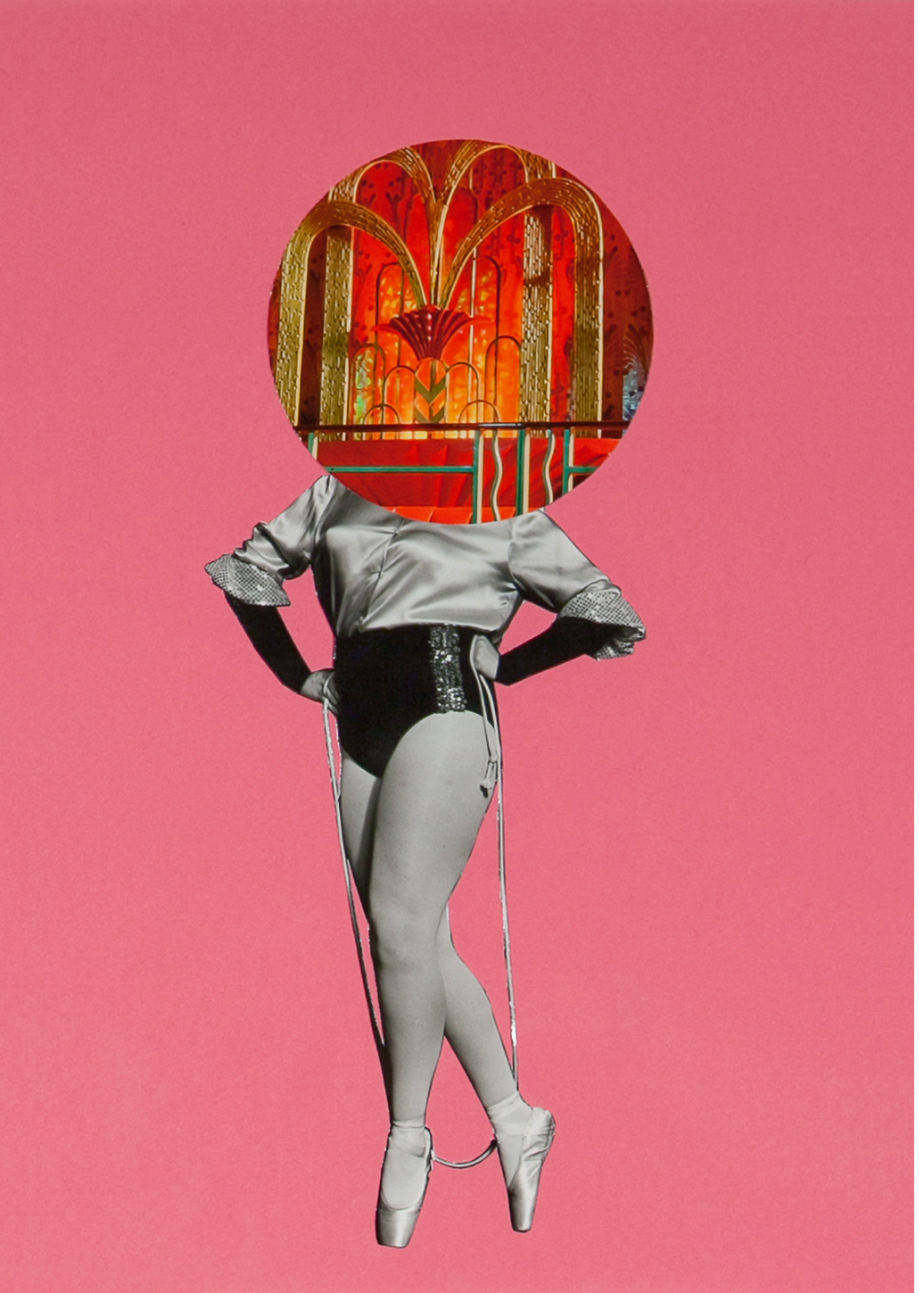
How Can I Perform As An Image? (Gloss Blob on dress, Mlle de Bremont) 2022, A4 collage



How Can I Perform As An Image? (Divided Self, Maria Gregor) 2022, A4 collage



How Can I Perform As An Image? (Catherine Hamilton & Burgundy Circle) 2020,
A4 collage



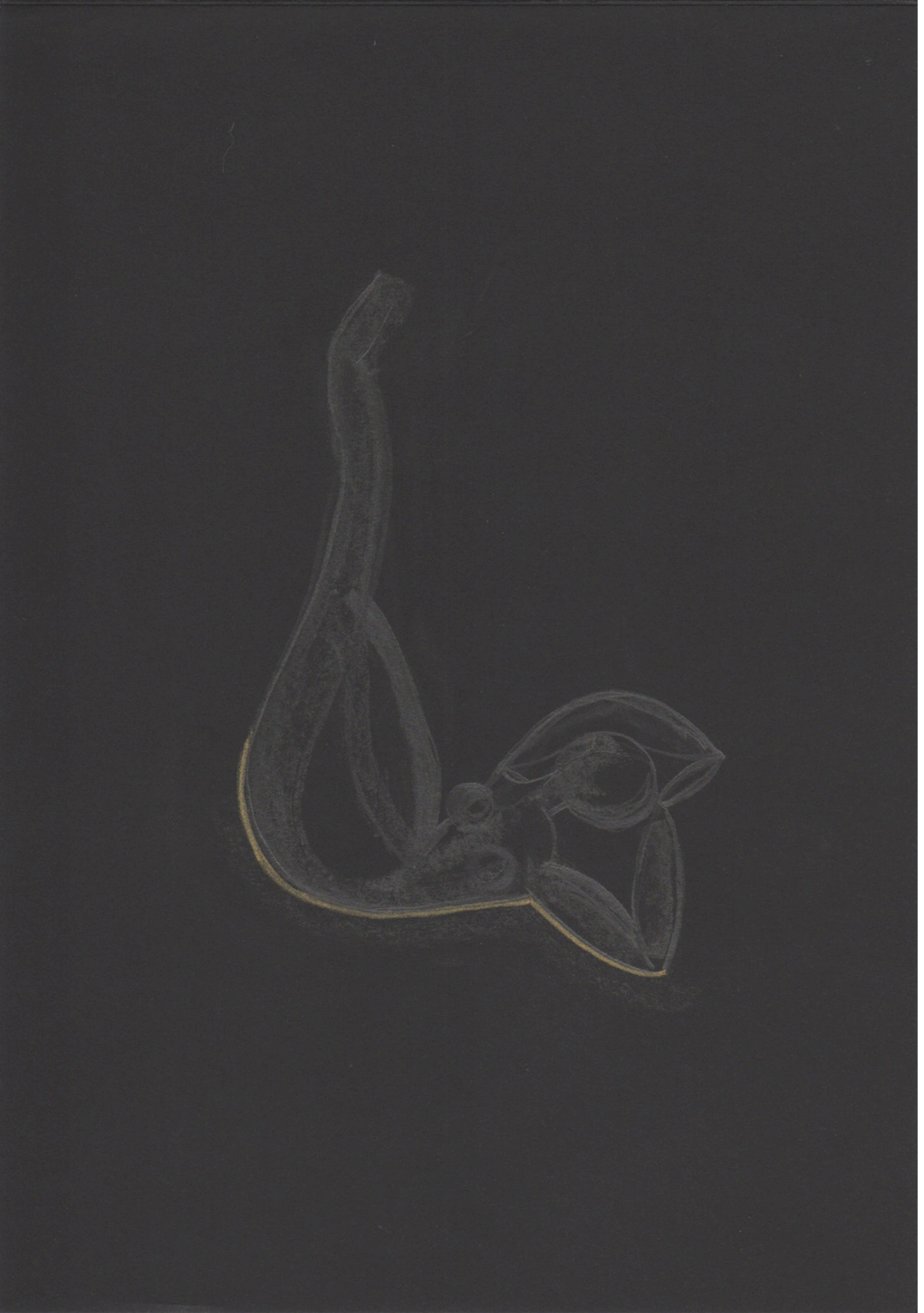
Radical Entertainment: Iya / Madame JoJos 2016, A4 collage



The In Between (Rectangle) 2025 drawing with gouache and gold ink on watercolour paper, A4



Spirit of A Muse With Pleasers, Legs Up 2025, drawing with gouache and gold ink on watercolour paper, A4



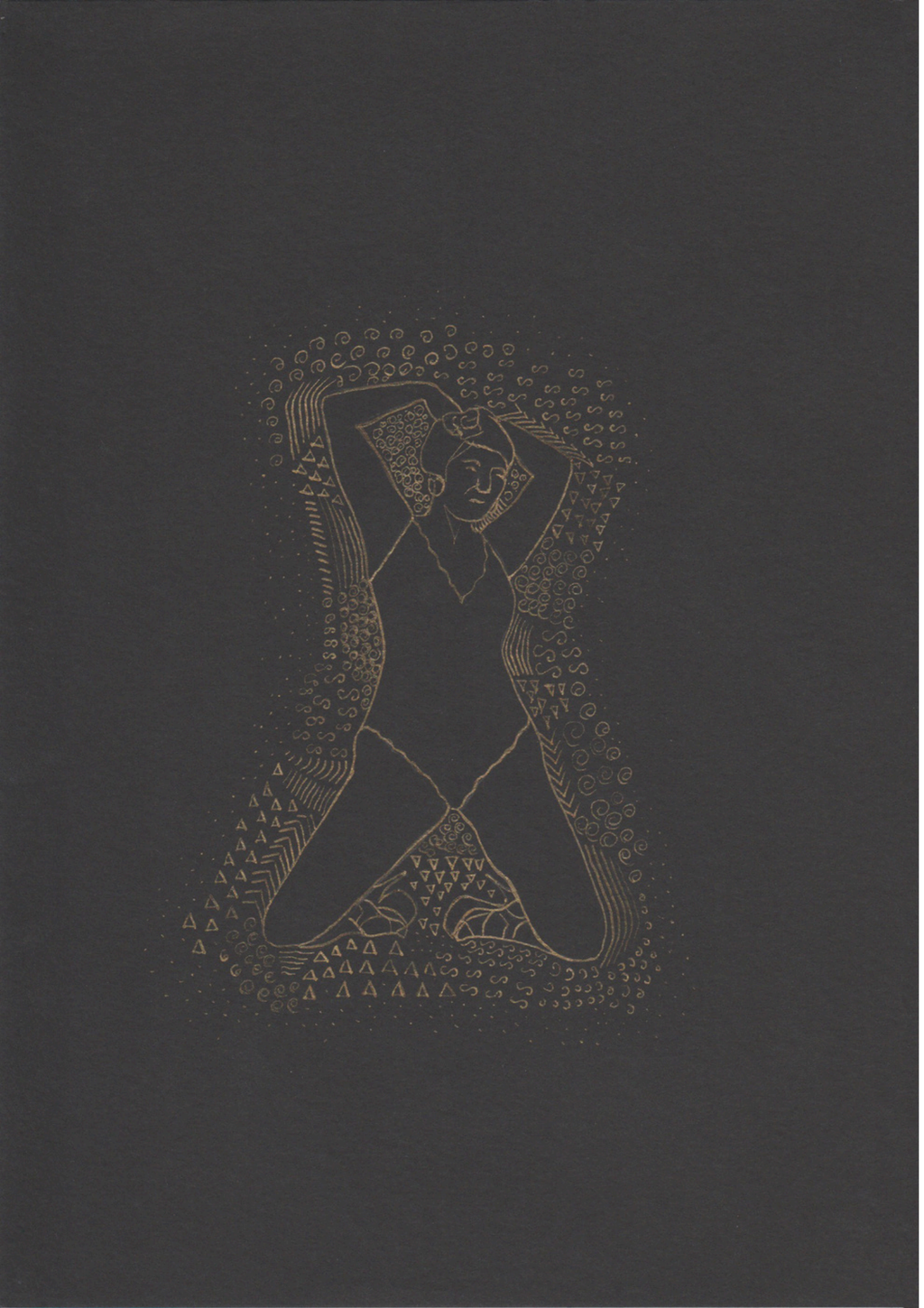
Spirit of A Muse, *With Pleasers*, *Legs Up*, *Shadow* 2025, drawing with graphite gold pencil on black paper, A4



Crown / Halo (Clipping) 2021, drawing with gouache and gold ink on watercolour paper, A4



Spirit of A Muse With Pleasers, *Leg Lifted* 2025, drawing with gouache and gold ink on watercolour paper, A4



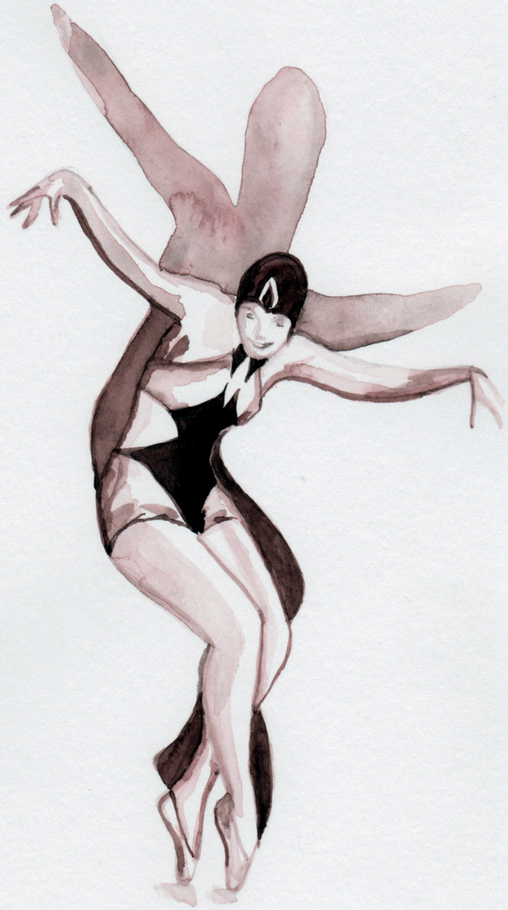
Tallulah, is That Your Real Name? Sexplicit 2025, gold ink drawing on black paper, A4



Spirit of A Muse, Seated 2024, drawing with gouache and gold ink on watercolour paper, A4



Pose and Shadow, performer unknown (backflip) 2021, drawing with gouache on watercolour paper, A4



Pose and Shadow, *Dorissa Nelova* 2020, drawing with gouache on watercolour paper, A4



Pose and Shadow, *Alexandra Danilova* 2021, drawing with gouache on watercolour paper, A4



Modernity / Power, video, 13 mins, 2021
video available to view

WHAT SHE PROJECTS



SHE DOES NOT POSSESS





They Danced as One, video, 45 mins, 2021 -
video available to view here



They Danced as One, video still, 42mins, 2022 -



They Danced as One, video still, 42mins, 2022 -



They Danced as One, video still, 42mins, 2022 -

IT WAS SPECIAL



Felicity Means Happiness, Abingdon Studios, Blackpool, 2019
video available to view here, 16 minutes



Felicity Means Happiness, video still, 16 mins, 2018



Felicity Means Happiness, video still, 16 mins, 2018



Wish You Were Here, *Real Photographs*, *Maria Gregor*, 2008
B&W gelatin photograph, 20" x 24", edition of 5



Wish You Were Here, *Real Photographs*, *Iya*, 2008
B&W gelatin photograph, 20" x 24", edition of 5



Wish You Were Here, *Real Photographs*, *Ginette Vrala*, 2008
B&W gelatin photograph, 20" x 24", edition of 5



Wish You Were Here, *Real Photographs*, *Mlle de Bremont*, 2008
B&W gelatin photograph, 20" x 24", edition of 5



Wish You Were Here, *Real Photographs*, *Getty Jasonne*, 2008
B&W gelatin photograph, 20" x 24", edition of 5



Tap Performance for Gallery with Many Dancers, performance
Three Act Structure, group exhibition, S1 Artspace, 2014



Bauhaus Bühnenchor, performance, 2019



To Embody Power, performance, 2021

Down the road at Bloc Projects, Carr's cinematic photographs of northern theatres mesmerise. The familiar rows of luxurious velvet seating, the draped curtains and gold-painted detailing are captivating through Carr's colour-soaked lens. Each image focuses on the staircase that leads to the stage - a bridge between reality and creativity, especially for women. She who climbs it may have a moment of artistic freedom, she is to return to her expected role.



▲ Colour-soaked ... Alison Carr's Ascending a Staircase. Photograph: Alison J Carr

'Yorkshire's steely antidote to London-centric art, Platform 2019 review' Hannah Clugston, Guardian

Alison J Carr is an artist based in Sheffield. She works visually and creates performances. Following her sojourn to the California Institute of the Arts, where she absorbed the critical dialogue and the lure of the Hollywood facade, she returned to Sheffield for a PhD at Sheffield Hallam University, where she gained her undergraduate degree.

Her book, *Viewing Pleasure and Being A Showgirl: How Do I Look?* was published by Routledge in 2018. Her next book, *Sex on Stage*, co-edited with Lynn Sally was be published by Bloomsbury, 2025. *The Night* was re-published by Peakrill Press, 2025.

Support for her work included: Terra Foundation, Freelands Foundation and the Site Gallery, the Jerwood, and Arts Council England. Most recently she was awarded a 'Looking Forward, New Dialogues' commission for Sheffield Museums. Alison has shown her work internationally in LA and Berlin, and nationally in London, Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester, and Blackpool.

Alison J Carr
Born 1978 Sheffield, lives in Sheffield

Education
2013 PhD Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University
2009 MFA Photography & Media, California Institute of the Arts (CalArts)
2001 BA (Hons) Fine Art: Combined & Media Art, Sheffield Hallam University

Solo Exhibitions, Performances & Screenings
2023 They Danced As One, live scored screening with Rob Bentall, Cultures of Sound, Huddersfield, UK
2022 Night World, Exchange Place, Yorkshire ArtSpace Society, Sheffield, UK
2021 Bubikopf, performance, The Cellar Theatre, Sheffield; NewBridge Project, Newcastle, UK
2020 Ascending A Staircase, Darlington Hippodrome Theatre, Darlington, UK
2019 Into the Spotlight, Platform / Site Gallery, Bloc Projects, Sheffield, UK
The Gaps in the Cannon, McCullough Center, Middlebury College, USA
2018 Felicity Means Happiness, Abingdon Studios, Blackpool, UK

Selected Group Exhibitions, Performances & Screenings
2025 The Muses Are Watching, Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK (commission)
Mad Dooley Circus Art Show, The Untouchables Bar, Newburgh, NY, USA
2024 Hold the Space, Brown Street Project Space, Sheffield, UK
2023 Babble, Ilkon, Ilkeston, UK
Contrafibularities, Fronteer Gallery, Sheffield, UK
2022 Think of Me With Kindness, Gage Gallery, Sheffield, UK
2021-22 Single Figures, Prosaic Mosaic, Sheffield, UK
2021 Undertow, Group Show, Freelands Foundation, London, UK
2019 Prosaic Mosaic: A Survey of New Paintings, Bloc Projects, Sheffield, UK
Inter-Section, Temporary Contemporary, Huddersfield, UK
Showgirls: Screening and Book Launch, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, UK
2018 Construction House, performance, S1 Artspace, DINA, Sheffield, UK (commission)
Showgirl Manifesto, Temporary Contemporary, Huddersfield, UK
On Show, Curator's Show by Joanna Craddock and Dawn Woolley, Leeds Arts University, Leeds, UK
2017 Lay of the Land Performance, HOME, Manchester, UK (commission)
2014 WROUGHT One-to-One Performance Festival, The Hive, Sheffield, UK
Three Act Structure, S1 Artspace, Sheffield, UK (commission)
London Life, L A Noble, London, UK
Library Interventions / Sharon Kivland, Leeds College of Art, Leeds, UK
2013 Past/Present, Kinsey Institute Gallery, Indiana, USA
2012 Showtime, with artist Kerstin Honeit, SIA Gallery, Sheffield, UK
2011 Showtime, with artist Kerstin Honeit, LoBe Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2009 Greater LA MFA (GLAMFA), California State University Long Beach, USA
MFA Conversations Part II, I-5 Gallery, Brewery Arts Complex, LA, USA
Why Theory: MFA Graduation Exhibition, Spring Arts Tower, LA, USA
2007 Déjà Vu, three-person show, Bloc Projects, Sheffield, UK
2006 Just for Fun, performance, Webster Gotts & Robin Close, Sheffield, UK (commission)

Curatorial Projects
2018 Showgirl Manifesto, Temporary Contemporary, Huddersfield, UK
2014 You Me You Me You Me, S1 Artspace, Sheffield, UK
Hollywood Forever, SIA Gallery, Sheffield, UK

Residencies
2011 LoBe London Berlin Art Kunst, Berlin, Germany
2010 Terra Summer Residency, Giverny, France

Collections
2020- Numerous private collections
2009 Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender & Reproduction, Indiana, USA

Awards
2024-5 'Looking Forward, New Dialogues' commission, Museums Sheffield, UK
2022 1:1 Fund, Jerwood Arts
2018-20 Platform / Freelands Artist Programme, Site Gallery, Sheffield
2008 American Association of University Women, International Fellowship

Funding
2021-22 Developing Your Creative Practice, ACE
2018-19 A-N Mentoring
2017-8 Grants for the Arts, ACE

Selected Press
2022 'Rina Arya in Conversation with artist Allie Carr: Ascending a Staircase: the magic of the interior' Dispatches, Contemporary Theatre Review, 2018
2021 'Counter Pose' Edward Ball, Old Land, New Waters, Freelands Foundation, 2021
2019 'Platform Shoes: Emerging Artists In Sheffield', Allan Gardner, The Quietus, 2019
'Yorkshire's steely antidote to London-centric art, Platform 2019 review' Hannah Clugston, Guardian, 2019

Selected Publications
2025 Sex on Stage, eds. Alison J Carr & Lynn Sally, Bloomsbury
2022 The Night, self-published novella (2nd edition 2025, Peakrill Press)
2018 Viewing Pleasure and Being A Showgirl: How Do I Look? monograph, Routledge
2017 'The Stripper, De/Constructing Key Figures', The Routledge Companion to Media, Sex and Sexuality, eds. F. Attwood, R. D. Egan, B. McNair, C. Smith, Routledge

Alison J Carr
@alliejcarr
alisonjcarr.net
alliejcarr.substack.com
alliejcarr@gmail.com
07850153182