



Press Release

Yorkshire Graduate Award 2021 Jessica Rost

2021 Yorkshire Graduate Award artist invites us to rethink how we can live in better harmony with nature

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is delighted to announce Jessica Rost as the recipient of the 2021 Yorkshire Graduate Award, a residency that provides vital support at the critical stage of transition from student to artist.

Rost recently completed her MA in Fine Art at University of Leeds and is an artist who considers the sustainability of art practices. She lives off-grid, both as a political action and an act of solidarity with the environment, and her work invites us to question how people can have less impact on the planet and live in better harmony with nature.

Working with assembled sculpture, film, sound and textiles, Rost creates installations that often include living or raw materials, and is interested in passive protest, ecology, animality and environmental issues. She examines how artists can create low impact practices, and takes inspiration from durable or sustainable culture, known as permaculture design, and its basic principles of caring for the planet, the people and sharing fairly with others.

Rost says: "When the COVID-19 pandemic reached the UK, I made the decision to remove myself from the system. Whilst most people's only interface with the outside world in lockdown has been through digital experiences, I have been picking nettles, collecting solar rays, and lighting fires to cook and keep warm by. The break from normality became an opportunity to go beyond 'thinking by' and actually 'living by' some ideas that I have been exploring around sustainable art practices, namely, the philosophy behind permaculture."

YSP's Yorkshire Graduate Award is an opportunity for recent graduates to reflect and move forward with their practice. It includes a residency at the park; access to metal and wood workshop facilities and studio space; a budget for materials for the development of new ideas; time with YSP's skilled technical team; and critiques and guidance from the curatorial team. The award has previously resulted in new and exciting projects from past awardees, including the current exhibition by Kedisha Coakley in the Upper Space at YSP and the recent project by Hannah and Jasmine Cash.

In March 2020, as lockdown began and university studies became virtual only, Rost took the decision to self-isolate on a piece of wasteland near Blackburn, Lancashire. This period became an important research method for her artistic practice. Through the process of observing, working with natural surroundings, and becoming more self-aware in our recent unprecedented times, Rost continued to find ways of making artwork, whilst minimally impacting the environment.

"Living off-grid has made me more acutely aware of how dependent we are, and how caught up we are, in systems which perpetuate inequality, unsustainable production and unnecessary consumption."

During her time at YSP, Rost plans to continue exploring off-grid living spaces and the plants found growing at the park, and their importance in providing material to make clothing with, or for foraging for food. She will continue her investigation into low impact living, temporary and transitory 'homes', and research the history of environmental activism. She aims to extend her public-facing practice by inviting visitors to YSP to encounter happenings and demonstrations of alternative practices and off-grid techniques.

Rost explains: *"I would like to find ways to continue my research into passive activist living, off-grid spaces, and perma-art practice; living-by and practicing-by these principles. This continued conscious re-worlding is in recognition that as a maker, consumer, terraformer, and, as a part of the problem, I can also, therefore, be part of the solution."*

Since Yorkshire Sculpture Park was founded in 1977 by Peter Murray CBE, it has invested in artists at crucial moments in their careers and supported them throughout their professional journeys.

Head of Curatorial Programme Helen Pheby says: *"YSP was founded to create opportunities for practitioners and participants in a regional context and remains fundamentally committed to the principle, which is more important now than ever."*

-Ends-

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Press enquiries

Svetlana Leu, Sutton: +44 (0)20 7183 3577 / svetlana@suttoncomms.com

Download images at yvsp.org.uk/media

Listings information

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG

Near Wakefield and Barnsley – M1 Junction 38

+44 (0)1924 832631 | yvsp.org.uk | @YSPsculpture

Open seven days a week, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Booking essential, via yvsp.org.uk

About Jessica Rost

Jessica is a sculptor and a performance artist. She is interested in ecology, animality and environmental issues, and lives off-grid. Much of her work involves live, raw and recycled materials. She has exhibited and performed across the UK, including performing at The Tetley, in Leeds, and at MK Gallery, in Milton Keynes. Alongside her solo practice, she is a freelance maker and director: devising and making for outdoor spectacles and events. From 2008-2018, Jessica was the Artistic Director and a maker at Festive Road CIC, where she produced sculpture, street theatre and large-scale puppetry, mainly for the outdoor arts. After completing an MFA at University of Leeds, Jessica has recently taken on a Creative Caretaker role and is in residence at Wild Rumpus in Cheshire. She runs her own company, Rost Productions Ltd, which is a collaboration of makers, technicians and performers who create outdoor installation and street theatre, which tours across the UK.

jessicarost.co.uk | Instagram: @rost.jessica | Twitter: @ProductionsRost



Jessica Rost, Bath meditation, rubbish dump, 2020.
Photo: Orrin Saint Pierre



Jessica Rost, Bath meditation, workshop, 2020.
Photo: Orrin St Pierre

About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is one of the finest places in Europe to experience modern and contemporary sculpture in the open air. We host work by some of the world's most well-known artists from Yorkshire-born Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Damien Hirst to Phyllida Barlow, Kalliopi Lemos, Gavin Turk, Ai Weiwei and many other major international and emerging artists across 500 acres of 18th century-designed landscape and six indoor galleries. YSP welcomes around 500,000 visitors every year to enjoy and experience art, heritage and the landscape and each year 40,000 people have contact with our learning programmes. Founded in 1977, YSP is an independent charitable trust and registered museum.

Creative Case for Diversity

Yorkshire Sculpture Park was founded in 1977 to enable fairer cultural access and opportunity and we are committed to being part of change towards a fairer world. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form and are proactive in our programme, policies and behaviours to address inequalities locally, nationally and internationally. We recognise that economic, social and cultural disadvantage is complex and intersectional and shape our activity accordingly. Diversity and equality are crucial to the arts because they release the true potential of our nation's artistic talent – from every background. At YSP, we support Arts Council England's mission – great art and culture for everyone. We share ACE's commitment to promote and embed diversity in our workforce and cultural programme. This is called the 'Creative Case for Diversity'.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

wakefieldcouncil
working for you

**LIZ AND TERRY
BRAMALL FOUNDATION**

**SAKANA
FOUNDATION**

**ROGER
EVANS**