Name/s of Applicants: Catherine Street

Project Working Title and Short Summary (maximum 100 words):

I love the shooting scenes

A multimedia environment with booming sound, flickering projections, live performance and drawing. The work compares the imagined violence in video games with a broader, real, more subtle violence that we encounter day-to-day. I draw from my own experiences with violence to build a theatrical space that uses the power of the live body; there's nothing quite like coming across a motionless body in a space surrounded by films and drawings. I explore how violence, power and control affect our bodies; how we respond to subtle violences around us and how this violence affects our ability to thrive.

Names, institutional positions, and contact details of two referees:

Referee 1

Jenny Brownrigg, Exhibitions Director, Glasgow School of Art

Referee 2

Lucy Askew, Chief Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, National Galleries of Scotland: Modern,

Biographical Summary of Applicant

I have been working professionally as a visual artist since 2001, taking part in exhibitions, performances and screenings working in video, sound, sculpture, performance, writing and drawing. I will give a summary of some of my projects of recent years. In 2015 I had a major one-person exhibition at the Reid Gallery, GSA, Glasgow. This was the result of several years work supported by a bursary from Creative Scotland. The exhibition was made up of a three screen video and sound work, a further separate sound recording, six one-hour long live performances and various drawings, texts and one further film presented on a monitor. Like much of my previous work, this particular exhibition explored the relationship of ideas to bodies. I'm fascinated by how our bodies are affected by the ideas and thoughts that surround us and prey on our minds. In this work, the space was filled with shimmering, blurry, bodily images and sharp breath sounds, the viewer invited to consider the strange meanings and layers of drawings and the content of handwritten notes. The live improvised performance explored tasks of memory and how ideas take shape in the mind.

Since then I have gone on to develop a range of projects and have taken part in a number of residencies. In 2018 I exhibited a one room exhibition in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA). For this exhibition I created a film, titled Orchids, that was made whilst working at a residency centre at Cove Park. In this film I used blurring, movement and rhythm to suggest the body's relationship to the natural world, with an ambiguously erotic quality. The exhibition also included a series of collages that used fragmented imagery of plant forms. In 2019 I was commissioned by LUX Scotland to make a film responding to the life and work of the filmmaker Margaret Tait, this film focused on the interplay between two different voices speaking of spiritual themes. In 2020 I had an exhibition of film and collage work at Cindy Rucker Gallery in New York, that built on my work presented at the SNGMA. Since then I have created a film for Hidden Door festival in Edinburgh. In this video work the viewer hears my voice reading a text that is very free and explores an experience of the body alongside ideas of death and survival. The work incorporates images of physical

endurance created in a previous film, with degraded footage of people dancing harvested online. Much of the work for this film was done whilst on a residency at the Museum of Loss and Renewal in Italy. I have recently had a solo exhibition of collage at Sierra Metro Gallery Edinburgh.

Proposal

I love the shooting scenes – Catherine Street

Summary

- A multimedia environment with booming sound, flickering projections, liveperformance and drawing.
- Comparing the imagined violence in video games with a broader, real, more subtle violence that we encounter day-to-day.
- Expressed through the live and recorded body of the artist.

Violent encounters in real and imagined worlds

As a society we have a deep relationship with imagined violence. It's easy to sit down in front of the TV and watch a crime thriller as a way to relax after a busy day, or pick up a crime novel whilst on holiday. Or even to spend hours engrossed in violent games.The video game is a special case, the real-life player is not a passive observer but a protagonist in the game, directing and perpetrating the violence herself.What is it about thedepiction and simulation of death and violence that is so entertaining? And how do our thoughts and feelings whilst engaging with violence in a game or on TV differ from our thoughts and feelingswhen we actually encounter in real life a violent act, either against ourselves or others? This comparison between different ways of engaging with depictions of violence has been a central concern of my work for many years.



My own experiences of encounters with violence real, imagined and mediated

I have often been drawn to the use of violent imagery in art and culture but I've also witnessed first-hand a violent assault that nearly led to the death of a friend. I have had many experiences of imagined violence inpowerful hallucinations due to psychosis,whilstin

the pastI have worked for a human rights organisation, regularly reading horrific accounts of torture.I'm fascinated by the ways that our senses respond to these different experiences and how our reality is built of sensations, whether that's when we're seeing exploding heads rendered lifelike in a video game or witnessing a friend'sblood spilling onto the pavement.I would take as astartingpoint the comparison that the project has posed:comparing'power, domination and the glorification of violence in the invented worlds of gaming with everyday life and reality'. I would make this comparison by using my live and recorded body, creating an arresting, multi-sensoryenvironment and drawing on mylived experience.

Public interest

I would explore the visual, simulated, gratuitous violence in video games as a comparison to a broader violence we encounter day to day, by comparing my live body and images of my body. The call for proposals mentions, as included in the jurors' concerns: a 'lack of control'; a lack of 'collective material investment';'social isolation' and 'ecological catastrophe'. I understand these to be forms of violence that we, as citizens, face and struggle with on a daily basis. My role as an artist is to explore these public interests alongside my audiences, by asking questions, teasing out ideas, stimulating debate or private contemplation on urgent questions about contemporary life and experience. These ideas would be elaborated on in the spoken element of the work and in the drawings (as described in following section).

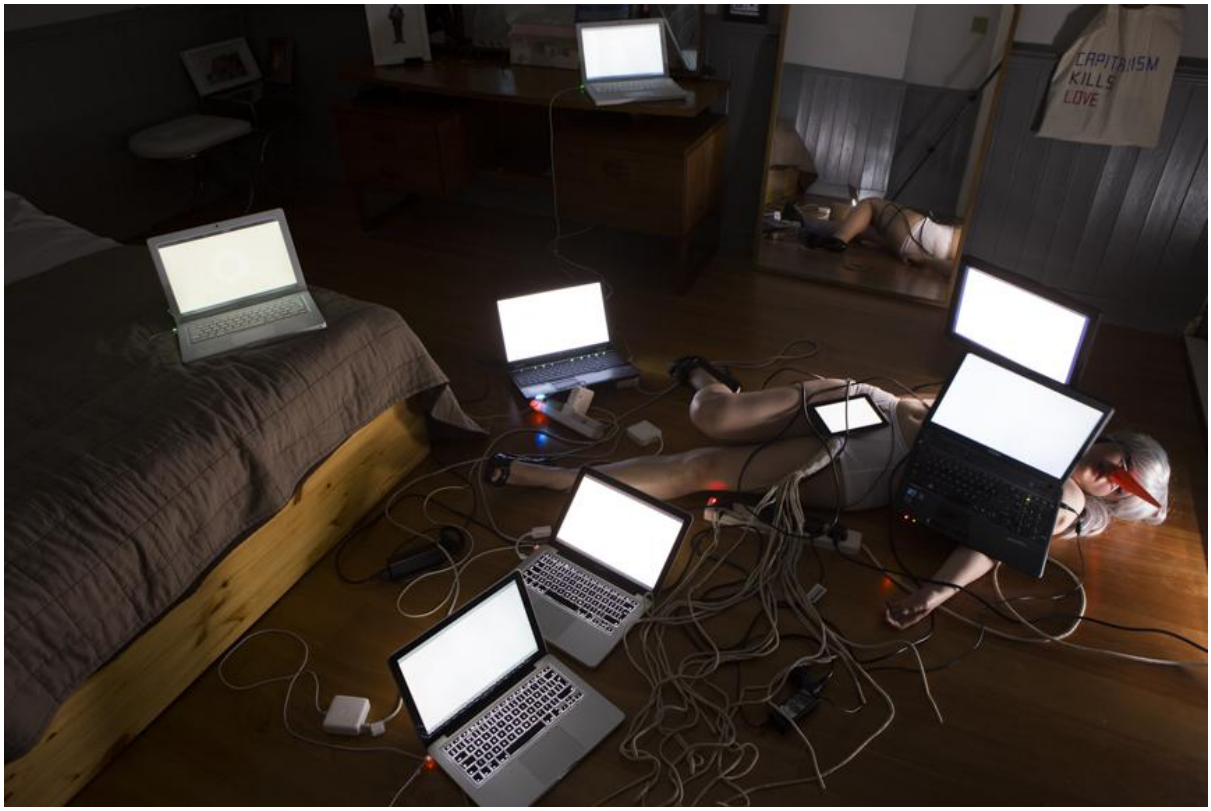
My work is all about the body. I can explore how violence, power and control are inscribed on our bodies – how do our bodies respond in ill health or when we lack access to a safe environment? How broad can we go when thinking of violence in terms of control and domination in our everyday lives? I see there to be a strong public interest around the body's relationship to these subtle violences around us that affect our ability to thrive.

Is the gamer's point of view as the protagonist in violent acts a compensation to our general powerlessness in the face of these subtle forms of violence? How are our vulnerable bodies at the mercy of forces larger than ourselves: our own government; governments of foreign powers; global corporations or the volatility in global markets? If video games provide an escape, a distraction, is this powerlessness what we want to escape from?

I think there is also a strong public interest in exploring the power play in the artwork itself. I have a degree of power as an artist, in the sense that I have an active role in culture and in deciding what is considered as art. I am privileged in being able to access the experience of using my own creativity in a public way; most people don't have access to this experience. However I also make myself vulnerable by offering my body for contemplation. I want my work to be an experience that is both enlivening and healing.

What would it be like?

There's something strange and compelling about a motionless live body presented in an exhibition surrounded by other artworks. It brings a different energy to a space. I would envision making a dramatic and atmospheric work using my live but motionless body in a sculptural environment (see image below for an example of this approach). I would project shimmering, pulsing colourful videos of myself and of gameplayover the top of my bodyand the surrounding room. I would wear minimal clothingso that parts of the video would be reflected off areas of my bare skin. Theimages in the video conjure a violent world of colour and shape.The tension between how I present my own body as a living, breathing reality but at the same time as an image on a screen, will help me to explore the central theme of violence in real and imagined worlds.



Here my real body would come to represent the subtle, real violence we see around us, and which impacts on our lives, whilst the images projected over the top would represent imagined, digitally created violence in the video game. The work would be engaging through sight and hearing with high contrast, flickering images and booming surround sound.

By using my own body I engage the audience – I make my work accessible and relatable – we all have bodies! Risk is an important factor; I choose the level of risk I can bear – thinking about revealing my lived experience of ill health or even physical endurance when staying motionless for long periods of time. The use of my body and my lived experience is one way in which my work is distinct from much art, film, gaming and culture in general at the moment.

I would not be able to be there in person for the whole exhibition. In the past I have approached this difficulty by making two versions of the work – one with my live body, and one with a surrogate. By surrogate I mean something that stands in for my body when I'm not there and that isn't present when I am there. This could take the form of an additional sound work using speech or another film presented on a monitor.

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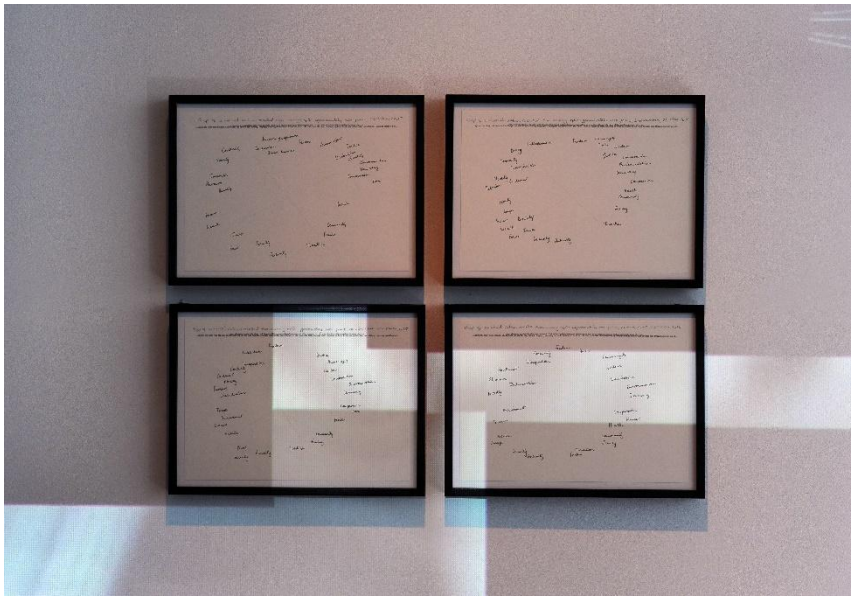
The video projected over my body would come from video games and from recordings of my body, but would only be dimly recognisable. I would create the video by using clips of video games filmed from the screen. I then manipulate and layer the images until they are blurred and soft.(You can see an example of this in the film LESIONS linked below). In this way, some of the violence of the game is bent back onto itself, it's like I'm ripping apart the violent image with my body. But this ripping apart or distortion of the image leads to something subtle and even beautiful, raising the question of how depictions of violence function in imagined worlds, in creative work, how they can be made seductive.

Link to LESIONShttps://drive.google.com/file/d/14Qhb8mYKbgVV0LhtPXtfajJ2PbiS-ttd/view?usp=sharing

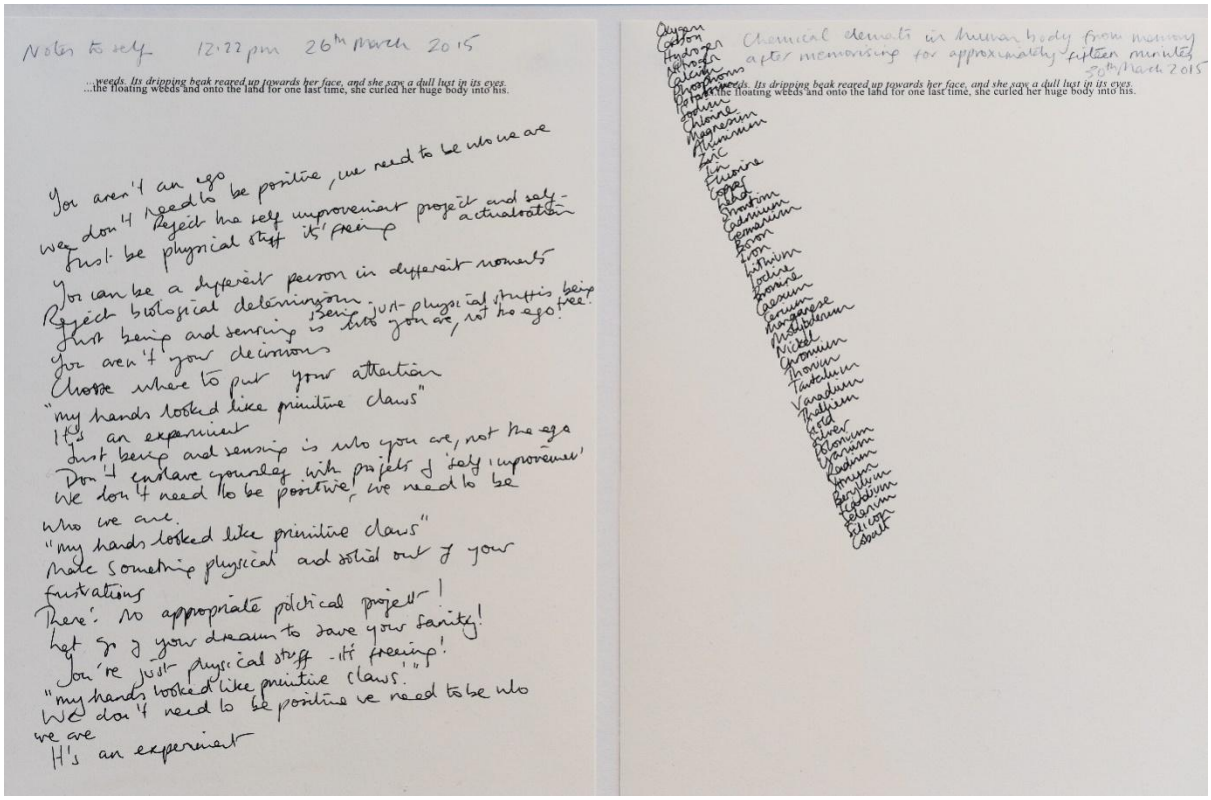
The sound component would mix sound created electronically, created by musician Neil Simpson, who I have worked with before, and my own voice. The voice would explore in a poetic way some of the themes described, meandering in an imaginative, stream of consciousness way. Conceptual Emergency, linked below uses this approach.

Link to Conceptual Emergencyhttps://soundcloud.com/catherine-street/conceptual-emergency?si=08b49b9603d6445c9377a68dce369382&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Near to my body and overlapping with the video projections as they throw light across the whole space, would be a series of framed drawings using text. I have used this approach before e.g. in Muscle Theory (images below). Using handwritten text and drawn motifs, these drawings would explore the themes and ideas in the work in a more calculated way. Here the briefing sessions with the jury would be very important. The drawings would aim to capture the thought process of the jury when choosing and elaborating on this theme. The drawings may include verbatim quotes from conversations handwritten onto the drawing. You can see an example of this type of text drawing below.





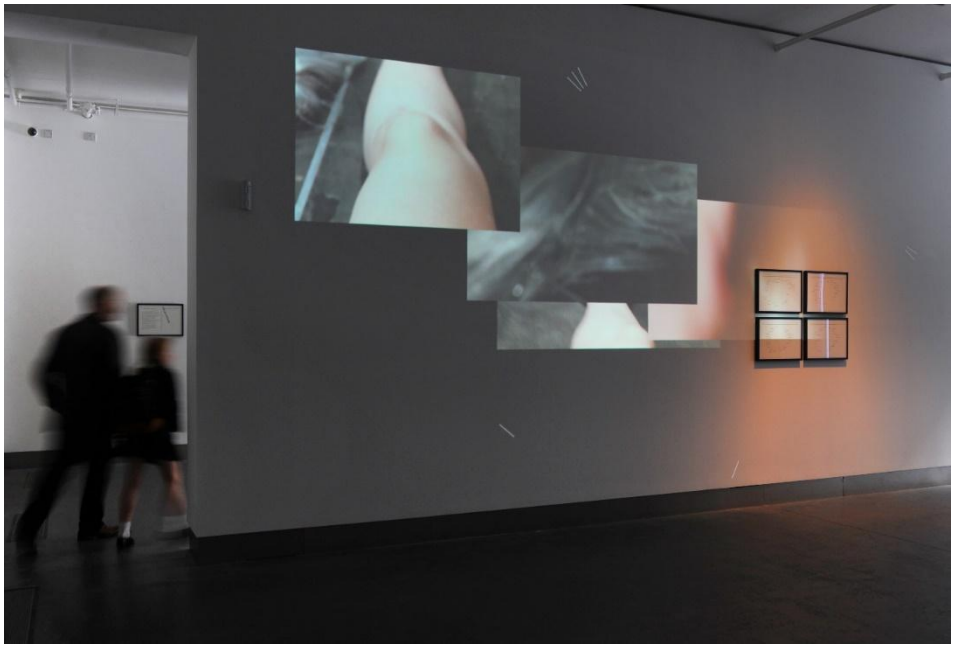


Provisional Budget £8000

Artist fees 2 days per month for 10 months (20 days at £336 SAU rates)= 6700

Commission additional music/sound950

Videographer 1 day 350






When your clothes
are a high-energy mix,
keep your make-up
ole. Try a winged
ourtesy of YSL
n Du Regard
oof Eyeliner
Ivresse, £23.
Rain jacket, £355,
Isabel Marant Etoile.
Embellished cotton
hoodie, £2,050,
ntino. Motocross
rom £21, O'Neal