



One Day Changes
Shahor Omar and Ako Ismail
One Day Changes was a joint exhibition by Skimstone Arts' Associate Artists and photojournalists Ako Ismail from Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Shahor Omar from Kirkuk, Iraq who now live in the North East of England with lived refugee experience. The exhibition shows how in one day something so dramatic and life-changing forces people, including children, who were leading normal lives, suddenly to become refugees fleeing their homes, and as survivors look for a safe place. Purchased by Durham University.



Temporal; Visitations; Dwelling Place
Shaho Omar
Photographer/artist Shaho Omar has documented his own and others temporary experiences of having to navigate what is 'home'. He has personally had to move three times in one year and continues to live in fear of being transferred again somewhere else unknown to him.



Lanre Sonde
Lanre Sonde presents an illustrative collaboration with Ovie Mac Solomon on the poetic exploration of Sonder with Sonde that delves into the awareness of the hidden complexity in the lives of others.



Birds in Flight
Kev Howard
Birds in Flight a breath-taking new exhibition by Teesside-based photographer Kev Howard which celebrates the beauty and grace of the movement of birds in flight using the technique of long-exposure photography.



Underneath, Within, Beyond
The Sun & The Soul Company
Exploring the underneath and often hidden parts of plants in Winter Gardens at Preston Park, Stockton-on-Tees and our own stories and dreams. It's an exhibition that celebrates the beauty of growth. Created by Skimstone Arts' The Sun & The Soul Company (people with lived refugee experience living in Stockton and Sunderland.)



Where do you Sit?
Features photographic portraits of ordinary people who shared extraordinary stories or co-created poems and lyrics that responded to the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2023 - Ordinary People.



Meet the Photographers
5.45 - 5.15pm
Kev Howard, Shaho Omar and Ako Ismail, Lanre Sonde and some of those who took part.

A chance to have a conversation that matters!



UNITY-SOLIDARITY-JOY

Theresa Easton

Join in solidarity and print your own message of hope, in this family friendly drop-in workshop using traditional letterpress to make statements, pledges and proclamations print maker Theresa Easton.

Print Workshop 4 - 6pm

"Skimstone Arts are a vital part of the cultural ecology. Everything they do has their core beneficiaries at its heart.... And they do it with such a sense of ambition and fun! Furthermore it feels mutually respectful and there is always a sense that everyone is learning and growing together." - **Jo Cundall, Senior Programmer, Community Foundation.**



FOOD

Delicious vegan and vegetarian food served in the café area.

- Lite bites from Kaltouma 3 - 5pm
- Vegan/veggie buffet 5.15 - 7.45pm

Skimstone Arts

About Skimstone Arts

Skimstone Arts Mission: To support diverse artists, people and communities at risk of social isolation to create work with, for, and about the world that matters to them.

This special party celebrates the wonderful diversity of artists and communities stories. Through a live performance, film and exhibition programme, it highlights the experiences of working together with the talent, resilience and commitment to create artworks that says something about the world we all inhabit.

The artists and communities, from often invisible (by society) parts of the UK and around the world, have brought us new perspectives and lens over the last 18 years, which we want to share on 14th November at the Star & Shadow. Together, we created an annual programme of moving and joyful events, gigs and festivals, with people whose paths we would probably never have crossed had we not shared a common purpose: to create.

Skimstone Arts has sought to position these acts of creation to remove the barriers, divides, expectations and limitations that society or policies place on us, and instead open a myriad of possibilities for creating something unique, and working with respect, care and in unity.

Skimstone is closing (because of the possibility of my returning brain tumour), but let's go out on a high, a thank you to everyone who has been an artist, staff member, partner, funder, volunteer, venue and audience member and who has journeyed with us.

We hope you have a wonderful time on 14th November, dancing to our music, watching our films, viewing our exhibitions, eating delicious food and creating a message yourself or together with someone you meet for the first time... and exchange a smile, a few words... even a song... an exchange that matters!

UNITY is Power!

Claire Webster Saarements, Skimstone Arts Artistic Director

Skimstone Arts



Skimstone Arts

Celebration Party

Friday 14 November 2025, 2pm - 9.30pm
Star & Shadow Cinema, Warwick Street, NE2 1BB

Skimstone Arts invites you to their **FREE** Celebration Party as part of our final journey
skimstone.org.uk



Main Stage / Theatre

2pm



2.15pm

Claire Webster Saaremets

A warm welcome and introduction from Claire Webster Saaremets (Skimstone Arts CEO/Artistic Director)

3pm



2.30pm - 3pm

The Upstartz

Listen to The Upstartz, a band based at St Anthony's Day Care as they launch their second EP Once upon a Time, exploring what magical means today; love from unexpected places; pollution of the seas, and protecting what is delicate and precious in our lives.



3 - 3.20pm & 4.10 - 4.30pm

David Stickman Higgins

Exploring rhythm with our bodies, voice and wordplay. Sounds and emotions that unite together. It's the energy of the now!
With artist, poet, musician and educator David Stickman Higgins.

“I would gladly work with Skimstone Arts again because it allowed me to grow creatively. It was life changing...Meeting people who shared their stories – [it was] very moving to actually meet them (refugees) when we had read the testimonies first.” - David Stickman Higgins

4pm



4.30 - 4.45pm

Shieldfield Youth Programme

Listen to an upbeat song composed with children and young people who explored their dreams and aspirations of living in and around Shieldfield. Recorded at Blank Studios.
Film produced by videographers Ako Ismail and Shaho Omar.



4.45 - 5.15pm

Bilal Kose

Join Bilal and experience his mesmerizing sand artist performance with animated elusive stories on a lightbox. Each grain of sand is ephemeral, briefly revealing fascinating worlds hidden within. Step into hidden mysteries shaped by sand.

5pm



5.15 - 5.30pm

Talha Ozleblebici and Tugay Yalcin

Listen to the haunting and evocative sounds of traditional Turkish music performed by Tugay Yalcin (Ney flute) and Talha Ozleblebici (clarinet).
Imagine yourself in their unfolding stories.

“So many stories to ground us in the human impact of what blasts out at us from the news everyday making us compassionate again.”Audience Feedback” - Audience Feedback, Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2025

6pm



6 - 7pm

Reality Boots

Reality Boots is a band of young people, supported by Skimstone Arts, who want to say something about the world through music. Hidden Worlds, their new and fourth album, features original songs with designated tracks co-created with partners from across the North East of England.

Hidden Worlds explores the hidden complexities of our existence and societal influence, the joy of the natural world and the horrors of human interference and action for positive change.

Special guests - Jazzy Dystopia from Jack Drum Arts, Durham.

7pm



7 - 7.10pm

Zine Launch

Get your FREE copy of our specially commissioned zine of 44 Stories That Matter! The zine has been created with print maker Theresa Easton at Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University, and some of the story sharers who have journeyed with Skimstone Arts. Take copies for family and friends, helping us to show why diversity in the arts and social action matters even more today.



7.10 - 7.30pm

Carol Candler (Skimstone Arts Trustee) and panel

Why do Stories Matter? How do we see the impact on people's artistic and personal lives? Join a panel of funders, commissioners, artists and community members and they share their own journey of change.

8pm



8 - 8.30pm

Harkling

Explore the hidden world beneath your feet, a place of untold stories and unheard song. The Hidden Chorus journeys into the unseen networks of mycelium, where decay feeds life and renewal begins. Layered songs, field recordings and organic movements reveal the elemental power of these hidden realms. Photo © Bri Focals

“I loved the variety of events and that there was something for everyone, it's so special to be amongst such a diverse crowd that is so positive, welcoming and vibrant. I liked how relaxed the environment felt, and being able to dip in and out.” - Unity Festival 24 Audience Member

9pm



9 - 9.45pm

Ensemble Band

Listen to and maybe even dance along with our genre defying Skimstone Ensemble band (David Stickman Higgins – kit / John Pope – bass / Kema Kay – vocals / Keith Hill – congas & vibes / Peter Saaremets – guitar / Claire Webster Saaremets – vocals) as they play some of our favourite songs from the past decade.

9.45pm

Last orders at the bar

10pm

Doors close

Cinema

Skimstone Arts film screenings of commissioned work 2013 - 2024.

“I believe this organisation continues to make a genuine difference to the people they work alongside. Rather than simply alleviating the symptoms or current problems, they successfully do this by: continuing to champion the arts as a way of giving positive recognition, active voices, opportunities to those who have been forgotten, neglected, unpopular, addressing social injustice and isolation ... enabling groups to visit their accessible studio space in the city ... and beyond.” - Arts Development Team, Newcastle City Council



3 - 3.20 pm

Jack and Jill & The Red Postbox

Jill's gone missing after going down the hill to post a letter... A filmshort based on Skimstone Arts' original touring theatre, first performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2013, commissioned by and inspired by the research of Professor Charlotte Clarke and Dr Cathy Bailey. Film was screened at global events to explore living positively with early onset dementia.



3.25 - 3.45 pm

Michael's Map

What is happening in musician Michael's world? Where are his friends? Produced in a partnership between the University of Edinburgh and Skimstone Arts, Michael's Map responds to a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council held by Charlotte Clarke and Heather Wilkinson and in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation and Alzheimer Scotland.



3.50 - 4pm

UNITY Festival 2023 Highlights by Congolese / British film maker Elvis Katoto

Highlights of our UNITY Festival 2023. Three days of free live music, performance, arts, exhibitions, creative workshops and outdoor trails in Stockton-on-Tees and Newcastle upon Tyne. Festival-goers of all ages took part in a jam-packed programme of events to celebrate humanity, nature and social action.



4.30 - 4.55pm

Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future

My home, my castle, my container, my prison? How do we imagine the future of where and how we live? This sensitive, humorous and moving film, with original songs and live soundscapes, explores: behind our doorbells and front doors, how are we dreaming of the future? Doorbells: Dreaming for the Future was commissioned by Care & Repair England and Elders Council of Newcastle, supported by Northumbria University.



5 - 5.25pm

A Natural Anthem

This specially commissioned poignant and humorous anthem-led performance and multi-art form installation, explored the impact of threat, community action during times of war, and today's fight to protect the natural world. From this, a new micro-nation is born...A Natural Anthem premiered at Newcastle Arts Centre Gallery 24 and The Discovery Museum in 2014 and was an intergenerational venture.



5.30 - 6pm

Poets' Corner

Join local poets Clare Matthews and Lanre Sonde as they recite extracts from their specially created poems for Skimstone Arts projects including our UNITY Festivals. Hear how they responded to themes of humanity and our living planet.



6 - 6.30pm

Magic Moments UNITY Festival 2024

Whitby-based videographer Chad Hodgson's commissioned film of UNITY Festival '24 A free music and arts festival celebrating humanity, nature and social action. UNITY Festival '24 took place at Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle Upon Tyne and Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar. It involved and commissioned local and global artists and communities.



6.35 - 6.45pm

Stories from Around the World

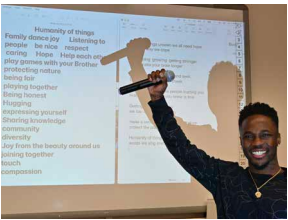
A selection of short stories and songs, co-created with actor Sam Lamptry and artist Nii Kwartelai, based in Accra, Ghana, and Smajo Beso from the Bosnian community, for our Refugee Week and UNITY Festival programmes. Also, ITV coverage of the purchase of One Day Changes Exhibition by Durham University.



7.15 - 7.25pm

Songs that Matter

Forest Fading: Enjoy this animated and evocative music video, created by Leeds based dance artist Jem Clancy. It was commissioned for Reality Boots' song Forest Fading and premiered at UNITY Festival 2023. **Memories Lost:** A special live recording of a song written by Reality Boots for our Holocaust Memorial Day Events 2022.



7.30pm - 8pm

Why Songs Matter?

Join Skimstone Arts musicians / music leaders Kema Kay and Keith Hill with Reality Boots Nicole Davis as they explore why we universally need to create songs. How can we make this process accessible and be inspired by both our own and others stories?



8.30 - 9pm

Rapasa

Experience musician Rapasa's participatory performance that celebrates our diverse communities. Experience a space to challenge stereotypes and have a deeper understanding of 'the other' by direct involvement through joy and celebration.

9pm

Cinema closed

“When I first came to Skimstone Arts I had 3 numbers in my phone - my Mum, Dad and sister. Since I've been with Skimstone Arts, I now have 20 numbers, new friends I can meet, work opportunities that take us out to help other people who might be isolated. Being in their studio spaces has made me more confident, happy, motivated and my life has changed so much for the better.” - Participant