

THE SHOW ROOM

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Adam Shield
Amp Envelope

20 July–17 September 2022
Open Wednesday–Saturday, 12–6pm

The Showroom presents *Amp Envelope*, the first solo exhibition in London by artist **Adam Shield** and the third iteration of *The Showroom Mural Commission*.

Shield's new body of work opens up drawing and collage as a means of exploring interior worlds; with imagery encompassing references distilled from post-apocalyptic science fiction writing, dystopian dream projectors, seventeenth century alchemy and everyday encounters with political, societal and economic structures.

Conceived as a total installation, *Amp Envelope* extends from The Showroom facade to the interior walls and surfaces of the exhibition space; incorporating entry points for public, collaborative processes of production to unfold over the coming months.

A series of hanging textile banners demarcate thresholds; a publication production zone for workshops houses a Risograph printer, ink-drums, photocopier and scanner as an in-situ print studio for public use. Shield's new series of large-scale drawings punctuate the space; with images drawn in black synthetic bitumen ink overlaid on swathes of screen-printed colour and set against walls of wide, warping grids. They explore the blurring of inner and outer worlds, drawing resonances between individual perspectives and wider structural conditions.

The grid, a recurring motif for Shield, weaves in and out of the various spaces and timeframes of the show, creating a pattern of energies and tempos; a rhythmic network within which the distinct yet inter-connected elements of the exhibition are situated.

Existing between the functional and sculptural, the hybrid furniture in the exhibition extends the language of the installation and DIY ethos that runs throughout Shield's practice. As a site and generator for critical reflection and creative exchange, the space is equipped with tables and work-spaces for workshop contributors, storage for print materials and a display structure for a selection of handmade zines and publications produced by **Long Distance Press**.

The mural

For the third iteration of *The Showroom Mural Commission* Adam Shield has taken as a starting point a period of research into local, radical grassroots print presses in North West London, including *The Poster Workshop* on Camden Road which ran from 1968-71; the *Paddington Printshop* and later *londonprintstudio* on Harrow Road, amongst others. Each used vibrant imagery through poster campaigns and a wide array of printed matter to amplify local voices, often focusing on housing rights and neighbourhood initiatives, as well as gigs and festivals.

Often providing platforms for articulating resistance to the status quo, self-publishing continues to enable trans-local countercultures and subcultures to distribute alternative narratives via low-fi, hand-made means. Informed by Shield's long-term interest in self-publishing and DIY production processes, *Amp Envelope* focuses on carrying forward the possibilities of publishing and print-making to generate new spaces of experimentation, reflection, collaboration and exchange.

Enveloping the exterior walls of The Showroom, Shield's hand-printed grid creates a layout device which will be used to locate and position posters of varying scales that will be produced during public workshops over the course of the exhibition. The mural will evolve as new posters are pasted up and layered over time; a work-in-progress accumulating throughout and beyond the timeframe of the show through to Summer 2023.

The banners

The series of hanging textile banners that partition the space present inky, vortex-like visualisations of energies, like sound waves or signals emanating towards or outwards from a central point.

One reference point in the process of producing these new banners for *Amp Envelope* has been Reflective Target stickers catching Shield's eye whilst moving through London: these are small targets for an architectural surveyor's laser when mapping distances and proximities between material infrastructures in nascent or newly developed neighbourhoods, from one building-site to the next.

The drawings

Shield uses drawing as a means to reflect on every life, and as a subjective lens or filter for direct experiences in the industrial surroundings of his studio, or fragments of unease gleaned from experiences of the city. Ink applied rhythmically on the page becomes a crossing-point where a blurring of realities, reflections or imagined narratives emerge.

Shield often uses tempo and rhythm as a strategy to develop a particular feeling of movement, or a beat within a drawing, treating images almost like samples in a musical composition. Each image has a tempo, and through repetition or re-placing often in relation to a grid, they become akin to a score within a space. For *Amp Envelope* the installation becomes an immersive environment encompassing a series of interconnected energies.

The workshops

Amp Envelope will explore processes of self-publishing as a site and generator of public discussion and exchange. A series of public poster-making workshops focused on drawing, collage and print will run within the exhibition space as an inherent part of the show.

Having worked in the Church Street area for several years as a technician at The Showroom, these workshops build on Shield's research processes and The Showroom's established connections to people and groups within neighbouring organisations, including the **Church Street Library**, the **Sunflower Coop** and the **Penfold Hub**. The workshops also build upon Shield's existing partnership as one half of **Long Distance Press**, a postal art project with artist **Thomas Whittle** that quickly turned into collaborative works, publications and exhibitions between Glasgow, Newcastle, London and Edinburgh.

Zine and comic book culture offer tools for processing and communicating current social and political movements, where the personal crosses over with the political. Each workshop at The Showroom will open up discussion amongst a small group, and will lead to the creation of a collage of overlapping voices and imagery on the facade of the building.

The Church Street neighbourhood, within which The Showroom has been situated for over a decade, is in the midst of a period of major long-term redevelopment. Throughout *Amp Envelope* The Showroom will act as a hub enabling a relay between critical reflection, production and the amplification of voices, concerns and imaginative interpretation from the local area and beyond.

Workshop bookings:

First cycle of dates: **Saturdays 23 & 30 July; 6 & 13 August, 11am–4pm**

No previous experience required, sign up for one or more sessions.

For more information or to book a place contact welcome@theshowroom.org

Upstairs in the Studio: Reading Area

In his work Shield often responds to texts exploring ideas around technology, with **Hito Stereyl's** *The Wretched of the Screen, 12 Bytes* by **Jeanette Winterson**, and *Snow Crash* by **Neal Stephenson** as recent references. Each touches upon the darker side of technology; the ubiquity and totality of the internet's reach into our lives. From different perspectives they explore how technology can alternatively function as a platform with which we recreate shifting images of ourselves and identities. Shield approaches zine culture, hand-making and printing as a route out of this omnipresence, as a way of creating face-to-face communities through discussion, becoming present and reflecting on the immediate, physical environment we inhabit.

Upstairs in The Showroom Studio there is a selection of publications available to read, from Shield's own references, self-publishing and independent printing presses. There is also the starting point for an open-source resource listing current open-access print studios in London, which visitors are invited to contribute to.

Adam Shield (b. Newcastle Upon Tyne) lives and works in London. He studied at the Royal Academy Schools (2014–17) and BA Fine Art at Newcastle University (2007–11).

Selected recent exhibitions include *BLAST BEAT*, with artist Thomas Whittle as **Long Distance Press (LDP)**, **Priestman Gallery**, Sunderland, 2021; *Drawing Biennale*, **Drawing Room**, London, 2021; *Dark Silo*, **Thames Side Studios Gallery**, London, 2020; *A Very Long Wait*, **Newchild Gallery**, Antwerp, 2020; *Expo Dream Leech*, **Drawing Room**, London, 2019; *Terraforms*, **Kristian Day Gallery**, London, 2018; *Hands Roots*, Hawkins, London 2018; *Drop Shot*, LDP, **Fetes College**, Edinburgh, 2017; *Bearing Liability*, **Strange Cargo Gallery**, Folkestone, 2017; *RA Schools Degree Show*, Burlington House, London, 2017; *Premiums: Interim Projects*, **Royal Academy of Art**, London, 2016; *Let's Get Inside Everything*, **Milma**, London, 2016; and *RIFF*, **Baltic 39**, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2014.

Shield has co-curated exhibitions including *Greetings*, **Mauve Gallery**, Vienna, 2019; *Chumming*, **The Pipe Factory**, Glasgow for **Glasgow International 2018** and *IMAGE DRUM* at **The Royal Academy of Art**, London, 2019.

Since 2013 Shield has been co-running **Long Distance Press (LDP)** with artist **Thomas Whittle**. Working between Glasgow, Newcastle, London and Edinburgh, LDP started as a postal art project that quickly turned into collaborative works, publications and exhibitions. Through these Shield and Whittle continue to explore research, drawing and works on paper that often live at the unseen edges of artists' practice. LDP works closely with artists to produce new artworks, artist books and editions employing a range of processes, paper stocks and binding methods to produce printed ephemera that is tactile, intentionally low-fi and inky to touch. They have also delivered collaborative workshops for students at **The University of Sunderland**, **The Bartlett School of Architecture–UCL**, **Fettes College**, Edinburgh and **Goldsmiths**, University of London.

In 2023–24 **LDP** will develop a new public artwork with The Showroom as part of the programme of public art commissions in partnership with **Lacuna**, supported by **Great Western Developments** at Tanner Lane, situated between Paddington Square and St Mary's Hospital.

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The Showroom Mural Commission – Adam Shield: Amp Envelope, 2022 is generously supported by the **Abbey Harris Mural Fund**.

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