



‘We are the work.’

Drafts is an experimental artist film directed by curator and artist, Jade Foster and commissioned by DASH that poetically reimagines how we can communicate in a neuro-affirming and just way. It’s one of the first contemporary examples in the UK of how creative captioning, intersectional translation, and intuitive collaborative processes are applied to informational-esque moving image—opening up what is possible.

Our political climate is marked by life-threatening cuts to health and disability benefits—affecting an estimated 700,000 families who are already in poverty, a projected 250,000 people who will be newly driven below the poverty line, and 3.2 million families across Great Britain who will lose out under the plans in 2029/2030, including Disabled artists and curators. And borrowing from artist Abi Palmer, who writes in ‘On Crip Wisdom: Surviving the Erosion of the Welfare State’: We ‘want a life where [our] crip friends and family, collaborators, mentees and mentors get to do more than just barely survive.’

We understand that our work is more complex than ever under these scarce conditions; however, we are certain that the urgency of what we are trying to do is to drive permanent change and combat the fact that Disabled, Neurodivergent, and Deaf art workers are not thriving. There is no future without Disabled voices. There is no future where organisations and curators are inconsistently supported in the British arts sector by the press, cultural institutions, and funders.

In the face of prevailing austerity, we are proud to recommit ourselves to leading change. Launching in August 2025 via a simultaneous digital release across eight partner organisations, including DASH, ***Drafts* brings together the individual and organisational voices of directors and curators from seven influential contemporary visual arts organisations across England** to create a constellation of vision and mission statements for the **Future Curators Programme (FCP)**.



Drafts (2025)

[soft liquid keys chime nostalgically] at the beginning of the film, setting a textured tone of liquidity, reflection and softness. Following the director's rough cut and a conversation about the sound of language with Foster, Axel Kacoutié, an award-winning audio artist and poet, produced a responsive score based on their intuition and gut knowledge. Disabled and queer-led working group Carefuffle in London then penned the captions in an eb-and-flo collaborative process—communicating the nuance of Kacoutié's vision. Their creative captioning, throughout the work, responds to musical texture, voice, non-verbal communication, and visuality. It incorporates animations, symbols, directional changes, as well as variations in typeface, colour and rhythm. This approach builds from the methodological bedrock developed for *Drafts* by Collective Text, a Glasgow-based, Disabled and Deaf artist-led organisation.

Following a young Black masc in rural England, we come across new growth amongst browned leaves as we spiritually enter Spring. Just as language attempts to resist capture through its opacity, so does the boi, whose future is ahead of him if only the sector would allow it. You know, if the industry doesn't try to split him—forcing apart melanin and disability—like trying to separate leaves from soil.

Split.

Splinting between experience and articulation.

Hands call to us; call out and reground us. The hands of the teenager, Muslim, British South Asian, Deaf actor Sahera Khan, and Black Deaf actor David Ellington remind us to show up for the living and the future. Their hands are followed by those of Heather Peak (DASH), reciting their 'draft' as a synesthetic drawing to declare, embody, and deposit their intentions for FCP and how they are feeling their way through the process. Peak is preceded by 'drafts' from Claudia Lastra (Arts Catalyst), Elinor Morgan (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, MIMA), Roma Piotrowska (Midlands Arts Centre), Trish Wheatley (Disability Arts Online), James Green (Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange), and Rosie Cooper (Wysing Arts Centre).



Why Make a Film?

Foster utilised the project as a testing ground to treat ‘communication’ as a subject and material, an aesthetic and a politic, challenging normative communication styles by producing an artistic approach to communication that goes beyond traditional attitudes towards access. Film lent itself well to this exploration. They also aimed to: highlight diverse voices, especially from Disabled, queer, and intersectional perspectives; explore nuanced and integrated ways of combining closed captions, British Sign Language (BSL), and audio description; and represent a collective commitment to creating more inclusive arts and cultural spaces.

The film features multiple voices representing different organisations, with a focus on how they envision a more inclusive future. It’s intentionally designed as a draft—something that can be continually edited and rethought, reflecting the dynamic nature of creating meaningful change in cultural institutions. The project emphasises artistic integrity, sensory richness, and a generous approach to communication that invites viewers to ‘think twice, look twice, and listen twice’.

Credits

Director: Jade Foster

Cinematographer: Freddy Griffiths

Film Composer: Axel Kacoutié

Cast: Joshua Samuel, Sahera Khan and David Ellington; Heather Peak, Claudia Lastra, Elinor Morgan, Roma Piotrowska, Trish Wheatley, James Green, and Rosie Cooper

Caption Groundwork: Collective Text

Captioning Consultant (Collective Text): Bea Webster

Creative Captioning: Carefuffle

Captioning Consultant (Carefuffle): Nina Thomas

Audio Description: SoundScribe and Jade Foster

SoundScribe Visual Awareness Consultant: Kirin Saeed

Production Assistant: Lucy Mounfield

DASH Team (Production Support): Esther Cartwright and Rachel Fleming-Mulford

Location: Wysing Arts Centre



For Editors:

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About the Future Curators Programme

The Future Curators Programme 2023-2026 is a residency programme for Disabled curators within mainstream visual arts institutions.

Grounded in Disability Justice, the Future Curators Programme was founded by Disabled artist-led visual arts organisation, DASH, and is run in partnership with: Arts Catalyst, Disability Arts Online, John Hansard Gallery, MAC Birmingham, MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange and Wysing Arts Centre. Using an action research approach and a multiplicity of intersectional lived experiences, DASH, FCP partners and resident curators collaborate on programmes, system change, evaluation, commissions and critical thinking so Disability Justice is embodied in their practice.

About DASH

DASH - Cultivating spaces for extraordinary artists.

DASH is a UK-based, Disabled-led visual arts charity dedicated to creating opportunities for Disabled artists to develop their creative practice. DASH's vision is a society where Disability Art is core and equally valued in the arts sector. The team works with artists, audiences, communities, and organisations to challenge inequality and implement change.

During the last twenty years DASH has undertaken truly ground-breaking work – projects that have challenged perceptions, fostered and mentored new Deaf and Disabled artists, encouraged professional development and helped to engineer change in the sector.

DASH is a member of the **Plus Tate Network** and in 2023 became the host of **New Art West Midlands**.

DASH was awarded the prestigious **Ampersand Award** in 2021.