

Regulated Exhibition: 1 October to 5 December 2021

BACKLIT is delighted to be working with artist [Joshua Sofaer](#) and the Environment Agency on this exciting interdisciplinary exhibition, bringing art and environment together to trigger some critical discussions.

Joshua's work focuses on how audiences engage with the world and has previously worked with Tate Modern, University College London and the Science Museum in London. This unique collaboration between the artist, the Environment Agency and community will enable social engagement, allowing participants to feel some ownership of the final design – a plastic sculpture of a body weighing 98.66 kilograms.

In the UK we produce 98.66 kilograms of plastic waste per capita annually. The unbelievable truth is we are throwing away significantly more plastic than our own weight as an entire population, every single year.

Joshua Sofaer says of the project's conception and his involvement in the show:

In 2019 I had the opportunity to shadow members of the Environment Agency Regulated Industry team as they conducted their checks on industrial sites, including one of the largest plastic recyclers in the UK and a giant pork pie factory. I also visited small 'end of life' workshops that depollute cars, materials recycling facilities, and illegal waste sites.

It was an eye-opening experience. Then the pandemic struck, and the world changed. But one thing that hasn't changed, and in fact is getting worse, is the amount of waste that we produce.

Single use PPE, which is saving lives, has only made this problem greater. This exhibition wants to raise some questions about the work of the Regulated Industry team and the scale of the plastic waste problem in the UK, including the waste produced by the creation and exhibition of art.

I'm delighted to be working with BACKLIT and the Environment Agency on this project and looking forward to engaging with people across Nottingham.

'Regulated Exhibition' will see BACKLIT Gallery transformed into a 'factory' where the public can drop off plastics in the depot which will be accepted and sorted by Science Communicators.

Throughout the exhibition, the Environment Agency will periodically regulate the processes undertaken and provide an insight into their work. There will

be a film following the day in the life of a Regulated Industry officer at the Environment Agency and how they regulate and manage waste.

Mark Haslam, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency said:

We have partnered with the BACKLIT Gallery in Nottingham and artist Joshua Sofaer to produce 'Regulated Exhibition – a plastic human' as part of our community engagement. Much of the plastic waste produced by individuals in the country ends up being sorted, processed, and disposed of at sites regulated by the Environment Agency.

The focus of the exhibition is to engage local communities to consider plastic usage through a sustainability lens. It also provides an ideal opportunity to raise awareness around the role the Environment Agency plays in protecting the environment through its regulation.

This is the first time we have worked with the arts sector in the East Midlands to highlight environmental issues and show how the Environment Agency regulates and manages waste. We're sure the exhibition will be highly successful in increasing awareness of how we all need to reduce, reuse, and recycle more of our waste and resources.

The plastics collected from the public will be used to create a mould and human sculpture of a person representing the annual waste, which will then become part of the final show. The live 'body cast' will be carried out 30 October by Richard Arm, Senior Research Fellow at Nottingham Trent University and leader of the Flexural Composites Research Laboratory for the Advanced Textiles Research Group in the School of Art and Design.

We need your help:

BACKLIT is making a call out to a member of the public who is 98 kilograms (15.4 stone) to volunteer for the live 'body cast' for the mould for the final piece. They will need to be available 30 October and public will be invited to watch the process. Moulding the cast of the plastic person will take place 20 November which will then be displayed as part of the exhibition.

Please help us find a suitable person and support us collecting plastic. All types of plastics will be accepted but they must be washed and cleaned.

Other events will run throughout the exhibition, some by BACKLIT Studio Artists, including panel discussions with scientists, artists, and regulators about the hidden environmental impact of art making. There will be film about the artists' work, community and family workshops. This is a great opportunity to collaborate with organisations outside of the arts sector, highlighting environmental issues and promoting responsibility.

Matthew Chesney, BACKLIT Director and Curator, says of the exhibition:

BACKLIT is delighted to work with the Environment Agency to explore very important conversations around waste produced by the gallery and the environment. We are thrilled to work with one of UKs most exciting artists, Joshua Sofaer, whose previous projects have engaged and ignited the public to come together and be accountable for the artwork. This is a chance to use art to enable people to take part and have crucial conversations on how they can make their environment a safer and more enjoyable place.

Events

- Friday 8 October, 11am -1pm at BACKLIT, no booking required, free.
- Friday 12 November, 11am -1pm at BACKLIT, no booking required, free.

Donate plastics for recycling.

Walk and talk

- 27 November, 1pm – 3pm; behind the scenes insight into the making of the exhibition with artist Joshua Sofaer and Matthew Chesney (BACKLIT Director). This will be followed by a Panel Talk: Arts, Ecology and Accountability 3-4pm with Environment Agency, BACKLIT, Academics and local groups.

Public programme

[The public programme events can be booked via Eventbrite.](#)

- Family activity: [Wild Worlds](#), Sunday 24 October, 2 pm – 4 pm, with Jess Emsley (BACKLIT Studio Artist). Free; suitable for 4+. Booking is essential via Eventbrite due to limited places (maximum 8).
- Community workshop – [A Sculpted Story: Our Old Sustainable World](#), Saturday 6 November, 2pm – 4pm, with Shadia Houssein (BACKLIT Studio Artist). Free; participants must be 18+. Booking is essential via Eventbrite due to limited places (maximum 8).
- Film event – [Buffering... The Smog of the Sea \(2017\)](#), Saturday 13 November, 6 pm – 8 pm, with [Pending Collective](#). Watch [trailer](#). Suitable for 16+. Booking is essential via Eventbrite due to limited places (Maximum 16 places). £5 per ticket, all proceeds going to the [Canal & River Trust](#) for their [Treasure Your River project](#).

- Community workshop – [Nurture Nature: Rewild your Habitat](#), Saturday 4 December, 2 pm – 4 pm, with Katie Sandoval (BACKLIT Studio Artist). Free; suitable for 18+. Booking is essential via Eventbrite due to limited places (maximum 8 places)

Notes to editors

Background information

About the Environment Agency:

- The EA has a role in auditing materials recycling facilities to ensure permit conditions are met. This includes a range of criteria such as pollution levels, pest control and sampling procedures. This covers the measurement of how much product at a site is recyclable. Monitoring how much of this is recycled by each facility is done on a commercial level at each site.
- Between 2000/2001 and 2019, the amount of waste going to landfill decreased by 43%.
- The government's landmark Environment Bill and [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) set out how we will go further and faster, to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and help leave the environment in a better state than we found it for future generations. These include plans to place greater responsibility on producers to make their items more resource efficient and easier to reuse and recycle.
- Businesses and householders should carry out checks to ensure that they are using legitimate companies to deal with their waste. To check if a waste carrier is genuine visit the Environment Agency's [public register](#).
- The project supports the Environment Agency's ambition to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste, helping to achieve the goals and commitments outlined in its EA2025 five-year plan to create a better place for people, wildlife and the environment, and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.
- Follow us on: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [YouTube](#) [Instagram](#)

About BACKLIT Gallery

BACKLIT www.backlit.org.uk, Alfred House, Ashley Street, Sneinton NG3 1JG is a 3-storey independent art gallery. It consists of studios that houses 100 young and emerging artists, supporting early career graduates, contemporary artists, and international touring practitioners. In recent years, we have shown major works by Simon Starling and Yinka Shonibare, as well as an artistic and public engagement project by Turner Prize winner Gillian Wearing. BACKLIT provides a dynamic public programme of national and international artists including original artist commissions, workshops, screenings, and live debates. It has a strong working relationship with regional and national organisations and universities. It is committed to supporting community engaged projects and provides unique critical sessions for artists working in the city.

Follow us on: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).

For more information and images please contact BACKLIT Marketing Coordinator helen.trout@backlit.org.uk or for artist interviews and information contact BACKLIT Director matthew.chesney@backlit.org.uk +44 (0)7877926072. For information about the Environment Agency contact linda.parker@environment-agency.gov.uk or Communications_Midlands@environment-agency.gov.uk