

EMILY RYALLS DIVINE ARCHIVES

Until 7 March 2026

Divine Archives: Women's Bodies, Memory and Resistance at The Art House



Image © the artist

NOW OPEN | Divine Archives – Emily Ryalls' Exhibition and Engagement programme, culminating on International Women's Day weekend

Divine Archives is the first solo exhibition by Wakefield-based artist Emily Ryalls, bringing together a powerful body of work that celebrates togetherness and invites moments of awakening and resistance. Through photography, performance and sculpture, Ryalls centres women's embodied knowledge and the ways we understand the world through our bodies.

Central to the exhibition is a monumental installation of large-scale hanging screens that move through and divide the gallery, transforming the space into a site of movement, memory and collective presence. Ryalls' public engagement programme, currently running, leads towards **International Women's Day weekend** in March (7 March 2026), inviting visitors into an evolving feminist space shaped by participation, performance and embodied knowledge.

Projected at an intimate yet commanding scale, moving images of women performing, gathering and archiving their bodies are cast onto translucent hanging screens that slice through the gallery. As visitors move through the installation, bodies appear and disappear, overlap and fragment, creating a powerful physical encounter with vulnerability and resistance.

The exhibition features over 50 hand-printed photographs, 8mm moving image films; documentary photography and ceramics that centres how women understand the world through their bodies, and how that knowledge is held, shared and preserved. It expands the idea of the body as a living archive, offering a feminist framework for caring for knowledge that has historically been overlooked, dismissed or erased.

Ryalls invited 46 women to a series of gatherings exploring where knowledge lives within them and asked to consider their bodies as radical and beautiful archives. Shaped by years of sensation, memory and lived experience, these gatherings recognised the wisdom held within the body and reclaimed it as a tool for reflection and healing



Grounded in the words of feminist writer Sara Ahmed – “I was the only witness to this event, my body its memory” – the exhibition asks what it means to honour those memories collectively. Women cast parts of their bodies in clay, lay beneath the Yorkshire sun to imprint their forms onto light-sensitive photographic paper, and stepped into one another’s worlds through performance and storytelling.

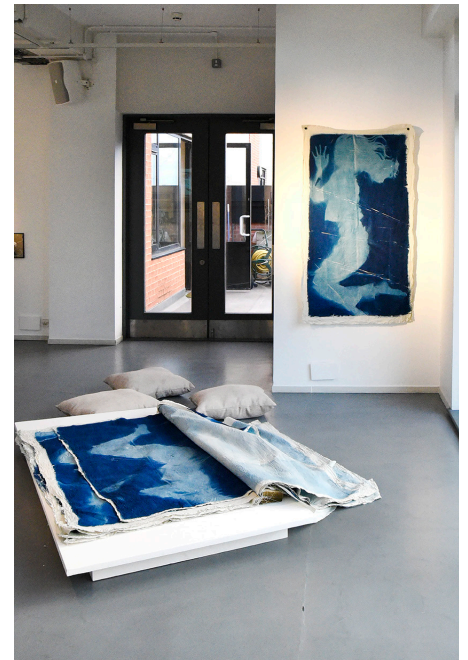
Captured on film, photographs and immersive projection, these moments unfold across the gallery with care and intimacy. The hanging screens become porous thresholds – spaces where private knowledge becomes visible, shared and held in common. Alongside moving image works, ceramic relics created through a communal pit-firing at Yorkshire Sculpture Park sit quietly within the space. Clay forms shaped by women’s bodies were wrapped in hair and natural materials from the home, fired, buried and later unearthed, becoming physical artefacts of embodied memory and collective ritual.

Throughout its run, **Divine Archives** has been conceived as a space for further gatherings and activations. Ryalls is hosting an engagement programme inviting women to take part in workshops, conversations and collective moments, culminating over **International Women’s Day weekend** (7 March 2026). Creating space for connection and collaboration is central to Ryalls’ practice, positioning the exhibition not as a static display, but as a living, growing archive.



More than an exhibition, **Divine Archives** presents a way of learning that visitors are encouraged to carry into their own lives – through listening, sharing and recognising the knowledge held within their own bodies.

ENDS



Notes to Editors

Press Contact: Damon Jackson-Waldock / damon@the-arthouse.org.uk / 01924 312002

Images and interviews by arrangement.

The Art House

Drury Lane, Wakefield, WF1 2TE

01924 312 000

Facebook: [/theartouse.wakefield](https://www.facebook.com/theartouse.wakefield)

Instagram: [@theartouseuk](https://www.instagram.com/theartouseuk)

Opening Times

Monday: 09:30 – 16:00

Friday: 09:30 - 16:00

Tuesday: 09:30 – 16:00

Saturday: 09:30 - 16:00

Wednesday: 09:30 – 16:00

Sunday: Closed

Thursday: 09:30 - 16:00

About The Art House

The Art House provides time, space and support for artists, makers and creative businesses to develop their practice. It is a place where artists and audiences of all kinds are welcome to experience contemporary visual art. Established in 1994 by a group of disabled and non-disabled artists, The Art House is registered charity. Alongside a programme of training, mentoring, residencies and commissions, The Art House develops a range of projects designed to engage audiences in the artistic process and contribute to an essential discourse around diversity in contemporary visual arts practice. The Art House is the recipient of The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's second annual Award for Civic Arts Organisations 2022. It is the UK's first Studio of Sanctuary, a role which sees them engage Wakefield's Asylum Seeker, Refugee, and Settled communities in creative projects, and was awarded Gallery of Sanctuary in 2023.