

## Manifesto for Sustainable Experimentation 21 May-9 August 2025

### Anne Robinson

The Ballad of The Charmers VI

2024

Silkscreen 59cm x 84cm

The Charmers

Gig

Thursday 3 July 2025

Beaconsfield Arch Space

Doors open from 19.00

Tickets: Donations from £1+

[Book on Eventbrite](#)

A band of time-travelling witches known as The Charmers contribute to Manifesto for Sustainable Experimentation by playing a gig for one night only on Thursday 3 July within the Arch Space installation that includes works by BAW, David Burrows, Luana Duvoisin Zanchi and Trevor Mathison.

Visual artist Anne Robinson instigated The Charmers project, composed the songs and film pieces, also and contributes vocals. The work emerged from a residency at Beaconsfield in summer 2022, exploring specific stories from the witch trials in the context of *Monica Sjöö The time is NOW and it is overdue!* an exhibition of Sjöö paintings with a programme of live responses, June-September 2022, developed and curated in collaboration by Minna Haukka, Naomi Siderfin and David Crawforth.

*The Charmers* art project considers the 'witch' trials then and now and themes of queer banishment and othering: drawing on archival research into the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Scottish trials, known to be amongst the most brutal in the world. During investigations, artist Anne Robinson found scrolls recording seven accused 'witches' in Ayrshire, as 'not to be found' - apparently fugitives. From these fragments, using 'critical fabulation' and experimenting with songs, film, and performance, the work developed around a 'sci-fi folk ballad' and time-travel through queer history. The accused 'witches' abscond using the very conjuring they are accused of – transported away out of their cells to form a band, on tour with their familiars to historical moments of transformative rebellion - levellers' meetings, molly houses, cabaret, disco protests... *Coming soon.. The Charmers!* is an art project in diverse forms: films, drawings, sound, broadside ballads, workshops and conversations.

Anne Robinson's experimental practice is concerned with the politics and perception of time passing - working with film, drawing, paint/print, sound and curation, including Supernormal Festival. She has exhibited widely and her work with See Red collective and as an experimental filmmaker recently featured in 'Women in Revolt!' at Tate Britain, National Galleries Scotland and the BFI. Recent works include 'Wakeful' (2028) which features renowned percussionist Limpe Fuchs on soundtrack and 'The Hurrier' (2021) on art, class and bodies for which Anne wrote a sci-fi folk ballad. She has taught Fine Art and Film for many years, most recently at Middlesex University.

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The Charmers are a (possibly fictional) band, formed by seven accused 'witches' from Ayrshire. These queer, runaway, time-travelling-players were discovered on a 17th century scroll by an artist, Anne Robinson, investigating the Scottish witch trials. As part of *Manifesto for Sustainable Experimentation*, The Charmers perform in the Arch space with **Debbie Armour** (Burd Ellen, described by The Wire as one of 'our finest folk explorers') on vocals and shruti, **Debbie Smith** (of Curve and Echobelly fame) on electric guitars, artist **Tansy Spinks** electric violin, **Lisa Lux** (The Priscillas) percussion/drums, and **Anne Robinson**, vocals and visuals.

Website: [gracenotesproject.org](http://gracenotesproject.org)

Instagram: @anrobs

The 4 track EP 'Not to be Found' is available via Bandcamp in vinyl and digital formats, also featuring Jo Gate-Eastley and Maggie Nicols.

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With thanks to: Space Art, Middlesex University, Dimple Discs, Beaconsfield Contemporary Art, Narture, Fruitmarket, Ayrshire Archives, Cutty Sark Centre, Brian O'Neill, Karina Townsend, Nic Howaintz, Limpe Fuchs, Helen Spackman, Loussin Torah-Pilikia, Charlie Wood, Rachel Gomme, Edwin Mingard, Phoebe Dyer, Lisa Gornick, Queer Materialities GSoA, Triangle Centre.

