

Announcement, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## SERPENTINE LAUNCHES SECOND EDITION OF THE READER

The second online and physical issue focuses on innovation in long-form writing and explores wellness and self-help in a time of social and ecological fragility under the title *I hope this finds you well*.

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 6pm

The Magazine, Serpentine North

Please RSVP to [press@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:press@serpentinegalleries.org)

Press images available at [serpentinegalleries.org/press](https://serpentinegalleries.org/press)



Image: cover and back cover of The Reader © Serpentine, 2026. Photo: Studio Eskandar

Serpentine is pleased to present the second annual issue of the *Serpentine Reader, Issue 02: I Hope This Finds You Well*, a new collection of essays, experimental guides, critiques, fiction, and poetry that reimagines the genre of self-help amid collapsing systems and intensifying global crisis.

Contributors include: Stephanie Wambugu, Eliot Haworth, Alex Quicho, Anahid Nersessian, Joycelyn Longdon, Asa Seresin, David Lisbon, and Eburn Sodipo. With motivational stickers designed by Alake Schilling.



Committed to slow publishing and long-form inquiry, the yearly publication provides space for deep research, reflection and creative exploration across diverse literary formats. The publication brings together established and emerging voices to explore new modes of storytelling and critical engagement. It launches in *The Magazine* on 9 March at a special event with readings from contributors.

Following *Issue 01: Circulation*, which explored the movement of water, bodies, images and power, *Issue 02* turns to a familiar phrase, *I hope this finds you well*, and asks what “wellness” now means in a world that feels increasingly unwell.

As care becomes increasingly commodified and automated, flattened into email greetings, corporate mindfulness seminars and chatbot companions, *Issue 02* examines how “being well” is performed, managed and sold back to us, even as collective conditions deteriorate. In a time of hyper-connection and deepening loneliness, self-help mutates into something more collective, more desperate and perhaps more mythic: stories we tell ourselves (and sell to each other) about survival, worth and possibility.

### Selected Highlights from Issue 02

“My Fourth or Fifth Time” - Stephanie Wambugu

Disillusioned by failed therapies, a man exhausts the self-help sphere and finds care in unexpected, uncanny forms.

“The Year in Animals” - Eliot Haworth

Haworth documents every animal-related story in *The New York Times* over the course of a year. Revealing how nonhuman life is framed as a commodity, diplomatic tool, or emotional distraction, Haworth critiques humanity’s transactional relationship with nature.

“Refinement” - Alex Quicho

An exploration of “AI psychosis” and the growing emotional attachment to Large Language Models. Quicho examines the rise of AGI or “Artificial Girl Intelligence”, in which attentive, compliant AI personas meet human needs for devotion.

“Sous les Asiles, la Plage” - Anahid Nersessian

An examination of mid-20th-century institutional psychotherapy through the work of François Tosquelles at the Saint-Alban asylum. Nersessian contrasts this collective, creative model of care with today’s bureaucratic and pharmaceutical approaches to psychic suffering.

“Palaver Ecologies” - Joycelyn Longdon

A critique of the “relational drift” produced by extractive capitalism, Longdon proposes the African practice of palaver, ritualised collective dialogue, as a wayfinding technology for communal healing, ecological care and intergenerational resilience.

“Divorce!” - Asa Seresin

Seresin interrogates the rebranding of divorce as a luxury lifestyle and self-optimisation



project, shaped by race and class privilege and detached from the realities of economic vulnerability and emotional rupture.

“Bog Theory” - David Lisbon

A meditation on the “bog” as a metaphor for contemporary media ecosystems. Lisbon contrasts ecological muddiness and historical layering with the sterile environments of surveillance capitalism, advocating for critical image literacy and sustained engagement with complexity.

“I Guess I Gotta Help Myself” - Eburn Sodipo

An account of self-help as a strategy of transgender survival in the UK’s hostile healthcare system. Sodipo documents DIY medical networks and “homebrewed” hormone practices as forms of necessity-driven autonomy and resistance to normative gender regimes.

Across the publication, contributors trace how care circulates unevenly, how responsibility is deferred, and how wellness can become a management strategy for enduring intolerable conditions.



Image: Alake Schilling, *Everything is good, and rather splendid*, 2025. Commissioned on the occasion of Serpentine Reader Issue 02 © Serpentine, 2026. Photo: Studio Eskandar

This year, the *Reader* collaborates with artist Alake Schilling, who has designed a series of characters paired with original words of affirmation that were specially commissioned for this issue. Each copy will include one unique motivational sticker from a limited set of five designs from the series *Everything is good, and rather splendid*, 2025, created by Schilling.

**Alake Schilling said:** “Sometimes I feel guilty making art while the world around me burns. But I am here for the small bit of joy I can contribute. The stickers I made for Issue 02 hold that irony, how we try to have hope, even joy, while feeling like we have one foot in the grave. Life is duality; nothing is absolute. For me, *I hope this finds you well* is both sincere and questioning. I think the best care you can take of yourself is choosing to look toward the light, even when it’s dark. That’s something I practice often.”



*Serpentine Reader* is organised and edited by Hanna Girma, Senior Editor and Curator of Editorial Projects and designed by Louise Camu.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Serpentine

Building new connections between artists and society, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987); Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010); Lee Ufan's *Relatum – Stage* (2018–19); Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018); *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021); Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)* (2022); Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2022–ongoing); Atta Kwami's *Dzidzɔ kple amenuveve (Joy and Grace)* (2021–22); Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2024); Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* at the Round Pound (2024); Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024) and Giuseppe Penone's *Albero folgorato (Thunderstruck Tree)* (2012) and *Idee di pietra (Ideas of Stone)*, (2010 – 2024) in 2025.

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

### Serpentine Reader 01

Launched in 2025, *Serpentine Reader* is an annual publication dedicated to long-form writing and critical inquiry. *Issue 01: Circulation* explored the forces that propel and constrain social, cultural, and political life, inviting readers to reflect on repetition, movement, and renewal in an interconnected world.

Featured contributors include Aria Dean, Nolan Oswald Dennis, Tosia Leniarska, Hana Pera Aoake, Okwui Okpokwasili, and Gary Zhexi Zhang.

### Serpentine Podcast

Serpentine Podcast explores art and ideas for a changing world. A curated listening experience exploring multiple facets of a singular theme per season, Serpentine Podcast shares Serpentine's commitment to elevating the voices of artists and other practitioners whose work critically



engages with the issues faced by our societies. It is produced by the highly-acclaimed audio production company Reduced Listening. Available on all streaming platforms, the podcast relaunched in January 2023 with *REWORLDING*, a series that invited listeners to imagine the world we need and collectively work towards it. Our latest series, *Intimacies*, continues this journey by looking sensitively at what is happening within and between us. Guided by the voice of host Gaylene Gould – an artist, experienced broadcaster, and creative director – the series gathered perspectives from artists, designers, writers, thinkers, and others.

## Merchandising

In conjunction with Issue 02, the Reader has partnered with Alake Schilling to produce a capsule collection of hats, pins, apparel and children’s T-shirts, launching alongside the publication. Proceeds from the collection will support the Reader and its ongoing mission.

Born in 1993 in Los Angeles, California, Schilling is a painter and sculptor known for her gelatinous, rainbow-hued creatures, drawing inspiration from Lisa Frank and Peter Saul. Her work bears carefully coded emotions and rich narratives exploring companionship, risk and reward.

## For press information please contact

Nicolas Smirnoff, Head of Communications, [nicolass@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:nicolass@serpentinegalleries.org); +44 7570 291 018  
Andrea Gillespie, Press Manager, [andrea.gillespie@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:andrea.gillespie@serpentinegalleries.org); +44 7879 1981 29

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