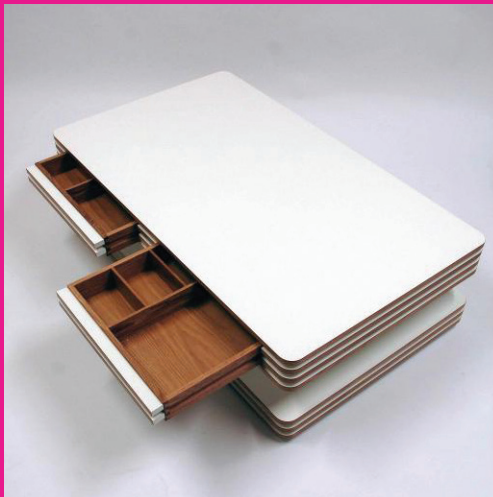




CONVERGE
2016

VISUAL ARTS SCOTLAND CONVERGE 2016

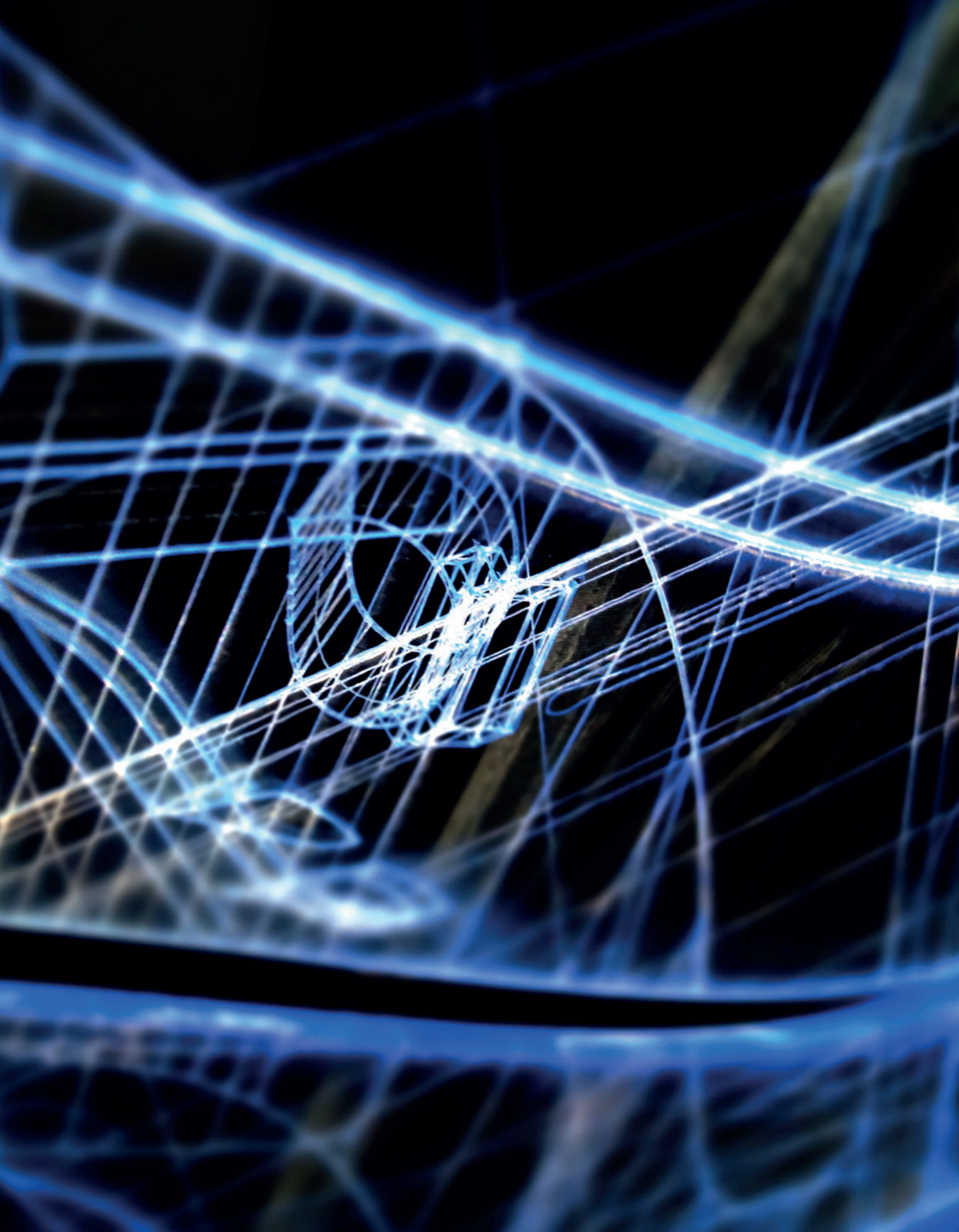
ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS



David Watson. *Cocaine Coffee Table*



Barry McGlashan. *The Exile*, detail



Gosia Walton. *Drawing 02*, detail

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CONVERGE is a statement of intent. We want our 2016 annual exhibition to be a place where disorder, the disparate and the disjointed converge, a place where we can make fresh connections and engender new insight into the practices of artists, designers and makers.

What we could not have predicted was just how much of the submitted work would offer concurrent lines of enquiry, with spooky serendipity. There was a proliferation of work dealing with linear inquiry, architectural form, blueprints and infrastructures, not only among the work of our invited artists, graduates and the Cordis Prize shortlist, but also among the 1277 entries to our open submission. How much of this is a reflection of current practices or is the result of our curatorial direction I hope will become part of the debate.

There were many strong works we could not include due to the constraints of space. To make an engaging and coherent exhibition, individual works inevitably become the ingredients for a larger vision and our selection team chose distinctly crafted works which speak beyond the established boundaries of their genre and discipline. Whether we are seen to have pulled this off will of course be down to you and the thousands of visitors to the show, to critics and reviewers, and to the collective memory.

Over 14,000 visitors engaged with our 2015 show VAS:T which received strong critical acclaim nationally. We introduced unfamiliar artists and designers to Scottish audiences, some of whom impressed Craft Scotland enough to be invited to show at SOFA Chicago 2015. We are thrilled that Craft Scotland has chosen to support a new prize for a work at CONVERGE. This is the first of what we intend to be a range of curatorial collaborations and sponsorships designed to enhance the profile of contemporary making in Scotland.

We are also delighted to welcome Sir Mark Jones to the role of honorary president. As former director of National Museums of Scotland and of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Mark brings huge experience to our society and we know his presence will offer us support, influence and insight as we develop Visual Arts Scotland as a leading organisation for promoting and supporting artists, designers and makers throughout Scotland.

I want to thank all those involved in making CONVERGE happen including our council members, invited artists and graduates. They have given up their time generously and with great energy and support. Visual Arts Scotland must be a self-sustaining organisation and relies on the goodwill and dedication of our team.

ROBBIE BUSHE, PRESIDENT



Hazel Thorn. *Swooping*, detail

Art is often seen as apart from the everyday – special, rarefied, occupying a world of its own, to be defined by its opposition to the practical and to the mundane preoccupations of commerce, work and leisure. But there is an alternative tradition. The founders of the National Museum of Scotland, as of the Victoria and Albert Museum, took quite a different view. For them art and design were inseparable from daily life. They hoped, by providing sources of reference and inspiration for artists, makers and designers, by interesting the public in how things were made and why they look as they do, to raise aspirations, sharpen discernment and create new markets. They believed, as I do, that art can make a difference in every part of our lives; that the visual choices we make say a lot about us, both individually and collectively.

Visual Arts Scotland's commitment to showing fine and applied art together, to respecting making as well as

conception, places it in that tradition: a tradition that rejects the dualistic view that opposes mind to matter and which thinks of the idea or the word as original and execution as secondary and mechanical. Instead it recognises that the body is not the slave of the mind; that just as creativity for a musician or a dancer arises out of performance, so for an artist the act of making can itself be the source of creativity and new ideas.

It is a pleasure to be associated with Visual Arts Scotland, which selects and curates its shows with an open mind and a fresh spirit, bringing together a wide range of work, creating enjoyable and unexpected juxtapositions and provoking thought as well as giving pleasure.

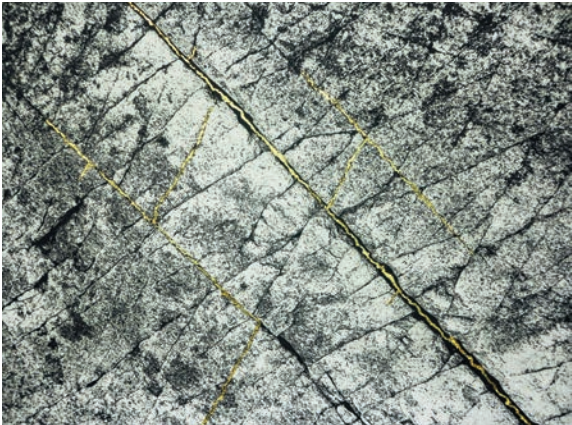
SIR MARK JONES, HONORARY PRESIDENT
MASTER, ST CROSS COLLEGE, OXFORD
FORMER DIRECTOR, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM



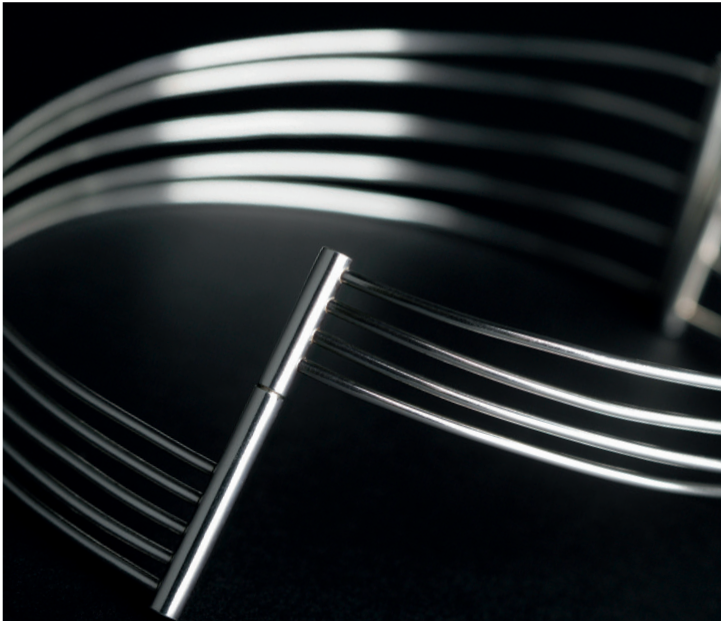
Anne White. *Swell*

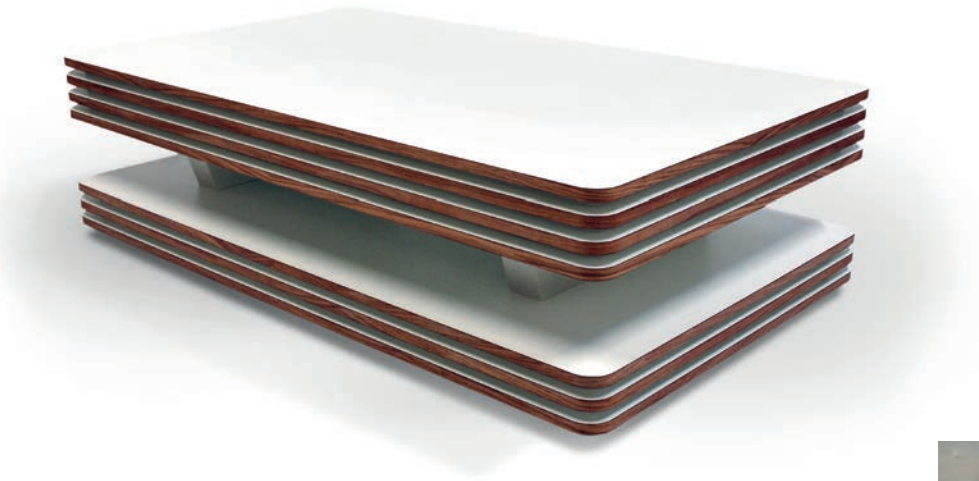
OPEN SELECTION

Central to the purpose of the annual exhibition, the Open Selection is always a thrillingly eclectic mix of entries. From this the curators have to hang a coherent show, which means narrowing down a submission of over 1200 works to about 200. This naturally causes disappointment to many. But ‘good things come in small packages’: every member can be part of *Good Things*, an explosion of small works, this year taking centre stage as it spills over the President’s wall in the grand central gallery.



- 1. Norman McBeath. *Alchemy*
- 2. Calum McClure. *Outflow II, Mellerstain*
- 3. Fiona Hutchison. *Sea Structure II*
- 4. Teena Ramsay. *Neckpiece*
- 5. Olivia Irvine. *Room*
- 6. Hamish Dobbie. *Columns Bowl*
- 7. Tadeusz Deregowski. *Shop Fronts, West End, Glasgow*



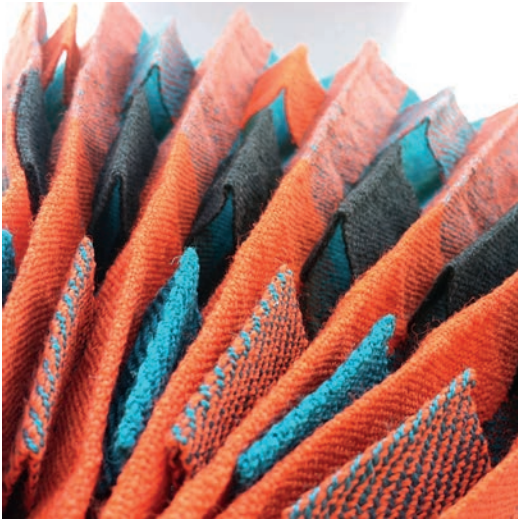


1

1. David Watson. *Cocaine Coffee Table*
2. Yu Hsiang Liao. *Graft – On the Table*
3. Amy Bond. *Maquette for costume design*
4. Joy Arden. *Untitled Blue Grey*

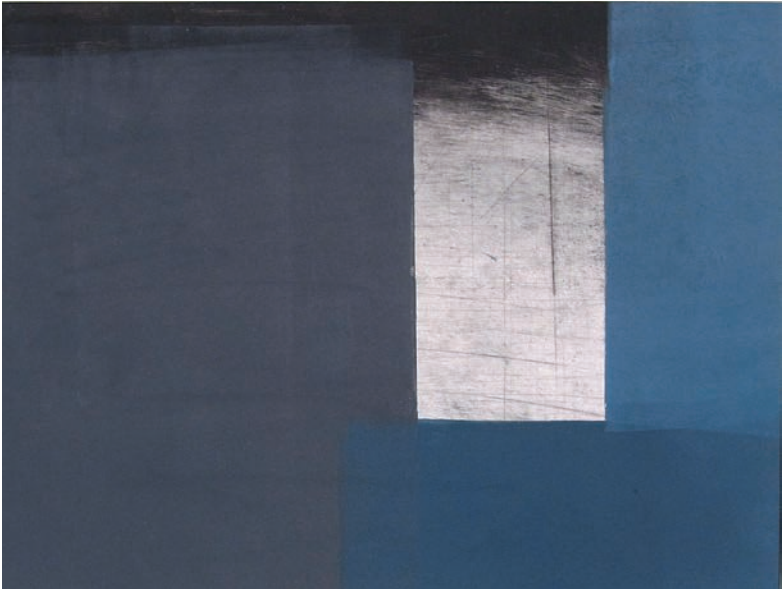


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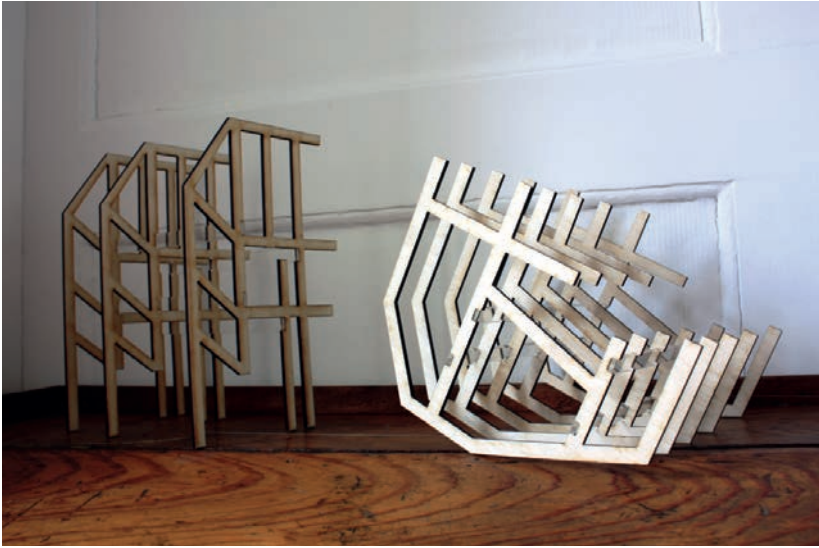
1. Suzie Darcell. *Victorian Bird, repeat*
2. Karen Elizabeth Donovan. *Lace Collar*
3. Kathryn Hinton. *Faceted Vase*
4. Deirdre Macleod. *Record Drawing 2015*



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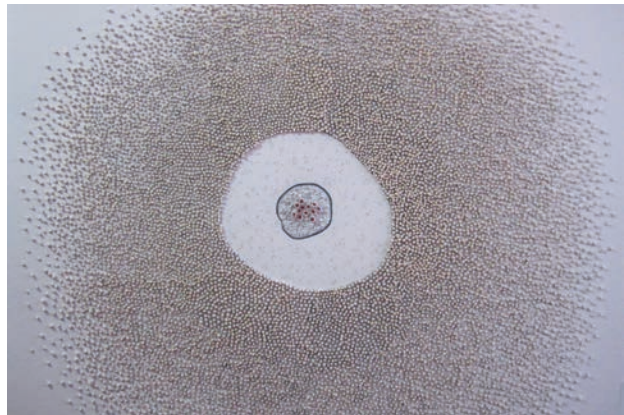
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4



7

1. Karen Akester. *Sapling*
2. Elina Partheniou. *Untitled, Living Beings series*
3. Theo Shields. *Oak and Iron*
4. Lorraine Robson. *Ripple I*
5. Graeme Wilcox. *Boxer, study*
6. Anne White. *Bedpan and Jug*
7. Ronald Binnie. *Nature – Culture – Narrative*



1

1. Gregor Wittrick. *Raw and Cooked*
2. David Henderson. *Walk II*
3. Rhona Fairgrieve. *Take Off*
4. Yoshika Kobayashi. *Pewter and Yarn Bowl*
5. Clare Waddle and Dave Robson. *YB8*
6. Janet Melrose. *Flight Lines*
7. Pippa Young. *Inexorable Weight III*
8. Christine Wylie. *Cube One*



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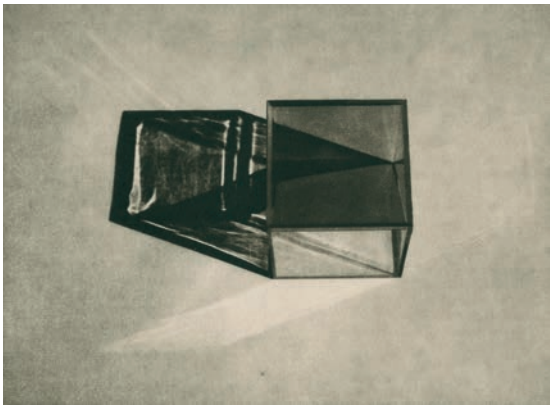
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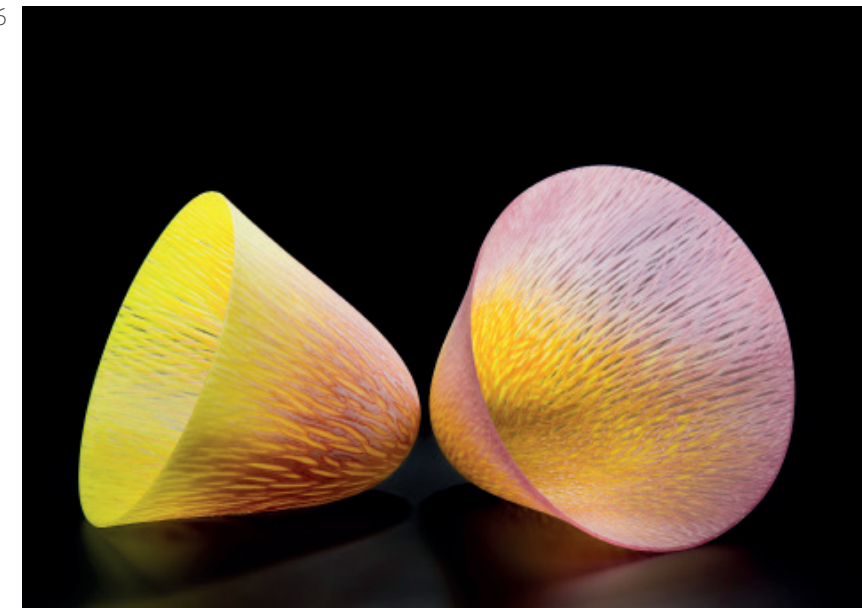
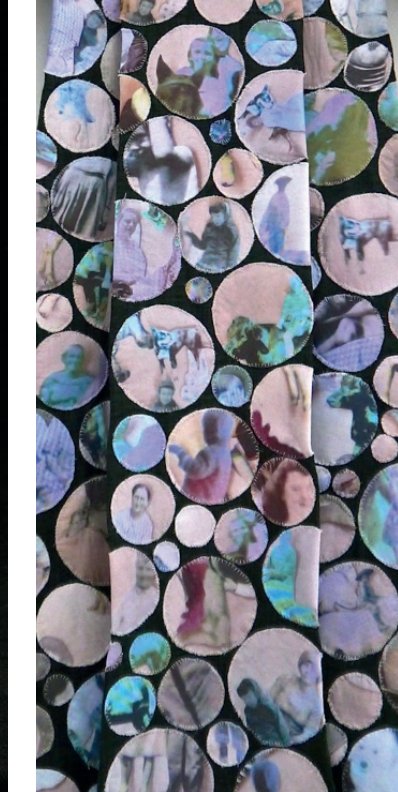
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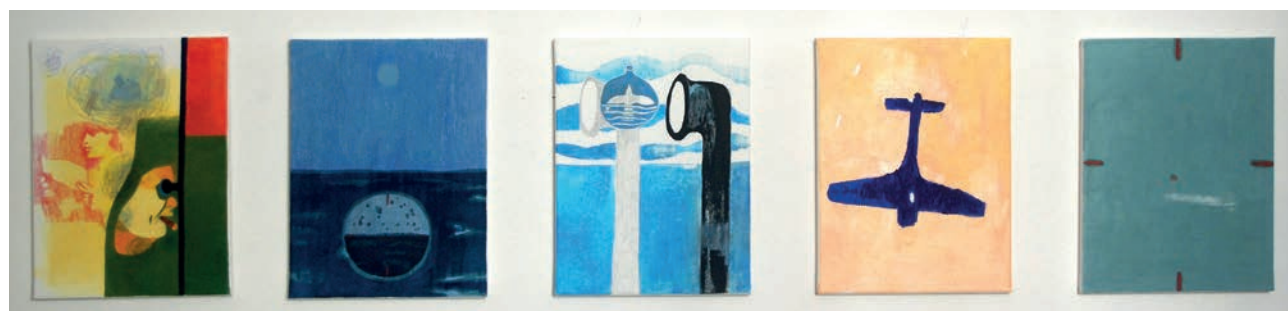
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8



1. Victoria Brown. *Vanitas*
2. Elizabeth Stewart. *Dress*, detail
3. Aileen Grant. *Off the Vine*
4. Agnese Matteini. *Target*
5. TERRIBLEm86.z #TM86apple
6. Amanda Simmons. *Dahlia Universe*
7. Melanie Muir. *Lemon Stone Bubbles Shards*
8. Fiona Rutherford. *Familiar Rhythm*



INVITED ARTIST

Steven MacIver

Steven MacIver's work is an ongoing investigation of line, surface and space. A theme that runs throughout his practice is the juxtaposition of the organic and the man-made. Born and raised in the Orkney Islands, Steven did his undergraduate degree in Art and Design at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen and his MFA at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. On completing his MFA he was awarded the prestigious Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Sculpture at the British School at Rome. As well as appearing in many group exhibitions, Steven has held solo shows in his native Orkney and in Aberdeen, London and New York. Since 2012 he has been represented by the Dillon Gallery in New York.

Steven MacIver's two years in Rome saw him investigate the modern and ancient architecture of the city, reigniting his interest in stadia and amphitheatres. These subjects are ones he used for many of his early works. Towards the end of his stay in Rome Steven began to research his next project, *Latitude*. Inspired by the discovery that Rome and New York City share an approximate line of latitude on the map, this project would ultimately see the artist circumnavigate the globe, following latitude 41°, visiting 15 towns and cities across Europe, North America and Asia. The resultant body of work that Steven produced on completion of his journey caught the attention of the Dillon Gallery in New York, particularly his *Gamespace* and *Akasaka* pieces, inspired by his time in Japan.

After showing these pieces in the Dillon Gallery summer group exhibition, Steven signed with the gallery in 2012. To date he has had two solo exhibitions, with a third scheduled for June 2016. Steven's *Nexus* installation was originally produced for his debut solo show with the gallery. His work at that time was primarily two dimensional, with linear compositions focusing on structure and form, exploring the interplay between surface, line and light.

Nexus began from the inclination to take line off the

page and create a drawing within a spatial environment. In this work an organic form is made through a considered, geometric and deliberate process. This work takes inspiration from Steven's early research involving minimal sculpture and the notion of the viewer becoming a part of the art, encouraging movement and interaction. It is significant for Steven that *Nexus* is conceived as a drawing, before it is seen as an installation or sculpture. Since its first incarnation in the New York space, he has adapted it for site specific installations at VOLTA 9 in Basel and Art14London.

Material and process play an important role in Steven's practice. While completing his *Latitude* project, Steven developed a way of working which relied less on the use of photographs and secondary resource materials. Instead, he took notes as he travelled and chose to use these, along with the memory of an event, as a starting point to create new works. This process of creating remembered spaces continues in his current work; the depiction of spaces and landscapes is both real and imagined. Steven believes this offers him much more freedom to make work that is not dictated by pre-existing imagery.

Over the past twelve months, Steven has continued to utilise drawing and structure to create elaborate linear



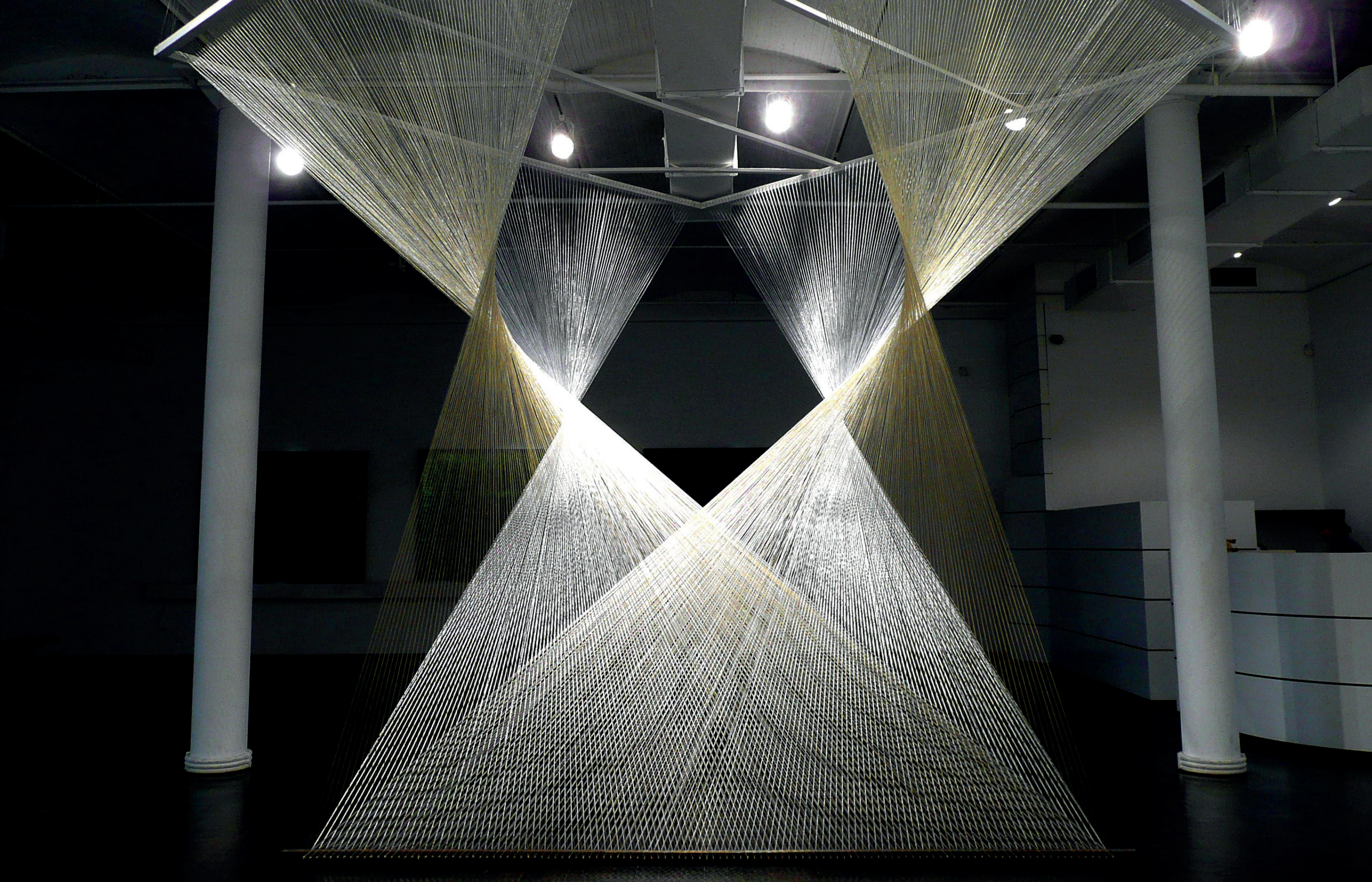
Nexus

networks. Having been reluctant to use his connections to the Orkney Islands as a point of reference, he has recently decided to embrace this, with new works depicting a much more fluid and organic use of line. This development brings out an intriguing juxtaposition of the organic and the man-made and demonstrates a departure from the rigid architectural structuring seen in earlier works.

Whilst the use of line and a focus on surface tension remain, the 'subject' is beginning to abstract and the use of material is playing a greater role. *Nexus* was one of the first pieces in which Steven used metallic materials, but gold, silver and copper leaf are now a common thread in his work. These reflective materials encourage the viewer to experience the piece through their movement around

and physical engagement with the work. This shifting experience is also conveyed through the use of thread, which conveys a solidity from a distance, contrasted with the delicacy of the woven strands on closer examination. In this sense, Steven's two- and three-dimensional works have aligned, as his works on canvas trace the solidity of built and organic spaces through thousands of finely etched lines across tissues of metallic leaf. This solidity, formed through delicacy and intricacy, draws the viewer in to the work, inviting the discovery of new angles, aspects and changes in light, giving organic qualities to the man-made.

DIANA LEE, DIRECTOR, DILLON GALLERY, NEW YORK



INVITED ARTIST

Sam Johnson

For CONVERGE Sam Johnson has collaborated with Kays Scotland and Fyfe Glenrock who make curling stones from granite harvested on Ailsa Craig in the Firth of Clyde. With a background in furniture and product design Sam places a strong emphasis on a material-led design process. Each project is a new beginning and an opportunity to explore different materials and techniques. Since 2001 the Sam Johnson studio has been creating objects and spaces for both large international brands and smaller local operations. Clients include Adidas, Hasbro toys, Land Securities, MARK furniture, Mathmos, Modus, Thorsten van Elten and the Victoria and Albert Museum. As well as running the design studio Sam has been a visiting lecturer at some of Britain's leading design schools and has delivered lectures nationally and internationally for the British Council, the ICA and PechaKucha. Here Sam is in conversation with Visual Arts Scotland's President Robbie Bushe.



Nation Interior, 2015

When did you know you wanted to be a 3D designer and what was it that drew you in?

My foundation course was the turning point. Up until then I thought I was going to specialise in fine art. I was taught by an incredibly inspirational designer called Jay Osgerby who spoke in a language that made sense to me: there was no grey area, your design was either right or wrong, it either worked or it didn't. It allowed me to express myself in 3D which was something I hadn't really experienced before. I loved the to and fro between sketching and the workshop, the way they informed each other.

How would you describe your practice?

Small, simple.

Your work doesn't necessarily follow a house style. It seems to engage more with solving individual problems through materials and processes. What first attracts you

to a project and do you have a set process for research and development?

I think I do have a style but it's more by accident than intention, and nearly always driven by material or process. In my mind this is how it should be. I'm not a massive fan of form that is wasteful of material or time. I think this approach has been driven by both my education and my early years in the studio when money was too tight to be wasteful.

I start most projects by talking ideas through with people, which makes them feel real, gives them clarity. I'm also looking for people's reactions. I work a lot in sketchbooks, perhaps the most important and enjoyable part of the process. That's where I explore the idea and think through problems before making models out of fairly basic materials: paper, card, foam and bits of wood, whatever gives me the quickest results. I think people expect me to have a vast workshop but it's just not viable. By keeping things simple I can be free to use any materials to manufacture the final pieces. I've always

been cautious of investing in big expensive machinery – I'd be concerned that I'd have to work in a particular material to justify it. I prefer to use specialist workshops; collaborating with people like Kays is a perfect example of why I want to continue to work in this way.

For Visual Arts Scotland you were looking for a new challenge. You chose the manufacturing process of the humble curling stone. How did you arrive at that?

When I received the invite I started sketching and talking over some ideas with people but nothing was really clicking. I often find these early stages of a project quite frustrating. I work much better once I'm focused. I was also aware of presenting the work in a gallery context and that the solution would need both presence and narrative to hold its own.

I'd watched a documentary about curling stones and became interested in the history of the sport and the beauty of the objects which are so uniquely Scottish. I'd also never worked in stone so I was keen to see

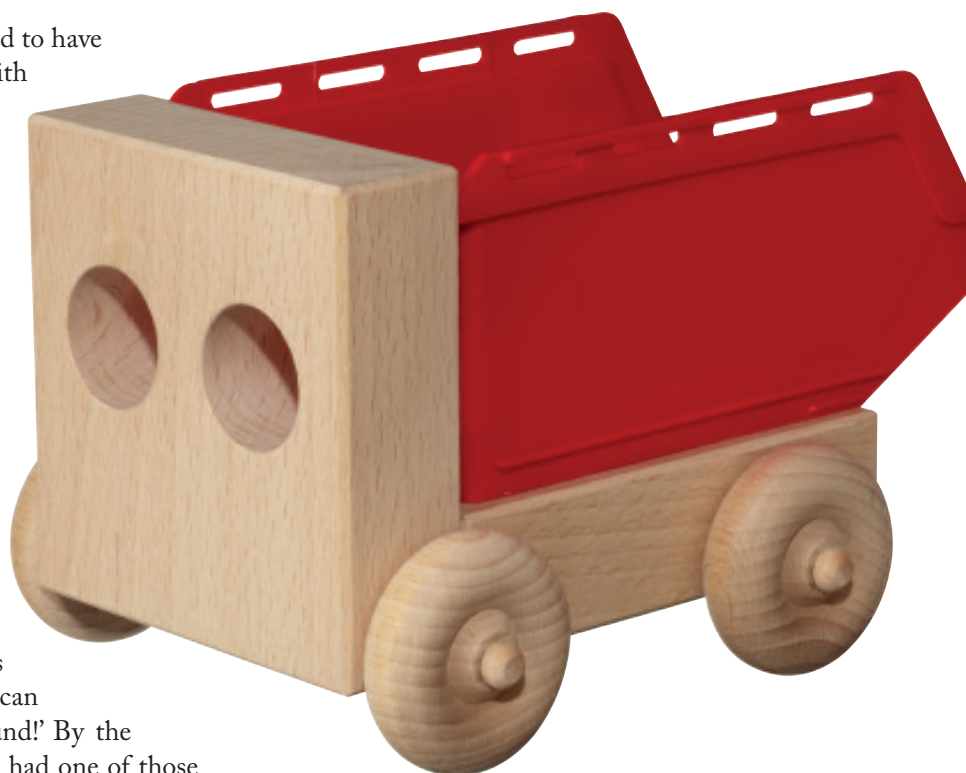
what the chances were of engaging with a curling stone manufacturer. Once I discovered that Kays was the only company in the world producing official curling stones from a local material, I was completely sold.

There is a huge romance in the back story of the stones: only granite quarried from Ailsa Craig is considered strong enough to withstand official championship curling. What did you find when you visited Kays and what ideas emerged?

I don't think I've ever seen such a perfect story: it's an amazing process, using an incredible and local material to create these utterly beautiful objects. Kays is also a resounding success story, a thriving British manufacturer with a backlog of orders catering for a global clientele. As well as keeping up with production they also have to cater to a steady flow of curlers on a pilgrimage to the birthplace of their stone and photographers and film makers documenting the manufacturing process. The workshop manager Bill does a tireless job of juggling

workshop and PR! I feel very honoured to have found them and to have worked with their precious granite.

Prior to any factory visit I like to sketch a few rough ideas. These help me to establish the boundaries of the material and the machines. Nine times out of ten I end up not pursuing any of these early ideas – this was definitely the case with Kays. As soon as I entered the site I was taken by these huge slabs of granite with holes in: the waste product from the pucks that make up the curling stones. It seemed such a shame that this unique and valuable material had no use, its fate to be crushed for aggregate. I also knew I had to work within the boundaries of Kays' equipment. I was told: 'We can make anything ... as long as it's round!' By the time I'd driven back to Edinburgh I'd had one of those Eureka moments that happen once in a while.



Dumper, red, beech, plastic workshop container. 2014

It could be argued there is a resurgent interest in the handmade, design and craft within contemporary arts practice. The 2015 Turner Prize for example went to Assemble, an architecture and design collective. Visual Arts Scotland itself wants the public to engage with both fine and applied arts and design. How do you feel about your work being shown in a gallery context rather than as a commercial product or design solution?

Presenting in a gallery is a new experience for me. It's been quite liberating not to be concerned with costs and a client. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to communicate the story behind the objects. This doesn't normally happen at a trade fair where people generally only want to know how much an object costs and when they can have it!

The whole handmade, craft movement is definitely enjoying some of the limelight at the moment. I hope it's not just a passing fashion. Not so long ago everything had to be sustainable/ethical/green, now its handmade/craft/artisan. In many ways I think this was a natural progression from the sustainable tag as many of the processes and materials used in the maker movement have inherent sustainable properties. It could also be argued that by spending a bit more on a quality handmade object you're less likely to send it to the tip in a few years

– that's got to be more sustainable! I was in Brooklyn, New York, recently and the maker movement has really caught on there. You can see it happening over here as well. It's a healthy reaction to the digital age, an opportunity for people to reconnect with materials and explore traditional processes.

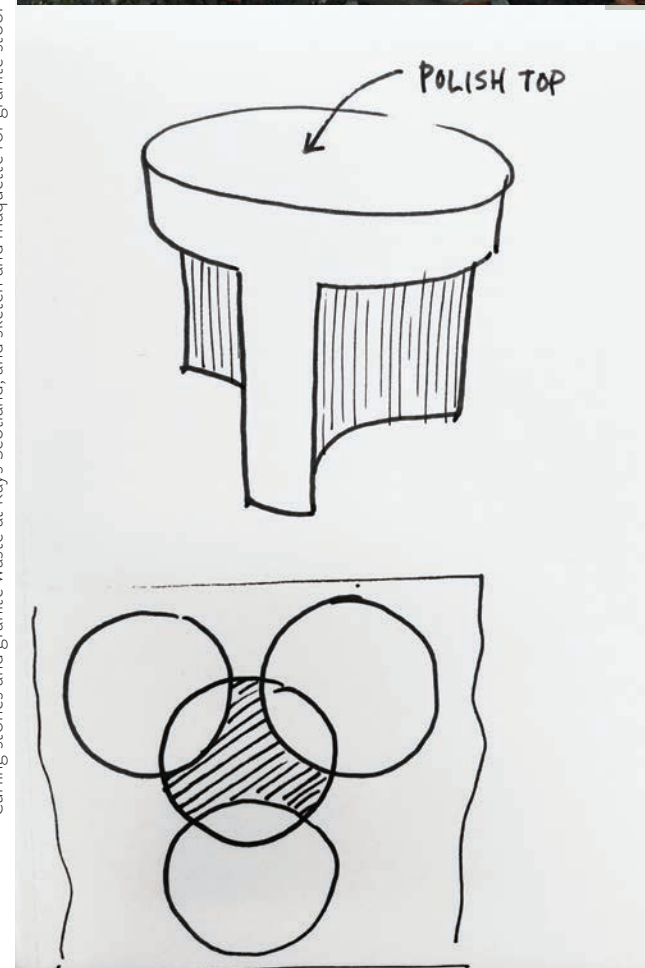
I like the gallery as a place to view my artefacts. It elevates them and allows the story of the material and the maker to be told. It is however a very exclusive environment and I'd like to see more opportunities to reach the masses with such projects. Shouldn't everyone be able to enjoy the power of making?

What do you hope your work in CONVERGE will achieve?

I hope it will allow me to continue to work in this way. Perhaps more importantly I hope it will raise some awareness of the materials and manufacturers that exist in Scotland. Through my involvement with Kays I've heard and read about other Scottish manufacturing success stories. If we are indeed in this age of handmade and craft I think Scotland is well placed to export her products and their stories.



Curling stones and granite waste at Kays Scotland, and sketch and maquette for granite stool



INVITED ARTIST

Andrew Mackenzie

Andrew Mackenzie is a painter whose work mines a territory between pure abstraction and representation. His work responds to the landscape and overtly acknowledges the constructs through which it is seen. Trained at Edinburgh College of Art and now based in the Borders, Andrew is represented by the Sarah Myerscough Gallery in London where he has presented several successful solo exhibitions. His work has also been included in important group exhibitions, both in the UK and abroad. He has received several research and development awards, and has works in many collections, including The Fleming Collection and The University of Edinburgh. Here he is in conversation with James Clegg, Assistant Curator, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh.

What is the relationship of your works to the world?

The works are connected to the world in the sense that they were born from a direct experience, as all my work is. Then, through the physical processes of drawing and painting, they are subject to an abstract multi-layered sensibility, as I attempt over time to work out this experience in form.

From some perspectives it might seem that there is a contradiction between direct experience and the constancy of your work. But I think that constancy allows you to rediscover direct experience in the studio because the world that is encountered and the abstract schemes of your practice are there in advance. I am interested in how your work develops in time.

Yes, although I rely on the empirical experience of a place to ignite the work, my interest is certainly directed, or focused, by ideas gathered from books, politics and art history.

The work may appear constant but it has slowly evolved. I spend a great deal of time in the studio

revising, working over, pushing back and pulling forward in an attempt to discover the relationships within the work: a tension between control and chance, between the surface and the subject, between the initial spark and the realisation.

The many layers of these drawings suggest different time frames. The choice of subject also relates to time: this particular defunct service station first caught my attention because it radiated a beautiful sense of abandonment. It was a temporary modern ruin on a brownfield site on the outskirts of the city, glimpsed in the passing. I returned later to draw and photograph it, and it is now gone completely; this transitory state appealed to me.

The generic architecture of the service station is resolutely modernist. They populate our landscape in their thousands like anonymous outgrowths of a universal vision. Many great architects have designed service stations, but in general we tend not to consider who designs and manufactures them. They are illuminated, branded, comforting and 'new', exuding simplicity, geometric cleanliness and efficiency.

This place, however, negated all these associations.



Service Station Drawing 3, detail, soft pastel and gouache on paper, 150 by 115 cm

I imagined how nature might have gradually swallowed the site (alluded to in the work by the growth of winter trees, some lit artificially), the defunct structure passing into another use or entering landfill. It is now an uncertain memory. Therefore there is a twisted sense of the past in this work – returning the ruined form of the building to something like a diagrammatic blueprint with the suggestion of an entropic future. As James Bridle says in his blog on hauntology: '[it] ... is like encountering a revenant – a return in figurative form of a glimpse of a future that never was, a visionary dream that was envisioned once but which slipped out of collective memory.'

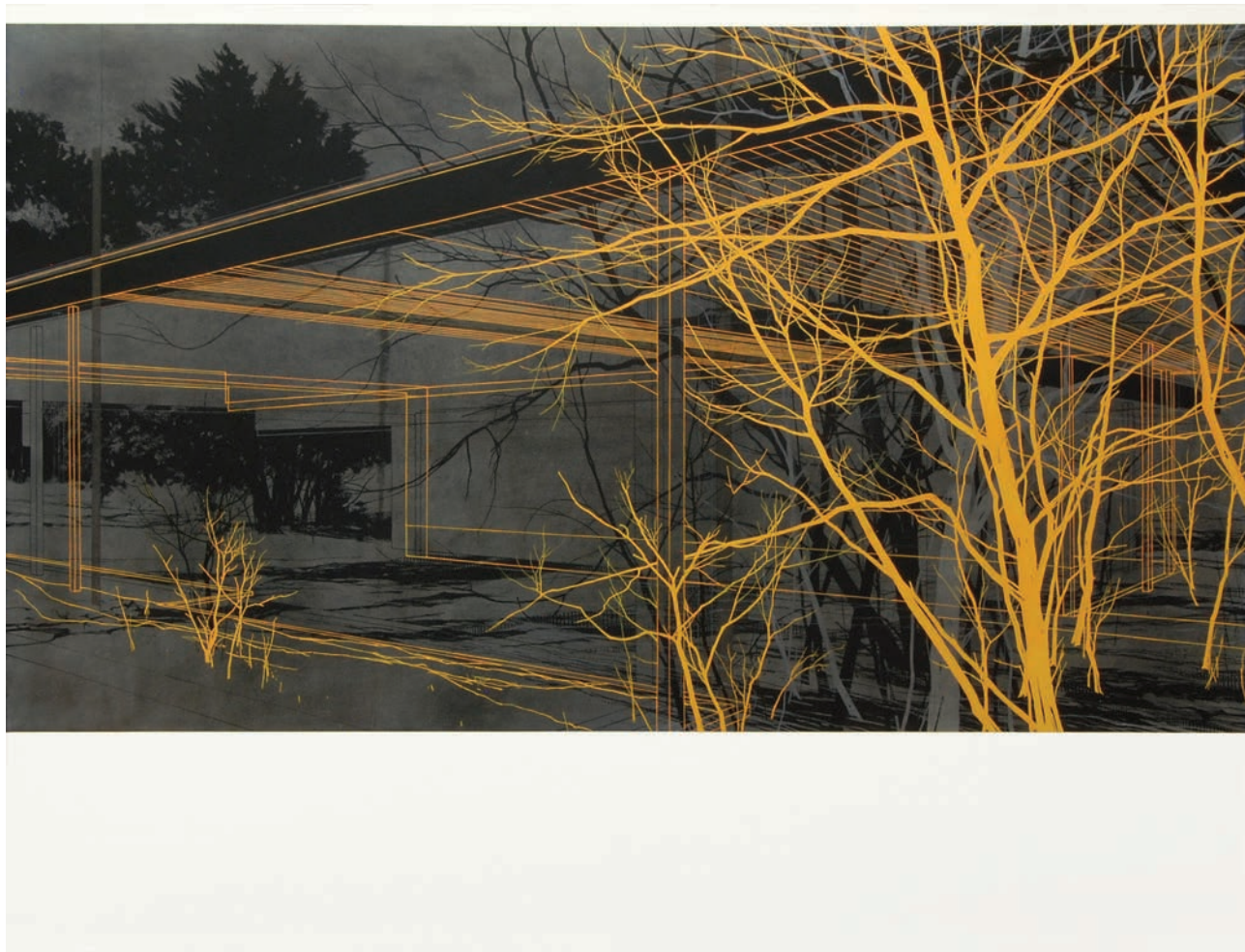
Oil and petroleum have shaped the political events of the last century, with claims made for the value of Scottish oil reserves surfacing at the time of the Scottish

independence referendum. You're not known for making political statements so how does this charged subject matter fit within your practice?

The focus on politically-charged landscape is not new for me. I have made work about Torness Power Station, about transport infrastructure and about deserted supermarket car parks. Although my initial excitement concerning this project may have been the abandoned form of the structure and its visual possibilities, I was also aware of the potential significance of a dead service station, and how that might be read.

There has been a shift for me. Like many people, I became deeply involved in the 2014 referendum debate. Politics suddenly seemed more relevant to our actual lives than ever before, closer to home.

In previous work I was exploring and acknowledging



Service Station Drawing 1, soft pastel and gouache on paper, 150 by 115 cm

the contemporary landscape (both rural and urban) and its constructs, echoing the perceptual relationship we have with it by developing a personal visual language through an abstracted system of graphic marks, rhythms, spaces and surfaces which form an equivalent structure to my internal sense of the place. This new work seeks to do that also, while simultaneously foregrounding serious concerns regarding our dependency on the petroleum and gas industries, and the government's refusal to acknowledge the changes needed to move forward, towards renewable and sustainable energy.

Previously your work has derived from poetry about the Scottish landscape. The new work evokes something much more anonymous, displaced almost. Has your work naturally pushed you towards this kind of 'non-place' or have you made a conscious decision to deal with it conceptually within your practice.

My work prior to 2011 tended to focus on non-romantic aspects of our surroundings. In 2011, however, I made the decision to confront the (somewhat loaded) legacy of the romantic Scottish landscape in a more focused way: I visited specific waterfalls, rivers, lochs and woodland in the highlands in order to make work about them, in an attempt to unravel this legacy.

These new drawings represent a return to a thread I was pursuing previously, and I can see many equivalents in considering relationships between nature and culture, which involve both 'place' and so-called 'non-place'. There are slippages between them, and I think that to give active attention to your surroundings, wherever you are, and ask what a particular place signifies, is important.

Your work has always seemed to insist that 'abstraction' is a facet of recognisable organic forms just as much as it is the more typical geometric forms. The world 'out

there' can only be re-presented by a symbolic language, a language that is largely known to us in advance. This search for 'slippages' is intriguing. It suggests encounters with a natural world that distort our sense of structure, whether built or whether the structure of a (painterly) language. I wonder if you might say more about slippages?

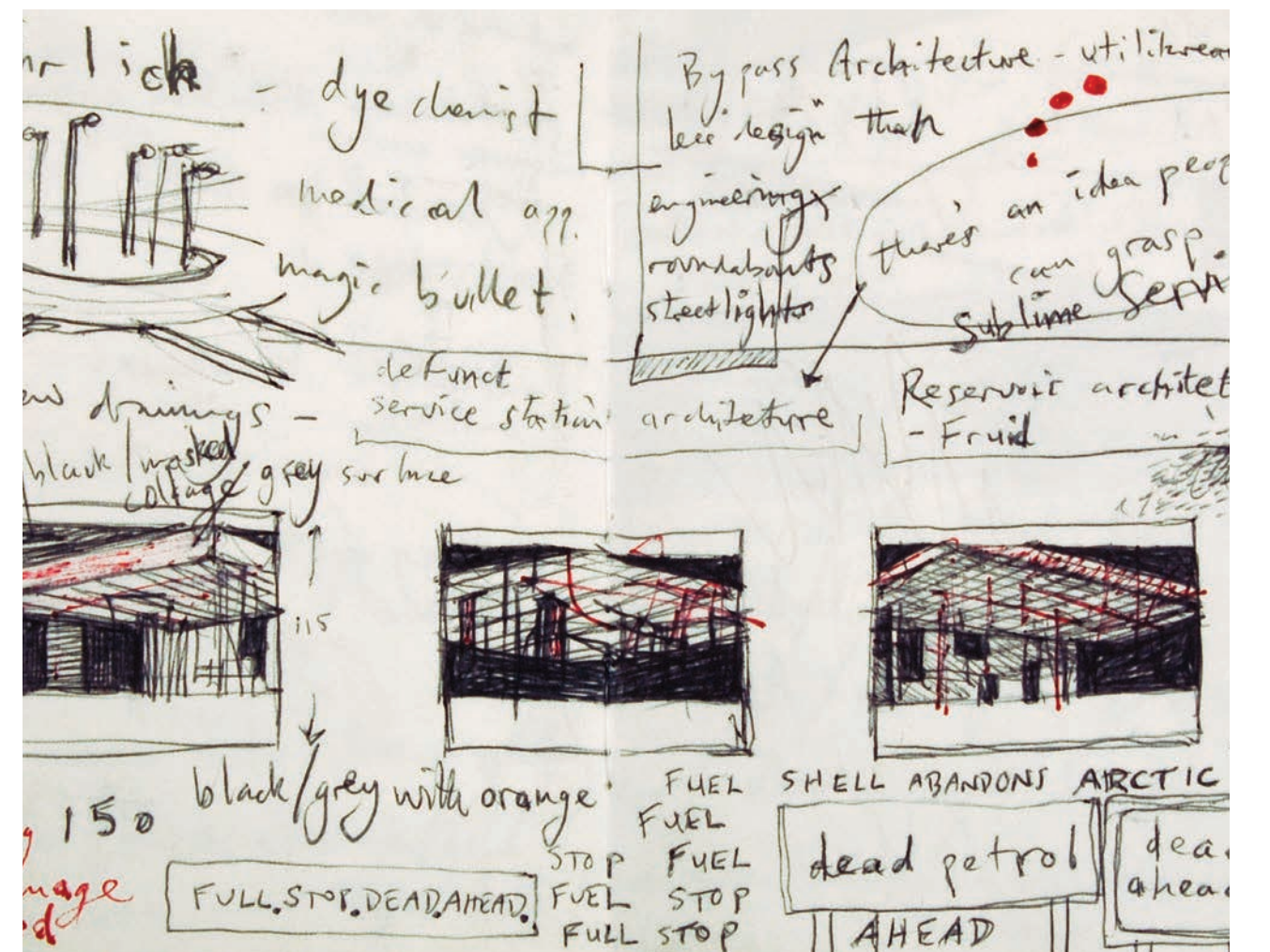
In terms of 'abstraction', I build up a rhythmic pattern of marks across the surface of the work which relate to multiple (displaced) images of a place, but do not seek to imitate these places illusionistically. It is important to me that the works have an independent existence, but still form associations in the mind of the viewer between the geometry and the organic forms. Sometimes the viewer is surprised, when moving in close to one of my paintings, to discover that the rocks or hillside are composed of many repeating lines, dots or dashes. This process chimes with how I read landscape as a shifting,

temporal phenomenon 'framed' by our way of seeing.

Displacement occurs formally within the work, as layers of material partially obscure underlying drawing, and subsequent layers slip and move slightly, overlapping to maximise visual potential, creating a deliberate visual buzz. This process echoes the sense of dislocation upon visiting the site, but also a sense of excitement. The work marks both time spent in the studio, but also the memory of time spent considering a place. What is an experience of a place? Where does it occur?

I draw from 'life' sometimes and I'm aware that in the brief time it takes to look and process the visual information, more actively constructed by the brain than by the external world, my perspective can alter slightly. However key the outside experience is for me, any immediate freshness of vision can be as much in the studio as outside. These formal slippages are acknowledgments of this responsive process.

Sketchbook, detail



CORDIS PRIZE 2016

First, a big thank you to all 50 tapestry artists, from 19 countries, who submitted a total of 85 works for this, the second Cordis Prize. From these we have short-listed seven ambitious works, some of them very large, to be exhibited at CONVERGE. The £5000 prize will be announced during the exhibition.

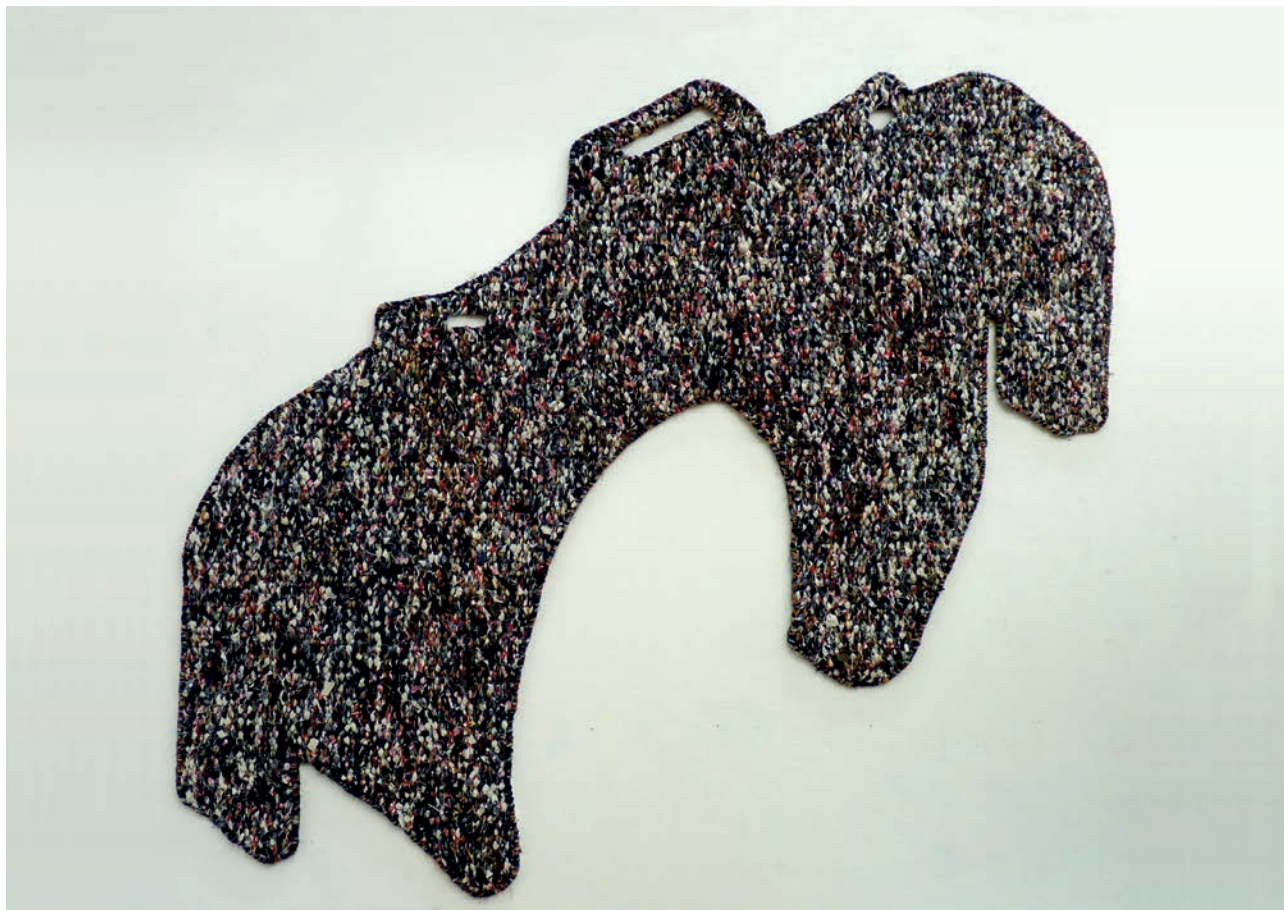
Miranda Harvey writes on the following pages of that mysterious 'quiddity', the object quality that is unique to the medium of tapestry. These artists have exploited that quality; the idea and the execution are so bound together, the medium so understood, and the delight in making so particular that the tapestries are

tangibly beautiful, sensual, powerful and complete.

Misao Watanabe's joyful *Happiness* is a delight. Her colours are intense and deep. That 'quiddity' is here, it gives the yellow substance, an added dimension, and the white and green and tiny red marks woven within it make it a tangible mist of colour. Over the top the word happiness is etched out, 'dancing on the yellow field of canola flowers'. The sense of spring is indeed here. It is woven in small shapes that build and build giving it form and an intensity that only tapestry weaving can.

Gudrun Pagter's monumental piece *Red Line* again plays with depth, but this is an illusion of space and it is

Philip Sanderson, England. No. 13 Thrust Block Shoe



Misao Watanabe, Japan. *Happiness*, detail

almost architectural in scale. Here that object quality of tapestry seems to exaggerate the illusion and almost lend it form. This huge black piece has only fine perspective lines woven within it: their exact placing is critical, the drawing of them exemplary. The red line sings as it runs through the dark space.

Philip Sanderson's *No. 13 Thrust Block Shoe* is also based on a technical drawing, a found engineering drawing. From it follows an exploration of the 'relationship between image and process' which gives the work that illusive and wonderful quality. What is it? The weft has been carefully developed to create the work in a language which is above all textile. The uniformity of the weft thread suggests the industrial, but the shape becomes more pictorial, 'creating an interesting tension between represented and literal surfaces'. It makes you smile.

Marika Szàraz's *Depth* also works with the relationship between the woven shape, form and surface. She exploits the way that light hits the parallel warp lines in this powerful structural tapestry. The piece plays not only with the notion of dimensions through the direction and scale of the warp, but with the overall shape and the particular quality of the weft threads she has selected. This piece is in a sense the essence of

tapestry pared down to just warp and weft, completely monochromatic and immaculately made.

Susan Mowatt's *Black/Time/Lines/White/Time/Lines* is another very distilled piece. It is about process and time, the process of weaving in real time; recording time if you like, using only the colour of the yarn as an expression of that experience. 'Weaving,' she says, 'for me is like thinking: a place where the past, the present and the future come together in one action.' This recorded consciousness is then stitched together into a cloth and presented in a simple rectangular format. It is what it is. There is a real beauty in it, a recording of time passed, and the celebration of a process.

Elke Hülse also refers to her own action of weaving in *Era uma Vez*, but in a figurative narrative. The image of a particular place is her starting point, and into it three events that occurred there at different times are woven. She explores these with different thicknesses of warp, of weft and scale. There is a real sensitivity here as she works to unite her story with the action of weaving. It is a romantic piece, very well composed yet time and place and the action of weaving are again important elements in a very different tapestry.

Justine Randall's *Wiltshire Landscape* is an extraordinarily ambitious work. Distilled through



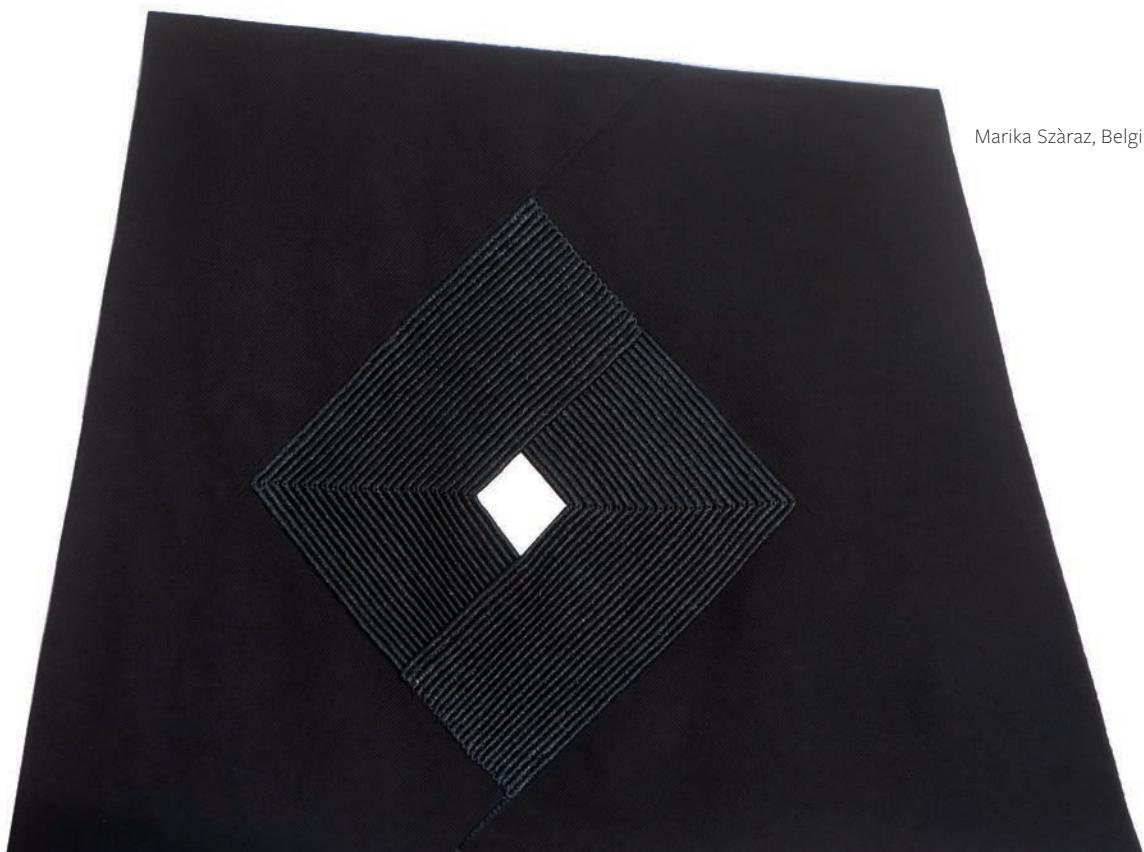
Susan Mowatt, Scotland. *Black/Time/Lines/White/Time/Lines*

methodical research from her local landscape the tapestries speak of colour and of seasons. Each of the four tapestries represents three months. The yarn has been dyed to 60 precise shades, the warp divided into precise rectangles. Every rectangle is woven with precision. Justine, like all the weavers represented here, has an idea and a determination to execute it to perfection. This work sings, and yet any weaver knows just how difficult it is to make something as accurate, and yet still keep that joy in it. That object quality of weaving is used to perfection here. It is a very controlled piece yet still exuberant.

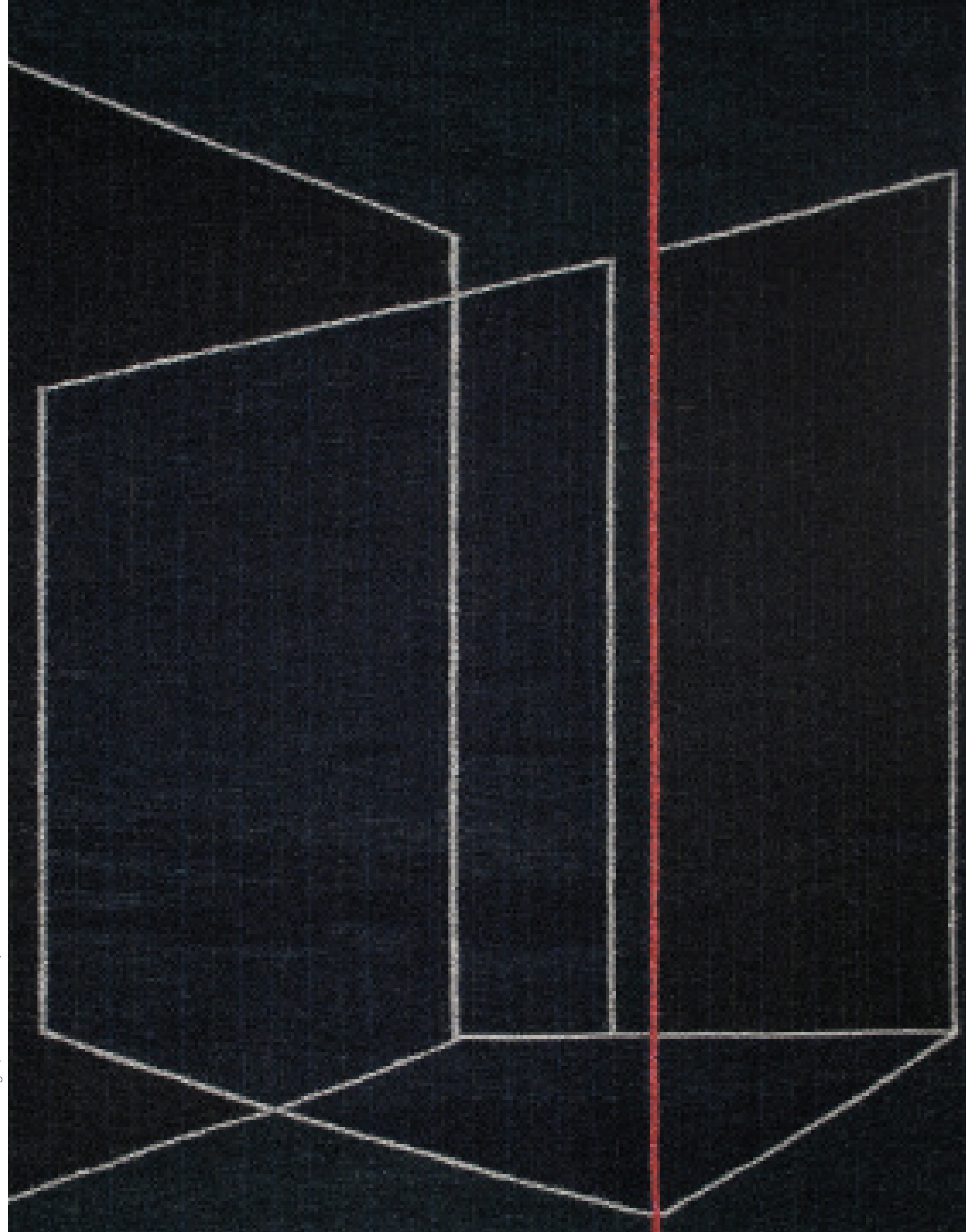
There are clearly changes in the flavour of the shortlist from 2015 to 2016, which is as it should be as it reflects the differing submissions. This year's was clearly more international which can only be good. We feel it is a very strong selection and a range of beautiful tapestries. Next year the final Cordis Prize will be awarded. Who knows where tapestry weavers may take us then.

FIONA MATHISON, ARTIST, FORMER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
EDINBURGH TAPESTRY COMPANY

CORDIS PRIZE SELECTION PANEL: ROBBIE BUSHE, LINDA GREEN,
MIRANDA HARVEY, FIONA MATHISON, ALISON WATT



Marika Szàraz, Belgium. *Depth*, detail



Gudrun Pagter, Denmark. *Red Line*, detail



Justine Randall, England. *Wiltshire Landscape*

Can you picture a tapestry?

I do hope you've had the opportunity to see in situ the magnificent tapestries shortlisted for the Cordis Prize 2016. But if you aren't within view of a tapestry, can you picture one? If I close my eyes I can see in pictures; I can summon a visual representation of a favourite picture. It has all the features I associate with the actual picture: the glossiness of the oil paint, the gilt of the frame, even the reflection in the glass. Although I would doubtless see far more in the real thing, the image in my mind is to all intents and purposes the same as 'seeing'.

I am a great admirer of tapestry. There are tapestries that I have spent hours staring at, so you might think I could readily summon to mind an image of the one that hangs in my office. But when I try to imagine it there is something critical missing. A tapestry is an object as well as an image, one that has depth and weight, and I can't capture its 'quiddity' (as the poet Louis MacNeice would put it) in my mind's eye.

If you look at a photograph or watch a film, you may feel that you are 'in' the scene, and suspend your

Misao Watanabe, Japan. *Happiness*



Elke Hülse, Brazil. *Era uma Vez*, detail

awareness of reality; with tapestry the sense of a created surface is ever present. The image therefore has to do something other than represent a scene accurately. Even in a figurative piece there is an element of abstraction, and the language of the image has to work in non-realistic ways. Most woven tapestries don't attempt to be realistic images, and when they do (for example in the portrait of Alice Bayke in the Queensland Art Gallery, woven by the Australian Tapestry Workshop) there has to be a reason for working in tapestry rather than in any other medium. This tapestry is a representation of a fashion photograph that itself is commenting on artificiality in image.

So, as well as having a basic materiality, tapestry is essentially abstract. In medieval tapestries of hunting or mythological scenes, the images may appear as realistic as in the paintings of the day. But both contain images that are coded messages: the strawberry leaf, the unicorn, the dove. Each has a meaning that animates the image. Medieval tapestry was of course an elite artform, and woven tapestry has continued to be a relatively expensive way of covering a wall. The essential technique remains time consuming, individual, constructed.

It pays to remember however that tapestry has a democratic aspect also. All of us can look at a woven piece and understand the over-under, back and forth construction. In the Middle Ages the lowliest serving wench would have understood the need to cover cold stone walls and the need to have some portable luxury item. So the 'how' and 'why' of early tapestries weren't a great artistic secret. Viewers can still look at tapestries and see how they are made. We all wear woven cloth and decorate our homes with it, so the idea of textiles

is a familiar one. Obviously a piece of art is a long way from a printed apron, but somehow we feel comfortable with tapestry precisely because we think we understand 'what' it is.

Many tapestry artists enjoy pushing the boundaries of their art. Getting off the wall and into three dimensions is one obvious way of challenging the convention. Using the warp – normally invisible and perpendicular to the weft – to say something about tapestry or integrating unusual materials to break the resemblance to the painted image are other challenging techniques. But every tapestry artist has to have a good reason for working in tapestry. There has to be something about what they want to say that can only be expressed in this way. Otherwise, why go to all that trouble? The 'why' of tapestry has changed, the art of tapestry weaving is no longer designed to insulate or impress. It also has to express something more complicated than a myth or a religious scene.

In celebrating the art of tapestry weaving, the Cordis Prize limits itself to works that are constructed in one way. But even within this one technique, the range of choices made by the shortlisted tapestry artists is immense. The echoing resonance between the making, the craft, the quiddity on the one hand and the ideal, the invisible, on the other is a subtle but, for me, crucial part of appreciating tapestry. I look, I respond, I feel, but I also think. Perhaps this is the reason I can't picture a tapestry, and also the reason why I appreciate them so much.

MIRANDA HARVEY, TRUSTEE OF THE CORDIS TRUST

GRADUATE SHOWCASE

In the summer of 2015 Visual Arts Scotland visited the degree shows of Scotland’s four main art schools to look for the emerging artists and designers whose work best exemplifies the fresh and dynamic approach to contemporary applied and fine arts that we seek to support. From the vast range of talent on offer we whittled the selection down to six aspiring artists. This is the second time we have included a curated Graduate Showcase in our annual exhibition.

Eva Melnika

JEWELLERY AND SILVERSMITHING : ECA

www.salon.io/eva-melnika

Eva is interested not just in a product but also in its purpose. How do we perceive it? What impact does it have on us? Her work challenges the importance of the obvious by directing us to handle familiar objects in a playful way. Utensils made from snowcrete, silver and hair lead us back to ourselves: how we touch, eat,

sense and observe. Each utensil becomes charged with a curiosity when it is used, thereby engendering a ritualistic dialogue between it and the user. Eva’s passionately cool, controlled forms straddle the disciplines of silversmithing and ceramics.

Eva Melnika. SCOOP



James Ritchie

SCULPTURE : DJCAD

www.jamesritchiesculptor.com

For James, art should stimulate debate and thought about the world we live in. His sculpture is based on the terrible consequences of armed conflict, reflecting both physical and emotional pain. It is a visualisation of the loss and grief inflicted on all peoples and nations, irrespective of

their religious, political or ideological beliefs. It represents vulnerability, hopelessness, imprisonment, transition and the idea of death in a violent and destructive situation.

‘We all turn to dust ...’

James Ritchie. Conflict



Greig Cockburn

INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN : DJCAD

www.greimgcdesign.co.uk

Inspired by Scottish bothies, Greig has designed four urban bothies to be located in city centres to provide temporary office space for the nomadic worker. The user will have not only office space but also the chance to disconnect from life by turning off all forms of communication. The idea of being transported to a tranquil environment within a city will be highly appealing to many, offering a modern twist on the Scottish bothy. The workspaces will be well designed, highly functional and bookable for any timespan.

Greig Cockburn. *Bothy*, wireframe oak scale model

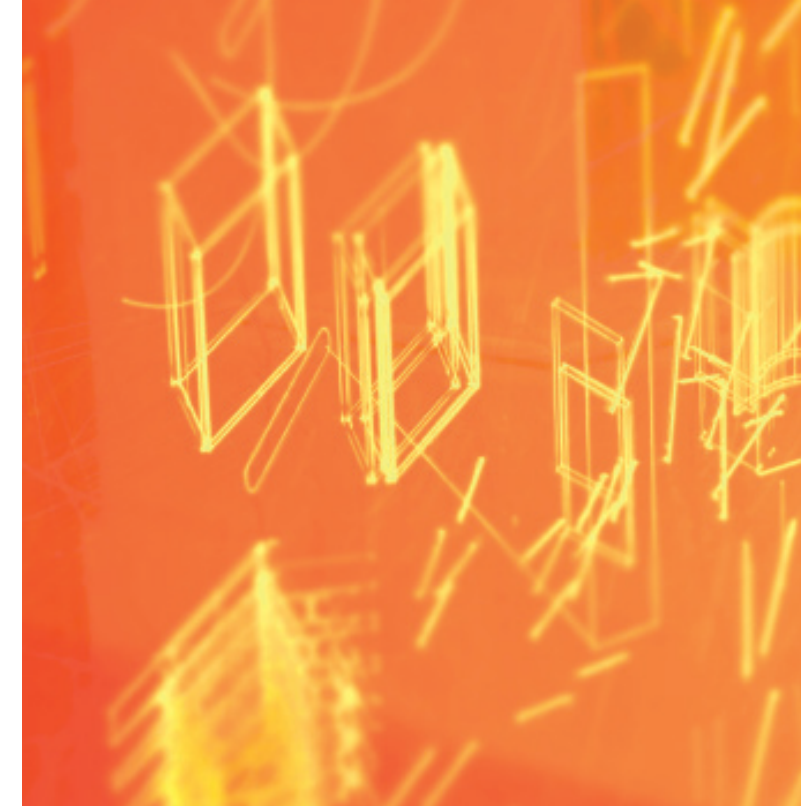


Gosia Walton

FINE ART : ECA

www.gosiawalton.com

Gosia explores the capabilities and boundaries of machinery and technology in relation to the concept of 'hand-made'. Through experimentation she tries to give language to the empty or occupied space where digital representation and human intimacy meet. She challenges the perception of the 'real' and the 'artificial' in ways which alter the use of these constructs in the making of art. Her series of large-scale drawings is created by etching and cutting and rastering into acrylic sheets using a laser cutter. By experimenting with machines Gosia hopes to achieve a sense of tension between the inherent human traces in the work alongside the inhuman marks caused by the machine.



Gosia Walton. *Drawing 01*, detail

Euphrosyne Andrews

FINE ART : PAINTING AND PRINTMAKING : GSA

www.euphrosyneandrews.co.uk

Ornament's uncertain position within contemporary fine art is a theme that underpins Euphrosyne's work, questioning the division between the decorative and the fine arts. The use of ornament, often originating from a religious ban on representation, can be traced through abstract art into contemporary art today. Euphrosyne exploits the traditional relationship between

the ornamental motif and the multiple, particularly within printmaking. Working primarily with forms of making that are associated with decoration, craft, domesticity and function, she draws upon ideas of the total aesthetic, bringing connotations of a domestic interior into the curation of works and their relationship with one another.

Euphrosyne Andrews. *Installation view: The Private Abode to the Public Façade*



Natalie Jane Adams

JEWELLERY AND SILVERSMITHING : ECA

www.nataliejaneadams.co.uk

Initially taking inspiration from the vibrant colours of Asia and from Chinese architectural lattice patterns, Natalie strives to combine geometric configurations with striking colour combinations. Transparency is significant and light is essential. Her pieces reflect a pursuit of accuracy and the soothing transition from drawing to making: her drawings are recreated in acrylic plastic dyed with colours that fade into one another, the plastic enhanced by being wrapped with metallic wire. Perfection evokes both excitement and serenity.

Natalie Jane Adams. *Candied Spirals Necklace*



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Joanne Waldie. *Temple Book*, detail

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FROM THE EDINBURGH ACADEMY RESIDENCY PROGRAMME AND
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PUBLICATION

EDITED BY SUSIE LEIPER
DESIGNED BY MARK HADDON
TYPESET IN FREIGHT SANS PRO AND ADOBE CASLON PRO
PRINTED BY 21 COLOUR, GLASGOW

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ISBN : 978-0-9931810-1-6

COVER : LORRAINE ROBSON, FRONT. SUSAN MOWATT, BACK



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