

International and UK artists brought together in the UK for radical craft exhibition

34 international and UK artists who express their creativity unbounded by taught conventions are showing work in **Radical Craft: Alternative Ways of Making**, a **Craftspace** and **Outside In** touring exhibition launching at **Pallant House Gallery** on 12th March 2016. The exhibition, which is co-curated by **Laura Hamilton**, will showcase artworks by historically renowned artists associated with Outsider Art and contemporary self-taught artists who see themselves as facing barriers to the art world for reasons including health, disability, social circumstance or isolation; 21 of whom have been selected from open submissions.

Eminent artist Alice Kettle, one of the selectors for the open UK call for artists says the exhibition ***“communicates the dynamic of living and making, of using transformative potential of craft to enter other visionary worlds...craft becomes a process of resistance and method of adaptation”***

Themes in the exhibition include radical missions in which artists have a passion for a particular subject or technique; intuitive responses to textiles employed as a non-verbal means of engaging with the outside world; autobiographical responses to the natural or urban environment; and folkloric or surreal perceptions of the world. Each of the artists' individual backgrounds and paths of creative development occupy a different world to our more typical perception of the artist or craftsman. Most have never received any formal art training, although their practices may have been nurtured and encouraged in specialist centres or studios. Their work or creative impulses have been developed with independence, perceptual senses and an obvious lack of inhibition which is rarely aimed at a particular audience or marketplace.

Xavier White's (UK) 'Verrelic Spires', a conceptual glass assemblage made following rehabilitation from brain injury, refers to Duchamp's 'Large Glass' (1920), and merges two words *verre* and *malic*, symbolising bonding/possibilities of engagement/safety in numbers/something simultaneously tough and brittle. **Mr X** (UK) makes large scale cardboard structures and vehicles as a form of escape, survival and resistance to living in

an institution. **Pascal Tassini** (Belgium) has a special interest in weddings and bridal attire producing a complete environment including a wedding tent, rings, love letters and elaborate Baroque-style headdresses. **Beth Hopkins** (UK) employs found objects, often washed up from the Thames, and parts of discarded electrical gadgets. She finds it *“empowering to reduce items down to their components; taking back the power digital life has over us all.”* **Angus McPhee** (Scotland) secretly wove numerous garments from grasses, vegetation and sheep’s wool picked from barbed wire fences found in the grounds of the hospital he lived in.

Other artists include: **Dalton M Ghetti’s** (USA) extreme miniature forms sculpted into discarded pencil leads; **Michael Smith’s** (UK) altered donated jeans, bound and wrapped with masking tape; **Erkki Pekkarinen’s** (Finland) folkloric life size woven birch bark figures; **Nnena Kalu’s** (UK) large evolving cocoon-like forms of paper, fabric and foam bound and wrapped with tape, yarn and cling-film; and **Julia Krause-Harder’s** (Germany) large mixed media dinosaurs.

The panel for the UK open selection included Alice Kettle, Textile Artist; Phil Baird, Artist and Outside In Award Winner; Laura Hamilton, Co-curator of Radical Craft; Katy Norris, Curator Pallant House Gallery and Deirdre Figueiredo, Director of Craftspace.

Tour venues include Oriel Davies and Aberystwyth Arts Centre in Wales, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle and The Barony Centre, West Kilbride. The exhibition marks key anniversaries; 10 years of Outside In and 30 years of Craftspace.

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

Radical Craft combines Outside In’s fourth triennial open art exhibition and Craftspace’s touring exhibitions programme which reflects developments in craft. It will showcase UK creativity by artists who face barriers to the art world for reasons including health, disability, social circumstance or isolation, and who have submitted their work through the Outside In website. The works selected through this open call out will be displayed alongside pieces by historically renowned and invited contemporary Outsider and self-taught artists.

Images available on request.

Award

Exhibiting invited artist Marie-Rose Lortet will choose one Award Winner from the selected works to receive a solo show at Pallant House Gallery at a later date. Lortet is often associated with the field of outsider art, and her signature lace objects and architectural constructions have been exhibited widely across Europe and are in the Collection de L'Art Brut in Lausanne, Switzerland, and will this year be shown at the Outsider Art Fair in New York for the first time. Lortet says: "I am proud and grateful to be chosen as the judge. I am excited to look attentively at the artists' creations and what the work reveals about their life. It will be a hard choice without a doubt."

Outside In: www.outsidein.org.uk

Since its inception in 2006, Outside In has provided an increasingly international platform for artists who see themselves as facing barriers to the art world for reasons including health, disability, social circumstance or isolation. The goal of the project is to create a fairer art world which rejects traditional values and institutional judgements about whose work can and should be displayed. The project won the Charity Award for Arts, Culture and Heritage in 2013 and in the past three years has had thirty exhibitions. Currently it supports over 2000 artists. The project is based at Pallant House Gallery, where it was founded.

The triennial open art exhibitions are Outside In's main vehicle. First held in 2007, featuring 100 artists from across Sussex, the project went national in 2012, and has gone on to engage more than 5,000 artists and 270,000 audience members.

Craftspace: www.craftspace.co.uk

Craftspace is a leading craft development organisation. It commissions exceptional, world class contemporary craft and champions makers to take an active role in civil society. It connects creative practice with diverse communities of interest and place through a range of activities and partnerships. These include curating touring exhibitions, producing creative events, action research and public learning and engagement projects.

Pallant House Gallery: www.pallant.org.uk

Pallant House Gallery is a unique combination of an historic Queen Anne townhouse and contemporary extensions, housing one of the best collections of Modern British art in the country, including important works by Peter Blake, Lucian Freud, Eduardo Paolozzi and Graham Sutherland. Widely acclaimed for its innovative temporary exhibitions and exemplary Learning and Community Programme, the Gallery has won numerous awards since re-opening in 2006, including the Gulbenkian Prize; the largest for arts and cultural organisations in the country.

The Radical Craft exhibition has been programmed to run in conjunction with an exhibition looking at John Piper's textile work providing a fitting focus on craft across the temporary exhibition spaces.

Tour Schedule:

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester	12.03.16 - 12.06.16
Oriel Davies Gallery, Powys	25.06.16 – 29.08.16
Beecroft Art Gallery, Southend	10.09.16 – 5.11.16
20-21 Visual Arts Centre, Scunthorpe	19.11.16 – 28.01.17
Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle	11.02.17 – 26.03.17
The Barony Centre, West Kilbride	8.04.17 – 10.06.17
Aberystwyth Arts Centre	24.06.17 – 2.09.17
Walford Mill, Dorset	16.09.17 – 12.11.17

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