

Radical Craft: Alternative Ways of Making

Historical Work

Willem van Genk
Angus McPhee
Judith Scott

Willem van Genk

1927-2005, Belgium



Willem van Genk, Arnhem, photograph Guido Suykens courtesy of Museum Dr Guislain, Ghent

Growing up in Voorburg, Van Genk experienced a difficult childhood affected by mental health and behavioural issues. He started to draw both at home and at school, as a means of escape. On reaching adolescence, he was placed in a boarding school and then in a Christian school for Arts & Crafts, where he took courses in commercial art. A skilled graphic artist, he worked briefly for an advertising agency but unsuited to office work, resigned. In 1958 Van Genk enrolled at the Royal Academy of Fine Art in The Hague. Reluctant to adhere to the syllabus, he was advised to only attend evening classes but nevertheless, was granted a major solo exhibition by the Academy in 1964.

The paintings which he produced at

home comprised complex collages inspired by his travels to the former Soviet Union, Rome, Paris, Madrid, Copenhagen, Cologne and Prague, and also referenced guidebooks and photographs. On account of his passion for trains, buses and train stations, he called himself "King of Stations". Van Genk stopped painting in 1988 and for the rest of his life, turned exclusively to making models of trams and trolleybuses. They were constructed from a variety of recycled materials – buttons, string, cardboard and toothpaste tubes – glued to core forms. Covered in advertising slogans and rarely including passengers, Willem van Genk's vehicles, which so aptly capture the wear and tear of urban transportation, are represented in many museum collections.

Angus McPhee

1916-1997, UK

Angus McPhee was raised in Eochar on South Uist, an island in the Outer Hebrides. In common with other islanders, he was skilled in the traditional craft of creating horses' bridles and rope woven from local grasses. After having a breakdown during the war, McPhee was admitted to the Craig Dunain psychiatric hospital near Inverness in 1946, where diagnosed with schizophrenia, he chose to remain mute for 50 years. Throughout his stay in hospital, McPhee secretly knitted with only his fingers, numerous garments – vests, jackets, hats, shoes, socks – from grasses and other vegetation found in the grounds. These pieces were laced with sheep's wool picked from barbed wire fences. He hid his work beneath bushes and in the undergrowth,

perhaps to protect it from the elements. Consequently McPhee's creations were not fully appreciated until they were discovered in 1977 by visiting art therapist, Joyce Laing. The woven works were accessioned into her developing collection for The Art Extraordinary Trust, now held in Glasgow Museums and Art Gallery.

Laing continues to champion McPhee's work which in addition to being widely exhibited, has been documented in books, a film and a play. Since the originals are now deemed too fragile for loan to touring exhibitions, selected pieces are represented in Radical Craft by a photograph, film, and replicas commissioned from Scottish weaver, Joanne B Kaar.



Above: Angus McPhee, Jumper, photograph courtesy of Angus McPhee Archive, Taigh Chearsabhagh, Museum & Arts Centre

Right: Joanne B Kaar, Grass Boots Replica (after Angus McPhee), photograph Joanne B Kaar

Judith Scott
1943–2005, USA

Judith Scott was born profoundly deaf, mute and was diagnosed with Down's syndrome. She lived with her twin sister, brothers and parents until, at the age of 7 when deemed "uneducable" as a result of her deafness, was sent to the Columbus State Institution. She remained there until 1985, when her twin succeeded in becoming her legal guardian.

Scott was then enrolled in the Creative Growth Arts Center in California. For the first two years she showed no interest in art, until she was introduced to fibre in a class led by artist Sylvia Seventy. Scott then began to spontaneously sculpt with textiles, inventing her own technique of meticulously wrapping found objects in carefully selected lengths of knotted cloth and yarn. Some resembled cocoons and others, body parts but none of the 200 created over a period of 18 years, incorporated the same shape or colour scheme.

Scott typically worked five days a week, developing her forms until they sometimes grew unmanageable in scale. Within some pieces, she inserted seemingly random objects, including an engagement ring, which she gathered from the studio. Their significance, like the decision of when to stop working on a piece, was known only to the artist. The creation of paired objects was perceived to reflect her status as a twin.

Scott's work has been exhibited internationally to great acclaim and is represented in public and private collections worldwide. Ten years on from her death, her popularity continues and her prolific practice was celebrated in a major retrospective at The Brooklyn Museum, New York in 2015.

Top: Judith Scott, Untitled 1990 (cane, bentwood, cotton) and above: Untitled, 1990 (yarn), photographs courtesy of Musgrave Kinley Outsider Art Collection, The Whitworth, The University of Manchester



Cultural Roots

Aradne
Barry Anthony Finan
James Gladwell
Beth Hopkins
Andrew Johnstone
Horace Lindezey
Marie-Rose Lortet
Pinkie Maclure
Rosemary McLeish
Erkki Pekkarinen
Joanna Simpson
Maria Wicko
Xavier White
Terence Wilde

Aradne UK



Aradne, The Gathering, photograph Oana Damir

"I have always loved making things and have a long held passion for art and textiles. As a consequence I have visited many art galleries and museums and have been inspired by other artists' work.

However, inspiration also comes from the fabric itself or the working process and many of my best pieces have developed from just doing and making without any end goal in mind. Something comes to mind, often when I'm walking, and I just go with it. Sometimes they are totally outside the box and don't work, but then, occasionally they do. What I have observed from years of notes and drawings is a repetition of well-loved ideas or images which almost seem to exist within me.

Winning a prize for technical excellence in an embroidery competition judged by Alice Kettle motivated me to continue developing my work. I feel sure that the figures which emerged are an intuitive response to my unconventional childhood in Africa.

My current work, selected for Radical Craft, is more three dimensional. It's a process that has been in my mind for a while but only developed when I just let myself go with the flow. I never draw or plan out what I'm going to make. I just sit at the machine and choose some thread and stitch. Sometimes it's a struggle but at other times it works out perfectly."

Barry Anthony Finan UK

Barry has a particular passion for writing: he spends hours and hours writing about many subjects, including getting an acting job on TV, trick photography, telegraph poles and traffic lights. He likes to collect newspapers as well as food packaging, and other people's drawings and notes found lying around the studio. Sometimes he likes to talk about memories from his childhood and from films or TV programmes, like Oliver Twist or Coronation Street.

The majority of his work, whether ceramic, textile, woodwork or mixed media, either uses his text as a starting point – when he draws things he has written about – or incorporates text. In 'TELLEGRAPGHPOOLLESSERRSS' for example, Barry uses his writing on some of the above subjects, as a backdrop to wire

drawings which illustrate some of the things he likes to talk about.

All of Barry's artwork is created in his Venture Arts workshops where assistance is available to help him gain skills in different techniques and in the case of 'TELLEGRAPGHPOOLLESSERRSS', he requested guidance on how to best work with the sheet of metal and wire which he had decided to use. In contrast, the pages and pages of writing that he brings to his art tutors are produced at home. Barry says he has always loved writing, and his writing is an art in itself. In this, he is completely self-taught, and the subjects on which he focuses, are all his own interests and obsessions.

Artist's statement provided with support from Katherine Long, Studio Manager, Venture Arts



Barry Anthony Finan, Tellegrrapghpoollesserrss, photograph courtesy of Venture Arts

James Gladwell

UK



James Gladwell, Foreign Birds, photograph Oana Damir

"My passion is all about my needlework. I get my inspiration from my dreams; like the island with birds, and the mermaid. I always find my own materials and cloths. I go to the scrap box, or order threads from the Art Barn. I started sewing at the training centre in Ongar, Essex when I was 13. I'm now 63. I used to get mats for the sideboard and draw on them then needlework them. I'd decorate them with flowers, hot pokers, pansies and dahlias. My granddad used to grow them, and shove rusty nails in the roots to change colours. Working in the Art Barn has given me more colours and more skill. I'm self-taught but staff showed me how to crochet and cast off in knitting."

Born into the Romany gypsy community, James was taught needlework by his grandmother when he was 7 years old.

Highly independent, he works a lot from the quiet of his own flat, and spends hours stitching intricate designs onto found materials. He draws whatever interests him, from a memory of a skiing trip in Switzerland to a TV programme about Cleopatra. Stitching is something that is portable, relaxing and satisfies his need to create. James has recently started silk screen printing: "I'm currently making drawings of mushrooms which I picked near the gas site. These are drawings of ones in my mind and real ones. I draw on the silk screen, colour them in with felt pens then print onto cloth and paper. Then I'm going to stitch into the cloth."

Artist's statement provided with support from Sarah Ballard, Curator, Barrington Farm

Beth Hopkins

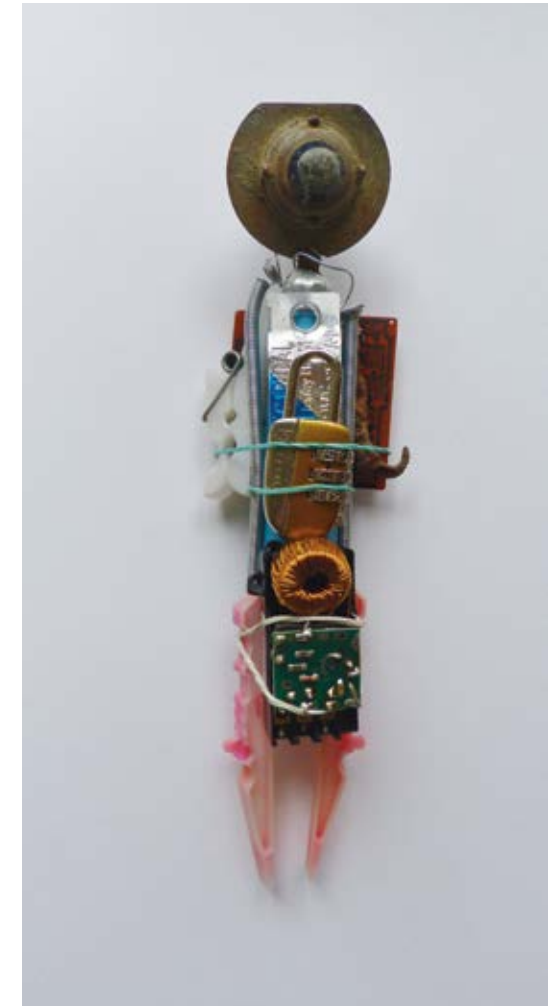
UK

"My work is a response to items I find washed up by the Thames at Vauxhall and Blackfriars Bridge. Among other things I have found shards of glass and pottery, pieces of metal, car break lights, horse's teeth, stones and bones. To me, the river is the subconscious of London, receiving decades of unwanted or lost things and washing them up with the tides, before washing them away again. Each piece is a mystery, you never know what it was part of, who owned it or why was it thrown into the Thames. If a piece of bone; what kind of animal did it belong to? How did it end up in the water? I find fragments far more interesting than a whole, as each has the potential to have been part of anything, with any history.

My work is about using fragments to create a new whole and my totems and figures draw on the meaning of the river itself and all the lost things rolling in its tides. I have felt fragmented at times and creating new whole objects is a way to pull those fragments together.

I continue to use everything I find, in mosaics, mobiles and talismans; some of which are later returned to the river.

My confidence as an artist was nurtured through 'Art Matters'; a mental health recovery service in Surrey. Being in a studio environment and around other makers, taught me how to use creativity to manage my bipolar. I experimented with printmaking and textiles, gained my Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at West Dean College and then returned to 'Art Matters' as Artist in Residence in 2015."



Beth Hopkins, Untitled, photograph Beth Hopkins

Andrew Johnstone

UK



Andrew Johnstone, Bus, Cup, Bowling, photograph courtesy of Venture Arts

Andrew has many interests including transport, animals, music, dancing and going out for meals, especially ribs and chips and is encouraged to create artwork based on the things he likes best.

Andrew's passion for drawing was nurtured from a very young age by all of his family and especially, his mum Joan who spotted his talent in drawings made of puppets when he was eight. Drawing was also very important as it was a means by which his family communicated with Andrew; involving them drawing people or places that they were going to visit etc. Andrew was taught to sew by his mum when he was only three or four years old. He began with a cross stitch piece of Thomas the Tank Engine and then continued to make more of his favourite characters.

At Venture Arts, Andrew is encouraged to create artwork which is personal to him. His first piece 'Southport Open Top Tours' was based on a trip to Southport to see his friend Laura. He made a drawing from a photograph and was then taught how to embellish it with a collage of magazine paper and stitch. Once introduced to a technique, Andrew immediately employs it with confidence.

'Ribs and Chips Hut', also in the exhibition, is a response to a set project where a group of artists created a "material world" out of fabric. The image was drawn, coloured and then transferred onto fabric before embroidered details were added. Andrew is currently working on stitched drawings of his pet fish continuing with this technique.

Artist's statement provided with support from Katherine Long, Studio Manager, Venture Arts

Horace Lindezey

UK

"I do artwork to keep me busy and to be occupied."

Horace has many interests, a fantastic memory and is a very inquisitive; all of which inspire his creativity. He is an avid collector of many things including audio and video cassette tapes, ties (especially Christmas ones) and suits to wear on special occasions.

Family is a huge influence and he often talks about childhood memories and in particular, going to "special occasional days" such as weddings, funerals or parties with his mum or his sister. He especially likes dressing up for these occasions and his collection of suits was the inspiration behind 'The Seven Suits'.

The piece was made in a wire drawing workshop at Venture Arts. The wire reminded Horace of coat hangers and so the discussion turned to clothes. He had often spoken about his suits and now wrote down the date and where a particular family member had bought the suit and which specific occasion it was for. He drew each suit and was taught how to recreate these drawings in wire so that their shadows would cast on the surface of metal plates. Horace paid careful attention to the different colour, texture and shape of each suit.

Horace uses many different media and his skills respond to both workshops and the materials themselves. As a child, he watched his mother, a seamstress, making clothes. He recalls that he was not allowed to touch the needles but when given a needle and thread at school, he knew exactly what to do with them. Horace sewed when he first attended Venture Arts workshops over 25 years ago and has since developed his sewing skills by hand and machine.

Artist's statement provided with support from Katherine Long, Studio Manager, Venture Arts



Horace Lindezey, The Seven Suits, Green Suit, photograph courtesy of Venture Arts

Marie-Rose Lortet

France



Marie-Rose Lortet, La Tatouée, photograph Clovis Prevost

"I am inspired by my childhood and the landscape of Alsace where I grew up. The curved contours of many of the houses' roofs, which I viewed from my window, made me think of traditional Russian houses. From 1978 they inspired me to make my own round houses: creating works in space from lace stiffened with fibre resin or sugar.

Whenever anything becomes too easy, I challenge myself with bigger projects and am often surprised by the finished products which sometimes feel like miraculous feats! Hence, over time, architectural pieces have become larger, more complex and more rigid.

I learned to knit as a child but soon discarded its practical uses to focus instead on flexible images which could follow me wherever I went. I also design costume. I gained a first class diploma in couture and tailoring but frustrated by the rule

that jackets should have armholes, took the first step in following my own path by creating sweaters or tail suits for angels with wings.

I never throw anything away, from leaves to chocolate wrappers, since everything can be used in knitting, embroidery and collage to build new discoveries, discussions and inventions."

In 1969, Marie-Rose Lortet's work was brought to the attention of Jean Dubuffet and acquired for his Art Brut Collection; the first of many public collections to hold her work. She regularly revisits pieces begun up to twenty years ago and exhibits a broad range of work abroad; including highly coloured, embroidered and woven panels and three dimensional thread constructions which like cathedrals, appear to defy time and space.

Pinkie Maclure

UK

"I drew obsessively from an early age, but bad experiences with a sexist, bullying art teacher led me to give up completely in my teens. I didn't take art up again until I was nearly forty, when I fell into a job helping a friend who was making and restoring architectural stained glass windows.

My interest grew when I discovered early painted stained glass, especially the small, eccentric pieces hidden in the far reaches of cathedrals. These inspired me to experiment with painting on glass and I slowly rediscovered my childhood artist. I taught myself to paint, fire, sandblast and engrave, using books, the internet

and experimentation. I find that the slow, painstaking process gives me time to escape the present, to confront my fears and to lay painful memories to rest, creating beauty and humour with a deeper layer of meaning.

In 2011, I was selected by NHS Lothian to make a window for their new sexual health clinic. This was the first large-scale, entirely personal panel I had made and it led to me being shortlisted for two awards; Jerwood Makers and the Fergusson Arts Prize. Encouraged, I began to work on more personal, highly-detailed panels, which take several weeks or months to make. In February 2016 I had my first solo exhibition."



Pinkie Maclure, Landfill Tantrum, photograph Pinkie Maclure

Rosemary McLeish

UK



Rosemary McLeish, *What I Do When I Don't Do The Ironing*, photograph Rosemary McLeish

"I was brought up in the fifties with five brothers, not expected to do anything worthwhile because I was female. I've been a feminist since I was four. My creativity lay dormant until, aged forty, I started to draw and paint. I chose not to go to art school because my creativity disappears at any hint of being told what to do. After fifteen years struggling on my own, I joined a group of outsider artists in Edinburgh (Artesian) and discovered a new, non-judgemental world of art without rules, middle-men or thoughts of posterity. I learned to trust my intuitive response to materials and experimentation, and started collecting second-hand objects to transform into art. Since then I have made miniatures and other sewn and crafted works, following wherever my fancy takes me.

My art is rooted in my childhood. As a very young child, I made friends with local

old ladies who introduced me to miniatures, dolls' houses, fine china, and taught me embroidery, tatting, tapestry work, knitting and crochet. My mother was a stay-at-home housewife, and she taught me many other traditional women's crafts. Ironing was one of the many household tasks I shared with her, so when I found the child-sized ironing board in a market I was angry that it had been considered an appropriate toy for a girl.

Making these miniature assemblages has shown me how strongly my work is informed by a culture which is disappearing. While I celebrate it equally with traditional crafts, I don't wish to pursue the perfectionism associated with them or with fine art. I like to do my own thing, to mix metaphors and have the freedom to play. I enjoy the challenge of every new piece."

Erkki Pekkarinen

Finland



Top: Erkki Pekkarinen, *Walter & Rose*, photograph Celine McIlmunn

Bottom: Erkki Pekkarinen, *Birch Bark Suit*, photograph Veli Granö

"Everyone is attracted to something. I became interested in birch bark as a child and still love working with it, especially in winter. When there was plenty of birch bark in the wood, I made large objects, but now that it is harder to find, I make smaller pieces. The birch bark can only be gathered in the summer: it's a short season, so I must always find time for it.

I first discovered drawings of birch bark shoes in a school book and set myself the task of making something similar. Several attempts with strips of paper proved unsuccessful until I used seven strips instead of six. That was how my interest began.

I developed my own technique of weaving, bending and plaiting and my adaptation of traditional methods has been documented on film. Sometimes when I work on older models, I remember how my technique developed, almost by accident. It is very helpful having a cottage in which to house my work; having it on display makes it easier to decide what to do next.

My ideas come suddenly. The first version is always the slowest, because I have to think about the technique and realize it. But I am not in a hurry. I am currently making a duck for the first time but since it's still in my imagination, I don't yet know what kind of duck it will be.

Walter and Rose have been displayed in the Kaustinen Folk Art Centre since their completion in 2010 but this is my first exhibition in Britain."

Joanna Simpson

UK



Joanna Simpson, Good Luck Gum Nut Folk, photograph Oana Damir

"I am inspired by materials that are readily available to me and my work is always created in response to the environment, my love for my own four children and my compassion for the 'lost' children of 'The Stolen Generations'.

I have developed my technique intuitively and I benefit from the therapeutic value of being able to work within the arts and crafts field.

The Good Luck Gum Nut Folk are made from the seed pods of eucalyptus trees and were gathered whilst I lived in Sydney, New South Wales prior to the year 2000. I cluster them together in different groups, like little families and communities.

Since returning to UK I have worked in ceramic at college; studied glass at University and tried painting and drawing, but I have always struggled to be accepted into the mainstream art world. Now I am

making soft sculptures, with wool, cashmere and silk. I mainly use natural materials and my working process involves knitting and sculpting people from re-cycled, pre-loved knitwear, garments and textiles.

It seems to me that my work is always the same; filled with my love of arts and craft and of people, especially my children. I am very lucky and I believe that both my family and my work is safe in God's hands.

The Good Luck Gum Nut Folk work was shared and exhibited extensively in Australia and has since been shown and shared in the UK. I created a ladder covered in the Good Luck Gum Nut Folk and this was selected for the Grosvenor Museum Open Art Exhibition and won the Peoples' Choice Award."

Maria Wicko

UK



Maria Wicko, Bird with Open Wings, photograph Oana Damir

Maria was very inspired by the natural world, especially the variety of birdlife at Barrington Farm. The care home where she lived in rural North Norfolk was situated next to a day centre on a farm and Maria would help collect eggs from the chickens. She enjoyed looking at the birds in the surrounding trees as well as the peacocks that roamed free on-site. Her friend said she used to own a bird as a child.

The Art Barn, where she spent a lot of her time, was fully equipped for most arts disciplines, but it was in the ceramics and kiln area where her talents were discovered, encouraged and developed.

Maria was a self-taught artist and had a completely innate understanding of clay. She loved to work in the art studio with her friends and created all of her sculptures using her own imagination and skills. She worked mostly with traditional 'coil-pot'

methods to build up large scale bowl or vase structures whilst simultaneously incorporating her vision of a certain bird and adding their distinguishing features using the same coiling technique. The surface of their bodies is covered in organic shapes and rhythmic pattern, and in some cases with illustrations of nature and other creatures bringing the whole composition to life. Apart from being extremely beautiful, sophisticated, well designed and crafted pieces, Maria's animated vessels are an exceptional example of harmony of form, function and aesthetic.

Maria made around twenty of these ceramic pieces before she passed away in 2000, each different and each expressing everything that was joyful to her in life.

Artist's statement provided by Sarah Ballard, Curator, Barrington Farm

Xavier White

UK



Xavier White, Verilic Spires 5, photography courtesy of Bethlem Gallery

"My practice concerns waste, demand, mass, substance, cheating death and my luck of being alive and able to do anything.

I was eighteen and had just discovered an interest in art, when I was involved in a near fatal road accident. I suffered a severe head injury and my recovery took many forms, but creativity; making, being able to do, was vital to me. I have continued to make and exhibit work ever since, and much of my work centres on function, neurology and the workings of the brain.

I spend a lot of time experimenting with ideas and materials. I did a BA in Architectural Glass, but the majority of my technical skills have been honed through experience and practice.

The 'Verrelic Spires', begun in 2011, are conceptually complex. The term refers to Duchamp's 'Large Glass' (1920), and the merging of two words 'verre' and 'malic', symbolises bonding something simultaneously tough and brittle. The multi-faceted surfaces echo our similarly multi-faceted learning processes. The connections between the objects symbolise the connections within the brain.

I am currently working on a performance, based on the spires that are on display in the Bethlem Royal Hospital Chapel that explores the links between the spires and mental health and wellbeing. In addition, I am developing my show 'Cohedia: a Human Campaign' for London South Bank University."

Terence Wilde

UK



Terence Wilde, Embodiments, photograph Anthony Woods-McLean

"Panic, Visceral, Control, Exposed, Sadness, Seeking External Approval, Bound by Shame, Naive, Fragility and Freedom.

These ceramic maquettes represent expressions of something in a tangible and visible way. They represent a new departure for me both in approach and style, taking ideas, experiences and materials from different places and bringing them together with clay as a central and unifying element. Working this way is a return to the spontaneity of the child, playing creatively in the unguarded moment.

My creative motivation changes constantly and is influenced by who I meet and work with. I'm currently on a 'Collaborative Artists' Residency' with a student from Central Saint Martins School of Art, so waiting to see what this brings. Buddhism is a massive influence

on how I use art to reflect who I am. I make art because it's what I've always loved doing. I try not to think too much about influences, if I un-think it lets more of them in.

My first efforts in pottery were made when I was asked to help run a group. Thrown in at the deep end, I had to develop a very quick relationship with clay. It gives me room for experimentation and freedom. It holds mistakes and changes. Having no training in ceramics is an enjoyable alternative to my much practised drawing and painting.

I'm now working on embroideries as reciprocals for storytelling. Stitching poetry, extracts from diaries, song lyrics and illustrations onto canvas. These will form habitats on which to display my embodiment ceramics. I'm interested in fusing the handmade with recycled and craft embellishments."

Intuitive Textiles

Linda Bell
Nnena Kalu
Lasmin Salmon
Michael Smith
Atsushi Yoshimoto

Linda Bell
UK

Linda has a passion for materials and a clear need to play, then construct with them. She responds to materials she finds appealing, often focusing on their tactile quality and how the material can move and be shaped. Linda will play extensively with a range of materials before eventually settling on a process and producing a final work. Her work has an incredibly tactile quality, there is always a strong desire to touch, to squeeze, pull and spin her created objects. Often the intricate creations are

put through rather rigorous moments of playful exploration by Linda, which can occasionally lead to their demise.

Linda has been attending ActionSpace's South London Studio since 1999. Over the years, with support from artist facilitators, she has developed her own intuitive relationships with both materials and processes.

Linda is currently creating a large series of small looped foam and wire sculptures which she is attaching to two large frames. The foam shapes are the same form repeated over and over again. The work is similar to the piece shown in Radical Craft, in that it is a collection of smaller sculptures brought together to make a whole work. However, rather than a range of varied shapes, forms and materials the newer bodies of work comprise the repetition of just one single shape, made from the same material.

Linda is profoundly deaf and non-verbal. She enjoys using her artwork to communicate and collaborate with others; exploring the relationship between herself, her work and the collaborator. Her practice provides a unique platform for play and interaction giving it a focused purpose and a means for engagement with others.

Artist's statement provided by Charlotte Hollinshead, Artist Facilitator, ActionSpace



Linda Bell, Hanging Frame 1, photograph Charlotte Hollinshead

Nnena Kalu

UK



Nnena Kalu, Mummified Sculptures, photograph Charlotte Hollinshead

Nnena is driven by an instinctive and essential urge to layer, to repeat marks and lines, whether 2D or 3D, and to bind materials together. She works in an obsessive and determined way to develop a range of work underlined by systematic layering and wrapping. In her sculptural work Nnena indulges her interest in layering, incorporating any materials and/or objects that come to hand. Nnena uses a wide range of materials but for binding, prefers those with a continuous line such as tape, string and wool. Whilst wrapping, Nnena responds to both the sounds created and the rhythm of the process until her whole experience of creating appears fully immersive.

Nnena has attended ActionSpace's South London studio since 1999. Here, supported by artist facilitators, she has developed her practice in accordance with her need to wrap, layer and bind. Nnena's work has

developed gradually; from small, roughly constructed forms to large, complex pieces. Her work is constantly evolving: individual pieces are never really finished but continue to change, to grow, merge or come apart again. Over the last five years she has created a vast number of 3D pieces of varying sizes; from collections of small pods and cocoons to large organic shapes that are as large as, and larger than, herself.

Nnena's practice is an extremely important part of her life, led more by an urge to create than as a form of communication as such. The intensity of the work and the passion for the process is evident, allowing viewers their own interpretation.

Artist's statement provided by Charlotte Hollinshead, Artist Facilitator, ActionSpace

Lasmin Salmon

UK



Lasmin Salmon, Rug, photograph Charlotte Hollinshead

Lasmin has a passion for fabrics and fibres. She will play with materials, bending and twisting fabrics until the right shape is made. She then recreates this shape in many varied forms. Lasmin meticulously constructs each piece with carefully selected materials, pulling them through her fingers to ensure they are the right texture, pattern or weight before embarking on a new piece. Then with absolute precision, she sews the materials together to create the desired shape. She takes great pride in the final piece which she will then photograph; close up, to capture detail.

Lasmin loves circular forms which reappear in all areas of her practice: drawing, painting, textiles and sculptures. The shape is explored over and over again with a specific focus on the edging which will be lovingly worked over.

When Lasmin joined ActionSpace's

South London Studio in 2006, she was skilled in knitting and sewing. Since then, supported by artist facilitators, she has expanded her practice and developed her own unique style. She combines her knowledge of materials and craft based processes with her intuitive sense to experiment with new ideas. She will frequently explore a range of selected materials until settling upon a shape and process which will bring her ideas to fruition.

Lasmin loves making but is not necessarily using her work as a way of communicating with the outside world. However, the opportunity to work alongside textile artist Celia Pym on an installation for the Royal Festival Hall in 2015 enabled both of them to explore, exchange and share ideas through non-verbal connections and processes.

Artist's statement provided by Charlotte Hollinshead, Artist Facilitator, ActionSpace

Michael Smith

UK

Michael is an energetic and prolific artist, with a current passion for textiles. He is the master of creating something from nothing, and so everything in the studio is at risk of transformation. Canvases are over-painted; waste bins are wrapped in cardboard and turned into sculptures, fruit boxes are perforated with nails and staples. His natural talent and eye for composition can be applied to most creative disciplines.

Michael is very interested in clothing. His recent series of reconstructed denim jeans originally sprang from a desire to create wearable garments. After making a pair for himself, he revisited the pile of donated denim jeans but this time, altered his approach. By cutting through the leg seams, then re-stitching with wool and fixing pieces together with masking tape, Michael has developed a collection of patchwork and tightly wrapped trouser-like sculptures that are impossible to wear, yet retain his enjoyment of the creative process.

Michael does not communicate verbally, and so his art is his main outlet for creative expression. It is used to relay ideas and interests, and convey his strength and abilities in life.

He is totally self-taught, with a healthy disregard for most other artists. He is happy to visit galleries and museums, but it is mainly his unfailing presence in the Art Barn, at Barrington Farm and unstoppable energy that have fuelled his artistic development.

Michael continues to work with fabric and masking tape and is now cutting the jeans fully in half to create single legs or tubes that are then wrapped and covered in layers of white tape, ready to be hung from the beams.

Artist's statement provided by Sarah Ballard, Curator, Barrington Farm



Michael Smith, Jeans II, photograph Oana Damir

Atsushi Yoshimoto

Japan

Atsushi does not set out to create or make particular things. He works instinctively, with an approach to materials which, appears completely intuitive. He is obsessed by the pleasure derived from the pursuit of an impulse and its material realisation. He is a self-taught artist who loves and responds to textiles.

Entering the studio at the Nui Project, Atsushi calmly sets up his workspace, straightening all of his threads which sometimes, five metres long may have become knotted or tangled. Atsushi prefers thin and glossy cloth like chiffon, georgette or organza. For seven or eight years he has been cutting numerous rectangular pieces of cloth, ranging in scale from 3 x 3cm to 8 x 8cm, which are then stitched repeatedly around their edges. He also spends time rolling lengths of thread into tiny, tight balls which are then clustered onto the surface of his fabric and sewn in place.

Atsushi's addiction to textiles extends into his private life and he spends a lot of time in his room pulling out fibres from his towels, socks and bed sheets, or tearing fur balls from his sweaters. These threads are then twisted and lined up neatly on his desk. This is very much an important part of his life which goes far beyond the creation of art.

The pieces shown in Radical Craft are the first of the artist's work to be shown in the UK.

Artist's statement provided by Sayaka Enomoto, Chief of the Design Office, Shobu Gakuen



Atsushi Yoshimoto, Untitled, photograph Shin Fukumori

Radical Missions

Kate Bradbury
Sue Burbidge
Nek Chand Saini
Dalton M Ghetti
Roland Kappel
Julia Krause-Harder
Pradeep Kumar
Shinichi Sawada
Ian Sherman
Pascal Tassini
Mr. X

Kate Bradbury
UK

"When I wake up in the morning it's like getting dressed. I pick up my power drill and hacksaw and with my hands still inky from late night scribbles, I set the house singing and shaking. One day I would like to give up my job making sandwiches and spend every waking hour with a hammer, pen or ukulele in my hand.

The motivation for my creative endeavours can come from a variety of sources. I am particularly drawn to found objects, retrieved from whichever environment I find myself in. Living in North London provides me with an endless source of discarded industrial and household waste. Whilst on journeys to the coast or countryside, I am able to gather from the rich thickets of natural deposits.

My work goes through phases, sometimes focusing on figures and characters and sometimes concentrating on more abstract forms.

'Railroad Jim' is one of twenty suitcase characters I made to envisage a gathering of diverse travellers, with their life stories and vocations embodied in their holdall torsos. 'Railroad Jim' is a composite character, based on characters met on my own travels, and influenced by the music and biography of folk singer Woody Guthrie.

I have no formal art or craft training, but through many years of trial and error, experimentation and observing the practices and achievements of others, I have been able to construct work which I have intuitively conceived.

I am currently making work that continues to employ found materials, although a lack of space means that the size of the creations is generally smaller than before. I am experimenting more with shapes, patterns and repetition and welcome the challenge of learning new methods and adapting different media."



Kate Bradbury, Railroad Jim,
photograph Shared Ground Photography

Sue Burbidge

UK

Sweet Chestnut; barbed wire incursion.
Handmade paper – Monks Orchard
stone, clay.

Interior – Holm Oak, Birch, Apple, Horse
Chestnut, moss, Lime Burr, Red Cherry,
Beech, Holly, badger fur, Cherry, Sycamore.

“All materials used within the cabinet were
gathered from the immediate surroundings
of a 150 year old Sweet Chestnut grown next
to Monks Orchard House, now the grounds
of The Bethlem Royal Hospital.

The word Xylotheque; from the Greek
xylon for ‘wood’ and ‘theque’ meaning
‘repository’ means a wood collection.
Such as a library is more than a collection
of books, a xylotheque is more than a
collection of wood.

It’s not clear how it started but I learnt
how to do things the old fashioned way,
by looking it up in a book. The wood has a
way of letting you know what or how it might
become, the best way to learn is by working
with it; slowly. It takes time. A board of wood
one inch thick requires a year to dry.

Wood used to be acquired from a sawmill,
already dissected, dissociated from itself;
from its context. Now it comes almost
entirely from the grounds of the Bethlem
Hospital, the felled and fallen trees, still in
the round. From this has grown The Bethlem
Wood Library - though this is a narrowing of
place, it is a broadening of scope – archives,
documentation, artefacts, with various
physical manifestations. It draws on the
undiscovered country of the nearby – both
dry and green wood, bark, lichen, charcoal
making, photography, wild raspberry
cordial, wood chippings, print making,



Sue Burbidge, Bethlem Xylotheque: VOLUME II Castanea
Sativa (Ferrum), photograph courtesy of The Bethlem Gallery

paper making, turning. Things are no longer
made in isolation from one another; they
have a frame of reference, a context.

The use of this material on the Bethlem
site acknowledges the old asylum system
where patients would work in the grounds.”

“The trees themselves are dense with
time. They contain detailed records of
their past etched in the pattern of their
branching and the texture of their wood.
Wood is an accumulating memory bank...
its experiences are engrained in it.”
Richard Mabey, Beechcombings.

Nek Chand Saini

India

Nek Chand Saini was employed as a road
inspector for the Public Works Department
in Chandigarh and was in charge of the
city’s rubbish dumps. However, his spare time
was dedicated to the creation of his own
vision of the divine kingdom of Sukrani. Since
much of the old town of Chandigarh and its
surrounding villages had been demolished
to make way for the construction of a new
city designed by Le Corbusier, there was
an abundance of rubble which provided
Chand Saini with all the raw materials he
required. His chosen site was a gorge beside
Lake Sukhana, which surrounded by forests,
ensured that his work remained hidden from
the authorities for 18 years.

By the time Chand Saini’s project
was revealed in 1975, it spread across
12 acres and comprised interlinked
courtyards filled with hundreds of concrete
sculptures of dancers, musicians and
animals covered in pottery, broken glass,
bangles, mosaic and other salvaged
materials. With the support of the public,
the park was designated a public place in
1978 and Chand Saini was awarded
the post of Sub-Divisional Engineer, Rock
Garden of Chandigarh, along with
50 labourers. Officially hailed as one of
the wonders of the modern world, it now
includes buildings, arcades, gorges and
waterfalls covering 25 acres and is visited
by over 5000 visitors per day.

Chand Saini was awarded the Padma
Shri by the Indian Government in 1984 and
his artwork is represented in public and
private collections worldwide. He passed
away in 2015.



Top: Nek Chand Saini, The Rock Garden
of Chandigarh, photograph Simon Martin,
Pallant House Gallery

Bottom: Nek Chand Saini, Cloth Figure II,
photograph Oana Damir

Dalton Ghetti

USA



Dalton M Ghetti, Boot (above left) and Giraffe (above right),
photographs Sloan Howard

“Small is Beautiful”

Dalton regards his practice as a form of meditation. He derives great pleasure from self-imposed challenges to carve miniature figurative forms in the lead tips of the pencils used in his carpentry and furniture making. His aim is to create the smallest possible carvings which can be seen with the naked eye.

His interest in tiny things began with a boyhood fascination for insect life as he was growing up in Brazil. Dalton moved to the US in 1985 and always keen on DIY, gained an Associate’s degree in Architecture from New Community Technical College, Connecticut. A self-taught sculptor, he

honed his carving skills on tree trunks, stone, wax and broom handles and gradually, influenced by the gaining momentum of nano-technology, began working on an ever diminishing scale. Most of his carvings are made with a sewing needle or v-shaped, triangular metal blade and because of the intensity of the work; he only sculpts for a maximum of two hours each day. Each piece can take up to a year to complete.

Dalton has never sold his work. Instead, by exhibiting his sculptures of ‘incredible inventions’ used in everyday life; he encourages us to spare the time for a closer examination of those often overlooked, commonplace objects.

Roland Kappel

Germany

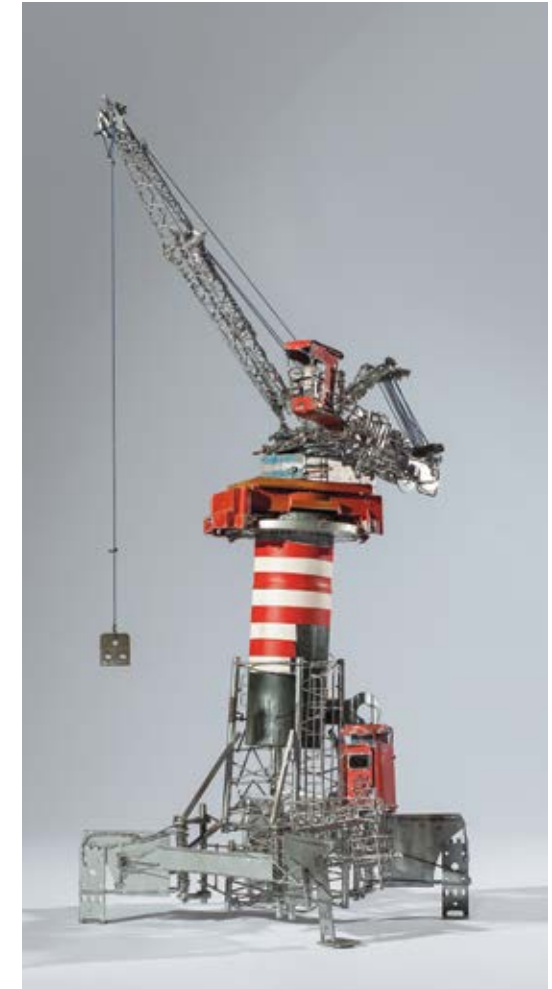
“I actually enjoy the work. A lot of questions are asked, and I have an answer to the questions. It is important not to forget about old machinery and traffic signs.”

Roland began making constructions from scrap metal at an early age and having a flair for art, completed a painter’s apprenticeship. His true passion is machinery used in the construction industry – diggers, cranes, bulldozers – and he is constantly visiting building sites for inspiration. Roland is self-taught and has developed his craft through years of practice in design and making. To create his models, Roland employs a specific range of materials: “spray paints in red, blue, silver, and left-overs, things I have found – wire, metal, wood, components from computer boards, old radios – and CD players; they have a disc with ball bearings, and I need those things for my excavators and cranes. And there is also a moving rail inside which works like a lift. Whenever I see something new, on a building site or out and about somewhere, then I think about how I can use it to build with. Sometimes it comes from my imagination.”

These materials are then fixed together with adhesives and a special spot-welding technique which he developed in the Atelier 5 workshop in Mariaberg in the 1980s.

Each piece with its painted label: ‘RK Building Mission’, demonstrates the artist’s fine attention to detail and testifies his keen skills in design and engineering.

Roland is currently building a construction site at the studio involving buildings, machines and complex designs for a crane, so that it can be lowered for transportation.



Roland Kappel, WOLFF, photograph Ben Wiesenfarth

Julia Krause-Harder

Germany



Julia Krause-Harder, Stegosaurus, photograph courtesy of Atelier Goldstein

Julia is obsessed with dinosaurs and has made it her life's mission to create 3D models of every known species. Inspired by reproductions in museums, she is gradually building her collection and often revisits favourites such as the Stegosaurus. Julia's work ranges in scale, from just 34cm in length to life size constructions over 4 metres long and 3 metres high, and her materials are equally diverse: corks, audio cassette tape and cases, clothes, textiles and even toy dinosaurs.

Julia spent three years training to be a tailor and initially, employed her skills in pattern cutting and machine and hand

sewing to create "pet dinosaurs" from clothes stuffed with cotton. In 2005 she joined Atelier Goldstein, Frankfurt where, assisted by a sculptor, she began working on both a larger scale and with more demanding materials, such as metal rods and pipes secured together with cable ties, to create skeletal forms.

As a Fellow of La Forge Fragua, Julia spent 3 weeks as Artist in Residence in Cordoba, Spain, which culminated in an ambitious installation of a large-scale suspended dinosaur. She now wants to take her dinosaurs to Russia and Asia. Radical Craft is her first exhibition in the UK.

Pradeep Kumar

India

Pradeep Kumar was born deaf and partially mute in Narwana, a small village in India. His condition did not make him eligible for state benefit, but in recognition of Pradeep's intelligence and determination, his father ensured that he had the same educational opportunities as his peers. After school; Kumar was employed as a clerk at the Punjab National Bank in Narwana.

From an early age, it was also apparent in Pradeep's sketches, paintings and figurative reliefs in tin, that he was highly creative. While bored at school and without any formal training, he began to use a razor blade to carve figures and birds on sticks of chalk. He then moved on to carving on mattocks, before progressing to delicately worked figures and birds, incised

and overpainted on matchsticks. These became the miniature masterpieces for which Pradeep is internationally renowned. Pradeep is currently working on an even smaller and more intricate scale by carving figures into toothpicks.

Pradeep's approach to his practice is very much intuitive and his extraordinary work is his key means of communicating with the outside world.

His work has been displayed and collected internationally and in India. Pradeep has received various awards for his contribution to art and culture, including the Red and White Bravery Award for Courage. This is the first time Pradeep has exhibited in the UK.



Pradeep Kumar, Untitled, photograph Oana Damir

Shinichi Sawada

Japan

Shinichi was introduced to ceramics around 2000 when he started attending a local social welfare facility for people with learning disabilities. He works from a pottery workshop in the mountains two or three days a week during spring and summer. When Shinichi works, he demonstrates such confidence and assuredness that it seems he has already envisioned in his mind how the completed piece will look and an onlooker cannot help but wonder what force or vision propels his creativity.

As a prolific artist, even his larger pieces can be completed within three or four days. The 'thorns', which are delicately applied to each figure have evolved over time. Their shapes and sizes have gone through various phases and were once more pointed and sharper. Their distribution too, has become much denser and more orderly. Shinichi is autistic and hardly communicates. The significance of these thorns therefore remains a mystery.

Shinichi's practice comprises around fifteen different motifs; from what he has been able to tell friends and family, they depict rabbits, dragons, demons, chickens, owls, racoons, frogs, 'Maneki-neko' cats, (a traditional Japanese figurine of a cat with one raised paw), masks and vases. He often revisits themes but each piece is always unique.

Completed pieces are allowed to dry for up to a year before being fired in a traditional wood-fuelled kiln at 1200 degrees Celsius. The process takes three

days. Unglazed, the work is imbued with a distinctive earthy quality. Shinichi's work is constantly evolving. What new and exciting directions he will be taking in the future is known only to him.

**Edited from text provided by Mizue Kobayashi,
Art Director, Tokyo, Japan**



Shinichi Sawada, Untitled 1, photograph Oana Damir

Ian Sherman

UK

Ian has been fixated with making assemblages from an early age and even today, asks himself what as a five year old, he would think of a current piece of work. The earliest piece in his vast collection was made when he was only seven and several remain 'works in progress', despite being started 20 years ago.

Ian is not interested in art world trends nor in the representation of real events, but rather, draws his inspiration from his psychological responses to situations and the desire to create something tangible from his vivid obsessions. Ian describes his approach as being 'old fashioned' and his craft as a vehicle, which ennobles otherwise worthless items that have a special visual interest or some alluring mystery. He does not generally work from sketches or to a definitive plan but instead, has a semblance of an idea for which he sources suitable materials. Alternatively, he might find materials which then inspire a theme.

Ian attended a Foundation course at Portsmouth Art College and went on to study Product Design, where feeling restricted, he felt like a maverick. Although the course

provided technical skills which he employs in his assemblages, he never considered a career in this field and so found another means of earning a living whilst he created his art. Over time, his paintings have attracted collectors but he acknowledges a reluctance to part with assemblages since this would prohibit him from adding to them at a later date.

He is currently working on an assemblage which will serve as a maquette for 'Cosmic Mausoleum': a mausoleum dedicated to his mother, and two paintings inspired from the 'very bleak' to a curious exuberance such as a 'Duck Billed Platitide'.



Ian Sherman, A Comedian, photograph Jacqui Cavalier

Pascal Tassini

Belgium

Pascal's work is about love, a desire to live freely and sharing his ideas with other people.

Pascal began creating art at Créahm.be in Liège in 1996 and has developed his skills through diligent practice and a complete dedication.

His first artworks were made in clay. They were simple oblong shapes in clay into which he made incisions to create an elementary face. This soon developed into a proliferation of horned, hybrid monsters, some over 1.5 metres tall.

In parallel, Pascal has developed 2D work which also features these characters, but sometimes, he covers a whole page with waves. If pages contain two entwined rings, they are marriage proposals; otherwise, they are prescriptions. These 'writings', like a signature of sorts, always appear at the end of one of his 'projects'.

Pascal is also an actor and as 'Dr Tassini', writes prescriptions for medicines and love letters from his 'surgery'. It was the creation of his 'surgery', fabricated from piles of textiles knotted around supports that spurred his serious exploration of textiles and led him to abandon ceramics. He later began to roll, knot and build, highly tactile organisms from strips of cloth, which like his clay models, grew more complex and monumental in scale. He also started to wrap various objects – chairs, stools, coat-hangers – in strips of fabric, before moving on to design jewellery and clothes,

including wedding dresses for the women to whom he had written letters.

Pascal continues to work on his masterpiece: a fabric house with its collections of fabric sculptures, writings, and wedding attire, which constantly evolving, will never be finished. Through his art, Pascal has found a universal language which touches individuals of all ages and cultures.

Artist's statement provided by Gentiane Angeli, Artist Facilitator, Créahm.be, Belgium



Pascal Tassini, Untitled, Muriel Thies, photograph courtesy of Créahm Liège

Mr X

UK



"I have always been interested in motor coaches and I have collected pictures from magazines, books and films as reference material for when I am making. I have learnt by studying other people's work and experimenting on my own. I am now making a 'space truck'. Each time I make a new vehicle I build on the last and make improvements."

Mr X resides in Bethlem Royal Hospital, London where he makes cardboard structures and vehicles. "Each structure is simultaneously a form of escape, a hiding place, a filter, a second skin – an alternative way of inhabiting the institution but also, a reflection and a critique of its spaces and rules. The structure has a specific use – value for the person who made it. Survival in any institution requires a series of recalibrations – moments when you conform and others



Top: Mr X, Mobile Structure, photograph courtesy of The Bethlem Gallery

Bottom: Mr X's Work Place, photograph Josip Lizatovic

when you resist. Making the structure is a response to the question: How do I make this space adapt to me when I am constantly being asked to adapt to it?"

Second quote by Michaela Ross, Bethlem Art Co-ordinator