

SPECTRUM



CONTENTS

Introduction	6–11	Harry Moorcroft	54–59
Nnena Kalu	12–18	Joseph Coyle	54–59
Charlotte Amelia Poe	20–29	Mark Wallinger	60–69
Peter Matthews	30–35	Sharif Persaud	70–73
Elise Broadway	36–43	Paul Noble	74–75
Janice Hughes	44–47	Mary Simpson	77
Dawnne McGeachy	48–52	Biographies	78–81

INTRODUCTION

Intro copy

Designed with great intention and style, this extended catalogue with the air of an art magazine, hopes to remain fluid in stance. It reflects the strange time in which it was conceived. Able to exist happily online, it will also be printed. It is hoped that in some way it can, and will continue to, embody a range of working stages and experiences. How to capture the different states of work still in progress, as well as the completed artwork itself? After all, in and under lockdown, the constant question for artists has been how to hold together all that is virtual, how to gauge a reception without a conventional audience, and how to trust organisers and curators to best represent and show excellent artwork without falling back on false assumptions about role and function?

This publication was born, in part, out of pressing need as the actual exhibition of work by this year's shortlisted artists had to be cancelled. It also aims to reflect the structure and process of the Spectrum Art Award itself. By featuring work from current award winners as well as those from last year, there is a more open, inclusive, atmosphere. Being given

brilliant work by selectors from both years of the award, and inviting generous contributions from artists, writers, journalists, designers as well as curators at organisations and institutions that work with finalists, this inclusive publication starts to celebrate the broad community that has grown up around the Award. The relaxed and unorthodox structure hopes to celebrate the growing community of artists, critics, art historians, designers and journalists.

Selection of the Spectrum Award is Open—which means no name, sex, age, or position is given to selectors. You don't have to state whether you are autistic, either. This open reliance on the quality of work itself, whatever the medium and apparent ambition, creates a situation in which selectors are forced to trust their own sense, and understanding, without any sort of contextual support or anecdotal information. There are as many autisms as there are images — of course, and the work sent in is always varied in every sort of way. Some formal things are definite however, such as this is a sculpture, print, or illustration.

The spectrum of autism fills the sky conceptually in the same way that the roughly coloured rainbow, no longer the province of LGBT, has been bestowed to key workers and the NHS. So, how large is the consideration and consistency, how immense this field, or sky, how many shades of blue are there? Autism, like artistic talent or ambition, can lie unrecognised, however. Understanding is necessary, it is certainly hoped for. You wonder what makes, effects, affects the other. Probably the young artist wanting the relief of a diagnosis knows that this will be only the beginning.

At a later stage, when possible, ambition and understanding might be able to run alongside each other, making sure, however, they do not converge with false senses of purpose and simplistic understanding.

It is difficult to question entrenched definitions of insider and outsider, self and other, audience and innocence, autonomy and communication? These matters cannot and will not be answered, as such, and it is essential to

remember that while art might not give answers it is certainly able to pose questions. SPECTRUM, the charity, spent years wondering how to set up the award, how to find the best work, how to differentiate between works, and how to avoid a simple correlation between art and therapy. This publication hopes, through the artwork and critical writing, to invite others in to consider just that. The democratic assumption that we start at the same space, in the same space, when looking, is being replaced by something just as good.

It is perhaps best to come down, down, from such talk to the actual, or at least to images of actual work by artists.

Nnena Kalu's making of sculpture is sometimes, with certain curators, seen as a process, something which has to be seen. Her performance raises great questions around ideas of process, and therefore performance, with the suggestion that her activity in particular is perhaps more substantial than the result. In fact, Kalu is an amazing composer of image and structure who, with great certainty, knows when

she is finished. Does exposure to Nnena's making enforce ideas of the autistic artist, does it raise the notion of an artist just doing, making, doing, without cease? Nicola Wright, curator at Studio Voltaire, the artist studio complex and important gallery in South London, writes about Nnena's most recent exhibition, a pop-up show in Mayfair organised by Voltaire. Nnena was a finalist in the first manifestation of the award, at Saatchi Gallery, since then she has contributed to many shows, the Glasgow international 2019, for instance. The level of familiarity that has to be attached, at least formally to the making of a work, a painting at least looks like a painting, the monitor frames the moving image....

The moving image piece by Charlotte Amelia Poe, which first brought Charlotte to our attention, betrayed a highly sophisticated understanding of structural film. She obviously spent a great deal of time studying the way Warhol's camera would go up and down a static building. In and out, real and virtual, representing the stages we show here, work in progress through the final works, For this publication, we are have an exceptional piece of writing by Charlotte, who, it has to be added, upon finishing the exhibition at Saatchi, immediately turned around to write *How to be Autistic*, a publication which has already become something of a text book on the subject. We present an essay, and two series of prompts, written for others, but mainly themselves, as a method of holding on to constructive thought—especially at night— in a worrying time.

Peter Matthews, another finalist from the last manifestation of the award, has had a busy time since. We present here a 'basket' of images of his work and the context within which it was made. Peter is a painter who works in situ, in the very place, sound, whirl of season and pressure. He travels, really, across the world in a different life already, often invited by institutions, awards, and galleries to paint either in or at the edge of oceans and seas, by or submerged in converging waters and continents.

Elise Broadway has worked hard in Dallas, Texas through lockdown and now out the other side. Elise was selected for the award for her stuffed sculpture, her extraordinary play between standard, set images on the internet; a family, for instance, the domestic interior and pets. She sets a context within the elongated sculptural pieces which both measure out space between themselves but carries space with them. The work she has made since returning to the US is different. Here she makes paintings and drawings, but the drawings in particular carry a strong historical reference which betray a social sense, a touching need for real political responsibility and leadership and the atmosphere and civic sense. The images are accompanied by an internet Question and Answer session between the artist and myself.

Janice Hughes, one of the five 2020 finalists, pays great attention to detail, to specks and samples and slivers of detritus found on a walk, for instance. She concentrates on how natural elements will also carry their own permanent quality. The artist put elements found, on a walk, or in a family album or cupboard, to great use. She deals with scale, not in order to create any sort of ambiguity of approach, but to have one concentrate in an over sensitive manner, to be drawn

close to memory, moment, texture and ultimately the disturbing levels of interference that the artist experiences. Janice makes film, using simple means, and the film manages to carry that combination of peace and distraction that gives the work such quality.

Ashley Koenigsberg, who helped organise the Award last time, has written a sensitive essay to extend the understanding of Janice's work. It is important that work in the award is seen critically, which means that its life is further interpreted rather than left on its own to exist.

Dawnne MacGeachy, one of last year's finalists, was also a judge this year. Dawnne is an amazing painter who's large, moving images of rushing water carry many layers of mark making and understanding throughout.

She is adamant that the image that finally results, in Dawnne's case a virtuoso sense of rush, swell, force and shift, of water crashing, carries beneath it notation of that movement, the diagrammatic descriptions of force, the mathematical chart of tides, the one of the other languages used to chart the movement of the sea, tide with reference to swell and star and the position of the moon. Science and fact, visual emotion, are there in a build-up of pressure. For this publication, Dawnne is celebrating her continued involvement with the Award by disclosing some of the secrets normally buried within the paintings. A very contemporary 'message in a bottle' is revealed beside each image of her paintings.

Harry Moorcroft has an astonishingly easy, almost natural relation to television. It is as if he inhabits the box, his extensive moving image artwork seems to come from a particularly deep and practical relationship to the medium. The SPECTRUM Award exhibition, which could not be held in May 2020, was to feature Harry's work in the form of a continuously active and changing, multi-channel television set, with a remote control bringing one after another plausible, often funny, contribution by the artist. He is three-dimensionally at ease with everything, from spoof safety warning, through a 'how to make your own 'monster movie to the seminal early piece featuring Mrs Sugar the scary teacher. Harry does it, props, voice over, dressing up friends, talking, and talking more, with a skill that allows the alluded peak of a summit to also remain the corner of a sofa. He takes you there, using animation and props in between. He harnesses the medium to morph between self-conscious construction of self-situated in-between the knowledge of the construction of belief and belief itself.

Joseph Coyle inhabits a whole world that really does, in a way, exist for him in Shropshire. We cannot necessarily see the kinds of creatures he supports, defends, and conjures. He has worked with a range of media, including performance, but has more recently been keen to return to illustration in order to more effectively point out, describe and ultimately protect the Giants that lie under the ground and prop up the range of hills that run, loosely, up and down the border between Wales and England. Coyle is keen at times to enter the place that already enthralls him, whether as a performer, poet, or book designer.

Paul Noble, a selector for this year's award, was struck by the quality of work he saw. With the painter Dawnne MacGeachy, a finalist for the year and judge for this before. Noble, the insistent drawer, obsessive thinker, describes a whole world with such intense and fascinating extrapolation and discussion. The cartoon that Noble has made for this publication carries his mixture of close observation, poetic imagination and perceptive humour.

Mark Wallinger, a selector for the last manifestation of the award, has contributed his lockdown observations in the form of a poem, about looking and looking again, as well as images of an eerie empty central London at the height of lockdown. Living there, venturing out to walk alone, down streets so familiar, Wallinger found himself able to look both up and down without the fear of bumping into anyone. The State Centre became law abidingly austere and deserted, whilst more domestic areas, around the edge, showed some sort of life. The poem is about wondering what it is that you know, as it questions what you recognise and understand, while Wallinger's photographic images capture a sort of slide rule of slipped observation, where spectators, themselves looking askance at the emptiness, morph, embodied and disembodied, as they are already part of the spectacle of suspended life in a usually frantic capital city.

Exhibitions of work by some of SPECTRUM Award artists were put on hold, held up or suspended, during lockdown. In the case of Sharif Persaud, whose exhibition at Autograph in Shoreditch, was suspended after only just the opening, could be seen afterwards through the huge windows of the gallery for months on end. The director of Autograph, Mark Sealy, has written a piece on Sharif's show of huge painted representations of casts of characters in television soap programmes.

This work is not, however, what Sharif, an abundantly talented artist who works in a range of media, was selected for the Spectrum Award. Our judges prefer the solo, mono prints of bodily disquiet and disturbance; his self-portraiture and quick honesty carries a range of repeated personal motifs.

Sacha Craddock

Nnena Kalu: Unfixed Objects

Written by Nicola Wright, Curator (Exhibitions)
at Studio Voltaire

Kalu's installations are physically commanding, testing the sculptural possibilities of her materials. Primarily developing her work through repetitive and durational processes such as binding and wrapping, Kalu makes use of everyday components – adhesive and video tapes, textiles, thread and paper – to amass large-scale forms which explore the interplay of space, colour, line and volume.

Earlier this year, Kalu was commissioned as part of Studio Voltaire elsewhere, a series of offsite commissions with artists who have had long-standing relationship with the gallery. Kalu, who is an artist with ActionSpace, has worked from their studio at Studio Voltaire for over twenty years. During the exhibition, Kalu produced four bold sculptures. Building onto structures fabricated from timber and plastic tubing, Kalu's works became almost architectural, with forms variously freestanding, suspended or intersecting with the building.

Writing about Kalu's commission is inevitably affected by its premature closure: three weeks after the opening preview, and apace with decisions taken by most other UK arts spaces, all activity was suspended in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Though Kalu had already undertaken some thirteen days of install, the longest period she has spent on-site for a single commission, the intention had been for work to continue throughout the entire exhibition.



Nnena Kalu, *Studio Voltaire Elsewhere*, 2020.
Commissioned by Studio Voltaire in partnership with ActionSpace, courtesy of the artist and Studio Voltaire
Credit Francis Ware.



Nnena Kalu, *Studio Voltaire Elsewhere*, 2020.
Commissioned by Studio Voltaire in partnership with ActionSpace, courtesy of the artist and Studio Voltaire
Credit Francis Ware.

The early closure, therefore, was inescapably disappointing, chiefly because of the sense that Kalu's work — always ambitious — had been curtailed, and the sculptures remained 'unfinished'.

However, to consider the works 'unfinished' seems to disregard their inherently time-based character. Instead, I'd like to offer a brief reflection on ideas of process and performance in Kalu's practice—considering her sculptures not as static forms but as temporal, unfixed objects.

Public installation (or performance) has developed into a key aspect of Kalu's practice and augments the experience of viewing her installations. For example, Kalu's process is responsive to the rhythms and sounds produced by her materials being unspooled or wrapped, and while she works, her installations take on an auditory dimension. In past presentations, where Kalu has not been onsite for such a substantial period of the exhibition, sound recordings have been played to stand in place of this aspect for the audience, underlining the presence of the artist and the primacy of process in her work.

Kalu's works expand relationships between performance and object-making: beyond her actual or recorded presence in the gallery, the sculptures themselves can also be viewed as documents of her processes. Her works have distinctly tactile qualities, with the many built-up strata of tape and paper tracing repeated manual actions of binding, weaving and wrapping over time.

Correspondingly, drawing plays an interesting role in reference to Kalu's sculptural practice. Another, ongoing series of works produced both on ordnance survey maps and large pieces of paper mark out

a repeated circular motion, with overlapping lines forming vortex-like spirals of colour. Kalu's drawings offer a kind of blueprint to her three-dimensional works. They translate a sense of the tempo and duration of their construction, building systematic and repetitive actions intuitively towards a whole form. Similarly, within her installations Kalu's long lines of unwound tape, thread and paper are reassembled as a material inscription—a drawing—of her physical movements.

At the exhibition's preview, one of the structures was partially empty, directly pointing to the ongoing nature of the commission: something that was tacitly echoed in the materials used for her commission at Studio Voltaire. The installation began with a substantial (but soon exhausted) mound of 'cocoons' or 'boulders': spheres of material which had been reclaimed from a series of dismantled sculptures, produced during a recent solo exhibition at Humber St Gallery in Hull. This cache of materials was rebound and reshaped, in many places entirely disappearing under layers of added material, to form the foundation of the artist's new works. Following the exhibition's closure, Kalu's sculptures were deconstructed again into smaller pieces which may themselves be reworked as future installations.

Kalu's sculptures—already vigorous and visually energetic—are charged with the potential to continue unfolding and evolving well beyond discrete periods of display. They are as much defined by their durational and performative qualities as they are material properties. It is perhaps more useful then to speak about Kalu's works not as conclusively finite or anchored objects, but in a state of becoming: less unfinished than temporarily paused.



Prompts

by Charlotte Amelia Poe

1. The day after the end of the world
2. An aeroplane lost at sea
3. The happiest birthday
4. The golden hour
5. When people aren't looking
6. Self portrait
7. The loveliest word in the world
8. Everything I can see from here
9. This city is alive
10. Let's not pretend
11. What the fox knows
12. Cosmonaut
13. The first good day
14. Nowhere to be
15. Don't kiss me goodbye
16. Fragile, handle with care
17. Writing backwards
18. Gentle yesterdays
19. Firefly
20. A beach bonfire
21. Watching the sun set
22. Chipped nail polish
23. Cave paintings
24. Things I learnt from my parents
25. Love/hate tattooed on your knuckles
26. Your favourite t-shirt
27. Your least favourite song
28. The meaning of a promise
29. A bird singing
30. How to say 'I love you'
31. Better, now

Charlotte Amelia Poe

is a self-taught artist and winner of the inaugural Spectrum Art Prize for her film *How To Be Autistic*. The film presents the rarely shown point of view of someone living with autism, and formed the basis for her memoir of the same name, published in 2019. Their work challenges narratives of autism - created by neurotypical people - as something to be 'fixed'. Charlotte believes her autism is a fundamental aspect of her identity and art.

Charlotte's intention was to "show the side of autism that I have lived through, the side you don't find in books and on Facebook groups. The title, *How To Be Autistic*, is taken from the idea that constantly, constantly, neurotypical people are writing about us, with an idea of how to fix us." She lives and works in Suffolk.

Hitler was autistic, and other lies the DWP told me

by Charlotte Amelia Poe

There is something uniquely terrifying about the brown envelope dropping through the letter box, the return address that of the DWP. Have they decided that you no longer count as disabled enough? Will they ask for the money back? How are they planning to hurt you, and do you have the strength to fight back once again? It never gets easier, and each envelope opening is met with the same level of nervous trepidation, as you wait to see if your life will be ruined.

Being disabled in the UK during this past decade has been an exercise in repeatedly being assured that you are, indeed, a burden on society, and that you're a scrounger, lazy, that you could get a job, and you just choose not to. According to The National Autistic Society, only 16% of autistic people are in full time work, a statistic that hasn't changed since 2007. Only 32% of autistic people are in any kind of paid work. As Conservative MPs tell us that disabled people should work for less money, or indeed for free, because we, apparently, can't comprehend money, and when the prime minister states on the record that a society with a large gap between high and low IQ is good actually, because some people are more equal than other people, we are faced with the fact that even if we are able to work, we will be facing a monumental, and indeed, unfairly biased against us, task.

I rely on the money I receive from benefits to pay rent, and to buy food. It is far from the life of luxury people imagine. Yes, I sit at home all day, because I suffer severely with agoraphobia, and the risk/reward ratio is not worth the toll it takes on everyone involved to get me out of the house. I have missed out on the best years of my life, a prisoner in my own home. I had been on the waiting list for a CBT assessment with the local mental health trust for three years before they decided there was 'nothing more they could do for me'. I'm now signed off. They gave me the phone number for the crisis line, should I need it. I can't use the phone.

Being told time and time again that you are worthless because you don't add monetary value to an economy that prioritises the rich and a government that on its second day in power wasted no time making it harder for people to be signed off as sick, despite being unfit for work, it all adds up.

We fight every day, but it can be exhausting, and I know my self-esteem has suffered hugely as a result. If I am useless in the eyes of society, maybe I should remove myself from it.

It is no surprise then, that the average life expectancy for autistic people, according to the NHS, is 54 years, compared to a control group that achieved 70. People with 'high-functioning' autism have a suicide rate that is nine times higher than a neurotypical person.

We are dying. We are killing ourselves. We are being forced into corners we cannot escape from.

You begin to wonder if there's a rationale behind all of this, whether the government wants you dead, whether they'd prefer it, rather than having to fund resources and training. Sure, sometimes there's an inquiry, but by and large we slip from this mortal coil without much aplomb. We are easily forgotten, our lives small, our families devastated, our potential unrealised as a result of the systemic failings we have seen throughout our short lives.

We aren't diagnosed. When we are diagnosed, there is no help. When there is help, it is age-gated. We are sent to homes. Employers, despite discrimination laws, easily pass over applications that mention autism.

So, I was to be moved from DLA to PIP. My mum, loyal, brave and so, so strong, phoned the DWP to ask if there was any way I could have a home visit, such was my anxiety. She is my appointee, she speaks where I cannot. She is my words. She fights for me every damn day and always has. She knows the system, and I have seen how it has broken her. We were given a home visit, but not after being told that by requesting a home visit it counted as missing the first meeting, and it was a two-strike system. Apparently the three-strike system had 'been abused', so this had been put into place. Had I been ill on the day my home assessment, I would have had my benefits removed without question or chance of appeal.

On the day of my home assessment, I was terrified. I had read the horror stories online, I had no idea what to expect. My mum spoke calmly, answering questions, and I wondered how her words would be twisted. I sat on the sofa under a blanket, my body shaking, violent tremors that could be seen from across the room.

There is no dignity to this. No subject is off limits. My toilet habits were discussed, my

personal hygiene. I had to be laid bare in order for the DWP to consider me. It was humiliating, and no doubt that is the intention.

When my anxiety got too much, I had to leave the room, unable to stand, my mum pretty much dragged me to my bedroom, my head dizzy, my mouth tasting of bile.

When I was out of the room, the assessor told my mum that Hitler had been autistic.

Apparently, it was the reason he had been so successful, how he'd gotten so many people to follow him.

The idea of autistic people as sociopaths without empathy is not a new idea, but it still hurts to hear it. As far as I can tell, there is no evidence that Hitler was autistic, in fact autistic people were executed and experimented on by the Nazis, and I genuinely cannot think of a reason why, even if he was, you'd bring this up in conversation.

Unless the mask had slipped, and the assessor was letting my mum know exactly how they saw me, as manipulative, without empathy, a sociopath, and possibly with designs on Poland. It's hard to say.

Maybe it was an act of projection. Because the whole episode had been wholly cold and heartless, from the initial letter and its countdown deadline, to the six week wait to find out whether I'd still be able to afford food, to the letter that finally plopped through the door, a collection of fictions about what I could supposedly do, my mum's words twisted just as I'd feared they'd be.

I got the same rate of PIP that I did DLA. The whole exercise had been an exercise in futility, I was just as disabled as I was before, and it had only cost time, money, and dignity.

I will be assessed again in four years' time. I'm already dreading it.

When you pit so many odds against us, making education near impossible to access and fund, making diagnoses so difficult to seek out, with waiting lists stretching on for years, with untrained psychiatrists and psychologists literally Googling autism to see how to treat us the night before (this happened to me), to the job market that demands so much more of us than we can give, to the DWP that requires us to tell them, time and time again, our most intimate secrets, so they can give us a score of how broken we are — all of this leaves us empty, tired, hollowed out.

These things I know: Hitler wasn't autistic. The DWP are not in the business of helping people. And I am not a burden on society. This world is hard enough to live in as it is. The government

is attacking some of the most vulnerable people. And yes, there are people fighting to stop them. But real change can only come from within, in the rooms and corridors of power. So for as long as they continue to ignore us, or actively try to harm us, people will die.

And the blood will be on their hands.

And they will never hear about it, because what's one more dead disabled person to them?

Something needs to change. People must be held accountable for the organised persecution of thousands of people.

This is a national emergency. We are in crisis.

Help us.

Failed by the NHS by Charlotte Amelia Poe

I watched 'Failed By The NHS: Callie's Story' with the same horrified disbelief as I imagine everyone else did. The only difference was, I was watching it with my mum, and the story on the screen was one we were only too familiar.

Callie, an autistic girl suffering with depression, ended her own life after a series of judgement errors by the NHS. The inquiry found that Callie's death could have been prevented, and was caused, in no small part, by the lack of understanding the NHS mental health services have in regards to autism and its co-morbid conditions.

I have been with the NHS since I was eight years old, and I'm thirty one now. I was diagnosed as autistic at twenty one. In the now ten years since then, I have received no meaningful or sustained help to deal with my anxiety, depression or PTSD. Psychiatrists and psychologists would leave without warning and I would be faced with a new person, the understanding being that I could trust this person, this person I'd never met before, with my life story, spilling it out all over again, for what felt like the hundredth time. My NHS medical records are several hundred pages thick, and I have read every single one of them, every mistake, every glaring error, every missed opportunity. It is an encyclopaedia, it is a warning, it could have become an inquest. It is my life, in scrawled handwriting.

I first became familiar with depression as a young teenager, too young to really know what it meant, and too lost in the system to find someone to explain it to me. I just knew that I couldn't picture a future for myself, I knew that one day soon I would die, and then there might perhaps be some kind of respite. In my notes, this is described as an 'adolescent crisis'. I was put on anti-depressants, which amplified my anxiety and did nothing for the depression, except for making me briefly numb to anything at all.

After I left school, and after a failed attempt at college, I became almost entirely housebound, agoraphobia grabbing hold of me and latching onto the PTSD that had developed after several years of traumatic school experiences. I was repeatedly not referred onwards for mental health care because I found it extremely hard to get to appointments, anxious to the point of vomiting. This is disgusting, but it is also true. I want you to know that. Every word of this is true.

My mum fought hard for me, calling everyone she could think of. This was before the internet was as prevalent as it is today, but still she picked up leaflets in waiting rooms and

asked for referrals. It was no use, I was shuffled around like a pawn on a chessboard, and I got lost. I got so lost.

Suicide seemed like the most obvious option. Riding in cars to appointments, I'd wish for an accident where only I would get hurt and killed. I'd wish for some kind of terrible but quick illness that could take me and make me seem not like a coward, but as someone who fought valiantly and lost. I didn't realise that every day I stayed alive, every day that I kept myself alive, and every day that my mum had to take over and keep me alive, was another day I was fighting valiantly.

I am lucky to have my mum. Without her, I wouldn't be here. She has been there when I woke her up at 3am crying because the world seemed too dark to exist in. She has been there every time a psychiatrist has said there was nothing more they could do, but there was a waiting list I could join. She has been there when I won the Spectrum Art Award with a violently worded spoken word poem about my experiences. She has been there when my first book, *How To Be Autistic*, was published.

And I was there when my first nephew was born, and then my niece, and then two more nephews.

Without the help of the NHS, I have had to find my own anchors to this world. But I still have days (and nights) when I think everyone would be much, much happier if I wasn't a part of their lives. I dread the days after Christmas through to February because I know I will fall into a darkness I always worry I'll never escape from. I am alive because of my, and my mum's, sheer bloody-minded stubbornness, because to die would be to let everyone who hurt me (and I include the NHS in this) win.

As I watched 'Failed By The NHS: Callie's Story', I held back tears, and thought about all I'd put my mum through, and how so much of it felt like it was my fault, when really it was the fault of a system far bigger than me. There were people who saw me sitting in front of them with no hope, no dreams, no desires at all, who did nothing. There were people who didn't know me and who hadn't read my file, who prescribed me harsher drugs. There were people who met me for half an hour and made judgements based on what they'd gathered from the stammering wreck I become when I meet a person in authority.

I was officially signed off from the local mental health team's books because there's 'nothing more they can do for me'. I'd been on the waiting list for an assessment, let me stress that, an assessment, for CBT treatment, for over two years.

'High-functioning' autistic people are nine times more likely than the neurotypical population to end their own lives. Our life expectancy is a mere 54 years. Whatever you may read in the papers, we are far more likely to hurt ourselves than anybody else.

Programmes like 'Failed By The NHS: Callie's Story' highlight a very real issue, and it's important to talk to those touched by suicide. But it's also important to talk to those trapped in a system that doesn't really seem designed to help anymore, but rather to shuffle people along. Our voices are rarely heard, and often spoken over. We are dying, and promises are being made, but having lived this for as long as I can remember, I can only say, I've never seen changes. I've never seen it getting better. And every person that dies should be seen as blood on the hands of every person who cuts funding to services, of every person who closes an inpatient hospital ward, of every person who dismisses a mental health case because it looks too difficult to take on.

I am, and it's amazing and strange to call myself this, one of the lucky ones. I survived, against ridiculous odds. But Callie didn't. And neither will thousands of others. So please, listen to our voices, as we scream about how it hurts to be here, and don't talk over us even though it's easy to do so.

There is a crisis in the mental health system. It should be saving lives. Instead, it is being found to be responsible for a young girl's death. And that's just someone you've heard about. How many more of us will go unreported? How many will it take?

Ask yourself, how many lives do you want on your conscience? How much blood on your hands? Will you sleep easy tonight with Callie's death weighing heavily?

Is this what our NHS should be? Or could it be so much more? Could it be better?

Could you, the decision makers, the policy makers, be better?

I ask you to consider it. We're dying.

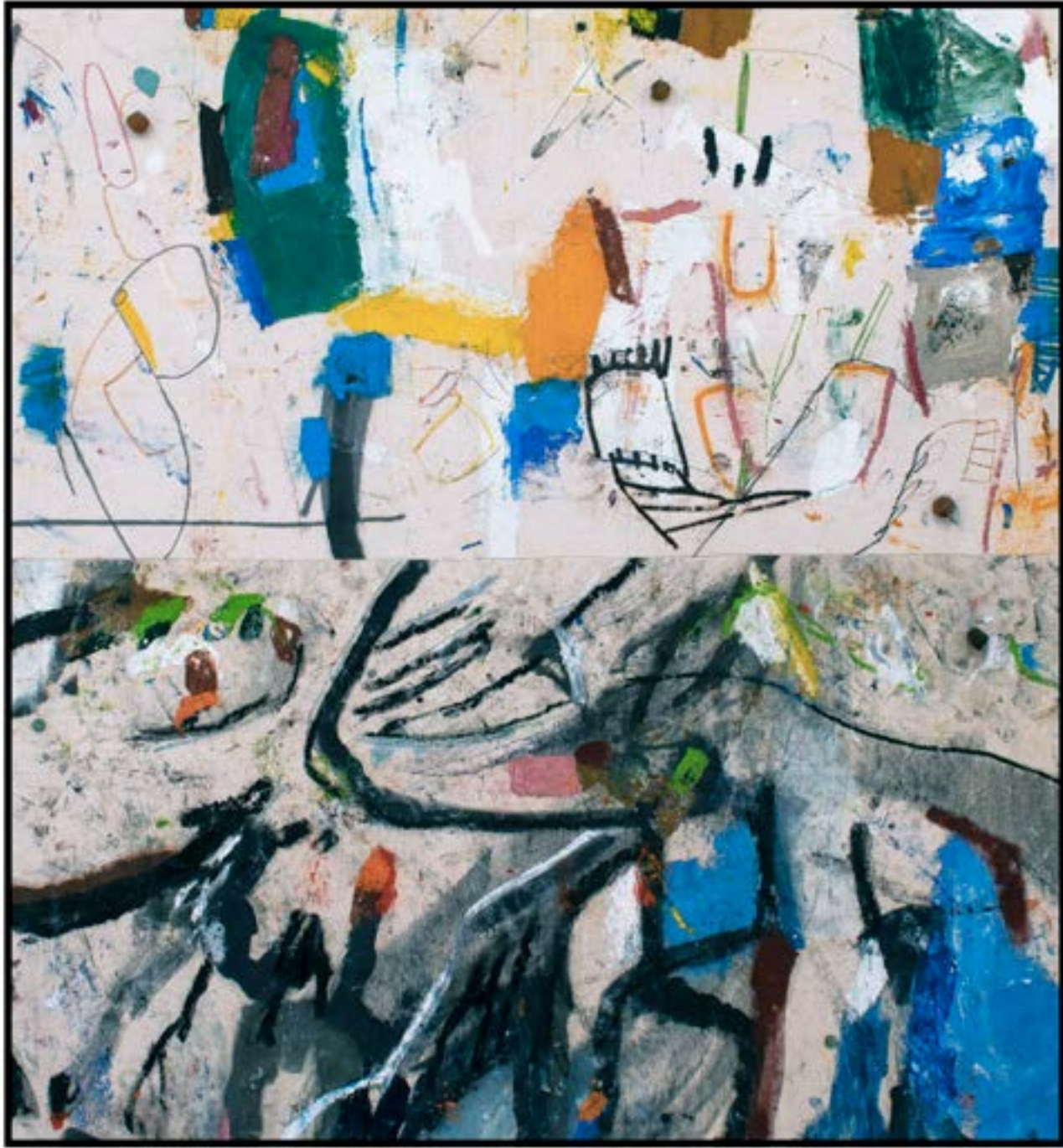


Peter Matthews in the Pacific Ocean, Japan 2019.

Peter Matthews

is a contemporary English artist who explores exploding drawing, painting, video, film and photography. Matthews creates paintings while immersed in water, often floating on, or submerged in, oceans. This timescale of this process can range from several hours to a few days. He works with art materials strapped about his person, and allows the movement of the ocean and its waves to paint his pictures for him. His work has been exhibited in Wirksworth, Turin, Dortmund, Folkestone and Laguna Beach. He has lectured for university audiences, including at the University of California, San Diego, and was the artist-in-residence at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.





Peter Matthews, *Hubiku*, 2018.



Peter Matthews, *Northern Flux*, 2019.



8 Hours In and With the Pacific Ocean (Japan)



12 Hours In and With the Pacific Ocean (Chile)



(Top) Peter Matthews, From the Pacific Coast of California.

(Bottom) Peter Matthews, From the Pacific Coast of Oregon.



Elise Broadway, *Saint*, 2020.

Elise Broadway

completed a BA in Fine Art at the University of Pennsylvania in 2016 and graduated from the Royal College of Art, London with an MA in Fine Art in 2019. Broadway creates free-standing and wall-mounted sculptural works using stuffed, drawn or painted fabrics, often using stock images of people and animals found on the internet. The result is a startling mixture of the sophisticated and ungainly, with the apparently mundane transformed into something special and memorable. Her work has been shown in numerous group exhibition internationally, including; The Codex Project, Works on Paper Gallery, Philadelphia (2020), Surge, East Wing Biennial, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2018) and Studies, of Itoshima, Studio Kura, Itoshima, Japan (2016). She currently lives and works in Dallas, USA.



Elise Broadway, 2020.

"I believe that certain characteristics of ASD have gifted me the ability to communicate complex ideas without having to verbalize; I can focus on building intimate worlds within my work and my art practice allows me to organize visual/physical narratives within a controlled space.

These created worlds allow for an absence or distortion of temporal and spatial linearity yet accumulate a surreal flow; characteristics which challenge social realities but present a mode of communication specific to my own experience."

—Elise Broadway.

"I feel deeply honoured to be selected as a finalist for the Spectrum Art Award, I believe that the prize has and will continue to inspire future paths of my work, whilst also validating the complex and uniquely individual experiences of neuro-diverse artists.

In the future I want to pursue research into how specific repetitive imagery and sensory data might be particularly significant within the narrative and dialogue of the autistic psychological thought process. In particular, how mental routines and attachments to objects and images might help one navigate the challenges and unexpected anxieties of everyday life.

I would like to continue connecting with neuro-diverse individuals through Spectrum to help build a more inclusive and focused dialogue on the intersection of neuro-diversity and the arts."

—Elise Broadway



Elise Broadway, 2020.



Elise Broadway, *Tumuli I*, 2020.

Dear Elise,
 I am very excited to write to you about your recent drawings which seem so perfect for the absurd and potentially dangerous time we find ourselves in. We are on either side of an ocean but the cultural language seems sound to me, and timely. Before I give my list of references, let me hear about yours? And, by the way, this can be as particular, cultural and art historical, as you wish. Do not be afraid, my sense, from looking at these, is a rush of association that comes with political rationale. But perhaps it is generational. Whatever you say to begin with, I will not hold back from saying what I see. Our Q and A must be fun for the two of us, let's see where it goes and worry about an audience, later. Over to you.

Dear Sacha,
 I believe that my recent studio practice has zeroed in on an intense subconscious flow of visual information

brought on by self/locally imposed quarantine, social distancing, and general anxiety/confusion surrounding the current global pandemic. Throughout the past few months living in my hometown in Texas, I have been surrounded by large amount of familiar cultural symbols yet there has been a distinct, surreal disconnectedness attached to every experience. I have often found myself thinking of congruent historical events, modern and folk medicine/healing, and the serenity of the natural world (flora, fauna). I am constantly trying to encourage positive thought while facing a sense of desperation for both global, local/political, and self-healing. Through my collections of images I have found the ability to express a number of non-verbal feelings compiled like those of an internet search engine, creating non-linear narrative collages describing a cycle of emotional states.

Dear Elise,
 So fascinating, the way you see this, the way you say you started this series of drawings. I really want to at least revel in, the generational difference between us in relation to reference and association. I tend to go historical, you tend to go for now. It does, however, not mean real difference between us because visual language always adds up to the same thing. When I first saw your drawing I thought about the 1930s, a time of crisis across the world. How does that match with now? I thought about a return to figuration, a revival of arts and crafts, the use of labour, and labour intensity. I think of murals and works made for the advance of working people, and you talk of the material, works, made and ordered for public use that you see near you in Dallas. This is a kind of aesthetic, a natural reference, the neo-classical too, means the move from groups of people represented in work by

Mexican muralists, very early Guston, pictures in schools, ceramic works, for all of the society as a whole, commissioned by the President at the time. By looking to nature to bring things back together, and drawing with such finesse, your work seems to glance towards the fact that the notion of society, so reduced by Trump, is essential, for healing and organisation.

Dear Elise,
 I hope you are very well indeed and hope I did not frighten you off with my rather hasty response to your lovely writing. I did not address the matters you explained so much as go off in one particular direction. Do write back, with anything. I will edit my contribution, and sum up, then we will have enough. Tell me how you are? Are there demonstrations there too?

Yours, Sacha

Dear Sacha,
 I've been so very distracted by a number of things and I'm so very sorry for my late response again. Everything has been hectic once again and I've been involved in some demonstration work (not so much marching protests). I think that you are 'right on the nose' when referencing history and contemporary geo-politics; I'm very interested in cycles/repetition of world events (health concerns/pandemic, civil rights movements, national/international conflict. etc) and how these happenings (whether negatively or positively perceived) are characterized by symbolism that also has a tendency to repeat. Hopefully this makes a little sense? I will try to keep following up with you much better in the future!

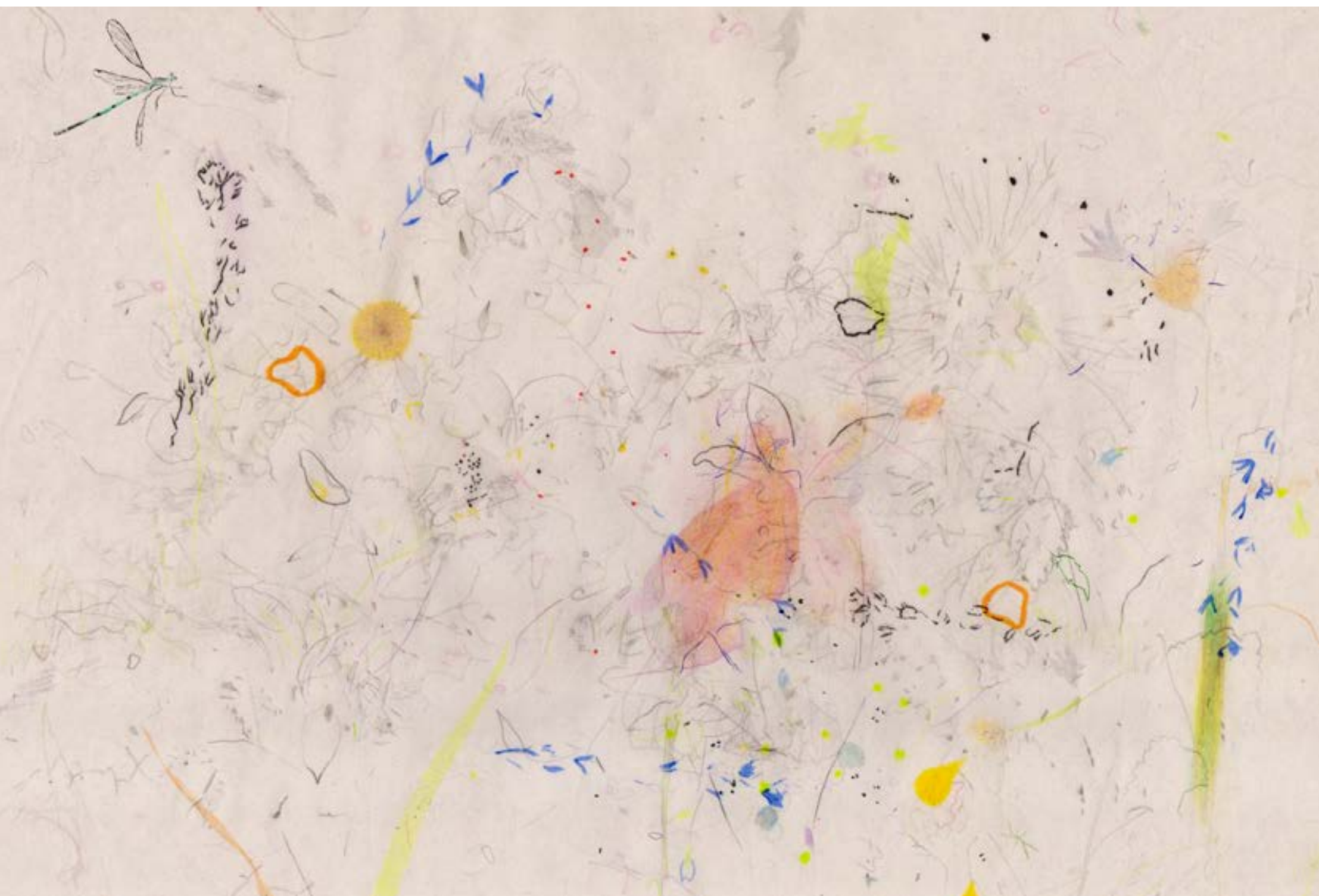
Hope all is well with you and your friends/family!

Thank you and kind regards,
 Elise



Elise Broadway, 2019.





Janice Hughes, *Silverweed Song*, (Animation Still) 2020.

Janice Hughes

graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 2017. She works in a variety of mediums including painting, collage and film inspired in part by her understanding of nature, her films incorporate animation, often with single frame footage taken from family videos, 'collaged' with seed heads, leaves and dried flowers. Hughes's work has been sold at markets and shown in various group exhibitions, including Joint Effort II, Lubbock, Texas (2017), and RUA 134th Annual Exhibition, (2015). Commissions include a music video for Martha Ffion's No Applause (2018). She lives and works in Belfast.

"The Spectrum Art Award has given me invaluable support for my work. I am grateful to be part of a space that celebrates the connection between art and autism.

In future I would be interested in exploring a more narrative and collaborative type of film or animation based on autistic experience."

— Janice Hughes

On Janice Hughes

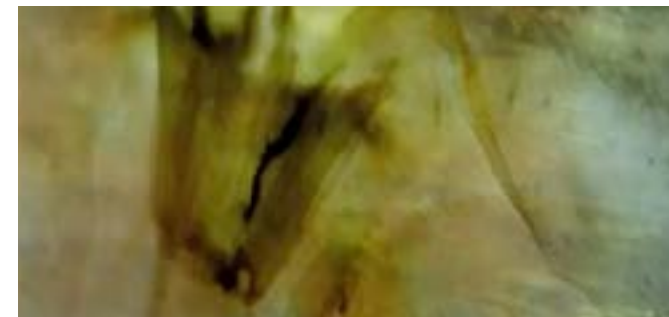
by Ashley Koenigsberg

Mood is the impetus for Janice Hughes' work. With a keen sense of observation for the overlooked and forgotten, she searches both in nature and her own home for elements that will find their way into her work. Anything from a weed growing through the cracks of the sidewalk, to a snippet of a family movie, to the stubs of coloured pencils discarded at the bottom of a box. Using these foraged materials, giving them a new purpose, both limits and frees Hughes' creative process. The recycling of the existing, a central part of her practice. Once the tools for creating have been sourced, then begins the process of layering and re-layering, both physically and digitally, working until the right feeling is evoked through sensory stimuli as opposed to a narrative structure.

Many of her films include fragments of home movies. Speaking with Hughes she describes re-filming these videos with different cameras both as a way to aesthetically manipulate and as a device to revisit her memories on her own terms. Inadvertently, she also practices the post-modernist trope of appropriation, in the most intimate way possible. Instead of using the vestiges of popular culture or the work of other artists, ala Richard Prince or Sherrie Levine, Hughes takes these home movies with no real 'author' or purpose, beyond archives of the past, and reimagines them layering images of nature that flash before the viewer's eyes at an unprecedented rhythm to the beat of strumming instrumentals.

Hughes' films have an innate duality, the repetition of both image and sound can be both lulling and stressful. Hughes explains, one of her sources of inspiration and understanding of herself and her practice is Donna Williams' 1998 book *Autism and Sensing the Unlost Instinct*. While individuals with autism can suffer from sensory overload they can also be sensory seeking of certain materials or sounds that bring comfort. Hughes often feels out of synch with society, within her practice she can demonstrate how she processes the world. This gives a window into her brain, while the viewers response to the work, whether it be comforting or agitating or something completely different, highlights the innate variation in human responses.

While the work is very personal to Hughes I would argue that it is not simply art that is about the self. The work critiques the notion that every image, every sound, every touch, or taste or smell is processed by humans in the same way. This notion of universal responses has had wider implications, for instance, in the way in which the education system is set up, who it caters to, and who is therefore more likely to succeed. Ultimately Hughes' practice is a study.



Janice Hughes, *Silverweed Song*, (Animation Still) 2020.
Janice Hughes, *Golden Morning*, (Film Stills) 2020.



Dawnne McGeachy

was one of seven finalists for the inaugural Spectrum Art Prize in 2018. She trained at the Glasgow School of Art and has received awards, including a scholarship to study Fine Art at the University of Ohio, US and in 2013, the Jolomo Bank of Scotland prize for landscape painting. A fascination with the sea led her to study the science of waves, relaying the forces that create waves through mathematical equations and by using the Beaufort Wind Force Scale. These calculations are then used to create precise paintings that convey the power and brutality of the waves. She lives and works in Scotland.



Dawne McGeachy, *Eshaness Beaufort 12 Rolling Life*, 2018.

Dawne McGeachy, *Eshaness Beaufort 12 Over*, 2018.



What gets you up in the morning and want to paint?

I am motivated by the paintings and the struggle to get it to a point where I am satisfied with it; a day I know will never come but the journey to get there is never dull, if a little frustrating. I also love the alchemy of painting, mixing colours, sourcing new paints and materials are a great joy. The materiality of my work is really important to me and my choice of paints and mediums is very much wrapped up in that. I love the idea that pigment is floating, suspending in the liquid. It seems to correlate nicely with my feeling toward the sea

What is your work about?

I have been obsessed with the sea since I was a very small child and really wanted to understand how it worked, the science of the waves. It is chaotic and beautiful watching waves crash on the shoreline or looking over the side of a boat and seeing the white foamy paths the boat makes cutting through the water. It never doesn't take my breath away. I particularly like the colour of Shetland water; it is a rich deep turquoise. My house is also situated about 30 feet from the sea, so I get to see its varying tempers on a daily basis. And it can be wild. Waves crashing on the bedroom window.

Which artists influence you and why?

I have a very eclectic mix ranging from Rembrandt, Richter, Keifer, McTaggart, Saville, Guilde, Bellany, I also love Peter Matthews work who was awarded a spectrum prize the same year as me. I tend to connect most well with work I feel has a sincerity, honesty (in a way that I understand it).

What was your experience like at the Glasgow School of Art and at the beginning of your career?

I loved being at the Glasgow School of Art. It felt like home the second I walked into the Macintosh building. It was strange because I had never felt a sense of calm like it, other than my bedroom at home. I got a lot of support from my tutors and I am pleased there was such a focus on drawing. I think the tools and techniques I learned while there are what has scaffolded my work. Life drawing every day for 5 years was certainly of benefit. I was at Glasgow school of Art for 5 years and then got a scholarship to study in America. The American University experience was very different, but I enjoyed both institutions for different reasons.

Tell us about the messages to the sea

During lockdown I had more time to reflect on the work I was doing and remembered a story my mum told me about her finding a message in a bottle on the shoreline of Eshaness in Shetland. She was thrilled that she had a pen pal from the mainland. I liked the idea of the sea bringing stories and messages to people; connecting with serendipity. I remembered that while I was studying in America for 2 years, my mum wrote to me every single day and my dad wrote to me every week. I hand traced all the letters first thing in the morning and used them in my paintings. It made me feel less home sick.

Tell us about Glass Bottles

I have been writing messages on my work but never revealed the text; things my family and friends have said to me are hidden in the layers of my paintings of the sea. I have lots of little bottles I found on the shoreline (and on eBay!) in my studio and I dug out my old letters from America and began hand tracing them again. I begin all the letters with 'Dear Sea' then extract text from the hand traced letters and put them in a sealed bottle, where some of the text is partially seen through the glass. Writing to the sea has helped me gather my thoughts and process things in a new way.

How has Covid 19 affected your practice?

I am naturally a solitary person, so the isolation part hasn't affected me too much and I have been able to work as normal. However, I have started to work on smaller paintings to sell on the artist support pledge. It's a great idea and I know it has been a lifeline to some of my friends.



Dawnne McGeachy, *Untitled*, 2018.



Harry Moorcroft, 2020.

Harry Moorcroft

currently studies film and media at Bridgwater & Taunton College. Harry makes films and animations which demonstrate a sophisticated eye for characterisation, coupled with deadpan humour. Frequently self-narrated, his subject matter is often drawn from personal experience, including bringing vividly to life the difficulties he experienced as an autistic child coping with school. He lives in Taunton, Somerset.

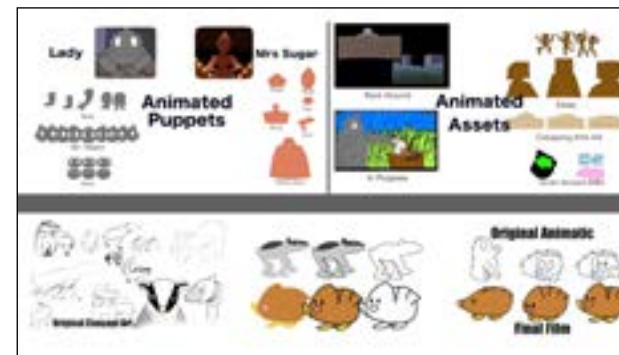
Harry's work can be found on [YouTube](#).

Harry Moorcroft, 2020.



"I struggle immensely with reading and writing, and since we live in a world dependent on these skills, I try to pick up on visual assets to make sense of the world. Because of this being my lifestyle, my approach to video making is to conjure up a rough idea and then grabbing a camera to film my idea - without the aid of a script - editing what I filmed and seeing how far I get. Once I feel that I film something that I feel has potential, I'll tirelessly revise that idea and expand upon it; making it the best it can be."

—Harry Moorcroft



Harry Moorcroft, 2020.

"When I was making my cartoon, I was transitioning between the ages of 19 to 20, essentially this is the last project I made while I was still a teenager, and the first project I worked on as a full fledged adult.

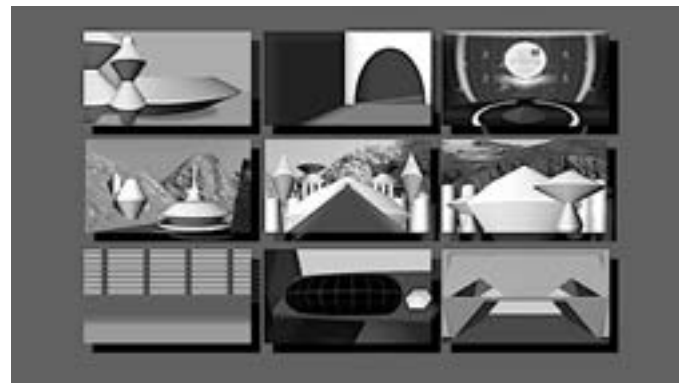
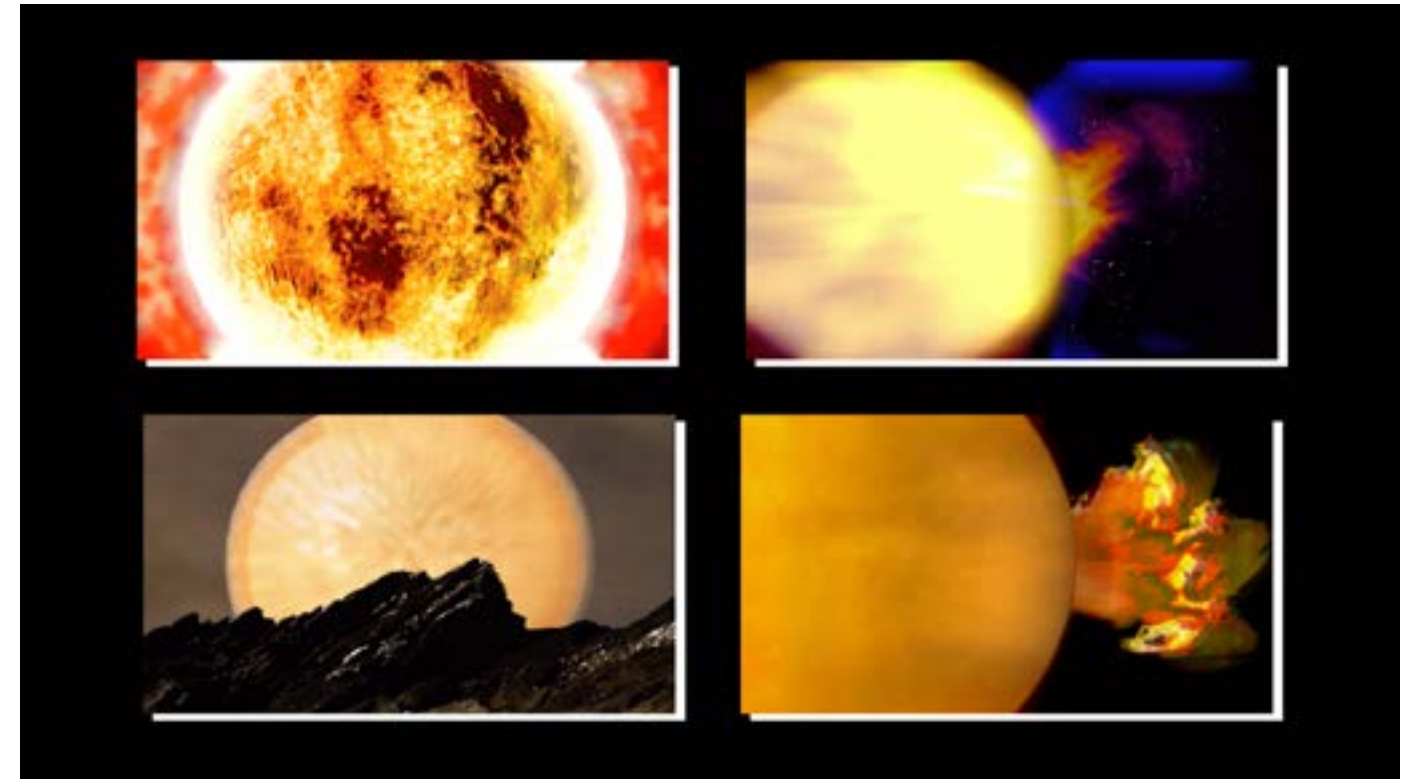
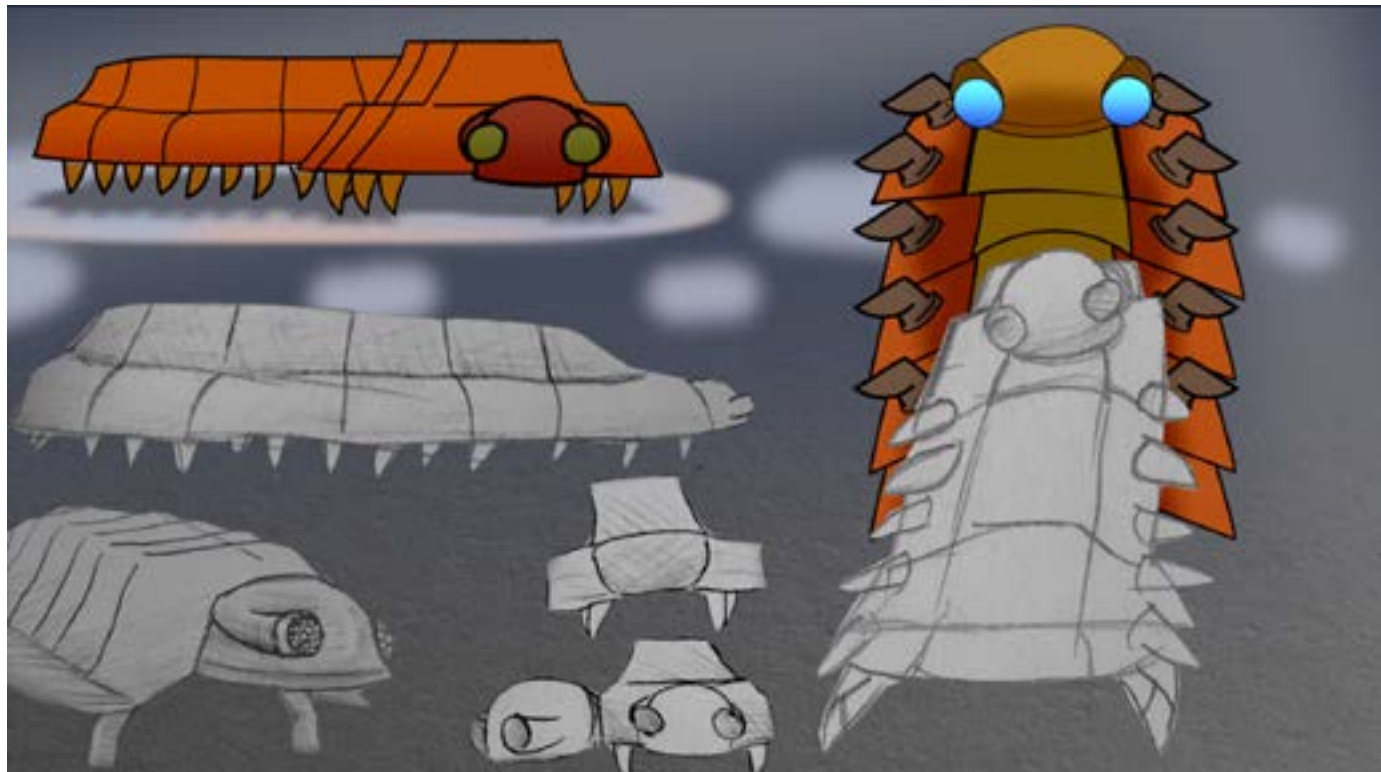
Telling the story of my grief as a child, but as an adult being able to illustrate it in a more positive way.

When I was younger, the upsetting times at school, really troubled through my mind, but now I'm able to look past it as nothing really, time has really helped into healing my distrust and discomfort, amongst teachers and pupils.

I saw this film being very therapeutic for myself, as while I will never have the chance to go back, and to stand up to those who spoil my time in education, making this film and coming to terms with what happened, has made me be able to close a past chapter of my life.

The school reflection film, I made was actually a remake of an older cartoon I created, some several years ago, the older film I felt was somewhat crude, I felt that I could make it much more better, so taking all the skills I learnt about filmmaking throughout my teen years, I felt as if I could create my distinctive style of film.

And with the new school reflection film, being rewarded a gold distinction and being one of the lucky winners of the spectrum a price, it's reassured me of all the time I spent studying and learning, about film and media throughout my youth, has paid off, as from now throughout my 20s onwards, I can point towards school reflection as being the Harry Moorcroft film, my own distinct taste and style."



Harry Moorcroft, 2020.



Mark Wallinger, *Oxford Street*, 2020.

Mark Wallinger

selector, 2018

is a British multimedia artist. His work explores themes of class, nationalism, religion and spirituality. Wallinger was first nominated for the Turner Prize in 1995, which he won in 2007 for *State Britain*, an installation that replicates the camp of peace campaigner Brian Haw in Parliament Square. He was the first artist to occupy the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square with his stature *Ecce Homo* in 1999. His work is held in the collections of the Tate Gallery in London, the Denver Art Museum, and others. He lives and works in London.



Mark Wallinger, *British Museum*, 2020.



Mark Wallinger, Marble Arch 2020
Mark Wallinger, Waterloo Station 2020
Mark Wallinger, Holborn 2020
Mark Wallinger, Tottenham Court Road 2020
Mark Wallinger, Picadilly Circus 2020

'I saw him' by Mark Wallinger

I saw him, I am sure I saw
Him pass me in an empty bus
I mean he looked the same
But young, like I'd known him before
The name is on the tip of my

(Below) Joseph Coyle, 2020.

(Overleaf) Joseph Coyle, *Hedge Giant*, 2020



Joseph Coyle

graduated from Hereford College of Art with 1st Class Honours in 2014 and Aberystwyth University where he received an MA in Fine Art with distinction in 2019. His practice spans performance, illustration and painting inspired by nature and British folklore, notably demonstrated in his intricately detailed and small-scale series of paintings based on the story of Cock Robin. His work explores mythmaking and storytelling with an extraordinary attention for atmosphere and detail. His exhibitions include *The Death of Cock Robin* (2019) Castle Gates Library, Shrewsbury and his work to date has been collected into 3 books; *The Death of Cock Robin* (2019) *All Gods Around the Wrekin* (2016) and *The Beast of Dary's Pit* (2014). Joseph has also performed as a story-teller with a variety of costumed alter-egos tellers at numerous public venues in the UK. He lives and works in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.



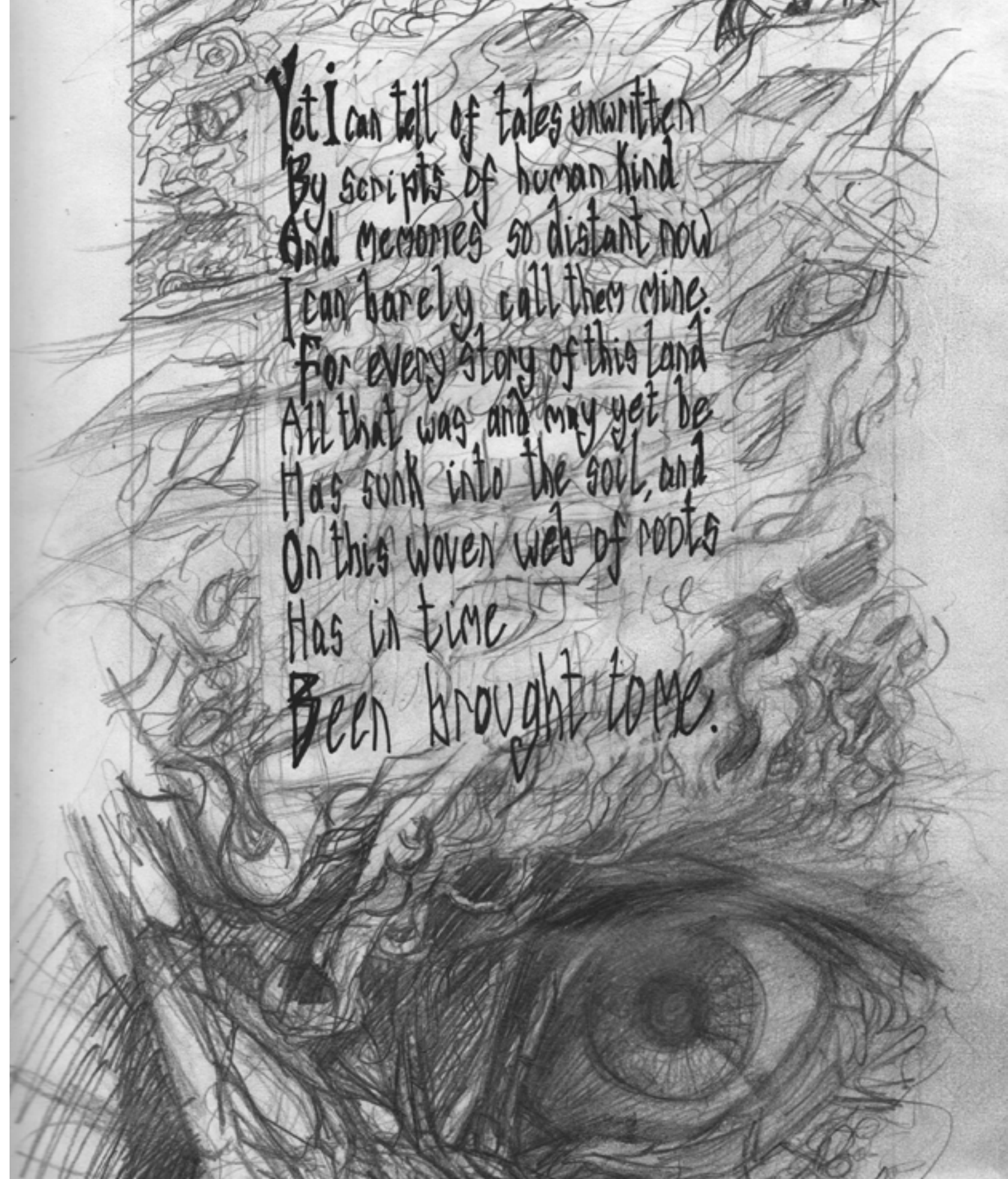


"Autism has made it very difficult for me to feel at ease within the world, being a cause of social isolation and mental illness. Yet I have come to appreciate that my dedication and passion for expressing myself through art is intimately tied to my autistic perspective. Without the obsessive attention to detail that comes from my condition I know that I would not be able to work in the way that I do, and my practice has been invaluable in providing me with both a fluent mode of communication and an escape from the anxiety of my daily life."



"It is a great privilege to be selected as a finalist for the Spectrum Award, my passion for my artwork is driven by a yearning to share something of myself with others, a way of reaching beyond the confines of isolation and anxiety. As such, this is a truly exciting opportunity to share not only my work, but also its roots in autistic experience, with a much wider audience than I have previously found possible. It has empowered me to look towards exploring those roots more openly in future projects, and given me confidence that my work has the potential to connect powerfully with that audience."

— Joseph Coyle



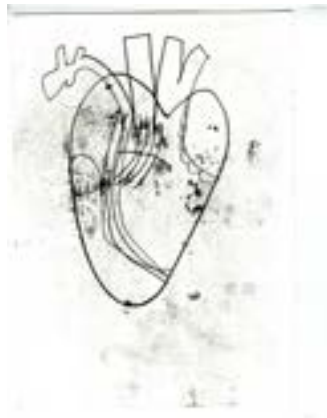
Yet I can tell of tales unwritten
By scripts of human kind
And memories so distant now
I can barely call them mine.
For every story of this land
All that was, and may yet be
Has sunk into the soul, and
On this woven web of roots
Has in time
Been brought to me.



Sharif Persaud

is a self-taught artist. He attends Project Art Works, the award-winning artist-led project space, where he makes films, drawings, paintings and mono-prints. Persaud's work explores his unique way of navigating the world as a person with autism, including his frequent use of a cardboard Al Murray mask in public and a very developed interest in bodily functions, diseases, healthcare, hospitals and benefits. His work is by turns funny, arresting and fresh and a wonderful demonstration of how art can provide a powerful platform to directly communicate the experiences of autistic individuals, as well as opening opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. Persaud received his first solo exhibition in 2020 with *Have You Ever Had* at Autograph Gallery, London. His work has been featured in group exhibitions, including *Putting Ourselves in the Picture* (2019) Fabrica and *In the Realm of Others* (2015) De La Warr Pavilion. He wrote and directed the short film, *The Mask* (2017), which went on to win Best Story at Osaka Bright Film Festival in 2017 and has been shown in numerous screenings across the world including, *The Other Film Festival* in Melbourne, the *Discover Film Awards* in London and the *British Film Institute Collection*, *Disabled Britain on Film*. He lives and works in Hastings.

(Overload)



w3229, Untitled, 2015, ink on paper, 31.5x43cm
 W3444, Heart, 2015, Monoprint, 29.5x21cm
 W3449, Untitled, 2015, Monoprint, 29.5x21cm
 W4569, Self-Portrait, 2018, monoprint, 29.5x21cm
 W4571, Gangrene Foot, 2017, Monoprint, 30x21cm

On Sharif Persaud

by Dr Mark Sealy

Sharif Persaud questions his audiences through the lens of his own body: its functions, its pleasures, its past and possible future states. His work operates as a form of direct engagement with what could or might have been concerning his and our health and care.

Observing himself through the barrier of the masks he wears becomes a powerful metaphor for our contemporary condition and identity formations. The question that underlines Persaud's creative methodology and his way of being in the world is, 'Have You Ever Had?' This direct process of enquiry encourages the viewers of his work to consider what version of themselves is being made evident in the present.

Through Persaud's art the social and personal body melds into fantastic new conversations that become further amplified by his reflections on the world of television dramas such as *Holby City* and *Casualty*. These types of fictional medical dramas are watched by millions of people globally who enjoy the emotional and physical traumas they portray from the security of a safe place. Persaud's work also brings us into direct dialogue with divergent forms of celebrity, such as President Obama with Al Murray's comical persona, *The Pub Landlord*. Persaud's relationship with celebrity through the masks that he wears throws into focus the meaning performance has on our daily lives.

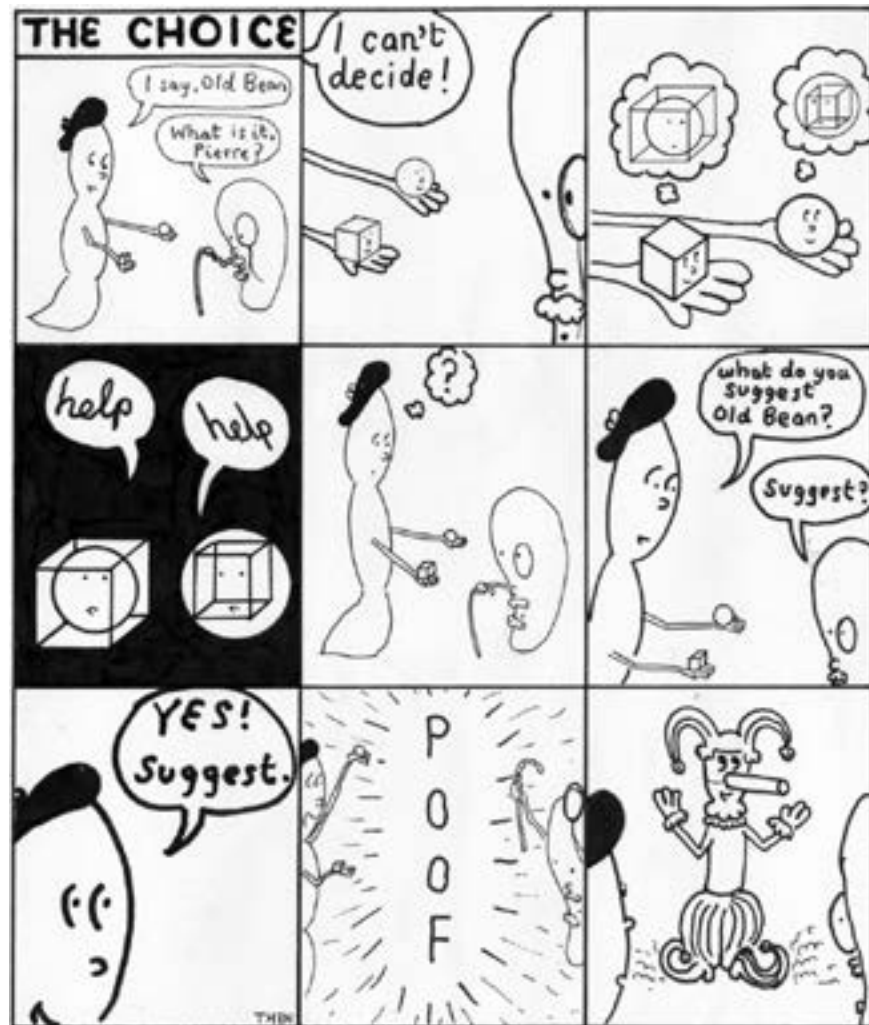
Research conducted at Project Art Works in Hastings, where Persaud is based, has shown that blue is the first colour choice by the artists there. Persaud's large painting titled *Egypt* is a serene self-portrait that oozes blues and projects the sheer pleasure of merely being free to float in both physical and internal space. *Egypt* has a contagious quality that calls forth the human desire for both tranquillity and space. Persaud's works, many of which remain untitled, reflect our deep need to be in dialogue with the world, to be in conversation with each other and to be seen.

"Sharif has unique ways of communication that do not necessarily follow socially acceptable norms. He is curious about the world and affable with others. Placing himself at the centre of his work, Sharif explores identity through his experience of life and autism"

— Kate Adams, Artistic Director and CEO, Project Art Works.



Sharif Persaud, *Holby City*, 2019.



Paul Noble, The Choice, 2020.



Paul Noble

selector, 2020

is a British visual artist. His work has been part of numerous group exhibitions, including shows at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (2001); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2002); Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2003); New Museum, New York (2003); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2003); Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (2003); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2004); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (2005); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2005); Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York (2006); Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (2009); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2010); Tate Britain, London (2010); Kunsthalle Münster, Germany (2010–11); Caterina Tognon Arte Contemporanea, Venice (2011); Henry Moore Foundation, Perry Green, England (2014); and Marta Herford, Germany (2015). Recent solo museum exhibitions include the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2005); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2005); and Nobson, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2014). He lives and works in London.

Art Award

By Mary Simpson

The Spectrum art award's goal is to increase awareness of the relationship between excellent art and autism. It intends to reveal to institutions and cultural bodies the high level of artistic talent that exists, create a unique archive of work by autistic artists, and sensitize the broader public about such a range of brilliant talent.

We had great plans for 2020 with an exhibition, in Frith Street, in Soho, of the amazing work by the five Spectrum Art Award winners. In March, we found COVID-19 had very different plans for us all. We have found ourselves in increasingly extended unprecedented times. This, something we have never had to face in our lifetime, has irrevocably changed the world as we know it.

The need to think how we could meet our goals and aspirations beyond that of what turns out to be a hugely challenging physical exhibition, has led to an online magazine that can show finished and continuing work by finalists. We are in the process of creating a strong online presence that connects artists with one another and the wider community, this has never been more important during COVID-19.

With the help of curator Sacha Craddock and our wonderful judges, our now vibrant community has created a unique online magazine, as well as a paper publication that features finished work, works in progress, poetry, articles, interviews with and statements by the five current winners, finalists from the 2018 award, as well as amazingly generous pieces by past and current judges, Mark Wallinger and Paul Noble.

The magazine is unique in that it seeks to represent all artists equally, to support and develop their work through such a difficult time. The magazine inevitably accounts for the way artist's lives have changed during the pandemic. The work is a commentary, as a result, on the way artists manage changes in society. The work is unique to 2020 and the pandemic and is of its time.

We have found that during the time of fear and uncertainty there is hope for the future and the very real need to connect to people and places is never more clear.

We hope you enjoy either the online magazine, printed publication, or both.

BIOGRAPHIES

Nnena Kalu

is a self taught artist. She creates large-scale sculptural pieces using a range of everyday materials, from coloured string and cling film, to cardboard and old VHS reels. Nnena begins each work by bundling material into a cocoon, which she then expands by adding layers of different material, altering the shape and density of the original object. Which piece of material she chooses to add is determined by the sound and rhythm of what she is making. When Nnena is making a pattern, she has a clear line, a path and a process, with herself at the performative centre. Nnena lives and works in London.

Elise Broadway

completed a BA in Fine Art at the University of Pennsylvania in 2016 and graduated from the Royal College of Art, London with an MA in Fine Art in 2019. Broadway creates free-standing and wall-mounted sculptural works using stuffed, drawn or painted fabrics, often using stock images of people and animals found on the internet. The result is a startling mixture of the sophisticated and ungainly, with the apparently mundane transformed into something special and memorable. Her work has been shown in numerous group exhibition internationally]

including; The Codex Project, Works on Paper Gallery, Philadelphia (2020), Surge, East Wing Biennial, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2018) and Studies of Itoshima, Studio Kura, Itoshima, Japan (2016). She currently lives and works in Dallas, USA.

Joseph Coyle

graduated from Hereford College of Art with 1st Class Honours in 2014 and Aberystwyth University where he received an MA in Fine Art with distinction in 2019. His practice spans performance, illustration and painting inspired by nature and British folklore, notably demonstrated in his intricately detailed and small-scale series of paintings based on the story of Cock Robin. His work explores mythmaking and storytelling with an extraordinary attention for atmosphere and detail. His exhibitions include The Death of Cock Robin (2019) Castle Gates Library, Shrewsbury and his work to date has been collected into 3 books; The Death of Cock Robin (2019) All Gods Around the Wrekin (2016) and The Beast of Dary's Pit (2014). Joseph has also performed as a story-teller with a variety of costumed alter-egos tellers at numerous public venues in the UK. He lives and works in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

Janice Hughes

graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 2017. She works in a variety of mediums including painting, collage and film inspired in part by her understanding of nature, her films incorporate animation, often with single frame footage taken from family videos, 'collaged' with seed heads, leaves and dried flowers. Hughes's work has been sold at markets and shown in various group exhibitions including Joint Effort II, Lubbock, Texas (2017), and RUA 134th Annual Exhibition, (2015). Commissions include a music video for Martha Ffion's No Applause (2018). She lives and works in Belfast.

Sharif Persaud

is a self-taught artist. He attends Project Art Works, the award-winning artist-led project space, where he makes films, drawings, paintings and mono-prints. Persaud's work explores his unique way of navigating the world as a person with autism, including his frequent use of a cardboard Al Murray mask in public and a very developed interest in bodily functions, diseases, healthcare, hospitals and benefits. His work is by turns funny, arresting and fresh and a wonderful demonstration of how art can provide a powerful platform to directly communicate the experiences of autistic individuals, as well as opening opportunities for

dialogue and collaboration. Persaud received his first solo exhibition in 2020 with Have You Ever Had at Autograph Gallery, London. His work has been featured in group exhibitions including Putting Ourselves in the Picture (2019) Fabrica and In the Realm of Others (2015) De La Warr Pavilion. He wrote and directed the short film, The Mask (2017), which went on to win Best Story at Osaka Bright Film Festival in 2017 and has been shown in numerous screenings across the world including, The Other Film Festival in Melbourne, the Discover Film Awards in London and the British Film Institute Collection, Disabled Britain on Film. He lives and works in Hastings.

Harry Moorcroft

currently studies film and media at Bridgwater & Taunton College. Harry makes films and animations which demonstrate a sophisticated eye for characterisation, coupled with deadpan humour. Frequently self-narrated, his subject matter is often drawn from personal experience, including bringing vividly to life the difficulties he experienced as an autistic child coping with school. He lives in Taunton, Somerset.

Paul Noble

is a British visual artist. His work has been part of numerous group exhibitions, including shows at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (2001); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2002); Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2003); New Museum, New York (2003); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2003); Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (2003); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2004); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (2005); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2005); Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York (2006); Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (2009); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2010); Tate Britain, London (2010); Kunsthalle Münster, Germany (2010–11); Caterina Tognon Arte Contemporanea, Venice (2011); Henry Moore Foundation, Perry Green, England (2014); and Marta Herford, Germany (2015). Recent solo museum exhibitions include the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2005); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2005); and Nobson, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2014). He lives and works in London.

Dawne McGeachy

was one of seven finalists for the inaugural Spectrum Art Prize in 2018. She trained at the Glasgow School of Art and has received awards including a scholarship to study Fine Art at the University of Ohio, US and in 2013, the Jolomo Bank of Scotland prize for landscape painting. A fascination with the sea led her to study the science of waves,

relaying the forces that create waves through mathematical equations and by using the Beaufort Wind Force Scale. These calculations are then used to create precise paintings that convey the power and brutality of the waves. She lives and works in Scotland.

Mary Simpson

is the CEO of Spectrum and has worked in the field of autism for over 25 years. Mary has extensive knowledge of the current economic, social and regulatory issues in the care sector and autism. Mary has extensive links within the art world, through Spectrum's affinity with artistic expression and has been instrumental in the development of local and national art auctions to raise awareness of autism and fundraise for a dedicated Education and Arts Centre in Cornwall. Simpson firmly believes that art can create a powerful and meaningful dialogue to those who feel socially isolated, lonely or different from those around them. She is passionate about giving individuals with autism the platform and opportunity to show others their unique worldview as well as their interests, hopes and perceptions of life.

Simon Baron Cohen

Professor Baron-Cohen is the Director of the Autism Research Centre at the University of Cambridge and President of the International Society of Autism Research. Baron-Cohen is one of the world's leading experts in understanding autism and related neurological conditions. His books include *Mindblindness*, which in 1995 transformed our understanding of the psychology of autism, through to 'Zero Degrees of Empathy' (2011), which gave a new perspective on biological and social factors that determine cruelty and kindness.

Sacha Craddock

is an independent curator and critic, who has written for numerous national newspapers including the Guardian and the Times. She co-founded ArtSchool Palestine in Ramallah, which offers a structure and place for the exchange and development of contemporary art, as well as founding the Fellowship in Contemporary Art at British School at Rome. She currently chairs the Bloomberg New Contemporaries, which provides a means for newly graduated fine art students to be exhibited nationwide, and has been involved in the selection process since 1996.

Charlotte Amelia Poe

is a self-taught artist and winner of the inaugural Spectrum Art Prize for her film *How To Be Autistic*. The film presents the rarely shown point of view of someone living with autism, and formed the basis for her memoir of the same name, published in 2019. Her work challenges narratives of autism - created by neurotypical people - as something to be 'fixed'. Charlotte believes her autism is a fundamental aspect of her identity and art.

Charlotte's intention was to "show the side of autism that I have lived through, the side you don't find in books and on Facebook groups. The title, *How To Be Autistic*, is taken from the idea that constantly, constantly, neurotypical people are writing about us, with an idea of how to fix us." She lives and works in Suffolk.

Mark Wallinger

is a British multimedia artist. His work explores themes of class, nationalism, religion and spirituality. Wallinger was first nominated for the Turner Prize in 1995, which he won in 2007 for *State Britain*, an installation that replicates

the camp of peace campaigner Brian Haw in Parliament Square. He was the first artist to occupy the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square with his stature *Ecce Homo* in 1999. His work is held in the collections of the Tate Gallery in London, the Denver Art Museum, and others. He lives and works in London.

Peter Matthews

is a contemporary English artist who explores exploding drawing, painting, video, film and photography. Matthews creates paintings while immersed in water, often floating on, or submerged in, oceans. This timescale of this process can range from several hours to a few days. He works with art materials strapped about his person, and allows the movement of the ocean and its waves to paint his pictures for him. His work has been exhibited in Wirksworth, Turin, Dortmund, Folkestone and Laguna Beach. He has lectured for university audiences including at the University of California, San Diego and was the artist-in-residence at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Arun Kakar

is a journalist who writes about culture, politics and current affairs. His work has appeared in the *New Statesman* among others. He is currently a staff writer at *Spear's* magazine.

Alexandra Lunn

is a graphic designer who helps businesses and bodies who operate within the arts and cultural industries to stand out with bold and vibrant identity design work.