

### 5-29 APRIL 2017

DOUG COCKER RSA STEVEN COX IAN HOWARD RSA JOANNA KESSEL LORNA MCINTOSH RSA HARRY MORGAN ALAN ROBB RSA BRONWEN SLEIGH DAWN YOULL



### THE**SCOTTISH**GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1842

16 Dundas Street, Edinburgh EH3 6HZ | tel 0131 558 1200 | email mail@scottish-gallery.co.uk | www.scottish-gallery.co.uk Cover: Doug Cocker RSA – Big Rain, 2016, ash, 114 x 116 x 30 cms, cat. 1 (detail)

### INTRODUCTION

First brings together nine artists who have not exhibited at The Scottish Gallery before and represents The Gallery's recognition of the strength and depth of artist talent in this country. There is a deliberate mix of artists from various stages in their careers and an acknowledgment of the validity of all media in creative endeavour.

In First we take the opportunity to show three senior Scottish artists for the first time: Doug Cocker, Ian Howard and Alan Robb. All three are Academicians and have been deeply involved in art education: Ian Howard, who now lives in France and was Principal at Edinburgh College of Art (2001–2011), Alan Robb was Head of The School of Fine Art, Duncan of Jordanstone (1983-2003) and Doug Cocker had senior roles at all the Scottish colleges in the 1980s and 90s. Cocker is a sculptor who carves, constructs, cuts, paints and assembles, combining rigour and poetry in wall pieces either boxed, framed or free. Howard is a modern mannerist, a technical master and ambitious picture maker whose references are historical, literary and painterly. Robb, like Howard, has technical ability to burn and chooses to move freely between the primitive, sacred and magic realist worlds, his restless talent defying a neat summing up, preferring a variety which assures his conceptual relevance.

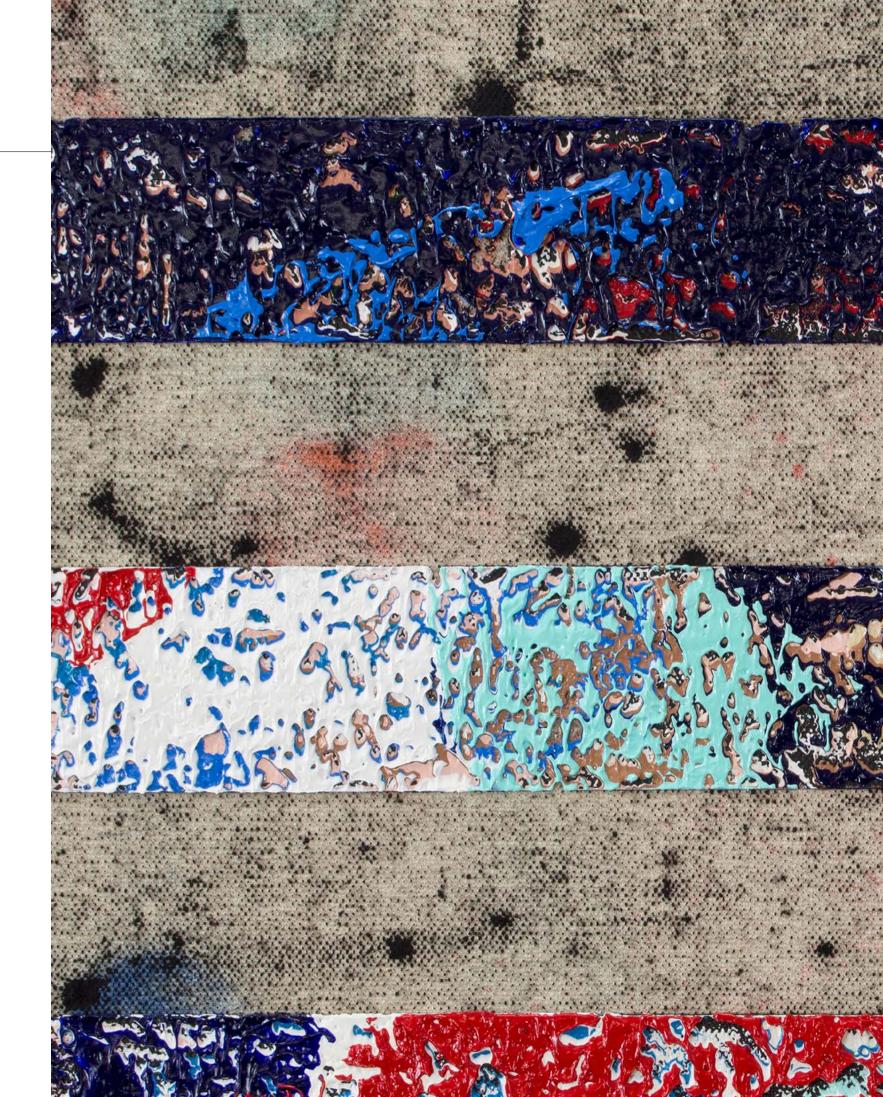
A second triumvirate are also painters, but in early or mid-career, whose decisions to paint do not represent a conscious denial of conceptual alternatives but recognise the endless possibilities of the medium to remain relevant, rich and rewarding. Steven Cox is technically innovative using transfer, layering and experiment to create paint equivalents of the accretions of city surfaces, weathered and worn, but through a neon prism. Lorna McIntosh is steeped in the enlightenment, in early science and its recordings. Her oils on paper are beautiful and intriguing and layered with 'issues of a personal nature' which keeps the work emotionally honest. Bronwen Sleigh is a draughtswoman and printmaker who describes an urban matrix of line and shape, which speaks of city and architectural space but becomes an abstract mind-space which might be utopian or dystopian.

Finally, three more artists work in different media: mosaic, glass and ceramic. Joanna Kessel combines cast concrete with mosaic, the contrast between 'fine' and 'brutalist' is telling, to make wall pieces like architectural segments at once beautiful and provocative. Harry Morgan works in similar territory but his objects are as much about transformation as juxtaposition of materials: glass merging into concrete. Simple shapes reference industrial process and the combined materials evoke the primitive origins and enormous forces which have shaped the planet. Dawn Youll is a sculptor who uses traditional ceramic techniques of modelling, mould-making and slip casting to make domestic scale objects which embrace surrealist tropes, personal stories and formal appropriations. The works conceived in groups, embrace familiarity and ambiguity in a beguiling, human narrative.

First is a complementary juxtaposition of sculptural, abstract and figurative work. The investigation of landscape both real and imagined, urban or natural, of process, of the history of art and ideas, is embraced. Most importantly, First is a celebration of talent, material and different ways of seeing the world.

The Scottish Gallery would like to thank all the artists for their significant creative contribution.

- Christina Jansen, March 2017



## **DOUG COCKER RSA (B.1945)**



Doug Cocker in his studio, Lundie, 2017

Doug Cocker was brought up in rural Perthshire and comes from a long line of farmers and blacksmiths. He taught sculpture at Nene College, Northampton and Grays School of Art, Aberdeen and over a period of twenty years he was visiting lecturer at Edinburgh University, Edinburgh College of Art, The Glasgow School of Art, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, Tyler University, Philadelphia, Georgian College, Ontario and Newcastle Polytechnic from 1992–1998. He was elected to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1984.

Cocker has undertaken many public sculpture commissions including the Ben Lomond Memorial at Rowardennan and the Glasgow Bouquet in the Merchant City, Glasgow.

Doug Cocker's sculpture is the artist's response to the landscape and natural environment around him. Working predominately in wood, his studio in Lundie, outside Dundee, is a magnificent thinking space where walls are littered with evolving ideas. The works in *First* are preoccupied by weather and as such, read as sonnets.

#### **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:**

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow
Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow
Greenshields Foundation, Montreal
Peterborough Art Gallery
Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture, Edinburgh
Northampton Art Gallery
Kirkcaldy Galleries
Perth Museum and Art Gallery
The Ballinglen Archive, County Mayo
Robert Gordon University Collection, Aberdeen
University of Dundee
Boswell Collection, University of St. Andrews
Arts Council of Great Britain



1. Big Rain, 2016, ash, 114 x 116 x 30 cms





















## **STEVEN COX (B.1986)**



Photo: Christopher Fernandez

Steven Cox was born in Aberdeen in 1986. He completed his BA in Fine Art from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in 2008 followed by an MA from Edinburgh College of Art in 2011. He recently won the Lepsien Art Foundation Grant Scholarship in Dusseldorf, Germany (1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017). Cox currently lives and works in Edinburgh.

Steven Cox's work is based on scavenging cities in search of beauty within the mundane. Cox's interest in degraded, urban surfaces began in 2015 when he was living in Tilburg, the Netherlands where there is a zero tolerance for fly-posting. Local artists, musicians and promoters endured a nightly battle with the local council to promote their grassroots events. The posters that were mounted in the evening would be torn down by morning. Cox saw the beauty in the walls where the residue of paper, glue and spray-paint had been left from this cultural battle.

"I specifically chose to explore this social issue I had witnessed in Tilburg and I created a body of work in response to the interesting textural qualities of these walls. By developing a brushless process of painting, I focused on how I could simultaneously apply and remove paint through a singular action."

Through developing new and unconventional transferral painting processes, Steven Cox's brushless paintings build up in layers of colour and texture creating a rich, textural surface that echoes the torn paper, glue and spray-paint from Tilburg. The 'stripe' paintings (Cat 13 and 14) incorporate the application of oil and spray paint on both sides of the canvas. Vibrant sections of spray paint applied to the reverse of the painting faintly stains through the canvas to form a subtle dialogue with the heavily applied layers of oil paint on the surface.







13. Lines Of Knowledge, 2017, oil and spray paint on canvas,  $60 \times 50 \text{ cms}$ 

14. Along The Line, 2017, oil and spray paint on canvas, 100 x 80 cms

### IAN HOWARD RSA (B.1952)



Ian Howard in his studio, France, 2017

lan Howard specialises in painting, drawing and printmaking. He is an Academician of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture and an Emeritus Professor of the University of Edinburgh. He was formerly Dean of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, University of Dundee; a member of the Faculty of the British School at Rome; and the former Principal of Edinburgh College of Art.

His particular research interests include: art and science, alchemical symbolism, Hermeticism, emblems, and Medieval and Renaissance iconography. He lives and works in France.

"Howard's work characteristically involves the intuitive interweaving of figurative, abstract and symbolic forms and is inspired by Renaissance and Early Modern imagery of an arcane nature. Such imagery reached the height of its complexity in seventeenth century illustrations to treatises on alchemy, such as those by Heinrich Khunrath (1527–1604) and John Dee (1527–1608). These illustrations often provided labyrinthine allegories of spiritual transformation, or even hieroglyphic stimulants to revelation, as much as they provided practical instructions for changing base metals into gold. Howard is partly attracted to the enigma of alchemical imagery for its own sake, and the subject of his work is likewise less revealed through straightforward depiction than experienced in the exploration of visual connections. He deconstructs, reconstructs and repeats forms so as to amplify, dissolve and extend their hieroglyphic 'references'. Through this process and through the notion of physical art as alchemy, Howard relates magical symbolism to Modernist practices."

- Notes from Sorcery, Victoria and Albert Museum Collection.

#### **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:**

Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture, Edinburgh
Art In Healthcare, Edinburgh
City of Edinburgh Council
Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Collection
Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow
High Life Highland Exhibitions Unit
The Fleming Collection
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums
Edinburgh College of Art (University of Edinburgh)
County Hall, Leicestershire County Council Artworks Collection
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre

Revelation (Cat 15) has its origins in the Book Of Revelation. An angel, who hovers in the distance, has taken a "golden censer" filled with fire from the heavenly altar, and thrown it to the earth (8:3–5). What follows are "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (8:5). Hail and fire, mingled with blood, are thrown to the earth burning up a third of the trees and green grass. (8:6–7). All fresh water turns to blood. (16:4–7)



15. Revelation, 2017, mixed media on panel, 28 x 35.5 cms

Draco (Cat 16) is essentially an alchemical emblem representing part of the alchemical process. 'Prima Materia' in the course of its elaboration must be subjected to a four-fold division, divided into four elements, described in the form of a cross. This is the cross of Physis, which enables matter to be incarnated and to come into the world. The cross is an allusion to both the conflict of opposites and to the Crucifixion. Only this coming together of opposites can slay the alchemical or mercurial dragon. In alchemy, it is part of the symbolic imagery of 'mortificatio' – killing, decay and decomposition. That which undergoes 'mortificatio' is the 'slaying of the dragon', representing the first elemental state.



16. Draco, 2016, mixed media on wood panel, 80 x 60 cms

## **JOANNA KESSEL MA RCA (B.1961)**



Joanna Kessel in her studio, Edinburgh, 2017

Joanna Kessel studied ceramics and tapestry at Edinburgh College of Art and The Royal College of Art, London. In 2010 Kessel received a Scottish Arts Council Research and Development Award to study contemporary mosaic in Italy. The trip proved a pivotal point in the development of her studio practice and she continues to return on an annual basis to both study and teach.

The ongoing series of mosaic and cast concrete artworks (*In*)visible Cities is inspired by Carlo Scarpa's architecture and Joanna's experiences of travelling in Italy. The series takes its title from Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* and plays with the notion of what is visible and what can be gained by looking outwards, as well as inwards – exploring the intimate detail, and beauty, of unseen, 'glimpsed' spaces.

"The city... does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets... every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls".

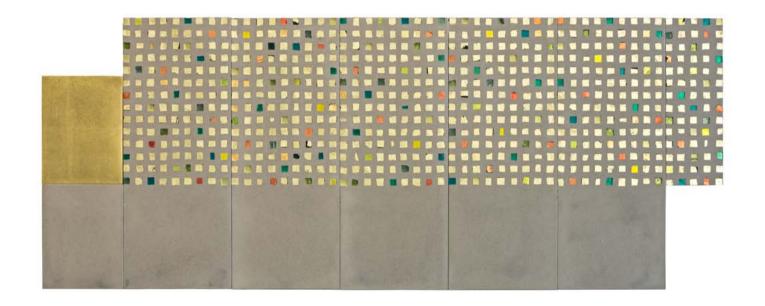
— Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* 

Kessel's mosaics depict a highly personal response to 'place'. They bring together an interest in abstracted, simplified forms and a fascination with the subconscious associations and memories evoked by these. She is interested in mosaic as a contemporary craft rooted in history – the jewel-like qualities of hand-cut mosaic tesserae and the time it takes to create an exquisitely crafted object. The work inhabits a place where craft-meets-art-meets-design-meets architecture and explores material relationships – ordinary and precious – combining materials such as hand cut marble tesserae, Venetian glass smalti and gold leaf mosaic with polished slabs of cast concrete.

Joanna Kessel's work is exhibited internationally and is in numerous private collections.



17. (In)visible Cities: Reveal 3, 2016, marble, Venetian glass smalti, gold leaf mosaic, cast concrete, 150 x 41 cms
Photo: Michael Wolchover









# LORNA MCINTOSH RSA (B.1974)



Lorna McIntosh, Balmungo House, 2011 Photo: Coline Russelle

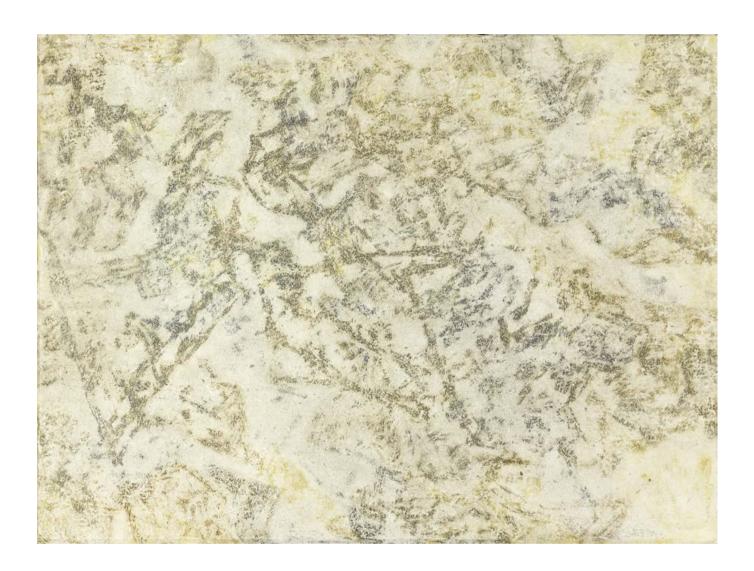
Lorna McIntosh studied painting at Edinburgh College of Art, graduating with a BA Hons in 1995 and an MFA in 1997 and was elected as a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 2012. She has won numerous awards including the John Kinross (1997) and Salvesen (2002) travel scholarships from the Royal Scottish Academy. In 2011, a Residencies for Scotland Award from the RSA/Creative Scotland allowed Lorna to spend three months as artist-in-residence at Balmungo House by St Andrews, the former base of the Barns-Graham Charitable Trust.

"My work relates to ideology from the 17th and 18th Centuries. The work, although highly personal, is informed by my research which encompasses the work of Goethe; 18th Century chemistry; early palaeontology; mineralogy and emblematics. I explore the connections and affinities between my different areas of research and issues of a more personal nature. The resulting work has layers of meaning – personal, philosophical and relating to the physical world."

These three works primarily relate to research into early natural philosophy – in particular Francis Bacon's 17th Century work 'Novum Organum' – and its connections to other areas of McIntosh's research, including Goethe's 'Elective Affinities'. Bacon viewed nature as a labyrinth through which science could provide a pathway: "A method rightly ordered leads by an unbroken route through the woods of experience to the open ground of axioms"

#### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:

Royal Academy, London Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture, Edinburgh Edinburgh College of Art Art in Healthcare, Edinburgh Alastair Salvesen Trust



22. Investigative Paths, 2015, oil on arches paper,  $57 \times 76.5 \text{ cms}$ 

 $^{32}$ 





## HARRY MORGAN (B.1990)



Harry Morgan outside his studio at Custom Lane, Edinburgh, 2017.

Harry Morgan is included in *First*, which coincides with his first ever solo exhibition – *Echo*. Harry currently works from his studio within Custom Lane, Edinburgh. Originally from Manchester, Harry Morgan gained a 1st Class BA (Hons) degree in Glass from Edinburgh College of Art in 2014. Since graduating, Harry has exhibited at the 2015 British Glass Biennale in Stourbridge, where he was awarded the *London Glassblowing Award for Emerging Talent*.

His work has already been exhibited widely throughout both the UK and internationally, and The Scottish Gallery is his first solo presentation.

"If materials contain history and meaning in their nature, then these ideas are embedded in objects. Echo displays a collection of objects that explores the relationship of materials through contrast. Despite being composed of the same elements, glass and concrete appear as conflicting materials. With unclear borders and internal dimension, glass reflects ambiguity and intangibility. In sharp contrast, concrete is brutally physical; the word itself is used to describe absolutes and certainties. Both materials have strong social, cultural and polarised connotations; from the sumptuous history of Venetian glass to the utopian concrete of post-war Brutalism. The use of glass in my work draws inspiration from the ancient Venetian glassblowing technique, *murrine*; where each rod or thread of glass is individually pulled by hand from a furnace. The glass is then arranged into a sequential structure and cast within concrete or precious metal, which binds them as one object. I'm interested in applying these traditional skills in alternative directions."



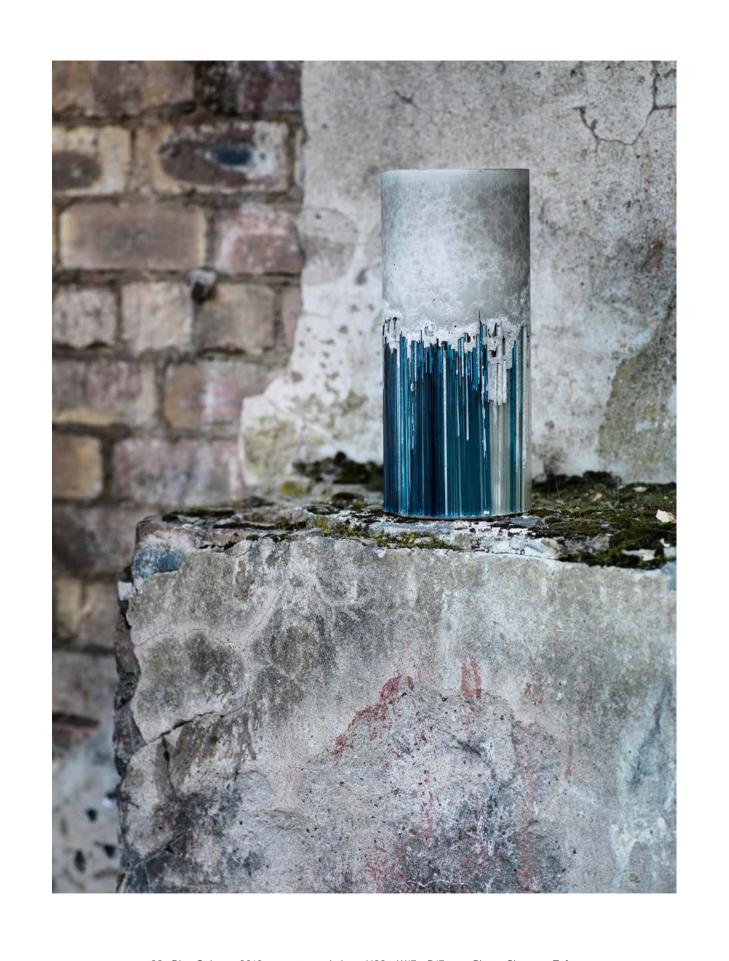
25. Blue Box, 2016, concrete and glass, H40 x W30 x D12 cms. Photo: Shannon Tofts





26. White Flux II, 2017, nickel silver and glass, H22 x W24 x D14 cms. Photo: Shannon Tofts

27. Enigma, 2017, concrete and glass, H78 x W32 x D32 cms. Photo: Shannon Tofts



28. Blue Column, 2016, concrete and glass, H38 x W17 x D17 cms. Photo: Shannon Tofts

## **ALAN ROBB RSW RSA (B.1946)**



Alan Robb, Self Portrait, 2016

#### **SACRED & PROFANE (2005-2017)**

- 29. St. Peter watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 30. Crusifix of the Artisans watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 31. St Lucy watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 32. St. Sebastian Rio watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 33. St. Jorge watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 34. St. Sebastian Bahia watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 35. Yansa St Barbara watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 36. Oxumare Snake Boy watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 37. Yemanja and the Indian watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 38. Ze Pomba watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 39. Pomba Rainha watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms
- 40. Exu and Pomba Gira watercolour and gouache, 26 x 20 cms

Alan Robb was born in Glasgow and brought up in Aberdeen. He graduated from Grays School of Art, Aberdeen in 1969 and from the Royal College of Art, London in 1972. Robb was appointed assistant art master at Oundle School in Northamptonshire and in 1975, relocated to Cork, Ireland as painting tutor at the Crawford School of Art. In 1980 he became head of Diploma Studies and as well as Painting, Printmaking and Sculpture, his remit included Art History, Stained Glass and Violin making. In 1983 he was appointed Head of School of Fine Art at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee and was awarded a personal chair in 1989. Robb retired as Professor Emeritus of the University of Dundee in 2007.

Alan Robb was elected as a member of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour in 2010 and a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 2011.

"As I review my practice and resulting body of work it seems like a speculative circular journey, based almost wholly on intuitive choices and a growing understanding of what I can do. The motivation and momentum comes from unexpected discoveries and the hundreds of small decisions, which give each work its resolved identity."

Sacred & Profane: A painterly exploration is made of material gathered from churches and museum collections to market stalls and specialist "magic shops" or the artist's collection of Christian votive figures, Macumba and Candomble figures in wood, metal or plaster. The resolution of each painting is a combination of reference and invention. There is latitude for interpretation as in all popular iconography and religious art, which is where the real interest lies.

#### **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:**

Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Collection
ANGUSalive
The Argyll Collection
Royal College of Art, London
Art and Heritage Collections, Robert Gordon University
Hospitalfield Arts, Arbroath
Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture, Edinburgh
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums
His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh

Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow















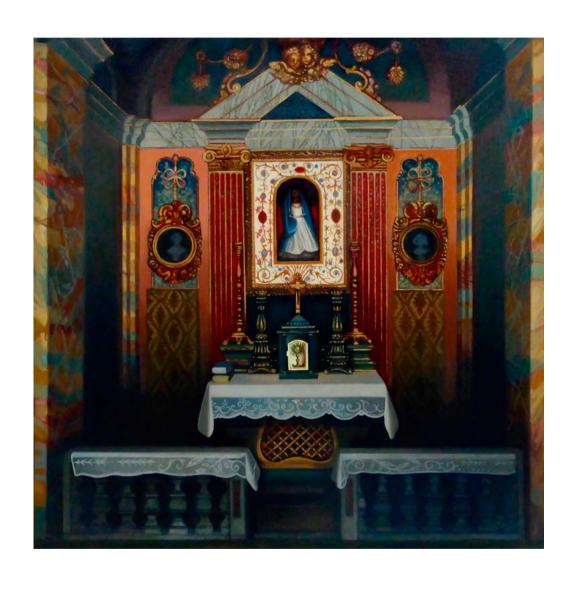














41. San Donino Chapel, 2004, oil on linen, 60 x 60 cms

42. Chance Encounter, 2013, acrylic on linen, 96 x 76 cms





## **BRONWEN SLEIGH (B.1980)**



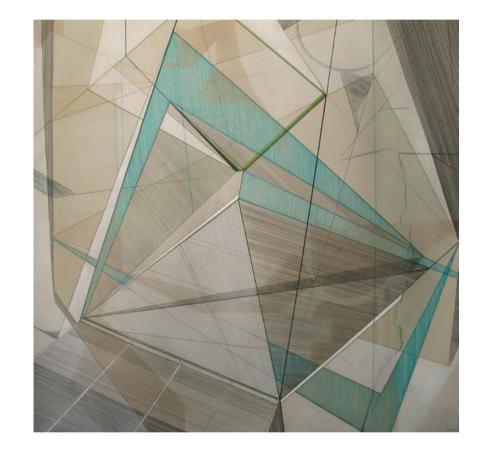
Bronwen Sleigh in her studio, Glasgow, 2017

Born in 1980 and raised in Wales, Bronwen Sleigh received her BA from The Glasgow School of Art in 2002 and an MA from The Royal College of Art, London in 2008, where she was selected for a six-week exchange to The University of Calgary, Canada. She has also worked for several prestigious arts organisations including The Royal College of Art, London, The Royal Academy Schools, London as a Print Fellow and at Edinburgh Printmakers as their etching technician and collaborating printer. Sleigh currently lives in Glasgow.

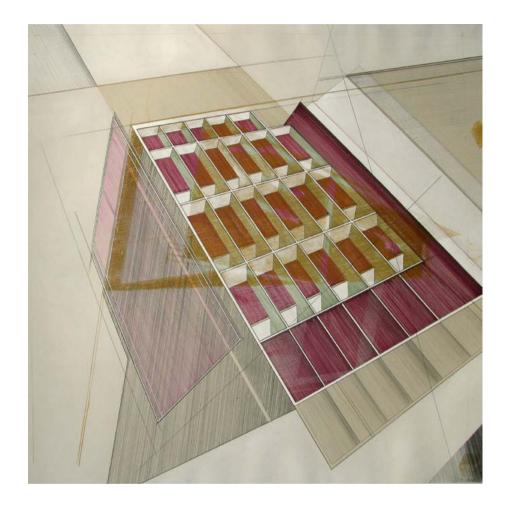
Bronwen Sleigh is a multi-disciplinary artist who takes inspiration from industrial architecture, unused and forgotten urban spaces, and environments at the edge of the city. Her work provokes an extended and considered dialogue with these spaces, which she transforms through the processes of painting and printmaking. Sleigh's work explores space rather than describing it, challenging perceptions of the ordinary by presenting it in an unfamiliar way.

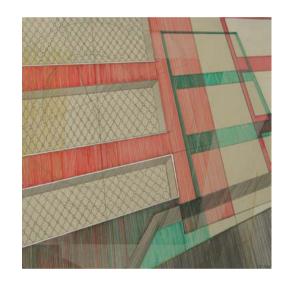
#### **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:**

British Museum, London
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Royal Academy School, London
Royal College of Art, London
The Parliamentary Art Collection, London
Aberystwyth University, Wales
Glasgow Print Studio
Edinburgh Printmakers
Highland Council Inverness Museum and Art Gallery
Strathclyde University, Glasgow
University of Calgary, Canada
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester















### **DAWN YOULL (B.1977)**



Dawn Youll in her studio, Glasgow, 2017 Photo: Colin Tennant

Dawn Youll is a ceramicist, originally from Sunderland, now based in Glasgow. She studied ceramics at The Glasgow School of Art, 1999 and later at Cardiff School of Art & Design, graduating with an MA in 2008. Alongside her studio practice she worked in the Scottish film and television industry and is currently Craft Programme Producer for Cove Park, an artists' residency organisation on the west coast of Scotland.

Dawn Youll's sculptural practice centres on the exploration of a personal narrative. The urban environment, the studio setting, and the making process itself all play a part in the development of her ornamentally scaled ceramic sculptures. From research gathered she selects and considers form, colour, surface and words as separate elements, gradually allowing them to find comfortable partners and groupings as a body of work develops. Using clay as her chosen medium and traditional ceramic techniques such as modelling, plaster forming, mould making and slip casting, allows her to explore the power of the ceramic ornament as a carrier of narratives, produced throughout history to record and commemorate many aspects of daily life.

#### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:

Victoria and Albert Museum, London Crafts Council Collection, London

Dawn Youll is represented by Marsden Woo Gallery, London

**Cat 52.** The three legged form in *Be Prepared* reflects that of a camp fire or a simple shelter and is reminiscent of the world of Guiding or Scouting. The gold of the piece references a different and perhaps darker side to self-preservation. The plastic cable tie both binds and grounds the two elements.

Cat 53. Clutch is one of three pieces generated by an interest in the temporary functions performed by a sandbag. This piece focuses on the ability of the bag to grip and is paired with a ceramic pole to illustrate the action. The title Clutch references both the physical action and the part of a car which depends on the skill and co-ordination of its driver in order to function. The dark grey and yellow of the two components reflect an urban road and it's instructive linear markings.

Cat 54. The two components in *Comprehensive Cover* take their forms from an industrial corner guard often used to protect shelving on a factory floor and a sandbag which has been shaped to neatly rest on top. The title itself relates to the double layer of defence brought together in the piece. Colours are taken from the many IKEA bags I have around the studio, which perform multiple functions once their original intended purpose is fulfilled.



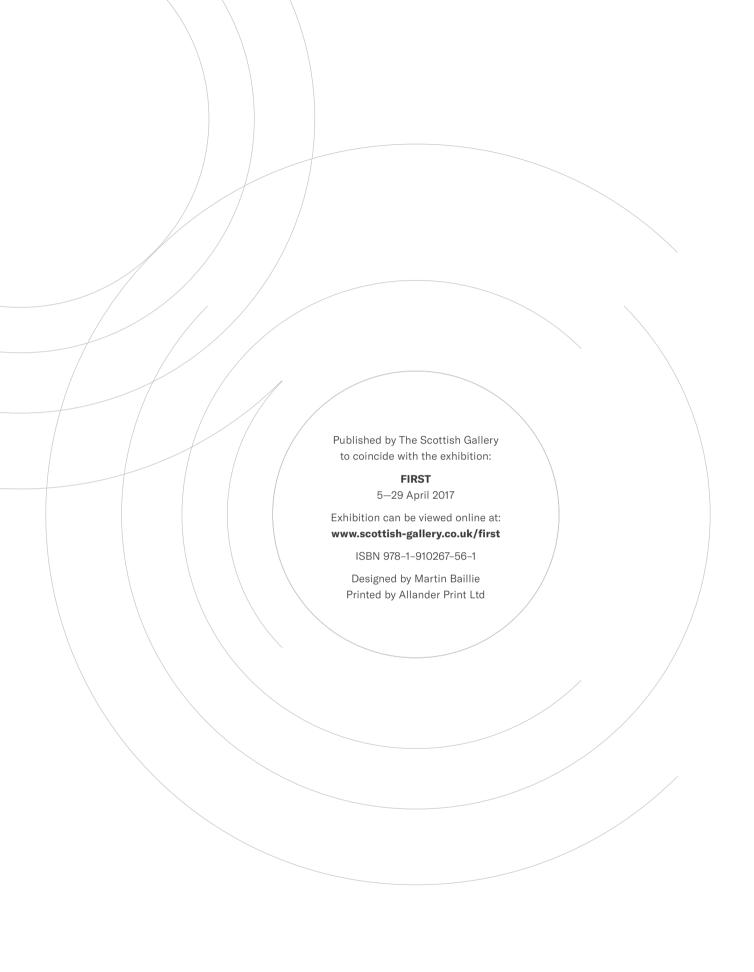
52. Be Prepared, 2014, slipcast earthenware, H26 x D34 cms. Photo: Philip Sayer, courtesy of Marsden Woo Gallery





Cat 55. Positive Parenting consists of two components which take as a starting point a sapling and its supporting wooden stake and rubber strap. The work considers shared identity and the alternating roles of the supported and the supporter. One protectively loops around the other but would in fact fall if its charge was not there.





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