



# MK CALLING 2020

**Garfield Weston Gallery Guide**

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15th Feb - 17th May  
130 Artists  
Free entry

# 1

*The Mezzanine*, 2020  
Book pages, adhesive

## Aaron Head

Aaron Head is an artist based in Milton Keynes. The disruption of language, whether visual, written or oral is a regular technique in his work. *The Mezzanine* is, in part, inspired by the novel of the same name by Nicholson Baker (1988).

In *The Mezzanine*, the protagonist, Howie, attempts to retell a simple moment in his past: going to buy shoelaces on his office lunch hour. Howie quickly becomes caught in endless digression, examining in more and more detail all the objects, products, and small methodical acts. These include the history of American vending machines; the static modernism of contemporary doorknob design; the inclusiveness of mug handles over the teacups; and why slicing toast diagonally is a more civilised habit than the usual perpendicular approach. Such preoccupations fill the minutes of each day with something resembling meaning for him.

# 42

*COMFORT 7/32/00*, 2019  
Wallpaper, framed archival  
pigment print, privacy film, text

## Elisabeth Molin

Elisabeth Molin (b. 1985, Denmark) lives and works in London. Molin investigates the overlap between mental space and physical architecture, as grounds of both construction and destruction.

*COMFORT 7/32/00* addresses entropy, the effects of urban environments on the body, and the surreal overlaps between biological and mechanical rhythms in the city. The title of this work refers to a note found by Molin on the street, which she was struck by but could not decipher. To the artist, it seemed to contain a paradox between a state of mind and a particular time, although the time was out of date or 'imagined', caught between past, present and future. *COMFORT 7/32/00* combines photography and short poetic texts, together creating a prism of approaches to the subject. The photographic images present moments of intersection, while the text describes bodily encounters with synthetic materials, screens and data. Printed on privacy film, the texts are only visible from certain angles in the room.

# 41

*A Gold Heart, 2020*  
Holographic vinyl on wheelie bin

## Iain Woods

Iain Woods is a recording, performance and video artist based in Coventry. Describing himself as the “bastard lovechild of Bruce Nauman and Madonna”, Woods’s work combines pop-performance and its presentational devices (singles, albums, music video, posters and live shows) with more traditional fine art processes. Reframing the ‘pop campaign’ as *gesamtkunstwerk* (a work combining many artforms): “I embark upon lengthy, conceptually-thematic research projects, collecting audio, video, visual and literature archives which are then processed and spat-out in endless combinations”.

The work presented here is from his current series *Populism* which spans society, community, nation and state and draws parallels between 1980s New York and Brexit-era England; “a gleaming, glossy, rainbow-holographic discotheque of capitalism, the veneer gently crumbling at the edges”.

# 2

*Mathiesen Road, Corner, 2019-2020*  
Graphite on paper

*Campion, 2019-2020*  
Graphite on paper

*Cut through, 2019-2020*  
Graphite on paper

## Emma Wilde

Emma Wilde’s work often explores the green spaces and suburban planning of Milton Keynes. As this new town has matured she has become increasingly fascinated with the way the hopeful geometry of the man-made and designed has come up against the circumstantial and accidental forces and forms of nature. Much of her work explores this process.

When making these drawings, Wilde re-read John Cheever’s short story *The Swimmer* (1964). The protagonist decides to swim home through his Californian neighbourhood via the swimming pools that adorn every garden there, only to find that ‘home’, when he arrives there, is no longer really home.

The hedgerows, trees – the privy fence – of suburban Milton Keynes suggests to Wilde the same idealism and pathos of *The Swimmer*. The tracing of these features map an uncanny journey through both time and town.

# 3

*Caveworld*, 2019  
Lithograph, silkscreen & digital print, paper collage, coloured pencil on black MDF

*The Barrens*, 2019  
Lithograph, silkscreen & digital print, paper collage, coloured pencil on black MDF

## Sebastian Thomas

Sebastian Thomas is based in Reading. Thomas's practice is concerned with how perceptions of reality are mediated through language. The collages presented in MK Calling combine lithographic, silkscreen and digitally printed paper with drawn and painted elements. They are imagined landscapes based on Thomas's interpretation of scenes from Russell Hoban's novel *Riddley Walker* (1980) set in a post-nuclear Britain. They depict a parallel universe, where fragmented components of past and future collide to form a strange new reality. The images operate like maps of these barren landscapes, building surreal narratives from the objects that float within them. The pictorial planes are subjected to a form of structural disintegration as the compositional elements repel each other, dispersing to the edge of the paper.

While language facilitates us in describing the world, it can also potentially obscure our view, creating a blind spot at the centre of our collective vision. This is reflected in Thomas's work materially through the appropriation and deconstruction of images from the sprawl of imagery surrounding us, as well as the elevation of cheap industrial materials and discarded objects.

# 40

*Missing! - The Bigger Picture*, 2020  
Recorded spoken word and singing bowls exhibited via a transducer and acrylic panel

## John Garrad

John Garrad is a sound artist living and working in Milton Keynes. On first coming to Milton Keynes in the 1990s, Garrad was drawn to the simplicity of its design, its modernity and its green spaces. Since the late 1970s, when he was involved in the original London Punk subculture, Garrad has taken an active interest in socio-political discourse.

*Missing! - The Bigger Picture* was devised and built specifically for MK Calling. The stand-alone installation is designed to challenge the demand for unbridled economic growth. The sound content is a spoken word piece, written and performed by Garrad and punctuated by contemporary speeches relating to climate change.

On attending the 2018 anniversary ceremony for the Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda at Willen Lake, Garrad was surprised to notice close parallels between his work and the words of Peter Kara, formerly High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, on greed. Kara referenced the Sanskrit word 'Lobha', meaning a fixation upon things we do not need, but which we believe will bring happiness if we possess them. Garrad's recent work has been inspired by this message.

# 39

*Torque 1*, 2019-2020  
Acrylic on canvas and telescopic prop

*Torque 2*, 2019-2020  
Acrylic on canvas and telescopic prop

*Go on say it (twice)*, 2019-2020  
Acrylic on canvas and hemlock plank

*Foil*, 2019-2020  
Acrylic on canvas and telescopic prop

## Miraj Ahmed

Miraj Ahmed is an artist working in London. Ahmed is interested in the tension between creative impulses of making and physical forces that seem to undermine them. Ahmed explores this through making installations that play with this precariousness and entropy. Paintings are compressed into place using construction acrow-props and telescopic poles. A painting takes support from the weight of a wooden plank leaning against it.

These paintings enter a three-dimensional dialogue between their pictorial content - the layering and build-up of colour pigment - and specific locations in space, through absurd methods of support. Processes embedded within the works allude to natural or human-made forces and resistances to them.

# 4

*Population Momentum 1961*, 2020  
Organic handmade watercolour on paper

*Demographic Transition 2019*, 2020  
Organic handmade watercolour on paper

## Lisa Marie-Price

Lisa-Marie Price grew up in Milton Keynes and now lives and works in London. Price's abstract paintings interpret the relationship between people and place. A growing consciousness of the world has driven Price to explore the use of art as tool to advocate for a healthier, more empathetic planet. Her decision to follow a vegan lifestyle influences her creative work: "My passion for this change has opened my eyes to a planet I didn't know before; hidden away, a secret to be unearthed... It has transformed not only what I eat but every action I take. Crucially, it has redefined my art."

The works displayed in MK Calling represent the population growth and urbanisation of Milton Keynes. *Population Momentum 1961* is made up of 53,000 dots which represent the 53,000 people living in Milton Keynes at that time. *Demographic Transition 2019* is comprised of 217,000 dots showing that the growth of Milton Keynes has surpassed expectations set out in its initial planning stages. Price collects pigments from travels and makes her own inks and paints from natural materials. The watercolour used is made from earth and rocks from Milton Keynes.

# 5

*Ghetto*, 2018  
Fineliner pen

*Godfather*, 2017  
Fineliner pen

*Extended Syllables*, 2019  
Ballpoint pen and collage

*Hajjah Aliya*, 2018  
Fineliner pen

*The Place of The Inferiority  
Complex*, 2018  
Fineliner pen

## Habib Hajallie

Born in south-east London, Habib Hajallie's Sierra Leonean and Lebanese heritage feeds into his practice. Through the exploration of ethnic identity, Hajallie gives voice to the empowerment of often marginalised ethnic groups. Hajallie investigates how disenfranchised people are often undermined by the mainstream media, reflecting an archaic hierarchy of status in alignment with colonial ideologies. The artist exposes how ethnocentrism remains prevalent within modern society.

Using antique texts and maps as canvases is a constant feature of Hajallie's practice. This process of bringing new value to often disregarded items creates a cohesion between aims of empowerment and the works' visual appearance. As Hajallie depicts various figures, he also elevates the ground used as he places it within a new context. Often representing himself or family members within his portraits, Hajallie creates a sense of immediacy through navigating the intersection of the artist's western upbringing and his African culture.

Regularly drawing with pen enables Hajallie to call upon traditional draughtsmanship, influenced by sketches from the high Renaissance. Through an almost contradictory process of using modern mediums alongside a classical approach to mark making, the artist celebrates authentic drawing within the digital age.

# 38

*Ambarnath Slow*, 2019  
Paper clay and bricks

## Rekha Sameer

Rekha Sameer is an artist based in Buckinghamshire.

The idea for *Ambarnath Slow* came from the slow train of the same name that runs between the main business district in the south of Mumbai to Ambarnath in the state of Maharashtra, India. "Whilst travelling on the slow train, one sees people defecating with their bottoms exposed. Their faces are shrouded with a shawl to conceal their identities from slower walking traffic. They live in ramshackle slums made out of corrugated metal sheets with no electricity and water. In a crowded city like Mumbai, most are forced to do their most private activities in public." Though the work might seem cheeky in its visual language, Sameer encourages viewers to engage with its serious undertones.

# 37

*Community*, 2019  
Ceramic magnets, Perspex/acrylic,  
supported within a tubular aluminium frame  
with wooden base

## Bob Spriggs

Bob Spriggs is an artist based in Tring, working in Digsweil, near Welwyn Garden City. *Community* is a kinetic sculpture made up of 100 magnetic pendulums, each four metres long. The magnets are set up to repel one another: if one moves, they all move.

The pendulums are in constant, hypnotically slow motion driven by electromagnetic circuits underneath. "I called this piece 'Community' because I believe it is similar to the way we interact with the people around us. What affects us as individuals, affects everyone around us in some way. We are all linked by invisible bonds, separate yet interdependent." Spriggs decided to leave a few pendulums empty, without magnets. They remain still while the rest of the pendulums move around them. There is nothing pushing them away, and so the other pendulums remain closer to these than to the others.

Spriggs's work synthesises art and science. Rather than making sculpture 'about' science, Spriggs uses it as his raw material. The invisible forces between objects and the special properties of light are of particular interest to the artist. The medium of the work may be intangible but its effects are powerful and real.

# 6

*Audition For The New You*, 2019  
Mixed media on paper

*Bow As Arc*, 2019  
Mixed media on paper

*Side Step*, 2019  
Mixed media on paper

## Kate Parrott

Kate Parrott is an artist working in London, previously living in Milton Keynes. Parrott's background is in sculpture, but increasingly her work incorporates drawing and collage.

In *Side Step*, *Bow as Arc* and *Audition for the New You*, Parrott brings the language and approaches of sculpture to works in two dimensions, which exist somewhere between sculpture and drawing. These provide a way for Parrott to work sculpturally but with a playful disregard for the practicalities of three-dimensional rules.

The drawings sometimes follow the laws of gravity. A stacked tower can be as unstable as it likes, preposterously thin spindles can support bulking masses of assembled shapes and unidentifiable forms. There is a playfulness to the way the drawn and collaged forms are combined, balanced, built, and joined. Sometimes a detail such as a hinge or some tape might find its way into a drawing, as a nod towards sculptural thinking and viability.

The drawings demonstrate the artist's interest in balance and collapse, and the application of colour. The works echo the illogical assemblage of forms which one might encounter on a deserted stage, or as a performance.

# 7

*Scaredy-cat, Scary Cat*, 2019  
Terracotta, acrylic, wood

## Henrietta MacPhee

Henrietta MacPhee is a British ceramic artist living and working in London. MacPhee creates *trompe l'oeil* illusions through sculpture and painting, traversing the border between two- and three-dimensions.

In *Scaredy-cat, Scary-cat* a leopard and a tiger are portrayed climbing a tree to escape from rising water, acting on their instinctive fear. With snarling faces and heads turned towards the viewer, these wildcats exhibit opposing emotions of fear and fierceness. The two entrance columns define a transformation of weakness into strength through a single stance.

MacPhee's work is a reflection of experience interwoven with imagination. She creates scenes of poetic tenderness and humour, interweaving metaphors for embracing life's diversity of peoples and cultures. Her work is playful, representing an innocent yet thought-provoking relationship with the material form.

# 36

*The Desperate Hours I and II*, 2018  
Mixed media installation with  
internal looped animated film

*Prison & Hospital*, 2018  
Mixed media installation with  
internal looped animated film

## Shona Davies, Dave Monaghan & Jon Klein

Davies, Monaghan & Klein have been working in collaboration since 2008. They create miniature worlds, populated using a combination of hand-modelled and recycled found objects.

*The Desperate Hours* is a diptych examining the impact of the dismantling of the NHS and disinvestment in the prison system. The work looks at the effects of reduction in funding on an understaffed hospital ward from a patient's perspective, and the violence and disorder of a prison from a prisoner's point of view. Beyond their closed environments we are able to witness the chaos they observe from their confinement.

The environments made by Davies, Monaghan & Klein are brought to life through the use of stop-motion animation and the creation of soundscapes. The films are housed within constructed installations that allow them to be watched through controlled viewpoints, inviting the audience inside to experience the narratives playing out as though part of them.

# 35

Collage, 2020  
Combination of stop-motion, drawn animation,  
photography and phone captured video

## Rachel Wright

Rachel Wright is a Milton Keynes based-artist working across video, film, animation, installation, craft and drawing. Wright's piece for MK Calling is an animated film about her relationship with the natural world within the confines of a terrace garden.

"My garden is a mixture of cultivars and wild flowers. I question when a weed becomes a *bone fide* plant and a desire to order the complexity of living things fascinates me and has become an ongoing preoccupation. Beyond the back gate, hidden behind the façade of a conservation area, a network of alleyways, often neglected and seen as messy eyesores, provide habitats for wildflowers and garden escapes. I see them as interesting places, where I discover species of plants, grasses, insects, birds and the occasional hedgehog. I pull up the weeds and add them to my garden to encourage creatures to visit."

# 8

Tying a Knot, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas

## Vilas Sirah

Vilas Sirah is an artist based in Milton Keynes.

"After my retirement few years ago, I realised, 95% of my time was spent by the sink and days were not long enough to do anything else. This stressed me quite a lot. I knew I had to divert my feet away from the kitchen sink. So, one day I just took a roll of plain wall paper and drew some curves and bends. To my amazement, that turned out into a beautiful drawing. I have not looked back since then. Nothing beats creating something from scratch turning it into a special memory for somebody else.

This witty painting is of giraffes tying the knot in a safari park. The bride and the groom are wearing their traditional African outfits with a matching jewellery made from shells. You can see how happy the groom looks, giving his shy bride a kiss, to be together forever. But, hang on... the waiters are patiently waiting to serve the tasty cakes. And you stop noticing a very clever and experienced photographer who is busy taking pictures. I bet the couple can't wait to see their unique wedding album. And, finally, the cloud is waiting in the bright blue sky to whisk off the newlyweds on a surprise honeymoon. The couple met at a movie called 'Shrek', the Donkey thinks that it's all because of him the couple is getting married. So, here he is very eager to give them a surprise of singing for them."

# 9

*Long Stretch*, 2020  
Black colour pencil and pencil on paper

## Graeme Roach

Graeme Roach moved to Milton Keynes in 1990. The drawing *Long Stretch* was created specifically for MK Calling 2020. While Roach worked, this Canadian Goose was quite content to pose and preen itself by the side of the lake at Mount Farm Park, Bletchley. Its form, while architectural in the strong arch shape of its extended wing, also revealed a complex pattern of feathers which became a focus of the drawing. The use of black colouring pencil proved effective not only in capturing the strength of the bird, but also allowed the layering of texture and tone to communicate the softness of the plumage. Milton Keynes encourages a wide variety of wildlife through its lakes and green spaces.

The subject of geese and swans has occupied Roach's work for a number of years. He is interested in their physical presence and strength, and often depicts them at a large scale. These powerful birds are considered to be creatures of beauty, yet they can also be aggressive and confrontational. It is this contradiction that makes them so fascinating to the artist to observe.

# 34

*changes*, 2017-present  
Durational video

## Guillaume Vandame

Guillaume Vandame is an artist and writer based in London, often collaborating with Josh Wright as the collective, Wright & Vandame. Vandame is primarily interested in pop culture and art history from a queer perspective. Growing up in New York and New Jersey, his art is influenced by the Pictures Generation and artists such as Jack Goldstein (1945-2003) and Dara Birnbaum (b. 1946). Moving-image and video art are a key part of his practice alongside text, digital painting, sculpture and performance, focusing on the poetry of images to express the human condition from a personal and collective visual language.

For MK Calling, Vandame presents two new artworks. The first is an ongoing video, *changes*, which consists of clips sourced from YouTube of people performing David Bowie's iconic song, including solo performances and ensembles, karaoke, classical covers, impersonators, instructional videos, weddings, kittens and unusual instruments such as banjos and ukuleles.

The second is a durational sound piece, *holding on and letting go*, which juxtaposes pop songs exploring the themes 'holding on' or 'letting go' with equal passion and enthusiasm. Both works treat the subject of time and change as something universal and inspiring, while placing a certain indifference and irony towards its inevitability.

# 33

*The Space In Between*, 2020  
Video

## Jam Patel

Jam Patel is a British director. Her work is infused with a striking sense of colour, mood and place, filled with passion, energy and humour. Patel's early career started at *Dazed & Confused* magazine. After contributing as a photographer she went onto shoot fashion for numerous editorials worldwide.

The women in this video were given something to eat in a performance context, in the hope of capturing an authentic moment. The work expands conversation, exploring what is not said. The space between the subject and artist, and then the artist and the viewer becomes its own moment.

Patel considers herself a storyteller first and foremost, always presenting a narrative within rich and sensual films. Her Indian heritage, nurturing a love for the vivid and bold, combined with her enthusiasm for magical realism, has led to her unique style. Patel's commercial & editorial clients include *Vogue*, *Chanel*, *Celine*, and *Charlotte Olympia*. She is currently writing her first feature film.

# 10

*Travelling Coral Museum*, 2010  
180 ceramic sculptures in a wooden cabinet

*Trio of Museum Specimens of Bleached Coral*, 2016-2019  
Bone china ceramics

## Dorothea Reid

Dorothea Reid lives in Buckinghamshire and works in ceramics and print from her studio and Buckinghamshire College. Her creative practice reflects the fragility of life on Earth, and the responsibilities of human beings to protect and maintain the balance of nature. Reid is particularly concerned with the marine environment.

*The Travelling Coral Museum* demonstrates how environmental change is bleaching and killing coral reefs around the world. The work is set in a future time – possibly only 100 years hence - when most of the ocean's coral has disappeared and only bleached skeletons remain. Reid uses plants from her garden and white clay to simulate coral textures and their bones.

More widely, Reid's work explores the impact of global warming on the sea. She is also engaged with the effects of over-fishing, and our relationship with the North Sea, having been born in North East Scotland. She undertook a residency and exhibited in Denmark before completing an MA in Ceramics.

# 11

*Polar Bear on the Ice*, 2019  
Oil colour on canvas

## Sharda Patel

Sharda Patel is an artist living in Milton Keynes.

“Following my busy working years I have diverted my energies into developing my skills, education and interest in making art through attending workshops. I love to create art and challenging myself to see what I can do. I put all my efforts, time, hard work and imagination into my work until I am satisfied. I am very much inspired by nature, people, animals, trees, beauty, colours, shadow, and shape, which I put into my paintings. Art inspires my deepest thoughts and interest. After seeing the media reports and documentaries about climate change affecting the environment and animals, and doing my own research, reading and browsing online, I had the idea for this polar bear painting. All animals living on ice face difficulties to survive due to climate change. The ice is melting and the sea level is rising. I like polar bears and their babies. I have used oil colour and different types of brushes to create the different visual effects. I wanted to show the melting ice, the beautiful polar bear and its baby. I have used the canvas to show the texture of the ice. This is my favourite work among my paintings.”

# 32

*What About Capitalism*, 2019  
Video

*Revisional Operation*, 2019  
Video

*Breeding Plan*, 2019  
Video

## Yande Ren

Yande Ren is an artist working in China.

“My works are based on daily life. I hope to make them vivid and accessible. First, they must be both interesting and thought-provoking. Nowadays, I prefer to say that my creative process is not solely about politics or society, but is more a way for me to perceive the subtlest details of things I encounter. Deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture, I have formed a unique world view that is reflected in my works. I am a pious Buddhist and strongly interested in philosophy and Taoist culture.”

# 31

*Song of Myself*, 2018  
Video

## Miles Umney

Miles Umney was born in Milton Keynes and lives and works in London. Umney works with collage, documentary, and fiction to explore the relationships between contemporary filmmaking technologies and the cultural contexts in which they are used.

For *Song of Myself* Umney used YouTube videos to reconstruct a short section of the poem *Song of Myself* by Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Reflecting on the themes in Whitman's poem of experience, mediation, and authorship, Umney creates a framework to think about the experience of being on YouTube.

# 12

*Hommage to Ernst Haeckel*, 2005  
Inkjet prints on acetate, laminated

## Astrid Baerndal

Astrid Baerndal was born in Sweden and lives in Milton Keynes. Her work demonstrates the beauty of nature and its variety, advocating for the protection of the environment and the creatures that inhabit it.

At the age of around four, Baerndal was shown the book *Art Forms in Nature* (1899-1904) by Olaf Breidbach, featuring the intricate drawings of Ernst Haeckel. To Baerndal, this felt like the discovery of a whole new universe: "the first time I understood that there is a whole amazing world out there, so detailed and beautiful - but not visible to the naked eye." *Hommage to Ernst Haeckel* acknowledges this formative encounter, presenting 'life forms' created by Baerndal through digitally altered photography. The insect-world, with its endless supply of shapes, forms and structures provided a multi-faceted source of inspiration to the artist. This work is based on repeatedly edited photos of fruit and vegetables.

"When insects disappear, other life forms will very soon as well!"

# 13

*Berg and Eldgos, 2020*  
Stoneware, clay hollow sculptures

## Andrew Macdermott

Andrew Macdermott lives and works in Milton Keynes. Macdermott's creative practice recalls the power of nature, drawing from strong memories of visiting wild and unforgiving places in Britain and abroad. The artist draws upon experiences of growing up, living and working in the relative calm and comfort of Milton Keynes, in contrast with nature's strength and our fragile place within it. Macdermott's memories of travelling to Iceland act as a reminder of this fragility, informing his creative pursuits in Milton Keynes.

Working in clay, Macdermott is drawn to texture, tone and the surfaces of the earth. The sculptures blend volcanic black clays with his own glaze recipes. Icelandic, icy blues, whites and volcanic tones are used to create forms which are influenced by the Reykjanes Peninsula on the Icelandic south-west coast.

Silhouetted against the often grey-filled skies, Macdermott's pieces echo rock formations thrusting from the ocean, and reflect mirror-like against the grey swirling sea, dominant within the supernatural wilderness. Through these works, the artist engages and evokes images of the natural world and our place within it.

# 30

*SANARE, 2019*  
4K single channel video,  
stereo sound (5 minutes)

## Karolina Lebek

Karolina Lebek is a Polish-born artist currently based in London. Lebek's practice merges sound, video, photography and sculpture to explore interests in consciousness, intergenerational trauma, history, nature, ecology and mental health.

The title of this work, 'Sanare' is a Latin word, meaning 'to heal'. The tradition of drinking mineral waters from active water springs in Krynica Zdroj in Poland – a historic health resort town attracting thousands of tourists each year with the promise of wellness – is the most vivid memory of a trip Lebek undertook with members of her family in 1996. This trip, taking her to the heart of a Lemko region of the Carpathian Mountains, existed as an initiation and first introduction to a cultural identity that had been erased from her upbringing through taboo and generational trauma, related to ethnic cleansing and resettlement of that region in 1947.

Through the act of visiting sanatoriums (medical spas) as an observer, Lebek participated in healing treatments, gathering information about the medicinal properties of natural materials, focusing on the inner worlds of other participants and spaces where healing occurs. This project takes a form of a video work, existing as a meditation on identity and healing, mental health and connection to nature beyond the physical.

# 29

*Ripping out his heart*, 2019  
Embroidery on cotton

*Gouging out his eyes*, 2019  
Embroidery on cotton

*Smothering*, 2019  
Embroidery on cotton

*Tearing out his windpipe*, 2019  
Embroidery on cotton

*Tearing limb from limb*, 2019  
Embroidery on cotton

## Ciara Callaghan

Ciara Callaghan is a fibre artist based in Milton Keynes. She uses natural dyeing, needlework and spinning to explore themes around ancient craft, lost wisdom and female power.

*How to murder a man with your bare hands* is a series of embroideries based around the fallacious law in Hong Kong that if a husband is unfaithful to his wife she is legally allowed to murder him on the condition that she uses her bare hands. These embroideries explore themes around uprising and female empowerment.

Making work in mediums often considered to be 'women's' crafts, such as embroidery and natural dyeing processes, Callaghan carves a space for these heritage, traditionally 'female' techniques within contemporary activism.

# 14

*Surrender*, 2019  
Acrylic on paper

## Linnet Rubaya

Linnet Rubaya is a self-taught artist based in Leeds. Born in Harare and raised in London, Rubaya's works on paper aim to inspire, empower and educate observers: "You are important, and your story is important. Your story means you choose the tone and invent the language you use to say who you are and what you mean. But you are not just your story you are your potential fulfilled."

On *Surrender* the artist notes: "In times of unrest, the first people to be persecuted and silenced are the artists, the authors and the free-thinking journalists. They have the power to speak to people's humanity in a way that is unmatched. This piece is a commentary on pain, hope and strength black people all over the world carry. From Albania to Zimbabwe, black people can and will relate to this image but more importantly they will have a story in which they can attest to the strength of surrender. Surrender; Brave despite it, wiser because it".

With contemporary influences from artists such as Nelson Makamo, Barkley L Hendricks and most notably Kerry James Marshall, Rubaya aims to provide a unique commentary primarily for under-represented people.

# 15

.-. , 2020  
Audio, paper, charcoal, graphite

## Giuseppe Alfano & Roisin Callaghan

Giuseppe Alfano is a composer and musician working collaboratively with artist Roisin Callaghan, to create site-specific sound installations which explore the architecture of a given space, drawing attention to how we listen. They create scores either from the existing sound of a space as audio maps, or the physical nature of a site through a graphic (or drawn) score, played as pieces of music within the space.

Working at the intersection of music, sound and visual art the work created for MK Calling 2020 explores active listening. Viewers are invited to listen and respond to the sound work, offering an opportunity for participation.

.-. explores listening as a solo experience, which is then made into a collective one through the creation of the graphic score. The initial piece is created through abstract shapes and symbols, which themselves are based on the architectural structure of the space. Visitors are presented with instructions to create an arrangement of marks, dots and dashes, in response to the sound they are listening to.

# 28

*loose sheets*, 2018-present  
Mixed media

## Wai Wai Pang

Wai Wai Pang is an illustrator based in Milton Keynes. Pang's work seeks to capture feelings and emotions with lines, gestures and groupings.

"home  
belonging  
longing  
memories  
growth  
joy"

*loose sheets* is an ongoing exploration of ideas, memory, and making connections through drawing and mark-making on loose paper. The pages are unprecious, often crumpled and creased; stored in a shoebox like old photos, miscellaneous objects, undiscovered treasures.

# 27

*Community Netwalk*, 2019  
Ink and watercolour on paper

*Sketchbooks x 4, Untitled*, 2017 - 2020  
Drawings and watercolour paintings

*Community Networking at the  
Festival of Creative Urban Living*, 2019  
Ink and watercolour on paper

## Suzanna Raymond

Suzanna Raymond is an artist living and working in Milton Keynes. Raymond's subjects include urban and social landscapes, and the way they evolve over time through challenges to their original functions. By considering Milton Keynes as a microcosm of the wider world, Raymond aims to question the associations between privately-owned 'public' space, and how this is used.

Local community spaces are constantly changing, adapting to revisions in funding, leases, and alterations to the planned vision for urban growth. This has led Raymond to take an interest in the relationship between the availability of community space and how it is used by services, community groups, and the public.

Through urban sketching, Raymond has started to document some of the informal and formal structures of the local landscape and beyond. The artist's drawings and notes record the ways in which people use buildings such as shopping centres, community centres, and galleries, to build connections and provide peer support. These sketches hint at an underlying tension between the design of public spaces and how they are utilised.

"Ideally my work is the starting point for a conversation, or insights into accepted structures, allowing us to question the logic behind them."

# 16

*Ripples*, 2020  
Ink and wax

*Rhythm*, 2020  
Ink and wax

## Dawn Iles

Dawn Iles is an artist living in Milton Keynes. Her works often combine the use of acrylic paint with media such as ink and wax to create ephemeral, fleeting moments.

The limited colour palette of the works displayed enhances their contrast and impact. The natural world, which Iles considers to represent the essence of life, is important within the practice as she looks for the abstract and geometric repeated patterns of nature. Iles harnesses these forms to express emotions which are either unconscious or on the surface. The multiple senses and symbols of these works come into focus over time.

# 17

*The Planet*, 2013  
Silk weaving with natural dye (plants)

*The Lagoon*, 2013  
Silk weaving with natural dye (plants)

*The Stratum*, 2010  
Silk weaving with natural dye (plants)

## Emi Fujisawa

Emi Fujisawa is a Japanese textile artist based in England, specialising in hand-weaving with natural materials and dyeing.

Influenced by traditional techniques including natural dyeing, Fujisawa started researching methods using found flowers and plants as an art student in London. The artist has developed several different techniques of natural dyeing, and has created their own bespoke colour palettes using organic dyes with their own special recipes. Inspired by nature, Fujisawa wove the textiles on display using the double-weaving and ikat techniques, using different silks and natural yarns which create unique textures and a rich colour mix.

In making the work, Fujisawa conducts research into the historic production of dyes, including some of the most ancient techniques using muds. The artist has travelled along the English coast collecting chalks of different colours, and after many experiments, managed to successfully develop dyeing techniques for her yarns without the use of any chemicals.

# 26

*An ABC of Childhood Memories*, 2007  
Altered book: book pages, digital print, Japanese stab stitched

*Tracery de la dentelle en punt*, 2013  
Recycled envelopes, mixed media

*Postcards from Home; Sets 1-4*, 2014  
Four tins, containing altered postcards, thread

## Melanie Bush

Melanie Bush is a book artist with a studio near Milton Keynes. She co-founded the book arts collaborative *we love your books*.

*An ABC of Childhood Memories* is an altered book collecting the childhood memories of 16 people aged six to 82, presented as an alphabetic primer. The words and images are printed over the existing text about doll's houses, deliberately making it less easy to read. The images are from childhood sources, both personal and found. The cover is Japanese stab stitched.

*Tracery de la dentelle en punt* was inspired by the artist's discovery in Ghent of old lace patterns, pricked onto envelopes. The new pieces trace the moving points in the lives of five or six interconnected people. The quotes, opposite to the individuals, are from the works of the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), whose surname is the Flemish word for 'lace'.

*Postcards from Home* is a set of four tin boxes containing ideas, images, words and structures exploring the concept of home. Each set has postcards that were created under themes of place, pattern and child. The jacquard cards suggest a calendar of events in the home, both good and bad. The house of cards represents the fragility of home.

# 25

Sketchbooks  
Cake for exhibition closing event

## Lee Farmer

Lee Farmer is an artist and baker who lives and works in the Milton Keynes area. Farmer began his cake business in 2011, combining a training and career in fine art with a long standing interest in baking.

“I love sugar, chocolate and the processes of chemistry, fabrication and assembly involved. I also enjoy the degree of ornamentation which is traditionally associated with the craft and its contrast with the minimal surfaces and finishes which can also be employed. Making cakes is challenging, in that it involves manipulating soft and perishable materials to build a new form, something stronger than the sum of its parts but ultimately impermanent.”

# 18

*Ye Olde Swan*, 2020  
Oil on board

*Bletchley Park*, 2020  
Oil on board

*Peace Pagoda*, 2020  
Oil on board

## Charlie Denning

Charlie Denning grew up in Milton Keynes, and now lives in Norfolk. Her current practice, comprising an ongoing project initiated in 2016, considers architecture through oil paintings on board, which are referred to as ‘portraits of buildings’. These are the result of on-foot exploration and photography of Norwich and surrounding areas of Norfolk, where the artist believes the vast variety of architecture is taken for granted. For this reason, Denning removes the buildings from their contexts to elevate them and to draw the viewer in. Denning researches the histories of the buildings, which in turn influence the creation of their ‘portraits’ and eventual titling. Her most recent pieces, including those displayed here, were created in part due to the personal significance of the subject matter to the artist. Denning made them to disprove her own hypothesis of a lack of interesting architecture in Milton Keynes, where, growing up in the town centre’s estates, the artist felt surrounded by the Brutalist architecture of the 1960s and early 1970s.

# 19

*Entrance*, 2017  
Carved painted plaster, gold leaf on panel

*Orange Tree With Folkton Drum*, 2018  
Acrylic, gold leaf, carved plaster on panel

*Moon Bridge*, 2019  
Acrylic, gesso, oak, gold and silver leaf,  
brass hinges and bronze latch

## Edward Durdey

Edward Durdey (b. 1954) has lived and worked in Milton Keynes since leaving the Royal College of Art in 1982. Durdey's interior landscapes are suffused with jewel-like colour and light, representing contemplative explorations of the artist's subconscious.

*Moon Bridge* opens to reveal an inner-world. The moon is echoed in the bridge and its reflection, linking the moon to its influence on the tides. On the left-hand panel, a Chinese Moon Vase can be seen. The plaster relief *Entrance* echoes Indian temple and early Greek Bas relief carving. It is rendered in builders' finishing plaster, with areas of gold leaf, echoing religious icons.

In *Orange Tree with Folkton Drum*, a stylised orange tree is set in a primordial landscape before an enormous gold leaf sun. At its base are offerings of vessels, fruits and flowers, all symbols of abundance. They are carved in relief to enhance their connection to the earth. The Folkton Drum, held by the British Museum and currently on loan to Stonehenge, was excavated in Yorkshire from a Neolithic children's grave dating from 2600 BCE. It is believed to be a measuring device used to plan the building of Stonehenge.

# 24

*Why Don't You Love Me?*, 2018  
Comic strips

## Paul B. Rainey

Paul B. Rainey is an artist working in Milton Keynes. *Why Don't You Love Me?* is a graphic novel which the artist has developed over several years. While each page works as a strip in its own right, eventually they will interlock to form a cohesive whole.

"I started out seeing if I could create a sitcom about a dysfunctional family where, at the end of the day, they still don't love each other. I have found that since working with these characters over the years... *Why Don't You Love Me?* also examines depression, loneliness and parental neglect."

Pages from *Why Don't You Love Me?* appeared in two previous MK Calling exhibitions. Rainey expects to have finished work on this graphic novel by the summer of 2020.

# 23

*Ghost Ship*, 2019  
Smoke fired clay

*Sunk*, 2019  
Smoke fired clay

## Morag MacInnes

Morag MacInnes makes sculptural clay work using a variety of techniques. MacInnes lived in Milton Keynes for 16 years, teaching art and participating in the Silbury Group. MacInnes is interested in exploring themes that elicit resonance and emotional responses. The artist has always been fascinated by myths, archetypes and symbolic imagery that reoccurs across time and space. Ancient cultures form a constant influence. The pieces included in MK Calling are a loosely nautical body of work reflecting the artist's interest in how we move in a man-made way in water. They have been made with Doble's clay, from Cornwall, slipped and smoke fired in a brick kiln. The intense smoke firing processes that are somewhat uncontrollable echo the peculiar primeval character of the pieces.

# 20

*Resilience Series: Autumn Sacrifice*, 2018-2019  
Watercolour on handmade khadi paper

## Ritu Sood

Ritu Sood is a London-based artist. *Resilience Series: Autumn Sacrifice* is a selection of observational paintings made on Hampstead Heath, London, of autumnal paired trees and leaves in the midst of sacrifice. In this artwork, Sood combines nine paintings to document the seductive palette of these trees and their quiet power.

"Autumn is a time of breathtakingly beautiful displays of colour in trees. What we are witnessing is, in fact, radical action by trees to survive the imminent cold. The tree pulls its nutrients back into the trunk and strips the leaves of chlorophyll leaving behind their original colours; striking yellows, warm oranges, deep reds and intense purples."

Central to Sood's artwork is a lifelong study of the emotive power of nature's colours, our innate reading of the body and a naturalist's eye. The artworks act as 'portals' into seeing what connects us, and are underpinned by Sood's political sensibility.

# 21

*In The Workshop of Dr Coppélius*, 2018  
Oil on paper

*The Sacred Flame*, 2018  
Oil on paper

## Len Hollman

Len Hollman is an artist living near Milton Keynes. His pictures originate as pencil drawings on stretched paper, begun with no particular subject matter in mind. After several days of drawing and erasing, Hollman's subjects begin to appear. The images that surface relate to long-buried childhood memories, dreams or fantasies.

*In The Workshop of Dr. Coppélius* imagines a scene from the ballet *Coppélia* (1870), with score by Léo Delibes. In the ballet, the eccentric Dr Coppélius makes a life-sized female mannequin with whom Franz, a village boy, falls in love.

*The Sacred Flame* suggests the importance in many cultures of fire as a focus of worship and ritual. Fire is often a symbol of purity and continuity, in the form of a sacred flame either placed on an altar or existing within a secret place. Those chosen to tend the sacred flame have often been required to share its properties of purity and grace.

# 22

*Piecework*, 2014  
Photographs and sound file

## Bronya Arciszewska

Bronya Arciszewska is an artist based in Bedford. Arciszewska creates performative installations and costume for film, theatre and dance. She is drawn to the universal relatability of costume.

This work was inspired by *Smallcreep's Day* (1965), a surrealist novel by Peter Currell Brown (b. 1936), satirising the dangers of industrialisation. Developing the novel's themes, Arciszewska's performance piece is a study on standardisation and our resulting lack of engagement with the surrounding world. It is heavily influenced by the concept of 'piecework', where repetitive acts have no greater meaning for the worker than their quota-filling function. In such circumstances, the body becomes indistinguishable from the machine.

The performance relays the journey of an insignificant worker, Smallcreep, who embarks upon a quest to discover the meaning of his contribution to the 'Great Machine'. Contained and controlled by his fiercely delineated role, his movements are at first restricted. As his journey develops, he unfolds seemingly endless layers of identical components, with the human form reduced to pattern pieces. Eventually a great structure is revealed, a meaningless abstract mass, through which Smallcreep comprehends the futility of his existence. Overwhelmed, he returns to his place in the assembly line.