

Get Fresh

14 January – 5 March 2017

Get Fresh is a biennial exhibition which showcases the work of new makers and graduates from the Southwest region. It is an important part of Devon Guild of Craftsmen's remit to support what is often referred to as 'emerging' talent from the region. In practice this can be a recently graduated young student, someone who has returned to college as part of a career change or someone who has learned their skills and set up their practice without going through the college route. The criteria for applying to be in *Get Fresh* states that 'applicants must have graduated or set up their own studio within the last five years'.

Over 40 applications for *Get Fresh* were received this year with the final 15 exhibitors chosen by Laura Wasley, Contemporary Craft Programme Leader, Plymouth College of Art (PCA) and Devon Guild of Craftsmen's exhibitions manager, Saffron Wynne. In tandem with *Get Fresh*, Riverside Gallery is showing **Spotlight**, also a biennial exhibition, which showcases work made by Devon Guild Associate Members. This year our five *Spotlight* exhibitors are working on a fairly large scale. The two exhibitions are closely related in that they are both showing makers in the early stages of their careers and many *Get Fresh* exhibitors become associate Devon Guild members. We hope that, in turn, our associate members will progress to full membership of Devon Guild.

Makers and artists at the beginning of their careers require exhibiting and selling opportunities in order to build their experience, confidence and practice. As well as honing their designing and making skills they must get to grips with such things as deadlines, submission processes, writing statements, marketing know-how and, sometimes, rejection. Despite the many galleries, shops, art and craft fairs and online selling opportunities available to makers and artists, it's a competitive market and the nature of the work, made by hand, often with expensive materials or labour intensive processes, means the work is never going to be cheap. As with all products, either mass-produced or hand-made, the market place is crucial.



Image: Mark Cullen, hand dyed wool

One of the big changes making its presence felt in contemporary craft practice is the availability of digital technology which provides new, highly sophisticated tools such as laser cutters, 3D printers and scanners. These new technologies are present in our 2017 *Get Fresh* but they are not as prevalent as one might expect from a cohort of new makers. Luke Axworthy uses 3D printing and scanning in combination with traditional glass blowing and metal working techniques whilst Carey Ellis utilises digital embroidery. However, most of the work in the exhibition, while much has a contemporary aesthetic, relies solidly on traditional craft techniques. These include silversmithing, weaving, woodwork, screenprinting, pate de verre (glass paste kiln casting), sculptural ceramics and metalwork.

Emma Finch's urban, architectural themed ceramics are screen printed and hand painted with cityscapes which show the constant cycle of dilapidation, demolition, rebuilding and regeneration which marks out our capital city as a shape-changing, dynamic metropolis. Emma's imagery of recognisable landmark buildings mixed with faded estates on the glazed surface of tall vases and shallow dishes has a pleasing painterly quality.

Image: Emma Finch, Olive cityscape with Shard



Sarah Duncan's prints, photo etchings and lithographs, show decidedly un-earthbound imagery. Water and heavenly bodies are her subjects with the night sky, as she puts it, a screen for human dreams. Sarah's prints are made using aluminium plates coated with a photopolymer film which is exposed to UV light with a 'manipulated' photo negative in place. Post-exposure, the plate is developed and hardened with the printing done in a similar manner to a traditional etching plate - covered in ink, wiped and printed under high pressure in an etching press. Her lithographs also use a light sensitive substrate exposed to a photo positive image which is engraved onto the plate by chemical treatment. The final stage, printing the image, is done with an offset litho press with as many as four plates used for separate colours. Sarah's prints of dark water and celestial skies show us that there are still mysteries and unreachable places which, despite our constant appetite for 'knowing' and 'having', reminds us that we are in fact only human.



Image: Sarah Duncan, Nova Stellar

Marieke Ringel's ceramic sculptures are a little unsettling. Made from stoneware clay mixed with body stain and fine grog, her finely modelled subjects are presented in shallow boxes. Are they portraits or do they have a resemblance to hunting trophies? Do they expose the close but too often exploitative relationship that humans have with other species or are they, as Marieke suggests, a metaphor for human emotions and possibly our desire for wildness and freedom? Either way, Marieke's use of clay is skilful and assured; she understands her material and what she wants to do with it.

Image: Marieke Ringel, Bones



Claire Read's 'story boxes', composed as they are from repurposed objects, mostly from the first half of the twentieth century, cannot help but evoke a sense of nostalgia. Far from being sentimental, her minimal, well-chosen use of text and tune makes them humorous, theatrical and charming.

Image: Clare Read, Happily Ever After

There are fifteen exhibitors in this show and I have only highlighted a few but, overall, *Get Fresh '17* shows a high standard of design and craftsmanship and Devon Guild is very pleased to be showing the work of all these new makers. The range of work on show is diverse and inventive, but all of it, whether traditionally based or contemporary and conceptual, employs a variety of skills, tools and technology, materials and material knowledge. Whether our *Get Fresh* exhibitors become full-time, self-employed designers, artists and makers or follow a mixed career, their knowledge and experience is already extensive and hopefully all will find ways to enable them to continue making their own work and also pass on their skills.

Further images and information on *Get Fresh* exhibitors' work can be found on the Devon Guild website www.crafts.org.uk and will feature on our social media platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Devon-Guild-of-Craftsmen/65969175737>

<https://twitter.com/devonguild> / @devonguild

<https://www.instagram.com/devonguildcrafts/> @devonguildcrafts



The Guild has a *Learning Outside the Classroom* badge. This means we provide an environment of Learning and Safety and are a trusted centre for education providers to use in curriculum teaching.



ARTS AWARD students and advisors: For **Discover the arts** - we can help participants in different arts activities with our Supporter offer: We run regular hands-on workshops in a wide range of art, craft and design subjects, delivered by skilled workshop leaders. These include printmaking, ceramics, textiles,

willow, paper, recycled materials, natural materials and mosaic. (See our website/events brochure.)

Find out - experience artists and their work. We offer inspirational talks by artists and makers. Young people can also take a look at our member's directory on www.crafts.org.uk to find out more about a chosen artist and their work.

Share - show your discovery to others. At the end of our workshops and talks, we can provide time for Arts Award participants to share what they have enjoyed and learnt with others. Our learning team members can also be on hand to hear from young people individually.

ALSO: If you are running creative courses or Arts Week activities for your group, school or college, please get in touch with us to arrange a visit. Visit our website to check out exhibition dates.

Call **01626 832223** to chat to Phil or Anna, our Education staff, about arranging a group visit plus Introductory Tour of the exhibition and any specialist requirements.

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