



BEYOND THE FRAME

exhibition catalogue

studio 8 collective

artists residency 28 March - 20 April 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Studio 8 Collective has co-created an immersive artists residency and exhibition at Mura Ma Art Space. Their goal was to challenge traditional ways of presenting art, revealing the process of making, discussion and experimentation usually reserved for the studio, and to see what happens in a co-working space.

Visitors to the gallery were invited to observe the artists' work in progress as it unfolds, whilst the artists consider the threads and themes that connect their work and ask, 'what is the value of collective creativity?' To see what happens when they leave the singular studio environment.

The residency is the first time the artists have worked together as Studio 8 Collective. It follows a three-month programme of peer-led studio visits and critiques facilitated by Nan Collantine of Mura Ma to investigate a collective and peer-led approach to developing an artists' creative practice. Each artist is now planning a new piece of work that will be realised, and collaboratively developed and presented in the gallery.

"The peer-led process is a non-hierarchical system that enables artists to work collectively to support development, independence, risk taking and shared resources.

It has been an honour to simply hold that space for that to happen. Firstly in providing a structure in which to support, critique and appreciate each other's studio practice and then to invite them into Mura Ma to share a working space.

During this 4 week residency the artists have formed a collective and not only produced new work as individuals, but also to continue conversations, try out new skills and techniques and experiment and take risks.

It has been exciting to watch each artist challenge and push their practice. Collectively they have formed connections, pulling on threads of ideas and conceptual themes such as taking up space, what implied meaning materials and objects hold and the systems and structures that might restrict and hold us; exploring what we respond to and how art making helps us to find a way to investigate, describe and determine what matters to us.

It is not an easy undertaking and I'd like to congratulate all the artists on their grace, bravery and determination throughout this process. It is truly evident in the work that has emerged from it.

Nancy Collantine
Mura Ma

MEET THE ARTIST

Suzanne Bethell



Suzanne Bethell developed her art practice whilst following a career as a lecturer in Teacher Education and first started exhibiting her work in 1995.

In 2020 she was selected for Bolder, a talent development programme with Castlefield Gallery. Suzanne has exhibited widely throughout the UK, including most recently in a solo exhibition in the Granada Gallery at HOME, Manchester. Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo show at the Penwith Gallery, St Ives in April 2025. Her work is in private collections in the UK and internationally.



My method of making art is initially intuitive and process led. New work arises when a blend of internal and external stimuli triggers strong feeling.

For this residency I made a conscious choice about inspiration. I was interested in discovering how responding emotionally to different types of music would be translated into visual representation.

I intentionally chose contrasting pieces, each of which resonated personally as having powerful emotional impact.

I was also keen to explore to what extent there is a universal language of mark making relating to different emotional states, an idea explored by Betty Edwards in *Drawing On The Artist Within*.

Would the marks representing joy, as in *Ode to Joy* by Beethoven, be different from the rousing tone and enigmatic lyrics of *Hallelujah* by Leonard Cohen?

What colour choices would dominate with Lou Reed's *Walk on the Wild Side*?

Influenced subconsciously by the work evolving around me, and the nature of the lyrics, *Walk on The Wild Side* was created initially without pause using a black ink tense block.

I loved the physicality and movement of the process. I then immediately worked into the piece with white paint. The neon canvasses were inspired by Yvonne's focus on surface texture.

Throughout the residency Suzanne has become much more experimental and playful in her approach to her work. Moving away from canvas and onto lining paper. During the residency we spoke about the pressure to work larger scale (onto expensive papers). The lining paper became a medium with little/no pressure attached. This freedom and playful..... became instrumental in her approach/development of work.

Suzanne started to explore the relationship between emotion and painting. Her aim was to capture 'true emotion/pure emotion' by listening to music as she worked. Specific tracks were chosen including Lou Reeds Walk on the Wild Side & Halleloulah by Leonard Cohen.

The works become visual records of music translated onto paper using a range of materials including oil sticks and spray paint. Inviting members of the public to participate opened up interesting conversations and discussions during the residency. Often the children visited had more confidence and experimented more widely than the adults.

Text written by Sarah Connell in response to Suzanne's installation



MEET THE ARTIST

Bernadette Bone



Bernadette Bone is an architect and educator who was guided on the path of following a respectable profession. Finding ways to expertly navigate the male dominated world of architecture, Bernadette now specialises in conservation architecture for which she established her own practice in 2014.

In her artistic practice, Bernadette works with illustration and textile; using ink, thread, pattern and colour to reveal the emotional story of the place and time in which she is.

In 2021, her hand stitched textile 'Stitch Your Story' was exhibited in the British Textile Biennial. In 2022 she was invited to do a residency at Islington Mill within their historic engine-house building. for the first time artistically.



I started the residency with a sequence of 3 layered silk hangings that were hung outside in the yard to be viewed through the windows of the gallery. They depicted the architectural classical orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian) overlaid with text. Interwoven into both layers is a flower symbol which represents both my personal voice as a female architect and artist.

The text was formed from both permanent and water soluble inks. The silks were left out in the rain for some of the text (difficult things said to me as a female architect) to be washed out. This happened rapidly (given the rain we have had!) which was expected but additional erosion happened and transfer of the inks through the layers of silk. Some film and photography of this was recorded but I would have liked to have had a more detailed record of this process.

When I brought the textiles into the gallery to work with there was a period of uncertainty as to what would come next. Collaborating with the other artists around how to work in the space has been really helpful. This is how my use of the 'darkroom' came about.

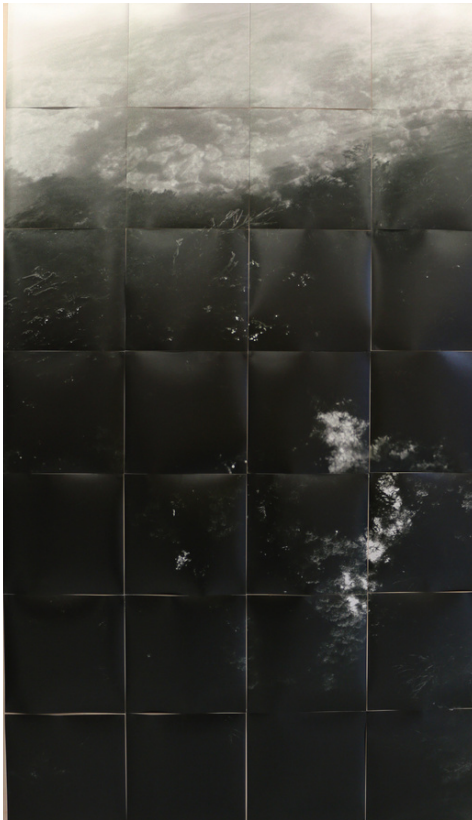
I have trialed different ways of hanging the textiles in the darkroom space, then sought opinion and self critiqued to develop the installation closely in line with my original intent.

The sculptural pieces that I sought at the outset of the process to incorporate, not knowing how, are now emerging.



MEET THE ARTIST

Sarah Connell



Sarah Connell is a contemporary analogue photographer based in Cheshire. She graduated from Manchester School of Art in 2017 with an MA in Photography. In 2022 she was longlisted for the Aesthetica Art Prize and awarded a 'Develop your Creative Practice Grant' from Arts Council England.

Recent exhibitions include; Queerfest, Norwich (2024) Espaço8 Casa Cultural, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2023); Aesthetica Art Prize, York Art Gallery (2022), In the Open, Rydale Museum & Gallery (2021); Air Open, Air Gallery, Altrincham (2021); Leeds Summer Group Show, Leeds (2021); Warrington Contemporary Arts Festival, Warrington Museum & Art Gallery (2020).



My initial goal for the residency was to break free from the traditional methods of presenting my work, mounted and framed prints on a gallery wall.

I started with large scale prints blown up to 4 feet by 4 feet – pieced together like a jigsaw onto the gallery wall. The jigsaw pieces allowed me to break apart the individual images, reworking and rearranging the pieces to create new images. This resulted in a larger scale piece 7 feet by 4 feet.

I chose images to explore that were more open, ambiguous and painterly.

The gallery space allowed me to push the size and scale of the work, which became more immersive than anything I've created before.

As I resolved the print installation, I started to think about the potential of projection to develop my work further. During the final week I'm hoping to create twilight projections on the gallery windows that can be viewed as people pass by. This is a return to exploring the role of light and darkness within my practice.

Returning to question the role of light and darkness within my practice.

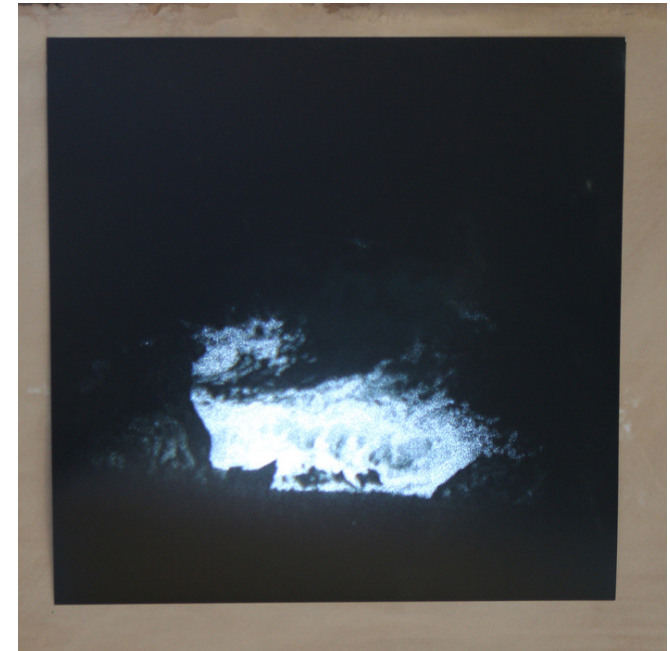
Sarah has created a series of three huge, painterly photographs which immediately demand our attention through their sheer scale. The pieces shimmer with mystery, their darkness revealing moments when bodies of water meet land, and eddying tides are reflected under moody skies.

Each composite whole has been constructed from a combination of 12" square photographs. These squares have in turn, been created from Sarah's careful selection of sections of smaller photographs drawn from her Jersey collection.

Her innovative process has involved the reconstruction and collaging of these chosen images to create the larger whole. By intentionally exposing fissures of joints between each small square, which also billows slightly, the viewer is able to grasp simultaneously the whole image and its individual component images.

A creative delight and an intriguing visual puzzle.

Text written by Suzanne Bethell in response to Sarah's installation



MEET THE ARTIST

Mair Doyle

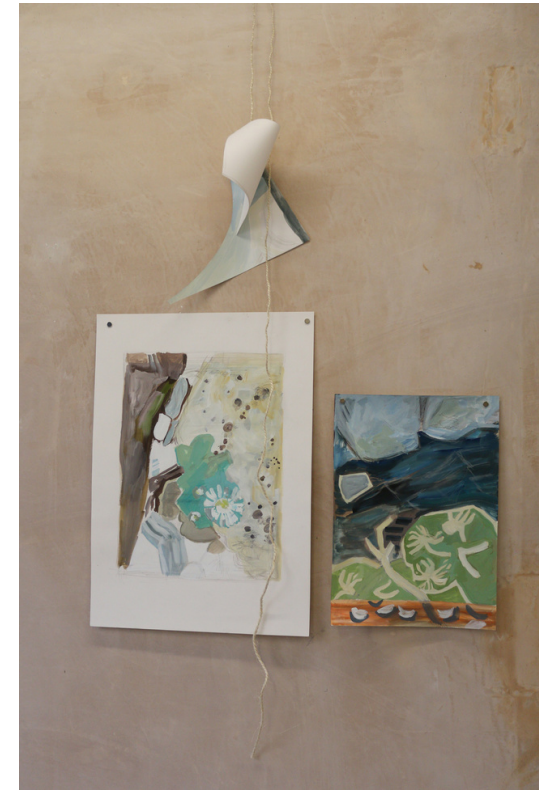


Mair Doyle has a BA (Hons) in Multi-Disciplinary Design and over 20 years experience in the animation industry, mainly as a drawn animator.

She's always been interested in exploring different art techniques and the natural world, and in 2022 she started teaching in a garden building, on the site of a former textile mill. Holly Vale Workshops is designed to complement her own art practice and share her enthusiasm for creativity & her environment.

I brought to the residency lots of sketches of nature, mainly trees - in paint, pencils & collage, and an idea of creating the feeling of nature expanding up and out over a section of the gallery wall.

For nature to claim space with a combination of realism and abstraction I wanted to attach my art rather than frame individual paintings. Keen to keep the sketchy element, I experimented with lots of different paper sizes, shapes and materials, for instance oil crayons on lining paper.



The 3D aspect of folding, raising and hanging the paper away from the wall was a way of exploring a tree canopy of papery leaves, and was something new & exciting from group discussions.

Nature bursting out of an actual wooden frame was then added, and also the inclusion of salvaged wood appearing like picture frames consumed by nature.

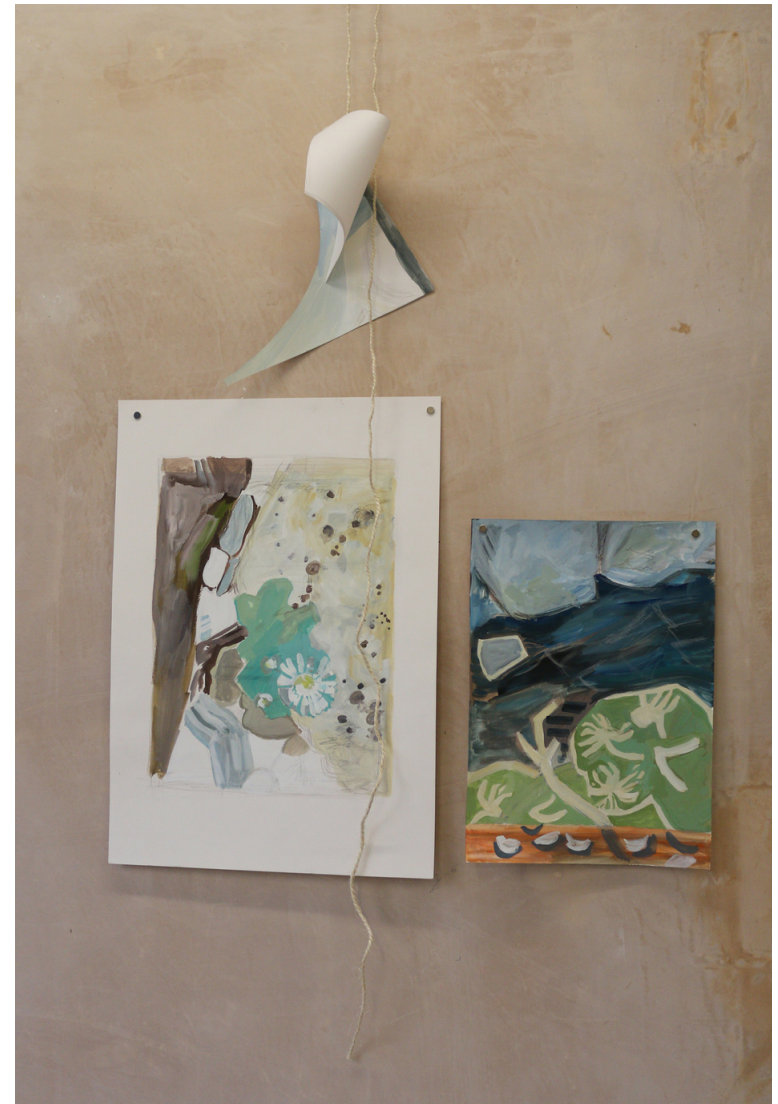
Mair has a studio in a natural space, where species of plants exist in harmony, unsurprisingly her sensitive drawings and paintings, rendered on paper with gouache or watercolour, staining and inhabiting wild space - reflect the natural world in which she lives and works.

Her starting point was the essence of her experience, now, brought to the collaborative studio where the organic and delicate reflections of nature have expanded and formed relationships with abstracted shape, colour and mood, invading neighbouring work in profile.

Placed with fixings, attachments devised to support the work and make connections, Mair has also used found objects in wood to allow work to spill out into the gallery.

I have admired the authenticity Mair brought to the studio truly reflecting her motivation and affection to recreate the flora and fauna of her studio practice. I have appreciated the transient nature of this work, both Mair and myself have resisted the desire to 'finish' work, highlighting process and the question of when the end point is apparent. I responded by placing fragments of decaying organic material as a memento mori to this end.

Text written by Yvonne Noworyta in response to Mair's installation



MEET THE ARTIST

Suzie McDaniel



Suzie McDaniel is a ceramic artist and member of the Manchester Ceramics Collective in Old Trafford. Her practice focuses on slip-casting or hand-built ceramic pieces primarily in porcelain, which are decorated using a mixture of hand painting and sgraffito, taking inspiration from ceramicists including Daphne Christoforou, Vicky Lindo and Helen Beard.

Suzie has a degree in Accountancy & Finance and started her art practice in 2018. Her first exhibition took place in October 2023 with the Manchester Ceramics Collective at the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair at Victoria Baths, Manchester. Gaining exclusive access to the Bath's archive for inspiration and creating a piece as a response to the location.

To overcome the difficulties of working with clay in a mixed studio environment, I decided to create the interpretations of my ideas with another equally sustainable material - paper. Discarded cardboard is utilised to create coils and build my vessels using the same techniques as ceramics.

Experimenting with watercolour, acrylics and oil pastels to produce waterscapes for collage decoration was fulfilling.



The residency has been instrumental in allowing me to really listen to my instinct and trust my ideas. Its also been pivotal in providing focus for future work as I'd been feeling a little lost in my practice.

I hadn't anticipated how much preparation prior to the residency would've helped my progress, as this is my first residency, it has been invaluable to learn this.

During the residency Suzie has created a sequence of sculptural maquettes testing new larger scale forms.

The maquettes follow slab building techniques using cardboard allowing a sustainable approach that is directly transferable to the medium of clay.

The sculptural pots are routed in archetypal forms but are also clearly contemporary. Each form has been informed by the previous and evolved in scale and complexity. They are intuitively and exquisitely proportioned.

This work builds on Suzie's latest project which celebrates female swimmers and female autonomy. As well as developing larger scale sculptural forms the maquettes provide an opportunity to test mark making, illustration and storytelling at this larger scale.

The maquettes have a powerful energy within the gallery space both individually and as a collection.

It has been inspiring to witness the development of Suzie's approach to form making and the expansive opportunities this direction has for her practice.



Text written by Bernadette Bone in response to Suzie's sculptures

MEET THE ARTIST

Yvonne Noworyta

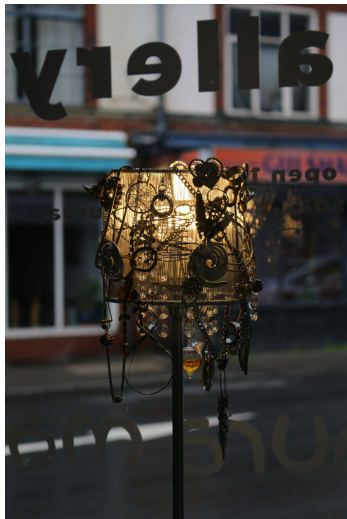


Yvonne Noworyta is studying in her final year of an MFA in Painting at Manchester School of Art. She also has a degree in embroidery, has taught textiles and exhibited widely with Decorum Artists, who were interested in collected ephemera, found objects stitched and manipulated wire and fabric. We enjoyed historical connections and otherworldly traces of being.

As part of her MFA programme, Yvonne has most recently exhibited at the fg. Gallery, Mura Ma and Inch Arts in Altrincham.

I have taken a retrospective view of my practice to inspire credible connections in paint, my love of texture along with manipulation of materials to form a surface support, painting layers of gesso over emulsion paint, enabled interesting effects, which were ideas arrived at during peer mentoring with the studio group.

Recurring themes identified, included white on white, where texture was picked out with Matt emulsion paint on stitch - this enabled the impression of traces of loss, being or absence, either eroded by time or physical embroidery techniques employed to this end giving nuance to the work, - using radical methods, tearing, cutting or editing out, obliterating that which has ended.



Now realised in paint - my aim is to light the results with a beacon.

Whilst the work of peers has been considered, in the organic nature of Mair's practice, the energy of Suzanne's drawing, has inspired, a line drawing in wire, that influenced by Lou Reed's walk on the wild side, also reminding me of the decadent and ostentatious times of the 1970s.

I have felt the fallout emotion, from past work, and I have realised this can result in a theatrical depiction of space.

Yvonne's art studio feels to me like the excitement gained backstage of a theatre - there's evidence of an abundance of curiosity into all aspects of art - paints, fabric, wire, collages all wait to be touched or held.

She has successfully brought this feeling into the gallery. I especially admire and respond to her love of texture.

Her process of painting white over all the carefully chosen different surfaces brings a unity uncluttered by colour - the tactile quality is paramount.

The wire 'line drawings' show Yvonne's response to Suzanne's art and create a lively musical energy.

Text written by Mair Doyle in response to Yvonne's installation





murama

Installation photography by Sarah Connell © 2024

To enquire please email nancy@murama.co.uk