ARCADIA

Amy Beager
Elizabeth Magill
Freya Douglas-Morris
Hannah Brown
Rene Gonzalez
Saad Oureshi
Sue Williams A'Court

OT
FSHO
OF ARTS

ARCADIA

"Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things."

Extract from 'Wild Geese' by Mary Oliver, Poet, 1986.

Participating artists:
Amy Beager, Elizabeth Magill, Freya Douglas-Morris, Hannah Brown, Rene Gonzalez, Saad Qureshi and Sue Williams A'Court.

The exhibition is in collaboration with A Space for Art.

Throughout the Western and Eastern canon of art history, depictions of landscapes have been a significant preoccupation for artists, often blending the inner and outer worlds into metaphysical or spiritual scenes that capture our deep connection with the natural world. This exhibition is presented within the beautiful Georgian interior of Home House, designed by renowned architect Robert Adams in 1775. In the eighteenth century, the landscape paintings of Claude Lorrain became highly collected in Europe and their bucolic visions of pastoralism inspired many artists of the time to focus on the genre. It eventually became one of the dominant art forms in the nineteenth century, particularly during the Romantic movement when representations of nature could dramatically and empathetically reflect the human condition.

It is this extraordinary tradition of responding to and capturing the natural world that this exhibition seeks to engage, celebrating utopian and idyllic scenes that transport the viewer. The works in the exhibition highlight our profound connection with nature, ever more poignant and deeply felt given recent global events.The exhibition explores diverse artistic representations of landscapes and the environment, and emphasizes the strength and value of our relationship with the natural world, while also hinting at its peril.

Sue Williams A'Court
Desire and Longing 12
Graphite and mixed media on linen canvas
180 x 180 cm
£12,500

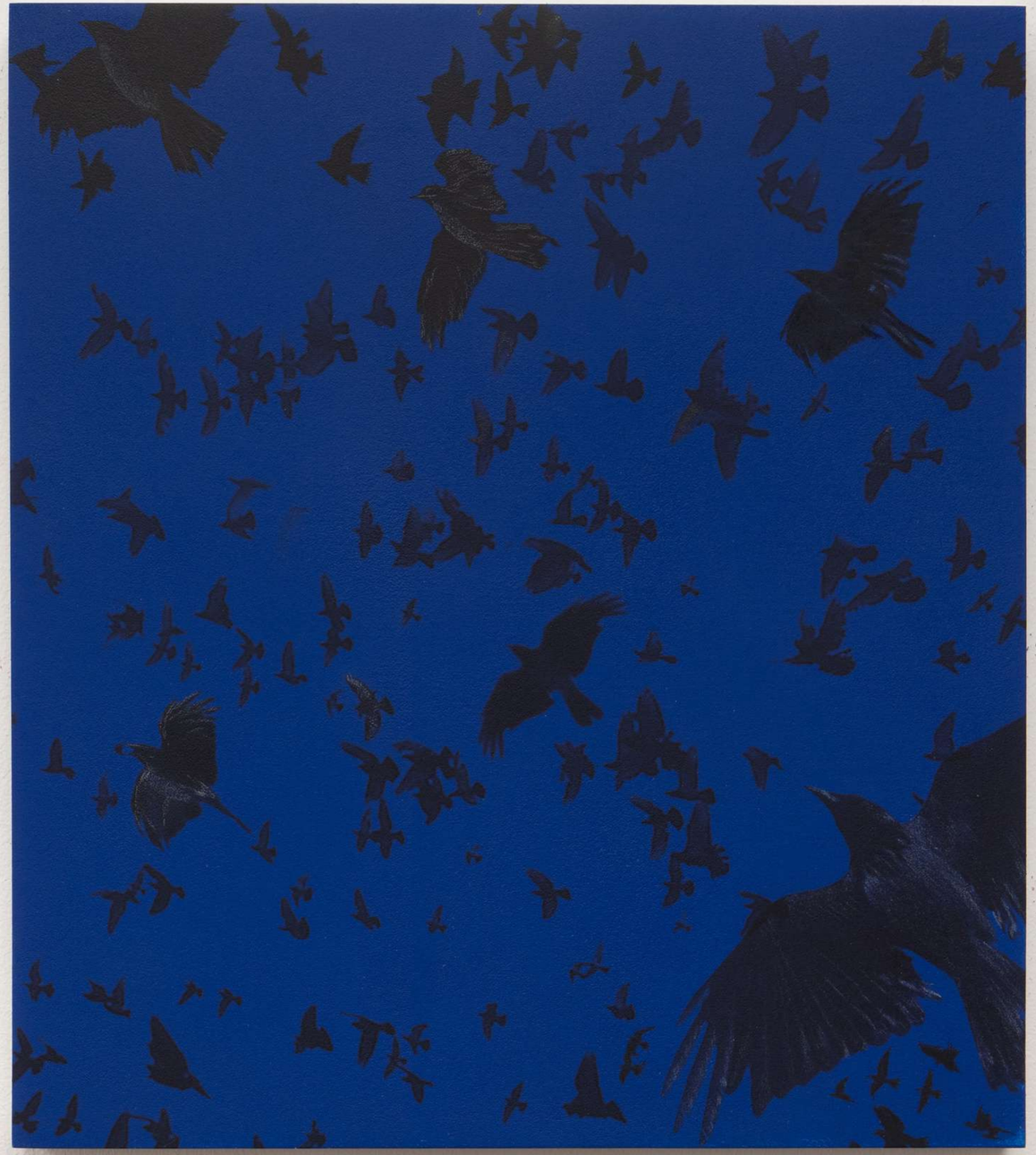
Elizabeth Magill
Still (revised)
2017-2022
Oil and mixed media on canvas
183 x 153 cm
£57,000 + VAT

Freya Douglas-Morris
Stay Bright
2022
Oil on birch panel
30 cm diameter
£2500

Rene Gonzalez
Deer Garden
2022
Acrylic on raw canvas
250 x 200 cm
£7500

Sue Williams A'Court
Desire and Longing (After Mr and Mrs Andrews)
Graphite and mixed media on board with white gold leaf guild edges
86 x 86 cm
£4500

Saad Qureshi
Mist
2020
Acrylic, spray paint, ink, wax pencil on birch plywood
36 x 32 cm
£3500

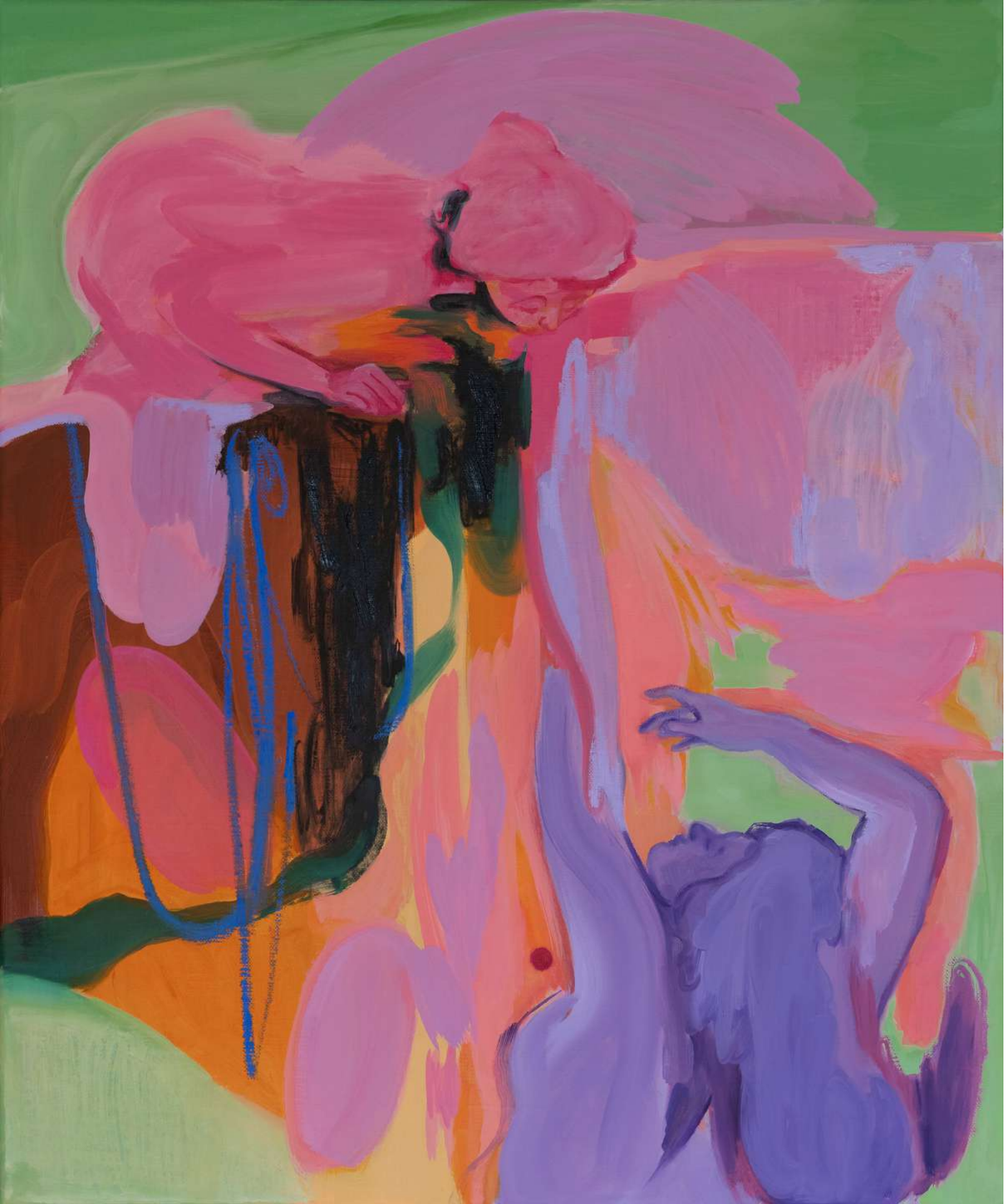


Saad Qureshi
The Blue Hour IV
2020
Acrylic, spray paint, ink, wax pencil on birch plywood
36 x 32 cm
£3500

Amy Beager
Dream If You Can
2022
Acrylic and oil on linen canvas
77 x 51
£2500

Freya Douglas-Morris
Evening Sun
2021
Oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm
SOLD

Elizabeth Magill
Fota Park Red
2000
Oil on canvas
122 x 152 cm
£45,000 + VAT



Amy Beager
The Climbers
2022
Acrylic and oil on linen canvas
61 x 51 cm
SOLD

Rene Gonzalez
Nothing But A Little Boy
2021
Acrylic on canvas
75 x 50 cm
£2200

Rene Gonzalez
Unfamiliar Footsteps
2022
Acrylic on canvas
75 x 50 cm
£2200

Hannah Brown
Hedge (1)
2017
Oil paint on linen
120 x 170 cm
£12,500

The works of Sue Williams A'Court evocatively recall landscape scenes from the past, and she repositions these landscapes in a contemporary context, offering a fresh perspective on the genre. The two works in the exhibition directly reference the works of Georgian painter Thomas Gainsborough, and implicitly reference the idyllic vistas of Claude Lorrain, giving a reverential nod to the past. In 'Desire and Longing', the iconic portrait by Gainsborough of 'Mr and Mrs Andrews' is appropriated, with the figures noticeably removed from the scene. This absence reinforces the true subject of the work, the English countryside in all its Arcadian grandeur. Williams A'Court deftly weaves the landscape art of the past with a sense of nostalgia and reverence, but also provides a meticulously rendered view of the landscape that encourages pause and reflection; a restorative, meditative process.

Capturing the essence of Arcadia and the Sublime are the exquisite paintings by Freya Douglas-Morris. The artist creates scenes that blend differing landscapes and natural elements to present the viewer with an other-worldly, dream-like vision. Often taking a memory or biographical event as a starting point, Douglas-Morris conjures a terrain that is ambiguous in time and space and evokes an enigmatic fusion of the real and the imagined. The paintings are imbued with radiant colours and expressive brushwork, revealing the intuitive and imaginative process of painting. The landscapes are both familiar and mysterious, encouraging the viewer to project their own narrative and context to the works, offering themselves to our imagination.

Elizabeth Magill has been focused on landscape painting for many years, and her approach is psychological and deeply subjective.Born in Canada, and raised in Northern Ireland, Magill continues to travel back to the countryside in Ireland from London where she works and resides. Photographs form the basis of her ambitious compositions, which on one level documents and monumentalises the landscapes that she is drawn to. Her technique is innovative and unique, often combining imagery from photographs, screen-printing, stencilling and collage which create complex, dense vistas that are intriguing to penetrate. In 'Still (1)', the painterly application and textures of her painting method are evocatively revealed, imbuing the scene with the expressive sense of wind and movement. This work at once celebrates the power and majesty of nature, the noble stature of the trees in centre stage. But it also hints at a fragility and vulnerability, as the forms are buffeted across the canvas.

This sense of foreboding is brought to the fore in Magill's painting 'Fota Park Red' – the sky is a luminous red, the surface of the canvas textured, worn and weathered. Here the stark outlines of trees emerge through the haze, there is a sense of something lost, abandoned, and in threat. The idyllic and Arcadian vision of nature is at risk, the natural world as we know it is in danger, and Magill's epic paintings both highlight the wonder of nature, and also exposes its instability and the precariousness of the status quo.

This sense of fragility and uncertainty is beautifully executed in the Blue Hour series by Saad Qureshi. These works also explore a more profound, spiritual connection with the natural world, where historically birds become symbolic bearers of both good and bad will. Through Western mythology and in religious texts, birds were signifiers of a day of reckoning or a prophetic symbol or omen. The artist recollects his childhood in Pakistan, when his mother would chase away crows, afraid that their presence and song would bring ill fortune. If the birds were out of reach, the artist learnt to point a mirror in their direction, and this would cause them to fly away. "See", she would tell him, "they're even afraid of themselves". Qureshi's practice often draws on his rich, personal recollections and memories, which in turn inspire works that attest to the human experience. These works reveal how experiences of nature can impose deep imprints on our psyche. The scale and composition of these works appear as vignettes, snapshots or fragments of memory. By incorporating the form of the birds, these become a vehicle to express a more profound misgiving about the environment and their presence exudes a sense of apocalyptic augury that prescient climate experts are remonstrating.

Through these stark warnings we are encouraged to be mindful, present and appreciative of the significance of the natural world.Echoing Qureshi's adoption of the bird motif to explore our profound connections with nature, Rene Gonzalez also features animal protagonists in his paintings. Gonzalez's landscapes are imbued with a sense of reverie, imagination and a joyful celebration of the wonders of nature. Elements of classical architecture are juxtaposed with verdant landscapes of trees, flora and fauna that envelop the viewer with their illustrative detail and vibrant colour palette.

Like Douglas-Morris, Rene's scenery appears to be an amalgamation of differing terrains and landscapes. The viewer embarks on a journey through forests, architecture, the tropics and luscious floor-beds of undistinguishable woodland. Memories of childhood fairy tales and folklore are evoked, with the appearances of deer and red foxes endowed with an endearing sense of anthropomorphism. Amy Beager's highly saturated, colourful paintings depict the human figure in leisurely pursuits, relishing in the adventure of the great outdoors, where two female figures precariously climb up a precipice, or lie contemplatively watching the rain cascade from the sky. Beager's loose handling of paint emphasises the sense that the viewer is capturing a fleeting moment or memory, one that celebrates nature and our place within it.

Hannah Brown's painting practice has focused on the English landscape, and how it has been reproduced and represented. Rather than portray the more conventional and idyllic vistas, Brown searches for "quiet, potentially unsettling places with a peculiar type of beauty". Brown presents us with the glimpse of a candy-coloured sky, the crepuscular light of the sun setting over undulating hills, capturing the allure and grandeur of an Arcadian landscape of the past. The artist deliberately disguises her locations, void of any landmarks, to encourage the viewer to project their own narrative or sense of place on the scene. This picturesque vista is surrounded by a highly detailed canopy of leaves and hedgerow that provides a theatrical framework to the drama of the pink and purple hues of the twilight sky. This dense foliage creates a sense that the viewer has stumbled across a secret garden or hidden place, the leaves suggest shelter and a rather claustrophobic encroachment across the canvas, an ambiguous tension. The artist reveals that the sources of these paintings are far from the hills of the English countryside, but are in fact secluded areas of her local park in London.

Brown reworks these into epic vistas that distil the artist's experience of the landscape and reinforces the concept of nature as a refuge and a significant point of focus. The artist presents a revitalised perspective on areas of nature that can be disregarded, overlooked and undervalued; a premonitory notion that we should all take heed of.

What aligns these artists are not topographical records of the landscape or locations, but evocative, dream-like scenes that create a sense of solace, contemplation, memory and human connection.

Text by Melissa Digby-Bell

The exhibition is in collaboration with A Space for Art.

Image: Saad Qureshi, The Blue Hour IV

AMY BEAGER

Amy Beager (b. 1988) lives and works from her studio in Chelmsford, UK. She obtained a National Diploma in Art & Design (Distinction) in 2007 and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Nottingham Trent University in 2010. Beager was selected as a winner for the Delphain Gallery open call 2020 and started exhibiting her work in London in 2019. She has since exhibited with a number of London Galleries including the Saatchi Gallery, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Huxley Parlour Gallery and Wilder Gallery among others. Beager's work has been acquired by Soho House and placed in multiple private collections globally.

ELIZABETH MAGILL

Elizabeth Magill is a painter who depicts and explores aspects of landscape and the effects of the sublime through her practice.

She works primarily with oil paints, and more recently with silkscreened images imprinted onto her painting canvas. Her images are drawn from photographs she has taken over decades and primarily areas she grew up in and around Antrim in the North of Ireland. The resulting evocative, atmospheric paintings are often bare, desolate and without human figures.

Magill has exhibited widely with notable solo shows held at The New Art Gallery, Walsall; Ulster Museum Belfast, RHA Galleries, Dublin,Towner Art Gallery and Museum, Eastbourne, IKON Gallery, Birmingham. Baltic Centre, Gateshead; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; Southampton City Art Gallery and Arnolfini, Bristol.

Her works are also represented in many museums and public collections including the Tate gallery, London; Arts Council of England, the Arts Council of Northern and Southern Ireland; The British Museum, London; Towner Art Gallery and Museum, Eastbourne; Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton and The British Council, The National Art Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Elizabeth Magill was born in 1959 in Canada, and grew up in Northern Ireland. She now lives and works in both London and Ireland.

Image: Portait courtesy of Hugo Glendinning and the artist

FREYA DOUGLAS-MORRIS

Freya Douglas-Morris studied Fine Art at Brighton University before receiving an MA from the Royal College of Art in 2013. Since then she has had solo shows in London, Milan and Edinburgh and has been included in numerous exhibitions. She was selected for the Bloomberg New Contemporaries, The New Sensations & The Catlin Guide. She has work featured in several publications, most recently 'The Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting 2' as well as '100 Painters of Tomorrow' & 'Paper - Saatchi Gallery' and various magazines. She lives and works in London.

HANNAH BROWN

Hannah Brown (b 1977) in Salisbury, Wiltshire. Lives and works in London

Hannah Brown's paintings draw on the omnipresent legacy ofthe English landscape tradition. Working within and against this framework she presents carefully edited interpretations of seemingly bucolic scenes.

Brown is a graduate of Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (BA hons Sculpture 1999) and the Royal College of Art (MA Sculpture 2006).
Recent exhibitions include: I Stood Still, Frestonian, London,The Forest, Parafin, London, Companions, Union Pacific, London, and Before Long, Union Gallery, London. Her work has been selected for the John Moores Painting Prize 2020 and is held in both public and private collections including the V&A, London.

Image: Portait courtesy of Peter Mallet and the artist

RENE GONZALEZ

Rene Gonzalez is a London based artist of Latino background who was born in Montreal Canada, started as a graffiti artist for many years in Costa Rica before moving to the UK in 2012 to undertake a BA in Fine Art Painting at City & Guilds of London Art School.

Rene has exhibited in solo and group shows in galleries and art events across the UK, Europe and America, including collaborations with the Messums Gallery, The Great Western Studios, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Auc Art, The Auction Collective and The Arcs Cotswolds.

He was awarded first place in the Clyde & Co Blank Canvas Art Prize 2015, creating a twenty meter painting for the competition. In 2019 he produced a mural displayed in the area of Seven Dials as a tribute to the legendary junction and has created unique artworks for entities such House of Vans, Clarks, New Platform Art and the NBA London. Rene's work has been featured in articles and magazines such as Art Maze Mag, i-D Vice, Luxe Magazine, Fad Magazine and Dateagle Art.

SAAD QURESHI

Saad Qureshi received his BA in Fine Art from Oxford Brookes University in 2007 and an MFA in Painting from The Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2010. Described by Laura Cumming in the Observer as "one of our most pensive and poetic artists", his sculptures give form to the ideas or stories by which we give meaning to human existence.

Recent solo exhibitions include Something About Paradise, conceived for the Chapel at Yorkshire Sculpture Park; Aicon Gallery, New York; and Gazelli Art House, London. Group exhibitions include l'Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris; Museum Arnhem; and Kunsthall 3,14, Bergen. Qureshi has had public commissions at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford and Victoria, London and his work has been acquired by public collections including the Dipti Mathur Collection, California; The Farjam Foundation Collection, Dubai; The Bagri Foundation, London; the UNESCO Creative Cities Collection, Beijing; The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; the Boston Consulting Group; and the Almarkhiya Gallery, Qatar as well as British and international private collections.

Qureshi was shortlisted for the 2021 SkyArts LANDMARKS public art commission. He has received three ACE awards; the Celeste Prize, Rome; the Royal Society of British Sculptors bursary award; the Red Mansion Foundation Prize; and he was shortlisted for the Lecturis Award, Amsterdam. He features in the 2020 Thames & Hudson book 100 Sculptors of Tomorrow and is a Trustee of Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

SUE WILLIAMS A'COURT

Sue Williams A'Court was born in Lincolnshire in 1964. She studied BA Illustration at Brighton Polytechnic 1983-1986. She was shortlisted for "The Columbia Threadneedle Prize" Mall Galleries in 2014. Other awards and prizes include: "FID" International Drawing Prize 2017; "The Jerwood Drawing Prize" selected by Kate Brindley, Michael Craig-Martin RA & Charlotte Mullins, Jerwood Space and tour 2013; Stage 2 "John Moores" 2014 ; "The National Art Open" 2015 selected by Hugie O'Donoghue RA, David Lister, Rebecca Hossack, Vanessa Branson & Amanda Harman; "The Open West", Wilson Cheltenham Art Gallery Museum 2015, selected by Lyn Cluer Colman & Sarah Goodwin; "Royal Academy Summer Exhibition", 2013 and 2015 selected by Anne Desmet RA & David Remfry RA.

Solo shows include; "Escape From Eden, Saachi Gallery London 2017; "I will meet you there", Le Salon Vert, Geneva 2016, "Pulse NYC" as recipient of the "Pulse Prize" 2016, represented by Bo.Lee Gallery, The Metropolitan Pavilion New York City. She exhibited in "Only Connect" curated by Prof. David Remfry RA in the Keepers House Royal Academy and in " Table of Elements" curated by Graham Crowley and Julian Perry. She was an invited artist in "Discerning Eye" 2021, curated by David RemfryRA, The Mall gallery and "Between the Bliss and me" 2021, Chelsea Arts Building Kings Road curated by James Elwes Recent exhibitions include RA Summer Exhibition 2022 curated by Yinka Shonibare RA. And "Frequencies (for healing)"Confer Karnac Art Space Spitalfields. Future exhibitions include a Public Museum commissioned work "For the Love of the Master" Coach House Gallery Museum Dublin.

Offshoot Arts is a gallery and art consultancy based in the UK. We collaborate with a global roster of artists who question and explore universal themes and issues that connect us all; often expressed through highly unusual and innovative materials and techniques.

Our commitment to discovering and nurturing artistic talent is shared via curatorial projects, pop-up exhibitions, collaborations, curated online presentations and private consultancy. We champion artists, connect with audiences and create engaging and accessible creative experiences that challenge and inspire.

Melissa Digby-Bell founded and launched Offshoot Arts in 2020. She has worked in the upper echelons of the contemporary art sector since 2002, following a degree in History of Art at the University of Bristol. Her career began at White Cube, going on to manage the studios of high-profile artists Marc Quinn and Anish Kapoor.

CONTACT INFORMATION

MELISSA DIGBY-BELL

melissa@offshootarts.com

+44(0)7515 123 453

WWW.OFFSHOOTARTS.COM

offshoot_arts

A SPACE FOR ART

Home House

OFFSHOOT ARTS