

eNEWSLETTER

Women's Arts Association / Cymdeithas Celfyddydau Menywod

Women's Arts eNewsletter issue 10 published June 2015

International Women's Day at Riverfront Arts Centre Newport



We had a lovely exhibition this year held over two floors of Newport's Riverfront Arts Centre. A total of 35 artworks by 36 artists came together in an exhibition which offered an insight to the rich but often unseen diversity of creative women in Newport and surrounding areas, women were included from Pontypool, Cwmbran and Chepstow.

Thirty-five artworks by thirty-six women were shown. It was good to see returning women from 2014 but also to extend the reach to others; there were eighteen first-time IWD exhibitors.

The generations were represented from 18-post 65s. It was particularly nice to have the work of two sixth-formers, who delighted in the opportunity to take part in the event,

representing for them an early step in their creative journey and a useful addition to their CV!

The evening opening event on Friday 13th March coincided with the monthly open-mic session. Once the theatre-goers were settled into their shows a group of about 30 supporters of IWD gathered in the ground floor gallery for opening words from Dr Sally Lewis Clinical Director of Aneurin Bevan Health Board (Sally courageously agreed to step in at a day's notice after sickness prevented our original opening speaker from attending).

Kate Broadhurst's passion was clearly evident when she spoke of her transition from animation to painting and her current focus on the intimacy of the bathing space. Kate has since painted live at TEDx Cardiff. Tanya Whittaker

performed a version of *The Narcissist*, her thought provoking work on the notion of the 'selfie' and imagery of the female. On her suggestion Tanya mingled anonymously and her identity as the performer was only confirmed after the performance, although by then her attire had probably given the game away!

Two treasured prints and a drawing made separately by mother and daughter were arranged and exhibited under the title 'H is for Harries, History & Hafal'. Sales resulted from the exhibition boosting the confidence of two first time exhibitors.

Jay Kynch's introduction to the Women's Art Association at the opening was valuable in promoting the benefits of membership. This combined with the widely expressed appreciation for this type of women's community event is encouraging for the future of IWD events. Any woman interested in taking this event forward in a vibrant manner for 2016 would be welcomed and encouraged.

Thanks to Masae Takeuchi who generously gave her time to designing the eye-catching poster; to the co-curators Dani Danaher, Thora Kittridge and Sian Leung; to Emma Wheeler for contributing text; to Ellen Roberts and Marion Cheung for their help with the hang; to Susannah Stonehouse, Sally-Anne Evans and Riverfront

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COMMENT

ARTS AND CULTURE

The Contribution of the Arts and Culture to the National Economy, Arts Council of England.

Estimated number of UK jobs in music, performing and the visual arts: 300,000. This number comprises 167,000 creative jobs within the creative industries, 57,000 creative jobs outside the creative industries and 76,000 “support” jobs in the creative industries. (Jan 2015).

The arts and culture sector accounts for c.0.4 per cent of UK GDP.

The UK arts and culture industry supports

Arts and culture play an important role in supporting the UK’s wider commercial creative industries, such as film production, advertising, design and crafts, and showcasing the country’s creative talent overseas.

The arts and culture sector has an important benefit on health and well-being. Those who had attended a cultural place or event in the preceding 12 months were 60 per cent more likely to report good health. People valued being in the audience for the arts at about £2,000 per year, which is higher than sport.

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/CEBR_economic_report_web_version_0513.pdf



Helen Sear

the rest is smoke | Wales in Venice | 2015

c.260,300 full-time equivalent jobs, or 1.1 per cent of total UK employment.

The arts and culture industry pays nearly five per cent more than UK median salary, thereby making a positive contribution to average household earnings.

The UK’s arts and culture are a very strong draw for international visitors, attracting at least £856m of tourist spending.

The Welsh Government has responsibility for the arts in Wales and has a good record of support for all the arts but almost certainly the national cuts will reduce the amount of money allocated to Wales and what further impact will it have on the already year on year budget cuts to the arts?

The financial reduction made by the Arts Council of Wales in 2011 that saw small arts organisations, such as the Women’s Arts Association, lose all revenue and partnership funding. This impacted severely on the development and prospects of many artists in Wales and supporters too.

Five more years of the Conservatives will reduce the arts to a national joke http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2015/may/06/conservatives-arts-national-joke-gallery-cameron-britains-cultural-sector?CMP=share_btn_tw

MEMBER'S PROFILES



Knot
Portland limestone
approx. 45 x 50 x 25 cm

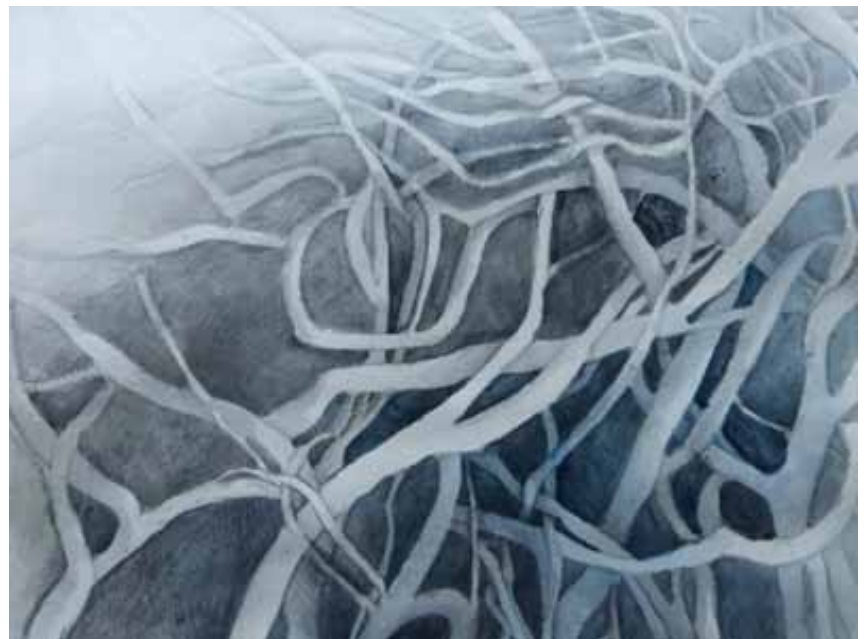
Gwyneth Price Past Chair of Women's Arts

I was born in South Africa, and studied sculpture at the University of Natal, then moved to London to continue my art education. To continue to live in Britain at a difficult time for my home country, I trained as a teacher, working in secondary schools and further education and running a pottery when my children were small.

Now I carve wood and stone, but also enjoy drawing, both as a way of developing ideas and producing images that may not be possible in 3 dimensions. I love the act of carving, the physical removal of material, coming slowly to a final form.

My work is connected with the natural world. Recently I have been interested in the link between Celtic knot forms and the way in which ivy forms a knotted cage enclosing tree forms, a network around a larger form. The recently relocated stones in Llantwit Major's St Illtud have been an inspiration, as have the plants at Dyffryn Gardens in the Vale of Glamorgan.

I am a member of Sculpture Cymru, the group of Welsh sculptors, and of the Vale of Glamorgan Artists, but my return to active making, was greatly encouraged by joining the Women's Arts Association.



Tree Net (detail)
soluble graphite with some watercolour,
60x154cm

MEMBER'S EXHIBITION

CONCENTRIC 11th – 21st March 2015

Group show for International Women's Day 2015
curated by Jacqueline Alkema.

Jacqueline Alkema; Penny Hallas; Leona Jones; Kay Keogh; Lydia Spurrier-Dawes; Sheila Vyas

Cardiff MADE gallery invited Jacqueline Alkema to curate an exhibition of works by Women artists to coincide with International Women's Day in March. Jacqueline's work presents the female form as carrier of a unique perspective. Powerful solo presences, her female forms are challenging;

self portraits in essence. Her work with titles 'The creatures that sometimes inhabit me', revel in celebratory mischievousness, overcome by states of beings of another realm to mere mortals. She often paints a series, triptychs, as if to reinforce a sense of sisterhood, otherness to the everyday. Painting is the perfect language to convey the transformative powers of Womanhood which contort the form, shape shifting, dynamic.

Alkema's curation continues this stance; in selecting

artists who acknowledge directly what it is to be a woman artist through their subject matter (Spurrier Dawes, Sheila Vyas) or taking on the world in bold and perceptive strokes, absorbing and noticing the world around them and commenting with humour as in Hallas and Jones' work.



The exhibition 'Concentric' was aptly titled, distinctively different artists, individually creating ripples, but resonating in tune with each other.

"Concentric' is a coherent group of very individualistic entities, questioning, pushing boundaries, experimenting with making processes and subject matters, all playing with the

notion of what and how it is to be a woman and a woman artist ".

Beginning with Sheila Vyas' extraordinary paintings, which rely on drawing to map a subconscious terrain of body, like a diagram of self splayed open, beautiful and macabre simultaneously. Displaying the exquisite hyper-detail akin to the techniques of traditional Indian miniatures, from a distance they appear as beautiful mandalas, which on closer inspection contain obvious terrors within the anatomical forms. Connective

MEMBER'S EXHIBITION

tissues like thought maps do not distinguish between imagery which the sub-conscious throws up. Married to a pleasing aesthetic, the affect is quietly subversive. Viewers were polarized in their responses to these works in revulsion and attraction.

Similarly subversive, yet like a wolf in sheep's clothing, Lydia Spurrier Dawes' adopts the soft cloak of wool through 'knitting', the mute preserve of mothers, old maids and spinsters, to actively challenge notions of expectation around nurture, womanhood. Her jumpers are straightjackets, her knitting needles huge, absurd, carrying the weight of the world or just carrying on.



Lydia Spurrier-Dawes
Untitled (Extreme knitting)
approx. 270cm x 450cm
pine and wool.

Kay Keogh is a complementary companion in style to Alkema, strange figures inhabiting a narrative which is personal and which we are privileged to see but not necessarily welcome. Penny Hallas's works are composite absurdities, her series of large charcoal drawing collective forms made of objects from a museum, like giant paradoxical marriages, they form cohesive presences unified by her drawing skill.

Leona Jones is the oddball of the group. Her work with text is on the face of it unemotional, aesthetically cold, yet expressing deep felt responses to site and being. 'Hard to grasp' was the cut out statement of text placed on a window in the gallery, which projected a moving light cast around the walls over the course of a day, disappearing with every cloud. Transformative, and quietly beautiful, this statement connects her concentrically to the others.

Zoë Gingell
Co-director of Cardiff MADE

Women's Arts at Butetown History & Arts Centre

The Butetown History & Arts Centre is the venue for one of four Women's Arts Association exhibitions in celebration of International Women's Day 2015. There were 45 women artists showing in the Diversity Gallery.

Penelope Rose Cowley curated the exhibition this year, with help from Lauren Butcher and the vital drilling and support of Walter.

The exhibition drew a crowd to enjoy the formal opening by Tracey Harding, the Vale's Arts Development Officer. One of six successful artists inspired at school, she did her degree at Manchester Metropolitan and her main love is dance.

The event was accompanied by singer songwriter Phillipa Irving, and was filmed by trainee journalists from Cardiff University who obviously had impeccable taste (ie they include my painting on their site).

The exhibition ran until April 4th and had both exciting work from exhibitors new to Women's Arts and pieces from more established members.

Jocelyn Kynch (Chair of WAA).

REVIEWS

Helen Sear, artist: 'I am trying to slow down the instantaneousness of the camera'



Helen Sear lives and works in Wales, and will be the first female artist to represent Wales in the forthcoming Venice Biennale. She has been in her current studio, a large shed, for the past six years. Today it is hung with the photographs that form most of her practice, although there is also a sculpture, one of several that will appear in Venice. It is in a "rural industrial estate" near to the village where she and husband have bought a former shop, transforming it into a comfortable home for themselves and their dogs.

Sear was born in 1955, "looking into Wales in Worcestershire", the daughter of a surgeon who imparted his love and knowledge of nature on long walks in the country, intoning the names of flowers and animals. "It was a point of connection as a family, getting away from the constriction of family life," she says. Walking is something she continues to do with her dogs, Marshall and Mazzy Star.

In the past she has been described as a formalist feminist, and she cites her influences as Max Ernst but also Britishness, citing the paganism of Samuel Palmer, William Blake and Paul Nash, but unashamedly quoting the Pre-Raphaelites as well.

The studio is also a store-room. There are crates of images packed and ready to be shipped to Venice. She shows me a strip, part of a larger work that will be shown. The image is a simple wood stack, an everyday sight in Wales: on the metallic background

the image gleams allowing the viewer to clearly see the chisel marks of the trees' ends: "I am trying to slow down the instantaneousness of the camera, to allow the viewer to see behind the normal, adapting the surface when necessary." A photograph of wild flowers rests against a wall. Arranged in jugs and vases found in charity shops, the local flora are a rich source of material for her. The richly textured background is made from crumpling the images and then photographing them again, reminiscent, she says, of her childhood hobby of pressing flowers.

Sear happened upon a nearby beechwood seven miles from her home. "I noticed that the trees had been marked with numbers from one to 83; they were marked for felling. It is the age of my mother." The forest has become important for her.

Much of what Sear does is to film or shoot again and again. Meticulously selecting the right print, or in some cases gardening the area to focus the lens on a specific image, she highlights the ordinary, making it extraordinary, forcing the viewer to engage with the work and puzzle out the image. "It has to be a process of discovery for me. People think that it's easy – but actually it's not."

Helen Sear represents Wales at the 56th Venice Biennale (www.labiennale.org/en), 9 May to 22 November.

The Independent, Karen Wright, 14 March 2015

REVIEWS

10,000 revolutions: meet Mary Kelly, the mother of all feminist artists

In the 1970s, she pinned dirty nappies to a gallery wall. Today, Mary Kelly spins war memorials from mountains of tumble-dryer lint. At her home in Bel Air, the feminist pioneer reveals 40 years of shock tactics

“It’s good to have a vision. Even if it’s flawed, or turns out to be not what you expected.” Mary Kelly would know. As one of the world’s foremost feminist artists, she has pursued hers relentlessly for 45 years. It gives her a long view of the feminist movement that is refreshingly upbeat. “Something very wonderful has happened. If you look at how men engage with their children, it’s totally different. My husband Ray was the only man with a child in a backpack at the big demonstrations in the 70s. He used to get wolf-whistled picking our son up from school.”

When she started out, just getting heard required a shock to the system. In the mid-70s, her installation at the ICA, *Post-Partum Document*, analysed her newborn son’s development, their emotional bond, his early attempts at writing – and framed and hung his stained nappies on the gallery walls. “On display at the ICA ... dirty nappies!” ran the *Standard*’s outraged headline.

But Kelly was less interested in provoking the tabloids than adding a new voice to conceptual art. Something was missing, she felt, from the work made by these mostly male Americans up to that point. Her companion piece *Antepartum*, a looped film of her pregnant abdomen with her child kicking beneath the skin, hammered this point home. Today, it’s shown alongside minimalists such as Richard Serra or Donald Judd, only hers is a minimalism with a human relationship at its core.

It may have been Kelly’s education that led her to challenge the establishment. She began conventionally, studying painting outside Florence. But her first job was in Beirut at the American-Lebanese University, where she met francophone intellectuals and pored over the ideas of Sartre and Lacan. When war arrived in Lebanon, she moved to Paris, just in the time for the protests of ’68. From there to London, for postgrad work at St Martin’s art school. The atmosphere in London added the final piece of her radical makeup: she joined a commune, met her husband Ray, also an artist, and entered the women’s movement – an experience she describes as utterly transformative.

Today she and Ray share an immaculate white house in the hills of Bel Air. They greet us at the door, and she surprises the photographer by taking his hand to show



Mary Kelly in her studio near Bel Air, Los Angeles. Photograph:
Barry J Holmes

him around. I follow Ray into the living room, which looks like a fine exhibition of Bauhaus furniture. They bought the place when Mary became a professor at UCLA.

Kelly does not conform to any cliché of a radical feminist. She has a zen-like calm. She speaks quietly, with sentences punctuated only by a persistent,

REVIEWS



Shock of the soiled ... Mary Kelly's artwork
Post-Partum Document
became a tabloid scandal in the 70s.

but rather elegant, cough. Her hair is arranged in a beautiful crown, like something a Dutch master would paint. Now in her 70s, she remains cutting-edge, and speaks fluently of social media, screengrabs and drone warfare. Perhaps her only tell is the critical theory that peppers her speech. The Post-Partum work was “overdetermined”, she says, by her pregnancy during an earlier work, Nightcleaners – a study of the women cleaning London office buildings. The groups involved in that project give a real flavour of the time. She was part of a women’s-lib cadre called the History Group, and was assigned to work with the Berwick Street film collective to support unionisation. Nightcleaners was intended as a propaganda film, but became a seminal work of documentary art.

“The women took those jobs because they had to look after the children during the day. That began what we called the sexual-social division of labour that underpinned inequality.” But Kelly felt that the male-dominated labour movement was failing to see the real issue. “It wasn’t as simple as having someone else take care of the children. You had to understand what the pleasure was in the relationship with the child.”

She seized on the idea of non-essentialist feminism, that a woman’s place shouldn’t be physically determined, but created by her experiences. The Post-Partum Document is an analysis not just of all a mother is, but the process by which she becomes those things. Suddenly those dirty nappies seem less shock tactic and more reality check.

Kelly’s work has always retained its personal, emotional payload. For some years, her primary medium has

been lint – you know, from a tumble dryer. Like the dirty nappies, the material can seem like an invitation to scoff, but it’s designed to emphasise the workaday. Dryer lint is, of course, more familiar to most people than bronze, canvas or oils. The sad humour is there, too: she uses the fluff to make ephemeral war memorials, which often display the words of victims of violence. Kelly is painstaking in her attempts to articulate these voices. In a recent work, Dicere, she prints the testimony of two Afghan children whose grandmother was killed in a drone attack. “They had these phrases that you couldn’t translate easily from the Urdu,” she says. “Like, ‘She was the string that holds pearls together.’ The language does something very important to me.”

Her larger lintworks require 10,000 cycles of the dryer. I imagine a team of assistants manning banks of machines, but Kelly corrects me. “I wish there were,” she says, “but it’s just a peculiarity of this one” and she points to the laundry room just beyond her studio.

I ask her if it’s all been worthwhile. Despite the protest movement, decades of political art and legislation, perhaps the victims of injustice have merely changed.



If she were to make Nightcleaners now, wouldn’t the people be immigrants, lower paid, and no closer to unionisation? “Well, nothing is ever finally solved,” she says. “One would be crazy to think so.”

• Mary Kelly in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist is at Tate Modern, 22 May 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/18/mary-kelly-meet-the-mother-of-all-feminist-artists>

ON LINE



News Items from the WAA facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/WomensArtsAssociation>

Non-facebook members can view Women's Arts facebook page too

Niki de Saint Phalle artworks at the Guggenheim



<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2015/feb/27/niki-de-saint-phalle-artworks-guggenheim-bilbao-in-pictures>

Ydessa Hendeles's From her wooden sleep.



<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/mar/30/ydessa-hendeles-from-her-wooden-sleep>

Meet the many faces of the Women's Institute. Over the past 100 years, the WI has transformed from its rural roots and this year is even making an appearance at Glastonbury. These are the modern faces of the Women's Institute



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11638148/Meet-the-many-faces-of-the-Womens-Institute.html>

The What The Frock! Book of Funny Women written by Jane Duffus and with a foreword by Lucy Porter, puts an end, once and for all, to the tired idea that women aren't funny by providing countless examples of side-splittingly hilarious women.



<http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/2015/06/what-the-frock-book-and-birthday-party/#sthash.DI9OA4AR.dpuf>

ON LINE



News Items from the WAA facebook page

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Non-facebook members can view Women's Arts facebook page too

Paul Feig and Melissa McCarthy have teamed up again to prove once and for all that women are funny.



<http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/2015/06/spy-is-a-feminist-triumph/#sthash.eSoEP3nz.dpuf>

We need a sexual revolution in the Middle East – video 'Let's face it, the Arab Spring failed women. They are no closer to liberation than before the uprisings.' Mona Eltahawy, who was beaten and sexually assaulted by Egyptian riot police in 2011, argues that feminism is a vital movement wherever you are – both 'over here' and 'over there'

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2015/jun/10/we-need-sexual-revolution-middle-east-arab-spring-failed-women-video?CMP=share_btn_fb

The content of this issue of Women's Arts eNewsletter is mainly about visual artists. Where are the writers, the performers, the musicians? Contributions from women about women in the arts are welcome.



Emma Brockes

Why do some women artists pretend that success is the result of sorcery?

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/emma-brockes-column/2015/jun/11/women-artists-pretend-successes-hard-work?CMP=share_btn_fb

Julia Margaret Cameron is one of the most celebrated women in the history of photography.



To mark the bicentenary of her birth, both the Science Museum and the V&A will hold exhibitions of her work later this year. Julia Margaret Cameron: Influence and Intimacy, is at Media Space at the Science Museum, 24 September 2015 to 28 March 2016 and Julia Margaret Cameron is at the V&A 28 November 2015 to 21 February 2016.

To contribute information about creative women contact Women's Arts
tel: 07421083946 • email: office@womensarts.co.uk

Women's Arts Association

Women's Arts Membership

Associate membership £10.00
Ordinary membership is free.

To become an Associate Member post a membership form enclosing a cheque for £10.00 made out to Women's Arts Organisation or make a bank transfer (information below).

Download a membership form from www.womensarts.co.uk - membership page which you can print and post back or email to - office@womensarts.co.uk. Please put MEMBERSHIP in the subject field of the email. Remember to tick the box if you wish to become an Associate Member. Enclose a cheque for £10 by post or indicate if you have made a bank transfer or have created a Standing Order

Women's Arts Association
Sort Code: 08-90-03
Account No: 50013461
at
Cooperative Bank PLC
16-17 High Street
Cardiff CF10 1AY

To become an ordinary member, email or post a membership form to Women's Arts Association, 4 Dock Chambers, Bute St, Cardiff Bay, CF10 5AG.

INFORMATION

The Butetown History and Arts Centre has changed. Women's Arts has relinquished its office and volunteers now use a 'hot desk' for the administration of the Association. The postal address for the Women's Arts Association remains the same. Emails and telephone messages are answered as soon as can be arranged. **The new phone number is 07421083946**

www.womensarts.co.uk

The website will carry fixed information. WAA events, members work, general information, the eNewsletter to download and archived old newsletters etc.

The eBulletin is sent to all members on a regular basis when there is art news to circulate.

The eNewsletter will be available when there is enough content to make an interesting publication.

This, in the main, will be dependent on members' contributions. We aim for at least twice a year but ideally we would like it to be quarterly.

Send contributions to the Editorial team:

Di - di@womensarts.co.uk

Jay - eBulletin@womensarts.co.uk.

www.facebook.com/WomensArtsAssociation

Women's Arts facebook page has more immediate information of interest to women. To date the page is not open for contributions direct, members will have to email pertinent material to the page administrators for posting. We have revived the group page where members can share their thoughts and ideas with each other, The Network of Women's Arts Association.

Non-facebook members can view the page at the above address.

Administrators: Di - di@womensarts.co.uk; Isabelle - Isabelle.a@ntlworld.com

Anyone who would like to volunteer for Women's Arts please contact the Chair.

Jay - office@womensarts.co.uk.