

Seashells

Cornwall's Creative Women



An interview with
Catherine Lucktaylor

200 Years of
Creative Women in Cornwall

A day in the life of
Sophie Castle

Editors note

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Welcome to the first edition of Seashells Magazine!

This magazine is a celebration of creative women in Cornwall. Whether they were born here, studied here, or found their way to Cornwall later in life, each of these women has been influenced in some way by the beauty and community this county offers.

Seashells grew from my love of art and a desire to explore the many ways people express themselves. Within these pages, you'll find insights into the lives and practices of a wide range of artists, from students to professionals, including poets, painters, photographers, and more.

For centuries, women have been pushed to the margins of creative work, denied opportunities or overlooked when they did break through. In this issue, I look back over the last 200 years to reflect on the progress made by extraordinary women who paved the way for others. Alongside this, I'm proud to spotlight the women creating, working, and thriving in Cornwall today.

I hope this magazine encourages you to explore your own creativity, celebrate the women who inspire you, and connect more deeply with Cornwall's rich creative spirit.

Thank you for reading.

Claire Wilde

Contents

Spotlight

Tabby Booth 04

Francesca Pease 10

Imogen Wade 16

Ashleigh Mills 24

Hannah Pegley 70

Jane Burtwell 74

Lily-Anne Smith 80

Cassidy Mahler 88

Elizabeth Loveday 90

Features

200 Years of Creative Women in Cornwall	40
A day in the life of Sophie Castle	60

Interviews

Ali Basset	12
Mandy, My Mentor	20
Jo McMinn	30
Marie-Claire Hamon	34
Rachel Jakeman	66
Elaine Pamphilon	76
Catherine Lucktaylor	82

Tabby Booth

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A captivating parallel
between illustration
and traditional folk art.

Having studied illustration at Central Saint Martins, Tabby Booth went on to found the Nationwide franchise Cygnets Art School in 2015, as well as Sailors Jail Gallery in 2023.

Her work treads an interesting parallel path between illustration and raw, traditional painting - exploring themes of mythology, mysticism, and the sea. A fascination with folk art, combined with a passion for interiors, results in bold yet playful imagery. Designed, as Tabby says, for the walls of bold, playful people.







Left
SELKIE

Right
Georgia O'Keeffe Quote

Next page
Left
Untitled

Next page
Right
VEHICLE





Francesca Pease

The Loony House

Originally from North Yorkshire, Francesca studies BA Drawing at Falmouth University. This drawing and poem is based on experiences within psychiatric care.



The Loony House

A long distance from civilisation
In a faraway land
Is the loony house

In the loony house
Live the loonies
“A loony?” you ask, “What’s a loony?”

The loonies aren’t like us
They are a danger to themselves or worse... to others
Let’s take a look

Within the fencing, observed by loony watchers
A sensitive and emotional loony weeps
She sits staring into space wasting hours on end
Don’t worry!... She won’t escape to our world
The loony security will hold her down if she tries

Here, a young loony kicks up a fuss
Arm in arm with two brave and gallant loony carers
They must drag her to receive the food she refuses
Listen closely she’s muttering something to herself... “It’s just medicine”

Wednesday is game day in the loony house
Each loony goes onto the pitch one by one
A match with the sanity expert
The referee marks another tally on the scoreboard
The loonies haven’t won a point yet

Look!... this loony is having a lunatic episode
The rest of the loonies have heard and are gathering
They sit with her (BY CHOICE!) as if she is not dangerous the rest of the loonies listen and talk to her
As if she deserves that after causing such a scene

This loony here is allowed to return to our world for a day
She acted a little less like a loony this week
That means she didn’t commit any type of loony behaviour
How scary to think she’ll be mixing with us
I would keep my distance if I were you

Some loonies are what we call revolving door loonies
This means they have no hope of functioning in our world Luckily the loony carers can give up on these ones
They are destined to be loonies forever
At least the Loony House keeps them away from us

We barely notice this loony she’s so quiet
Sat barely moving her repetitive knitting grows
It’s rare we see her move... Gosh, oh look...
She puts the needles down to hug a younger crying loony
Wait! Listen! She spoke... “You can do it, be brave”

Sometimes strong gallant men must hold the loonies down
This is because the loonies act out like wild animals in this place
We must inject them to calm them down
After all the loony carers need a break from seeing loony behaviour at some point

An interview with:

Ali Bassett

www.partnershipeditions.com/collections/ali-bassett
[@ali_bassett.studio](https://www.instagram.com/ali_bassett.studio)



Ali Bassett is a multi-disciplinary artist living in Cornwall. Ali completed a foundation in fine art at Cheltenham, later completing a Fine Art degree at Spike Island in Bristol.

Working on canvas, pieces are stitched together in a patchwork of imagery, figuration, and pattern, allowing her to gently tell stories which she likes to be relatable to all.

Ali took the time to answer a few questions I sent her about her practice.

Summer portrait with roses
Acrylic on stitched canvas
2023

What inspires your art work?

My work is inspired by the oral tradition of folk stories, song and myth. Stories handed down through generations, of learning and connection.

This year my work has taken a lot from folk songs, the songs tell tales of falling in love, unrequited love and lost love. These themes are heavy in folk songs and are still so relevant today. Nights missing loved ones, glimpses of love from afar, I often use words and write maybe a single line to give a poetical feeling of place, as the old songs do.

‘The stars keep time with the moons lullaby’, and ‘just as a bird, a heart, needs a song’ draw pictures of those nights where you sit noticing the moon or a dawn full of birdsong.

Essentially I want the viewer to feel the connection to those feelings whether now or a hundred years ago and know they’re not alone.

How has living in Cornwall shaped your creativity and artistic style?

Cornwall has a feeling of standing still in time, there’s so much untouched land it feels ancient. It’s easy to imagine life in another generation, added to all the heritage riches and Celtic history there is a real wealth of inspiration. Celtic lands are also steeped in folk stories and songs which tell of times past, this informs much of my work.

The landscape here also influences my colour palette and pattern in my work, the muted tones of distant fields and the colours of the sky and sea are endlessly inspiring.

Living in Cornwall has also shaped my work in other ways, living in a St Ives rental with no space to really work for a time made me adapt to what’s possible. Wanting to make big work I’ve had to think past limitations. Painting smaller panels can be done at home in the kitchen. I’ve managed to work in the porthmeor studios to scale up pieces and stitch them together thanks to the management there and a few sublets. I think I’ve worked in at least four different studios for the odd week or two.

Thankfully, since I moved to Penzance in 2020 I’ve had a studio above the exchange gallery, which is great, but you have to try to never let situations be obstacles.

*Ali Basset's studio
2023*



‘Just as a bird,
a heart, needs a
song.’

Do you feel there's a strong sense of community among women artists in Cornwall?

I feel there is a strong sense of community in general amongst artists in Cornwall. There's a really good support network. People in the Porthmeor studios were mostly really generous with me (although there's always one!)

Newlyn Art Gallery and The Exchange Gallery have also been really supportive and are proactive at getting female work in the gallery as well as opportunities for emerging artists.

One piece, *Together we walk this ancient land*, was actually made for a project with Newlyn and The Exchange called *The Palace of Cultures*. The project was funded by an organization that provided the gallery with a list of ten artists. The gallery was then commissioned to create ten films featuring local artists who drew inspiration from the artists on the list. All ten were men.

Cat, at the gallery in response asked ten women to make the films, I chose Norman Adams from their list, his wife Anna was a poet. I made a piece of work inspired by a poem that Anna had written called *Credentials*.

When in 2021 organisations that are funding projects are happily dictating an all male artist selection to take inspiration from you have to adapt and respond accordingly.

As a female artist, I work with some great galleries and organisations in and outside of Cornwall. Felt, run by Tintin and Francesca. Partnership Editions, Run by Georgia Spray. There's also

Lucy at Circle Contemporary, Josie at Eastwood Gallery and Ann and Martha at Morgans Gallery. As well as a few group shows in other spaces and artist-led projects.

All the above are women-owned businesses, which hasn't been a conscious choice, there's just great women running great businesses and it hasn't come about that many male-run galleries or spaces want to show my work. I don't specifically make work about women or for women but maybe I'm drawn to the women's perspective of a story, which affects who is drawn to the work as most of my buyers are also women.



Nature's Embrace with Pink Flower,
Acrylic on stitched canvas
2023

Have you ever experienced self-doubt in your work? How do you navigate those moments?

Of course, everyone has days where nothing is working out right and everything is looking a bit wonky. I work in quite a different way to most painters, I never have a blank canvas scenario or ruin a painting on a bad day.

My way of working is quite playful as I work in patchwork and can piece together ideas on the floor before stitching and committing. I see what ideas work and flow together visually. If something isn't working I can unpick or rip up and start again, sometimes just by replacing certain pieces the whole work can change completely.

If pieces come back from galleries I often take the work apart and reuse the pieces, my studio is full of painted canvas sections, maybe just waiting for the right story.

I try not to focus on where the work is going or what the work is for, I try and just enjoy the process of storytelling and making. I'm keeping old stories alive in my own way and that's the part I love. It's why I make the work I do, not everyone will like it, and that's fine.

Any advice you'd give someone trying to find their creative voice?

You have to enjoy the process, be brave, make mistakes, learn from failures and challenge yourself. If you think there's something you're not good at, do it more and learn to love the way YOU do it. It won't be perfect but it'll be your personal voice.

Think of it as a conversation, it's your voice and your story, the truthfulness and your individuality will shine through. Also, remember to have fun.



“ Make mistakes,
learn from
failures ”

A Ballad
Acrylic on stitched canvas
2023

Imogen Wade

www.imogenwadepoetry.co.uk
[@imogen_wade_poetry](https://www.instagram.com/imogen_wade_poetry)



An inspiring novelist, represented by Jenny Hewson at Lutyens and Rubinstein Literary Agency. Imogen was raised in Harlow, Essex. She studied English at the University of Exeter, with a year abroad at Vassar College in New York. Her undergraduate dissertation was on female anchorites in medieval England, which reflects her strong interest in religion.

She won the National Poetry Competition 2023 and have received acclaim in other awards, including the New Poets Prize, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the Montreal International Poetry Competition. She's been published by periodicals such as The Poetry Review, PN Review and The London Magazine. Her first poetry collection 'Girl, Swooning', will be published by Corsair in 2026.

Messages From Heaven

Boscawen Park, Truro

I live next to a pond and have spent
three years carefully studying its inhabitants—
geese, mallards, pintails, swans.

I've seen them fight; howl cacophony like
an opera; fall in love; fall in hate; become entangled
in murderous conspiracies; kill each other's
babies; call out the names
of those who've wronged them.

But I've never seen them bother with the stars.
It's human beings who pray—which is unfashionable
but everyone does it anyway.
We all worship something and
only the moon knows quite what.

I think, unlike me, birds sense the quiet apathy
of the world. Or maybe all that exists for them
is pond, river, sky. Or maybe they wrestle
with the all-knowing rain.

Leaving Cornwall

Did you hear that I'm leaving
the turquoise sea, the cairns,
the white lighthouse, a round
castle, a lounge level with the
trees; the gorse that my friend
says smells like coconut if you
crush it, but I never crushed it;
graves, yes, even the graves
and dolmens under the moon?
Did you hear that I'm leaving
the silver stars and buzzards
poised in question; temples of
rainforest; clear water; purple
flowers sprouting from cliffs;
hills of clay; mine chimneys
like exclamation marks over
the fields? The high tide sings
like ellipses and I'm a comma
trapped inside a raindrop. Oh,
I say, like a refrain in an old
poem—oh, I say, I'll miss you
like the honeybees miss sun.

Argos

“But Argos passed into the darkness of death,
now that he had fulfilled his destiny of faith.”

– Homer, The Odyssey, Book 17

I'm dreaming of getting a Doberman again.
My landlord would say no, even though I haven't asked
and never will. So I don't know. But I dream of Argos
clawing at my door. Dream of him tearing my silk dresses.
Dream of his black eyes by the side of my bed,
begging me for the hills.

I first started dreaming of Argos when we scattered ashes
over gorse on Harting Down. Wind came and fine dust
rose like smoke from the bush, à la Exodus.

Once upon a time, a man with a heart and a liver
and a shiny black hat used to sit on the hill – he watched
over the village, could see the church steeple
and our roof. Man became ash. Then my love became
grief became a Doberman, a dog called Argos
filled with faith. He needs over two hours of exercise daily
and his stamina is the stuff of myth. He has good recall,
so his name is a leash. I tell my mother to count
her blessings, I could have worse coping mechanisms
than taking my fictional Doberman for a walk.

Argos is an island in my aloneness, made of loyalty
and a glossy black coat. The sunlight loves him.
Sometimes I can't get rid of the sight of the yellow petals
turning grey as we tipped his remains –
the way we hid their colour, and sometimes I cry.

Argos licks my face. I feed him a treat. I lie on my back
in the grass; I hear him panting beside me.

Argos who is grief who is love can seem indefatigable,
which is why his breed is known for full body slams
and growls that could make an army plead defeat.

I run him ragged, let him work out the power in his heavy
muscles. Then he sits on my lap in the evening
like he doesn't know his own weight.

Commended in the Montreal International Poetry Prize

An interview with:

Mandy

My mentor



Mandy has been my mentor at Falmouth university for the past 2 years. Alongside her role as a mentor, she's involved in a wide range of activities and educational pursuits. Always eager to learn and grow.

For this session, I turned the spotlight around, to talk about herself. I wanted to hear about her thoughts on art, including her experience with a painting course she's taking.

Mandy has chosen to stay anonymous.

The Wolf
2018



‘Then into the
fairy landscape
you go.’

*Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies
Dancing
William Blake*

**So tell me about the art
course you’re doing?**

It's an adult course and an award course. With I think eight people. Last year I did level one, so this year I'm doing level two. It's a proper awarded course, there's criteria for everything.

You know, if you earn under 26k a year, it's free, because they get funding for it. I also want to do the illustration course next year.

**What project are you
working on currently?**

So we have a subject title to produce a painting from. Mine is *A sense of place*. I decided to do something like a woodland scene with fairies because I wanted a magical sense of space.

I had to do research, so I looked at the Victorian fairy painters, to understand where they were coming from and their techniques, including William Blake.

**Tell me more about your
process for this project?**

We have to do primary and secondary research. Also thumbnail sketches. We have to consider brush strokes, texture, line marking, composition, and everything else.

So for my painting, I'm going to use a circular frame because several artists used circular frames for fairies, and actually that gives a sense of another world, like a portal. It's going to be a woodland scene with the moon coming down then into the fairy landscape you go.

**Do you have an exhibi-
tion at the end of it?**

No, which I like because I was in a painting class where we had an exhibition, and everything was for sale, but I've learned so much more from this.

We're exploring techniques here. Whereas for the other one, my teacher would come around and say, oh, do this, do that. I sold paintings only for a low price, but I never developed. It was very in-the-box painting.

Why do you think it's important to do creative projects?

For me, there are several things. One is that when I paint, I get this incredible creative energy. So if I think about Vincent van Gogh, I think he was probably possessed by a creative energy. I feel really sad for him that it was so hard. But there's this zest painters have. So it just gives me loads of energy and I get really fired up and love getting lost in it sometimes. So that's one thing.

I also think it's a way to express something. I can create what I want in the world. For example, at home, I made a painting of a sunset where I live, and then I put a barn owl hunting in it. You'd never see that, but I can create that and it's a very simple thing. It needed something so I added an aboriginal with a fire, so I was able to express this elemental feeling of something that we don't have yet. I have a feeling about nature and I have a feeling about the elements.

What do you express most in painting?

Beauty and happiness. It's a celebration. I think there's something elemental in my paintings. I lived in Ireland, in a very elemental place. There, nature is not so separate from us.

I've sensed the elements, so that's what I would paint, the natural world, because that feels pure in a way.

What artists are you inspired by?

Well, when I saw abstract, like Picasso, I'm sorry, just it's too mental. I'm just very sensitive to it. Whereas when I saw Van Gogh, I just cried, I was so moved. But I felt sick because I could feel the pain in the painting. He was into colour and expression, and I relate to that. I spent a lot of time learning about him, and when you look closely at his technique, it's just incredible.

I also think Turner and Monet. There's a rawness, and there's expression. Often a celebration of nature. It's beautiful.

I heard that Monet just held the brush, looked at the flower and wouldn't allow any thoughts to dictate what he painted. He went purely through his heart and his feelings and he took the mind away from the whole process. That's one of the reasons I love painting, getting so focused on it that you don't have time to worry. Which is amazing and reminds me of positive psychology.

What's positive psychology?

In positive psychology, they look at the things that make people happy. There's a thing called the Perma Model which was developed by Martin Seligman.

P stands for positive emotions. This is when we explore, savour, and integrate positive emotions into our daily life.

E stands for engagement. It's that flow of being totally immersed in something, like painting for example. Nothing else exists and you have this incredible sense of being in the moment, of being fully alive.

R is for relationships. We need to belong.

“Incredible sense of being in the moment, of being fully alive.”

M is for meaning. For me, this is working at the uni. It's so meaningful in so many ways. It gives my life purpose and meaning. I get to see people blossoming. It generates so much fulfilment and happiness. I feel very blessed to have that.

A is for achievement. When you've achieved, say, a painting, and you look at it, it fills you with a sense of pride.

So, In short, these are five principles to live by and engagement is just as important as the rest.

Do you have a balance of all five?

I'm very good at it, but I need to stay focused on the positive emotion. It's a daily thing, the discipline of creating the space in your head to be positive. It's a habit to focus on positive things. But yeah, the rest, I think, I have more or less. But they move around. Sometimes you'll start to move away from community when you need to go back inward. Sometimes you're traumatised and you've got to get deep psychological support. This method isn't for trauma, you also have to address the issues at the core. That's what I love about having been a counsellor, the positive psychology compliments the deeper work being done.

‘It's a daily thing, the discipline of creating the space in your head to be positive.’

The aboriginal Australian
2018



Ashleigh Mills

@ashleighmillsphotography



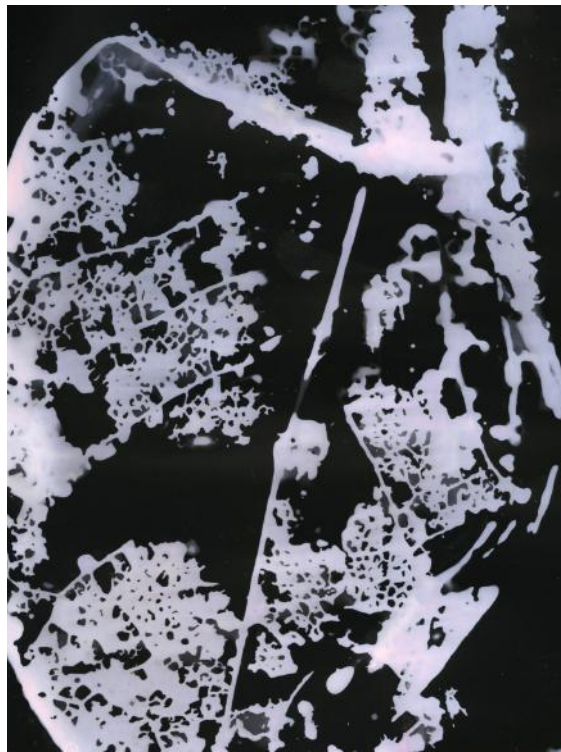
Ashleigh Mills is a student at Falmouth University studying fashion photography. Her work is often inspired by the natural beauty of the world around her as well as the beauty she sees in other people. This is perfectly shown in her project 'Liberate me'.





All things feminine are often perceived as weak in society as this is what we are taught, but I feel it's important to use our bodies and dress them (or undress them) however we please to make ourselves feel like our divine feminine self.

Women's sexual liberation and yonic symbolism within flowers is also a big part of this project as it is so taboo in society and many women still feel uncomfortable expressing their sexuality because of the shame surrounding it. My project invites women to take ownership of their bodies and do with them what they like!



‘ I see parts of myself in
the world around me ’



The aspect of nature is something I'm always drawn to in my work, as I see parts of myself in the world around me and this is something I wanted to include into my project.

Flowers reflect femininity, sexuality and beauty yet contradict feminine stereotypes because of the strength and growth within the plant. I feel the life of a flower mimics a woman's experience within her body and by appreciating the flower you can learn to appreciate yourself.



An interview with:

Jo McMinn

*Market Way, Redruth, TR15 2AU
@numbersevengallery_studio*



Jo McMinn is a Redruth-based artist and owner of number seven gallery. Her artistic practice encompasses printing, painting, and design.

Jo is currently taking an MA course in illustration at the university of Falmouth. She also finds time to offer workshops for a variety of artist practices.

I was lucky enough to visit her shop to discuss her work.



Can you give me a quick overview of how you ended up with the shop?

Sure! So I did my BA in Fine art at Falmouth University. I graduated in 2013 and went on to teach art for 10 years. I had a studio at Krowji. There I was getting lots of commissions for paintings.

I started to get very frustrated with my teaching job. Since I've always had a dark sense of humour I started to lino cut swear words and print them on any surface I could find, which I started to sell and they did really well.

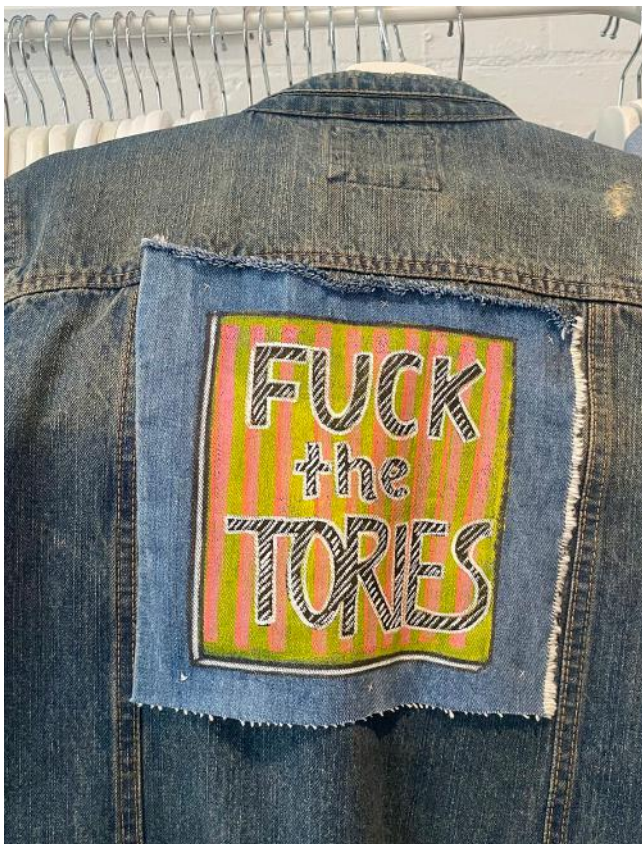
So I set it up as a little side hustle called *Sweary Mary*, it's been going really well, but I've deliberately set it up as a side thing with a separate name and a separate business so that it doesn't affect my fine art side of things so much. I don't just want to be known as *Sweary Mary*, it'll box me in a bit.

How does your shop work?

The way my shop space works is it's basically an open studio. I'm in here every Saturday working. I've been open for a year now.

I currently have a weekday job and I'm doing my Illustration MA part-time. I'm juggling lots of things. I'm really lucky though, I'm getting lots of support locally and repeat customers. I'll post on Instagram, a new print or whatever, and they'll come and buy it, which is really lovely.

I've always had this idea, but I just happened to walk up one day. I found this empty shop and on a crazy whim, thought why not? I contacted the council and found out it actually wasn't that much. So now I have the shop and everything in it is hand made by me, apart from when I rent the wall out for exhibition space.





Tell me more about the exhibition wall.

It's a very affordable space for anybody who wants to use it. I'm not looking for a particular style. It's all about giving people an opportunity to get their work out there. I'm very aware of the fact that it's very hard to get your work into any gallery or exhibition space, anywhere. I've tried on numerous occasions, and despite the fact I know my work sells, it's really hard to get galleries to see that. So far, I've had three people exhibit for six weeks at a time with a private view on a Saturday afternoon. They've all sold work which is brilliant.

What made you want to do a Master's in Illustration?

I think I've always been drawn to illustration, pardon the pun. When I went to uni to do my degree, I was very torn between illustration and fine art, but I thought I'd feel trapped with three years of illustration. Within fine art, I could paint or sculpt, I could do whatever I wanted. Whereas with illustration, I felt it would have been limiting. But I always knew I would go back and do illustration.

Do you enjoy having your studio in the shop?

I do. I get some really random people who come in. But it's lovely they stop by to have a conversation. I have to accept that my work will be interrupted, and I think some people really enjoy the fact I'm making art while they browse. They don't have the pressure of someone waiting around seeing if you're going to buy something. Plus they get a sneak peak into my process.



“I’m a jack of all trades, master of none. It’s more fun that way.”

I’ve noticed you use a lot of different art mediums. Why is that?

I’ll see something to go, yeah, I reckon I can do that. Then I do it. It just keeps things interesting.

I think people accept that one day there might be a print then the next day it’s sold, never to be made again. There’s no rhyme or reason to it.

I’m very physical, I like to put stuff together and see how it works, you know? So, an iPad just wouldn’t be for me, I wouldn’t find that satisfying. That wouldn’t work for me. Also, people are appreciative of hand-made things. They ask me how I know how to do so many things. I’m a jack of all trades, master of none. It’s more fun that way.

You also do workshops?

Yeah, I really enjoy doing the workshops. I normally have about five people. I’ve been fully booked each time. I did a book binding workshop recently, which was really good. I’ve also done a needle felting one. They’re very affordable.

Do you ever keep your art for yourself?

I’ve got things that I don’t sell. I’ve got a needle-felted hare that so many people ask to buy. He was the first thing I’d ever needle felted. He turned out brilliantly and took me months to make and I just like him too much to sell. I don’t want to get rid of him. I also feel a bit funny when a painting is sold. They’re more personal to me.

An interview with:

www.marieclairehamon.com
@marieclairehamon

Marie-Claire Hamon

Marie-Claire Hamon is a Swiss-born, Cornwall-based painter whose work explores the emotional and philosophical connection between people and place.

In addition to her artistic practice, Marie-Claire is an experienced educator. She has been a tutor at the Newlyn School of Art since 2013.

Hamon was kind enough to answer some question I had for her about her life and artwork.



Having lived in Belgium and Cornwall, how have these cultures influenced your artistic practice?

Although born in Belgium, I am a Swiss national. I lived in Belgium, France and Switzerland. I was introduced to the basics of colour mixing at the Lycée in France, it was a normal part of a child's education. Kandinsky, Klee and Miro were my building blocks, they still influence my work in subliminal ways. I lived and walked in the Jura mountains and in the Alps. It was customary to see shrines dotted on the hills. Religious imagery has remained part of my vocabulary; when it appears, it is as a universal symbol open to secular interpretation. In Penwith, I see holy wells and ancient places, the land on which I walk here provokes the same longing for rituals.

I love to look at what emerging artists are making and find a fresh energy in their work that is inspiring and energising. I am surrounded by the legacy of the modernists and surrealists who still inspire many artists, and their influence is never far away.



Can you walk me through your creative process?

My creative process is a way of living, it is with me all the time. The time in the studio is when the painting gets done.

I like to ground myself in a sense of place, to get to know it and its history. I also walk an area extensively, until it becomes familiar. I walk every day unless it's too wet, my walk is part of my routine of going to work. It

‘My creative process is a way of living’

makes me feel alive and in touch with a greater presence, in that sense, it's a necessary ritual to feel in the right state of mind to paint. I walk mainly on my own, the solitude of the walk is essential to my process.

In the studio, when I arrive, I look at the work for twenty minutes or so before I start painting. I put some music on and then squeeze fresh paint onto my palette. I tend to have around 7 paintings on the go at any one time, they are all at different stages of the process. I respond intuitively to the demand of the various pieces on the wall. I paint on the wall rather than an easel; I find the clutter behind an easel too distracting. Paintings can take weeks or months or however long is required, and occasionally I have a more spontaneous one. Paintings are made with a mixture of struggle, meditation and pleasure.

Are there any new themes or mediums you're excited to explore in your upcoming projects?

My exploration of subject matters evolves continually and gradually. Every day painting delivers the unexpected. I don't plan my work, my paintings are the outcome of a long dialogue with my process, which results in a body of work that I get to understand as I am making it. As I get a sense of the conversation, the paintings become more focused on a particular sense of identity.

Lately, I am pushing colour boundaries to excess, almost baroque at times, it's exciting but also a bit scary but I like that sense of anxiety around making work. I work with organic plant shapes, with ideas of fertility and reproduction and with ancient symbols. I am interested in the continuum of life; Cornwall has a very ancient history, we are reminded of past lives, rituals in the landscape and the span of time. I like the language of Surrealism as it allows for inventions outside of the realms of logic. Ithell Colquhoun's work is so pertinent as it addresses a new contemporary interest in the relationship between art, land, paganism and spiritual ecology.

As a tutor for the Painting for Beginners course at Newlyn School of Art, what are the common challenges you see among the new artists you mentor?

I teach 2 short 3-day courses a year at Newlyn School of Art for beginners. It is both a pleasure and a responsibility to introduce people to their first experience of making art.

A common challenge for beginners and emerging artists is accepting that it takes time and energy to become an artist, your identity will emerge as you work, so you don't need to chase it.









What has been the most rewarding aspect of teaching art?

Teaching is an enriching experience at whichever level I teach. In my tutorials, one of the most enjoyable moments is when a struggling student suddenly finds the motivation and excitement to progress with their work. Another amazing moment is when a beginner makes astounding work which they didn't know they could do.

What are some important principles for new artists to know?

1. Practice is key! Make even if you have no deadlines or commissions, use that time to explore and strengthen your practice.
2. Keep your sense of play.
3. Surprise yourself with your work.
4. Find other like-minded artists to exchange your joys and struggles, to collaborate with and network.
5. Keep looking at great art and learn from it.

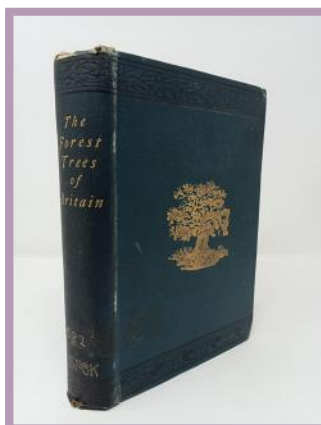
“Keep your sense of play.”

200

YEARS

1812

Maria Branwell (soon to the mother of the famous Bronte sisters) started writing love letters to Patrick Bronte



1847 Emily Stackhouse's work was published in *Forest Trees of Britain*

1890

Edith Hume painted *Fisherwomen at the beach*

1831

Mary Maria Colling published *Fables and Other Pieces in Verse*

1889 Elizabeth Forbes painted *School is Out*



WOMEN

IN

OF CREATIVE



1911 Eleanor Hughes began exhibiting her work at the Royal Academy



1952 Wilhelmina Barns-Graham painted *Red Table*

1938 Daphne du Maurier published *Rebecca*

1919 Laura Knight painted *Before the Mirror*

1940 Janet married Bernard Leach and began working at *Leach Pottery*



1991 Cornelia Parker sculpted *Cold Dark Matter, An Exploded View*

CORNWALL

Emily Stackhouse

1811–1870

Botanical Illustrator and
Mycologist





Emily Stackhouse was a pioneering botanical artist and mycologist from Cornwall, whose delicate yet precise illustrations captured the diversity of British flora. Born into a respected Cornish family, she developed a deep passion for botany, contributing significantly to the documentation of plants and fungi during the 19th century.

Stackhouse worked closely with various scientific publications, producing detailed illustrations for works such as *The British Flower Garden* and *Flora of the British Isles*. Her artistic skill and keen scientific observations set her apart in a field largely dominated by men. Despite her contributions, her work was often published anonymously or credited to male botanists, reflecting the gender biases of her time.

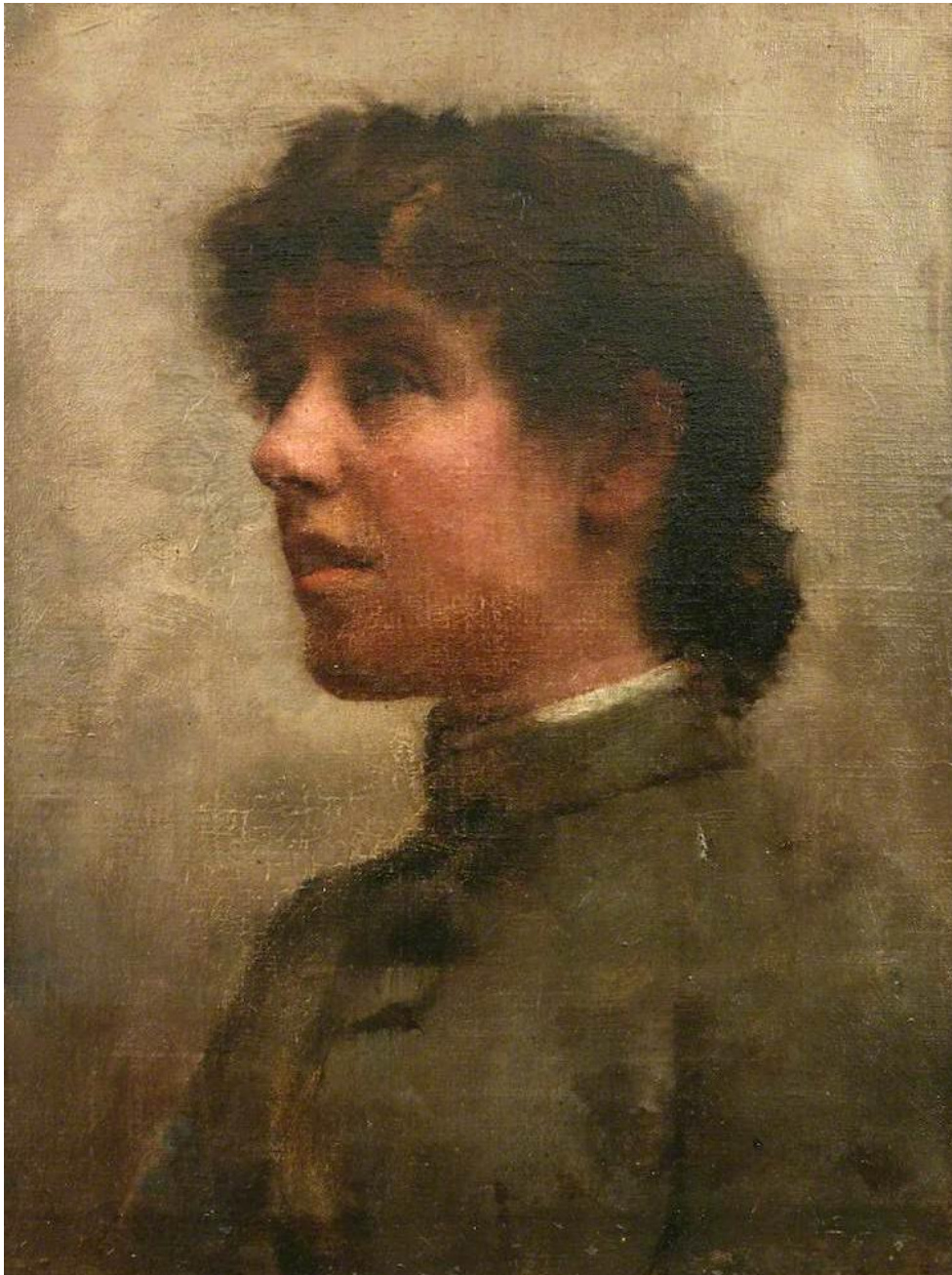
In addition to flowers, she was one of the first women to illustrate and study fungi, a subject that was considered unusual for female scientists. Her precise and beautifully rendered watercolours remain valuable records of botanical species, many of which have changed due to environmental shifts.

Though relatively overlooked in her lifetime, Stackhouse's legacy endures. Her work continues to inspire artists and botanists alike, and recent efforts to recognize historical women in science have brought renewed attention to her achievements.

“ Her work was often published anonymously or credited to male botanists ”

Elizabeth Forbes

1859–1912



A
Pioneer of
the Newlyn
School

Elizabeth Forbes
By Stanhope Alexander Forbes



Sisters
Oil on canvas
1895

Elizabeth Forbes was a celebrated painter and illustrator, best known for her role in the Newlyn School, an influential artist colony in Cornwall. Born in Canada and trained in London and Munich, she was deeply inspired by the plein air movement, which emphasized painting outdoors to capture natural light and everyday life with authenticity.

Forbes moved to Newlyn in the 1880s, where she became a leading figure in the artistic community. Her work often depicted rural Cornish life, particularly women and children in domestic and working settings, created with a soft yet expressive

realism. Her paintings, such as *Blackberry Gathering*, highlight her skill in capturing atmosphere and emotion.

In 1889, she married fellow artist Stanhope Forbes, and together they founded the Newlyn Art School, mentoring many young painters. Beyond her oil paintings, she was also an accomplished printmaker and book illustrator.

Despite her early death at 52, Forbes left a lasting impact on British art. Her contributions helped elevate the status of women in the art world, and her sensitive portrayals of everyday life continue to be admired. Today, her work is celebrated in museums and collections, preserving her legacy as a key figure in British Impressionism.

‘Deeply inspired by the
plein air movement’





Left
Blackberry Gathering
Oil on canvas
1912

Right
The Leaf
Watercolour on paper
1898
Sub-title:
*Where the wind carries me
I go without fear or grief.
I go whiter each one goes:
Thither the leaf of the rose,
And thither the laurel leaf.*

Eleanor Hughes

1882–1959

The Artist of Light and
Landscape





Left
On the Cliff
Right
Boleigh Farm

Eleanor Hughes, was a British artist known for her stunning depictions of the Cornish coast and countryside. Born in Devon, she studied at the Royal College of Art in London before moving to Cornwall, where she became closely associated with the Newlyn School of artists.

Hughes specialized in watercolours and oils, capturing the rugged beauty of Cornwall with a delicate yet expressive touch. Her work often portrayed the dramatic cliffs, fishing villages, and ever-changing coastal light, reflecting her deep appreciation for the region's natural landscape. She became a respected member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, a significant achievement for a female artist at the time.



In 1910, she married fellow artist Robert Morson Hughes, and the couple settled in Lamorna, a thriving artistic hub linked to Newlyn. She exhibited widely, including at the Royal Academy, and gained recognition for her atmospheric and finely detailed compositions.

Though often overshadowed by her male contemporaries, Hughes' work remains an important part of Cornwall's artistic heritage. Today, her paintings are celebrated for their sensitivity to light and landscape, securing her place among the notable artists of the Newlyn and Lamorna schools.

Left
RA Western Shore
 Right

View of Mount's Bay from Sancreed

‘She became a respected member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours’



Janet Leach

1918–1997

A
Visionary
in
Cornish
Ceramics



Janet Leach
By Ben Boswell
1980

Janet Leach was a pioneering British potter whose work helped shape the future of ceramics in Cornwall. Born in the United States, she studied art and ceramics before moving to Japan, where she studied traditional pottery techniques. This period deeply influenced her approach to ceramics, particularly the use of glazes and the integration of Japanese aesthetics into her work.

In 1955, Janet married Bernard Leach, a key figure in the development of modern studio pottery, and moved to Cornwall, where she became an integral part of the Leach Pottery in St Ives. After Bernard's death in 1979, Janet took on the leadership of the pottery, ensuring its legacy and guiding it through a period of innovation. She was instrumental in maintaining the pottery's high standards while introducing new techniques and designs inspired by her Japanese training.

Trio of ash glazed vases
1986





Janet's work is characterized by its elegant simplicity, with a focus on form, texture, and the natural beauty of the materials she used. Her ceramics, often utilitarian yet artistically refined, are celebrated for their balance between tradition and innovation.

Today, Janet Leach is remembered as a key figure in the evolution of studio pottery in Cornwall and as a female trailblazer in the world of ceramics.

It can be easy to look over such designs as the elegant, texture technique has inspired many ceramics since. But Janet's pottery was pioneering at the time in Cornwall.

‘Balance between
tradition and
innovation’



Left top
Sake Pourer and Cup

Left bottom
Vessel, raku, twisted form

Right
Trio of ash glazed vases



Wilhelmina Barns-Graham

1912–2004

A Pioneer of British Modernism





Wilhelmina Barns-Graham was a significant British painter associated with the St Ives School, known for her evolution from figurative to abstract art. Born in Scotland in 1912, she studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, where she developed a strong foundation in traditional techniques before pushing the boundaries of artistic expression. In 1940, she moved to St Ives, Cornwall, at a time when the town was becoming a centre for avant-garde artists. There, she became deeply involved in the post-war modernist movement, contributing to its development and gaining recognition as one of its key figures.

Barns-Graham's work was profoundly shaped by her environment, particularly the dramatic landscapes of Cornwall, which provided endless inspiration for her artistic exploration. Her travels to France, Italy, and Switzerland also played a crucial role in her artistic evolution, exposing her to European modernism and leading her to experiment with abstraction.

While her early works were primarily figurative, her style gradually shifted as she embraced geometric forms, bold colour palettes, and textured surfaces. She developed a deep fascination with the interaction of space and form, often exploring how the natural world could be distilled into simplified, dynamic compositions.

Left
Wilhelmina Barns-Graham
By Rowan James
 2001

Right
Red Table
Gouache on Hardboard
 1952

Throughout her career, Barns-Graham remained closely connected to a circle of influential artists, including Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, and Peter Lanyon. Their collective experimentation helped establish St Ives as a major hub for modern art in Britain. Despite facing challenges as a woman in a predominantly male art world, she persisted in developing her unique voice, refining her style over decades.

Her later years saw a resurgence of interest in her art, as critics and collectors recognized the depth and significance of her contributions. Today, her work is held in major collections worldwide, including Tate Britain and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. The Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust, established in her memory, continues to support artists and promote her legacy, ensuring that her impact on British modernism endures for future generations.



Just In Time
Screenprint on paper
1999



Glacier, Grindelwald, Switzerland
Mixed media on paper
1949

‘ Her style evolved through various phases, exploring the intersection of space and form ’

A day in the life of

Sophie Castle

www.sophiecastle.com
[@sophierosecastle](https://www.instagram.com/sophierosecastle)



Sophie Castle's paintings are rooted in the intricate history of portraiture and nudes, with her pieces alluding to complex narratives of the characters depicted. The subjects of the paintings are a vehicle to challenge societal expectations of femininity and construct a sense of self.

Sophie gave me a run down on a typical day in her working life.

7:15 Force myself to wake up. Immediately shower and get dressed.

*SADLY I AM NOT A
MORNING PERSON*

8:00 Go on a morning walk to wake myself up.

8:30 Meet my boyfriend at the local coffee shop to grab a Matcha and have a chat with the locals. Today a local brought me in a magazine of nudes from the 70s for my art which was very kind!

9:00 Make a bowl of porridge and stare at the painting I'm currently working on. Focus on all the areas I'm not happy with and decide a plan of action for rectifying them.

9:30 Put on my overalls and set up my tripod for filming. Realise I look reasonably awful and frantically apply mascara and bronzer to look less corpse-like.

9:38 Put my headphones on and get to work.

10:30 I've painted a snake within my painting to represent a 'creative life force' but somehow it is the worst part of this entire painting. I'm painting it now for the 4th time.

*ON THE VERGE
OF SCREAMING INTO
A PILLOW*

11:17 I have accepted this is as good as the snake will get and that I need to move on. Time to sort out the bluebells.

11:22 I've gone back to the snake. I can't leave it looking this dreadful.

11:56 I accept defeat. The snake is painted very crudely and in dark colours to ensure eyes aren't drawn to looking at it.

12:03 After a swift dance break I'm back on the bluebells. I've decided to paint them first and then fill in the background around them. This technique doesn't work for me when I'm aiming for it to look hyper realistic but I've decided this painting is going to look a lot more 'patchwork' in style.





Luncheon After Chess
Oil on canvas
2020

13:00 Stop for lunch and a natter with my boyfriend.

13:45 Back to it, getting into the swing of things now. The dance tunes are out and my singing is at a horrendous level in both skill and volume. I start tidying up small bits here and there.

14:50 I need to rectify the fishbowl. I have originally been painting it from my imagination, so I decide to google some images instead.

15:30 Turns out copying from an image precisely looks terrible with the 'unrealistic' style of the rest of the painting.

*I WIPE IT AWAY
AND START AGAIN*

16:03 It looks a lot better but the final touches will have to be made tomorrow once the oil paint is a little less wet and more tacky.

16:08 Tea break! *UNDOUBTEDLY, MORE
HORRENDOUS DANCING*

16:20 Tidying up edges. Neatening up the plate and table legs etc.

16:35 Stand back and think before I rush in and make silly mistakes.

16:37 Start painting the snake again

17:12 Realise I am never ever including a snake in one of my paintings ever again. Stick brushes in a far-too-old jar of turps, take off my overalls, complain to my boyfriend about stupid snake.

17:34 Head to the gym for minimal gain.

19:00 Head to the pub for BIG wine.







Left
Lady Lilith
Oil on canvas
2020

Right
Thetis
Oil on canvas
2023

An interview with:

Rachel Jakeman



Rachel is a soulful and intuitive painter exploring myth, memory, and female empowerment through earthy tones and ethereal imagery.

Her artistic journey into painting is one of rediscovery. After years of working in education and raising a family, she returned to her passion for art. Now finishing a masters in illustration at Falmouth University, creating soulful and intuitive work.

I met Rachel for a coffee at the university to chat about her journey with art.

Grounded
2024

So you're doing a Masters Degree, what made you want to do this? And did you study art before?

I had worked teaching at schools for a long time around taking care of my children, but when I was younger I lived in London and did a window dressing course. I knew I wanted to do something creative, but I didn't have the confidence to go into further education.

It wasn't until I was working in a school so long as a teaching assistant that I decided to do my teacher training, and I knew that I would do art because that was my passion. I did the training while my son was only five and had just started school.

Then sometime after, I realised that I needed to paint. I kept a studio while teaching. It's quite hard to keep it going.

You're talking about your studio in Redruth?

Yeah, that's the one. It was really nice to go to my studio, I had made friends there and had something consistent. It was important to have that.

I also finally sold my paintings from my BA. I held on to them because I never knew if I was going to paint again. I let go of them.

That must have been hard.

It was because one of them was my mum and it was under my bed.

But anyway, I think art's always been important to me and since I started painting again, I know that's what I want to do, but it's not that easy to make a career out of it.

“ I held on to them because I never knew if I was going to paint again. ”

Yes, this is why I do graphic design, there's more job opportunity's. But I was thinking about doing a master's in art later in life. What's the Masters course like here?

It's really good. I felt a little bit out of my comfort zone because I'm used to working in fine art but this master's is in illustration. It's a different territory to what I'm used to. I would have done fine art but at the time of enrolment the course was only online.

I was also exploring the narrative in my work, so illustration has been a good thing. It's given me interesting projects.

Is it just a year for the Masters?

It can be, but I do it part-time over two years. At the moment I'm doing my dissertation. I don't really like writing, and with all the referencing, but I know once it's done I can focus on the work again.

What's your dissertation subject?

I'm looking at Francesca Whitman. She was a photographer who died by suicide when she was only 22. From 13 to 22, she managed to produce an amazing body of work.

She was the photographer and the model. I really like her work and her topics. She looked at mythology and reflections which I'm looking at now too.

‘I’m interested in empowering women without a voice’

With your work, what draws you to this mythical side?

Well, I’m interested in capturing something real, I’m trying to put my imagination into it as well.

Yeah, I would kind of describe it like magical realism.

That’s a good way to describe it. Lots of people say that my work is quite ethereal too. Which I think is because I’ve been looking at wings. I don’t know where it all came from, really. I mean, I just kind of go with what I’m interested in.

I’m interested in the Greek myths. In my piece *Grounded*, I was referencing Apollo and Daphne. Daphne gets transformed into a tree to escape Apollo’s advances. But I was looking at the healing side of it. She escaped from trauma and she’s a self-healing. I kind of love that. She’s grounded and in touch with the earth. I’m interested in empowering women without a voice, and I think that it’s important. Looking back in time women have often been objectified, and seen through the male gaze then empowering women by having their own voice.

That’s great because I found you through the Cornish Maids exhibition, which is all about giving women a voice.

Yes and I was really excited when I got contacted by Fran to be part of Cornish Maids.

So is mythology your main topic or do you ever delve into other narratives?

I kind of stick to what I like. I’ve been asked to do commissions before but I find it hard. My work has to come from within.

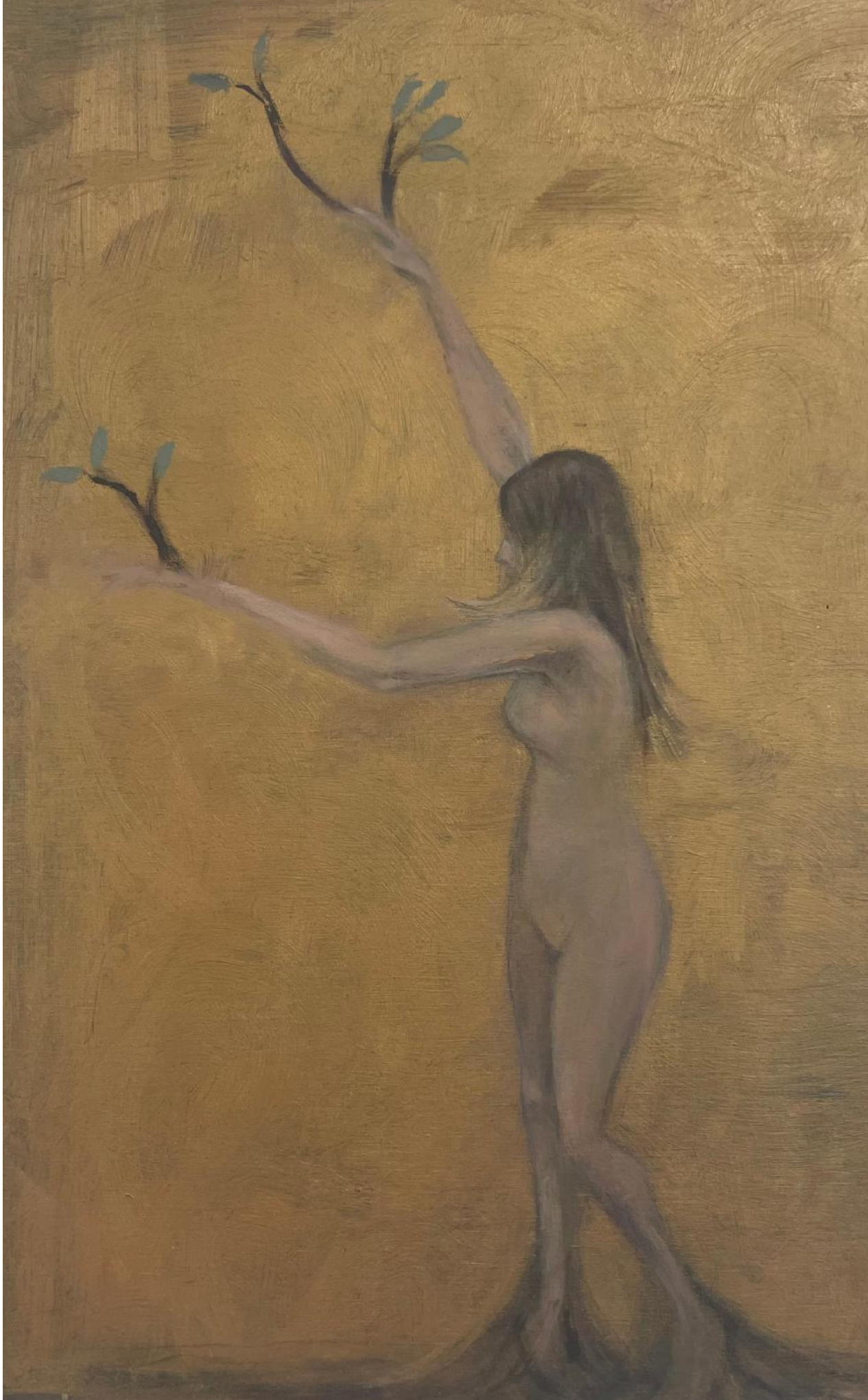
And with your work, I see a lot of muted, earthy tones, why is this?

I’m trying to be a bit more adventurous with colour actually. But I’m really particular.

Once I was struggling with a painting. It was a self-portrait, I painted the background green, but it had gone over my face so I looked ill. I didn’t like it. Then I spoke to this artist, she said that she believes that women like me should be themselves and just do what’s true to them. So I went back to my painting and painted over it in gold. I was like, oh, thank goodness! I’ve given her light. I’d made her sick and then well again.

Sounds like the process itself was art.

Oh, yes, I love that.



Tree lady
2024

Hannah Pegley

@hannah.pegley



The Beautiful Game

is a celebration of the passion and resilience of female footballers. Through intimate portraits and action-packed moments frozen in time, Pegley presents the growing face of women's football, exploring the bonds created between team mates and their shared passion towards the sport. Players are photographed against the iconic green backdrop of the pitch, but this time, it is dominated by women.

Her photography captures the vibrant energy of the womens game, documenting the playful yet determined attitude of these young athletes, giving us a glimpse into the behind the scenes, allowing the viewer to see a raw and honest perspective of the sport.







Jane Burtwell

www.cjanejewellery.co.uk
@cjanejewellery



Jane is the creative force behind C Jane Jewellery, a collection of handmade pieces crafted in Cornwall. Her work draws inspiration from the natural beauty of the sea, shore, and hedgerows, incorporating organic shapes and textures into her designs.

Jane welcomes bespoke commissions, offering personalized pieces that resonate with individual clients. Her jewellery is available through her website and select stockists.



My focus is firmly rooted in the south west. All my designs and ideas emerge from living in the countryside and are inspired by the sea, the tides, waves and patterns on the sand as well as leaves, petals and shadows in the hedgerows. Each piece is a unique item. The rings, earrings, bangles and necklaces are made from sterling silver with pieces of copper or bronze often added to enhance the detail and then worked individually to create texture.

The beginning of each piece often starts with a walk along the coastal path, a ride on my horse or perhaps a local photograph that triggers an idea from something that has caught my eye. From that initial concept I make some sketches, leading to cutting the shape from my chosen metal. Detail and textures are added in stages before the final polishing. I love the texturing process and have built up a series of tools that I like and experimenting with new methods is always fun. In my studio I keep a vase of leaves, feathers shells and stones as a constant reference point. Forming and adding other metals is always a possibility and I enjoy making the pieces asymmetric as this is a true reflection of nature.

One of the things I love about making jewellery is the stage by stage process and seeing each piece emerge into a beautiful and individual item that my customers will have great pleasure in wearing.

‘ The beginning of each piece often starts with a walk along the coastal path ’

An interview with:

www.elainepamphilon.com
@elainepamphilon

Elaine Pamphilon



Elaine is a painter and accomplished concert harpist.

Her characterful paintings often depict everyday objects, landscapes, and scenes inspired by her surroundings. I asked Elaine some questions about her whimsical artwork and life that inspires it.

What inspires your artwork?

Colours excite me! And everyday objects, souvenirs from travels, patterns, and walking the romantic countryside around our home. I love walking and always make mental notes about colours, shapes, lines and textures. When travelling, I jot ideas down in a book. It may be something I see that holds my attention, or it can be something completely visually unrelated, an emotional reaction to being in that specific space.

If you are inspired by life it dictates what you make. I'm always drawn towards the haphazard nature of the countryside, the sea-side, to the man-made objects and marks on the landscape. Feel your way into a painting and your life is enriched.

Where and when did this passion for art and music come about?

I've always had a passion for art and music. I did a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music at age 10 (sat next to Elton John then Reginald Dwight). I studied the harp, harpsichord and piano. My father was a violinist in the London Symphony Orchestra, my brother was a chorister at Westminster Abbey. My mother also played the violin and was a music teacher. I went to concerts as a child at the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall when my father played with the LSO.

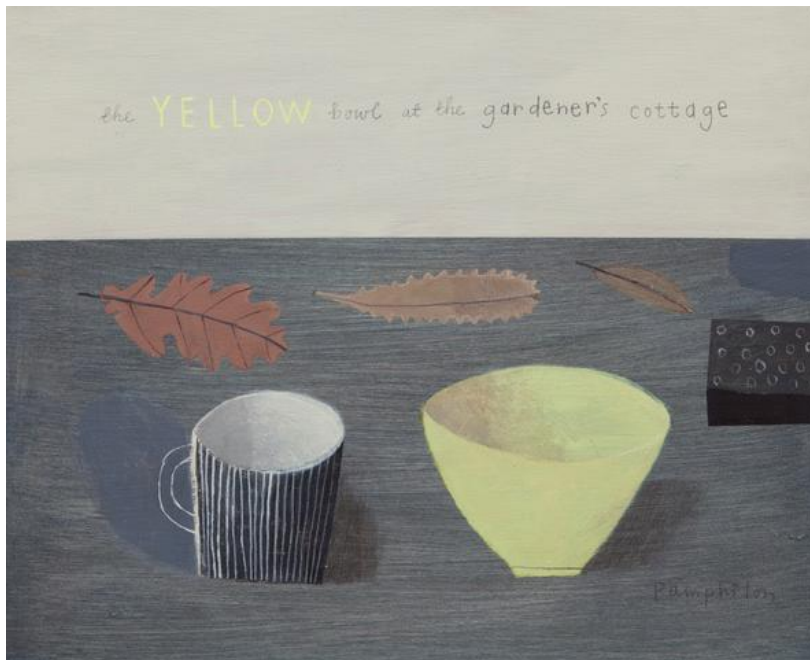
I studied the harp later on with David Watkins, the principal harpist at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. The harp is a notoriously difficult instrument to master but a wonderful sound. Three of my daughters also learnt it and played so well. I enjoyed listening to that sound floating and flowing around the house.

I also studied in Paris whilst an au pair to the famous French artist André Hambourg, and his family. He had a beautiful huge studio in Montparnasse that really got me interested in art. As a student at Kettles Yard in Cambridge I was introduced to Cornish

Art, particularly Alfred Wallis whom I love, and Ben Nicholson, whom I met once as a student. It was a seminal moment to meet such a great man, to look at his work and listen to his explanations about his thought processes. Jim Ede was also an inspirational figure. His stories about his collections and the different artists were always wonderful and that inspired me to look for a house in Cornwall later in life.

It remained part of my soul. The glorious countryside! I know the feeling of the landscape so well, the light on the sea and the marks of the paths around the coastline. The bright blue skies against delicious smelling yellow gorse, smoky turquoise waters and miles of uninterrupted sand.

*The yellow bowl at the gardens cottage
Mixed media on wooden panel*



How has living in Cornwall influenced your creativity and artistic style?

Colour is my big thing and the subtleties it can produce. I'm not a fan of using bright vibrant colours. We live in a pale pearlescent sea-washed isle, and that for me dictates what I make.

'Always paint what you know', says Scottish artist Barbara Rae, and I do agree with her, it works out better, generally. Making a painting look simple and spontaneous is difficult. The more I paint, the less I need on the canvas. Painting is an obsession. It's a way of looking at the world every second... every minute... each line... each light. Travels are also instrumental in the creative journey. One is never off duty to inspiration!





Left

*Ben Nicholson house st ives
Mixed media on wooden panel*

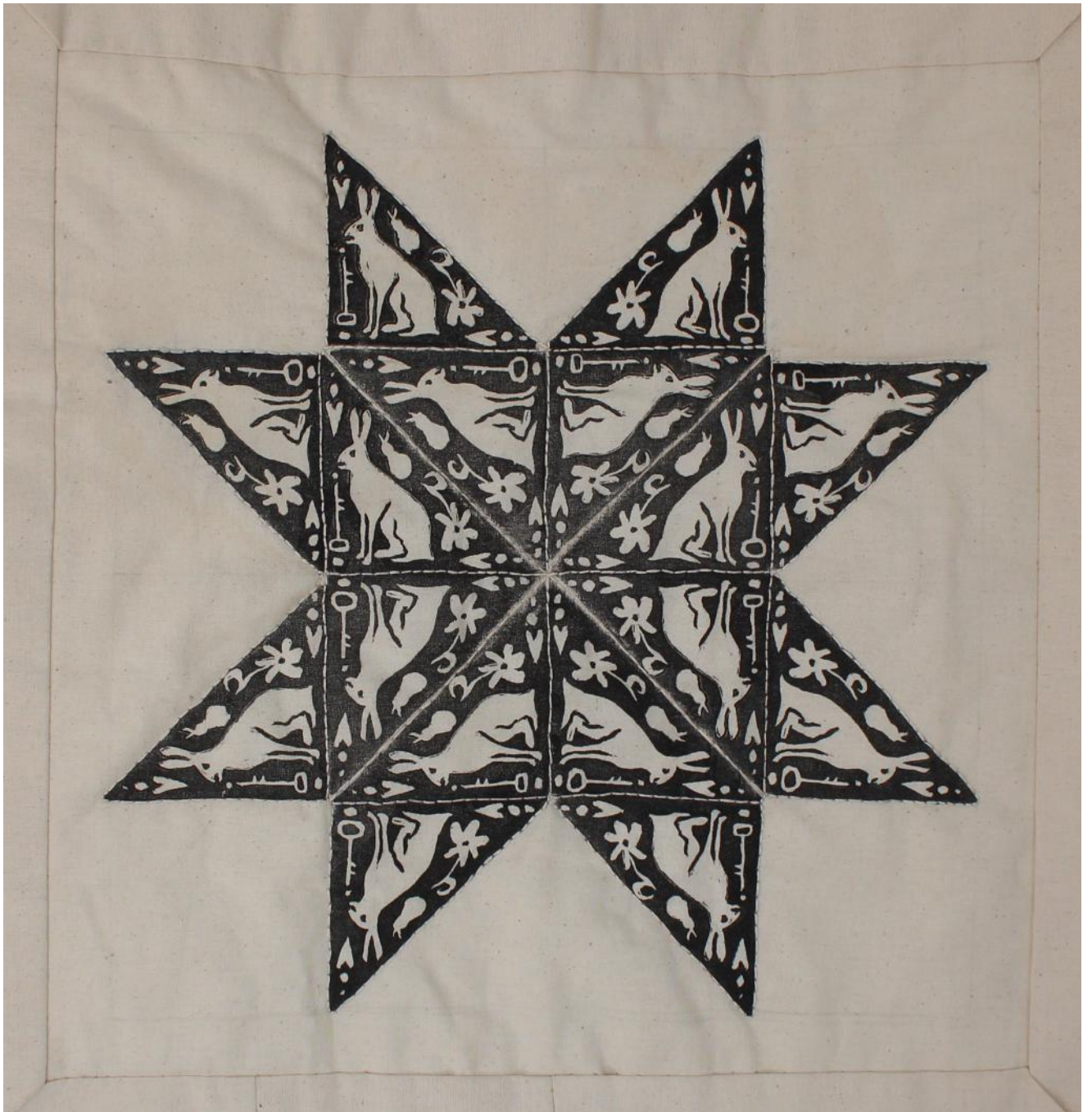
Right

*The collection
Mixed media on wooden panel*

Lily-Anne Garwood

@sillyanne.lilyanne

Lily-Anne's unification of lino print and hand quilting. Investigates how widely accepted fine arts practices can sit alongside processes viewed as domestic and less worthy of exhibition."



Eight Pointed Star
Lino print and hand quilting using embroidery thread on cotton calico.
2025

The symbolism of the hare is based on the Cornish legend of the broken-hearted lover haunting the person that betrayed her in the form of a white hare,

ultimately causing his death.

Catherine Lucktaylor

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@lucktaylorceramics



Catherine Lucktaylor is a ceramic artist based in West Cornwall, known for her unique hand-built Raku ceramics.

Drawing inspiration from her African heritage and the natural beauty of Cornwall, her work reflects a deep connection to nature, ancestry, and traditional techniques.

Right
Wild Cornwall Pots
Raku fired ceramic

Tell me your journey to becoming a ceramist.

Well it's probably been about thirty or maybe forty years now. I left school when I was 16 and I went straight into a two year art and design course. While I was there, I made my first ever coil pot and I could just do it, I felt like I had this natural affinity to it. So I thought, right this is what I want to do.

I went on to do a three-year degree in Wolverhampton, specialising in ceramics. I've done other stuff, like mixed media, multimedia and all different sorts of projects. But I've really come back round to ceramics as my first love.

What is it that you find most rewarding about working with clay?

I mean, I love the feel of it and I love the way you can just kind of get immersed in the process. So obviously I love creating things that look good, but I also love the process and the fact there are different processes. I like the tactile feel of it. The transformation it goes through when you fire it, and then there's the whole glazing process.

I specialise in raku, I just love the alchemy of it and, I can kind of know what result I'm going to get, but I still have things go wrong. I still have surprises. I think I will never get bored of working in that medium because it's so versatile. I could make pots, I can make sculptures, I could make small things, I could make large things. I could make jewellery.

Could you talk to me a little bit about the Raku technique? What's the process like?

Yeah, Raku originated in Japan as part of tea ceremonies, but it's really changed over the years when Western potters in I think it was in the 70s, started to experiment with Raku and it's like totally different to its origins, but it's still got that root and that connection to where it started. So basically it's a way of glazing ceramic. So, after bisqueing (a low-temperature firing) is the glazing process. And I've got a kiln that I've made myself out of a dust bin lined with ceramic fibre and a gas burner. So, it's a simple kind of up-cycled kiln. I fire things in small batches and can do so quite quickly. The raku kiln takes it up to a temperature quite quickly. Normally, if you were firing something in an electric kiln, it would go all night, and it slowly cools down. So it's quite a long process, whereas with Raku, you can go from start to finish in an hour.

I normally take it up to a round like 980° centigrade, then take it out of the kiln when it's red hot, and that combination of the hot piece and then hitting the cool air, that thermal shock causes the glaze to crackle. And that's the distinctive kind of raku quality, the crackled glaze. While the pots are still fairly hot, I put it in sawdust, that sets a light, it smokes. I put the lid on, it all smokes, and all the carbon from wood smoke goes into the clay.



So these pieces must be unique then because of the cracks, is that something you love about it?

Yeah, it is. And I love the way that I'm working with all the elements. For instance, if it's like really windy, I have to think which way round I need to put the kiln, or if it's raining, then even the rain spots falling on the hot glaze will make an effect and different marks will appear.

I love the alchemy of it, it's magical. It's really exciting.

I believe your heritage is Ghanaian? And you were able to visit Ghana because of your ceramic work?

Yes, I was born in England, but my father is from Ghana and my mother is English. I was really lucky quite a while ago, I got a traveling fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Part of that journey was to visit Ghana, which was my first time there. I also went to Nigeria and Brazil. The project was researching traditional religion and sacred arts and looking at particular nature spirits. I was looking at symbolism and how people who were enslaved and taken from West African, it became even more important for people who were displaced.

But part of that journey was also to find my father. I because my mum and dad separated when I was very young, then they lost touch as we moved around a lot. So he would come and go in my life. Then when I was about ten we just totally lost touch. I spent quite a few years as a teenager trying to find him, but could never make any connection.

Then I went to Ghana. I asked everyone I met know I was looking for my dad, just in case, you never know. But he had really common surname so it wasn't going to be easy to find. But I ended up meeting someone from London who said his dad would help me. So he put an ad in the local paper and I found one of my cousins. So I went back to Ghana, met my dad's family. I found out my dad was actually back living in London. So when I came back, I reconnected with him. This was a really important part of the journey, I was very fortunate.



Mothers of the Moon
1 of 3 sculptures
Raku fired ceramic

Oh that's wonderful! Did your experience in Ghana, affect your work?

I think it did very much intertwine. It's partly because I didn't have that cultural connection before. I grew up with my white English family and I was always the only black person in my family, in my school, in my community. I think there was something about wanting to find that part of myself.

When I was a teenager, I first discovered the Adinkra symbols. Which originated from Ghana and are symbols that were originally used on funeral cloths and for ceremonial purposes. They've been a thread that I've used throughout my work in different ways.

I think partly because I didn't have that culture growing up, it made it more important. I've always had an intuitive connection with my ancestors. In my past I did a lot of work that's around my identity. Then when I came to Cornwall, and focused more on Cornish ceramics inspired by the landscape here. Now I've come back around to the ancestral work. I trained as an ancestral healer recently.

What I love is combining that with the creativity. So that's kind of what makes what I do a bit different.

Could you tell me a bit more about the ancestral healing?

So the technique I learned is ancestral lineage healing. So I can do a Zoom or in person. I guide people to connect with their well ancestors (ancestors who lived lives characterized by positive attributes). It's like a guided meditation.

But what I'm also developing is a more creative based ancestral healing. So working with the clay and the elements and bringing in that ancestral element as well. I've run one retreat and I really want to do more. I did a grief ritual retreat, which was working with the clay to create elements that then could be used as part of a ritual. This is where I'm heading and what I'm working towards.

Yeah. I love when the two worlds of healing and art merge.

It's really fascinating. I think people get a lot out of it. And what I love about raku is that it's one of those techniques that has this magical element, it's elemental because you're really getting in with the flames and you plunge the hot pot into water. So you've got all those different elements coming together, but also, you know, you can get really good results because just the raku blazes look amazing. So even if someone's never made anything before, they can still go away with something that is really beautiful.

I've run ceramic courses in my studio, I've found that as people make, the conversations start to flow, sometimes getting quite deep. You can be creating and talking, and emotions come up. I love that way of transmuting energy and feelings through the process. It's very powerful.

**So would these retreats take place in Cornwall?
And what was it that drew you here?**

I live in far west Cornwall, so I'm right down the end, and I just love it. The fact that there's so many sacred sights, like stone circles. And the wildness, the landscape, the ocean. A lot of the work I do is coming from a very animism viewpoint, everything has a life force in it. So, you can connect with a river or a stream and, connect with the water spirits or you can go down to the ocean, connect with the ocean goddess. There's the Pagan and Celtic, earth-based traditions of the UK here. I bring in my African element to it as well.

You can be in nature, but also it's not far to go. You could go and sort of like do a ritual in a stone circle or go down to the ocean or connect with the river or the moon or whatever. And I just love that. I've lived in a lot of different places around the country and I never really felt settled until I came to Cornwall.

Finally, are there any women - artists, ancestors,

There's a few actually. I love the ceramic work of Magdalene Odundo. She creates the most beautiful vessels, they're really gorgeous and just speak to me.

I also love Frida Carlo, of course. The fact she used her own life experiences in her art, and she had a very difficult life, a lot of pain, but used that and expressed that.

There's also another artist who I absolutely love called Judy Chicago. She did this amazing piece called The dinner party. She created this large triangular table, with each place settings commemorating an important woman from history. She worked with loads of women to create it, and I just loved that. That idea of honouring women over time, but also working with women to make that vision come to life.

Oh that's inspiring. Much like the concept I have for this magazine.

Definitely, It's very Exciting.

Right
Ancestral Cat Spirit
Raku fired ceramic



A Queer Audio Space

@lilacarchive_pod

Cassidy Mahler



*Lilac Archive
Podcast logo*

The idea to have an evolving and inclusive Queer Audio Space, came out of two things. My long-term desire to explore and develop a project in audio format, especially one where I could interview and platform the voice of other people. As well as the need for a space for Queer creatives to show their work and ideas, including how their Queerness intersects with it.

Often, Queer creatives do not have the same access to spaces to showcase their work as other creatives do, although this is changing. It seems that in mainstreams spaces, Queerness only pops up in curated collections for Pride Month or as a hidden subtext to the works of well-known artists. Certainly, thriving in underground spaces, made for and by the wider Queer community. These spaces are operated on a pop-up basis, not allowing for a permanent standing for these works and their artistry.

The idea also stemmed from my exploration of the field of Queer Death Studies. Which I was writing about for my dissertation. The Queering of Death focuses not just on how Queer individuals die, but how our Queerness evolves and survives beyond this. Binding us together and allowing us to navigate through grief as a community. Having

immersed myself in these things, I wanted to create something that allowed me to give back to the community in my own individual way, in this case in the form of the platform itself. While also, through its archival purpose and format allowing for Queer voices to be retained and heard by a wider audience, thus escaping the morbidity of some of the aspects of Queer Death.

Having an archive, where the experiences of Queer creatives from the local community are placed front and centre allows for a longevity for these works. Not only highlighting the individuals interviewed but also allowing for them to express and discuss their work. Going behind how their artistic expression mixes with and informs their own personal identity. Through this, I have met some fascinating people and am still only half-way through producing the scheduled number of episodes!

Guests Include:

Episode 1: Gwen Howard – Queerness in Acting

Episode 2: Ollie Kemp - Queerness in Writing

Episode 3: Leo Kirk and Andi Searle - Creative resilience in community

Episode 4: Emma Frankland - Punk and performance

With more to come ...

Elizabeth Loveday

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Blending portraiture, embroidery,
and storytelling.



I'm a artist, mother and storyteller from Cornwall. I come from a family of creative craftswomen who have all used alternative materials in the arts to create narrative works. My mother is a wooden automata maker and my grandmother was a ceramists. They both used there work to tell stories and escape the humdrum with humour and a touch or the absurd, in this our work feels linked.

My methods do not sit solely within the traditional notion of "fine art", but draw elements from illustration, textiles and craft. Using my linear drawings as a guide I use fabric of different weights, textures and age, hand dying, layering and hand stitching to create narrative and decorative works. I use both traditional and gestural embroidery, using threads as accents, highlights and shadows, defining and mark-making sections of my images.

I then purposefully bruise, unstitch and weather my work, teasing the weaves to blend the contrast between fabrics. I like to use fabrics of contextual significance; fabric is a powerful and very human medium, it can evoke memory and feeling with ease as we spend our lives draped in it, sleeping in it, peacocking in it and so on, and this can strengthen and give great weight to a narrative.

I view my work as a visual outlet for dialogues that exist within myself and wider society. Handling humanistic themes, I use characters loosely gleaned from Cornish folk tales and my own life to tell stories that exist within the community I live in right now. It is at once comment on self and place and the intermingling of both.

I have been selling work privately for the last ten years but have also been able to do many solo and group shows. I spent a year at Goldsmiths College, London studying Fine Art and then three years studying Illustration at UWE, Bristol. I graduated with a first class BA Hons in 2013. I have been a practicing artist and illustrator ever since. I am now working in a small studio in Penzance where I live with my son and partner.

Left
Sea Hair and salt skin
Reclaimed silk

Right
Durgan
Oil and acrylic





Left
The Dance of Snakes and eels
 2025

Right
Sun Sisters
 2024



