



Above The screenprinted wall hangings are by Eve Campbell. Borja Moronta made the stoneware vessels. Right *Vortex Brooch II* by Andrew Lamb



IMAGE BY CAL DOUGLAS

Collect 2024

Meet some of the Scottish craft makers showing their work at this annual celebration of the handmade

Words Miriam Methuen-Jones

Craft is having a huge resurgence and, frankly, it's about time. Two-dimensional work, like paintings and photography, will always have its place, but craft is now rightfully being hailed as one of the most accessible forms of artistic expression, open to people who might not consider themselves artists – think of your gran knitting, your best pal methodically creating crochet tapestries, your brother-in-law taking a pottery class. Most creative people have dabbled in craft, and even if you haven't, craft is easily comprehended and appreciated. Of course, there are artists and makers ready to push the boundaries – so where do you go to see the best of the best? The answer is Collect, the annual London fair launched by the Crafts Council in 2004.

“Collect is probably the most important art fair for contemporary craft and design,” says its creative director, Isobel Dennis. “This year is its 20th edition, so it's well established.”

UK and international galleries apply to show the work of a selection of artists, then an advisory board approves the artists and gives space to the galleries. In total, more than 400 artists are represented. ▶



IMAGE BY GRAHAM CLARK

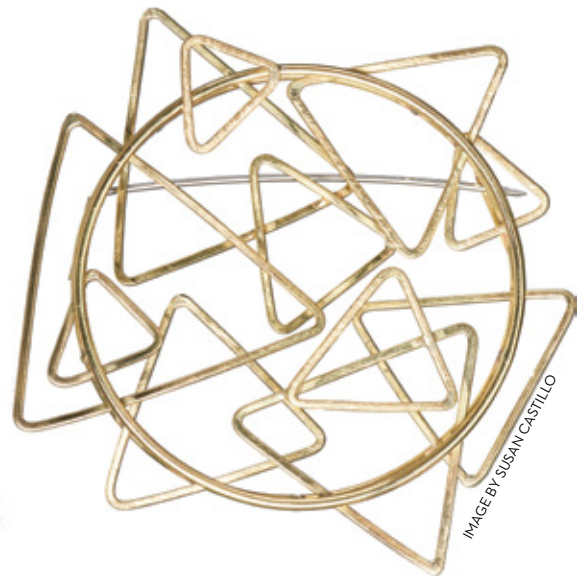


IMAGE BY SUSAN CASTILLO

“You get to see the most incredible work, from every discipline you could imagine,” says Isobel. “Ceramics, glass, wood, textiles, paper, jewellery – really interesting things. Everything is by artists working today, over 80% of the work has been made in the last five years, and so much is commissioned specifically for the fair.”

Collect, as you may have guessed from the name, is not an exhibition; it’s a selling fair or collectors’ market. Prices start at around £500 but most works cost between £5,000 and £15,000. Attendees include museum patrons and curators, art advisors, interior designers and, of course, collectors.

Part of Collect’s appeal is its location. Somerset House, which has played host for the past five years, offers a comfortable viewing experience, and one quite dissimilar to a typical gallery. Finding a new location was one of Isobel’s first tasks back in 2018, when the fair had to move from its original home at the V&A. “There isn’t a huge number of suitable venues in London,” she says. “I wanted to get away from that white-walled booth in a marquee or exhibition centre. I think the work deserves more than that. Somerset House has its challenges, but what it does give you is a fully immersive interiors experience. Each gallery gets an entire room. They have a fourth wall, fireplaces, wooden floors, natural daylight (which loads of exhibitions don’t have) and you get glorious evening light. This allows buyers to visualise the pieces in their own home.”

Isobel comes from a creative background herself; she’s the daughter of two architects and is trained in ceramics. “I was a maker, so I really understand the process. Even though I have to run the fair in a business-like manner, the whole creative side of it is incredibly important for me. That knowledge base helps me keep its creative direction moving in the right way.”

The makers at Collect are brilliantly diverse, and not just because they work in a wide variety of mediums. “We show a lot of emerging artists, and they’re not necessarily young. Some are having second careers,” Isobel explains. “As well as gallery submissions, we also have Collect Open, which is where an artist can apply independently. They have to put forward a proposal

which shows ambition in pushing their practice. Once selected, they are then supported to create something brand new for the fair. These interventions sit alongside world-class galleries. It’s a fantastic mix and always a proper feast for the senses.”

It’s not just accessibility pushing craft to the forefront; it’s the shift in the buyer’s focus that we should be tentatively optimistic about. “I think people really care about provenance these days,” agrees Isobel. “They care about the handmade. There’s a backlash against mass manufacture and sweatshops. People want to know the origin and authenticity of things and they want to support the artists, not the factories.”

Keen to add to your own collection? The following pages show some of the makers showcased by Craft Scotland at Collect this year. “Scotland offers up such extraordinary wildness for creative people to respond to,” says Isobel. “I think that’s why you see such beauty coming from Scottish artists. It’s embedded in where and how they live.”

Opposite Craft Scotland at Collect 2023: coffee table (foreground) by SHY Design Studio; Moon Jars by Ruth Elizabeth Jones; sculptural baskets by Iseabal Hendry; screenprinted wall hangings by Eve Campbell



IMAGE BY CAL DOUGLAS

Top left 18ct gold brooch by Heather McDermott. **Above** Engraved glass dolls by Suh Moonju. **Right** Faceted foam glass sculptural pieces by Charlott Rodgers



IMAGE BY CAL DOUGLAS



IMAGE BY CAL DOUGLAS

This image Richard Goldsworthy surrounded by his work in his studio at Marchmont. **Opposite page, right** Wave sculpture by Richard Goldsworthy **Opposite page, below** Jo Walker in her pottery studio near Dunfermline; *Homage to Forton*, made in white stoneware



IMAGE BY JULIE HOWDEN

Richard Goldsworthy

Sculptor

I knew I wanted to be a sculptor when I was 13, and doggedly pursued this path. I've always been drawn to 3D work over 2D and studied a BA in sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art. For me, Edinburgh was the place to be: the college had great tutors and it had space. That's so important when you're working in 3D - you need room to experiment and try new things.

I fell into using wood because it was the most accessible material for me. I started incorporating pewter after I had a bad accident; I used to be a professional skier with Team GB, but I had a big injury where I broke my back and neck. That was a pivotal point for me; if I'd had this

accident 30 years ago I would've been strapped to a bed for six months unable to move. I wanted to evoke this feeling in my work. I saw wood as a natural material that represented myself. I added nails to reference the screws in my spine that were supporting me and allowing me to heal. This evolved to using pewter and experimenting with the fusion of those two materials.

My studio is at Marchmont House in the Borders. I came to do an artist residency and just fell in love with the place. It's wonderful to be surrounded by lots of creative people. I also now know pretty much exactly which fallen tree the wood I'm working with has come from.



IMAGE BY ALEXANDER HOYES

Jo Walker

Ceramicist

I studied jewellery and silversmithing at Edinburgh College of Art but when I graduated I lacked the confidence to market myself and my work. I ended up working in retail, where I spent the next 12 years, and it wasn't until my two children began attending nursery that I had the free time to rediscover my love of craft. I enrolled in a weekly pottery class and realised how much I had missed having a creative outlet.

Working with clay was a complete revelation. I find clay infinitely fascinating, not only for its endless capacity to be transformed but also for the way it makes me slow down and focus. Before long, I found myself assisting in the pottery studio and later became part of a community group. As my enthusiasm grew, I established my own studio, which enabled me to supply galleries and shops.

My most recent work is inspired by two distinct threads, that of modernist architecture together with mid-century murals and decorative wall reliefs. I enjoy the juxtaposition of these two styles, simple forms combined with graphic patterns that invite the viewer to explore and discover.



IMAGE BY SHANNON TOFTS



IMAGE BY SHANNON TOFTS

Katie Charleson

Textile designer

From a young age I was very drawn to clothes and fashion. My granny taught me to stitch by hand, sew on a machine and do some basic hand knits. I still use her mother's hand-crank Singer sewing machine for most of my quilt piecing - it's one of the most reliable pieces of equipment I own and it must be at least 80 years old.

I did a course at Leith School of Art then studied textiles at Glasgow School of Art. I did think my path was going to be knit for a while, but I was obsessed with print from the first day I tried it. A friend told me I wouldn't like it because it was noisy and messy and nothing ever went right. I found all of those things to be true, and I loved it!

Ever since then I've been working in or around printed textiles in some way or another. What I love most about quilting is the option to collage and collate different materials, scraps and offcuts depending on what you are trying to say with the piece.

To me, craft means a physical connection between myself and what I make. I consider my quilts to be soft sculptures. For my newest piece for Collect, I chose to push the 3D element and introduced wool batting. This invites touch and draws the viewer in.



Above Katie Charleson with some examples of her work. **Below left** One of her screenprinted quilts. **Below** Triptych screen, hung with printed quilts





Susie Redman

Weaver

IMAGES BY SHANNON TOFTS

My parents weren't professional craft makers but whenever they needed something they always considered how to make it rather than where to buy it. As a child I learned how to knit and sew and even had a child-sized table loom.

My journey into weaving started with a beautiful Swedish floor loom. It was destined to be firewood but I couldn't let that happen. It arrived at my house in bits but I researched how to put it together and figured out how it worked.

Later I spent some time at a weaving school in New England. It was there that I was introduced to weaving with linen and the possibility of growing flax. I duly planted some on my allotment, enough to process on a small scale and enjoy all parts of the process.

I work from a studio in a heritage railway building on the Fife coast. My view is of a working harbour and across to Edinburgh, and most of my day is

spent weaving or planning a new weave. I'm learning how to spin my home-grown flax and also fleece from locally reared rare-breed sheep.

I'm excited to be showing my new collection of sculptural vessels at this year's Collect. The underpinning theme of the collection is the activity of gathering. These vessels are woven on my floor loom using a linen warp and Japanese paper wefts.



Top Susie Redman in her studio, weaving home-grown stripped willow rods. **Above** *After the Harvest*, 2023. Linen, Japanese paper, willow bark. **Left** *Flax Gatherer*, 2023. A sculptural hanging vessel made from linen, Japanese paper yarn, willow bark and flax stems with seedheads

Craft Scotland at Collect 2024, Friday 1 March to Sunday 3 March 2024, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA. www.craftscotland.org