

Artists' Statements

Caroline Devine

My work focuses on the voice and frequently involves the transformation of text into sound. I am interested in exploring voices that may be obscured, silenced or are in some way absent. I work with sounds that are discarded or disregarded – that need to be extracted, teased out and expanded so that they can be sculpted and explored. I perform, record or synthesize most of my sounds, building them from scratch in order to manipulate them digitally and using my own voice and the voices of others as raw material for composition. My practice is a mixture of experimental and process-driven, informed by a musical background and investigating the boundaries between music and sound/sound and silence/signal and noise.

I am fascinated by spatial aspects of sound – the spaces within and around sounds as well as secondary or indirect sounds that are instigated by a sequence of events such as sympathetic resonance in strings, room resonance, reverberation and echo. My installations exploit spatial aspects of sound through the use of multi-channel speaker arrangements.

Acoustic technologies are increasingly being used to influence human behaviour and the relationship between sound and power is a recurrent theme in my work. For *Recording Contract Recordings*, I have chosen to explore the absent 'legal' voice that is the backbone of the commercial recording industry as well as the relationship of power that exists within systems for the distribution of sound and music. To this end, I have repurposed a recording contract, a vinyl disc and horn speakers more commonly recognised as a system for public address, the distribution of background music or the circulation of orders.

Frazer Waller

Car boot sales occur every weekend all over the country from school playgrounds, fields, and even an outdoor music arena. Sellers and buyers from all walks of life gather to either sell off unwanted clutter from their garages and attics or go along to search for that bargain that will come in handy or be the perfect gift. These sales are also a great way of recycling unwanted consumables.

This series of photographs *Carbooting* looks into the world of the car boot sale exploring the buzz of people searching for their bargains, the sellers, and my fascination with the randomness of objects that reside next to each other, waiting to be sold on to their new owner.

This is a work in progress shot entirely on film and hand printed by myself at the Rapid Eye Darkroom in London. I would like to thank them for their support and passion in keeping traditional photographic practices alive.

Stuart Southwell

Grotesque Identities is a photographic installation where identities adopted within societies are explored. I pose as every character and the project investigates the idea of 'self' through the means of a family tree. Creating latex masks and using found clothing I apply theories of the grotesque

to create a macabre family that challenges our defined ideas of beauty and representation

In modern Western society, people are judged by how they look and dress. If they don't fit into our preconceived ideas of beauty, one expects them to change and manipulate their body. It could be argued that Western cultures have forged their societies into perfect representations of the grotesque, through its mass media. Hell no longer exists as an idea, we are living in it.

Jamie Chalmers

My *Spam Stitch* series immortalises titles from spam emails, converting throwaway phrases into permanent pieces of embroidered art. The process of creating the work, spending the hours stitching otherwise unforgotten phrases, invests meaning into content that is often overlooked and generally disliked. Within the general detritus of email clutter, tiny gems exist and the *Spam Stitch* series polishes these gems into charming pieces of stitch, combining a traditional art form with electronic leftovers to great effect.

Jason Smith

My work is under constant pressure from my surroundings, the surroundings being the revolving thought patterns around keywords, which are crucial to my subject matter. The current term being subjected to this turmoil is 'excavation'. A term that harnesses strength from the removal, or creation of space from an object to examine its new properties. My new works push the theme of 'excavation' and each work tells a short story.

The main explorative nature of the works suggests new and old structures, placed in a limitless environment that possess new possibilities within the materials that they are constructed from. I work with a variety of materials and processes, that includes drawing, print, photography and sculptural media, which further enhances the process of the excavation. It is by the effect of this process, that the works become layered with information, coded yet crisp representations of the 'excavation' process.

My current work depicts scenarios; whereby 'small worker people' de-construct the scene, which binds them in the frame. Their role is to hinder and excavate the purest thought-pattern of the viewer, and to present a new working ethos of thinking, surrounding the works of drawing and sculpture.

Kamil Szkopik

Throughout the process of portraying people it occurred to me that identity stands for the surface, just like sexuality, attire or preferences.

It is probably due to the pace of life in the Western world that we tend to merge genders. We lose distinction by putting it under the name of politically correct 'equality'. Nevertheless, this distinction emphasises an attraction common to all human beings.

The exhibited body of work is a collection of portraits of strangers depicted in a public space. It is important to point out that at this stage of my visual activity none of my photographs are airbrushed with the use of computer software.

Lauren Keeley

My approach to painting is pragmatic and structural: there is a focus on the processes, constructions and deconstructions that are used during the painting process, rather than a centring towards the final outcome.

There is a strong reliance on chance encounters and serendipity, which is connected to my everyday practice of painting – processes and ways of working are mostly intuitively found or stumbled upon. Yet it has become important that the eventual paintings are calculated and to an extent anticipated, their state is only visceral initially, which after a long process of development and ironing out of errors becomes much more fixed and certain. This hopefully reaches such a point that there is the feeling that the painting could be made again, an idea I find very interesting.

Final paintings are generative towards what comes next, which with the algorithmic nature of their construction, leads to a body of work that is connected yet assorted. This further leads to an interest in the hanging and combining of paintings, of which there are endless possibilities and within which some form of order is searched for.

Emma Wilde

A love of the natural environment and the influence of film permeates much of my work. Often working from film stills and my photography; the cinematic tradition influences how these images are selected and constructed. Scenes of often unsettled, separate places record the movement of a world unwatched, rendering it distant, other and timeless. By utilising certain angles or scenarios a cinematic veneer is set up in the work, where it might feel as though you are looking-in through a lens upon a story.

Meticulously observed, my drawings are rendered in pencil or paint, often on cheap everyday materials like notebooks, newsprint or layout paper. This choice of execution firstly adds a sense of fragility to the tensions depicted and then helps to bring the dramas into domestic focus. Just as in the greatest cinematic tradition; the unreal becomes real and the ordinary extraordinary.

The work in this exhibition is a progression from a body of work that focused on suburban Bedford; drawings detailing wildlife co-existing on the edges of the civilized, built environment. By setting up a sense of tension and balance, some of these drawings characterise a struggle between the built and the natural – one pushing against the other, resulting in snapshots of almost alien-like invasions. Following directly on from this I have focused on the uncluttered landscape of my hometown of Milton Keynes with its clean lines and modernist style architecture. Childhood memories of travelling to the cinema in the back of the family car, long straight roads, endless grids, and roundabouts appearing as if uninhabited islands existing on the edge of an expanse of traffic and tarmac are all conjured up in these new works, which depict a New City that has matured.

These are edited versions of artists' statements which appear on the MK Gallery website: www.mkgallery.org

MK Gallery

New Art MK: Eight Artists from Milton Keynes

8 July – 18 September 2011

Exhibition Guide

This exhibition brings together eight emerging artists from Milton Keynes who work in a wide range of media, including photography, drawing, painting, cross-stitching and sound. Each artist exploits the transformative potential of art, whether through performance and transgression, humour and irreverence or even poetry and beauty.

At MK Gallery, the artists present a selection of existing and new work, some of which has been commissioned especially for the exhibition. Jamie Chalmers (aka Mr X Stitch), the self-styled king of contemporary embroidery, immortalises spam emails in cross-stitch while sound artist Caroline Devine distorts acoustics using text from an officious record contract. Painter Lauren Keeley refracts the natural world through oil on canvas as Jason Smith looks behind the Gallery's façade and Stuart Southwell disguises himself in grotesque drag. Kamil Szkopik casts beautiful strangers in an ambiguous light and Frazer Waller composes popular tableaux at car boot sales as Emma Wilde charts the encroaching overgrowth on Milton Keynes' roundabouts, alleys and lampposts.

The work presented in the exhibition demonstrates the extraordinary breadth and quality of artist talent working in Milton Keynes today. The artists in *New Art MK* were all shortlisted finalists in the MK Community Foundation's Arts Bursary Award 2010.

Related Events

Family Evening

Free, drop in.
Friday 22 July, 5–7.30pm

New Art MK In Conversation

Thursday 18 August, 6.30pm
Artists from *New Art MK* talk about their diverse practices and the current cultural landscape of Milton Keynes.
Free. Pre-book at the Information Desk or on 01908 676 900.

Exhibition Tours

Free, just drop in.
Saturday 23 July, 1pm
Sunday 28 August, 2pm

For details of all events including Children and Families, Thursday Scratch Nights and Friday Film Nights (selected by the *New Art MK* exhibiting artists), please see our website for more information: www.mkgallery.org

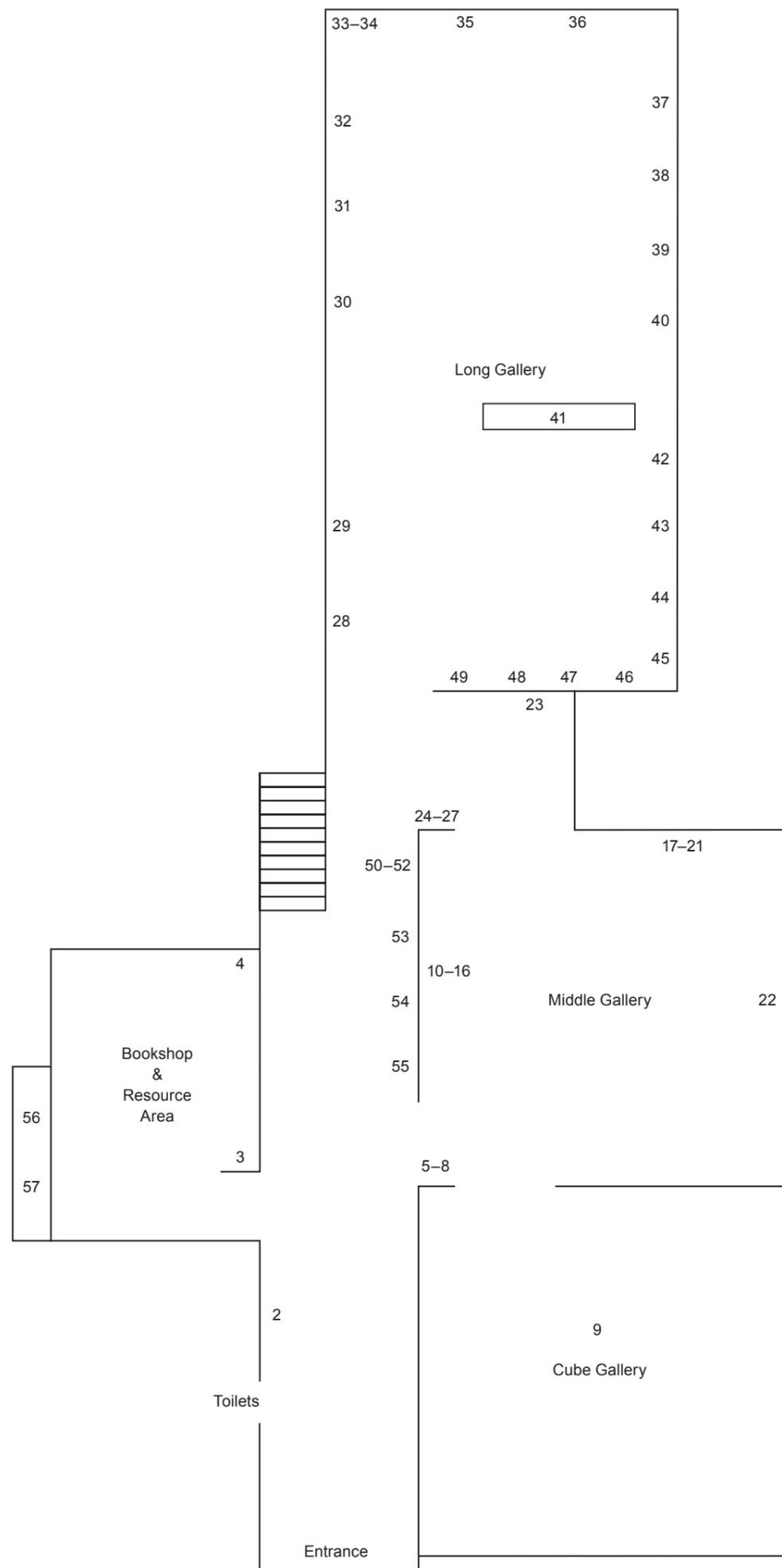
MK Gallery
900 Midsummer Blvd
Milton Keynes MK9 3QA

info@mkgallery.org
www.mkgallery.org
T 01908 676 900

Tuesday–Friday 12pm–8pm
Saturday 11am–8pm
Sunday 11am–5pm



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



1. Caroline Devine
Recording Contract Recordings (vertical slice), 2011
Three-channel sound installation
2. Jamie Chalmers
220311 (Ever do much thinking about Utopia?), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
3. Jamie Chalmers
Bad Ass, 2011
Upcycled tray lining with cross-stitch
4. Jamie Chalmers
080810 (Greetings in the name of God), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
5. Jamie Chalmers
290411 (Wouldn't this only be applicable...), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
6. Jamie Chalmers
100109 (Click here to be better in bed), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
7. Jamie Chalmers
270611 (A hand on my shoulder...), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
8. Jamie Chalmers
110111 (Electronic cigarette), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
9. Caroline Devine
Recording Contract Recordings, 2011
Fourteen-channel sound installation
- 10.-16. Frazer Waller
Carbooting I-VII, 2011
Seven C-type prints
- 17.-21. Frazer Waller
Carbooting VIII-XII, 2011
Five C-type prints
22. Stuart Southwell
Grotesque Identities, 2008-11
Silver gelatin prints on Foamalux

23. Jason Smith
The Gallery Opening Performance at James Hockey Gallery, UCA Farnham, May 2008
Photographic stills
24. Jamie Chalmers
151010 (I found your entry interesting...), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
25. Jamie Chalmers
031210 (Neglecting the very important resonances...), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
26. Jamie Chalmers
010611 (THX BRO), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
27. Jamie Chalmers
030511 (Zealot eagle eye anime hentai...), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
28. Kamil Szkopik
Untitled, 2011
Brilliant Supreme Matte inkjet print Edition 1 of 5
29. Kamil Szkopik
Untitled, 2011
Brilliant Supreme Matte inkjet print Edition 1 of 5
30. Kamil Szkopik
Untitled, 2010
Brilliant Supreme Matte inkjet print Edition 1 of 5
31. Kamil Szkopik
Untitled, 2011
Brilliant Supreme Matte inkjet print Edition 1 of 5
32. Kamil Szkopik
Untitled, 2010
Brilliant Supreme Matte inkjet print Edition 1 of 5
33. Jamie Chalmers
170211 (It seems quite trivial to expect), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida

34. Emma Wilde
140511 (Care about your manliness), 2011
Cross-stitch embroidery floss on aida
35. Lauren Keeley
Screen, 2011
Oil on canvas on board
36. Lauren Keeley
Untitled, 2011
Oil on canvas on board
37. Lauren Keeley
Conifer (grid), 2011
Oil on canvas on board
38. Lauren Keeley
Conifer, 2011
Oil on canvas on board
39. Lauren Keeley
Mast, 2011
Oil on canvas on board
40. Lauren Keeley
Structure (airport), 2011
Oil on canvas on board
41. Emma Wilde
Vitrine: Works, 2008-11 and research material
42. Emma Wilde
The corner of Western Road, 2010
Charcoal and pencil on newsprint
43. Emma Wilde
The corner of Western Road (detail), 2010
Charcoal and pencil on newsprint
44. Emma Wilde
Battison Street, 2010
Charcoal and pencil on newsprint
45. Emma Wilde
Midland Road, Cut Through, 2010
Charcoal and pencil on newsprint
46. Emma Wilde
Crownhill, 2011
Charcoal and pencil on paper
47. Emma Wilde
The County Court, 2011
Charcoal and pencil on paper

48. Emma Wilde
Turn left, 2011
Watercolour on paper
49. Emma Wilde
Redbridge, front, 2011
Charcoal and pencil on paper
50. Jason Smith
The Excavation Series No. 16, 2011
Pencil, ink, and cotton on Fabriano Tiziano paper
51. Jason Smith
The Excavation Series No. 51, 2011
Pencil, and ink on Fabriano Tiziano paper
52. Jason Smith
The Excavation Series No. 42, 2011
Pencil, ink, and cotton on Fabriano Tiziano paper

53. Jason Smith
Infrastructure No. 7, 2011
Pencil, ink, and cotton on Fabriano Tiziano paper
54. Jason Smith
Excavated No. 2, 2011
Pencil, ink and plastic on Fabriano Tiziano paper
55. Jason Smith
Excavated No. 1, 2011
Pencil, and ink on Fabriano Tiziano paper
56. Kamil Szkopik
Sketchbooks
57. Caroline Devine
Recording Contract Recordings (metal parts), 2011
Nickel metalwork stamper

All works courtesy the artists.

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