

# Possible all along

Catalogue of an online exhibition by disabled artists in Leeds

Featuring:

alabamathirteen

Si Denbigh

Alfie Fox

Sarah Francis

Mindy Goose

Stephen Harvey

Kirsty Ramsay Hogan

Lily Lavorato

Judit Mathe

Nicole Murmann

Vickie Orton

Ruthie Reynolds

Ria



2020 by Sarah Francis

<https://possibleallalong.co.uk/>



Supported with funding from Leeds Inspired, part of Leeds City Council.

December 2020

**Possible all along** is an exhibition of work by 13 disabled artists in Leeds, launched in 2020. It is a place to show that disabled artists are an essential part of the cultural landscape of our city.

As disabled artists, we look back on this turbulent year with mixed feelings. We're pleased that arts organisations are now regularly showing their work and events online and engaging with audiences in virtual spaces. At last! In a world of disabling barriers, the internet offers possibilities for greater access and connections for many disabled people. And it gives us an opportunity to share our art.

But without doubt, the pandemic is affecting disabled people really badly. It's affecting our health, making us more isolated and causing financial problems.

We believe that arts and culture in Leeds have a vital role to play in making disabled people's lives better. Recognising the work of disabled artists and including us as equals has to be part of that role.

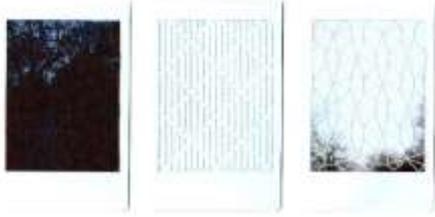
You might think that this was possible all along. Many artists and arts organisations think so too. They've aimed to be accessible and they've worked with disabled artists. Others, however, have said that access and inclusion is too difficult (or too expensive). But this year has taught us that the impossible can become possible and things can be done differently.

Barriers in the arts are being broken down or worked around. This must continue! As you enjoy this exhibition of disabled artists' work, we hope you will think about the possibilities ahead, to make the arts in Leeds more accessible, more inclusive and more equal.

We know there are many more disabled artists in Leeds. We'd love to learn more about your work - please get in touch.

Contact the organiser of the exhibition: [gill.crawshaw@gmail.com](mailto:gill.crawshaw@gmail.com)

## alabamathirteen



### **The Forest (Triptych), 2020**

Embroidered instax photographs, each photo is 85mm x 45mm

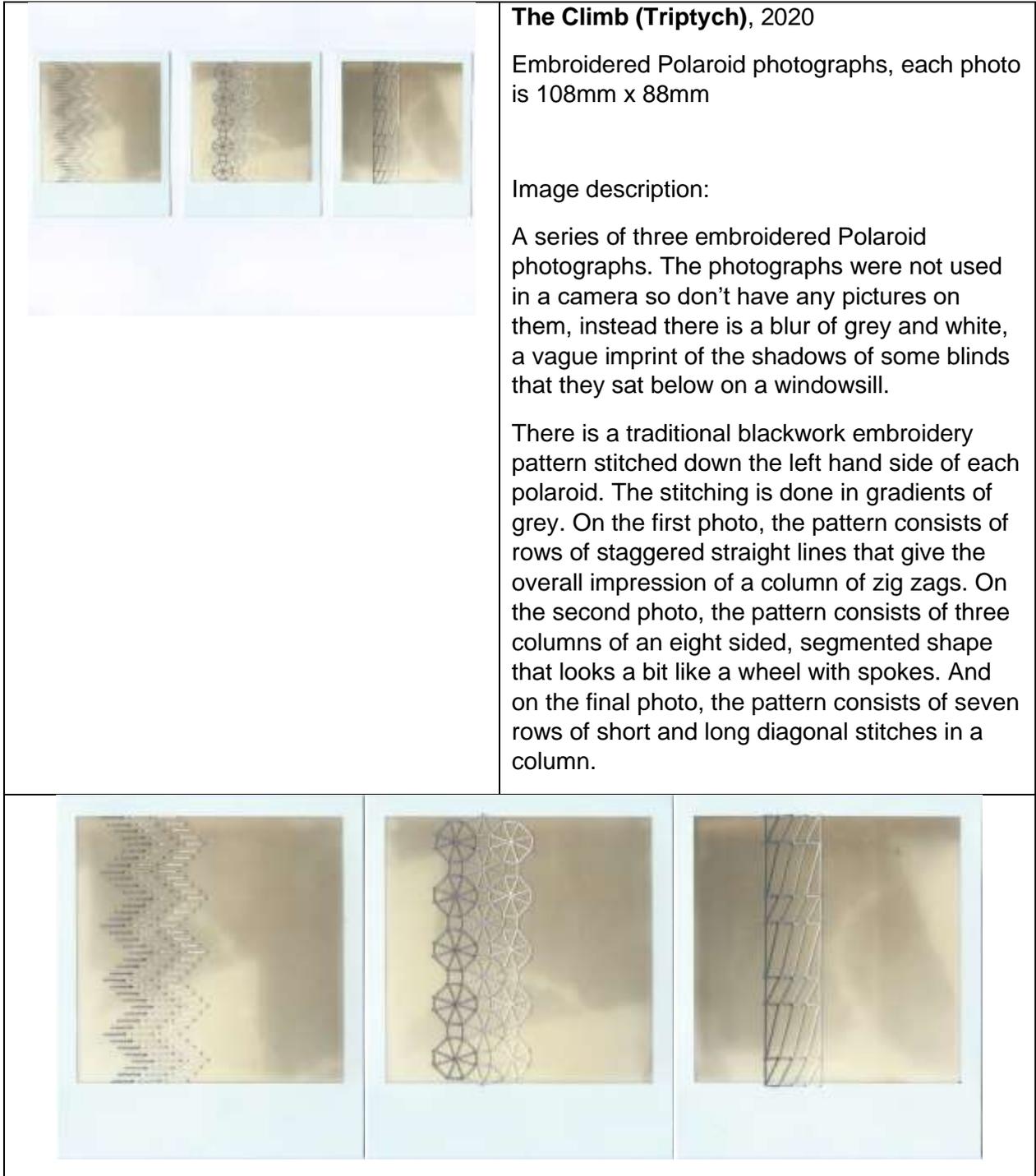
Three embroidered Polaroid photographs, 2020, each photo is 108mm x 88mm

#### Image description:

A series of three embroidered instax photos. The photo on the left of the triptych is a very dark image of a canopy of trees. The middle photo is completely white as it did not develop properly. The photo on the right is a predominantly light sky with some dark tree branches around the bottom of the image.

Traditional blackwork embroidery has been stitched over the top of the images. On the two photos of the trees the pattern consists of three columns of an eight sided, segmented shape that looks a bit like a wheel with spokes, using black thread over a predominantly left hand side photo and white thread over the right hand side photo. The pattern on the middle image is a series of rhombus shapes created from vertical lines, stitched in white thread.





I am a largely self-taught, working-class, disabled artist based in Leeds. I work mainly with photography, embroidery and sound recordings.

My work is focused around bodies, spaces and places, both public and private, and how we experience and occupy them both as individuals and as a society. I specifically draw on my own personal limitations navigating and negotiating the spaces and places I occupy as a disabled woman.

Website: [alabamathirteen.com](http://alabamathirteen.com)

Instagram: [@alabamathirteen](https://www.instagram.com/alabamathirteen)

Twitter: [@alabamathirteen](https://twitter.com/alabamathirteen)

# Si Denbigh

## Corvid 19, 2020

Oil paster and crystal watercolour on canvas.

Each is 40 cm x 30 cm.

Image description:

A series of four paintings, each of a single crow in flight, wings outstretched. They are isolated against mottled backgrounds, similar to cloudy skies but for the colour.

	<p>Image description:</p> <p>Side view of grey crow, red background.</p>
	<p>Image description:</p> <p>View from underneath of royal blue crow, edged in yellow. Background shades of reds with black.</p>
	<p>Image description:</p> <p>View from above and behind of brown crow with lighter wings, with splashes of pale green and yellow. The bird is edged around in white against a blue and dark pink background.</p>



Image description:

Black silhouette of crow flying upwards. Multicoloured background, mainly blue and white with some green, red, lilac. Large black inkblot above crow.

I had a stroke about four years ago. I permanently lost the feelings and use of the left half of my body, like someone had drawn a line down from the top of my head. After six months in hospital, I was released into the wild. I used to be a professional musician, that was kind of out for the future. I spent a long time figuring out how to be creative again. I discovered Inkwell, originally to do ceramics, and then art classes.

These are some of a series of oil pastels and crystal watercolour. I used to do a lot of detailed fineline ink work. This was a venture into experimenting with colour and movement, and getting messy. Based on a healthy obsession with crows, it is called *Corvid 19*.

## Alfie Fox

	<p><b>Access, 2020</b></p> <p>Digital collage</p> <p>Image description: A black and white collaged picture. A wide, long staircase with an ornate banister on the right, goes up and then turns to the right. A series of decorative metal and wooden trays and platters is scattered on the stairs. Alongside them, reading from the bottom and getting smaller as they go up the stairs, are the following words: No entry, access, choices, support, education, work, voice. The word 'voice' is tiny. Sunlight shines in through the banisters from a window.</p>
	<p><b>Fall Down, 2020</b></p> <p>Digital collage</p> <p>Image description: A black and white collaged picture. Shapes and letters are tumbling into a vortex, a series of circles getting smaller and smaller till they disappear into darkness. Each letter has been typed onto an individual scrap of paper, arranged in the upper right quadrant, to spell 'Falling down'. The 'O' in 'down' is a pencilled circle, and there are two similar roughly-drawn circles below. Falling from the left of the picture is a jumbled string of small black squares. There is a shorter jumble of squares on the right, beneath the letters and circles.</p>

I focus on photography, film making and digital collage to create thought provoking art which gives a unique perspective on life as a disabled artist.

Instagram: @alfjfox

## Sarah Francis



### **Land Shapes, 2020**

Wood, paint and plastic

43cm x 43cm

#### Image description:

A layered, framed composition. The main element is a square of light wood with the bottom two thirds painted grey. This is the background for a collage of roughly torn, thin sheets of wood placed horizontally across the lower section of the square. Above is a thick, straight, bright yellow stripe which is a strong contrast to the natural and muted colours of the rest of the picture. The stripe runs vertically from the top of the square, starting just to the right of the halfway point, then ends in the grey section, above the collage.

This whole is mounted on a brown wooden board with a matching wooden frame.



### **2020, 2020**

Acrylic on board

40cm x 30cm

#### Image description:

Paint has been spread firmly and roughly on the board. Just above and to the left of the centre there is an almost complete ring of fluorescent pink spray paint. It lies on top of a thick stripe of mainly dark blue paint that goes from the top to almost the bottom of the painting. There are flecks of green, white and yellow paint.

A straight pink stripe runs along the entire right edge of the painting, with an uneven dark blue stripe next to it and to the left.

Underneath is a painting of what could be a child or young person, with their hands clasped together in a prayer-like position. Much of this figure is obscured, their face and much of the body covered with paint.

	<p><b>Panel 2, 2020</b></p> <p>Paint and wood</p> <p>30cm x 30cm</p> <p><b>Image description:</b> Two irregular wood shapes against a bright yellow painted square. They are in the centre, side by side, with lots of space around them and a smaller space between them. It appears that they might fit neatly together – the shape of their nearest sides match, like jigsaw pieces. Their edges are smooth, curved, coming to points in places. However, they look different. The smaller piece on the left is bare wood. The other piece is larger, has been painted or stained and has a white curved section attached at the bottom.</p>
---	---

I am fascinated by the duality of identity. My art gathers and relocates particular events that were once lost, forgotten or left behind. I explore dyslexia, ADHD and queer identity in relation to my creative output and creative self. I build my own language and worlds to explore and understand 'how I made me'.

Instagram: @sarahfrancis.art

## Mindy Goose

	<p><b>Finding Light, 2020</b></p> <p>A series of five digital photographs, black and white.</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>Close-up black and white photographs of single leaves (1, 2 and 5) or sprays of leaves (3,4) on trees and bushes in woodland. Light and shadow play over the leaves and stalks. The leaf in the first picture is spotted with fungus, while the last is full of holes</p>
	
	

I am a photographer and artist. I use walking in my art. My collections of observations uncover the journeys I take, the paths I frequently walk, and the flux in which nature exists. I am concerned with how our environments connect to us, and what that means for a disabled person.

*Finding Light* is a new work in progress, started during daily strolls with my dog. I'm using black and white images to help find ways that light can be captured, even in the darkest of months.

[www.mindygoose.co.uk](http://www.mindygoose.co.uk)

Instagram: @mindygoose

# Stephen Harvey



## £3 Money, 2019

Print on fabric  
Dimensions vary.

### Image description:

Five banners of different lengths hang from fabric loops on a wooden rod against a wall. They are printed with various block capital slogans. They are fringed at the bottom.

The pair on the left are mainly yellow, with the heading 'Dictation'. One reads: 'YES tea coffee snacks sweets'. The other reads: 'NO beer beer beer beer'.

The middle banner is long and thin. '£3' and '£3 Money' is printed repeatedly down its length.

Moving along the row of banners, the next reads: 'Stop using my electricity to charge your phones'. This is printed on fabric that gradates from blue to green to red.

The banner on the far right is the shortest. The word 'dictation' is repeated eight times, in black capital letters on bright pink fabric.

## Is it open yet ? Stephen Harvey



my spot in cafe Merz  
espresso coffee  
caramel and cream

travelling on my own  
on the bus to Leeds  
making my way to Ryedale

I've got one of these masks  
but I don't like wearing it  
a rectangle  
blue and white

there's a first time for  
everything

reminding me  
my bus pass had ran out  
I've not even needed it

head to Wakefield  
find the travel office

it's shut  
of course

## Is it open yet? 2020

Illustrated poem

### Image description:

Type-written poem on right of page, with coloured pen illustration on left. Stars plus two face masks.

## **Is it open yet?**

my spot in Café Nero  
expensive coffee  
caramel and cream

travelling on my own  
on the bus to Leeds  
making my way to Pyramid

I've got one of them masks  
but I don't like wearing it  
a rectangle  
blue and white

there's a first time for  
everything

reminding me  
my bus pass had ran out  
I've not even needed it

head to Wakefield  
find the travel office

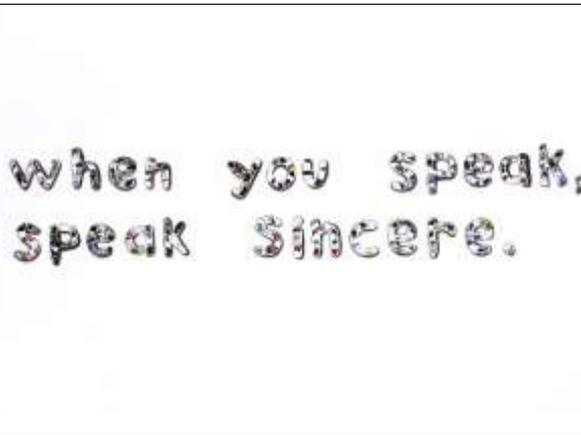
it's shut  
of course

I work with print, paint and letterpress to create text-based works which articulate the problems, frustrations and barriers that I struggle against when trying to live independently. Other disabled people might recognise these problems.

As well as being a solo artist I work collaboratively in Pyramid's Ribbleshead Group.

<https://pyramid.org.uk/stephen-harvey/>

## Kirsty Ramsay Hogan

	<p><b>Bird in my ear, 2019</b></p> <p>Screen print, ink on paper</p> <p>29cm x 42cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>Lots of white space with small, elegant text in the centre right of the image which reads 'categories note worth; i fell asleep with the bird in my ear'.</p>
	<p><b>No-one is you, 2019</b></p> <p>Ink and pencil on paper</p> <p>29cm x 42cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>Pastel pink paper with hand-drawn lettering and coloured with pencil in this order: orange, light blue, light purple, yellow. They are shaded with dark blue. The letters read 'No-one is you and that is your power'.</p>
	<p><b>Speak sincere, 2020</b></p> <p>Paper collage, ink</p> <p>29cm x 42cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>Mosaic patterned letters created with scrap bits of paper, outlined and shaded with black. The letters read 'when you speak, speak sincere'.</p>

I am a Deaf design and media producer who enjoys creating typographic based art on the side.

Website: [kirstyramsayhogan.com](http://kirstyramsayhogan.com)

Instagram: @rhkirsty

Twitter: @rhkirsty

# Lily Lavorato

## Arse End of Nowhere, 2020

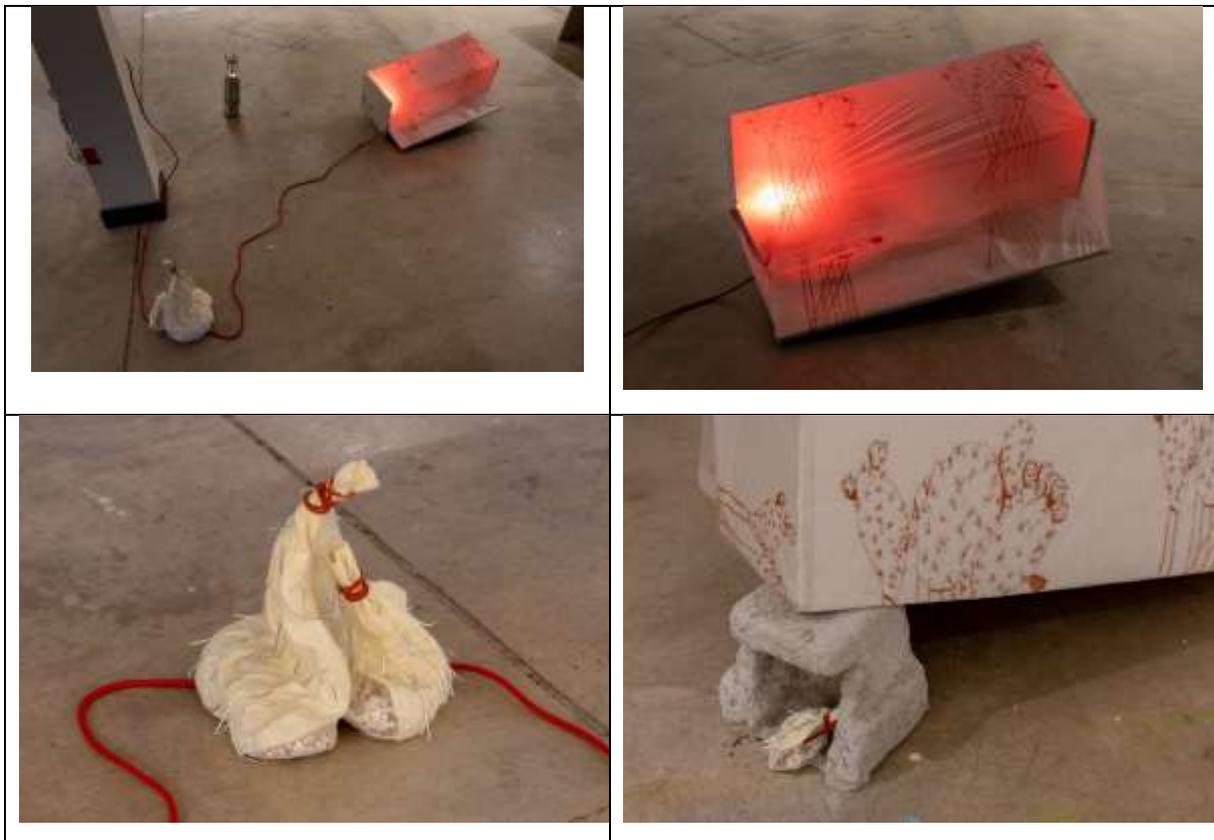
A sculptural installation. Concrete, candles, waste plastic, felt, wire, newsprint, synthetic sausage skin, essential oils

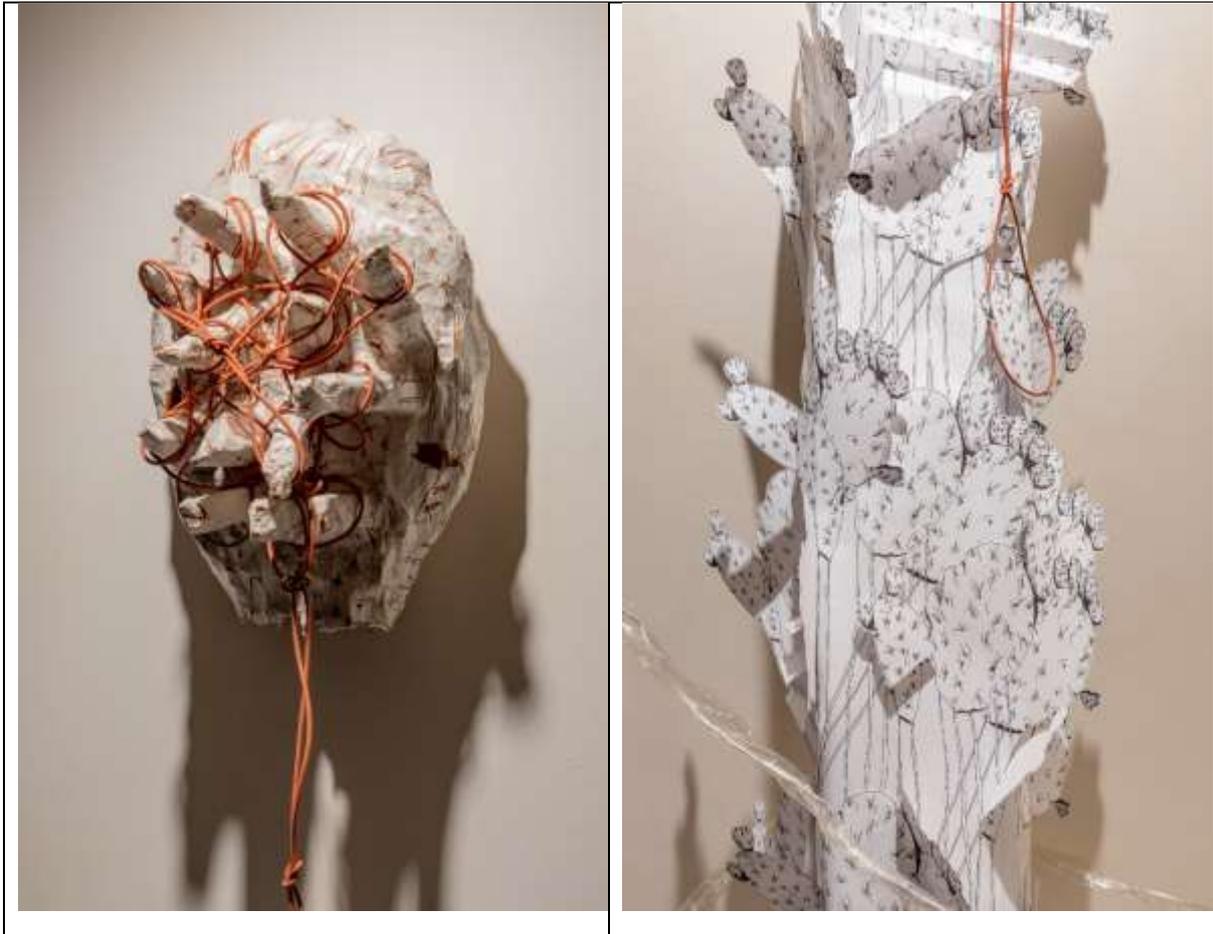
Dimensions variable.

Image description:

A light burns in a box covered with stretched red plastic. Red strings are knotted and draped around and between objects. White pouches, covered in spines, loll together on the floor. They are secured with red threads at the top. Drawings of cactus feature on many surfaces including a wall-mounted paper sculpture. Irregular pieces of concrete prop up objects or serve as plinths.

*Arse End of Nowhere* explores the social and physical landscape of Calabria, a southern region of Italy. The work considers the code of silence, omertà, which makes the regional mafia, the 'ndrangheta, one of the most impenetrable in the world. Lyrics from 'Il Canto di Malavita' or 'Songs of a Bad Life', written for and by the 'ndrangheta, directly informed the works. One piece functions as an essential oil burner diffusing fennel, oregano, bergamot and eucalyptus oils reminiscent of the air in Mandatoriccio.





**Vielleicht Niente, 2020**

Video, duration: 7 minutes 55 seconds.

<https://youtu.be/TjtvFHyYMqs> (the film is captioned for accessibility and these can be turned on using the 'cc' button in the right-bottom corner of the screen)

Description:

Bringing together footage filmed in Calabria (somewhere) in 2019 and conversations recorded during the first national lockdown, this film considers distance from place, land, family and histories as fluctuating and brittle (maybe). It asks what we sacrifice/gain in slowing down and what's to learn from somewhere that never sped up.

My sculptures, drawings and objects explore bodily understandings of places and imagined scenarios. Drawing on the autobiographical, I use sound, taste, smell and light to activate sculptures in immersive environments. I frequently use waste plastics to veil or bind my sculptures, which explore how social and physical barriers interrupt our sense of self.

**Website:** [lilylavorato.co.uk](http://lilylavorato.co.uk)

**Instagram:** @lilylavorato

## Judit Mathe

	<p><b>Tooth Fairy. Prayers of Offering, 2020</b></p> <p>Found objects, textiles</p> <p>21 x 6 x 6cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>There is a contrast between the hard, shiny surface of the doll and the intricate surface of the textiles. While you might think that the textiles are soft and warm, the way the doll is tightly wrapped makes the yarn very firm. The details of the threads stand out. The doll wears a crown of a pig's tooth, which was given to the artist a while ago. White yarns and threads cover the doll, which is also white as well as the crown. The work represents the pain of toothache.</p>
	<p><b>The Phoenix, 2020</b></p> <p>Found objects, textiles</p> <p>26.5 x 6.6 x 6cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>A female fashion doll with broken limbs. Soft, thick yarns and threads are woven tightly around the body. The broken arms and legs remain uncovered, or partially covered. The bottom part of the face, the nose, lips and chin, are uncovered. But the eyes and the rest of the head are covered. The doll is light pink and the threads are bright red.</p> <p>The doll wears a sharp, pointy wooden crown which is woven to the head.</p> <p>Elements in this artwork refer to the phoenix, a mythological bird which was reborn from its own ashes. Wood in the crown could be fuel for the fire which burns red, like the threads which wrap the figure. In this case the symbol of the phoenix represents female power.</p>

	<p><b>Mary, 2020</b></p> <p>Found objects textiles</p> <p>22 x 9 x 5cm</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>A broken fashion doll, with no head, half arms outstretched and full legs. The body of the doll is wrapped tightly and completely with yarns and threads. A small plastic lamb, mainly white with a little brown, is embedded in the area of the womb. The doll and the yarns are all white.</p> <p>This work was highly influenced by the artist's Catholic upbringing. It is also a celebration of the miracle of childbirth and the obstacles, suffering and immense joy of motherhood.</p>
---	--

I am a mixed-media artist working with found objects and textiles. My sculptural pieces are influenced by my Hungarian heritage and upbringing, combined with the love of fairy tales and a fascination with Catholic artefacts and medieval religious art. In my recent work I explore feminist themes as well as taboo subjects, such as religion, sexuality and female suppression.

I use discarded, broken dolls and wrap them with yarns and threads embedding various found objects to tell stories of female strength.

<https://outsidein.org.uk/galleries/judit-mathe/>

Instagram: @judit\_mathe

## Nicole Murmann

	<p><b>Hand washing, 2020</b></p> <p>Video</p> <p>Duration: 7.16 minutes</p> <p>Video with subtitles: <a href="https://vimeo.com/478233265">https://vimeo.com/478233265</a></p> <p>Video without subtitles: <a href="https://vimeo.com/419572334">https://vimeo.com/419572334</a></p>
	<p>Description:</p> <p>A pair of hands rub together as they are washed. They are the hands of a white person, filmed against a frosted glass background, sometimes reflected in the glass. At times the film is layered, giving the impression of multiple hands moving against each other.</p>

My working process combines a variety of media – including text, sound, and visual material – to produce performances, sound pieces, or videos.

I create safe environments in private, public or art spaces to facilitate conversations and storytelling. I embrace the power of vulnerability and intimacy to link people in different kinds of dialogue – through active listening, perhaps, or through the sharing of opinions.

<https://nicolemurmann.net/>

Instagram: @nicole\_murmann

## Vickie Orton

### To walk in the woods, 2020

Birch bark, paper, linen, wool, string and beads

10cm x 10cm; 10cm x 5cm; 5cm x 5cm

#### Description:

These artists books have a rough birch bark cover. The book is tied closed with hessian string which has beads attached to the end of it. The inside cover of the book is lined with paper from an Ordnance Survey map.

When opened the inside map cover is 99% obscured. When opened up there is one double page spread which unfolds from the centre of the book. The centre page is folded using a Turkish map fold. The centre page is made from unbleached cotton which is backed onto a random piece of Ordnance Survey map.

There is a raised surface on the unbleached cotton which is made from strands of twisted felting wool. The wool creates the pattern of a maze which you can run your fingers over to trace the pattern.





I'm a textile artist and a passionate believer in creating art for all. Many of my works include tactile elements e.g. using different materials to create raised surfaces, incorporating handstitched Braille and Bliss symbols.

The books arose as a result of being unable to join my family walking around a turf maze, the paths being too narrow for my wheelchair. I wanted to create a way to experience the meditative process of walking and following the maze. Running your fingers over the maze offers a sense of peace and tranquillity.

[www.facebook.com/wordweaverstories](http://www.facebook.com/wordweaverstories)

<http://www.wordweaverstories.com>

# Ruthie Reynolds

## Awkward Architecture, 2019

	<p><b>Stilted 1, 2019</b> (Awkward Architecture series) Plaster, black ink and metal leg protrusions</p> <p>30cm x 20cm x 21cm</p> <p>Image description: A stool-like object, a plaster slab held up on five metal rods. The upper surface of the slab is covered with six rows of five oval-shaped indentations. These are imprints of medication packaging.</p>
	<p><b>Stilted 2, 2019</b> (Awkward Architecture series) Concrete with scrap metal protrusions</p> <p>24cm x 43cm x 43cm</p> <p>Image description: A thick chunk of pale grey concrete. It's roughly square with rounded sides. Sticking out underneath are several sections of black or rusting scrap metal strips, rods and pipes.</p>



**Broken, 2019**

(Awkward Architecture series)

Concrete, slate, scrap metal

35cm x 18cm x 18cm

Image description:

A slab of layered concrete and slate sits broken in two pieces on the floor. The layers show clearly where the concrete has cracked open. Long thin black metal rods extend upwards from the concrete, two on the larger piece, one on the smaller.



**Escapism, 2019**

(Awkward Architecture series)

Resin plaster with copper scrap metal, silicone.

12cm x 18 cm x 18cm.

Image description:

A square panel of white plaster with a large square hole in the middle. It could be a window to escape through. Legs are formed by several uneven copper strips that extend from underneath the plaster. They rest on a white silicone mat cast from medication blister packs. This gives the mat a raised surface of dots and ovals.

**Off Kilter, 2020**



**Off Kilter**

Metal chair on two raised feet, cast concrete cushions and footstools of pigmented dyed plaster with re-appropriated metal walking stick legs, on grey rug.

Rug on floor 150cm x 55cm,  
Chair height 76cm x width 54cm x depth 43cm

**Image description:**

A metal chair perches unevenly. It only has two legs, at the front. A square cushion and a smaller round cushion rest on its seat. They are actually made of grey concrete, with stuffing bursting out of the seams. Under and either side of the chair are two footstools, plus another square cushion, all cast in concrete. The legs of the stools are made from different lengths of metal walking sticks and have rubber tips. Some of these tips are steady on the carpeted floor, but others rest on lumps of concrete or wave in the air as if reaching for solid ground.

I work mainly in sculpture, casting forms in concrete and plaster with protrusions of metal. My interest in architecture and minimal forms underpins my work. I aim to represent my own experience of living with chronic bodily pain due fibromyalgia through my artwork. *Off Kilter* brings together thoughts of both comfort and discomfort, with its uneven chair legs and cushions made of concrete. Other works from the *Awkward Architecture* series look at how pain can interrupt our movement through spaces.

<https://rr264925.wixsite.com/ruthiereynolds>

Instagram: @ruthie\_reynolds

## Ria

	<p><b>Stronger, 2019</b></p> <p>Paint on fabric</p> <p>1m x 2m</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>A brightly coloured painting of a white woman. She has pale brown hair and blue eyes. She wears a blue dress and a crown of flowers. The background is mottled pink with darker flowers. The words 'I am stronger' are on the right.</p>
	<p><b>Everything you think, 2019</b></p> <p>Paint on fabric</p> <p>1m x 2m</p> <p>Image description:</p> <p>A head, face on. A multi-coloured cloud with the words 'Don't believe everything you think' covers the top half of the face so only red smiling lips are showing.</p>

I work in two dimensions using paint, print and collage to create radical and inspirational slogans about identity. I have also branched out into creating electronic music.

I recently set up Reflex of Arts (@reflex\_of\_arts on Instagram), a collaboration with Pyramid and Health for All Leeds, which uses art to give care leavers like myself a voice and to build confidence through creativity.

<https://pyramid.org.uk/ria/>