

GO & SEE TRIP Feedback

Upland aims to provide support and opportunities to enable the creative talent of Dumfries & Galloway to flourish. Forming part of our professional development strand, the Go & See trips assist professional artists and makers to visit events and exhibitions out with the region that are relevant to the development of their practice. We awarded two makers from the region bursaries towards visiting Collect 2017 in London.

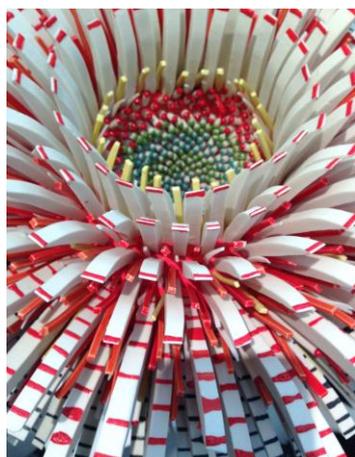
Upland Go and See to Collect 2017, Saatchi Gallery, London – Thursday 2nd February

Report compiled by Morag Macpherson

I had been anticipating the Collect show for a while so I was delighted to receive the Go and See bursary from Upland to get there. I arrived late Wednesday night to be able to attend the Thursday morning PV at the Saatchi Gallery. I had briefly been able to view Collect once before as part of the Crafts Council Injection group who met there in 2015. It was nice to see so many of those Injection participants at this show and catch up on how they are progressing their craft businesses and compare notes on the show. Ceramicist, Lubna Chowdry, wood designer Jeff Forrest, ceramicist Jo Scott and glass artist Andrea Walsh (exhibiting) were all there. I also bumped into Celia Pym who I'd met on residency at Cove Park in 2016 and discussed the textile representation at Collect with her. I'm a printed textile artist and I'm always a little disappointed with the lack of this medium at shows like Collect. However, Ruthin Craft Centre had beautiful printmaking on textiles with natural dyes on a large-scale by Mary Lloyd Jones which provided my first piece of inspiration of the day.

After the first round of the show, taking everything in quickly at a surface level, I began to delve deeper and circle the galleries again and again as some of the artwork began to speak to me. I was grateful to have the entire day to drink everything in at my own pace and in my own way.

One of the highlights was to see the ceramicist Zemer Peled's work on display as having been shortlisted for the Young Masters Ceramics prize at Cynthia Corbett Gallery. More ceramics represented by this same gallery came in the form of Matt Smith's black parian small sculptures which were refreshingly affordable! I'd previously admired this work as he was the artist in residence at the V & A London last year. I found myself in one of my favourite London haunts (the V & A cafe!) last September when I took part in Craft Scotland's Pavillion at London Design Festival. Looking for inspiration, I headed over to V & A and was disappointed with their much publicised and talked about installations for London Design Week. However I was not deterred but determined to find something within to stimulate. I found myself 'gate-crashing' a private and intimate salon where the helpful V & A curators seemed happy to add my name to the guest list! I sat within a beautifully crafted wooden 'Globe' created by Havana collective, Los Carpinteros...and immersed myself in a performance by Greek composer and pianist Dimitrios Skyllas who performed a world exclusive of 'Abyss' in response and in collaboration with Matt Smith's ceramics. It was emotional, moving and the small crowd were very attentive. It was the inspiration I'd been craving all day! So to see more of Matt's work and meet him in person at Collect was hugely inspiring. More chat with the gallery's Swedish curator, Fredrika, resulted in spending a lot of time in this area.



Zemer Peled

Throughout the day I came and went taking breaks to breathe the air outside (which seemed refreshingly clean for such a megalopolis!) and meet with friends. Jason Dear has just become a full-time writer (thank God and about time too!) and he accompanied me around the show to provide amusing and interesting anecdotes to the crafts.

My personal passion at these shows, besides the textiles, is always the sculptural jewellery. Gallerie Marzee from the Netherlands had an amazing selection on show, and to my complete delight, had triple the stock in drawers which the gallery assistant encouraged me to open! I began slowly sliding each drawer out to the delight of my fellow onlookers. Each drawer slowly revealed the treasure within and the anticipation mounted as if opening each drawer was a kind of performance! Unfortunately I could not purchase that day, but I now have the details of the best sculptural jewellers in the world, when I finally allow myself that treat!

Further highlights included the Openspace ceramic pots of Tanya Gomez, a beautiful display of colour and concept called 'A Day.' I realised that not only the artworks themselves, but how the gallery or individual artists displayed their work was a thing of beauty too.

Mixing materials was a trend that cropped up a lot, and the best example I found was from ceramic installation artist, Valeria Nascimento's first jewellery collection, combining wood and porcelain, creating a beautiful simplicity and natural aesthetic.



Tanya Gomez

An insight into the Japanese art world at Artcourt Gallery and the Korean Craft and Design Foundation were inspiring and the ceramics stood out for me. As did Vessel Gallery's Laura Hart 'Orchid Installation' made entirely from the colour palette available within Bullseye Glass.

Listening to Dutch Textile Artist, Marian Bijlenga talk about her work and process was extremely enlightening, enjoyed more for her sense of humility in her work which translated in person.

It was great to see representative works from Contemporary Applied Arts London, of which I'm a member. I stock their beautiful gallery space and shop in Southwark with my scarves and cushions. A fellow Injection participant, Sue Paraskeva's ceramics installation was great to see and was accompanied by a live performance.

Finally, I was surprised to see a Crafts Council exhibition on art posters and the importance of graphic design sitting within and alongside the Collect showcase. As a previous Graphic Designer for 12 years, before I jumped into the world of digital textiles, I always felt it was at the bottom of the art world's priorities as a skilled and creative profession, especially in the UK. Trips to the USA and Japan allowed me to see how other cultures had embraced and respected their Graphic Designers, for instance Milton Glaser is a household name and national hero in New York City (and one of my all-time creative champions). So to see the Crafts Council UK stage such an exhibition alongside such high-brow works of art made me very happy! And provided much inspiration for new posters I am due to design for our local arts collective at Professional Artists Pop Up in Dumfries and Galloway.

Having previously exhibited at SoFA Chicago, Collect was a nice comparison and contrast to that show. The smaller scale gives a level of intimacy and certain galleries seemed warm and approachable.

My intention for the trip was to keep up with what's current at the high end of world craft and it definitely opened my eyes and fed my imagination. I was also looking from a personal point of view, to see if my own larger pieces could be a fit for this show? I haven't come up with a definitive answer to that question yet and will continue to mill it over before the deadline for applications of Craft Scotland's curated selection of Scottish makers at Collect 2018.



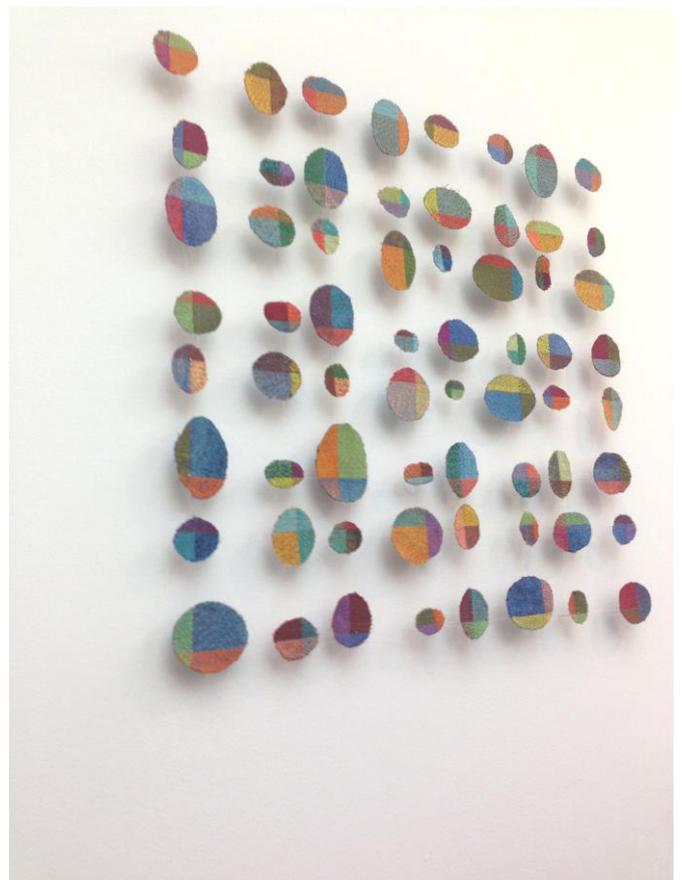
Laura Hart



Mary Lloyd Jones



Matt Smith



Marian Bijlenga