

South London Women Artists

Death and Transition

Gabriel Fine Art Gallery

Cottage 2 Old Paradise Yard
20 Carlisle Lane Waterloo
London SE1 7LG

17 April - 1 May 2015



Participating artists

Anna Arianova
Polly Bagnall
Juliet Blake
Kate Bowe
Lisa Brown
Melissa Budasz
Joan Byrne
Ilinca Cantacuzino
Gin Dunscombe
Edori Fertig
Dana Finch
Sheila Fratini
Yolanta Gawlik
Chantal Gillingham
Pia Goddard
Mary Gordon-Smith
Camilla Gray
Moiria Jarvis
Beata Kozłowska
Ky Lewis
Wenchi Lucas
Yoke Matze
Jennie Merrell
Jacqueline Merry Bernard
Marnie Pitts
Jasmine Pradissitto
Kate Redfern
Selena Steele
Kelda Storm
Chrissy Thirlaway
Caroline Underwood
Olivia Urquhart
Kim Winter

The Rye Poets:
Helen Adie
Joan Byrne
Pia Goddard

Foreword

"...first of all learn about death,
then about other things"

Nichiren Daishonin, 13th Century Japan

Death as a subject to shout about is provocative, but it walks with us every day. The three curators **Melissa Budasz, Ilinca Cantacuzino and Yolanta Gawlik** question what this final taboo may mean, exploring its finality and the fear it engenders.

The curators invited the artists to take their own approach in expressing the concept of Death and Transition. The result is thought provoking and cathartic. You will find a wealth of drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, time-based media, performance, poetry and song.

Death is as individual as it is universal, we might have different beliefs and cultural backgrounds, but Death unites us all, makes us all equal.

The Devil in Shaw's philosophical play 'Man and Superman' claims 'This marvellous force of Life of which you boast is a force of Death. Man measures his strength by his destructiveness'.

Gabriel Fine Art Gallery is situated near an old burial ground and close to the site of the old train station used in 1848 for transporting the bodies of the Cholera epidemic - it is rich with a history associated with death.

SLWA is collaborating with Gabriel Fine Art and Southbank Mosaics who are based in the Crypt at St Johns Church Waterloo SE1 where there will be a free event on Saturday 25 April 2015 showcasing The Rye Poets, Beata Kozłowska who will create a live Performative drawing and the duo Sarah Lloyd and Ian Kennedy will sing songs about death. Come join us after for tea and cake as we host a Death Cafe, a forum for discussion, led by Compassionate Funerals.

The closing event at Gabriel Fine Art on Friday 1 May 2015 will also offer poetry and performance.

Anna Arianova

The woman who knows... She is a Mother of Creation and also a Mother of Death. She lives underground and at the same time on the surface. The woman who knows helps us understand what is around us, near us and inside us that has to live and that has to die.

Anna Arianova is an established artist who specialises in figurative painting. She combines recognisable body shapes with abstract ideas.

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'The woman who knows', acrylic on canvas, 50cm x 70cm



Polly Bagnall

'In Memoriam' is a piece originally conceived as an installation in 1995. Twenty years later, this autobiographical film focussing on the death of my grandfather is updated with an epilogue. Original soundtrack by Cathy Lane.

Polly Bagnall is an artist, therapist and her book about her grandfather will be published by Pavilion later this year.

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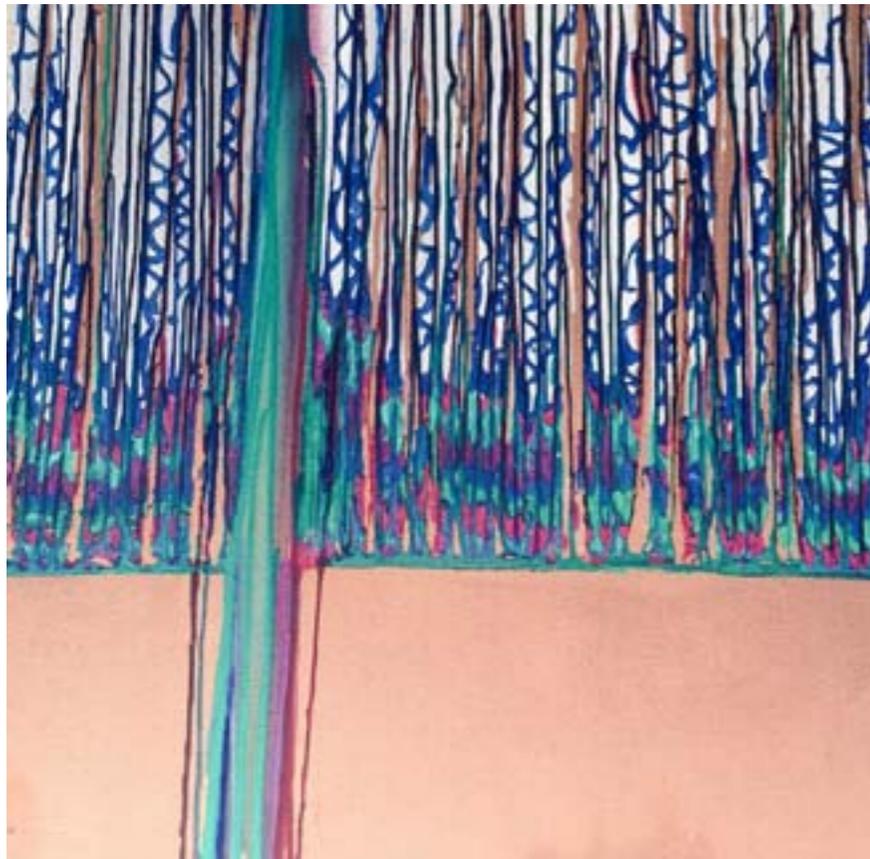
'In Memoriam', short film

Juliet Blake

"Death is not always the worst outcome"
I work in a Cardiac Catheter Lab providing acute care for heart attack patients, the epitome of a life and death environment. Blood dribbles over surgical drapes and plops on the floor; the body's cardinal humors exposed, mark making at it's most visceral.

I paint Abstract Landscapes inspired by serendipitous changes that occur in our personal landscapes. Sometimes I focus on the minutiae, expressing it on a massive canvas, other times I squeeze infinity onto just a square metre. Colours can be faithful or fanciful, whatever tells the story best.

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'La muerte y la trancision'
mixed media diptych
each canvas 60 x 60 cms

Kate Bowe

This is a continuation of a project that began with my observation of angel statues in a cemetery with missing hands. I imagined people stealing the hands so they could transform them into helping hands for the living. In this piece, the helping hands spring up from the decaying wood that represents death, illustrating the irrepressible surge of life, the synergy between life and death, and guiding loved ones through the transition between birth and death: life.

My work experiments with the assemblage of mixed media images in a planar form.

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'Hands Up'
giclée print (limited edition of 20), 75cm x 25cm

Lisa Brown

Bed head

I watched her lying in her bed
like a tiny bird with just a head
She scratched for breath
and choked and gargled
her song of words that were so garbled

She clenched my hand, looked straight ahead
then fell back down
oh dear she's dead

The crows are left and loudly squawking
their muddy feet where no ones talking
picking through what life remains
Bed head turns to dusty grains

Bird Head in a graveyard

Squawking birds high in the tree,
don't you fucking shout at me

They are on the floor
their throats are sore
they squawk no more

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'Bed Head'
wire, wax,
plaster, gl ass
150cm x 30cm

Melissa Budasz

Hecate - Goddess of magic, crossroads and necromancy.

I recently read *In the Body of the World: A Memoir of Cancer and Connection* by the activist, playwright and feminist, Eve Ensler. As Ensler was confronted with the possibility of death we experience connections to both her personal denial and our collective denial of global warming, the destruction of species and the use of rape as a weapon of war.

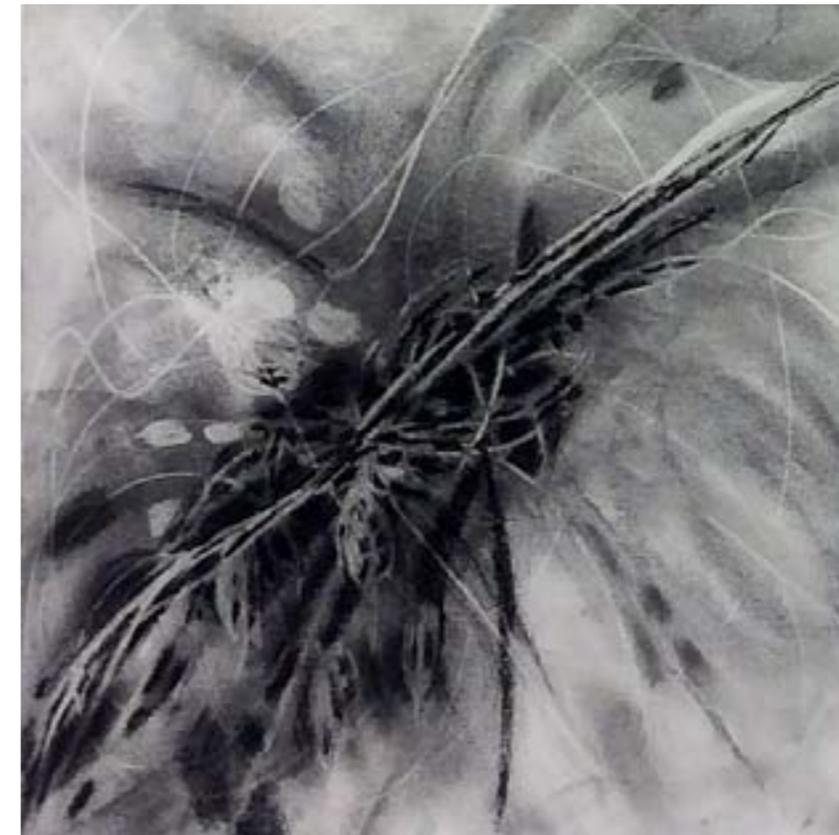
I think of William Blake as I draw and his insistence on the universality of creativity and as a starting point I have referenced his *Hecate of Enitharmon's Joy*. I draw on myths in a personal way as I perceive and process complex ideas and emotions. These drawings are about feelings of anger and sorrow.

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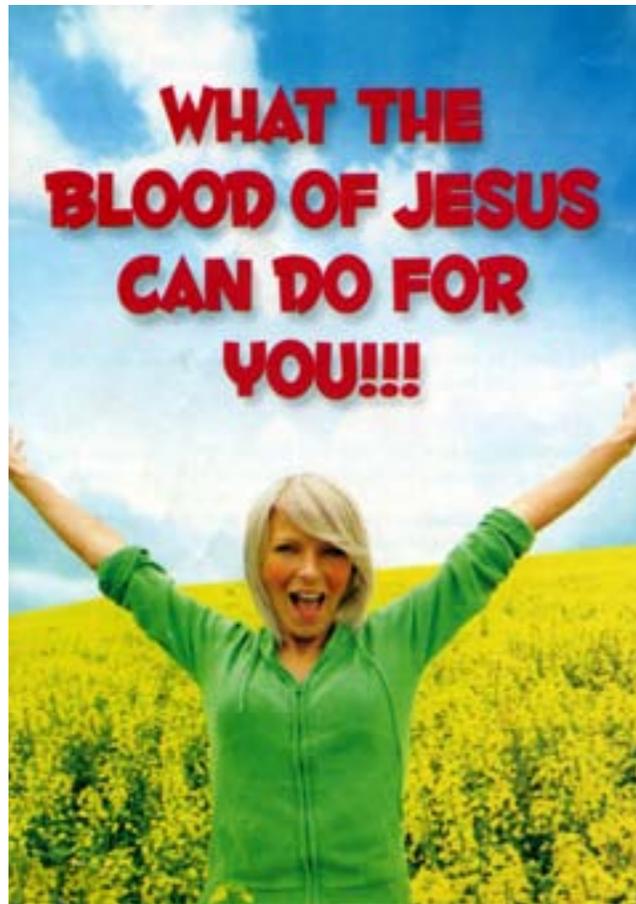
'Hecate's Wrath I'
charcoal on paper, mounted
and framed
40cm x 40cm

Joan Byrne

What happens after death? Religion has the answer. For years I have collected religious tracts promising salvation, which I have made into a limited edition print. This is art from the street; usually I take photographs of the street.

Also, look out for my recently published book, *Grave Art*, depicting the surreal or sublime tributes I photographed in three south London cemeteries.

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'Salvation'
archival digital print, limited edition of 4
42cm x 59.4cm

Ilinca Cantacuzino

Using an old photograph of my parents when they were young, I am setting photography up against drawing as a discourse: how if the former is death, the other through its process, is transition. Roland Barthes says in *Camera Lucida*, 'Whether or not the subject (of the photograph) is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe'. Every photograph is a representation of what has been. And although the photograph, as in this case, is full of life, and youth, its 'punctum', 'no longer of form, but of intensity, is Time ...'

The drawing, in the way its marks record the lines of age and the passage of time, is concerned with duration. As such it resonates more with how we perceive the nature of Life.

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'That has been', pen on tracing paper/photo



Gin Dunscombe

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Genesis 3:19 (King James Version)

My work is driven by contemporary issues of society and consciousness, sometimes confronting the cultural zeitgeist, and provides opportunities for the viewer to participate or observe proposals for engagement. Building on a strong foundation

in art history and social commentary, I often take a taxonomic approach to making art. I work in a wide range of media including 3D, film (super 8 and video), photography, printmaking and letterpress to produce installations, events, situations, artefacts or archives which engage the viewer in an ongoing dialogue of awareness and appreciation for the world we live in today.

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'Sigmund and Martha 1 January 2014',
mixed media: ashes, ceramics, dustpan and brush
dimensions variable



Edori Fertig

Death happens during life. A constant symphony plays. The rhythm of birth, decay, and then rebirth beats against the dark and light. In this performance we are both audience and player. Our attendance is inescapable.

Edori Fertig is an established artist and maker specialising in print. Her subject is often informed by lost histories and the use of humble materials.

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title, medium, dimensions?



Dana Finch

Painting is itself a process of death and transition. It involves so much annihilation before an image emerges that embodies the soul of the idea.

Dana Finch is a painter engaged in a process of excavating images from the landslide of life's visual impressions. She works in London but yearns for the wild and elemental places of Earth.

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'Untitled'
oil on canvas
50cm x 50cm

Sheila Fratini

'Once again love drives me on, that loosener of limbs, bittersweet creature against which nothing can be done.'
Sappho

The legend suggests that Sappho killed herself by jumping off a cliff for love.

Figuratively, I wanted to represent the aftermath of the jump and the brief bittersweet moment of consciousness before the void; metaphorically the power of love over everything, even death.

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'The Death of Sappho - Transitioning into the void'
Acrylics, 91cm x 61cm

Yolanta Gawlik

Death is not final, we are on the journey in which death is just another station, where each of us travels on our own spiritual path.

'The Geographer' triptych is inspired by my father, a mapmaker, who died 18 years ago. As a teenager during the war he escaped from a German work camp and walked all the way back home, to central Poland. He walked at night and slept during the day, always hidden from view, often in cemeteries.

In the triptych I used the fragments of an old German map, where the names of Polish villages are accompanied by German names.

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'The Geographer' triptych
collage and pencil on resin plates
23cm x 16cm each

Chantal Gillingham

'Man is always between two times, the brief time of his mortal existence and the big story time which his mind invents.'

John Berger

Chantal Gillingham constructs drawings from an assemblage of objects, photographs and stories. Information is retold and given new contexts. Artworks do not seek the namable, but instead suggest familiar forms, structures and memories.



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'The Nights, Forty Thieves'
Digital Drawing, Giclee Print 1/7
72cm x 92cm

Pia Goddard

Certain objects attend the stages of our transition. Some appear both at our beginning and at our end, though not always for the same purpose. The objects photographed could appear at either.

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I photograph with a forensic eye, trying to fix a narrative, working always against the tyranny of objects pretending to be one thing whilst they are actually another.



'Objects of Transition I'
photographic giclee print
on aluminium
25cm x 25cm

Mary Gordon Smith

Old ideas can die, and new ones take their place, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse.

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I make pots, but also figures which grow out of the clay. This one was inspired by the sculptor Rebecca Warren, whose work I hated at first, but then began to love.



'Death of an Idea'
ceramic and mirror tile
24cm x 15cm x 10cm ??

Camilla Gray

I approach the concept of transition by exploring the potential of thresholds and liminal spaces. This painting shows twilight, on the boundary between darkness and light. It has a contrast between the dense forest (rooted in the present) and the light beyond (suggesting hope of a life ahead and a realm of possibility). It suggests being on the verge of a new beginning.

I explore transitory qualities of light in my paintings. I strive to present an image which is familiar, but with a sense of possibility and intrigue. I make sketches and watercolours which are brought together in the studio.

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Moira Jarvis

Fire and Renewal.
After a forest fire sunlight falls on the forest floor; light and warmth enabling dormant seeds to grow. In these monoprints I have printed wet into wet which is a risky business, but this process seems to correspond to the inherent danger and excitement of forest fires.

Informed by an earlier career as a textile designer, my work explores personal and collective histories and our place in the natural world.

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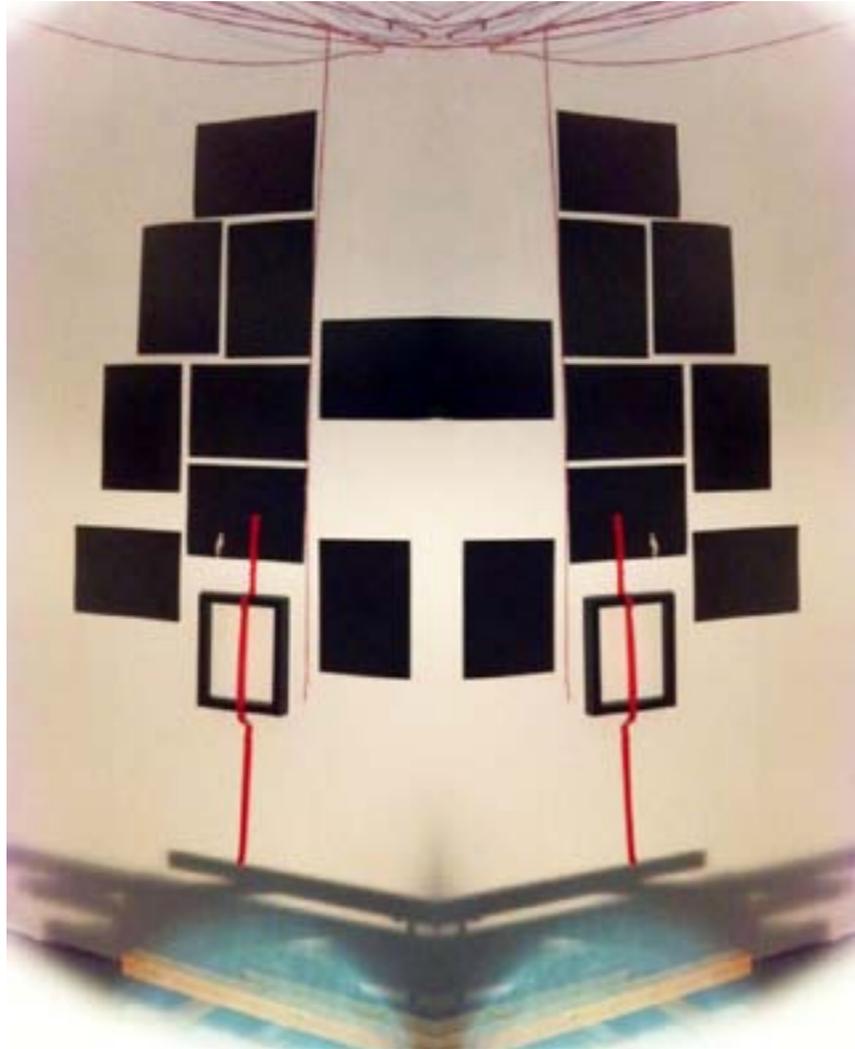
'Fire and Renewal 1'
monoprint
43cm x 69cm framed

Beata Kozłowska

'The Death and Transition' is an opportunity to experiment with a performative drawing. Transition is more interpreted as a metaphor of abandoning the existing structure and moving, following Ariadne's thread towards the New.

The performative piece for the show will be also inspired by William Blake interpretation of Ariadne in Dante's Inferno, as a territory of transcendence from the materialistic to the spiritual, therefore, abstract dimension.

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'Somnambulism, asking, re-make'
digital print, version 1/9
30cm x 35cm

Ky Lewis

The Death and Decay series explores the relationship between the essence of the former life of the subject and the chemical breakdown and transition into another form. Captured using long exposures, these images portray elements associated with death and new growth through transformation.

Ky Lewis is a fine art photographer using a variety of photographic and alternative processes. She makes pinholes from recycled objects and uses

camera less techniques to achieve dream like nostalgic images, resonant of past memories. Her work has been published both off and online, working collaboratively she has also exhibited internationally in juried group shows.

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'Evanescent Growth II'
photographic lumen printed as a
giclee on archival German etching
762cm x 762cm



Yoke Matze

Through exploring burial rituals I hope to reveal an area of life which is usually hidden. My work examines both environmental and social aspects of this phenomenon.

Yoke Matze MA works as a photographer, lecturer, exhibition organiser and curator.

Her work has been recognised by Greater London Arts and the Dulwich Picture Gallery and is found in collections in the UK and the Netherlands.

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Jennie Merrell

"The myths are the village and the winds and the rain ... The village is the talking bird, the owl, who calls the name of the man who is going to die..."

Margaret Craven, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, 1967

Jennifer Merrell studied Fine Art at City and Guilds of London Art School 1999 - 2003. Her current practice includes painting and printmaking.

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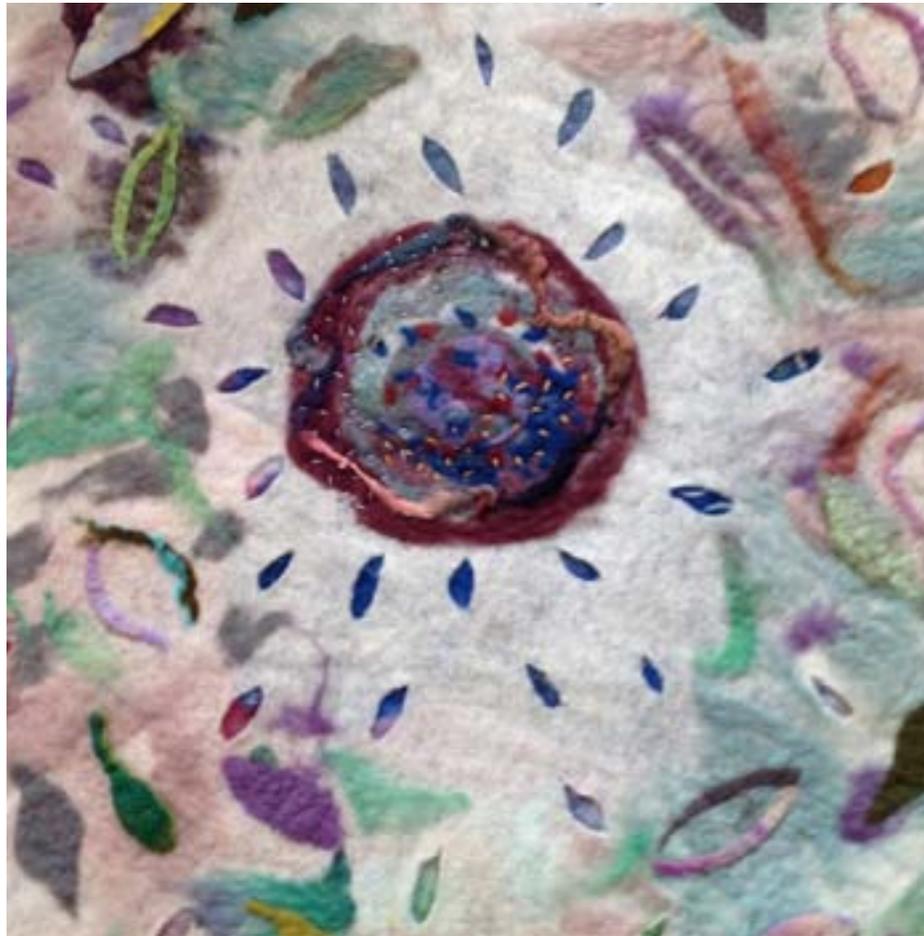
'I Heard the Owl Call My Name'
etching - edition of 20
70cm x 50cm framed

Jacqueline Merry Bernard

'Adventure, with Hope' is the first of a series of watercolours and feltworks depicting the disintegration of a wreath and tracing my bereavement throughout the past winter.

I need to have physical involvement in my creativity so moving from small paintings to the activity of felt making combines energy and solace; an antidote to the bureaucratic burden of widowhood.

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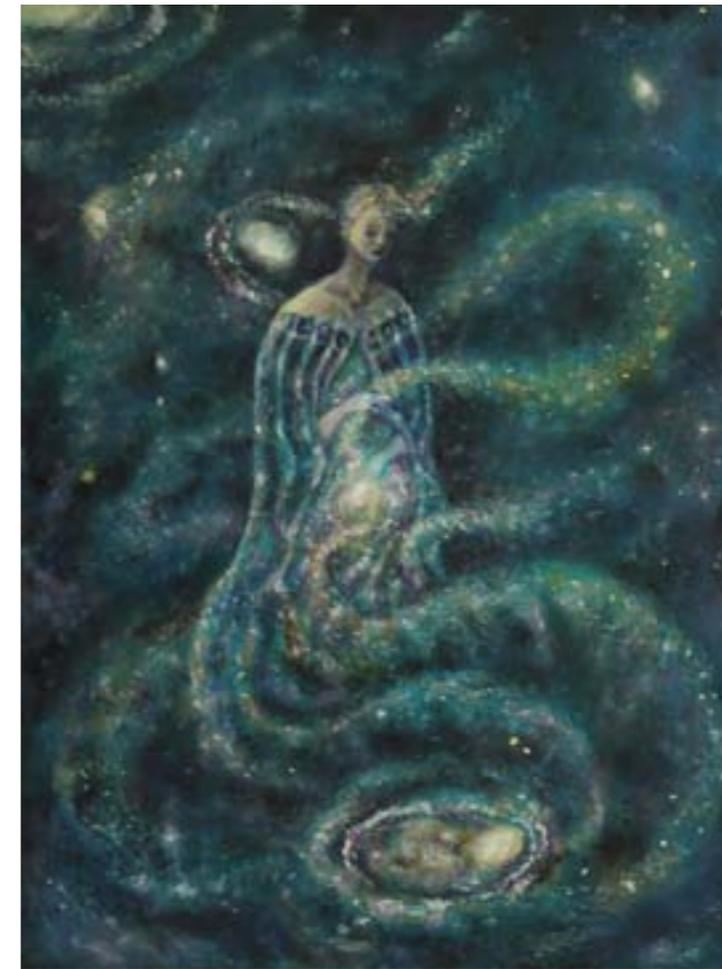
'Adventure, with Hope No 1'
feltwork, 70cm x 70cm

Marnie Pitts

Pantheism says "We see death as the return to nature of our elements, and the end of our existence as individuals. Our actions, our ideas and memories of us live on, according to what we do in our lives. Our genes live on in our families, and our elements are endlessly recycled in nature."

I am an Australian artist who has exhibited my work internationally.

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'Luminous body'
oil on aluminium panel
40cm x 30 cm (unframed)

Jasmine Pradissitto

Death and transition....Change.....
...leads to the woman who has nurtured and
pleased, finding her moment of flight; of escape
from boxes of expectation and pretty, girly things;
of metamorphosis into a true, genderless self.

A brand new material forged from the caterpillar,
as it melts into a butterfly.

Jasmine is a Quantum Artist (physicist), who
continues to manipulate light and plastics in order
to explore the observer/observed relationship,
which is also fundamental to quantum theory.

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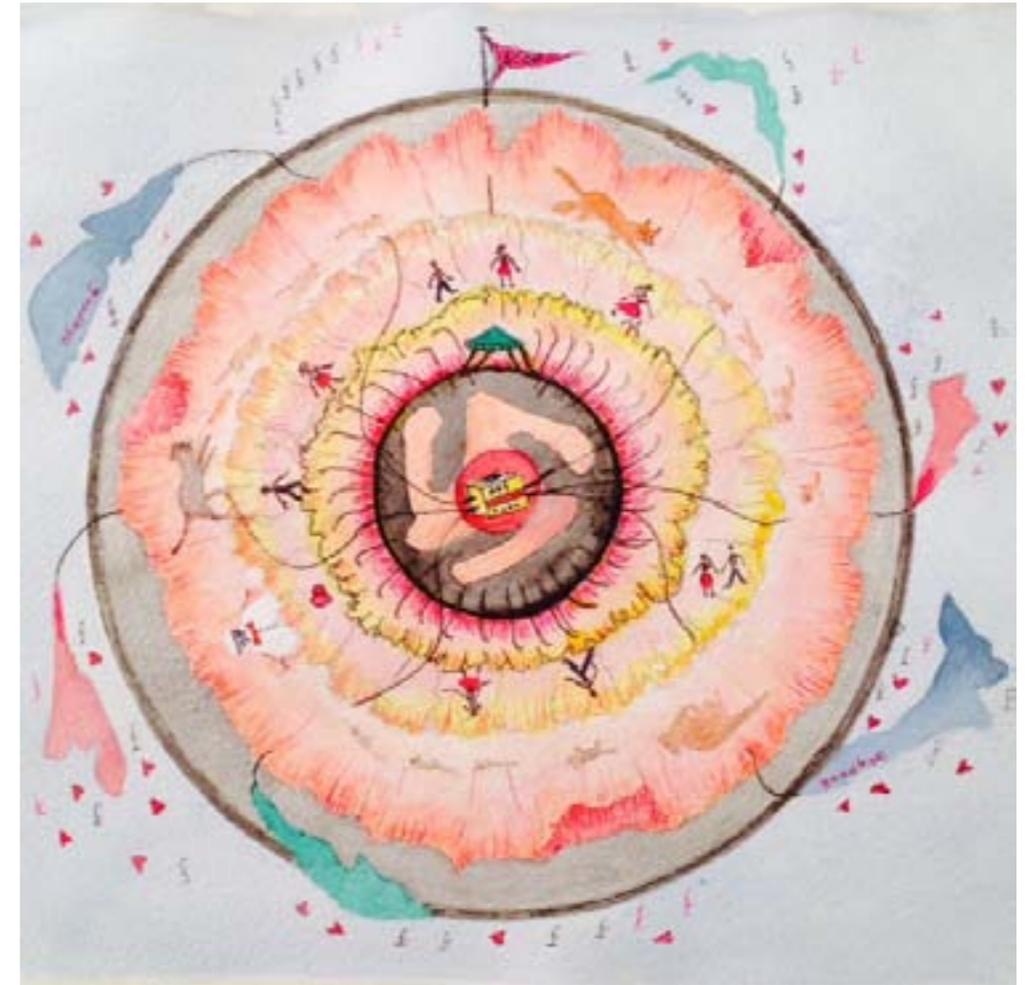
'I'm melting....girls are
made of sugar and spice'
quantum sculpture in light
and plastics, 2015
30cm x 30cm x 30cm

Kate Redfern

A mandala-type water colour painting illustrating
songs dealing with the theme of Death (of love)
and Transition (to indifference) by songwriter
Martin Gordon. www.martingordon.de

Kate Redfern most often paints in oils, and is
motivated by what she sees, but in this instance
she was motivated by what she heard ...

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'Flower Power'
watercolour on paper

Selena Steele

Troy stone, trace the path, fly.
"Be hole, be dust, be dream, be wind, be night,
be dark, be wish, be mind. Now slip, now slide,
now move unseen. Above, beneath, betwixt,
between"

Neil Gaiman - The Graveyard Book

Selena Steele's work incorporates ceramics, found objects and text. Here she explores the ritual use of the labyrinth in death and transition.

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'Path finder'
ceramic and found objects
43cm x 11cm x 5cm

Kelda Storm

In memory of my grandmother who sadly died in March 2015.

Death is part of the journey of life.

"I create vintage inspired prints with a hint of dark humour and a playful wink towards popular culture..."

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'Medicinal'
screen print, edition of 10, framed
50cm x 70cm

Chrissy Thirlaway

Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) is a parasitic round worm or filaria that is spread through the bites of mosquitoes. Virtually symptomless, it lodges in the heart and grows to congest and finally kill the host by heart failure.

Chrissy Thirlaway paints the human form with love; observing the human obsession with self and its universal insignificance.

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'You Wormed Your Way Into My Heart'
acrylic on canvas
30cm x 24cm

Caroline Underwood

La Lune, the moon, waxing and waning between darkness and light. A symbol of cyclical transition, its contrasts representing the essential dualism of existence.

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My monochrome, mixed media art work often develops in series, or as installations, representing the way we experience the world - not standing still but moving through it, being in it.



'La Lune'
mixed media (silkscreen print and spray
paint on collage), from a series of 28
12cm x 17cm / 23.5cm x 32.5cm framed

Olivia Urquhart

"I have been visiting this crumbling beauty for over 20 years now. She stands solitary but defiant of the cruel ivy that creeps into her seams. Built in 1783 by George Ross for the Gaelic speaking workers. There is an on-going campaign for her restoration; A significant relic of history."

The paintings (images attached) were done from photographs taken over a period of years, one was completed around 6 years ago, one 4 years ago, and another was completed more recently, around 2 years ago.

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34 'The Gaelic Chapel, Cromarty, Ross-shire, Smallest', 25.5cm x 20.5cm

Kim Winter

In nature, death is essentially a recycling opportunity. Along with bacteria, fungi are the main decomposers, degrading dead and rotting organic matter to inorganic molecules, which are then taken up by other organisms. Without fungi we would effectively be lost under piles of dead plant remains.

Kim Winter is a textile artist specialising in wet felting and indigo shibori dyeing.

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'Fungus', wool and wire
40cm (max) w x 100cm h x 40cm (max) d

The Rye Poets

Helen Adie

Aftermath

Is death no sound,
the other side of love;
what texture, temperature -

jellyfish cold, a body
beyond slack, towards
the tautness of a cave,

or the froth left behind
from the last tide,
confused by detritus,

or hollows containing
echoes of days that start
to bubble up to new surfaces.

Pia Goddard

Death in the garden

The wind races through the garden
grabbing the brown, crisp petals,
the loose, the curled, the drooped,
and carries them off.
Sometimes it gets away with more,
snatching at the brightest rose,
laughing as it goes.

Joan Byrne

From here to eternity

Curbside
black car pulls up
woman in black
'Hey!'
leans out the window
'You from round here?'
She holds a white card
an invitation.
'D'you know the way to Honor Oak
Crematorium?'
Others in the car
strain to hear my answer
'Right, left and straight on.'
They take off followed by two
more motors with mourners
– not an A-Z between them –
headlong to death.