

Building collections Supporting new ways of making

A collaboration between Jerwood Arts and Art Fund and is supporting five ambitious artists and makers at a pivotal point in their careers, as well as developing curator skills, writes *Hester Musson*



Since 2010, Jerwood Arts has been challenging the distinction between contemporary craft and visual art and strengthening the profile of material disciplines, such as ceramics, glass and textiles, in the form of its biennial open award for UK-based artists and makers. Now, through its collaboration with Art Fund, what has become the Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open (JAFMO) has offered five grants of £10,000 to early-career artists and makers, along with curatorial support, to produce new work over a 12-month period (up from £8,000 over six months for 2021 in recognition of the impact of Covid-19). The works by this year's artists will go on show at Jerwood Arts in London in January, before touring to Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange in Cornwall and JAFMO 2021 partner Aberdeen Art Gallery later in the year.

'The separation of labels between craft and visual art – what counts in different spheres – is challenging,' explains Harriet Cooper, Jerwood's head of visual arts. 'We want to think about what making means in a visual-arts context – how materials, making processes, concepts can all come together in a really strong format.' The award recognises how few opportunities exist

Above: Cecilia Charlton, *Michael Pollan says it's OK to take psychedelic drugs (in a therapeutic setting), part 1*, 2018; below: Helena Russell, *Persistence*; left: Vicky Higginson, *Artefact II. Spiral*, 2017; right: Anna Berry, *Breathing Room*; facing page, top: Jahday Ford (in collaboration with Joseph Hillary), *Breathe*, 2018; facing page, below: Francisca Onumah, circular textured vessel



for artists and makers in the first years of their practice to experiment and push the boundaries of their work, outside commercial pressures. 'The ethos of the award has always been about space, time and support to enable early-career artists to test what's possible with materials, skills and imagination.' This curatorial support, Cooper argues, is just as important as the financial support. For makers to feel confident within a visual-arts context, the wider curatorial language also has to change. To this end, Art Fund has also supported JAFMO's first curator and project coordinator role.

Svetlana Panova, who is based at Aberdeen Art Gallery, describes her role as being an 'ambient presence' for the awardees, one that builds confidence and encourages ambition. Having started out as a visual artist herself, she says it's great to be providing the support she wishes she'd had. 'I'm passionate about setting a benchmark for what good working relationships should be in the visual



sector for these artists,' she says. 'It's important to know the feeling of being nurtured to make your best work.' Panova has been impressed by the different ways artists can make use of the award, from learning a new skill, to conducting in-depth research, to working with specific facilities. 'It's incredible what it can do and how many shapes it can take.'

The new role was also created to help develop curator skills, through extended practical experience. As well as helping the artists navigate the making process and co-curating the Jerwood exhibition with Cooper, Panova will manage the tour and curate the Aberdeen show herself. Working closely with other venues is an important part of the project. As Cooper says, 'This is our opportunity to support these conversations within a museum collection and team. It is key to the way we look after and build narratives about making and craft in the future, too.' Each tour venue, as part of Art Fund's support, will also host events exploring curatorial development within their local context.

Out of more than 500 applications, the selection panel of artists, designers and museum professionals, including Junko Mori and Magdalene Odundo, picked artists and makers whose ideas are as varied as their practices and materials. The exhibition will showcase sculptural work by Anna Berry, focusing on clay and concrete; human-sized embroideries inspired by the Three Fates from Cecilia Charlton; a fusion of different techniques



and interactive light displays in Jahday Ford's glass vessels; Vicky Higginson's 'healing devices' in coloured glass, inspired by historical medical practices; and a collaboration between Francisca Onumah and Helena Russell exploring Sheffield's silversmithing industry.

The exhibition is a highlight of the gallery's programme for Cooper. 'It brings such a breadth of work into the gallery and breadth of audience as well – it elicits a lot of interest and curiosity and wonder.' 'This is a great award and opportunity,' says Panova, 'but it's really the artists who make it as exciting as it is.' Previous awardees, including Adam Buick, Jasleen Kaur and Zachary Eastwood-Bloom, among many others, going on to greater prominence is an indication of the ongoing success of the initiative.

● 'Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open 2021', Jerwood Arts London, 28 January to 9 April. jerwoodarts.org, free to all, 20% off in shop with National Art Pass

Below, right: bust of Marcus Aurelius, from Ryedale Hoard; below: Willem van de Velde the Younger, *A Royal Visit to the Fleet in the Thames Estuary*, 1672

Important bronzes for Yorkshire

Art Fund is one of several funders to support Yorkshire Museum to acquire an 1,800-year-old Roman hoard of bronze objects, which includes a bust of Emperor Marcus Aurelius and a statuette of Mars, God of War. The Ryedale Hoard, which is of national significance, was found by detectorists near Ampleforth in Ryedale, north Yorkshire, in 2020. The hoard will join the museum's existing Roman collection and help broaden understanding of the period.



Tissot's portrait *Quiet* (1881), both acquired with Art Fund support for National Museums Northern Ireland (featured in *Art Quarterly* autumn 2021), are in the exhibition 'Tissot's Mysterious Irish Muse: New Acquisitions' at Ulster Museum, Belfast, alongside works by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Lavery and William Orpen that depict women as artists' muses, society beauties or as living unconventional lives. nmi.com

A New Collecting Award completed

Richard Kelleher, assistant keeper of medieval and modern money at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, who in 2018 received a £40,000 Art Fund New Collecting Award to collect currencies of conflict and dissent from the past 500 years, made his last acquisitions earlier this year with three Philippine 'guerrilla' currency notes, created to pay local troops after Japan's invasion in 1941. New Collecting Awards are made possible by the generosity of individuals and trusts including the Wolfson Foundation, the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts and the Coral Samuel Charitable Trust.

Live-action conservation

The Art Fund-supported restoration of Dutch marine painter Willem van de Velde the Younger's large-scale seascape *A Royal Visit to the Fleet in the Thames Estuary* (1672), and its thought-to-be-original frame, held in the collection of Royal Museums Greenwich, is in the final stages. Conducted in the Queen's House in public view from 25 October to 3 December, the process will end when the cleaned, relined and retouched painting goes back on display in 2023. rmg.co.uk

New acquisitions on display

Hendrik van Balen's *Moses Striking the Rock* (c1600-32) and James (Jacques) Joseph

