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**Anna Berry | Cecilia Charlton | Jahday Ford | Vicky Higginson | Francisca Onumah & Helena Russell**

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## **Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open**

19 November 2022 – 5 March 2023, Aberdeen Art Gallery

Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open, the latest special exhibition at Aberdeen Art Gallery, showcases new work by outstanding early-career artists and makers **Anna Berry, Cecilia Charlton, Jahday Ford, Vicky Higginson** and **Francisca Onumah and Helena Russell**. The five commissions provide a snapshot of some of the most exciting new work being produced by UK-based artists and makers.

Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open is a collaboration between Jerwood Arts and Art Fund in partnership with Aberdeen Art Gallery. The prestigious biennial award supports artist development, commissioning and national touring, and champions artists and makers across the UK at a pivotal point in their practice, encouraging critical debate, visibility and dialogue around contemporary craft and applied arts within UK public collections. It is committed to strengthening the profile and importance of making, craft and applied arts presented within a visual arts context.

The exhibition at Aberdeen Art Gallery is curated by Svetlana Panova, Curator and Project Coordinator, who is based at Aberdeen Art Gallery in a role co-funded by Jerwood Arts and Art Fund to support curatorial development in the field of visual arts, crafts and applied art in museums and galleries. The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication detailing the commissions through interviews with the artists. Curator Svetlana Panova will lead a Meet the Artists event at Aberdeen Art Gallery on the opening day of the exhibition, Saturday 19 November, at 2pm.

This eighth edition of Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open showcases a broad range of material disciplines, including glass, textiles, digital modelling, silversmithing and sculptural installation. Although working across a variety of mediums and processes, the makers explore some common themes across their works such as the relationship between digital technology and traditional techniques, the potential of repetition in making, the power of tools, and the rich history of their material practices.

The exhibition allows research, concepts and experimentation to shine alongside the extraordinary craftsmanship of the objects created by the selected artists and makers. Giving the awardees an extended production period for this edition has proven key in developing their ideas on an even more significant level, marking the start of projects and explorations, which will expand past these commissions.

- **Anna Berry** presents new sculptural work using her signature geometric visual vocabulary and repetitive processes using cones as a way of creating a three-dimensional structure. Focussing on clay and concrete as her core materials, both of which are new to Berry's practice, the piece looks at ideas of balance, power and precarity – how two materials at the opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their fragility can exist within the same structure. Conceptually, the works propose that ideas that can be a force for good can also become tyrannical when balance is lost. [annaberry.co.uk](http://annaberry.co.uk)
- **Cecilia Charlton** displays her largest work to date: a human-size abstract triptych of Bargello embroideries, inspired by the Greek myth of the Three Fates who spin, allot and cut the Thread of Life. Each panel presents the characteristics of one of the Fates, with a unique combination of colour palette and stitch patterns. The embroidery is stretched over a gilded surface, allowing for the negative spaces in the work to glisten through. Charlton uses the Three Fates to reflect on the different stages of human life and the paths one has to walk through it, forcing us to examine our place on the planet and our relationships to one another. [ceciliacharlton.com](http://ceciliacharlton.com)
- **Jahday Ford** displays a family of large glass vessels, which combine ancient techniques with contemporary innovations to challenge what is possible with the material today. Interested in exploring the relationships between the digital and the hand-made form, the works extend Ford's current glass investigations into processes such as 3D Modelling and using CNC mould production alongside traditionally hand-blown elements. His installation comprises of three distinct groups of coloured glass works, with one interactive piece using LED sensors to illuminate when visitors are within a close proximity of it in the gallery space. [jahdayfordglass.co.uk](http://jahdayfordglass.co.uk)
- **Vicky Higginson's** commission for the exhibition is a set of varied healing devices imagined to treat emotional ailments. Made through combining hand-blown and cold-worked glass

elements in a variety of bold colours, the pieces are presented on custom made metal stands and plinths. Inspired by research into the shape and function of historic medical instruments the devices include: ear trumpets, to hear things left unsaid; a pestle and mortar, to break up bad thoughts; an anaesthesia inhaler; and a violet ray machine. Continuing her exploration into 'Folk Futurism' the objects on display look at the meeting point of folklore and fairy tales with science fiction. New techniques developed for this commission showcase the use of feathers, mirroring, and symbolic mark-making. [vickyhigginson.com](http://vickyhigginson.com)

- Working in collaboration and using a hoard of old silversmithing tools as a starting point, **Francisca Onumah** and **Helena Russell's** installation comprises of three elements coming together in the gallery space. Central to the work is a collection of five collaboratively made vessels in copper and silver, displayed on one large plinth. Alongside this, the pair display a series of found tools they have refurbished and repurposed to make the vessels, and aspects of their research into the past, present and future of the silversmithing industry in Sheffield, where they are both based. Through this commission Onumah and Russell have documented the personal histories of three Sheffield-based silversmiths, who have been involved in the industry in different capacities throughout most of their careers. The project aims to challenge ideas of 'preciousness' and whether it sits with the final product or the making process itself. [franciscaonumah.co.uk](http://franciscaonumah.co.uk) [helenarussell.co.uk](http://helenarussell.co.uk)

Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open recognises and promotes the significance of making practice and process within contemporary visual arts. It gives exceptional artists and makers the opportunity to develop their creative ideas independently, enabling them to experiment, learn and take risks at a pivotal moment in their careers. The awardees are able to explore their ideas outside of commercial pressures, with dedicated developmental, curatorial and production support from Jerwood.

Councillor Martin Greig, Aberdeen City Council culture spokesman, said, "Aberdeen Art Gallery has been renowned as a home for contemporary art and design ever since it opened its doors in 1885. It's great to maintain this tradition by welcoming back the prestigious Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open. This is a splendid display of new work. I hope as many people as possible will visit the exhibition to enjoy the wonderful exhibition. It is especially good to see these recently created pieces placed alongside carefully selected items from the established collection. This gives us an opportunity to make connections across time with artists and designers from the past. Making those links with Christopher Dresser, the Qing dynasty embroidery and other museum treasures helps us to appreciate the imagination and creativity of the Jerwood artists."

Lilli Geissendorfer, Director, Jerwood Arts, said: "Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open creates a vital space for early-career artists and makers to experiment, learn, and take risks with their work. Working with lead partner Aberdeen Art Gallery has revealed new knowledge, networks and connections to the city's rich applied art collections that have supported the artists throughout the development of their

work for this exhibition. Jerwood Arts and Art Fund have been delighted to co-fund a dedicated curatorial role held by Svetlana Panova to guide this project, investing in essential talent development opportunities in the curatorial sector. We are excited to share the exhibition with audiences in Aberdeen, and to connect with timely dialogue on the importance of making and skills in contemporary visual arts practice in Scotland.”

Rachael Browning, Deputy Director of Programmes and Policy, Art Fund, said: “Art Fund is delighted to have continued its collaboration with Jerwood Arts and to work with lead partner Aberdeen Art Gallery to see the eight edition of Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open come to fruition. The latest exhibition showcases the creative and ambitious work of incredible artists at an early stage in their careers, championing the importance of crafts and applied arts. Art Fund is also grateful to have co-funded with Jerwood Arts a new curatorial role to support the curation and development of the award.”

The artists were selected from over 500 applications by an independent panel comprising: **Christine Rew**, formerly Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Manager; **Yinka Ilori**, artist and designer; **Junko Mori**, artist maker in metal; **Dame Magdalene Odundo**, potter; and **Harriet Cooper**, Head of Visual Arts at Jerwood Arts. In recognition of the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, for this edition the awardees receive an increased award of £10,000 each plus curatorial and production support from the Jerwood Arts team to enable the making of new work over an extended twelve-month period.

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**Anna Berry** is a self-taught artist from Scotland, living in Milton Keynes. Her work is usually shown in non-gallery environments. She has a background in philosophy and commercial photography, both of which inform her practice. Anna is most known for her large, often kinetic, interactive installations in public space. These tend to involve a long and painstaking process of crafting from ephemeral materials for a non-archival outcome. She received an Unlimited Commission for her large kinetic installation Breathing Room, which was presented to a large audience as part Milton Keynes International Festival, before going on tour to Crewe, Wakefield and Gloucester. She was also DASH curator-in-residence at MAC Birmingham 2019/2020.

**Cecilia Charlton** is a London-based American artist. She received a BFA Painting in 2015 from Hunter College in NYC and an MA Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2018. Cecilia’s work draws on her upbringing as the daughter of a seamstress, utilizing textile processes to explore the effects of abstraction, geometric pattern, colour and composition. Recent projects include Love Token, a commission in the shop window of Robert Young Antiques, Battersea as part of their Contemporary Collaborations programme (August and September 2021). She also ran a series of 15 textile workshops with 55+ Ilford residents through SPACE Studios, which culminated in the solo exhibition Mammoth Loop in SPACE Ilford's gallery (October 2021 through January 2022). Cecilia has exhibited in the UK and internationally; her recent exhibitions include: Aurora, Candida Stevens Gallery, 2020 (solo); Parade, curated by Kris Day, Broadway Gallery, UK, 2019; Tender Touches, curated by Ines Neto dos Santos and Huma Kabakci of Open Space Contemporary, AMP Gallery, London, 2019; and SURGE: the Eastwing Biennial, Courtauld Institute, 2018.

**Jahday Ford** is a Glass Artist and Designer from Bermuda, currently based in Manchester, UK. He is a graduate of Manchester School of Art where he received his BA Degree in Three-Dimensional Design, specialising in hot glass fabrication and mould design. Using a combination of glass blowing and digitally programmed forms, Ford explores ways of drastically changing the materiality of his objects, effectively bonding these two diverse processes. He's participated in a variety of exhibitions in the UK and internationally and in 2020 took part in the HOME Manchester Future 20 Collective Artist Residency & Exhibition. His award-winning projects 'Breathe' and 'Deconstruct' have been exhibited in galleries including Corning Museum of Glass, New Designers, London Design Junction, Manchester Craft & Design Centre and The National Centre for Craft & Design in Lincolnshire. His most recent work was showcased with Yorkshire Sculpture Park – a collaboration with Studio Morison on the installation - 'Silence : Alone in a World of Wounds' 2021.

**Vicky Higginson** is an Edinburgh-based artist working mainly with hand-blown and cold-worked glass. Since graduating with a Masters in Glass from the University of Sunderland in 2011 she has exhibited work nationally, notably at the British Glass Biennale in 2012 and 2019, and Collect in 2019; and internationally in Ireland, Japan, the Czech Republic and the US. Residencies at Edinburgh College of Art and North Lands Creative have been pivotal in the development and evolution of Vicky's work, allowing her the freedom to experiment and change approach, developing personal style and themes. She was awarded the Student Award at the 2012 British Glass Biennale, the Creative Scotland Emerging Artist Bursary in 2015, and received a scholarship to a masterclass at Corning Museum of Glass in 2018.

Ghanaian born silversmith **Francisca Onumah** graduated with a MA in Jewellery and Silversmithing from Birmingham School of Jewellery in 2015. She was selected for the two-year Starter Studio Programme for jewellers and silversmiths at Yorkshire Artspace in Sheffield, South Yorkshire (2017-19). The pinnacle of the programme was being awarded the 'Precious Little Gems' commission from the Sheffield Assay Office (SAO), which was exhibited in the Millennium galleries, Museums Sheffield and is now part of the SAO silver collection. An alumna of the Crafts Council's 2020 Hothouse programme, her distinct aesthetic and emerging talent have been recognised and acknowledged with awards such as 'Best in Show' (GNCCF), and invitations for future collaborative projects and exhibitions. Francisca's work was featured in Maker's Eye: Stories of Craft at Crafts Council Gallery, London, followed by the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair in Manchester between 8 and 10 October 2021. Currently her work is on display as part of We Gather at Crafts Council Gallery until 5th February. In March 2022 Francisca will take part in the Harewood House Craft Biennial and will complete a window display for Bluecoat Display Centre, Liverpool.

**Helena Russell** graduated from Sheffield Hallam University with a BA Hons in Jewellery and Metalwork and an MA in Design. Throughout her studies she focused her design development on interaction, exploring the movement of an object with fittings and connections as well as how we hold and use drinking vessels, and how the form of the vessel can encourage different sensory responses and experiences. Helena is currently based in Persistence Works, Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield in the Starter Studio, a programme for early career Silversmiths and Jewellers, here she has been developing her practice and body of work which she has taken to exhibitions and craft fairs including Goldsmiths Fair and New Designers. Helena presented work at Goldsmiths Fair again in October 2021. In 2016 she received the Contemporary British Silversmiths Design in Silver Award.

**Project credit:**

Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open is a collaboration between Jerwood Arts and Art Fund in partnership with Aberdeen Art Gallery / Aberdeen City Council

**Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open:**

Launched in 2010, Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open (formerly Jerwood Makers Open) is a biennial commissioning opportunity that recognises and promotes the significance of making practice and process within contemporary visual arts. It supports exceptional UK-based artist and makers within 1-10 years of beginning their practice to develop their creative ideas independently, enabling them to experiment, learn and take risks with substantial curatorial support.

Jerwood Arts launched this initiative in response to a need for artists and makers to undertake projects outside the specific commercial briefs common in the applied arts sector. The eighth edition launches a major new collaboration with the Art Fund and partnership with Aberdeen Art Gallery, who host a dedicated early-career curatorial role to support the project and curate an exhibition of the new commissions in Aberdeen in autumn 2022. To date, this initiative has invested over £250,000 directly to artists to support 34 new commissions that have been exhibited at 14 venues across the UK. It continues to respond to an ongoing dialogue around the place of materials, skills and processes in contemporary art practice.

**Jerwood Arts** is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting early-career UK-based artists, curators and producers to develop and thrive. We enable transformative opportunities for individuals across art forms, supporting imaginative awards, fellowships, programmes, commissions and collaborations. We present new work and bring people from across the arts together in the galleries at Jerwood Space, London, as well as across the UK and online. [jerwoodarts.org](http://jerwoodarts.org)

**Art Fund** is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £3.6 million in urgent funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 130,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022 is Horniman Museum and Gardens. [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

**Aberdeen Art Gallery** is Aberdeen City Council's flagship cultural venue. It is home to one of the finest collections in the UK. Spanning over 700 years, the Collection of National Significance includes works by important Scottish artists, designers and makers such as Henry Raeburn, Joan Eardley, Samuel Peploe, Rachel McLean, Bill Gibb and James Cromar Watt, as well as nationally and internationally-acclaimed artists including Barbara Hepworth, Francis Bacon, Tracey Emin and Claude Monet. For over 130 years Aberdeen Art Gallery has been acquiring the best and most interesting contemporary artworks. We are proud to care for these treasures on behalf of the people of Aberdeen and to share their stories with all our visitors. Between 2015 and 2019 the Art Gallery underwent a landmark redevelopment supported by Aberdeen City Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Aberdeen Art Gallery was a joint winner of the prestigious Art Fund Museum

of the Year 2020 and winner of the 2021 Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award. It was shortlisted for the 2022 European Museum of the Year Award. [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk)

**Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange.** Founded in 1895 by John Passmore Edwards the philanthropist and social reformer, 2020 marked the 125th anniversary of Newlyn Art Gallery. Passmore Edwards was committed to improving people's lives and felt that art had an important role to play. This vision has inspired us to think more ambitiously about our work with communities and how we might involve them more actively in shaping and leading our work. We are particularly interested in how the gallery might embrace its civic role and become relevant and important to more people. Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange is an educational arts charity, an Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation, an Arts Council Collection National Partner, and a Cornwall Council Strategic Arts Client. We present contemporary work in all media by regional, national and international artists across two sites in West Cornwall. In recent years, our programmes have reached beyond the galleries into other settings, including care homes, schools and other public spaces, from beaches to places of worship, in order to realise our commitment to reach the broadest and largest audiences we can. We were thrilled to be named as part of the Jerwood Arts' Development Programme. We will be working with Jerwood Arts to deliver six artists' residencies, collectively known as The Jerwood Newlyn Residency, between 2021 and 2023. [newlynartgallery.co.uk](http://newlynartgallery.co.uk)

For any further information please contact Ilona Butter, Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums, [IButter@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:IButter@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

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