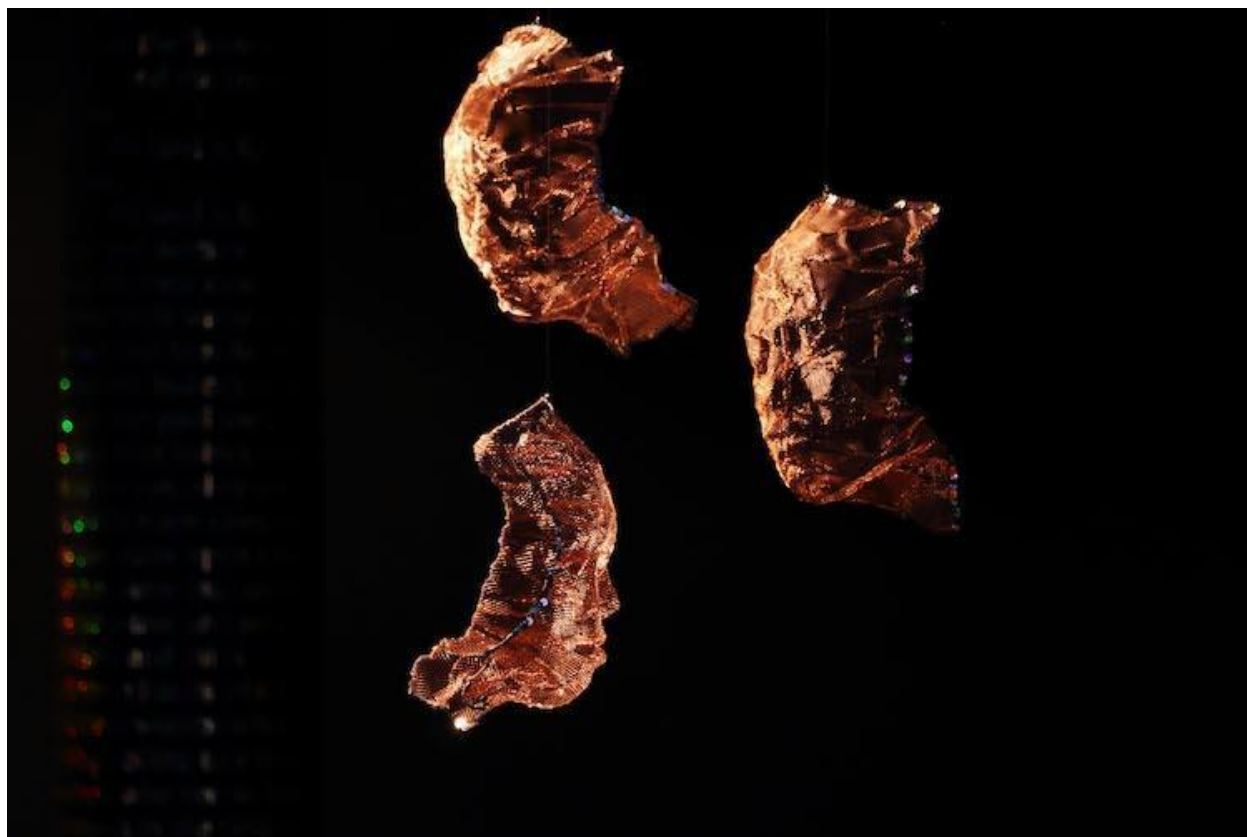


Media Release:

Full artist line-up revealed for landmark exhibition *Crafted Selves* exploring dual identity in contemporary art and craft

- Curated by Cat Dunn and programmed by Fife Contemporary, *Crafted Selves: The Unfinished Conversation* showcases the work of 13 Scotland based artists exploring dual identities in their work
- Participating artists are; Alberta Whittle, Sekai Machache, Ashanti Harris, Viv Lee, Rae-Yen Song, Adil Iqbal, Eden Grant Dodd, Li Huang, Emelia Beale, Joy Baek, Sara Pakdel-Cherry, Tilda Williams-Kelly and Harvey Dimond.
- Opening in St Andrews on 14 October 2023 before touring to Kirkcaldy the exhibition will share works in sculpture, painting, ceramics, textiles, installation, moving image films and creative writing responses.



Ashanti Harris *Emi Ori Cse in Bronze* as part of *The Skeleton of a Name* photo by Matthew Arthur Williams

Fife Contemporary are delighted to reveal participating artists in a new exhibition touring in Scotland in Autumn 2023 and throughout 2024. *Crafted Selves: The Unfinished Conversation*

opens at St Andrews Museum on 14 October 2023 and runs until 29 February 2024. The exhibition then opens 23 March at Kirkcaldy Galleries and runs until 12 May with plans for further touring later in the year.

The 13 Scotland based participating artists include Barbadian-Scottish visual artist Alberta Whittle who recently represented Scotland at the Venice Biennale, Zimbabwean-Scottish artist Sekai Machache who will represent Zimbabwe at the 2024 Venice Biennale, Chinese-Scottish ceramicist Viv Lee, Chinese-Scottish installation artist Rae-Yen Song and Iranian-Scottish visual artist Sara Pakdel-Cherry. A full list of artists is below.

Showcasing artworks in contemporary art and craft, *Crafted Selves: The Unfinished Conversation* takes its title from a continuing discourse between curator Cat Dunn and the 13 Scotland based artists featured - What does it mean to have a dual identity, and how is this sense of self reflected in work being made by Scottish craft artists today?



Li Huang Sacred

Featuring emerging and established artists and makers the exhibition will feature works in sculpture, painting, ceramics, textiles, installation, moving image films and creative writing responses. These artists showcased all in some way carry a dual identity. Many have a sense of their own self born from having a cultural heritage which is both Scottish and one which is rooted in another cultural home. The show also explores other dualisms and expressions of identity, including artists who express their, sexuality, disability, or trans and non-binary selves through their work.

As a Bajan-Scottish artist turned curator, Cat Dunn brings her unique understanding of what it means to maintain a dual-identity, the challenges that can be faced as an artist of colour, as well as the strength it can bring. Speaking ahead of the exhibition she said:

"Having dual identity can be used to celebrate social identity, or it can be used as a platform to express and teach others what life can be like from another perspective."

"For everyone who has embraced the term dual-identity, we do so with pride as we prefer to embrace the term than have it used against us ... Each artist becomes stronger. The artworks become more dynamic. There is true joy within the artworks, along with sorrow and pain. So, the works must have all of these elements to speak.

Scotland is undergoing a cultural shift as it repositions itself in the wider world, with Scottish art at the centre of the current discourse about Scottish social Identity. Art and craft can express aspirations, values, and national character."



Sekai Machache The Divine Sky

The selected artists are; Adil Iqbal, Alberta Whittle, Ashanti Harris, Eden Grant Dodd, Emelia Kerr Beale, Harvey Dimond, Joy Baek, Li Huang, Rae-Yen Song, Sara Pakdel Cherry, Sekai Machache, Tilda Williams Kelly and Viv Lee. Each of the artists taking part in the exhibition use layered and complex elements of craft. These create compositions that offer a unique iconography and hybridisation of references. Elements of historical and contemporary diverse cultures are evident in works exhibited.

For many of these artists their dual identity informs craft activity in their work such as Ashanti Harris' use of mask making techniques from Caribbean Carnival culture or Adil Iqbal's woven tapestries in collaboration with makers in Orkney and Pakistan. Zimbabwean-Scottish artist Sekai Machache references the ancient indigo dyeing processes across West Africa in her art practice. Hong Kong born Viv Lee's unique sculptural ceramics are influenced by prehistoric cultures, modernist forms whilst working with wild Scottish clay harnessing the elemental beauty of her adopted homeland. Chinese-Scottish artist Rae-Yen Song's work explores dual identity from a non-human perspective, allowing the artist to incorporate fantasy and fabulation. The result are puppets shaped according to the ancestral logics and imagined futures of Song's Chinese family, which serves simultaneously as a spectacle, a memorial and a refuge. Also referencing family is the work of Korean-Scottish ceramicist Joy Baek who has borrowed the imagery of the symbolic flower, Pulsatilla Koreana (the so-called Grandmother flower), from Korean folklore that highlights the sacrifice and unconditional love of an elderly Korean mother for her daughters.



Sara Pakdel Cherry, *Six Feet Under*

As part of *Crafted Selves: The Unfinished Conversation*, the Scottish premiere of Alberta Whittle's film *The Axe Forgets, But The Tree Remembers* will be screened at The Byre Theatre, St Andrews on the 17th January. The film features the stories of the Windrush generation and their descendants. Weaving together the experiences of her own family, stories sourced from Hackney Archives and conversation with the borough's Windrush residents, Whittle's film highlights the animosity experienced by those who first migrated from the Caribbean to the UK.

Kate Grenyer, Director of Fife Contemporary said: *“Cat Dunn has brought a thoughtful, personally reflexive, and powerful voice to the creation of this exhibition. It speaks to the deeply personal resonance that crafted work can have, as a carrier of wider cultural identities, and as a way to intercept these through personal expression. The audio recordings featured in the exhibition will have a particular resonance with many visitors as the artists share their own experiences.”*

Speaking as part of the conversations series that accompanies the artworks artist Tilda Williams-Kelly said:

“I think as a mixed race person, it's hard to cement myself in any one thing and I think what I've always felt mostly my life is not enough of any one thing. Not Scottish enough. Not Black enough. Not White enough. Not Irish enough. Not Trinidadian enough.

I think all those things are diluted. All together they make up me and it's taken me a long time to become proud of that. At least comfortable in who I am. So in my art, I started by drawing my family quite obsessively. I wanted to paint them beautifully and just say like, look at this person. Look at this person I love. Tell me that they're not worth as much.”

Speaking as part of the conversations series that accompanies the artworks artist Ashanti Harris said:

“I was born in Guyana and then moved to the UK when I was a kid. And being Guyanese has always been a really important part of my identity, especially when we moved to the UK because it was this sort of place that my family needed to keep alive for me because it didn't exist in my immediate surroundings. It was kept alive through food, it was kept alive through stories, and it was also kept alive through art.

If there was any kind of exhibition about the Caribbean, we would go and see it. And I would go for Afro Caribbean dance classes. And I guess just all of these different ways that you can experience a culture in a different country. For that reason, Guyana became this kind of magical place, to a certain extent that existed in the memories through other people's and not my own lived experience, but that became mine through my imagination.

I did a lot of research about Guyanese women who we were in Scotland in the 18th and 19th centuries. And I think that's also this idea, to know and meet these chosen ancestors. Like you have ancestors that are yours but then your chosen ancestors are so important and a lot of the time I use my artwork to have a relationship with my chosen ancestors and to honor them in some way as well.”

Fife Contemporary will also curate an associated programme of workshops and activities in collaboration with community groups and partner organisations to explore themes from the exhibition, offering a space for all to celebrate and communicate their own social, personal and cultural Identity.

Listings Information

Crafted Selves: The Unfinished Conversation

14 October, - 29 February 2024,

Opening Hours 10:30am - 4:00pm Wednesday - Saturday

St Andrews Museum, Kinburn Park , Doubledykes Road, St Andrews

www.fcac.co.uk/event/crafted-selves-the-unfinished-conversation/

Alberta Whittle: The Axe Forgets, But The Tree Remembers

Followed by Alberta Whittle In Conversation

17 January 2024

6.30pm

The Byre Theatre

Abbey St, St Andrews KY16 9LA

For further information, image and interview requests please contact Owen O’Leary, Oh Really PR on 07815 992658 or email owen@ohreally.co.uk

View and download a selection of hi res images from the exhibition here:

<https://app.box.com/s/zrkqbelmlehrkxlori14b69rg80a3m5c>

Connect on social media at: [facebook.com/fifecontemp](https://www.facebook.com/fifecontemp), twitter.com/fifecontemp, [youtube.com/fifecontemporary](https://www.youtube.com/fifecontemporary) and [instagram.com/fifecontemp](https://www.instagram.com/fifecontemp)

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Fife Contemporary produces high quality public exhibitions, programmes and activities with partners across Fife. Supporting artists to develop and extend their practice, and to create and exhibit new visual art and craft projects. Their work with communities facilitates engagement between artists and audiences, enriching the experiences of all.

St Andrews Museum and Kirkcaldy Galleries are run by OnFife. Further details here:

<https://www.onfife.com/>

Cat Dunn is a curator and researcher, her practice specialises in social justice. Her major curatorial projects include Harbinger, through which she investigated the impact of the climate crisis on marginalised communities living in urban areas, and NOWYOUSEEUS a digital exhibition focusing on Identity and the journey of black and brown womxn with Afro-Caribbean hair.

Artist Biogs:

[Adil Iqbal](#)

Adil Iqbal is a Scottish-Pakistani cultural practitioner with a Textile Design and Anthropology background. He utilises collaborative practice, narrative art, and digital media to bridge western and indigenous craft cultures.

He received the Dewar Art Award for his project '[Twilling Tweeds](#),' which connected Scottish and Chitrali cultures via weaving and hand embroidery. In addition, Adil has led art workshops exploring cultural similarities between Scotland and Pakistan, employing narrative discussions, life drawings, and digital art mediums.

[Alberta Whittle](#)

Barbadian-Scottish artist Alberta Whittle's multifaceted practice is preoccupied with developing a personal response to the legacies of the Atlantic slave trade, unpicking its connections to institutional racism, white supremacy and climate emergency in the present. Against an oppressive political background Whittle aims to foreground hope and engage with different forms of resistance.

Whittle represented Scotland in the 59th Venice Biennale and is a 2022 recipient of the Paul Hamlyn Awards for Artists. In 2020, she was awarded a Turner Bursary and the Frieze Artist Award, she was the Margaret Tait Award winner for 2018/19.

Whittle is currently presenting a major solo exhibition at Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern One) in Edinburgh, and is also participating in the 14th Gwangju Biennale.

[Ashanti Harris](#)

Ashanti Harris is a visual artist, teacher, and researcher, working with dance, performance and installation. Ashanti's work focuses on themes of mobilities - the movement of people, ideas and things as well as the broader social implications of these movements, specifically in relation to the diaspora of West Africa and The Caribbean.

Ashanti's current research is concerned with the body as a repository of incorporated histories which are communicated through dance and movement practices. As part of her creative practice, she also works collaboratively as part of the collective Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S) – facilitating movement workshops, research groups and collaborative performances; and as co-lead artist for Project X – a creative education programme, platforming the dances of the African diaspora.

[Eden Grant Dodd](#)

Eden Dodd is a transfeminine artist living and working in Glasgow, Scotland. Her practice focuses on the concept of 'fractured states'; the space between planes of existence, of dichotomies and of the physical and ethereal states. Dualities, reflections, and doubles are integral to the language therein. A multidisciplinary artist, Her work reaches between disciplines, but focuses on sculptural interventions, film and installations. The concepts of her work focus on personal demons, the transfeminine experience, and personal mythologies and narratives acting as 'lenses' of self analysis and actualisation. Her ongoing re-calibration of her identity is expressed through its connectivity to the androgynous nature of deities, mythological beings, Saints and Demons. Immortal and inexplicable, they are wells from which she channels her power as a transfeminine person. This 'transcendence' is expressed through an ongoing transitory state, one that flows in and out of vessels influenced and informed by memory, digital realms, and the shifting face of humanity.

Emelia Kerr Beale

Emelia Kerr Beale is a Glasgow-based artist. They work across drawing, sculpture, and textile to process the complexities of illness and hold discrepancies and contradictions together in tension, creating moments where discomfort/pleasure/anxiety/joy coexist and interact. Through the use of motifs and text, they consider the ways in which imagination and repetition can be coping mechanisms. Emelia often uses motifs, symbols and metaphors as methods of thinking about bodies without depicting bodies themselves. As Alison Kafer notes in *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, there is no 'the' body that isn't an iteration of a very specific body. Their practice pushes for more expansive understandings of illness that reject neat categorisations and binaries. Emelia's research is rooted in queer theory and feminist disability studies, as well as lived and embodied experience. Their most recent body of work uses a speculative history of an oak tree as a metaphor for the systematic disregard for the self advocacy of disabled and chronically ill people, through an installation of machine knitted garments, video and print work.

Harvey Dimond

Harvey Dimond (b. 1997) is a British-Barbadian writer, artist and curator based between South Africa and Scotland. Their multi-disciplinary practice examines queer ecologies and the entangled histories and trajectories of the climate crisis and anti-Blackness across the realm of the Atlantic. Recent commissions include Edinburgh Art Festival (2022), Art Walk Party (2022) and CCA Glasgow (2021).

Joy Baek

Joy Baek is a Korean artist based in Glasgow. Adopting a multidisciplinary practice, Joy explores art as a line of dialogues which record the history of our times. Addressing the socio-cultural issues in Korean and Scottish society, Joy's work embodies both public and private interpretations of women's lives. Her desire to render silenced voices heard has led her to develop an activist ethos that strives to sustain the action of elevating these voices, as demonstrated in her long-term series of work. Having graduated with a Fine Art (BA) from the Chelsea College of Arts in London, Joy has since graduated from the MFA at the Glasgow School of Art with Distinction.

Li Huang

Li Huang has a BA in Fine Art and MFA Art and Humanities from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee. Huang was selected for the 2021, 2020, 2019 and 2018 Scottish Portrait Awards Exhibitions. Their research is about the spiritual dimensions in portraiture painting. The theme is related to the reminiscence of his father who has been in the other world for a long time. Huang tries to explore something about the relation between the natural and the supernatural. The imprint from the traditional culture exists in people's life and it flows continuously through generation to generation. His practice-based research pays particular attention to the attitude to death from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy, religions and folk customs, and always from the western culture perspective in the meantime.

Rae-Yen Song

Rae-Yen Song is a Scottish born artist that works expansively across mediums, including drawing, sculpture, installation, costume, video, sound, performance, and family collaboration. Song's work explores self-mythologising as a survival tactic: using fantasy and fabulation to

establish a richly visual world-building practice informed by autobiography, ancestral journeys, Taoist philosophy, family ritual, multi-species interdependency, and science fiction. For Song, world-building becomes a tool for imaginative self-definition, with familial logics becoming the foundations of an alternative reality untethered from linear conceptions of space and time. It allows Song to resist colonial tropes and conventions, crafting multidimensional personal records and offerings for the future. These narratives yield a mix of humour, empathy and absurdity, whilst speaking broadly and politically about foreignness, identity, survival and what it means to belong — or not.

Sara Pakdel-Cherry

Sara Pakdel Cherry is a graduate of Fine Art DJCAD. An Iranian-Scottish multimedia artist and activist, exploring the consolidation of the Islamic regime after the 1979 revolution while enhancing my knowledge on my Persian heritage. Her art practice is based on her experiences as a Persian woman with hopes of educating the public of these issues. Meanwhile, illuminating the powerful feminine heritage of ancient Persia, for the women of all generations in Iran.

Sekai Machache

Sekai Machache (she/her) is a Zimbabwean-Scottish visual artist and curator based in Glasgow, Scotland. Her work is a deep interrogation of the notion of self. She is interested in the relationship between spirituality, imagination, and the role of the artist in disseminating symbolic imagery to provide a space for healing. Sekai works with a wide range of media including photography. Her photographic practice is formulated through digital studio-based compositions utilising body paint and muted lighting to create images that appear to emerge from darkness.

Tilda Williams-Kelly

Tilda Williams-Kelly (she/her) b.1999 is a Scottish visual artist based between Alloa and Glasgow. Tilda's practice involves portrait and figurative oil painting, open to myriad avenues of expression, producing vibrant and impactful images that explore themes of colour, light, environment, and humanity. This humanity begins with the self; what began as a reckoning with the notion that only men can paint, has morphed into an inner search of her own Trinidadian and Irish lineage, and the role of Scottish colonialism as a Scottish artist with this lineage. Tilda's work is to convey the necessity in uplifting one another; she looks to community as sources of inspiration and strength. Pursuits are based in community arts activism, collaboration, and research within socio-political settings such as anti-racism, intersectional feminism, and climate justice. Tilda blends classical oil techniques with contemporary style in both reference and countering with the oil 'masters' that first inspired her to pursue an oil portrait practice. Tilda takes this classical method and manipulates it to speak to us in the present; merging their methods with spray painting, mark making, abstraction and imagination is Tilda's way of expressing blackness and joy. She skilfully engages storytelling and mythos to address histories of erasure and subjugation often visited on Black bodies. In opposition to this, she chooses to represent the Black figure in compositions that evoke a sense of liberation and inner strength.

Viv Lee

Viv Lee was born in Hong Kong and studied at Glasgow School of Art. After graduating, she remained in Glasgow and is still based there today, creating ceramics inspired by the beautiful irregularity of nature. Rather than seeking perfect symmetry in her work, Viv looks to organic forms – particularly the human body – and embraces the imperfect. Each piece is a unique

work of art, which also serves a functional purpose. Lee creates unique, one-off, sculptural ceramics by hand in Glasgow.