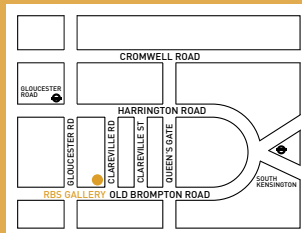




RBS Bursary Awards 2012

◀ Cover image:
Rebecca Griffiths
Spray Nozzle [detail] 2011

ROYAL
BRITISH
SOCIETY
OF
SCULPTORS



108 Old Brompton Road
London SW7 3RA

T +44 (0)20 7373 8615
E info@rbs.org.uk

www.rbs.org.uk

Registered charity no 212513

The Bursary Awards present an unparalleled opportunity for early career sculptors. The Royal British Society of Sculptors is honoured to provide this critical platform for ten emerging and talented sculptors, who will each receive two years membership to the Society. This will include opportunities to participate in exhibitions, residences and to network with our growing membership of professional sculptors. Nurturing and supporting the career of these ten sculptors will be a privilege. Through their work, the Society will continue to promote the diverse language of sculpture.

The Bursary Award goes from strength to strength each year and I would like to congratulate the ten recipients of the 2012 Awards and thank the Gilbert Bayes Charitable Trust for their generosity and continued support.

Terry New
President
Royal British Society of Sculptors

Foreword

Many years ago I studied at the Slade School of Fine Art. Located in the basement, the sculpture department was regarded as the haunt of hairy northerners (a beard was de rigeur), who had more brawn than brains. Painting students were urbane sophisticates (or so they thought) – clean-shaven, sensitive southerners (who were often well-connected). In all departments, female students were viewed mainly as decorative fodder – love interest for the boys. I'm exaggerating, of course, but there's enough truth in my caricature to highlight the prejudices pervading the London art scene of the 1960s.

Fortunately times have changed. The boundaries between disciplines have become increasingly blurred as artists shift from two to three dimensions or from one medium to another; they may paint on canvas for one project, do a performance, take photographs or make a video for another and cast an object in bronze for a third. Consequently, sculpture has become an umbrella term encompassing almost anything from made or found objects to ephemeral happenings and digital recordings.

Although traditional definitions are no longer adequate, the idiotic prejudices I recall have not disappeared so much as been inverted. The days may have gone when painting was for gentlemen and, by association with manual labour, activities like carving, chiselling and casting were looked down upon, yet there are those (with selective memories) who profess nostalgia for a time when manual dexterity was considered vital for an artist's credibility.

Some of this year's award winners relish the making process. 'I love working with materials', says Saad Qureshi. 'It gives me time to play... I'm such a materials person.' But others opt for a less hands-on approach. Myles Painter has begun using found footage in his films and recently has adopted the role of producer, inviting others to respond to television series such as 'Grand Designs'.

If judgements based largely on skill are no longer appropriate, what criteria are relevant when assessing a work of art? The most sensible course of action, I would suggest, is to set aside all assumptions and allow the artists to establish their own frame of reference and instigate a dialogue on their own terms, since the artist's intentions always inform the end product.

Pablo de Laborde describes his work as 'a subtle conversation between performance and sculpture that is suggestive of time and motion.' While a student at Falmouth, his work was primarily performance based. In 'The Weight of a Choice' sand is housed in a long tube with carved ends; resting the tube across his shoulders, the artist tilts from side to side, enabling the sand to pour onto the floor in little mounds. Since then, the balance has shifted between the performative and sculptural aspects of the work. 'Metronome' is a four-sided ladder attached to rockers. On video, two men climb the frame and rock back and forth; instead of completing the work, the performance is an optional extra, an open-ended exploration of the structure's potential. In 'Link', a segment of bicycle tire is filled with wooden blocks. Although rearrangement is possible, this latest sculpture seems content with its present form. Time and motion have been stilled – temporarily at least.

My partner collected things, like lead formers and cucumber straighteners, that are no longer useful. While he knew the identity of each item, since his death, I'm left guessing what they were for. Imagine a similar scenario a hundred years from now and you'll appreciate the mixture of familiarity and strangeness inherent in the work of Rebecca Griffiths. Made from brightly coloured plastics, resins, plywood or rubber, sculptures reminiscent of packaging and consumer goods are given titles such as 'Service Objects', 'Turbo' and 'Spray Nozzle'. Described by her as 'archetypes of modern living', they appear to be the last word in elegance, sophistication and desirability; but because they are hand-made and their function is obscure, they frustrate expectations and unsettle our relationship with the myriad products on which we increasingly rely.

The key to James Irwin's work is paranoia generated by technology that spies on us and invades our privacy. Not content simply to switch off his computer, he has created a space impermeable to Wi-Fi communication. '343,000 cubic centimeters' is a cube made from radar-absorbent material impenetrable to the internet. Hung at head height, 'Vacuum contained within a glass sphere' is a glass phial the same volume as an average human brain, similarly free from contamination. Perfect peace comes at a price, though; total isolation is lifeless and sterile. But Irwin has not given up on dialogue. Based on the Kilo Flag from the International Code of Symbols, 'Open to Communication' acknowledges a desire for contact. Split horizontally into a yellow and blue band, the panel signals a readiness to communicate, but in the here and now rather than via the world-wide web.

Do the claims made by manufacturers add up? What does it mean to measure an engine's performance in terms of horsepower? The desire for answers led William Mackrell to harness two shire horse to a Deux Chevaux and film their efforts to pull the vehicle. A torch claiming to equal the light of 1,000 candles provoked him to see how bright that would be; but 1,000 night lights burning in close proximity generate so much heat that the flames are extinguished. Futility is the name of the game, part of the attraction. '90 minutes' was inspired by the discovery that Saddam Hussein's son, Uday used torture to improve the performance of Iraq's football team. When they lost a match, he made them practice with a concrete ball. The stratagem was stupid as well cruel, since the ball caused injuries that lessened their chances. Mackrell's volunteers played until they were unable to continue. Dry humour, black comedy; these daft explorations pay tribute to human endeavour, which meets with failure as often as success.

Janne Malmros refashions found objects into exquisite new creations. In 'Outfit' the skeletal remains of a dress once patterned with flowers hangs on a wall; freed from the garment, the blossoms march across the space like triumphant wallpaper celebrating their release. 'Hirschsprung Centenary Wreath' consists of bows, cravats and bow ties

found in nineteenth century portraits from the Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen. Combined into a wreath, they seem to mourn the loss of elegance and frippery. In 'Shifts and Contrivances', segments cut from a repeating pattern form little boats that 'float' on the surface. The design is a blueprint; two dimensions expand into three and lay claim to the surrounding space.

Imagine a building made of fabric. Katie McGown's 'The kind of place I could build us' is a tower block made from cheese cloth stuffed with straw. Resting against the wall, the abject little model sags disconsolately as though saddened by its inadequacy, while shedding stuffing like a discarded toy. Frank Stella meets Claes Oldenburg in 'Reconfigured Folds', two triangular shapes linked by a folded length of striped material. The clean lines and hard edges of Stella's crisp geometry have been replaced by the soft contours of stitched cloth and stuffing. The industrial precision and cool anonymity of Minimalist art and architecture have been domesticated; such drastic make-overs may be more user-friendly, but risk being useless. Heroic phallicism is fun to ridicule, but difficult to oust.

A spiral staircase keels over in the corner of the room; the central pole has come adrift from the ceiling and, without a handrail to hold them in place, the spindles splay out at odd angles. The staircase leads nowhere, which is just as well since, cast in black wax, it is too fragile to climb. Titled 'The Descent', Nika Neelova's stairs suggest symbolic rather than actual movement – atrophy and decay rather than physical motion. Although the title reminds one of Duchamp's painting 'Nude Descending a Staircase', the reference is not to art history so much as to personal and collective memory. Black is the predominant colour of sculptures in which charred wood, distressed mirrors, threadbare flags and clappers separated from bells suggest mourning, and the terrible silence induced by trauma.

Myles Painter explores the urban environment as it appears mediated by film, television and the imagination. The American conceptualist, Lawrence Weiner writes instructions for actions that may or may not be carried out. 'In Search of

The Lawrence Weiner Statements' shows Painter trawling London's streets, along with Joseph Popper, for evidence of their impact. They accept a metal pole and some road works as likely responses to the statement "A removal of an amount of earth from the ground. The intrusion into this hole of a standard processed material". Weiner's influence is everywhere, it seems. The film is a spoof on Tacita Dean's 'Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty' (which shows Dean touring Utah looking for Robert Smithson's submerged artwork); with its modern jazz soundtrack, it also parodies tributes that make overblown claims about their subjects. In 'The Spectator' found footage is re-edited to follow a man making his way through Los Angeles to a ball game. When he breaks into a prohibited area, his presence immediately appears sinister, yet a caption describes him as 'a barely visible trace, merely a lonely negotiation of the space between start and finish'. The environment is both a screen and a mirror; interpretation is all.

Born in Bradford of Pakistani parents, Saad Qureshi uses paintings, sculptures and installations to explore issues of identity and belonging. 'A Sort of Loss' consists of items redolent of a time, place and culture. Black thread from a sewing machine unravels across a prayer rug in a tangled mass resembling human hair. Sprinkled over the machine like dust, turmeric fills the air with a pungent aroma. Appealing to smell, touch, taste and, by implication, sound, the installation is like an act of mourning for a vanishing way of life. Inspired by reports of a suicide bombing at a mosque in Afghanistan, 'Quicken' is a nine metre section of a ruined. The violence evoked by the charred structure is offset by the faint sound of a heartbeat recorded at an infant's birth. Order and chaos, carnage and renewal; opposite impulses battle for supremacy. 'Consortium' is one of a series of tableaux based on memories recounted by strangers. Charred wood suggestive of irrevocable loss creates an aura of melancholy tempered by the balm of nostalgia.

For David Turley anything – from shopping lists to family albums and broken bottles – is raw material. In his installations, the traces we leave behind are used to shed

light on the way we structure our lives and create meaning. 'We spend our lives', he writes, 'searching for something and dedicate every moment to the fulfilment of our dreams.' As a lapsed catholic, for him religious belief and the rituals surrounding it are an ongoing source of fascination. A pair of crutches titled 'Supports for Inadequacy' lean against the wall beneath drawings of crutches on old wrapping paper. Inspiration came from a basilica in Montreal where abandoned crutches testify to the healing powers of faith. 'I enjoyed this idea,' writes Turley, 'of replacing (physical support) with belief in a God, a mental support.... We believe in all sorts of things and hold on to hope and belief because honestly, we truly have no fucking idea. Where are we going? What will the weather be like? Perhaps I should take a coat?'

Damien Hirst, another lapsed catholic, argues that 'The only reason we do anything is to search for the answer to those questions: why, where, what, who?' Paraphrasing Gauguin, he asks 'Where do we come from, where are we going, and is there a reason?' Whether through humour, poetry or drama, the winners of this year's RBS Bursary Awards address one of more of these questions. And in so doing, their work reflects the enormous diversity of activities that come under the rubric of sculpture.

Some argue that the term sculpture is so all-encompassing as to be meaningless. I disagree; the ability to adapt to changing circumstances gives sculpture its enduring relevance. While painting risks obsolescence because of the narrowness of its definition and practice, sculpture has never seemed more healthy or more vibrant. By embracing diversity, the Society demonstrates that there is no house style dictating the choice of successful applicants and thereby confirms its ongoing relevance to today's practitioners.

Sarah Kent
October 2012



▲
Pablo De Laborde Lascaris
Link 2012
wood, rubber

Pablo De Laborde Lascaris

Concerned with the static tradition of sculpture in relation to impermanence or uncertainty in everyday life, I explore primordial artefacts, games and toys within my practice. My work aims to produce an exchange between ideas by conveying a subtle conversation between performance and sculpture that is suggestive of time and motion.

'Link,' begins with a wooden chair and a rubber tyre. The chair is deconstructed into small segments and as each piece is placed within the tyre, it causes it to expand. The relationship between the objects is caught in a balance between motion and stability, displacement and home.



▲
Rebecca Griffiths
Spray Nozzle 2011
mdf, plastic paint, ceramic tiles

Rebecca Griffiths

Interested in the objects of mass-production and their associated materiality, my sculptural work explores the residue of life's experiences. Frequently inventing processes that simultaneously de-stabilise and monumentalise the object, I question what it means to reside in a world 'designed to fit'.

'Spray Nozzle' is part of a series of work exploring the bland and generic plastic products we use and throwaway each day, bringing them into an anxious and poetic conversation with the body. The labour-invested sculptures select and enlarge ubiquitous design details to create strange prototypes that seem to reflect on their own making.

James Irwin

I create conceptual artworks to challenge the representation of the digital world as a purely positive development. Working across sculpture and digital media, I reflect upon how communication is mediated through technology: how the languages and systems of human and computational communication interact and diverge to generate meaning and forge connections.

Key to my practice is a distilled sense of loss of control in a world of technology. My works are exercises and attempt to regain control. '343,000 Cubic Centimetres of Isolated Space', is a Wi-Fi 'cold-spot': a sculpture clad in Radar Absorbent Material which disconnects itself from the ubiquitous hum of omnipresent Wi-Fi networks.



James Irwin

343,000 Cubic Centimetres of Isolated Space 2011

radar absorbent material, anodised aluminium



William Mackrell

Cutting Through Red Tape 2012

video documentation 6:46 minutes

William Mackrell

My desire to challenge the impossible often becomes an entry point into a new work. Venturing between the likely and the absurd, I see how far an idea can be pushed.

In each trial, the process becomes itself the content. For 'Cutting Through Red Tape', I cover every page in a daily newspaper with red cloth tape and document my attempt to cut through it.



▲
Janne Malmros
United We Lounge [detail] 2011
a pair of sixties deck chairs

Janne Malmros

Infused by strong interests in botany, entomology, geometry and pattern my work is driven by research, process and installation. The printed element is often the starting point for the three dimensional work and employs careful cutting and folding to explore the potential of repeated pattern, volume, space, surface and shadow.

'United We Lounge', is formed from a pair of 60s deck chairs each with a stripped canvas. Nothing is removed or added to the original chairs. Everything has been used, it is just reconfigured. Through the process of rigorous repetition of an action something new emerges.



Katie McGown

Reconfigured: Fold 2012

fabric, thread, stuffing

Katie McGown

My work inhabits the intersection between urban spaces and traditional textiles. I recreate my urban landscape referencing buildings and deconstructing architectural features. I produce models out of fabric to make a futile, playful, attempt to suggest alternative arrangements and possibilities for these buildings and explore their ownership.

'Reconfigured: Folds' continues an inquiry into the nature of shelter; how we conceive the space around us and imagine rearrangements of the forms that contain our lives. This piece juxtaposes a graphic, perspective element, with abstracted component parts to explore the potential for urban spaces to be adapted to individual whim and desire.



▲
Nika Neelova

Partings 2012

Somerset House door cast in concrete,
reclaimed burnt timber, rope

Photography courtesy Sam Mellish

Nika Neelova

In my work, I am interested in addressing memory through a historical and personal perspective. My work references architectural history by drawing inspiration from fragments that have survived and exist in the present. As fragmented structures, they point to a lost and invisible whole and suggest resilience through a passage of time.

The idea behind the sculpture featured in the Bursary Award exhibition originates from an exploration of the significance and symbolism of bells throughout history. It features a timber structure supporting suspended cast bell clappers. Transforming their origin and purpose, they will be rendered endlessly vulnerable and fragile and deprived from all their acoustic properties.



Myles Painter

The Spectator 2011

video

Myles Painter

I work with film, video, sculpture and installation to produce work that critically examines the discourse of architectural spaces, either physical or theoretical. The physical architecture presents a historical narrative and depicts an individual's inhabitation and lived experience. The theoretical architecture investigates a collective response and its influence on the design of social and psychological space.

'The Spectator' appropriates footage from the film Two Minute Warning (1976). Sections of the film have been edited together and overlaid with text by collaborator, Bella Szyszkowska. Presenting an alternative narrative as the character navigates his way through a series of spaces.



Saad Qureshi

I probe the psychology of flawed visual perception and its endless distortions of reality. Referring to how people living across the globe envision their surroundings, I seek to deconstruct stereotypes and subvert notions of belonging to a specific locality or culture.

Many of us have left a certain place or even homeland behind, the vividness of which is etched in our memories. My new work consists of landscapes that spring directly from the recollections of places and times significant to people I interview. These I re-imagine and manifest as fragile landscapes. The concrete and the imaginary become blurred together, crystallising mood and time.



Saad Qureshi

Consortium 2012

mixed media



David Turley

My practice is a mapping of seemingly unrelated histories, objects, places and events, shifting between irreverence and a more personal contemplative exchange. I often reference religious ceremony and investigate the understandings and connections between the physical world and transmission beyond. This work is an attempt to re-present and restructure disjointed and lost histories, piecing together a constructed mess of fearful hope.



David Turley

Dark Energy [fear of the dark] 2012

digital print, mixed media



Pablo De Laborde Lascaris graduated with a BA in Fine Art from University College Falmouth in 2011 and has participated in several group exhibitions in Mexico and UK since 1996. Most recently he has had a solo exhibition at Christ's Hospital in 2012. He is currently artist in resident at Christ's Hospital School, Horsham until 2013.

www.pablolab.co.uk



Rebecca Griffiths graduated with a MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art in 2011 and has had solo exhibitions at Flowers Gallery, London (selected by Alison Wilding), 2011 and Proctor Gallery, Cornwall, 2009. She has exhibited in several group exhibitions and undertaken artist residencies at Cornwall College and Spike Island.

www.rebeccagriffiths.com



James Irwin graduated with a MFA in Computational Studio Arts from Goldsmiths College in 2010. He has had three solo exhibitions in London including at Space in Between, 2011 and has participated in several group exhibitions since 2005. His work is also in a number of private collections.

www.jamesirwin.net



William Mackrell graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design in 2005 and has since exhibited extensively nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions including MOCA London, 2012; Dundee Contemporary Arts, 2012 and Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, 2010.

www.williammackrell.com



Janne Malmros graduated with a MFA in Sculpture from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2009. She has since participated in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally with two major solo exhibitions in Denmark and London in 2013 and 2014. Her work is featured in several collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection.

www.jannemalmros.com



Katie McGown graduated with a MFA in Sculpture from Glasgow School of Art in 2007 and has participated in group exhibitions in the UK, Europe, USA and Canada. She has been recipient of several awards including Sir Harry Barnes Award and the Glasgow Visual Artist Grants Scheme.

www.katiemcgown.com



Nika Neelova graduated with a MFA in Sculpture from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2010 and has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions. She was Artist in Resident at Merzbarn Foundation, UK and recipient of a number of awards including, The Saatchi Gallery and Channel 4 New Sensations Prize, 2010.

www.nikaneelova.com



Myles Painter graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design in 2008 and has exhibited in group exhibitions in Europe and the UK. Most recently his work featured in the Young British Art II exhibition in Zurich curated by Ryan Gander and at the Whitechapel Open Screening. He was Artist in Resident at A Curriculum, Liverpool, 2010.

www.mylespainter.com



Saad Qureshi graduated with a MFA in Painting from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2010 and has exhibited internationally in group shows most recently at Armsden and Patrick Heide Contemporary Art. He is shortlisted for the Celeste Prize 2012 and was recently represented at the Vienna Art Fair by Gazelli Art House. His first solo exhibition featured at Gazelli, Mayfair, 2012.

www.saadqureshi.com



David Turley graduated with an MA in Art in Public Spaces from RIMT University, Melbourne in 2009 and has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions across Australia and Japan. He has collaborated on a number of performance projects and residencies with artist Korin Gath since 2003.

www.davidturley.com.au

The Gilbert Bayes Charitable Trust was established in 1996 by his son and daughter, Geoffrey and Jean Bayes, who gifted to it a jointly owned collection of their father's works of art.

The principle objective of the trust has been to advance the education of the public in the knowledge understanding and appreciation of the Arts with particular emphasis being placed on sculpture and the works of Gilbert Bayes.

The trustees went a long way to fulfilling their objective by providing funds to the V&A to enable it to refurbish an area of the museum, which was subsequently named the Gilbert Bayes Sculpture Gallery.

The Trustees approached the Royal British Society of Sculptors where, fittingly, Gilbert Bayes served as President between 1939 and 1944, in order to support early career sculptors. As the work of the RBS, through its bursary scheme, so closely matches the objects of the charity, the trustees were pleased to make the last of five annual grants this year and further continue their support for another three years.

Gilbert Bayes Charitable Trustees



The RBS Bursary Awards are supported
by the Gilbert Bayes Charitable Trust

ROYAL
BRITISH
SOCIETY
OF **SCULPTORS**