

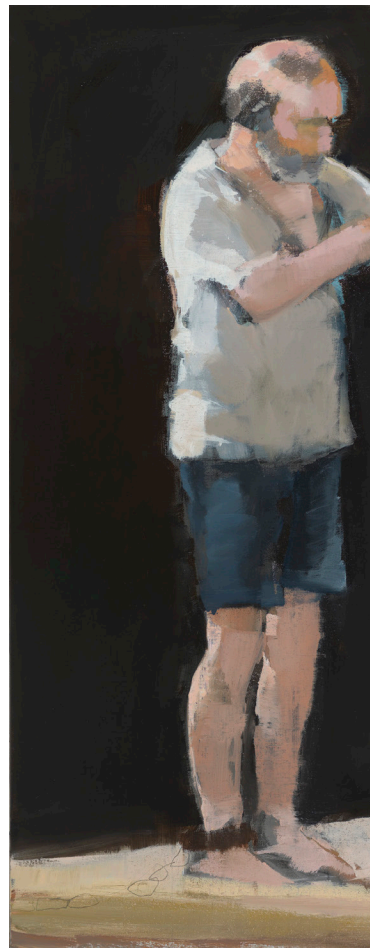
# THE STORY IN ART

Reading the visual, artists as storytellers

Lorenzo Belenguer  
Pippa Blake  
Šárka Darton  
Isobel Egan  
Alice Kettle  
Ron King  
Chitra Merchant  
Chris Orr RA



CANDIDA  
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28 MAY – 02 JULY 2016

Private view Friday

27th May 6-8pm

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## Introduction

We have been sharing stories since the dawn of time. From the fires of our ancient ancestors to the firewalls of the internet we continue to tell our tales. Implanted in us thousands of times, we pass them on, re-invent and create anew. As Umberto Eco said “every story tells a story that has already been told”.

Stories are everywhere and we love them. They are told to us in our childhoods and we remember, they are read by us and we learn, we hear them and we are transported. But stories are not just words, they can be seen and in their visual narratives we get meaning.

‘Every picture tells a story’ is how the saying goes and it is this idea that has got us intrigued to take a closer look at the role of artist as storyteller. From the allegorical to the Shakespearean and on into the realms of concept, we present a touching, moving, domestic as well as humorous look at the stories of us all. Here you will find some of the ultimate human experiences told through the artists’ mediums of paint, ink, pencil and clay.

The Story in Art is a celebration of humankind’s powerful, common bond to tell a story. Are you sitting comfortably? Then let us begin...



# Lorenzo Belenguer

## What's your story?

I was born in Valencia in 1970. After graduating in Economics, it became clear to me that I needed a change of direction. In my quest for this, I took the opportunity to travel. I spent some time in Paris before visiting England and eventually settled in London to live and work. It is the place where my career as an artist has taken shape. Initially, I was involved in mounting and participating in exhibitions in unorthodox spaces. It gave me the freedom to develop my own artistic expression. Today I continue to scour the city to discover objects, stories and histories to transform and reveal them for the meaning I seek.

## Where is the story in your art?

I am a Spanish artist based in London, highly influenced by Minimalism and Arte Povera. I am attracted by those movements because one is able to communicate ideas and stories with very basic materials in a spiritual way. In the digital and internet era, we are bombarded by images and does not give much space to think, to pause and to reflect about own daily existence. It is the story of our life that we seem to miss. My works aim to facilitate a space for meditation and calmness.

## How do you create the story?

Kathy Battista, Director, Sotheby's Institute of Art in New York, could not have expressed my practice in better words: "Lorenzo Belenguer's work straddles the realms of sculpture, painting and drawing. In one area of his practice, he transforms metal objects into sculptures that evolve from the visual rhetoric of Minimalism and double as 'canvases'. Belenguer is like a hunter who trawls the city for found objects, sometimes sourced as locally as the back garden

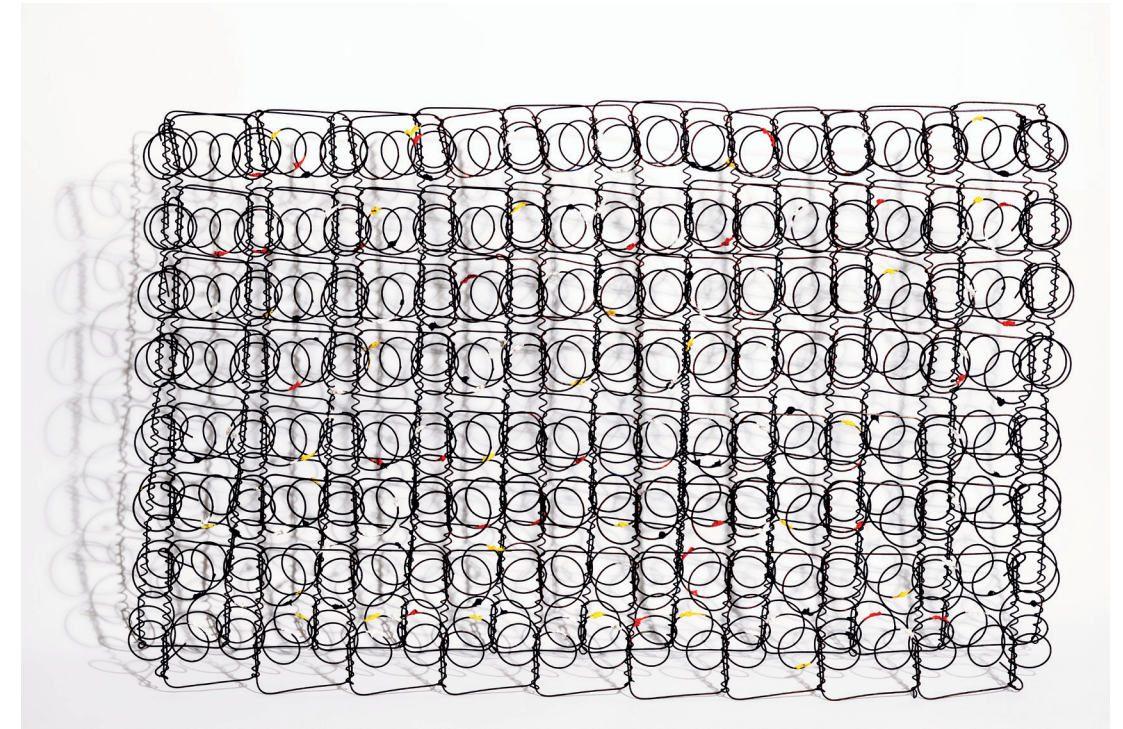
of the studios' church. The work is then dictated by his discoveries, which include steel grids, a mattress reduced to its mesh of springs, and blacksmiths' tools. These he reads as masculine objects. He intervenes with these structures by oxidising the metal elements in salt water or acids and dabbing them with paint of primary colours. This transforms how the objects are read, emphasising the points at which layers of meaning converge.

## What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

Homage to Pollock consists of oil paint in primary colours applied directly to the oxidised structure of a mattress. The metal object becomes a three-dimensional blank canvas on which I can paint. I call it Homage to Pollock because I am fascinated by his story and his work as an artist who made very sculptural paintings with the constant dripping of paint. Like me, we try to blur the boundaries between painting and sculpture and this affinity is something I wished to explore.

## Who has shared your story?

I was one of two artists invited by Leah Capaldi to perform 'Hung' at the Serpentine Gallery and also Tate Liverpool as part of the Keywords project. My work 'No Soul for Sale' was shown at the Tate Modern in May 2010. Testimonies was my most recent large-scale project which I created for the London 2012, in collaboration with the BBC. In 2015, I also exhibited at the 56th Venice Biennale. I have contributed to a cultural debate for The Guardian and my work has been featured in The Independent, Artlyst, Huffington Post, El Mundo, The Indian Express and FAD Arts Magazine among others.



*Homage to Pollock*  
oils on rusted metal  
60 x 100 x 15 cm  
Provenance: The artist

# Pippa Blake

## What's Your Story?

I was born in Portsmouth in 1954 but grew up on the shores of Chichester Harbour in Emsworth. I was sent away to school but my early childhood memories are of messing around in boats, walks on the South Downs and playing with clay in mother's pottery. I moved to London in 1972 to study Fine Art (painting) at Camberwell College of Art. After four years study, and ongoing time in London, I met my late husband, the yachtsman Sir Peter Blake and then together and with our children embarked on sea-bound journeys for over 20 years. I returned home to Emsworth in 2002 to carry on my art practice full time. Today I live and work from my studio here on the Sussex/Hampshire border but still travel frequently to New Zealand and elsewhere visiting family and friends, drawing and observing the world.

## Where is the story in your art?

I began exploring the abstract and abstract expressionism as an art student but upon my eventual return to the UK it was the urban and industrial landscapes at night in which I found inspiration. As time went on, I wished to be saying more about the world. The images of the Middle Eastern war on television began to affect me and move me towards making new work—as well as the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 2005 and the powerful images stemming from terrorism since 9/11. There is something about the soulfulness and loneliness of bombed street scenes, which resonates with something deep inside of me. I am fascinated by the idea of utopia: dystopia, of matters apocalyptic and how humans respond to each other in times of adversity. It is this human story that keeps drawing me back.

## How do you create the story?

The medium used is crucial and I often change a work completely before arriving at what I might be seeking. I work using photographs, either my own or from the internet, as well as making small drawings as studies for larger works or in their own right. I use my phone camera constantly, recording moments glimpsed and particularly glimmers of light in the dark.

## Who has shared your story?

I am currently represented by Artis Gallery in Auckland, New Zealand and have shown work in many group and solo shows both in the UK, New Zealand and Europe. I have recently been artist in residence, over two seasons, at the Minerva Theatre working on two different productions for Chichester Festival Theatre. Pallant House Gallery is also hanging three paintings from the recent production 'Someone Who'll Watch Over Me' by playwright Frank McGuinness in their Garden Gallery simultaneously to this show with Candida Stevens.

## Where might the next story take you?

I have ideas for the next body of work, which will take me away from the constraints of the theatre, stage and figures. This has been an enriching period that I have enjoyed immensely but it's time to move on and explore new ideas coming from my own story and experiences of life.



*'Whither thou goest,  
I will go with thee', 2016  
oil on canvas  
89 x 76 cms  
Provenance: The artist*

Pippa Blake will be showing  
6 other pieces from this series  
in the exhibition.



# Isobel Egan

## What's your story?

I was born in Ireland in 1976. I grew up in Kildare and then moved to Dublin to study art where I subsequently lived for many years. I qualified with a Masters in Design, Ceramics in 2005. I recently returned to live in Kildare with my husband, daughter and our Jack Russell. I work full time as a ceramic artist.

## Where is the story in your art?

I am fascinated with architecture and more specifically the architecture of personal space. I express my story through delicate porcelain building and box like sculptures. I tell a story of the human condition: of emotion, privacy, and openness.

## How do you create your story?

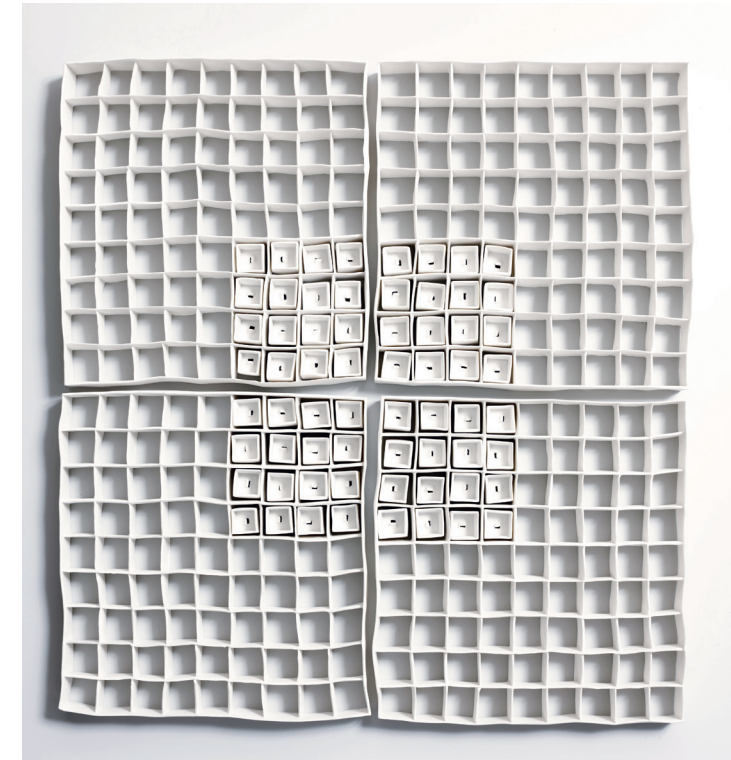
My ideas are drawn from my everyday observations. At its purest my work reflects inspirational buildings and manmade landscapes I have seen, from the Pantheon in Rome to the whitewashed walls of Santorini. The fundamental basis of my work is drawn ultimately from my life journey, encompassing all the relationships, interactions and experiences I have accumulated through my life. My work is very personal; it comments on all parts of my life journey. Our interaction with buildings are an important function of everyday living and each place elicits an emotional reaction from our conscious or sub-conscious. Every building creates this reaction either through its form, function or from the memories it holds for an individual. My work reflects this and humanizes the form and function of the spaces we live in and occupy.

## What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

The pieces entitled Internal Spaces are an evolution of several themes I have individually explored in previous bodies of work. These include; geometric structure, space and intimacy. I wanted to enclose or contain the miniature porcelain boxes within a space or form. The work echoes the use of grids in traditional pre-19th century Japanese architecture. With these works the viewer is invited to look below the surface to glimpse intimate elements that might normally be hidden.

## Where might the next story take you?

I am currently working on two separate themes in parallel. One side of the story explores the ideas of how 'unexpected memories' are created by random events we experience on a daily basis and why some of these remain with us forever in our recollection. The other side of the story is how we construct walls in our consciousness to prevent us from being completely transparent to outside scrutiny. While these serve to protect us they can restrain our progression as individuals. These new stories will take me to the west coast of America early next year.



*Internal Spaces II, 2015*  
Porcelain  
80cm x 80cm  
Provenance: The artist

Isobel Egan will be showing  
3 other pieces from this series in  
the exhibition.

# Ron King

## What's your story?

I was born in Brazil in 1932 and educated there until I was sent to England to my father's school in Sussex at the end of World War 2. Those thirteen formative years there have had a strong influence on my creative output. In 1951 I gained entrance to Chelsea School of Art to study painting where I met my sculptor wife Willow Legge. In 1956 we emigrated to Canada where, as well as painting, I ended up as an art director in a large magazine company and had my first one man show in Toronto. On our return to England, with three children, contracted to Editions Alecto, I took up printmaking but in 1967 left to form Circle Press for the publishing of artist books, which I still produce after nearly 50 years of working with over 100 other artists and poets. Today, semi retired, my wife and I live and work in our house and studios in West Sussex, mainly making sculpture.

## Where is the story in your art?

My childhood with my Brazilian friends, making kites and balloons, masks and folded paper toys and of course the 'Carnaval' has had an unending influence on the way I work, darting to and fro from one project to another! My obsession with the story of Lampião, the famous north country bandit, and his followers is today the theme of another exhibition in East Anglia of the 11 full size figures and carved heads connected to the legend. I am fundamentally a narrative artist which is why, even in sculpture, I aim for sequence and continuity. And I love collaborating with texts by writers and poets from Chaucer and Shakespeare to modern day ones like Roy Fisher, Kenneth White and Richard Price.

## How do you create the story?

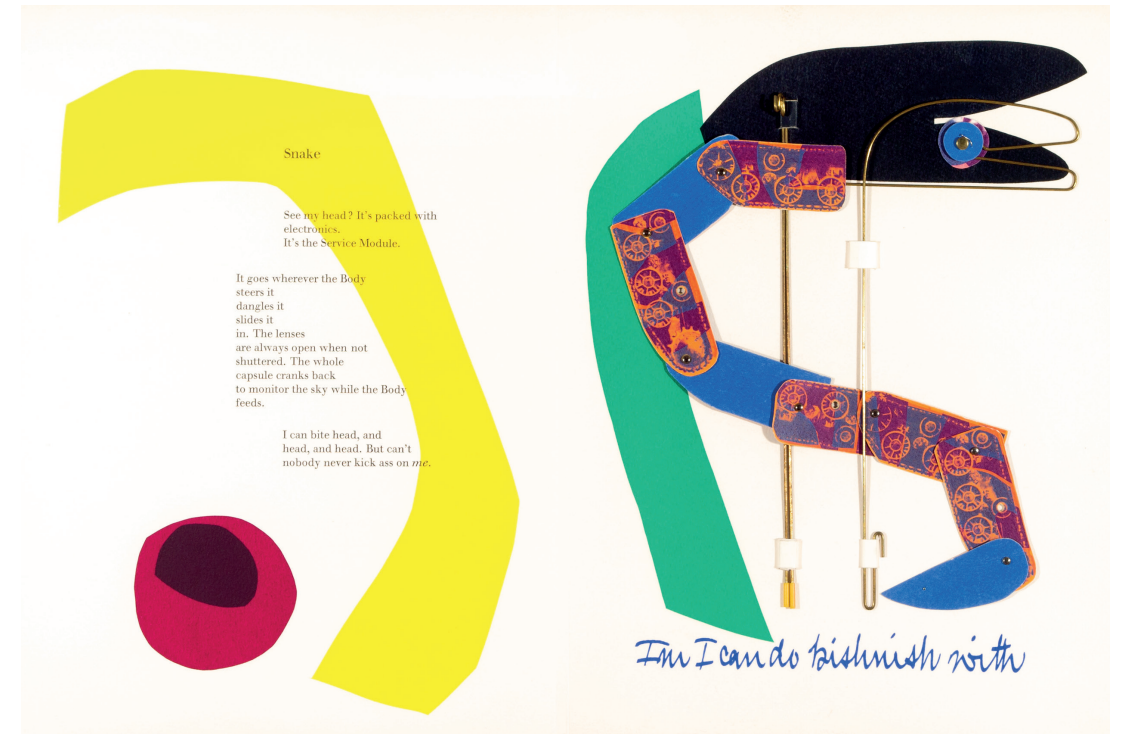
For me, each individual story dictates its own graphic approach, some cool with blind embossing and some colourful with silk screen or litho printing, many initiated with collage, with cutting and folding or for work on a jigsaw and with sheet lead.

## What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

The earliest is the Macbeth, the third tome I produced after Chaucer's Prologue and the Song of Solomon, all three of which I read at school. The Anansi Company came from an early purchase when I was a student of a book on African Folktales, which connected years later with my move to a workshop in the epicentre of the carnival in Notting Hill, where the original stories were central to Caribbean culture. The third is Tabernacle which features in a cabinet the history of my family printing over seven generations.

## Who has shared your story?

Loads of special collection libraries world wide have my books and of those who worked with me. Both the Yale Center for British Art in the U.S.A. and Cardiff University have near full collections of them all. The Gutenberg in Germany has quite a few as have the V&A and the British Library but also I have made unlimited editions which are basically affordable for ordinary readers. My alphabet still sells since it was produced in 1983.



*Spider from Anansi, 1992*

Artist's book

59 x 79 cm

Provenance: The Artist

A range of artist books and prints by Ron King will be on show during the exhibition.

# Šárka Darton

## What's Your Story?

I was born in the Czech Republic, former Czechoslovakia on 1st of April 1972. I felt very privileged to be growing up in the family where both of my parents were academics, but it was my father, a Czech Army Colonel and architect, who brought me to art from a very early age. I am very grateful to him for teaching me to look and see many things in the world in different and profound way. I have a long story of studying art at the SUPS Turnov in the Czech Republic, a scholarship at Dresden School of Art, a brief spell as restorer of paintings and wooden sculptures at the Museum of Eastern Bohemia, before moving to the UK in 1993 to study jewellery and fashion design. I later received a first class degree in fine art from University of Chichester and then graduated with MFA (Masters of Fine Art) from West Dean College (University of Sussex). I live and work near Chichester.

## Where is the story in your art?

It is the story of the relationships between people, places and the buildings we occupy. I am fascinated by how we are affected and in turn how we effect the environment we live in. I draw visual parallels between images of streets and maps of cities with visual representation of our organisms. Medical imagery, together with images of maps, are shown as one and tenderly interlaced to offer an ambiguous diagram for the viewer to decipher and negotiate.

## How do you create the story?

I use many mediums and like to build up several elements to allow me to explore both the permanence of the object and the

transience of the light and shade in our altering landscapes. I seek to tell a metaphoric fairytale and give a suggestion, a hint, of our ever-changing human narratives.

## What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

What is a Gold Thread is a story drawn out of maps, 24-carat gold leaf and numerous sculptures of over-sized steel needles intertwined with delicate gold thread. I invite the reader to be drawn and have their thoughts provoked and weave their own tale.

## Who has shared your story?

I have exhibited widely in the UK and internationally. Several of my pieces are held in private and corporate collections around the world (England, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal and USA). In 2015 my piece *Stitched Identity* was presented at the Florence Biennale in Italy as well as earlier this year in a National Museum of Marrakesh for the International 8th Woman's Art World Event. On both occasions, this installation was granted an international award. The Earl of March also commissioned a mural piece for the Goodwood Estate.

## Where might the next story take you?

I am always keeping my eyes and mind open. For me as an artist and an individual it is fundamental to live in the moment and to be most receptive to internal and external influences. I am due to represent the UK in the installation category at this year's Italian Triennale exhibition in Verona in June. After that I am much looking forward to new doors opening and new stories to unravel.



*What is the gold thread?*, 2016  
Installation  
Antique sewing table, gold leaf  
and gold thread  
Provenance: The Artist

A range of work by Šárka Darton will be on show during the exhibition.



## Chris Orr RA

### What's your story?

I was born in 1943 and brought up in London where I still live. I studied at Ravensbourne, Hornsey and the Royal College of Art. I taught in Art Schools part time in the UK and abroad. I was elected a Royal Academician in 1995 and appointed Professor of Printmaking at the Royal College in 1998. When I retired from that job in 2008 I was made Professor Emeritus. I was elected Treasurer of the Royal Academy in 2014. My practice as an artist has always been my main occupation and the work has strong descriptive elements. I love telling stories.

### Where is the story in your art?

I am a narrative artist who, amongst many other themes, speculates about the myths and lives of people such as John Ruskin, Albrecht Durer, William Blake and Kurt Schwitters, to a fascination with the physical and social nature of the modern city. My pictures are composed of well-mixed metaphors, references, allusions jokes and descriptions. My subjects are varied but behind much of my work is a story from which the work was inspired. They are a celebration of life.

### How do you create the story?

The tradition of popular graphic eccentricity (Heath Robinson, Donald McGill, Steve Bell et al.) is fair enough, I am happy to acknowledge many influences in this area. Everyday observation on the bus. In the crowd and more deliberately drawing en plein air are also very important. Nowadays, I am experienced in many printing techniques, most of my work is either etching or lithography, combining much detail with a clarity of image.

### What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

I am taking my viewers on a Merry Dance, we don't know where it leads but it is an expression of riotous fun with a touch of the sinister, Farming Today takes us into the world of the seemingly bucolic life of the country farmer but look closer, my farm is nurturing an anarchic world of contradictions. Two other pieces from me are a visit to Anne Hathaway's Cottage and a View of the Delft.

### What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

I have had numerous shows in the UK and throughout the world. As a Royal Academician I show 6 pieces a year in the Summer Exhibition. I have had 19 solo shows with the Jill George Gallery, the most recent of which was in February called "Visions of London". My work is in the collection of the V&A, The Science Museum, Tate Britain and the Royal Academy of Arts as well as a large number of private collections. I publish books about my work. Most recently "Chris Orr; the Making of Things" published by the Royal Academy.

### Where might the next story take you?

The beauty of it is I don't know. I have many irons in the fire. I often nurse potential ideas for years. For example, books on the old street cries of London have led me to a fascination with professions and jobs. My gallery of professions so far extends from Miss Whiplash to the Rag and Bone man.



*A Merry Dance*, 2016  
Engraving and silkscreen  
Paper size 68 x 85 cm  
Provenance: The artist

Chris Orr will be showing 3 other pieces in the exhibition. *A Merry Dance* will be shown in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, 2016.

# Alice Kettle

## What's your story?

I was born and grew up in Winchester where I have returned to live and work. I studied Fine Art painting at the University of Reading, at a time which emphasised expressionism, colour and the physicality of painting. Our tutors were Terry Frost, Mali Morris and Albert Irvin, influential artist whose legacy is present in my work in its scale and energy of line. I went onto to study Textile Art at Goldsmiths College, a place pre-eminent in defining textiles as artistic practice through its Head of School Audrey Walker and her predecessor Constance Howard. In placing textiles at the centre, I discovered my creative voice, drawing on the histories and associations with the feminine, the domestic and the marginalised.

## Where is the story in your art?

Textiles as a narrative form define the subject and object of my work. Through its metaphorical and physical presence I draw upon mythologies, folk and contemporary stories, using stitch as a descriptive medium to bring together the imaginary, the real and my own experience. These figural works are vast tableau or composite assemblages where stitch is used to draw and bind pieces together.

## How do you create the story?

Stitch has an improvisatory quality and its repeated gestures are like acts of reparation. The thread is different in thickness and type. It is stitched as though drawing in repetitive rhythmic patterns, which build up over the surface. As the thread is often too thick to fit through the needle, the work is done from

the back, so that as though blind I cannot see what is happening on the front until it is turned over. This adds to the unpredictable quality of the work.

## What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

I am showing the work *Pause II*, an allegory for *A Dance to the Music in Time*, inspired by Nicholas Poussin's painting in the Wallace collection. My work uses the figures of the original work reimagined as my family of dancing figures, who pause from their dance, which is the cycle of the seasons. Two smaller pieces; *Blue Tree* and *Two Blue Trees* are more playful narrative works with symbols and figures placed in a landscape. They are imaginary reinterpretations of Aesop's fables which have become almost nonsensical.

## Who has shared your story?

I have works in the many international collections including The Crafts Council, London, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester and the Museo Internazionale delle Arti Applicate Oggi, Turin, Italy. Commissions include those at the National Library of Australia, the Scottish High Court, Edinburgh, Gloucester Cathedral, Winchester Cathedral, the School of Music and Drama at Manchester University and Winchester Discovery Centre, Lloyds Register.

## Where might the next story take you?

I am working on a solo exhibition for a gallery in Madeira, which includes work of the embroiderers of the island. I am Professor of Textile Art at Manchester School of Art, where I write and teach embroidery and crafts.



*Pause II, An Allegory*, 2009

Embroidery

180 x 380 cm

Provenance: The artist

Alice Kettle will be showing 4 other pieces in the exhibition.



## Chitra Merchant

### What's your story?

I grew up in Southern India spending much of my childhood and later years drawing. Drawing was a solace and an escape from the rigours of formal education. I later completed a psychology degree, after which I took a year off to work in an artist's studio in West Africa. This was the beginning of my journey to becoming an artist. I moved to the UK in the 1990s to study printmaking and illustration. Today I work at Spike Print Studio and thoroughly enjoy the sociable, unpretentious and supportive nature of working in a shared space, where ideas and techniques are bounced around.

### Where is the story in your art?

I follow the story of the roles and expectations that are ascribed to women. These are often domestic tales, under recognised, but as pertinent today as they were thousands of years ago.

### How do you create the story?

I always start with drawings from which I create a stencil. These are then translated into a screenprint, where I enjoy layering colour, tone, line and text into each piece. I also like to turn techniques on their heads to see what treasure or disaster might be revealed.

### What is the story of the pieces you are showing here?

My pieces are from The Bell Jar series. A look at the tales of women and the roles in which they are held. My work uses the bell jar as a metaphor to suggest a state of vacuum holding its contents in a perpetual stasis.

### Who has shared your story?

My work has been seen in several galleries in the South West and last year my prints from the Bell Jar series were shown as part of the Royal Academy Summer exhibition.

### Where might the next story take you?

I intend to carry on this exploration of women's identities, roles and stories through the medium of printmaking and drawing.



*Bell Jar 8, 2013*  
Silkscreen print  
paper size 14 by 10 cms  
Edition of 50  
Provenance: The artist

Chitra Merchant has a large collection of work available in the gallery.



**Contributors:**

Curated by Candida Stevens

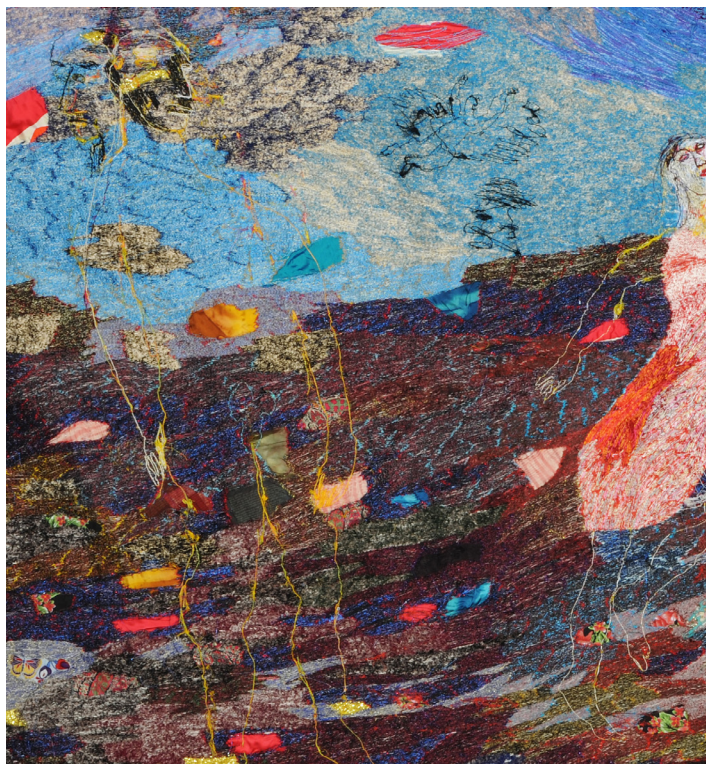
Introduction by Kerry Betsworth

Artist's stories by Kerry Betsworth and Silvia Gonzato

Design by Praline

Published by Candida Stevens Fine Art

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