

The background features a stylized tree with dark, silhouetted branches and leaves. The tree's trunk and branches are rendered in a dark brown color, contrasting with a warm, golden-yellow background. In the lower center, a dark silhouette of a rabbit is shown from the chest up, facing right. The rabbit has long, upright ears and a small circular detail on its face. The overall composition is framed by the tree's branches, creating a sense of being under a tree.

Surrey Artist of the Year 2021

Celebrating the wealth of creative talent in Surrey

Surrey Artist of the Year 2021

25 September - 6 November 2021

**New Ashgate Gallery Trust Ltd
Waggon Yard
Farnham
Surrey GU9 7PS
newashgate.org.uk
Registered charity no. 274326**

The competition is organised by New Ashgate Gallery in partnership with the Surrey Open Studios.

It is supported by the Patricia Baines Trust and Contemporary Art Fairs. The Surrey Life magazine, which has a monthly section dedicated to the local art scene, is the official media partner of the competition.

Editor: Joanne Argenti

Cover: Dawn Thornhill, *Woodland Hare*. Photo: Atelier Sturgess

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Sophie Artemis

Monique Birley

Sarah Cox

Penny Fleet

Keira Graham

Penny Green

Hilary Jones

Yeside Linney

Alison Orchard

Stephen Pitchforth

Sue Ransley

Louise Rowe

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Jean Tolkovsky

Pippa Ward – The Winner of the Surrey Artists of the Year 2019

Celebrating the wealth of talent in the region

The Surrey Artist of the Year competition celebrates its 12th anniversary in 2021. It has become an established and much anticipated event in the Surrey arts calendar. It shapes the artists' careers and involves the community in arts as the "curators" of the project, enabling all of us to champion the best contemporary art and craft in Surrey.

Since the beginning, we have promoted 148 artists and makers as voted by the public during the Surrey Artists Open Studios and profiled assemblage, mosaics, ceramics, collage, stained glass, photography, jewellery, painting, printmaking, textiles, and sculpture. We have also awarded 11 funded solo exhibitions. We are proud of our series of collectable catalogues (we hope that you are enjoying this copy), a programme of professional development events, a complementary stand at the busy Contemporary Art Fair and the great editorial coverage in the Surrey Life magazine.

The Surrey Artist of the Year competition is an important part of our mission as a charity. The New Ashgate Gallery Trust is dedicated to promoting and championing the best contemporary art and craft, and to providing an unparalleled resource in Farnham, Surrey and beyond. We raise aspirations and inspire excellence. The exhibition enables us to support and promote emerging and established artists and makers. It coincides with Farnham's Craft Month in October and a busy programme of community workshops and events open to all.

We would like to thank our partners: the Surrey Artists Open Studios, Contemporary Art Fairs and the Surrey Life magazine. We also thank the Patricia Baines Trust – their generous support has made this project flourish year after year.

We hope that you enjoy the exhibition and voting for your favourite artist.

Dr Outi Remes
Gallery Director, New Ashgate Gallery Trust

Surrey Artists Open Studios

Commissioned by Surrey Arts, Surrey Artists Open Studios is a county-wide membership scheme, offering the public direct access to artists and makers during an annual event in June, as well as offering artists a range of other benefits including specialist training and professional development.

SAOS has over 380 members, 286 of whom participated in Summer Open Studios this year, with over 15,000 visitors and over £360,000+ sales during the 16 days in June.

The opportunity to meet and talk to artists directly, to see their working environment and experience directly how their work is made, or what inspires them, is incredibly rewarding for both the visitor and artist.

Our artists have worked hard to offer a range of different experiences through demonstrations and workshops. Many studios are in artists' homes, gardens, sheds as well as workshops and other venues, this helps support a wide range of practicing artists at different stages of their career.

In 2009, the Surrey Artist of the Year competition was set up in partnership with the New Ashgate Gallery. The competition encourages the public to vote for their favourite artist during their visits to open studios, with the most popular receiving an invitation to exhibit work at the gallery. This helps to raise the profile of Surrey based artists as well as providing them with professional development and support to build an audience for their work. Our partnership with the New Ashgate Gallery provides a highly valued opportunity for artists to work with a contemporary art and craft gallery to develop their practice and promote their work.

Caitlin Heffernan

SAOY Programme Manager, Surrey Artists Open Studios



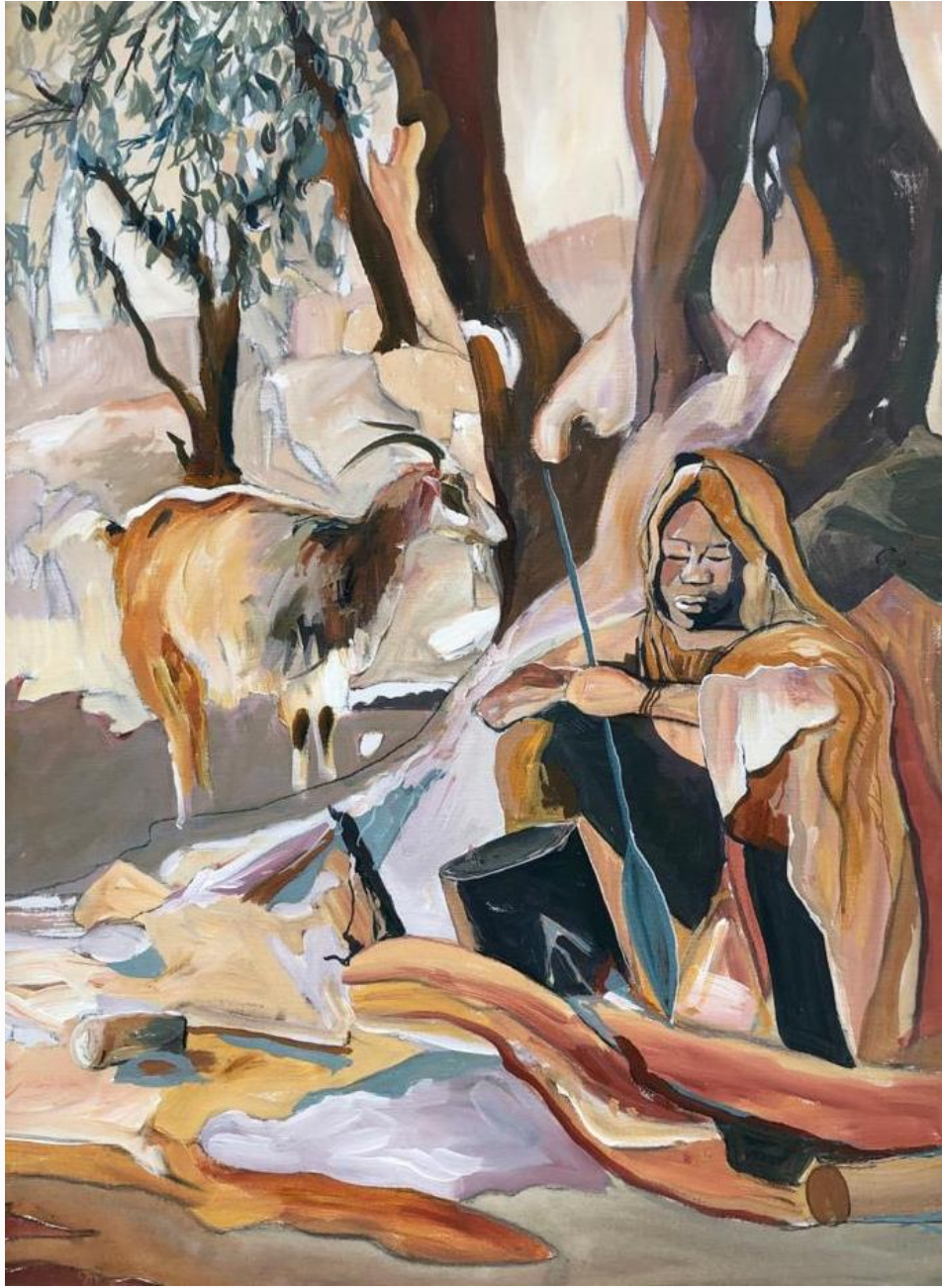
Sophie Artemis

Sophie is a maker of beguiling, sensual tunnel books and seductive scenography about love, using peep holes, pop-ups, tantalizing dioramas, and theatrical vistas to draw the viewer deeper into the story. She is most interested in what is beneath the surface and her work uses this visual journeying into the page, hiding and revealing as the work is handled, viewed, and explored.

During lockdown, Sophie made the *Thimble Theatre* tunnel books, which focus on poison and healing in nature through Autumn, Spring and Summer, and the beauty of flowers, toadstools, and acorns. Tiny, inked and watercolour books slip into cases, their viewing windows revealing the start of each journey into the heart of the matter. Artemis also makes one-off painted pieces. Her *Ladybird* series was inspired by nature identification charts and the talismanic nature of ladybirds, whose connection to good luck and love seemed relevant during Covid.

Sophie's studio is in West Surrey and her work is held in the Tate and V&A library collections. In association with Watts Gallery, she is Artist in Residence at a women's prison in Surrey.

Image: *12 Ladybirds on Linen*, 2021, Oil on linen, 33 x 43cm. Photo: Sophie Artemis.



Monique Birley

As an introverted child, Monique was always tucked away drawing. Her grandfather, well-known South African artist Otto Klar, saw potential in the big bold drawings coming from this tiny, shy girl and encouraged her to keep drawing every day. Monique studied fine art at the Technicon Pretoria - specialising in silk screening, etching, life drawing, jewellery, and ceramics. Monique went on to pursue a career as a goldsmith, completing an apprenticeship at Vienna Jewellers. She has been self-employed since, taking a break to raise children, all of whom are artistic. She started painting after moving to England, inspired by the winter light and how to capture this in paint - first in watercolour, then acrylics.

Monique's love of painting started as a love of the countryside, big skies, colour, and urban and rural shapes. She recalls that she was intrigued by nature and confused by people. After the fine controlled and detailed work as a goldsmith, Monique relished in the loose freedom of expression that paint offered. *I try to capture a moment or a feeling, rather than an identical likeness. The more I paint, the more I want to paint.*

Image: *The Goat Herder*, 2018, acrylic on canvas board, 66.5 x 87cm. Photo: Jessica Birley.



Sarah Cox

Sarah loves living in the Surrey Hills and much of her work is inspired by walking in the countryside where she lives. Her favourite landscapes include the meadowland beneath the Chancies, Abinger Roughts, Abinger Common, Holmbury St Mary and the Merrow Downs. Her paintings reflect the ever-changing colours and textures of the seasons. Sarah often returns to walking sections of the North Downs Way (the ancient pilgrimage route from Winchester to Canterbury Cathedral) and she often wonders who has walked in those footsteps before her. For her, happiness is being outdoors walking in nature, listening to bird song, spotting native wildflowers, and breathing in the colours.

Sarah's paintings are multi-layered, built up and scraped back over time. Base layers are often revealed in part, and this adds both depth and textural variety to her outcomes. Sarah likes to contrast elements of tight, structured paintwork with loose, atmospheric washes and gestural marks. Colour and texture are both dominant elements her paintings. Expect to see a mixture of sweeping brush strokes, palette knife work, scratched back surfaces and washy pools of paint. Sarah paints in acrylic but likes to incorporate other media such as spray paint, oil bar drawing and ink work into the mix. Her paintings aim to capture the energy and essence of a place.

Image: *After the Rain, When The Colours Sing*, 2021, mixed media. Photo: Sarah Cox.



Penny Fleet

Penny studied Textile Design at Brighton Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art and has worked as a designer, a freelancer, and a part-time teacher. She creates colourful, decorative mixed media paintings and collages inspired by her love of nature and her surroundings.

Penny's process is creative and experimental. Working from a still life, her sketchbooks, or photographs, she quickly and freely applies acrylic paints and inks to a wood, canvas or paper surface using large brushes, spatulas, sticks and spray paints to create a decorative and colourful background. She then draws loosely with inks or pastels before applying more paint, hand-decorated collage paper, fabric, thread, stitching, text from old books or other interesting finds to add layers of colour, pattern, texture, and detail. Her inspiration comes from many sources but mainly from being outdoors in the fresh air – the uplifting colour contrasts and harmonies in the flowers, hedgerows and foliage, the birds in her garden and the big open fields, skies, and landscapes in the countryside around her home where she walks throughout the year. Penny's aim is to capture the freshness, joy, beauty, and simplicity of nature in all its seasonal glory.

Penny runs small workshops from her peaceful, rural garage studio on the Surrey Hampshire borders.

Image: *Sunflowers and Dahlias*, 2020, mixed media acrylic, ink, collage on wooden board, 70 x 70cm. Photo: Penny Fleet



Keira Graham

Keira is a textile artist and designer based in Tadworth, Surrey. She studied Textile Design at Nottingham Trent University, specialising in embroidery. Always fascinated by the construction of fabric, Keira has spent many years exploring different techniques of manipulating, distressing, and experimenting with different fabrics and textures to create original artworks.

Keira has developed a style of artwork that reflects the richness and delicate nature of the most luxurious of fabrics, silk. Each piece of work is unique and what may initially appear as a landscape or tempestuous seascape from a distance, takes on an entirely different visual experience when seen close-up.

Image: *Appledore*, 2020, pure silk under UV protective art glass, 48.5 x 36cm (framed). Photo: Jonathan Graham.



Penny Green

Penny's ceramic figures create a world of masquerades which blend emblems and icons across history in a visual and symbolic journey that reflects contemporary issues. There are various thematic strands to her work. The piece shown here is based on the marginal forest figures of *Wildmen* and *Wildwomen* who roamed hinterlands and forests and are seen in medieval manuscripts, woodcuts, and sculptures. She sees their role as guardians of nature.

Penny's work is hand-built involving a great diversity of techniques. Press moulds are sometimes used for the forms, and she has many small press moulds which she uses for embellishments and additions. She paints with oxides and stains and makes her own glazes, enjoying stretching the glaze materials to their limits by overloading some. She studied Theatre Design at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. Later she became a fashion designer selling clothes to famous shops in London and America. After this intensive time, she started to make pottery and later took the Ceramics Diploma course at the City Lit in London. Penny works from a studio in Dorking.

Image: *Watching*, 2020, glazed earthenware ceramic, 34 x 18 x 12cm. Photo: Penny Green.



Hilary Jones

Hilary returned to her love of painting in retirement and was surprised when a fellow adult education student wanted to buy her first painting. She joined Molesey Art Society and Oxshott Art and Crafts Society. Hilary uses a variety of media, but her favourite is always the one she is working with at the time. She also loves to push the boundaries by experimenting and the work seen here, *Floral Frenzy*, is a good example of this. Here Hilary used yupo paper and alcohol inks for the flowers, which were cut out and added to the board. The surrounding leaves were sculpted with acrylic paste and covered with gold leaf. Hilary then painted the leaf veins and the surrounding area with matt gold acrylic. She added broken glass at the centre of each flower for sparkle and the whole painting was then covered with resin.

Hilary also works in pastels, oils and watercolour and chooses the media to suit her subject. She likes to paint animals, both domestic and wild. She finds that abstracts are fun to paint using different materials, whilst seascapes are calming. With the painting finished, Hilary makes her own frames and prides herself that the back of the painting is as neat as the front. She has progressed from painting in the kitchen to building her own small studio in the garden.

Image: *Floral Frenzy*, mixed media, 60 x 49.5cm. Photo: Hilary Jones



Yeside Linney

Nigerian born artist, Yeside Linney works in Hindhead. While predominantly a landscape painter, her work tends toward the abstract. Yeside draws much of her inspiration from the natural environment where she walks her dog, but also from literature and her travels. She works mainly from found objects or photographs as well as memory. These are starting points; the artwork frequently develops a life of its own.

The emotional impact of nature and the power of colour to impart that, are central to her practice. Landscapes and abstracts are full of shape, texture and energy: the key elements she captures in her work. Yeside works intuitively to begin with, often on several pieces at the same time, which allows her to ascertain what is working and use this to develop individual pieces. Acrylics and inks are her favourite media but this can vary depending on the style of each work. She also loves playing with the alchemy of different materials such as salt and ash. The application depends on her mood, and this naturally affects the diversity of mark making and the use of light. Yeside applies paint and mediums with brushes, knives, credit cards, rags or simply her fingers. Paint is flicked, spattered and poured on in a very intuitive process. When the balance and harmony feel 'right' then it is finished.

Image: *When Evening Falls*, 2021, acrylic and mixed media, 59.5 x 42cm. Photo: Derek Linney.



Alison Orchard

The multi-layered paintings of Alison Orchard are a personal response to her love of life. Her story begins with a passion for drawing or painting in the landscape; responding to the light, colours and mood of a specific place. Back in the studio, working directly against the wall, she becomes immersed in the physical process, enjoying the sensory pleasure of using charcoal or paint, making bold gestural marks, adding delicate glazes, scraping back or building texture. Her recent, more intuitive, abstract paintings reflect a maturing ability and confidence. This is partially due to her willingness to challenge herself, working with oils, acrylic or encaustic wax, playfully combining collaged elements, whilst incorporating the instinctive drawn line and marks, echoed in her sketchbook drawings. Alison trained at Epsom School of Art & Design and Harrow College, University of Westminster and initially worked at The Daily Telegraph as a designer and illustrator before launching her fine art career. She works from her studio in Grayshott.

I like nothing better than the freedom of painting, pairing a dusty soft charcoal line against a glossy brushstroke, perhaps adding a pop of fluorescent colour. I enjoy capturing movement and a play of light, creating paintings that grab and engage you on an emotional level, paintings that take you straight back to the vitality of being in the landscape, that feeling of being held up by the buffeting wind.

Image: *Fields of Gold*, 2021, Mixed media on canvas, 60 x 97cm (canvas).



Stephen Pitchforth

Stephen's paintings are abstracts in watercolour and pastel. The abstract mosaics comprise up to ten thousand painted marks, identical in size but enormously varied in colour. They required strict periods of up to twenty hours in the studio, spread over three days, painting in total silence. The result is a fascinating, intricate image that is simultaneously a record of its own creation.

The column paintings explore the energy of repeated colour sequences, or *Colour Rhythms*, and often reflect the overtones of impermanence in the colours of autumn, or in the oxidisation of metal.

Steven lived in Cranleigh for nearly 40 years and painted at his studio. Very sadly he recently passed away, but his work will provide a lasting memory of his talent and his dedication to his art.

Image: *Impermanence 14*, 2021, watercolour, 71.5 x 57cm.



Sue Ransley

Sue is based near Petworth and paints pictures of everyday folk, focusing on the real, not the ideal. All her work is observational. Taking a lighter look at life, she aims to capture our warmth and humanity, capturing that recognisable behaviour, or moment, that tells a familiar story. Stripped back to the essential information – Sue's work is about the essence of the person or moment, not the detail.

Most of Sue's work is in oil or acrylics, and she is an unashamed colourist. Often working on a coloured ground, and drawing with paint, usually French Ultramarine, she aims to capture the narrative as instinctively as possible. Sue still gets a thrill working on the modelling, when suddenly her people 'pop' off the canvas in three dimensions. She also loves seeing people's reaction to her work - especially if they are chuckling. Sue counts a painting a success if people see something familiar, or something of themselves, in her work.

Image: *Short Pitch*, 2021, oil on canvas, 40 x 60cm. Photo: Sue Ransley.



Louise Rowe

Louise works in freestyle water colour, inks, and acrylics to bring realistic and imagined effects to her paintings. She has a passion for colour as well as modern interpretations of still life objects. She likes to use everyday subjects such as discarded shoes, boots and picked vegetables and turn them into larger-than-life representations of themselves. Strong, colour drenched images have distinct surreal qualities yet link to realism and nature.

Louise often uses gold leaf as a background to intimate pen and ink drawings of wildlife and local buildings. She is well known for her original thumbprint paintings – these are made up of several small images that connect to each other in subject and space to form one larger picture. Originally trained to teach art, Louise has worked in further education as a teacher and senior manager. More recently, for two consecutive years her paintings were selected for the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London. Her studio in Woking.

Image: *Red*, 2021, ink and watercolour, 73 x 53cm. Photo: Louise Rowe



Jo Shepherd

Jo is a painter working in oil on canvas and board in her studio in Haslemere.

Having been primarily a portrait painter for many years, in August 2020, she set herself the challenge of painting one small painting a day alongside her portrait commissions. Having always loved birds, *A Bird a Day* was an obvious choice and gave her the new challenge of painting on a smaller scale. This new choice of subject has blossomed into a passion and Jo's birds have been flying off around the world to new homes ever since.

Jo's work has been exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, The Columbia Threadneedle Exhibition at the Mall Galleries as well as in many solo and group exhibitions. She has also been featured on BBC South Today News with her Portrait exhibition – *Face to Face* which celebrated the lives of people with profound and multiple disabilities.

Image: *Bobby Robin*, 2021, oil on board, 18 x 18cm. Photo Jo Shepherd.



Jessica Stroud

Jessica Stroud is a stained-glass artist who works from her garden studio in Haslemere. She has a passion for the transmitted light and colours of mouth blown glass and uses it when creating her own work. The natural world, especially her garden and the wildlife that visits, and our rich heritage of stained-glass windows, are an enduring inspiration.

Jessica uses traditional techniques to make her panels, the origins of which go back as early as the 7th Century. She restores stained glass windows as part of her practice; works include the renovation of Arthur Conan-Doyle's windows at Undershaw and the restoration of the Victorian windows in Haslemere Museum. Jessica is a member of the British Society of Master Glass Painters.

Image: *Little Birds*, 2019, stained glass, 45 x 45cm. Photo: Jessica Stroud.



Dawn Thornhill

Dawn is an Esher based artist. Since childhood, she has been fascinated by the simplicity and endless potential of paper. She combines her love of paper and her passion for wildlife conservation by sketching, hand-cutting, layering, then lighting, to create three-dimensional structures that encapsulate the beauty and fragility of the natural world.

It will always be magical to her to capture a memory or create a story by designing and adapting as she cuts, and to then see the delicate shadows creating contrast on the layers when the lights turn on.

Image: *In the Hive*, 2021, hand-cut watercolour paper and mount board lit by LED's, 24 x 18 x 7.5cm (framed). Photo: Atelier Sturgess.



Jean Tolkovsky

Jean trained at West Surrey College of Art and Design (now UCA Farnham) where she graduated with a BA honours degree in 3D Design/Ceramics.

She describes her current figurative work as thought-provoking narratives in clay. Her influences include fairy tales, novels, observations, and childhood memories. Wheeled animals and doll-like figures evoke a sense of familiarity and nostalgia and carry loose narratives which invite interpretation. More recently she has been focussing on a series of busts.

Jean works from her studio in Guildford. All her work is individually hand built using a stoneware clay, decorated with underglazes and a dry, matt glaze which is reminiscent of worn fabric. Her work is often embellished with nichrome wire and tacs. After the second firing, gold leaf is applied to some of her pieces.

Image: *Marsh Girl, Flowers*, 2021, 35 x 19 x 11cm, stoneware clay, underglazes, nichrome wire and gold leaf embellishment. Photo: Jean Tolkovsky.



Pippa Ward: The Surrey Artist of the Year 2019

We are delighted to welcome Pippa Ward, our 2019 winner, for her simultaneous solo exhibition, presenting a new body of artwork.

Pippa's work focuses on the environment, with an interest in our use and relationship with single use, found plastics, bags, bottle tops and beach plastic. She looks at man's inevitable impact on nature by using these materials. Pippa works with these ubiquitous and disposable materials and objects that do untold damage to our environment if discarded and used carelessly. In the words of philosopher Roland Barthes, the essence of an object has something to do with the way it turns into trash, possibly meaning that once an object has been discarded, and thus absolved of its function, its form becomes brightly visible out of its original place and freed from its status as a commodity. Once an object is no longer treated in terms of its use/value, the 'thingness' and 'unwantedness' of an item intensifies. This is when Pippa becomes interested in it.

Pippa acquires plastic by visiting beaches regularly, particularly following a storm. The processes that follow involve gathering, manipulating, and arranging materials using mindful taxonomy and grouping.

Image: *Torrent of Abuse*, community sculpture with children. Photo: Pippa Ward.