



Behjat Omer Abdulla's work has been exhibited widely in the UK and in Germany, Iran, Portugal, Australia, Norway and Iraq. Recently Abdulla was awarded the prize for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Fine Art when he graduated with first class honours from Staffordshire University. For Abdulla, art is a way to raise questions about what we are and how we place ourselves in the world. It is a way to be in touch with our responses to life and a way of speaking that allows viewers to translate, decode and change it to their own languages.

Cleo Jay is a multidisciplinary artist and theatre designer whose work is broadly inspired by the variety of human experiences, cultures and faiths, and she strives to create intimate, personal pieces in a world where identities are increasingly globalised. Another recurrent aspect of her work is the use of text, both written and spoken, as a basis for expression and communication. She has participated in various art and theatre festivals around the UK and Europe, exhibiting both solo works and collaborations. She is currently completing a PhD at SOAS, University of London, focusing on the use of theatre as a social and political tool in North Africa.

Mirela Bistran was born in Botosani, Romania. Having survived cancer and taken a break from her work, Mirela has now returned to her art, expressing her obvious lust for life in bursts of colour. Since moving to England in 2008 she has sought to refine the visual and conceptual vocabulary that emerges from the richness of different techniques. Mirela's work can be found in public and private art collections both in United Kingdom and abroad. She currently lives and works in Nottingham.

Curator of the exhibition, **Dr Anna Drummond** is a Nottingham art historian and curator whose museum career has included roles at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia and the Liverpool Biennial. She recently received her PhD from the University of Melbourne, Australia, for a study of the representation of marriage in Italian Renaissance art. In 2006 she was awarded a series of scholarships to fund a year of intensive research in Italy, the results of which she has presented at conferences around the world. Anna contributes to journals, publications and exhibition catalogues, including most recently writing the exhibition guide for *Ian Breakwell: The Elusive State of Happiness* at QUAD Derby. In September Anna will begin lecturing in Florentine Renaissance Art at the University of Nottingham.

Allan Njanji is a Zimbabwean who is passionate about all forms of the creative spectrum from fine art, sculpture and writing to film making. Currently studying television and film production and media studies, his work includes short films, music videos and documentaries.

Emmanuel Changunda is a stone sculptor from Zimbabwe who learnt to sculpt under the tutelage of the renowned Amos Supuni. His work is very much based on traditional forms, structures and techniques of Zimbabwe's Shona-speaking people. The beliefs and ancestral story telling passed down through this group inform the sensual shapes of his sculpture.

Naa Ahinee Mensah is an artist and philanthropist based in Nottingham. She works in a wide variety of media, including traditional African crafts such as bead making and batik on fabric. Since graduating from Central St Martin's School of Art and Design, Naa Ahinee Mensah has exhibited in museums and galleries across Britain, and in 2004 was selected for Channel 5's 'Big Art Challenge'. Ahinee has created a charity, the Tse Ataa Mensah Foundation, to raise funds for children's education in Ghana.

Obediar Madziva was born in Zimbabwe and has been sculpting in metal for nearly fifteen years. He uses recycled materials to create striking animal sculptures that are often life size. His work has been exhibited in Zimbabwe and Botswana and is held in numerous collections in Germany and the United Kingdom.

Sara Lerota grew up living and breathing the cross-cultural spirit of this exhibition in Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mostar is a city of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity with a complicated history in which different groups have long coexisted and the links between the city's various communities are symbolised by its iconic and historic bridge. Sara says 'Growing-up in this kind of diverse society made me a person open to international, multicultural communication and cooperation.' Sara works in pencil, pastel and acrylics to create works that aim to 'initiate a thinking process, which makes the viewer an active participant'. A 2009 winner of an Art On Call award, Sara represented her country in world art project 'Plus You' in London, where she has exhibited in a number of galleries.

Mina Rahimi moved to Nottingham from Iran. The colours and shapes of her work mesmerise the viewer, threatening to resolve into forms but remaining elusively abstract. Her work is inspired by her life experiences and her interaction with different cultures. She has recently begun to create painstaking and astonishingly lifelike portraits and intends to pursue this hyper-realistic direction.