

Emma Lloyd speech, Waterside Open 2012

Firstly I would like to say thank you to the judges, organisers and the sponsors of this competition and exhibition. Such a brilliant event would not happen without the time, dedication and support of everyone involved.

I must say it is an honour to be invited to speak here tonight as the winner of 'Best in Trafford' at the Waterside Open 2010. It is lovely to be back for the event this year and to see that the competition is yet again well supported by the community, both here and beyond.

It is a great opportunity for artists to showcase a select portion of their practice and discover what others are creating.

It is also an inclusive opportunity, inviting the whole community to enter work for consideration. I believe this is an important step to take. Art is everywhere, manifesting itself in various different forms.

Within these walls this is reflected by an exciting, diverse selection of the creative 'now'. For some, a platform such as this develops the confidence needed to take a creative journey further.

Being involved in the nurturing of young talent in art education has enabled me to understand the importance of encouragement. Gaining exposure and further insight in to art through exhibiting can help to drive, focus ambitions and lead to the achievement of one's goals. Anything that boosts artists and their careers in such a manner deserves to be applauded!

Speaking from my own experiences, the competition opened up more of what was happening in this area. I quickly found out about Creative Industries Trafford and the support that is provided through workshops, talks and group critique sessions.

There is an extended community, connected through creative process and thought. Within this you can discover so many interesting points of reference and a diverse world view. Art functions as a catalyst: bringing people together and forming new modes of connection. The experience of art reveals itself in such events to be equally as important as the practice of it.

For the past nine years or so, my practice has been centred largely on paper (especially the leaves bound together in books). Initially I explored the intricate patterns within plant structures. The delicate cut paper echoed the ephemeral nature of my subject matter, the use of a scalpel relating with the concept of uncovering and looking inside - a surgical process.

I am drawn to the enticing, tactile quality of layered paper. One thing that has always intrigued me is how the viewer perceives the removal of the

opportunity to engage with it. We are accustomed to being able to hold books and leaf through their pages.

My practice stems from a fascination with these 'relics'. In a sense, I wish to re-animate the contents thus displaying what they signify whether individually or collectively.

Through the use of specific texts, I explore various systems of knowledge by translating philosophical concepts into aesthetic visual experiences. Images are imposed upon the text, slicing through, obliterating what is written.

It is for one of these pieces that I received my award.

Winning 'Best in Trafford' for my sculpture *Lowson's Textbook Erosion* was a complete surprise! I remember discovering I had won the prize when I was sitting at the back of this auditorium in towering heels! Imagine the fear that struck as soon as I realized I had to make my way down to the front (preferably without tumbling).

The prize was a wonderful gift, not only because of the recognition I was receiving for what I do, but because it helped to equip me with the tools I required in order for my next project to commence.

In many respects a prize can be considered as something that contributes to the creativity; one could even consider that they mutually sustain. It has the ability to open up opportunities within one's practice making experimental pursuits (sometimes in other media) more possible, resulting in interesting extensions of an artist's oeuvre.

The prize can in part be credited with encouraging me to further my artistic ambitions in national and international arenas. I have also been fortunate to experience further success and interest in my practice; different pieces of my work travelling from Manchester to Chichester, London, Kendal and Los Angeles. Such experiences are thrilling indeed, but I believe it equally important to be part of what is happening where you are too.

Art is about putting forward ideas, memories and musings. It presents another way of looking at life and comprehending it. Wherever that may be, there is merit in its use. It is a much needed part of our communication and something that I and many like me will continue to be a part of.

Thank you.

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