



TELLING IN FULL

part of the Lancaster Words Festival 2017



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TELLING IN FULL

part of the Lancaster Words Festival, July 6th-8th 2017

Jessica Elleray and Elinor Moore



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The exhibition was funded by Lancaster University and by Arts Council England, which made the production of a catalogue possible, as well as high-quality posters and promotional material.

We have been lucky to work with such fantastic people: particularly Tajinder Hayer and John Schad on the Lancaster Words Festival committee, and Harriet Hill-Payne at the Peter Scott Gallery, who have provided invaluable support throughout the process. In addition to being a pleasure to work with, they have also given us an extremely valuable insight into the running of a large festival and a professional gallery. We will take this experience with us into whatever future endeavours we embark on.

We would like to thank Majestic Wine at Clitheroe for their generosity in sponsoring the exhibition's launch event.

Lastly, we would like to thank the incredible artists whose work is included in the show. For embracing the brief and contributing to a dynamic, multi-disciplinary show.



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English Literature
and Creative Writing





CONTENTS

Preface	1	The Sound Book Project	21
Meet the Curators	3	Emel Thomson	22
Drawing Out	4	In the Act	24
John Cockshaw	5	Karen Beattie	25
Carolyn Corfield	6	Julia Cunningham	26
Rovert Ladislas Derr	7	Nick Gear	27
Louisa Ellen Grace	8	Themes	28
Jacqueline F. Kerr	9	Rachael de la Mare	29
Robin Oliver	10	Imogen Galloway	30
Madison Piercy	11	Marion Kuit	31
Sarah Theobald	12	Henry Mulhall	32
Writer's Medium	14	Colin Reynolds	33
Brighid Black	15	Coming Alongside	34
Sharon Brown	16	Heather Boxall	35
Liz Collini	17	Emily Knox	36
Helen Frank	18	Heather Marlow-Stephenson	37
Pat Hodson	19	Sara Rees	38
Madeleine Ismael	20	Susan Wright	39
		Bibliography	40

PREFACE

Texts leave spaces; as do all mediums, and each leave their own type of space. The desire to see what is in the shadows between the lines is answerable, in part, through a creative translation; and sparks the desire to see how a different medium, in the hands of a different author, can illuminate the content of a text.

However directly, a conversion into a new medium forces a different perspective onto the original, by dint of its communicative properties. If text evokes the subject in the mind, with all the flexibility that comes with unobstructed imagination, a tangible artefact appeals directly to the senses as well as the intellect. Understanding of the subject is channelled in different ways, leading to fresh discoveries.

This exhibition is a collection of such creative translations; of texts rendered in paint, digital media, sculptural media and performance. Artists discuss texts through the senses, solidifying the resonant concepts in their chosen texts into tangible art objects.

Responding to a dynamic range of texts, the artists here have chosen to represent subjects that, in some cases, spring directly from descriptions in the text, whilst others have been inspired by thematic undercurrents. Untold fragments of narrative are excavated, or inventions woven into the existing narrative. Some works engage literally with the text, absorbing it as part of their fabric and expressing its concept through its form, whilst others engage obliquely to transmit the broader strokes of the text's message. In some, elements of the text are re-situated into the contemporary world.

Ekphrasis, from the Greek meaning 'telling in full', is generally defined as an expansive, textual reiteration of a static, physical artwork. Historically it has been the preserve of the writer: Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', Ruskin's appraisal of Turner's 'Slave Ship' and Ted Hughes' 'Six Young Men' help to establish this pedigree. However, it can be more widely applied to the translation of a work in one creative medium into another; and the illuminative capacity of the Fine Arts can provide an equally meaningful translation of literature.

The translations exhibited vary greatly in approach; to chart this, the exhibition is curated into 'zones', each representing a broad approach within the ekphrastic collaboration between literature and the Fine Arts.

In each of these zones, subtle differences in the angle of ekphrastic response reflect the shifting dynamics of the relationship between the source text and the responding artwork.

This relationship is fluid, and each artwork's response subtle: all belong in more than one of these curatorial categories. Within each zone the dialogue between the works is dynamic.

For many of the artworks in the exhibition, their literature is present in its original form only as the title of the work. Without the presence of their text to invite a direct comparison, the works easily appear autonomous. This invites the question at the heart of all ekphrastic responses: where is the author's voice in this re-iteration? Is the work a collaboration, or a usurpation; a supportive and supported companion piece, or an appropriation?

The relationship is a complex one; questioning ownership and autonomy, as well as the parameters of creative expression.

The artworks here differ in their support of the intentions of the author, and in how much of their take on the text is deliberately stamped with their own imagination. At the heart of each is a curiosity, and fascination, for the text; a desire to explore all or elements of it fully, through their own language. These currents run just below the aesthetically-pleasing surface of this exhibition.

Jessica Elleray and Elinor Moore
Curators

MEET THE CURATORS



Jessica Elleray recently completed her BA Hons in Fine Art and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. An artist and writer in her own right, she was most recently awarded the Dean's Prize for her Degree Show sculptures.

www.jessicaelleray.com

Where did the idea for the show come from?

Elinor: On one hand, the idea was very spontaneous. We'd been asked by Tajinder Hayer, Director of Lancaster Words, to practise pitching presenting an idea for an event at the Festival. We only had five minutes to develop the idea, but he clearly liked what he heard. There's an inherent compatibility between the Fine Arts and literature, and in tandem they create a fuller expression of their chosen subjects.

Jessica: We have a background in both practices, and so we have long been engaged in a dialogue that seeks to balance both forms of creative output - but also two ways of looking at the world and commenting on society. I think the moment the idea took form was really just a coming together of all that history.

Why did you want to invite other artists to exhibit, rather than make works yourselves?

E: For a start, the range of media on display at the exhibition is far more interesting than if we had only presented our own work. Also the range of different individuals shaping and interpreting an author's views makes for a dynamic show. Rather than hearing just our views - visitors get to engage with different voices on a topic.

J: For me, one of the best things about it not being our artwork or writing forming the focus of the show, is that I get to know what other people think. I know what I think about ekphrasis - but I wanted to see how other artists interpreted the brief. This has been one of the most fun parts of the process.

E: Also, it's great to elevate artistic responses to writing from pure illustration - there are more ways to engage with this type of translation. By inviting artists to respond to literature, you are almost giving the work a new author. It's been interesting to witness the balance between the original author and the artist's own intentions. The work becomes a collaboration between past and present intention.

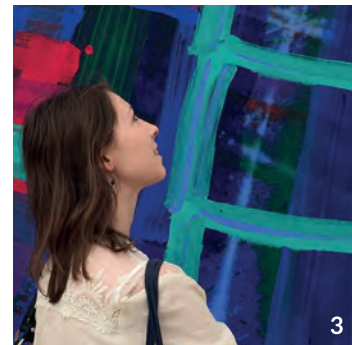
J: I'm so with you on the illustration front - we get it all the time; 'so you are going to write and illustrate your own books are you?' But there is a lot more to this combination than that. Illustration is of course incredible and a field in its own right - but there is more to be considered here. There is such potential for art to reintroduce audiences to literature in fresh ways and this show begins to explore this territory.

Why turn the traditional notion of ekphrasis on its head?

J: We wanted to explore the path less travelled. To suggest that ekphrasis is more than writers exploring paintings and that through creative translation we can begin to observe the fullness of intentions and ideas.

Elinor Moore has experience in the picture-framing and gallery business, having worked at Gallery 42 for four years. She has also volunteered for Lancaster Arts events. She has exhibited her own paintings at local exhibitions, and at the time of the event, will have recently graduated from a Fine Art and Creative Writing BA Honours degree.

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DRAWING OUT

Arguably the closest of interpretations, these artworks depict the text's subjects as they are conveyed through their textual descriptions. Closely interpreting the language used, artists exploit metaphors or consolidate descriptions to give new form to the subjects of the text. Specifics are reiterated closely, into media that convey the subject with vivacity and immediacy. As such, the subject is given some of the sensory qualities that are suggested to the intellect when described in its original form.

The works alter through interpretation, but do not necessarily undermine the original description: they neither usurp the text nor are they totally subservient to it. Similarly they are not all concerned with producing their subject naturalistically - lifting their subject off the page completely, to pose it as a real-world construct - though in some cases, words are transformed into believable environments or objects.

Depicting their subjects as such, the works enforce a pause, offering the subject to the viewer in isolation to be contemplated through the senses. Suggested narratives, inescapable links and gravitas are gifted to a subject that may have been sketched in or sped past in the original narrative.

This focus given to these subjects, alongside the re-expression into a new media, necessitates invention. It is this invention by the artist that revitalises the subject and opens it to new connotations, ensuring that these artworks encompass and exceed illustrational function, ranging alongside the textual description as a companion and a challenge.

Elinor Moore

JOHN COCKSHAW

www.frommordortothemistymountains.com

Following his Fine Art degree and MA in Art and Design Research, John Cockshaw has exhibited his painting, photography and video work widely in Yorkshire and beyond. Literary-inspired art has guided his most recent projects, particularly in the exploration of the works of JRR Tolkien and Susanna Clarke, and also introduced him to the world of art curation, publishing and fan conventions. John's work can be seen in publications by The Tolkien Society and in titles from Oloris Publishing and Luna Press Publishing.

For this exhibition, Cockshaw has displayed three works from an ongoing project exploring Susanna Clarke's Georgian-set novel, 'Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell'. It was the brilliant, eerie presentation of magic and the land of Faerie that most impressed on the artist and which he wanted to explore. In the novel, historical events and familiar locations in England and Europe are affected with subtle, uncanny and often terrifying magical interventions. Cockshaw depicts these locations as empty stages, devoid of characters, exploring these places of magic from a disquieting and dream-like distance.



Top: The Enchantment of Stephen Black, *pen and ink with digital photography*, 2016.

Above: York Minster 1807. A scene in anticipation of magic, *pen, ink and oils with digital enhancement*, 2016.

Left: Strange Approach to Windsor Castle, *pen and ink with digital photography*, 2015.

CAROLYN CORFIELD

ccsculptor@btinternet.com

Carolyn Corfield is a mixed media sculptor known for her compelling figurative pieces. Newcastle-born, her work as an artist first came to public notice while living in the Channel Islands. Based in her Darlington studio she creates unique pieces, hand carved in marble and wood while currently specialising in wall mounted and free standing sculpture in porcelain and stoneware clays, suitable for both interior and exterior display. Exhibiting in solo and group events home and abroad within the municipal and private gallery sector, Carolyn's work is now held in public and private collections worldwide.

Corfield's sculptures are a visual translation of Ovid's description of the Heliades in his text 'Metamorphoses'. The Heliades were the three daughters of Helios (Apollo) and Clymene. After their brother Phaethon was struck by a thunderbolt thrown by Zeus, the sisters wept for him on the banks of the river Eridanus where they were transformed into poplars and their tears to amber.



*“Meaning to kneel upon the ground, complained
Her feet were rigid. When Lampetie,
Her lovely sister, tried to come to her,
She found herself held fast by sudden roots;
The third, reaching to tear her hair, instead
Plucked leaves. One, in dismay, felt wood encase
Her shins and one her arms become long boughs.
And while they stood bewildered, bark embraced
Their loins and covered, inch by inch, their waists,
Breasts, shoulders, hands till only lips were left[...]
So their tears still
Flow on, and oozing from the new-made boughs,
Drip and are hardened in the sun to form
Amber.”¹*

Ovid - Metamorphoses, Book II, 346-365

ROBERT LADISLAS DERR

<http://home1.arts.ohio-state.edu/derr34/>

scan to
view video
in web
browser



Attempt at a Mistake, two-channel split-screen video black and white with sound, 2013.

Robert Ladislas Derr received his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and attended the Photography Institute National Graduate Seminar at New York University. Exhibitions and performances of his work have been held worldwide and his works have been funded by such organizations as the Urbana Public Arts Commission, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Ohio Arts Council.

There are no slips of the tongue according to Sigmund Freud in his 1935 essay, 'The Subtleties of a Faulty Action'. A slip of the tongue, or to use Freud's term, a parapraxis, reveals some repressed motive. With chalk held by his lips, rather than his fingers, Derr writes out the sentence that discovered parapraxis. In favor of his mouth, over his hands, he performs a slip of communication, or a slip of the tongue, writing Freud's sentence.

Freud wrote the following as he prepared a birthday gift to be set into a ring for a woman friend, "*Bon für einen Goldring bei Uhrmacher L. anzufertigen bis für beigelegten Stein, der ein Schiff mit Segel und Rudern zeigt*".¹ Translated from German to English, the sentence reads, "For a gold ring with watchmaker L. for the enclosed stone bearing a ship with sail and oars." In the course of writing this sentence, Freud mistakenly used the word "bis" that also has a Latin meaning of twice, and then crossed it out.

According to Freud, this "slip of the pen" may have been an unconscious inclusion because of the grammatical sloppiness of using the word *für* twice in the sentence. But then, after speaking with his daughter, Freud found that it was not because of using the same word twice in a sentence, nor his use of "bis," but because he had given this same gift to this woman before. He discovered that his repressed motive was not merely poor grammar, but rather, the indecorum of giving the same gift twice.

1. Freud, S. (1935). DIE FEINHEIT EINER FEHLHANDLUNG. GESAMMELTE WERKE: XVI, 37-39

LOUISA ELLEN GRACE

www.louisaallengrace.com

Louisa Ellen Grace is a promising young artist who at the time of print had just completed her first year at Lancaster University studying Fine Art.

Inspired by Emily Dickinson's poem A Bird Came Down the Walk, Louisa Ellen Grace produced a sculpture reflecting the duality of nature expressed in the poem.

The poet attempts to tame nature through language by affording it human qualities using terms of address such as 'he' and 'fellow'. Louisa sought to tame the bird visually by depicting human characteristics such as 19th century clothing.

Although the poem is short, presenting a fleeting moment in time, the description is so elaborate that Louisa wanted to capture this same sense of attention to detail in her finished work.



Work in progress on A Bird Came Down the Walk.

JACQUELINE F. KERR

www.sciartistprojects.wordpress.com

Jacqueline F. Kerr is a freelance artist and qualified teacher of Secondary Art and Design Education, who is currently working at Tate Liverpool, U.K. She has exhibited nationally and internationally since graduating from Edinburgh College of Art in 1993 with a B.A.(Hons) Degree in Fine Art, specialising in Printmaking.

The main inspiration for Jacqueline's artwork is from an interest in the history of map-making and the art of cartography.

Jacqueline is interested in how the development of mark making, the use of signs, symbols, maps, charts and illustrative journals by different cultures and generations of societies have been used to visually record their 'histories'. She explores how they have chosen to visually represent their unique existence within a certain inhabited space, within a certain period of time, and then creates her own creative environments in response.

Each artwork is a journey taken or anticipated, real or imaginary.

By using her original prints as a creative foundation she combines drawing, painting and collage to create a layered mixed media artwork on paper or canvas.

For the Telling in Full Exhibition Kerr has responded to the work of the Italian writer Italo Calvino, in particular his novel 'Invisible Cities'.

Working with drawing, painting, print and collage she has created new artwork that highlights and re-imagines his experimental writing in a new way. By exploring his imagined cities she hopes to create a new historical layer or chapter of time for a selection of the journeys contained within the book.



Work in progress for Telling in Full

ROBIN OLIVER

www.robinoliverartist.co.uk



Artist's Correspondance

Robin Oliver's images represent his slow and gentle evolution in recording as an artist what is observed, after his looking and looking again. The works become representations both of what the artist sees and imagines. The work is experimental, constantly changing and evolving. Through which he express a desire to reflect upon memories of growing up on the family hill farm, nestling at the fot of Cold Fell in Cumberland. This is a landscape which Robin feels hefted to like the sheep, cattle and wild deer which have long roamed there.

The drawing featured in this exhibition was inspired by Robin's study of the River Eden near Carlisle, Cumberland, and by his reading of William Wordsworth's poem about that same River: 'The River Eden', 1770-1850. Yellow watercolour and a touch of green were added to represent the colour of daffodils; a reference to another of Wordsworth's most recited and beloved poems, 'I wandered lonely as a Cloud', 1807, particularly in connection with our beautiful Cumberland Lake District.

The artist hopes that this image will encourage others to enjoy poetry and to take the time, where you are able, to walk along the banks of a river.

It

*It began, following the reading of a poem,
and the need to take some air and exercise.*

It became a walk beside the River Eden.

The walk beside the River Eden was repeated.

It became hope, interest and visual stimulation.

*It became delightful fragrances, stunning colours, and
beautiful glimpses of nature.*

*It became chance meetings, conversations, surprises and
inspiration.*

*It became; a period of observation, discovery, new learning,
and profound appreciation.*

It became Eden.

Eden became Art.

Art has become life, expression and meaning.

Robin Oliver

Dissolved Daffodils; the River Eden, black pigment ink and watercolour.



MADISON PIERCY

<https://madijpart.wixsite.com/mjpart>

Madison Piercy has always been fascinated with the medium of embroidery and its tactile nature. She is specifically interested in the way that it interacts with other mediums and to what extent it can be pushed to become a versatile form of storytelling.

The triptych of embroidered works, *Pigoons*, *Rakunks* and *Glowing bunnies*, bring to life the genetically engineered animals that run wild in the dystopian world created by Margaret Atwood in the novel *Oryx and Crake*.

At the time of the exhibition, Madison will have just completed a Fine Art Degree at Lancaster University.

Broadway 2, embroidery, 2017.



Glowing Bunnies, embroidery, 2017.

SARAH THEOBALD

www.theobaldminiatures.com

Sarah has been painting miniatures for the last five years. Some of her work is as small as 5mm. But she only works by eye, without using any magnifying equipment. This is aided by a specific form of Visual Stress, that was discovered last year on her 21st Birthday.

Although typically small, a miniature portrait is not a 'portrait-in-little'. The Latin derivative for small is *minimus*, whereas the Latin derivative for a miniature painting is *minium*. This refers to red lead paint in Medieval manuscripts, the origins of miniature painting.

It is the very specific delicate and time-consuming technique that both constitutes a miniature and restrains the size. As water cannot be absorbed into the surface the watercolour paint needs to be thinned out and left to dry before application on the surface using single dots, called stippling.

Since completing her Masters in History of Art at the University of Birmingham, she is now a portrait miniature specialist. Based in Yorkshire, she is tutoring the historical style of miniature painting to continue the tradition.

Inspired by Denis Diderot's letter correspondence to Sophie Volland, in which she seeks permission to place a miniature of her sister with a miniature of Denis. He consents, however, he adds a condition to the arrangement. He wrote, 'if [...] you have both our portraits, take care, Sophie and do not look more tenderly at her than at me. Do not kiss her more often.'¹ The piece made for the exhibition features two miniature portraits, a man and a woman, back-to-back within a locket, about the size of a pound coin.

Sophie's question for permission and Diderot's severe response reveals itself to be a very important piece of primary literature as it encapsulates the way in which miniature portraits were treated as items of devotion, depicting loved ones.



Beatrice, watercolour miniature, 2017.

1. Diderot, Denis, Diderot's Letters to Sophie Volland: A Selection, Translated by Peter France, ed. and trans. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 'Letter 2' pp.17-20 (p.20).

THE WRITER'S MEDIUM

Here, artists have appropriated the writers materials - taking as much inspiration from the form of their chosen texts as the content. Books, letters, exam questions and words themselves have become mediums, bringing to bear the question of whether a book is so far removed from an artwork after all. Artists have played with the physicality and expressiveness of lettering, tracing the writer's own hand.

Whilst these works expand upon and draw connections between past and present makers, these works all bring the boundaries between Fine Art and Literature into focus. Can an artwork be read? Can a book be played? Two forms of ekphrasis are therefore at play: one, the re-iteration of content, the other interpretation of form.

Jessica Ellera

BRIGHID BLACK

<https://www.axisweb.org/p/brighidblack>

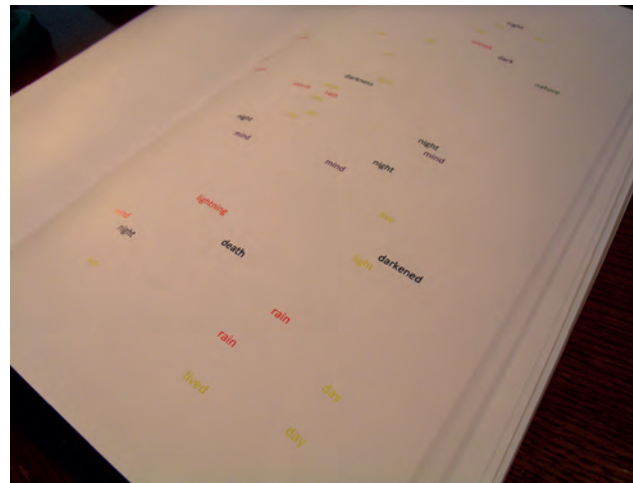
scan to
view book
in web
browser



Brighid Black was born in England and completed a BA in Fine Art at Northumbria University in 2007. Before studying art she had a career in the legal profession and is based in the North East of England. She works mainly in digital video, often with a performative element, but occasionally in film, writing and other media. Her work is informed partly by her earlier study of Ancient History and Literature, with a strong interest in mythology. She has participated in exhibitions and screenings in the UK and abroad.

The Promethean Code comprises of 50 pages and is an adaption of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* which was first published in 1818 and originally titled *The Modern Prometheus*.

Through the process of mapping the text thematically using blocks of colour, patterns appeared in the text which resembled visual representations of DNA sequencing. Scientists working in the field of genetics are regarded by some as contemporary Prometheans, their discoveries provoking many of the same fears as those unleashed by the explorations of Enlightenment scientists some two hundred years ago. Black's adaption explores Shelley's original work by translating words into shape and colour, and in the process, foregrounds the continuing, contemporary significance of the novel.



Above: *The Promethean Code*, artist book, 2013.
Left (both): *The Promethean Code*, interior pages of artist book, 2013.

SHARON BROWN

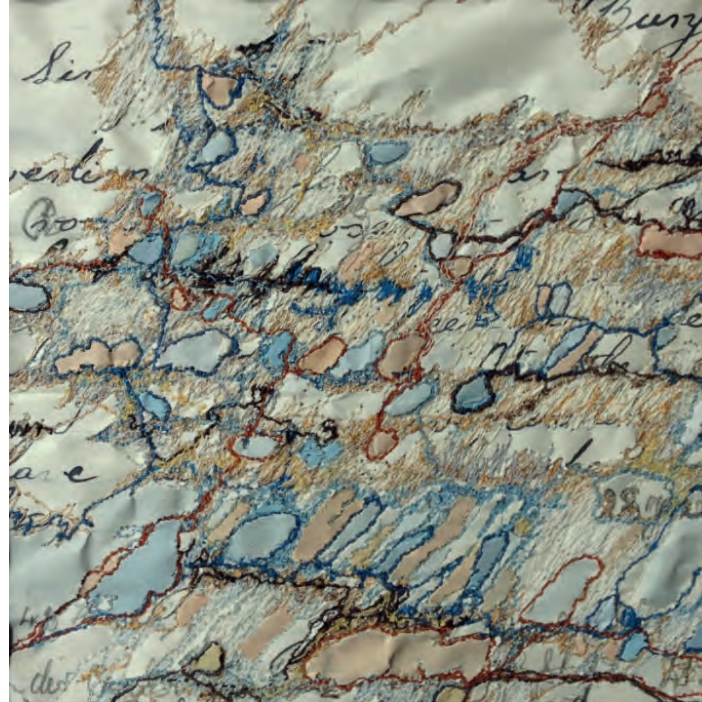
sharonbrownglossop@yahoo.co.uk

Sharon Brown is fascinated by many different forms of languages and has recently worked with old letters and documents, and the personal histories contained within them. She is intrigued by how writing can be so unique to an individual, suggesting character and narrative, whilst exploring the shapes and rhythms of the letterforms. Brown paints, collages and stitches her instinctive responses to the content and form of the historical papers she uses as a canvas. Although the nature of freehand machine embroidery breaks down the fragile paper, through the process she preserves and celebrates an aspect of history.

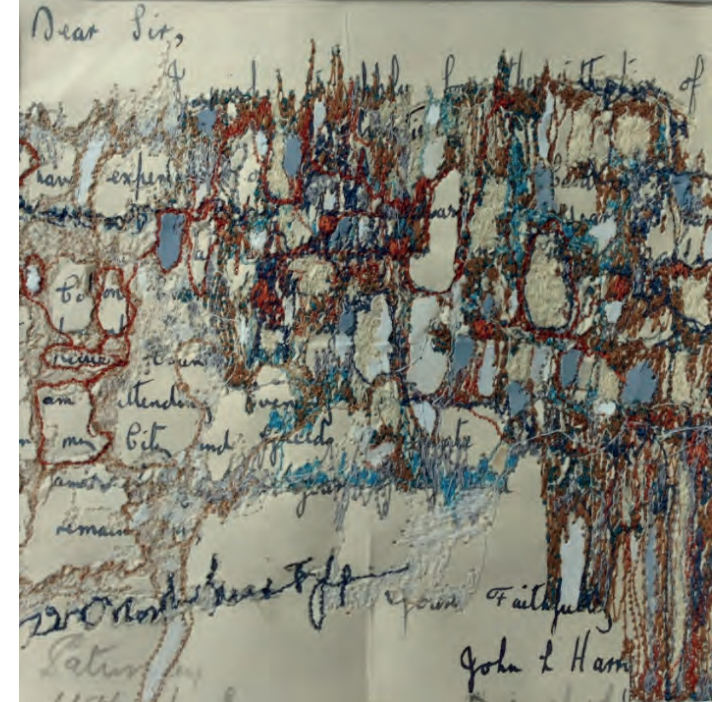
Her recent body of work has been made using old letters and documents from the 1950s and 60s when men from Lancashire were applying for jobs with Riggs of Rochdale. She was drawn to these handwritten letters for the glimpses they provided of the individuals behind the ink lines. For *Telling in Full*, Sharon Brown has further developed this project, responding to Ethel Carnie's poetry about life as a factory girl in 'Rhymes from the Factory' and 'Songs of a Factory Girl'.



Lines of Communication, machine embroidery on paper.



Untitled detail, machine embroidery on paper.



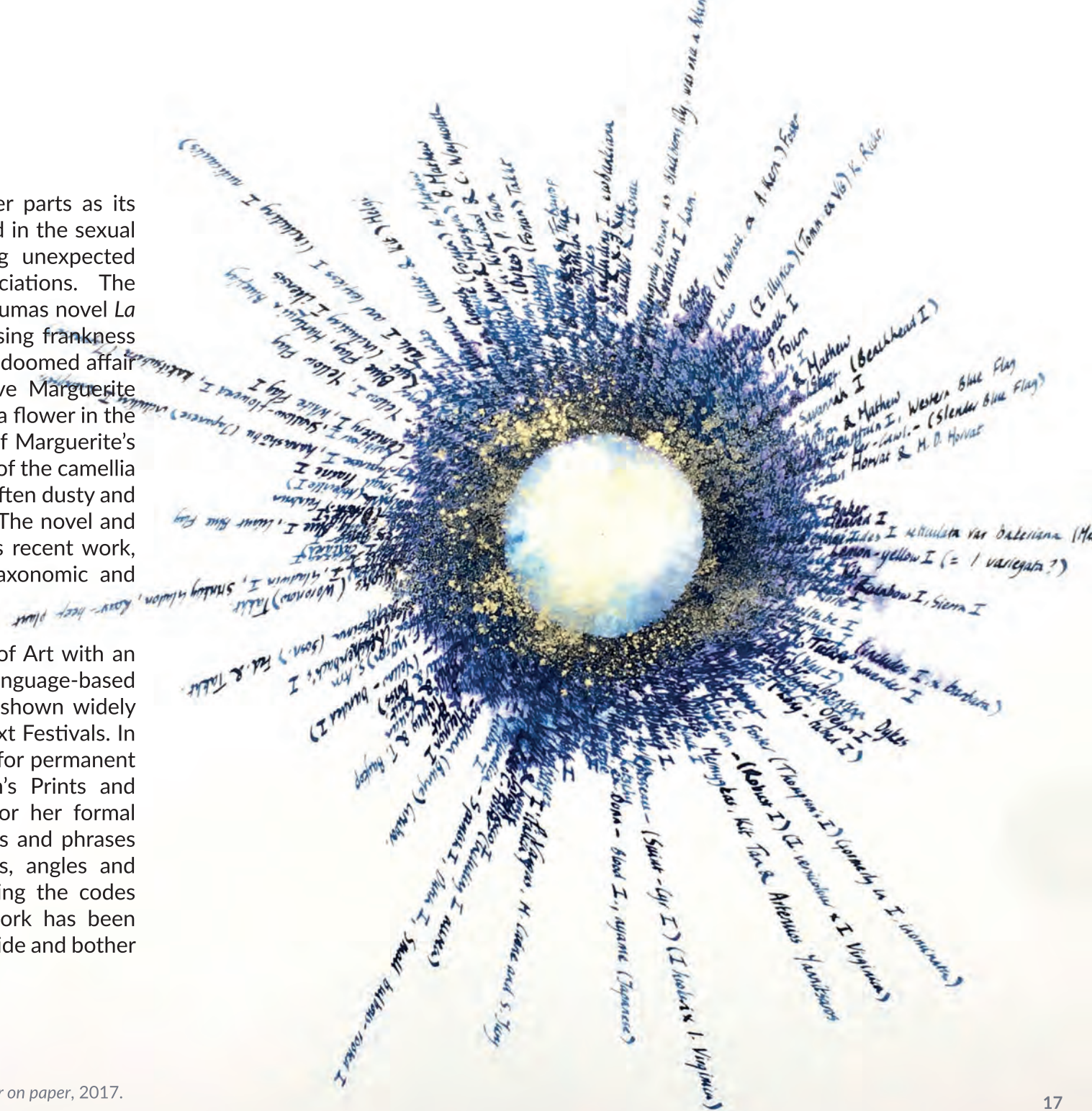
Untitled detail, machine embroidery on paper.

LIZ COLLINI

www.lizcollini.com

Camellia x camellia takes the names of flower parts as its starting point and explodes the language used in the sexual reproduction of flowering plants, generating unexpected chains of metaphorical and literal associations. The inspiration comes from the 1848 Alexandre Dumas novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, and its sometimes surprising frankness about the lives of Parisian courtesans and the doomed affair between Armand Duval and the consumptive Marguerite Gautier. Less a symbol of romance, the camellia flower in the novel, either red or white, is in fact a signal of Marguerite's sexual availability during the month. The ideal of the camellia flower in film and literature is traduced by its often dusty and yellowing appearance in many front gardens. The novel and the flower are recurring theme in Liz Collini's recent work, providing a vehicle for exploring the rich taxonomic and botanical language of flowers.

Liz Collini graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Fine Art Printmaking in 2007. Her language-based installations, prints and drawings have been shown widely in the UK and overseas, including the Bury Text Festivals. In 2011 a site-specific piece was commissioned for permanent display in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Prints and Drawings Study Room. Liz is best known for her formal plan-like constructions of text in which words and phrases are drawn using the detailed measurements, angles and annotations involved in their making, exposing the codes and systems buried within language. Her work has been described as a place where text and image 'collide and bother one another'.



Iris IV, ink and gold powder on paper, 2017.

HELEN FRANK

www.helenfrank-who.blogspot.co.uk

Helen Frank writes art and draws words. She is a member of the Oupeinpo* and finds herself in Paris from time to time.

She playfully questions notions of determinism and free will by employing constraint based systems to produce art work that can be viewed as writing and drawing. As well as exhibiting in the UK and internationally, she regularly contributes to conceptual writing publications, nationally and internationally.

'Masters of European Fiction' was the class taught by Vladimir Nabokov at Cornell University in the 1950's. Notes to his annual student lectures were published, and included examples of exam questions. Kate Briggs and Lucrezia Russo curated artists' responses to Nabokov's questions for the exhibition 'The Nabokov Paper'. The exhibition took place at Shandy Hall, North Yorkshire, November 2013 (former home, and now museum of Lawrence Sterne).

The book submitted for Telling in Full is the answer to question 29 that relates to The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka: "Make notes on the number three in the story".

* The visual art iteration of the ouXpo groups that work in parallel to the Oulipo.



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