



# MODERN LANGUAGES

Reinterpreting the Irish vernacular

Curated by Katy West



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# INTRODUCTION

*Modern Languages* offers the perspective of five international artists and designers with an interest in craft, its history and meaning. These artists seek to reinterpret the sometimes familiar, sometimes forgotten skills of Ireland's craft tradition. In doing so they uncover fresh significance and meaning, offering new insights into the Irish vernacular.

The premise for the exhibition came about through watching Robert J. Flaherty's seminal 1932 film *Man of Aran*. It is a film steeped in the vernacular, from the fishermen's sweaters to the dry-stone walling. But what enticed me most was Flaherty's unapologetic use of the materials the Aran islanders had to hand. Although dubbed the first 'Mocumentary', Flaherty's film is faultless in its poetic use of materials. It projects the universal idea of man's struggle against the sea through a carefully constructed fictional reality.

These careful re-enactments of tradition against the backdrop of a harsh natural landscape made me consider the use that contemporary artists, designers or craftpersons make of traditions and known signifiers. Like Flaherty, the artists in *Modern Languages* appropriate and re-contextualise known elements from within the vernacular tradition to better communicate their own concerns and interests.

Ciara Phillips' blankets were produced especially for *Modern Languages* by Phillips working alongside weaver John Heeny at Studio Donegal. Some of the blanket patterns produced were designed before the weaving began, and some were made with the wool left in the bobbins after the initial designs had been completed. By working alongside John Heena throughout the production, Phillips could make decisions that would otherwise be written out of the process by predetermined patterns. Phillips thereby opened up the design process through collaborative working in order to explore various possibilities within the limits of the blanket's form.

The contributors to the exhibition hold varying ties and relationships to Ireland. Whilst Nao Matsunaga's initial unfamiliarity with both the Aran Islands and Irish traditions in general has resulted in a formalist interpretation of the canvas-on-frame Irish currachs, Deirdre Nelson's textile works draw on an array of cultural traditions, myths and clichés to make sense of her contemporary surroundings.

Matsunaga is a sculptor who works predominantly with clay. His hollow clay forms with apertures, combined with wooden stick legs, share a common vocabulary with the slick beetle-like currach as it is carried down to the strand on the shoulders of men. For *Modern Languages*, Matsunaga's response to the west coast tradition of currach-making plays fast and loose with vernacular tradition, intuitively responding to formal similarities of material juxtapositions to create idiosyncratic assemblages.

By way of contrast, Nelson's focus is on the cultural narratives of her home country Ireland, reinterpreting its folklore with a close eye on the malleability of its traditions. Nelson's realisation that the Aran knit was developed more as a profitable souvenir than out of practicality (the plain grey ganseys had served perfectly well for years) has led to a set of products that negotiate ideas of both 'authentic' Irish heritage, and the Irish heritage industry, to produce a collection of 'souvenirs' that link directly to the economics of both traditional cottage industry and the more recent turmoil of contemporary Ireland.

Viewed comparatively, the challenges facing Irish craft traditions are in no way unique. Shetland-based Barbara Ridland takes pleasure in the endless beauty within the ordinary artifacts from her textile, crofting and maritime heritage. She acknowledges that many such artifacts remain for the sake of tourism or as collectables, their function having been replaced by more efficient and affordable objects in plastic. With the demise of the practical use of traditional artifacts, a whole vernacular language has almost fallen out of use at the same time – words such as *Kishie*, *Gloy*, *Hjogs*, *Simmoins*, *Boddie*, *Maeshie*, *Fletchie*, *Cuddie*, and *Fettel*.

In Ireland too machines and mass-produced imports have replaced the work of the local craftsmen, and synthetic materials have replaced natural locally-sourced products. Using computer-controlled cutting to create a series of profiles which are then built up into a version of the IKEA Stefan chair, Connemara-based Laura Mays' *Stefan 4* explores the relationship between new technology and craft, and also that between the chair and the body of its user.

By re-inserting an image of the user's body into a mass-produced artifact Mays re-inscribes into mass production the image of a unique, personal relationship. Similarly Ridland takes a dying and practically obsolete artefact, the Shetland basket-form *kishie*, and re-animates it, using the discarded scraps of cardboard packaging made ubiquitous by contemporary consumer culture. In this way one form of obsolete container (discarded packaging) is transfigured into the image of another (the now almost abandoned craft of *Kishie* making).

Such transfigurations from past to present, from commonplace to unique, from material to idea and back again provide a testimony to the valuable ongoing role that traditional craft skills play, in providing contemporary artists and designers space to reflect upon their role in relation to contemporary society. *Modern Languages* seeks to demonstrate the modern language of craft, transcending place, and employing a wide variety of materials and methods to explore ideas and concepts through making.

**Katy West** Curator



Still from *Man of Aran* 1932  
Courtesy of the IFI Irish Film Archive

# THE COMPLEXITY OF TIME

*Not all people exist in the same now. They do so externally, through the fact that they can be seen today.*<sup>1</sup> Within the last fifty years, craft in Ireland has become professional. Activities once undertaken within a simple rural lifestyle have become part of a contemporary practice, adopting the language and the intentions of art. Some crafts have fared better than others. Basketry, for example, has been transformed almost effortlessly and without losing its traditional forms. A few have held their functional value. The work of the saddler and the musical instrument maker has no need to incarnate as expressive art; it is still in demand for its original use. Other crafts have struggled. Where is the twenty-first century incarnation of the cast iron pot or the cooper's barrel?

Those crafts that have not found a place in contemporary practice remain in the vernacular which is, in a sense, the reject pile. Vernacular objects are those that have not made it into the cannon of contemporary craft. But yet they belong to the vocabulary that helped to form it. Once craft is made in the twenty-first century, by a maker trained at third-level to articulate the ideas behind the piece, it is no longer purely vernacular, no matter how traditional the skill of making. But the vernacular does not remain in the past; it is more fluid and slippery than that. There is a new vernacular in hobby craft and in populist forms of making that do not privilege aesthetic hierarchies. The work in *Modern Languages* does not belong to either the old or the new vernacular, both of which are characterised by a lack of irony. The exhibition shows self-conscious sophisticated objects that honour their ancestors. Although much of contemporary making stems from the love of everyday objects and the ways that they were made, it is rare to see this openly acknowledged. Craft, in its current manifestation as art, has often remained a little aloof from its vernacular roots. The contemporary craft world privileges the innovative, and the vernacular is tainted with the stigma of the old and unwanted. Part of the value of *Modern Languages* is that it is an overt expression of the deep and abiding love for the common tongue.

There is no single language of vernacular craft: it is a tarpaulin term stretched over an array of objects which had little relation to each other at the time that they were made. Many practices are nostalgically imbued with non-specific ideas of rural tradition, which masks their fascinating diversity. Basketry is often considered a 'country craft' practised as part of a rural way of life, but it also belonged to an urban vernacular. *Ioldanas* (1970), an exhibition that marked the first World Crafts Council congress in Dublin, included a log basket and a herring cran basket by Joseph Shanahan. These were not country crafts: the Shanahan family had owned a basketmaking business in Carrick-on-Suir since the late nineteenth century and had, at one time, been a sizeable local employer. Their baskets were functional items, made for their

original purpose. It was, however, a craft practice coming to the end of its cultural lifespan: the cran, which was the standard weights and measures basket for the sale of herring, was due to become obsolete when Ireland joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. Joseph Shanahan's baskets at Ioldanas were transitional pieces in that they were made as utensils but displayed as art. This pointed towards a possible future direction for the discipline.

It is essential that baskets continue to be made: unlike ceramics, they don't last forever and the most secure way of preserving them is to perpetuate the skill of making. But the reasons for baskets have changed: a contemporary herring cran is likely to be sold as a souvenir or an expensive collectors' item. This has changed the demographic of basketmaking. Baskets were once highly specific to local requirements which dictated their forms, and the skills were passed down locally. The different forms of making are now more likely to be handed down within an international community of artists, who have become, almost by default, the custodians of the discipline. Among them, Barbara Ridland's work draws upon the woven straw work of Ireland and Shetland, and its use in ritual costume. Her containers, some of which have mouths, reflect the connectivity of objects and language and the way in which the patterns and techniques of making run like strands of DNA: inherited, traceable, and gradually transforming.

The concept of authenticity, given a good hard shake and held up to the light, is utterly inappropriate to the vernacular tradition. Authenticity implies something that is fixed. A cabinet is either made by a certain cabinet-maker or it is not. But vernacular forms are not fixed; they are like a piece of traditional music and different in every rendition. A recent series of chairs by Laura Mays explores the recurrent patterns within vernacular chairmaking, and how this differs from the reproduction of specific designs. A Sligo chair, which already has many variations, is not a fixed form: just as a performer interprets a tune, neither following to a strict score nor playing something entirely new, each new chair has both similarities and differences to its predecessors. The use of the pattern enlarges the category of Sligo chair, just as each time a traditional tune is interpreted its meaning is expanded. In this way, Mays' rendition of the pattern is part of a wider evolution of the pattern over time.

But the visual similarities between a contemporary chair, made with expressive or philosophical intent, and its vernacular antecedent can also be misleading. Some vernacular objects have an aesthetic integrity that allows them to be lifted unaltered from the workshop to the gallery plinth, although they were not intended as art objects and were made with a different set of priorities. In 1974 a pair of Leitrim chairs made by John Surlis travelled to Canada, to feature in the World Crafts Council exhibition *In Praise of Hands*, where he was awarded one



**McCabe Lace Collar**

Courtesy of Octavio Paz and the World Crafts Council: In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World. Toronto, Canada, Ontario Science Center, 1974

**Surlis Chairs**

Courtesy of Octavio Paz and the World Crafts Council: In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World. Toronto, Canada, Ontario Science Center, 1974



of the major prizes. The catalogue for that exhibition states that: 'The chairmaking tradition of the Surlis family, handed down from father to son, goes back six generations.'<sup>2</sup> But, while this seems to establish a professional identity for the Surlis family as makers of furniture, David Shaw-Smith's film, *The Leitrim Chair* (1980), records that the Surlis family were coopers and that the chairs were a relatively recent side-line. Surlis described chair making as 'more of a hobby than anything else.'<sup>3</sup> He also made miniature versions of the Leitrim chair for sale in the family shop, as well as toy-sized donkey straddles and sugán chairs. These pieces, although skilfully made and appealing, fall into a category of souvenir that would be considered kitsch.

Surlis' chairs are an example of one of the many instances – and this is explored in the work of Nao Matsunaga – in which vernacular forms show an unselfconscious Modernism. Their form and their function have never been disentangled. Surlis entered his work for the Toronto exhibition because he was encouraged to do so by Muriel Gahan, the founder of the Country Shop. Gahan, a shrewd judge of craft aesthetics and workmanship, had an ability to see the 'possible modernity within craft.'<sup>4</sup> 'She sent an organiser,' Surlis wrote, 'by bye-ways and highways looking for craftworkers and she came to Monasteraden. Some years later through Miss Gahan I gave a demonstration at the Dublin Horse Show. I was treated so well before leaving Dublin that I promised her that anything that I made in the future would be better the next time.'<sup>5</sup>

Gahan also played a part in the development of the Aran sweater, which is a more recent element of vernacular heritage than often supposed. The intricately patterned báinín sweater was developed in the 1930s as a cottage industry, supported by the Country Shop; prior to this, the men of the Aran Islands wore dyed wool sweaters with a patterned section. The white sweater, probably inspired by those worn by boys at their confirmations, became fashionable among the young men of the islands.<sup>6</sup> Tradition is a moveable feast and what is understood as authentically Irish is often of mongrel extraction: invented, manipulated, or imposed. There are few pure lines of lineage. But the objects remain, often more interesting when not understood through a system of cultural eugenics.

The work of Deirdre Nelson unravels some of the mythology behind the construction of knitting and lace, the Irishness of which is both more complex and more interesting than it might be supposed. Kenmare Lace, for example, originates in an industrial school, opened by the Poor Clare nuns to relieve destitution in the 1860s. As the nuns began to develop their own designs, the school became known for needlepoint technique and original design. The lace, which was highly regarded in the nineteenth century, was mainly sold abroad. Alan S. Cole, author of *A Renaissance of the Irish Art of Lace-Making* (1888) wrote that: 'the Emerald Isle of the United Kingdom can revive, in modern expressions, glories of historic Venetian Points, Italian Cut Works, and Points of Alençon and Argentan.'<sup>7</sup> Cole observes that a needlepoint collar, designed by one of the nuns at Kenmare, was suggestive of a variation in needlepoint lace-making developed in France in the reign of Louis XIV.<sup>8</sup> Lace continued to play fast and loose with tradition. Another Irish piece shown in *In Praise of Hands*, a needlepoint lace collar in gold Lurex yarn, was worked in Kenmare buttonhole stitch by Sister Rosaleen McCabe of Dublin.<sup>9</sup> The collar is an adventurous synthesis of traditions. It draws on the nineteenth-century conventual tradition in terms of technique, but the outline of the piece is that of a pre-Christian Bronze Age lunula, while its patterning is based on the head of the twelfth century Lismore Crozier. McCabe's innovative use of gold Lurex yarn provides a visual link between the medium of lace and its references to historic metal. The exhibition catalogue juxtaposes the lace collar with pieces of modernist jewellery, but it is not clear to what extent the pieces shared a conceptual framework, and to what extent they merely looked as though they did.

The cultural lineage of tweed is also more complex than it appears. Handwoven tweed is often accompanied by romantic images of Irishness: sheep on an open mountain, or weavers at their loom, and Judith Hoad (1987) wrote that it had a quality that set it apart from the machine made: 'It is an intangible quality for which there is no word in English. Few people have the awareness to recognise it, but many are deluded by the illusion of it.'<sup>10</sup> In the mid twentieth century Irish handweaving, traditionally a male-dominated craft business was gradually replaced by mechanical weaving, while handweaving as a female-dominated studio craft gained in popularity. In the 1970s a generation of studio makers transformed Irish weaving from a business, using outworkers to produce miles and miles of tweed, to an expressive art practice. These makers were mostly women, and nearly all of them worked on Swedish looms. There were several reasons for this. The fly-shuttle loom, traditionally used in Ireland, was heavy to use and generally required male strength. The Swedish looms were domestic in scale and were typically used by women to make cloth for the household. They were better suited to one-off pieces than the fly-shuttle loom, which was designed to produce cloth by the metre. Ciara Phillips is working with Studio Donegal Spinners and Handweavers, one of the few places in Ireland where the fly shuttle loom is still operated commercially. Taking a step back from the trope of the solitary studio worker, this project engages with an older layer of tradition where cloth was the work of many people so that, by working alongside the weaver, Phillips can explore the vast range of linear possibilities within the framework of a plain weave. Henry Glassie (2000) writes that: 'Examined closely, analysed formally on the grounds of compassion, then manipulated into cultural arrangements, material culture breaks open to reveal the complexity of time, its simultaneous urges to progress, revitalisation and stability.'<sup>11</sup> All objects, vernacular and sophisticated, are expressions of culture. They carry their ancestors within them.

### **Eleanor Flegg 2011**

Eleanor Flegg is a writer and a PhD candidate in craft history at the University of Ulster. This essay draws on research undertaken as part of her thesis.

- <sup>1</sup> **Bloch, Ernst**, *Heritage of Our Times*, 1935; English trans, Cambridge, 1991, quoted in Burke, Peter, *What is Cultural History*, 2nd ed, Cambridge: Polity, 2008, p24
- <sup>2</sup> **Paz**, *Octavio and the World Crafts Council: In Praise Of Hands: Contemporary Crafts Of The World*. Toronto, Canada, Ontario Science Center 1974, p91
- <sup>3</sup> **Shaw-Smith, David**, *The Leitrim Chair*, Hand series, 1980
- <sup>4</sup> **McBrinn, Joseph**, *Handmade Identity: Crafting Design in Ireland from Partition to the Troubles*, in Alfoldy, Sandra (ed), *NeoCraft 2007*, p124
- <sup>5</sup> **Mitchell, Geraldine**, *Deeds Not Words: Life and Work of Muriel Gahan*, Town House 1997, p202
- <sup>6</sup> **Mitchell, Geraldine**, *Deeds Not Words: Life and Work of Muriel Gahan*, Town House 1997, p87
- <sup>7</sup> **Cole, Alan S.**, *A Renaissance of the Irish Art of Lace-Making*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1888, pix
- <sup>8</sup> **Cole, Alan S.**, *A Renaissance of the Irish Art of Lace-Making*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1888, pix
- <sup>9</sup> **Paz**, *Octavio and the World Crafts Council: In Praise Of Hands: Contemporary Crafts Of The World*. Toronto, Canada, Ontario Science Center 1974, p46-7
- <sup>10</sup> **Hoad, Judith**, *This is Donegal Tweed*, Donegal: Shoestring Publications, 1987, p126
- <sup>11</sup> **Glassie, Henry**, *Vernacular Architecture*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p159

# NAO MATSUNAGA



**Shelter With Multiple Legs Beach Animal** 2011

Wood, ceramics  
Photo: David Ryle

**Forlorn Tree** 2010

Wood, canvas, bitumen paint  
Photo: David Ryle





# LAURA MAYS



**Stefan 4** 2010  
Corrugated cardboard  
Photo: Laura Mays

**Rocking Stefan** 2010  
2 amalgamated Stefan chairs  
Photo: Laura Mays

# DEIRDRE NELSON



**Aran Jumper (Before) 2011**  
Bawneen wool  
Photo: Kendall Koppe

**Aran 0.5 2011**  
Repurposed eBay Aran jumper  
Photo: Kendall Koppe



# CIARA PHILLIPS



**John with blankets** 2011  
Studio Donegal  
Photo: Ciara Phillips

**Blanket (detail)** 2011  
Handwoven Donegal Tweed  
Photo: Ciara Phillips





# BARBARA RIDLAND



**Finns-Mythical Creatures (detail) 2009**  
Recycled cardboard and seagrass  
Photo: Mark Sinclair

**Skelker Mask**  
Maker and date unknown  
Courtesy Shetland Museums and Archives

# ARTIST PROFILES

## CIARA PHILLIPS

Born 1976, Ottawa, Canada. Lives and works in Glasgow

Represented by Kendall Koppe, Glasgow

[www.ciaraphillips.com](http://www.ciaraphillips.com)

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2011 Ciara Phillips, Kendall Koppe, Glasgow  
Springtime will never be the same,  
Deuxième Bureau/Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt
- 2010 Every Woman A Signal Tower, Glasgow  
Print Studio, Glasgow  
Optimism and Its Signs,  
Atelier am Eck, Düsseldorf
- 2009 Ciara Phillips, Washington Garcia, Glasgow
- 2007 Vowelled, The Project Room, Glasgow
- 2008 Recyclight, Electrorama, Paris  
Vault II, Bank Gallery, Carlisle
- 2007 I See Prisms, Open Eye Club, Glasgow  
Vault, Bank Gallery, Carlisle
- 2006 Bazaar, Open Eye Club, Glasgow  
Scottish Collective, The Royal Scottish  
Academy, Edinburgh  
The Clamour of Ornament, King Street, Glasgow
- 2005 Capricorn 28, Rocket Art Projects, Miami  
Do it now, TotalKunst, Edinburgh  
From there to here, Gallery Sowaka, Kyoto  
The last chicken at Sainsbury's,  
The Chateau, Glasgow

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2011 Petrosphere, REMAP 3, Athens  
Poster Club, Eastside Projects, Birmingham  
Le Poster Chaud (with Poster Club), Glasgow  
Print Studio, Glasgow  
Blueprint for a Bogey,  
Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow
- 2010 Aires de jeux: la police ou les corsaires,  
Centre d'art contemporain de Quimper, France  
Field, Satellite, Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Fizz Up and Dissolve, The Project Room, Glasgow  
Vocal Sans, 48 King Street, Glasgow  
Zwischenraum: Space Between,  
Der Kunstverein, Hamburg

### Residencies

- 2010 Anna Löbner Glasgow/Düsseldorf Exchange  
Zwischenraum: Space between at Der  
Kunstverein, Hamburg
- 2009 Visual Arts Creative Development Residency,  
Cove Park, Scotland

## DEIRDRE NELSON

Born 1965, Northern Ireland. Lives and works in Glasgow

[www.deirdre-nelson.com](http://www.deirdre-nelson.com)

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>2010 Punctuating a Collection,<br/>Stroud Museum, Stroud</p> <p>2008 Universal Provider, IASKA Kellerberrin,<br/>Western Australia<br/>A' Fighe A' Cheo Like knitting fog,<br/>Taigh Chearsabagh, North Uist</p> <p>2007 Currency Lads and Lasses,<br/>Museum of Western Australia, Perth</p> <p>2005 Dangers of Sewing and Knitting,<br/>St Andrews, Glasgow, Sleaford</p> <p>2004 A Hairdresser, A Soldier A Thimblemaker<br/>&amp; A Duke, Bankfield Museum, Halifax</p> <p>2003 Lush Betty, Isle of Arran Distillers, Arran</p> <p>2002 My Dear John, Museum of Edinburgh</p> | <p>2006 Changing Face of Craft,<br/>National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh<br/>Making Connections, Timespan,<br/>Sutherland, Scotland</p> <p>2005 Deconstruct Reconstruct, Bilston<br/>Craft Centre</p> <p>2003 Tell Tale, Shipley Art gallery, Gateshead</p> <p>2002 Archive Artifice Artefact, FISE Gallery,<br/>Budapest, Hungary</p> |
|--|--|

### Residencies

- 2010 Craft Residency, Cove Park,  
Argyll & Bute, Scotland  
St Sirius Art Centre, Cobh,  
Co. Cork, Ireland
- 2008 IASKA International Artists Residency.  
Kellerberrin. Western Australia  
Taigh Chearsabagh Museum and Art  
Centre, North Uist
- 2007 Curtin University, Perth. Western Australia
- 2006 London Printworks Trust, Brixton, London

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2011 R&R Residencies and Retreats. Contemporary  
Applied Arts, London  
In Silhouette, Gallery of Wonder, Newcastle  
University, Newcastle  
Close at Hand, Owens Gallery, Sackville, Canada  
Bufferzone, Armoury Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 2010 Smile, Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales  
Unexpected Guests: Homes of Yesteryear,  
Design of Today, Poldi, Milan
- 2009 Image/Craft, Innovative Craft, Edinburgh
- 2008 Jerwood Contemporary Makers,  
Jerwood Space, London

### Catalogues

- Buffer Zone Catalogue, Amromy Gallery, Sydney, 2011  
In The Loop, Jessica Hemmings,  
Black Dog Publishing 2010  
Dangers of Sewing and Knitting Catalogue, Collins  
Gallery, Glasgow, 2005

## NAO MATSUNAGA

Born 1980, Osaka, Japan. Lives and works in London

Represented by Marsden Woo Gallery, London

[www.naomatsunaga.com](http://www.naomatsunaga.com)

### Exhibitions

- 2011 Introducing; Nao Matsunaga, Kerry Jameson,  
Dawn Youll Gallery artists show,  
Marsden Woo, London
- 2010 Collect, Saatchi Gallery, London  
Studio, Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales  
Group show, Marsden Woo Gallery, London
- 2009 Diversions, Glyn Vivian Gallery, Swansea. Wales  
Group show, Barret Marsden Gallery, London
- 2008 This Place is Made of Rocks, Konstfack,  
Stockholm, Sweden
- 2007 Great exhibition, Royal College of Art, London  
Seduce/expand/convert, Turf Gallery, London
- 2006 In Site, Royal College of Art, London  
Ceramic Art London, London  
Arete, Madam Lillies, London
- 2006 Bath and Doorway, Hockney Gallery RCA, London  
Starecase, Mojoe, Church Street, Brighton (Solo)

### Collections

Crafts Council UK  
Nelson Woo collection  
Anthony Shaw collection

### Residencies

- 2010 Invited Artist, Cove Park, Argyll & Bute, Scotland
- 2008 Ceramics residency at Konstfack,  
Stockholm, Sweden

### Publications

The Pot Book, Edmund de Waal, Phaidon, 2011  
Ceramic Bible, Louise Taylor, Rotovision 2011  
Studio, exhibition catalogue, Phil Sayer, Ruthin  
Craft Centre, 2010

## BARBARA RIDLAND

Born 1959, Lerwick. Lives and works on Shetland Isles  
[www.troak.co.uk](http://www.troak.co.uk)

### Exhibitions

- 2011 I Vesterveg, a collaboration between artists and museums in Shetland, Faroe Islands, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. Norraena husid, Iceland
- 2010 Shetland Museum & Archives, North Atlantic House, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Nordurlandahusid, The Faroe Islands  
Kunstmuseene I Bergen, Norway
- 2008 I Do, I Bonhoga Gallery, commission for Shetland Arts  
7 Minutes of Explosion, in collaboration with Jeanette Sendler, an exhibition celebrating the two artists and the workers of the Scord Quarry. Shetland Museum and Archives
- 2007 Ethel Brown and Jeanie Jarmson, group exhibition, Shetland Museum & Archives
- 2006 Knitted and felted collaborative work by Sendler and Ridland, Dublin Street Studio, Edinburgh  
Sheep Seydur, Shetland Faroe collaboration, Shetland Museum & Archives Public Art Project  
Moder Dy, Bonhoga Gallery
- 2005 Le Dome, Who's Next Trade Show Paris
- 2004 Vestnorden Craft Show, Reykjavik, Iceland  
4x4, Bonhoga Gallery, Shetland
- 2003 Trade Investigation, Paris
- 2002 Trade Investigation, London Fashion Week
- 2000 The Street, Shetland Arts Trust  
touring exhibition and commission
- 1999 Hatched, Bonhoga Gallery, Shetland  
Shetland Art Exhibition, Maloy, Norway
- 1998 The Boat Show, Bonhoga Gallery, Shetland

### Collections

Shetland Arts Trust  
Shetland Museum & Archives

## LAURA MAYS

Born 1967, Dublin. Lives and works in Co. Galway

[www.yaffemays.com](http://www.yaffemays.com)

### Exhibitions

- 2011 Irish Craft Portfolio, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny
- 2010 Material Poetry, American Irish Historical Society, New York  
Irish Craft Portfolio, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny & Dublin
- 2009 Object, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny
- 2008 Ecology Mythology Technology, Crafts Council of Ireland
- 2006 Forty Shades of Green, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork and touring
- 2005 Toured in the USA  
SOFA Chicago  
Furnishing the Details - GMIT, Farmleigh Gallery, Phoenix Park, Dublin
- 2004 Artist as Traveler, King House, Co. Roscommon & Sirius Gallery, Cork  
Of Colour in Craft, National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny
- 2003 Becoming Furniture Becoming, Collins Barracks, National Museum of Ireland  
Wood Fair 2003, Eureka, California

### Collections

Office of Public Works, Ireland  
The National Museum of Ireland  
Private collections in Ireland and the US

### Publications

- 2011 Craft and Pattern, The Presence of the Past: Conference Proceedings, Letterfrack
- 2011 Blankets Chests, Gibson and Turner, Taunton Press
- 2006 On Details, Building Materials, issue 15, Architectural Association of Ireland
- 2001 The Problem of Craft, Element, issue 7, Mermaid Turbulence, Dublin
- 2000 Production Values Building Materials, issue 2, Architectural Association of Ireland  
Walking the Line, Furniture-Making Projects, Guild of Master Craftsman Publications

**Women Setting up Warp** Location and date unknown

Courtesy of Deeds Not Words: The Life and Work of Muriel Gahan (1997) by Geraldine Mitchell. Photo: Muriel Gahan



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Use of film footage in 'Modern Languages' courtesy of the IFI Irish Film Archive; National Museum of Ireland; Gael Linn; Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Linen Guild.

### **The National Craft Gallery**

Established by the Crafts Council of Ireland in December 2000, the National Craft Gallery exhibits a programme of groundbreaking national and international contemporary craft.

Activities include profiling the work of Irish makers in Ireland and abroad, developing relationships with Irish and international galleries and collectors, and inspiring appreciation, creativity and innovation through the gallery exhibition and education programmes.

The Crafts Council of Ireland is the champion of the craft industry in Ireland, representing all craft disciplines. It strives to foster the commercial strength and unique identity of the craft sector, and to stimulate quality, design and competitiveness. It is funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation through Enterprise Ireland.

National Craft Gallery,  
Castle Yard, Kilkenny, Ireland  
T + 353 (0) 56 7796147  
E [ncg@ccoi.ie](mailto:ncg@ccoi.ie)  
W [www.nationalcraftgallery.ie](http://www.nationalcraftgallery.ie)

### **Gallery Team**

Manager and Curator: Ann Mulrooney  
Gallery Assistant: Brian Byrne  
Education and Outreach Officer: Leslie Ryan  
Press: Christine Monk  
Technician: John Whelan  
Catalogue Design: Creative Inc

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