

Shoreham Gallery – November 2021

Light and Bright

**A joint exhibition of Turned Lamps and Collages
by Anna Cates and Amanda Duke**



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About Amanda

I am a local artist who trained in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College. I then went on to complete a PGCE in Art and Design which led me to teach Art in Secondary schools for 36 years. I had a great career which included leading 2 Art Department and a huge Arts Faculty in schools in the South East. Whilst I love having more time to do my own work now I really miss the energy, spirit, creativity and freshness of thought of young people.

At first sight, my work can be viewed as abstract but my imagery originates from first-hand observation and experience of my environment. Mostly the tiny fragments of what I see in front of me, that fascinate me, that I want to record and remember.



My current work involves using a range of paper and textile media to explore, capture and record my visual insights around the places I visit. It could be said that my work evokes a 'Sense of Place.'

There are so many artists who have inspired me over the years and I eagerly attend exhibitions (under normal circumstances) for continuous inspiration. Artists who have run the test of time for me include the inventor of collage Picasso and a contemporary of his Kurt Schwitters. Both these artists tested the boundaries of Art in their own time. Their shock of the new works from 100+ years ago paved the way for what we now call collage. Many artists have continued to develop the genre but I feel as if these two have been by my side for over 40 years.

Characteristically, I make compositional arrangements that capture fractured marks, tactile surface qualities, linear pathways and decorative surface pattern. Fabric works include my own hand dyed fabrics and sometimes small pieces of relevant repurposed fabric before I apply hand or machine stitching. Paper works include my own mixed media collage surfaces on mono or screen prints before I add hand drawn final layers to refine the images.

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In my shared October/November exhibition at Shoreham Art Gallery I have brought two series of works together. The two brightly coloured series connect through their sense of place.

Series 1 'Sussex Prairies' shows my response to a 2016-2017 artist residency at this local garden. A series of screen prints overlaid with slithers of photograph and collage with an overlay of drawing depicts the everlasting memories of the summer heat, the long tall grasses dancing in the breeze and my frequent meandering walks through the flower borders.



Series 2 'Faraway Jaipur' shows my response to two multi-layered experiences of Jaipur city. Capturing chaos of bazaar, conjuring fast paced city life, timeless weather beaten, poster-clad walls and traces of human activity that will, overtime, fade and crumble away. This series culminates with a statement fabric wall hanging 'Faraway Jaipur Wall 1' culminating my personally set challenge to produce my bravest Art textile to document my visit. It was a proud moment when this piece won 2nd prize at the Festival of Quilts in July 2021.



My teaching experience has helped to bring structure to my studio practice. After a lifetime of teaching, I now thrive working alone in my home studio and sometimes in a group environment. Working with my hands fulfills an inner need to make things.

The wall pieces in this show 'Light and Bright' I regard as 'the work'. These are created as part of my ongoing studio practise, they are challenging to make and usually present a problem to solve. It's thrilling when these works sell, it feels like a sale endorses my progress and whilst I feel bereft as the piece moves on I hope

the new owner can enjoy a small piece of my heart and soul. Other items such as hand dyed scarves, pin cushions and needlebooks I refer to as my hobby. They are relaxing, meditative and fun to create, when they sell I hope they give

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the new owner a functional, aesthetically pleasing piece which has been made with love.

Anna and I have teamed up for a 2 month show in the upstairs gallery. Our aim is to create an 'at home' feel with Anna's wood turned lights, ornaments and table and my paper and textile collages, giclee prints and cards. If visitors get the feeling they are in the front room of a cosy cottage where you can sit, enjoy the artworks, flick through a sketchbook, or read a book before moving on, then we will be very happy!

About Anna

What do you create?

A range of decorative and functional woodturnings.

Why do you create what you do?

I feel privileged to work with a material that offers so many different artistic opportunities. No piece of wood is ever the same as the last and my work is often guided by what I have at hand, be it a freshly cut down tree or a seasoned board of a specific size.

What is personal to you about what you create?

I have always had a love for wood. Climbed trees growing up. Felt immediately "at home" in the wood workshop at Brighton University when I started the 3D Crafts degree there in 2001 and was hooked the second I tried woodturning. It's just right for me, not sure why!

What other artists inspire you and why do they give you inspiration?

Andy Goldsworthy and Barbara Hepworth. Less is more.

What is your greatest joy when creating and why?

The feeling and sound when you know the chisel is sharp and the shavings fly. Finding a pleasing shape within a rough blank. Working until I know the surface is flawless.



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Which part of the creative process do you enjoy the most and why?

I enjoy many parts of creating each piece but applying the first coat of oil on a finished turning is wonderfully satisfying. The sudden depth of colour and sheen really pops.

What is your greatest fear about your creativity and why?

What drives you to be creative and why? I feel very lucky to be able to work full-time with something I love and creating objects which bring others joy makes me twice as happy!

What do you do for leisure and why?

I unwind at our allotment, even when it's hard work. You really reap what you sow and look after! I also love a swim in the sea, it makes you feel so free!



Who else do you share your passion with and why them?

There are so many creative people here in Sussex and I have made some wonderful friends through the Shoreham Gallery of course, The Sussex Guild and the Artists Open Houses. The Southdowns Woodturners are a great bunch too (mostly older men though, we need more women joining!) I am also part of an online community of turners who all support each other. Wow, what a lot of people when you start listing them!

How long have you been creating what you do?

Soon after graduating in 2004 I started turning all the legs for a large furniture company in Worthing. Some of the traditional patterns I still turn for them today. My own work has taken over more and more but I do like to help out so I accept all sorts of jobs from antique restorers and fine furniture makers.

Did you ever work in a different creative medium? If you did, do you still or if not why did you give it up?

I created various things like crazy clothes and shoes when I was younger to paper and card models and miniatures in clay. I still occasionally make little seaside scenes in mixed media just for fun.

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Do you find inspiration from the world around you? If so what and why?

Inspiration can be found in anything, at any time!

Do you feel you create for an audience? If so who is that audience? If not who are you creating for?

I make whatever I like. Luckily, it appears that enough people like those exact things as, pretty much everything I've ever made has found new loving homes.

What needs, wants and desires does your work fulfill for your customers?

Who doesn't like stroking a smooth wooden surface? I make so many different things so I guess they may fulfill a range of needs and desires. My functional pieces such as the lamps are decorative as well as practical of course but I have worked on a range of commissions where a tree or piece of wood has had some personal meaning for the customer.



How will viewers of your show benefit from the experience? What do you wish them to take away from the experience?

I'm hoping they will enjoy the space that Amanda and I have put together and perhaps enough to want to take a part of it home with them.

If you visited your show as a potential customer what would you hope to get from the experience?

Perhaps to be inspired to create something myself or to take up woodturning even! What will your show be composed of and why these objects? Mostly sculptural lamps that harmonise/juxtapose well with Amanda's colourful pieces.

How do you refer to yourself – as an artist, creative or something else? Why is this the most appropriate or comfortable title to give yourself?

I refer to myself as a woodturner.