

# NATIONAL COLLECTIVE

IMAGINE A BETTER SCOTLAND

Sections



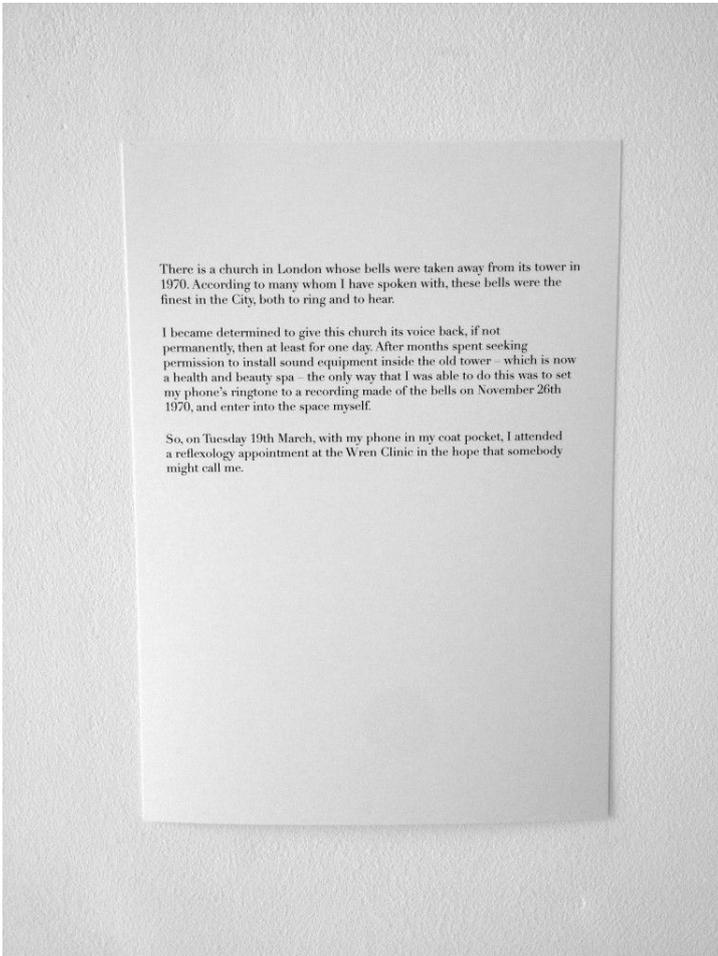
Reviews

## Degree Shows 2013: Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh

Ross Aitchison on June 11, 2013 / 0 Comments



Walking through the doors of [Edinburgh College of Art](#) one can never fail to be blown away by the generosity of its spaces; its flooding light and worn surfaces tread over by generations of artists. It's an entrance I have wandered through on an almost daily basis for the past six years as I completed my own degree in architecture and as ever the college show finds itself filled with works of imagination and intrigue. The bustling corridors and rooms of this year's show provide a platform for the emerging talent in Scottish art but also a place where the people of Edinburgh can engage with the ideas on offer. Seeing reactions across the course of the week, people are enthusiastic and mesmerised (and sometimes also confused) by the qualities of the student productions.



The unique Intermedia department provides a space for students to respond inventively to changing contemporary art practice. Looking at how an artist fits into the challenging experience of a world of visual stimuli we find the quiet and thought-provoking work of Sarah Boulton. Stating an enjoyment in art which we don't fully see, Boulton has pinned a single A4 sheet of paper to the gallery wall title 'A Little Faith'. Within it we are invited into a poetic story of the artist exploring an interaction with space and sound. Here we find an artist who is fully committed to storytelling and the power of imagination.

A colleague in Intermedia equally adept at storytelling is Emma Finn. Viewing her work, a film distorting any sense of reality, one can't help but be captured by the soft, endearing voice of the narrator. A story unfolds through the voice of an Irish postman that makes us question how much is real and how much is imagined. There is a craft to the cartoon-like expression of the film and its almost two-dimensional characters.

Within the graduates of painting we find another artist capable of distorting our perception of reality. Niall Stevenson's careful studies of the surface of ground across Edinburgh become art pieces in the gallery. A careful and documented series of studies lead the artist to create casts of parts of our city that go unnoticed. Drain covers, rough stone and cobble. Their beautiful re-creation within the gallery gives the viewer the sense that these objects have been physically lifted from the city. Colleagues Kate McAllan, who produces work of haunting beauty and eloquent silence, and 'Poster Girls', Louise Kernaghan and Ellen Wilson, who produce bold prints for unusual spaces (Adshell and Urban Outfitters to name two) are also worth noting.



Beyond, it is the work of a group of sculptors who steal much of the attention. Within their studio space we are invited to listen to short interviews with the artists who discuss the narrative to their investigations. A welcome addition to the show, these help to frame the motives behind what we see and clarify the meaning in much of the work.



The students benefit from being able to make investigations into differing topics, artistic and social. Rebecca L. Ashworth asks us to enter a conversation with scale, a giant pink fork and football sized peas dominate the gallery space. In the same room Sam Phillips shares

his own conversation about his sexuality, a timely discussion as the people of the Scotland look at the future of LGBT rights. Dennis J. Reinmuller looks at contemporary ideologies with works as diverse and interesting as, 'Player 1' a torso embedded head first in the studio floor complete with cartoon blood marks of polished metal, 'Galaxy, 2013' a floating canopy of stars, and 'The exorcism of Joseph Beuys' a film of bizarre acts committed by yellow faced characters.



A standout of the show is the beautiful investigations of Brodie Sim. Taking us through a conversation, sculpting intangible emotions into tangible objects through the manipulation of material and its inherent formal qualities. Slabs of wax are cast with some impregnated with elements of beeswax. The subtle changing of colour of these slabs and their soft bending under the strain of hanging are evocative of an artist at one with her landscape and material. Colour, form and emotion merge into the material and emerge in the senses of the viewer.

Sim's work is truly beautiful and is perhaps a strong indicator for the school as a whole. Powerful sensibilities are felt in all areas of the old institution and in a new post-merger era this place has much yet to explore.

**For further information:** <http://www.degree-show.eca.ed.ac.uk/2013/>

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#### **About Ross Aitchison**

Ross Aitchison is a Part II Architectural Assistant based in Edinburgh and a graduate of Edinburgh College of Art, originally from Aberdeenshire. He is a national organiser for National Collective.

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