

PRESS RELEASE

SHIFT PRESENTS

KALEIDOSCOPIC REALMS

8 June – 3 November 2024

At Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Exhibiting artists: Siddharth Gadiyar, James Gladwell, Thompson Hall, Richard Hunt, Nnena Kalu, Cameron Morgan, Michelle Roberts, and Leslie Thompson.



Kaleidoscopic Realms presents an installation of artworks by eight contemporary artists revealing a colourful insight into intuitive mark-making in its many forms, alongside films made about the artists and their practice. The featured artists have all travelled different paths to firmly ground themselves within their art practice, each with a distinctive style.

Unfettered explorations of repetition, pattern, detail, and culture weave their way into the artwork. A clear sense of storytelling and play often features, whilst others just ooze the pure joy of mark-making and material investigations. Ceramics, embroidery, pen drawings, and large-scale painted canvases invite closer viewing, whilst an impressive installation of bold, wrapped sculptures entices you with its strong presence.

Co-curated by Jennifer Gilbert of Jennifer Lauren Gallery and artist Christopher Samuel, the exhibition runs alongside a programme of workshops, talks and live events exploring who gets to be an artist, and who gets to be seen in galleries and why? *Kaleidoscopic Realms* is designed to challenge preconceived ideas, and to stimulate conversation and interaction. This exhibition not only allows the observer to appreciate the artwork but also presents a series of films revealing the artists in action, divulging more about their processes and motives.

This exhibition was born out of project SHIFT, from Jennifer Lauren Gallery, which exists to give recognition and to amplify the visibility, voices and works of UK-based neurodivergent and learning disabled visual artists within contemporary art. SHIFT creates space for inclusion, and for conversations between artists and gatekeepers, to deepen understanding, to commit to change, and to champion acceptance without prejudice. The Jennifer Lauren Gallery champions these artists, raising their profile helping to gain respect, and providing a platform to showcase their work.

Each of these artists work out of studios across the UK who tirelessly support not only these artists, but many other incredibly talented artists: ActionSpace, Barrington Farm, Project Ability, Project Art Works, Shadowlight Artists, and Venture Arts.

Quotes

Co-curator Jennifer Gilbert said, “These eight skilled artists are now beginning to receive the recognition they rightly deserve within contemporary arts, but I feel there is still a journey that audiences, gatekeepers, and art critics need to embark on to acknowledge the artists voice and the importance of this work. My hope is that this exhibition, and accompanying films and events, will raise awareness, generate conversations, inspire and create change for these and many other artists.”

Co-curator Christopher Samuel said: “I am always cautious about labelling exhibitions of artists who identify as disabled, due to preconceived notions around what ‘disabled art’ is and what qualities it has. These opinions are often outdated and judgmental - and that label can skew perceptions of the work. As a disabled artist myself, I am excited by work which speaks for itself or which creates a dialogue with the viewer... this work does just that!”

Tristram Aver, Curator of Exhibitions at Nottingham Castle, said: “When Jennifer Lauren Gallery searched for a collaborator open to new ideas and inclusive, forward-thinking exhibition-making, Nottingham Castle was the perfect fit for this need. We combined our experience of bold programming of underrepresented and neurodivergent artists with Jennifer and Chris’ exceptional vision, knowledge, and support. The result of this collaboration is ‘Kaleidoscopic Realms’, which offers an engaging, motivating and accessible experience for all but also provides the platform that the artists deserve within our beautiful galleries. We are tremendously proud to showcase this exhibition here in Nottingham.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST’S WORK IN THE SHOW

Siddharth Gadiyar and Nnena Kalu’s large scale, visually impactful artworks are a riot of colour, both producing art that is big, bold and eye-catching. Likewise, Cameron Morgan and Richard Hunt have an inclination towards colour however, their work is thematic - both weave stories, from observation and memory of the things they cherish, onto canvas; with Morgan utilising ceramics and embroidery to further extend his work. Thompson Hall’s work, whilst being both thematic and colourful, is more politically driven. Hall wants the observer to understand the hardships people endure and the anxiety this often brings.

In contrast to these are the works by James Gladwell, Michelle Roberts and Leslie Thompson where the emphasis is on detail. Gladwell’s delicate embroideries drawn from his imagination and memories are simple yet beautiful; Thompson’s characters in their myriad of forms are presented, from memory, with perfect pose and structure; Roberts’ signature characters drawn from visits both experienced and observed, joyfully dance across her large-scale canvases.

Images

Front page: Cameron Morgan, *Happy Go Lucky*, 2024, Ceramic. Courtesy the artist and Project Ability

This page: Leslie Thompson, *The A Team*, part of *Many of the Tv Screen’s Everywhere* series, commissioned by the Government Art Collection, 2024, Ink pen and pencil crayon on paper. Courtesy the artist and Venture Arts



NOTES TO EDITORS

Address / Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Lenton Road, Nottingham, NG1 6EL

Launch date / Saturday 8 June, 5–7pm (Relaxed launch 4–5pm)

Dates / 8 June – 3 November 2024

Opening Times / 10am – 5pm daily

Email / nottingham.castle@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Phone / +44(0)115 876 3100

Website / nottinghamcastle.org.uk / shift.jenniferlaurengallery.com

Entrance fees are applicable – please contact Jennifer, if this is going to be a barrier for you or your group.

Email info@jenniferlaurengallery.com

[PRESS IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE](#)

Media contact

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Several artists and/or supported studio staff can be available for interview, please enquire

Access info

/ This venue is wheelchair accessible/ has step free access. Please view the Castle's access information and visual story on their website

/ A video walk-through and short talk with the co-curators will be available online for those unable to visit the gallery (link provided after the launch)

/ BSL (British Sign Language) interpretation with subtitles for information about the exhibition, including the artist's biographies, is available on the Nottingham Castle and SHIFT websites

/ The films about each artist (with subtitles and BSL interpretation), and transcripts, are all available on the SHIFT website, should you wish to not watch them in the space, or if you're unable to visit the gallery

/ Autistic artist Anna Farley has provided a visual guide from her neurodivergent perspective, to open the work up to as many people as possible

/ An Easy Read guide on the exhibition is provided online and within the exhibition space

/ Large print labels and braille are available within the exhibition space.

About the co-Curator / Jennifer Gilbert is a Manchester-based gallerist, freelance producer and curator, working with disabled, neurodivergent, self-taught and overlooked artists, and in the realms of arts and health. In 2017 she launched the Jennifer Lauren Gallery to internationally showcase these artists, having previously spent years managing a national arts charity for under-represented artists. Jennifer is passionate about showcasing the voices and artworks of these artists to wider audiences. She has curated exhibitions at Carl Freedman Gallery in Margate and Flowers Gallery in London; provided curatorial advisory to *differently various* at the Barbican alongside brain injury survivors; co-collaborated on a solo show for an autistic ceramicist at James Cohan Gallery in New York; & is preparing to curate an exhibition in Philadelphia in 2025.

About the co-Curator / Christopher Samuel is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice is rooted in identity and disability politics, often echoing the many facets of his own lived experience. His work tells stories, often raising awareness of his experiences as a black disabled artist, missing representation within archives, and shared narratives from others in similar circumstances. His work has featured at the Wellcome Collection and Attenborough Art Centre, it sits within the Government Art Collection, and he is currently working on a commission with Birmingham Museums Trust. He also has a commission featured in the café space at Nottingham Castle during Kaleidoscopic Realms.

About the venue / Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery is a Victorian-converted Stuart Restoration-era ducal mansion museum and art gallery, built on the site of a Norman castle dating back to 1068. Its collection includes world-class examples of Nottingham alabaster, salt-glazed stoneware, and Nottingham's world-famous lace. It also now showcases artworks by local and internationally renowned artists. In 2021, Nottingham Castle re-opened following an extensive £32 million NHLF upgrade. Since November 2022 the Castle has been operated by the Nottingham City Council's Museums Service, and has been enjoyed by over 200,000 visitors within this time.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Siddharth Gadiyar (b.1998) is an extraordinary and prolific image-maker, who constructs a new work of considerable scale, each week in a three-hour supported studio session at Project Art Works, Hastings. His art is big and bold, an unfettered exploration of pattern and colour, that returns time and again to his signature motif, the circle. Siddharth had a solo show at Phoenix Art Centre in Brighton (2019) and has featured in group exhibitions at documenta fifteen (2022) and Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead (2023).

James Gladwell (b.1952) was born into a Romany gypsy community and was taught needlework by his grandmother at a young age. He has been a member of the Barrington Farm supported studio in Norfolk since 1989 where he developed his passion for drawing and embroidery. He spends hours stitching intricate designs onto found material and says it satisfies his need to create. James had a solo show at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester (2016) and his work won an award at the Norwich Castle Open Art Show (2018). He has works in various private and public collections including the Norfolk Museums Costume and Textile Collection.

Thompson Hall (b. 1975) joined ActionSpace in 1997. His work is primarily large-scale acrylic paintings and preparatory pencil drawings, using recognisable symbols to give accessible visual references to the subjects chosen. His recent art is inspired by the inequalities of society, what is happening in the world in regard to politics and marginalisation, and how these things affect him and his life. Thompson had a three-month residency at Autograph in London (2022) and took part in a collaborative project with the Royal Society of Sculptors in London (2023). A monograph about his practice was released in Spring 2024.

Richard Hunt (b. 1972) is based in Oxford and, since winning the Shape Open in 2017, has expanded his practice from just painting to embrace elements of sculpture and textured surfaces. Since 2016 he has worked in collaboration with Oxford-based artist Sonia Boué, and this partnership has helped Richard to develop his technique. Richard is a member of the Shadowlight Artists Group, which the arts charity Film Oxford supports. He has been in many Oxfordshire-based group exhibitions, most recently at The Old Fire Station (2023).

Nnena Kalu (b. 1966) is a prolific artist working from ActionSpace's supported studio in Studio Voltaire since 1999. Process, repetition and material are pivotal to Nnena's practice. The energy and passion Nnena emits through making, her methodology and the complex and ambitious work she creates are fascinating. She creates intense sculptural works and 2D paper-based works built from layers of repetitive circular forms. To-date she has had four solo shows, most recently with Arcadia Missa, London (2024), and has appeared in group exhibitions at MK Gallery in Milton Keynes (2023) and Carl Freedman Gallery in Margate (2022). In 2023 drawings were acquired by the TATE and Arts Council Collection.

Cameron Morgan (b.1965) is a multi-talented and prolific artist working with Project Ability in Glasgow since 1991. In 2016 he was awarded a lifetime fellowship to the RSA. Recently he has been fulfilling a research and development grant from Creative Scotland, working in collaborative residency projects with other professional artists. Cameron has had several solo shows at Project Ability, most recently in 2020, works regularly alongside printmaker Charlie Hammond, and was selected for an Unlimited Commission and subsequent exhibition at the Southbank Centre in London. He has also exhibited extensively around the UK and beyond.

Michelle Roberts (b. 1970) creates paintings at Project Art Works in Hastings, that are ambitious in scale, conception, and realisation. The subjects relate to lived experiences or special events she is aware of or has witnessed. Her paintings are carefully detailed, finely subdividing characters and forms into patterns and displays using paint or brush-pens. Michelle had a solo show at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester (2014) and was part of group exhibitions for the Turner Prize (2021) and documenta fifteen (2022). She is having a solo show at De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill, opening in September 2024.

Leslie Thompson (b. 1970) has been a studio artist at Venture Arts in Manchester for over 20 years. His drawings depict scenes from television and film from 1970–1990 and include fascinating written anecdotes from film, music, and TV. All born from his memory and imagination, they are highly detailed, varying massively in scale from tiny badge drawings to 5m long scrolls. Leslie had a solo show at Project Ability in Glasgow (2017), two solo shows in Manchester (2022), and group exhibitions at Castlefield Gallery in Manchester (2020) and TJ Boulting in London (2023). In 2023 he was selected as one of nine artists commissioned by the Government Art Collection to create new artwork about the Coronation.