

ArtSway

Contemporary Visual Art in the New Forest

Teachers Pack

ArtSway Open⁰⁶

9 December 2006 – 11 February 2007

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SWAY PARISH COUNCIL



ArtSway Open⁰⁶

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Exhibition Information for Teachers

About ArtSway

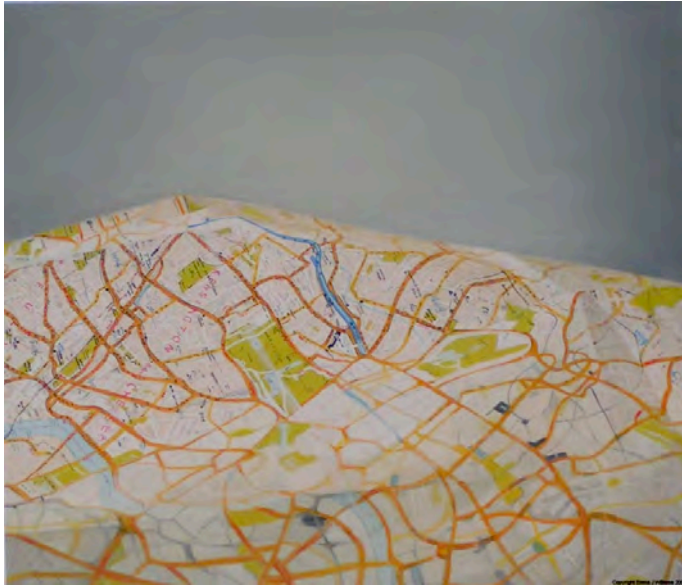
ArtSway is the contemporary visual arts venue in the New Forest, Hampshire. ArtSway supports the development, display and distribution of new work by artists and offers creative opportunities for audiences. ArtSway is one of the first National Lottery capital projects, funded through Arts Council England. The gallery was designed by architect Tony Fretton (Camden Arts Centre, Lisson Gallery, Quay Arts) and opened in 1997. Almost unique in the UK as a dedicated white space for the visual arts in a rural environment, ArtSway has developed a reputation for innovative exhibitions, such as the New Forest Pavilion at the 2005 Venice Biennale.

ArtSway Open⁰⁶

There was no theme to this year's Open Exhibition at ArtSway, in response to artists' concerns regarding the restrictiveness of prior themed briefs and the success of the previous Open exhibition (in previous years, the Open had themed titles such as 'Land', 'Animal' and 'commonground'). ArtSway's aim for this year was to select work that reflects the plurality of current artistic practices, and to produce a high-quality exhibition that can be enjoyed by audiences from the South of England and across the UK.

Artists were encouraged to submit work that reflected their current practice, and there was no restriction on content, or media used to make-work. The judges for ArtSway Open⁰⁶ were mainly looking for works that had a contemporary feel, which reflected contemporary themes and concerns, as well as works that are produced using traditional themes and methods. Almost 600 artworks, submitted by almost 300 artists, were judged for Open⁰⁶ with works being sent from across the United Kingdom, Europe and even as far a field as the US. Once the selection process was complete only 65 works had been selected, by 50 artists. In the New Year, one artist from the exhibition will be awarded a solo show at ArtSway in the latter part of 2007.

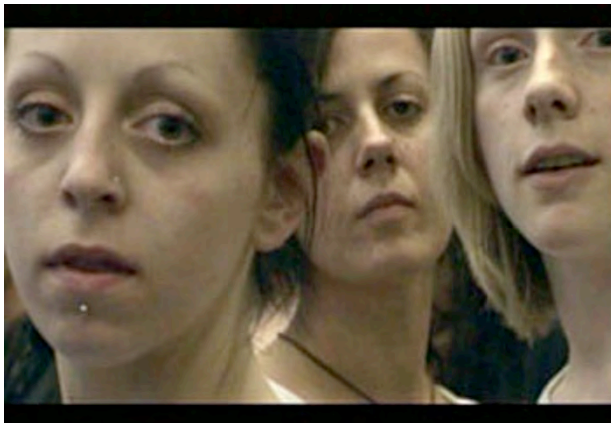
Selected Images and Artist Statements from ArtSway Open⁰⁶



Emma J. Williams, *Marylebone Flyover*, oil on board, 2002

Emma J. Williams Artist Statement

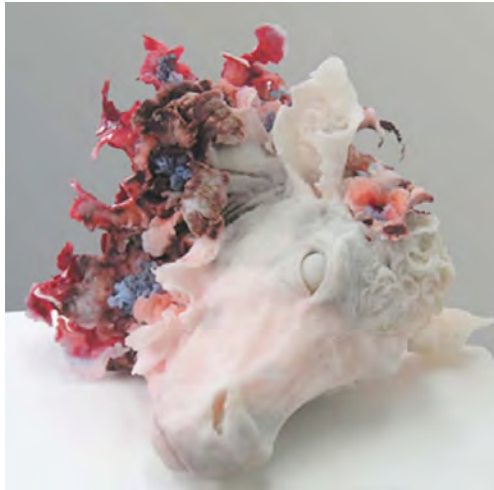
Maps are an integral part of urban living and, residing in a city as complex and intriguing as London, I am continually aware of how reliant I am upon them. With a fascination for the complexity of London living, maps become an inevitable and invaluable guide to navigating through London's many identities and facets. Various maps of London act as my inspiration, and amalgamating the map and the panoramic view, these paper landscapes form new and absurd views of the city. The paintings communicate in a language of lines, colours, symbols and empty spaces and the viewer is left to navigate through these transformed landscapes with only the aid of cartographic characteristics.



Miranda Pennell, *You Made Me Love You*, DVD, 2006

Miranda Pennell Artist Statement:

I originally studied Contemporary Dance and choreography and later started to explore choreographic ideas through film and video. With *You Made Me Love You* (2005) I wanted to explore the relationship between a moving camera and a moving subject. Twenty-one dance students showed up following an open-call. I gave them a simple instruction based on a reversal of the conventional camera-subject (or viewer-subject) relationship. The film is the result of this exercise – a game of cat and mouse with an unpredictable camera. This essentially formal exercise seems to produce other meanings because it combines the fixed nature of the camera-track with the immediacy and chance nature of the human response.



Rebecca Stevenson, *Pastorale*, polyester, resin and wax, 2006

Rebecca Stevenson Artist Statement:

My work uses a process of exposing the interior of sculptural objects. The work references anatomical drawing, flower painting and baroque sculpture. Figurative sculptures of humans or animals are created, then subverted and unravelled. Often I cut and peel back layers of material in a process that mimics a dissection. This process both mutilates and beautifies – the boundaries and meanings of the object becoming mutable and hard to define. The work is seductive and repellent, wilfully excessive and absurd. The wounded body or corrupted object is presented as a baroque spectacle, an object of both wonder and distaste.



Steffi Klenz, *Untitled from the series Nonsuch*, C-Type Print, 2005

Steffi Klenz Artist Statement:

My *Nonsuch* series concentrates on the 'model' town Poundbury in Dorset. Built on land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, the town owes its concept to the principles set out in the Prince Charles's book, *A Vision of Britain* (1989) – a book that engages with and searches for a material realisation of the perfect place inhabiting the ideal civil society.

The town is depicted while it is empty and presents a photographic series that is not reliant on human presence but that finds its drama and allegory in the physical and architectural presence of the town. The photographic series presents an uncanny feel of estrangement in its depiction of an abandoned town, devoid of people, litter and personal details – like a perfect backdrop for stage sets before or after a performance.

I deliberately do not represent Poundbury as the exemplary urban setting but rather visually create a town represented as a folly that seems to make the habitation and public life awkward.



Joel Papps, *Dukes 'C'*, OSB Board and wood veneers, 2005

Joel Papps Artist Statement

Using objective resource material including medical images and documents, the main focus of my work explores linear drawing, mapping and ideas relating to the body and illness. In addition I also use resources from other organic and cellular forms, and even cartographic maps.

Using imagery from these resources I translate them into two-dimensional wall reliefs and three-dimensional sculptures using composite wood boards such as OSB board and Plywood. The idea being to present an image/object that can be unrecognisable to the viewer to generate discussion of aesthetics of shapes, but also to offer a theatrical environment filled with ambiguity, tension and contradiction. Further ambiguity is presented by the titling of the work that uses Latin and medical terminology to inform what the shape depicts (E.g. '*Dukes 'C'*' the name given to the third stage of Bowel Cancer).



Johanna Eliisa Laitanen, *A Spectacle of Nature*, C-Type Print, 2006

Johanna Eliisa Laitanen Artist Statement

In the body of work *A Spectacle of Nature* (a series of photographs and a three channel film) I have examined the simulation of nature in natural history museums. Nature is viewed as a kind of cultural product representing the habitat dioramas as 'tableau of nature'. By removing the animal displays from their context, their gist turns to be something else. These carefully constructed animal displays reflect our ideas and desires projected on nature rather than representing nature objectively.

Themes for Lessons and Workshops

ArtSway Open⁰⁶ features work made in a variety of media, and encompasses a broad range of subject matter. You can find out more about this varied subject matter in the Artist Statement section of this booklet. As described in the **Exhibition Information for Teachers** part of this booklet, you will find that much of the work featured in Open⁰⁶ could be adapted for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum for Art, as well as Design and Technology.

Themes and Ideas to consider for Lessons:

- **Urban versus Rural**
- **Use of Tools and Unusual Materials**
- **Mortality**
- **Truth and Fiction**

Urban versus the Rural

The photographs of Steffi Klenz and Johanna Eliisa Laitanen both deal with how man attempts to control urban living, as well as the rural/ natural world. Klenz's photographs are of Poundbury – a village in Dorset founded by the Prince of Wales and lauded as model of gentle urban planning. Klenz photographs the village in a series she describes as 'Nonsuch', essentially claiming that the village is so bland that it become non-descript. Laitanen's photographs are of dioramas from natural history museums; set-ups manipulated by human hand and passed off as being realistic. Laitanen presents them as if they were actual images taken in the wild, but their artificiality – like that of Poundbury – is plain for all to see. In both artists' work the urban and the rural collide, with each attempting to overcome the other.

The map paintings of Emma J. Williams deal directly with how we perceive urban living. Williams' paintings appear at first to be areas of London that are hilly in terrain. However, we soon realise that the city is mostly flat, and the hills depicted in the maps give a false account of a real place. A map is considered an essential guide to a 'place', yet in Williams' paintings two states exist in our mind at once – provoking a sense of unease at our own recollections, as well as reinforcing our memories of a place we know well.

Use of Tools and Unusual Materials

Works included in Open⁰⁶ come in a range of materials, made with many different tools – many of which are not considered usual practice in the visual arts. Joel Papps fabricates his work using an electric jigsaw, cutting intricate shapes out of OSB board (a form of compressed chipboard). Rebecca Stevenson's sculptures are cast from many layers of wax and resin, which she then peels, cuts and distresses to make her final images. Zoe Keeton (work not shown in this pack) makes intimate works based on anti-social behaviour, using materials more commonly associated with sewing – even using appliqué and embroidery methods in a contemporary manner.

Many of the artists in Open⁰⁶ use traditional tools (such as Zoe Keeton) to produce work with a contemporary feel to it. The video camera is now becoming considered a traditional tool to produce contemporary art – although some artists still try to use unusual techniques to display their work. In their work *Infinity* (2006) Mai Yamashita and Naoto Kobayashi use a time-lapse camera to compress the lengthy time it took to make the work. Lyn Löwenstein (work not shown in this pack) also utilizes new/old technology to re-edit existing footage and present as new monologues by some of the world's leading political personalities.

Mortality

The works of Joel Papps and Rebecca Stevenson deal, respectively, with mortality in humans and animals. Papps' work is borne out of his own recent brush with mortality and his subsequent recovery from a life-threatening illness. The question of mortality is not immediately evident when first viewing Papps' 2-dimensional sculpture entitled *Dukes 'C'*. The title refers to the shape of a cell in third-stage bowel cancer: the elegant nature of this work – with its intricate lines and flowing shapes – belies the malignant nature of the subject being examined.

Stevenson's sculpture *Pastorale* explores mortality as it effects animals. However, the ghostly face of the cow featured in this work provokes thoughts on our own mortality, and in particular the consequences of a violent death: violence is in the distressed rear of the cow's skull, which at first sight appears bloodied and destroyed. Yet this initial horror is dispelled when we see that what we took for a bloody, pulpy mass is in fact a sprouting of blood-red roses. Horror and beauty exist here side-by side, at once revolting the viewer and the seducing them into the beauty of a horrific event.

Truth and Fiction

The photographs of Johanna Eliisa Laitanen at first appear to be straightforward recordings of animals in their natural habitat. The deer in *A Spectacle of Nature* appear to be caught in a moment in time, frozen in the flash of the camera. They are in fact real, albeit taxidermied animals, that have been posed in a diorama in a natural history museum. The artist has deliberately focused in on each tableau (other works in the *A Spectacle of Nature* series feature ducks and bears) and has filtered out any reference to a display case. It would seem her intention here is to question how realistic man can manipulate the natural world.

Steffi Klenz's photographs document various aspects of the village of Poundbury – which is a very real place, but has the feeling of a stage set, or as if the buildings were only façades similar to those constructed on movie sets. The paintings of Emma J. Williams at first seem to be real, touchable places – but on second viewing seems utterly absurd and could never be actual physical places.

Guided Tours and Workshops at ArtSway

ArtSway is always keen to welcome school groups visiting the gallery. Please see the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet for more information. **Please note:** we would only be able to accommodate between 20 and 25 children in the galleries per visit.

Guided Tours

One of the best ways to experience an artist's work, as opposed to looking at images in books and on the Internet, is to actually visit a gallery to see their work in the flesh. ArtSway has hosted many school group visits in the past, offering **Guided Tours** around the gallery by the Exhibitions and Education Officer and Audience Development Officer.

The tours sometimes involve power point presentations, but usually consist of ArtSway's Officers taking the students from work to work, explaining the origins and content of the works on display. A tour will usually end with a question and answer session.

On some occasions it may be possible to have the artists present for a school visit.

Workshops

ArtSway employs a wide range of artists to lead workshops. However, they are all professional artists who will charge a fee to lead a workshop. If a school is interested in scheduling an artist to lead a workshop, please contact the gallery. Contact details are in the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet.

There are a series of one-hour workshops available taking place after the tour of the exhibition that will be lead by ArtSway's Exhibitions and Education Officer. These workshops, that will involve simple drawing and paintings techniques, will be based on the themes outlined in the **Themes for Lessons and Workshops** section of this booklet. These themes will be relevant to the ArtSway Open⁰⁶ exhibition and are: **Urban versus Rural; Use of Tools and unusual Materials; Mortality and Truth and Fiction.**

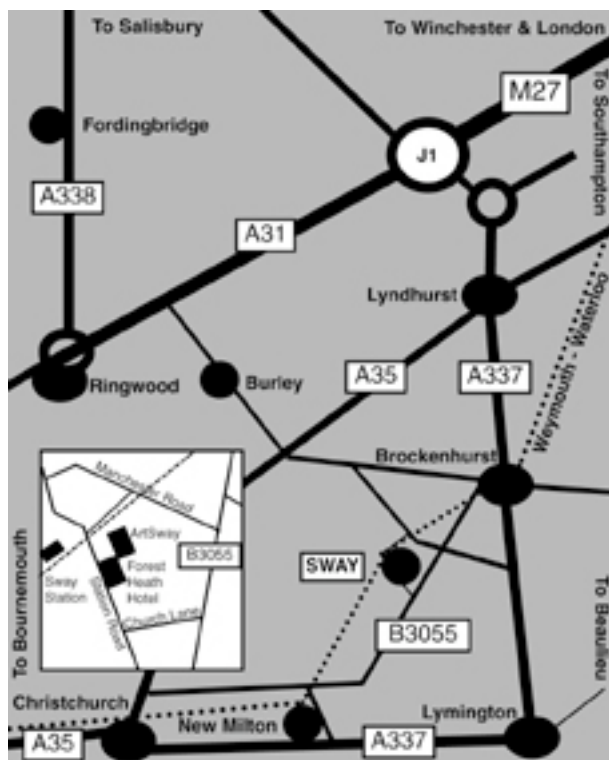
A Timetable of a Typical School Visit to ArtSway

- 10.00am – 10.10am: **Introduction and welcome to ArtSway.**
- 10.10am – 10.30am: **Tour of the exhibition.**
- 10.30am – 11.30am: **Workshop activities.**
- 11.30am – 11.45am: **Discussion and round up of activities.**
- 12.00pm: **End of workshops and school visit.**

Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway

The following is information for school groups visiting ArtSway for **Guided Tours and Workshops**.

Getting to ArtSway:



By Rail: Sway Station is on the London Waterloo to Weymouth Line.

By Car: Follow signs to Sway from Brockenhurst, Burley or Lymington, and then follow signs for Village Centre & Train Station. ArtSway is just behind the Forest Heath Hotel on Station Road.

Access: All parts of the gallery are accessible via level access.

Parking: ArtSway has its own car park that is reached along the access drive between the surgery and chemist on Station Road in the centre of Sway

In the Galleries

Works of art can be very fragile and cannot be touched. We ask that children visiting the gallery take care both of their own safety and of the artworks on display. Teachers and their assistants are responsible for their groups. At the beginning of the tour the relevant ArtSway Officer will give a brief explanation to the visiting children of what they can and cannot do in the gallery.

Contact Details for ArtSway

If you would like to discuss a visit to ArtSway, or what we could offer in terms of educational resources, please contact:

Exhibitions and Education Officer Peter Bonnell on Telephone: 01590 682260 (extension 14), or Email: peter@artsway.org.uk

Address: ArtSway, Station Road, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA
Telephone: 01590 682260 **Fax:** 01590 681989

Email: mail@artsway.org.uk **Web:** www.artsway.org.uk

Opening Times: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm. **Admission is FREE.**