



#20
february 2021

LISTEN UP

A beautiful playlist made for us by Maximo Park's Paul Smith

BUNGEE JUMPING OFF THE TRANSPORTER BRIDGE

Amy shares memories of the day she took the plunge

THINGS TO DO

Foundation Press suggest things you may or may not like to do at home

GREETINGS FROM

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The society documents February's everyday wonders

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Philosophical fun for all the family.

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Get involved in future issues of MIMAZINA

CREDITS

This feature shares musical playlists put together especially for MIMAZINA by musicians. This month it's Maximo Park's Paul Smith.

LISTEN UP!

LISTEN UP!

Words: Paul Smith



Hello, I'm Paul Smith and I make music with a band called Maximo Park, as well as with a bunch of other people, or sometimes by myself. The band has a new album out on February 26th, called *Nature Always Wins*. It was initially inspired by parenthood, which then led me to thinking about my own Teesside upbringing on a couple of the songs, including *Child Of The Flatlands*, which has a music video filmed in the area.

I've been very busy lately, piecing the album together with my bandmates while we all keep our distance, which has been a challenge. Add some home-schooling into the mix and there isn't much time for anything else, as I'm sure many readers can also attest! However, I've made time each week to compile 90 mins of songs and chatter for a Monday night Star & Shadow Radio show that I've called *Dear Listener*.

At 7.30pm, with my daughter (hopefully) tucked up in bed, I plug in my laptop, don my headphones, and broadcast live from my attic room. The show is important to me because I really believe in the volunteer-run DIY artistic ethos of the Star & Shadow Cinema, and it's one of the many Newcastle-based small venues that can't open under current restrictions. It also allows me to rummage through my record collection and stay in touch with other music at a time when it would be much easier to be consumed by the news or promoting our new album. I like the idea of sharing my musical enthusiasms with people while they're listening because I feel a real connection with radio as a listener myself. Here are ten of my favourite songs that I've played in the 39 episodes so far (all available to listen again [here](#) on the Star & Shadow Mixlr page, FYI!).

You can
listen
to the
whole
playlist
[HERE](#)

1. [LISTEN](#) Park Jiha *The Longing Of The Yawning Divide*

I first heard this South Korean artist's music on Kathryn Tickell's BBC Radio 3 show *Music Planet* in 2018. I made a note to get her album *Communion*, and have since bought her second album *Philos* - both are excellent. Primarily, she plays a traditional Korean instrument called a piri, which is like an oboe. Piri is a double reed bamboo flute so it can be quite loud, and there's a blend of minimal melodies with some quite harsh sounds that can jump out and surprise the listener.

2. [LISTEN](#) Flying Saucer Attack *Beach Red Lullaby*

I love the enigmatic sound of this Bristolian experimental space-rock band led by songwriter David Pearce. Guest vocals on this song are by Rachel Brook from the brilliant Movietone, who I recently featured on the show. You can hear multiple layers of feedback and tape hiss on most FSA songs, but the ethereal voice on this one makes it a precursor to Grouper, the nom de plume of Liz Harris, another *Dear Listener* favourite.

3. [LISTEN](#) John Cameron *Kes Front Titles*

Each week, I usually focus on a soundtrack or under-appreciated album and the *Kes* soundtrack (1969) was one of my favourites to work on. Cameron has said he was looking for a theme that "captured the naivety and fragility" of lead character, Billy Casper - hence the penny whistle - "a little boy making his way in the world", while avoiding the sentimental, mirroring Ken Loach's direction style. You'll hear flute, clarinet and harp mingling together on this simple yet richly rewarding soundtrack. Cameron wanted alto flautist Harold McNair to imitate the "hovering, swooping, fluttering, and diving of the kestrel".

4. ~~LISTEN~~ Nina Simone *Who Knows Where The Time Goes?*

This 1969 recording of a concert at the Philharmonic Hall in New York, can be found on the 1970 album *Black Gold*, but I first heard it on the John Malkovich-directed film, *The Dancer Upstairs*. I was stunned in the cinema and immediately sought out the original. Apart from the astonishing vocal performance, there's a spellbinding two-minute introduction where Nina Simone gets philosophical about time itself, the captivated audience in the palm of her hand. The song itself, in its Sandy Denny-led Fairport Convention incarnation, has been a favourite of mine for many years, but this rendition is transcendent.

5. ~~LISTEN~~ Raymond Scott *Sleepy Time*

Scott was a pioneer of electronic music. An American composer, band leader, pianist, record producer, and inventor of electronic instruments, older readers might've heard his music used in old Warner Brothers cartoons. This piece of music is from the first volume of his early '60s series, *Soothing Sounds For Baby*, billed as an "indispensable aid for parents." Whether that's true or not is open to question, but this is very beautiful, minimal music, with a hint of disquiet at its heart. Fun fact: Berry Gordy hired Scott in 1971 as director of Motown's electronic music and research department in Los Angeles, a position Scott held until 1977.

6. ~~LISTEN~~ Prince *Katrina's Paper Dolls*

This curio comes from Prince's famous vaults of unreleased music that are now, gradually, seeing the light of day. Taken from the *Purple Rain* reissue, I spent a good few weeks of last summer, driving my daughter to nursery with this pumping out of the car stereo at full volume. She loved his occasional screams on some of the other songs, but I liked the strange groove and mysterious lyrics on this one. I especially enjoy the new melody he introduces when he sings the title in the outro. I think he plays everything on this himself, which is typically Prince.

7. ~~LISTEN~~ Harald Grosskopf *B. Aldrian*

In Summer 1979, Harald Grosskopf, a drummer who lived in Berlin and had appeared on recordings by Klaus Schulze, Ash Ra Tempel, and others, made his debut album *Synthesist* in the apartment of a friend in Krefeld, Germany. In the flat he had a Minimoog, a primitive sequencer, and an 8-track reel-to-reel recorder, and the synth sounds he developed have a lovely fizzy quality. Apparently, Grosskopf's Minimoog's pitch would go flat or sharp depending on how warm or cold it was in the space. He eventually realised that if he placed a 60-watt light bulb near the synth, he could regulate the temperature enough to keep the instrument sounding good!

8. LISTEN

Bobby 'Blue' Bland *Who Will The Next Fool Be?*

I play a lot of old soul on *Dear Listener*, and there's no-one better than Bobby, AKA The Voice (so good they gave him two nicknames). I watched a documentary about him and he had this odd technique of pinching his neck to make his voice rougher! This song is brilliant – written by Charlie Rich who has also featured on the show – and the band is red hot, cooking up a brooding storm to match Bland's anguished performance.

9. LISTEN

Pylon *Read A Book*

Good advice conveyed via the medium of post-punk from Athens, Georgia. Punchy and off-kilter, which is how I like my post-punk bands. Done and dusted in two minutes.

10. LISTEN

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan *Shamas-ud-doha, Badar-ud-doja*

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was a Pakistani vocalist, primarily a singer of Qawwali, a form of Sufi Islamic devotional music. Extending the 600-year old Qawwali tradition of his family, Khan is widely credited with introducing Qawwali music to international audiences. He is popularly known as "Shahenshah-e-Qawwali", meaning 'The King of Kings of Qawwali' and the album this is from is called *Shahen Shah*. I found it in a charity shop in Heaton. The singing is off the dial!

NOTES

Hear more of Paul's music by following these links.

1. Archived *Dear Listener* programmes on Star & Shadow's mixlr page.

[CLICK HERE](#)

2. Maximo Park's *Child of the Flatlands* video and general you tube channel.

[CLICK HERE](#)

3. Paul's Instagram: @thinkinginpictures @maximoparkofficial

Please note also Prince's *Katrina's Paper Dolls* is currently unavailable on YouTube, listen to Paul's *Dear Listener* show to hear it!

BUNGEE JUMPING OFF THE TRANSPORTER BRIDGE...



Words and images: Amy Brannan

The Transporter Bridge is one of the most iconic landmarks in Teesside. Standing proud at 68m tall and renowned for its unique structure, the bridge is a solid reminder of Teesside's engineering and industrial heritage. It remains one of only eight working transporter bridges in the world and has been providing its services for over a century. Taking only 90 seconds to cross the river, the gondola (the structure suspended below the bridge) can carry nine cars (or six cars and one minibus) as well as a staggering 200 people.

Construction began in July 1909 and was completed by October 1911. The bridge was originally painted red and it wasn't until 1961 that it was painted the signature blue colour we see today.

Over the years the Tees Transporter Bridge has become a leading visitor attraction, as well as being one of the UK's 'go-to' spots for extreme sports such as bungee jumping, abseiling and zip wiring. "Now, who would be daring enough to even think about doing one of those?" you may ask. That would be me. In June 2017, I bungee jumped off of the Transporter Bridge and it was one of the best experiences of my life (so far).

Walking up the 210 steps gave me a lot of time to think about my decision and wonder why I decided to do it in the first place. Considering I was about to jump off a VERY high structure, I'd say that was a normal response. I still remember feeling the coldness of the hand rails and my grip tightening as the ground slowly started to become nothing but a distant memory. As I finally made it to the top, the beauty of Teesside's industrial landscape surrounded me. I watched in anticipation as one by one, the group who I was with made their jumps... and then it was my turn. The final checks were made to my harness and rope. From that moment on, I knew there was no going back. I remember looking down and fixating on the water and nothing else.

I closed my eyes to take a breath and I could feel my heart pounding in my ears. This was actually happening. Worried, scared, excited AND standing 160ft above the River Tees, my feet teetering over the green, tarp-covered ledge, I had just a few seconds to absorb the breathtaking views until 3, 2... I never made it to 1. Within seconds, I went from being airborne and feeling like I was freefalling to suddenly hovering upside down over the river, the sun's rays bouncing off the water and glimmering back at me.

A sense of calm washed over me as I swung to a halt and waited for the boat to collect me. It was oddly refreshing to view the world from upside down in that brief moment. Before I knew it, I was back upright and was being whisked to dry land where my friends were waiting for me.

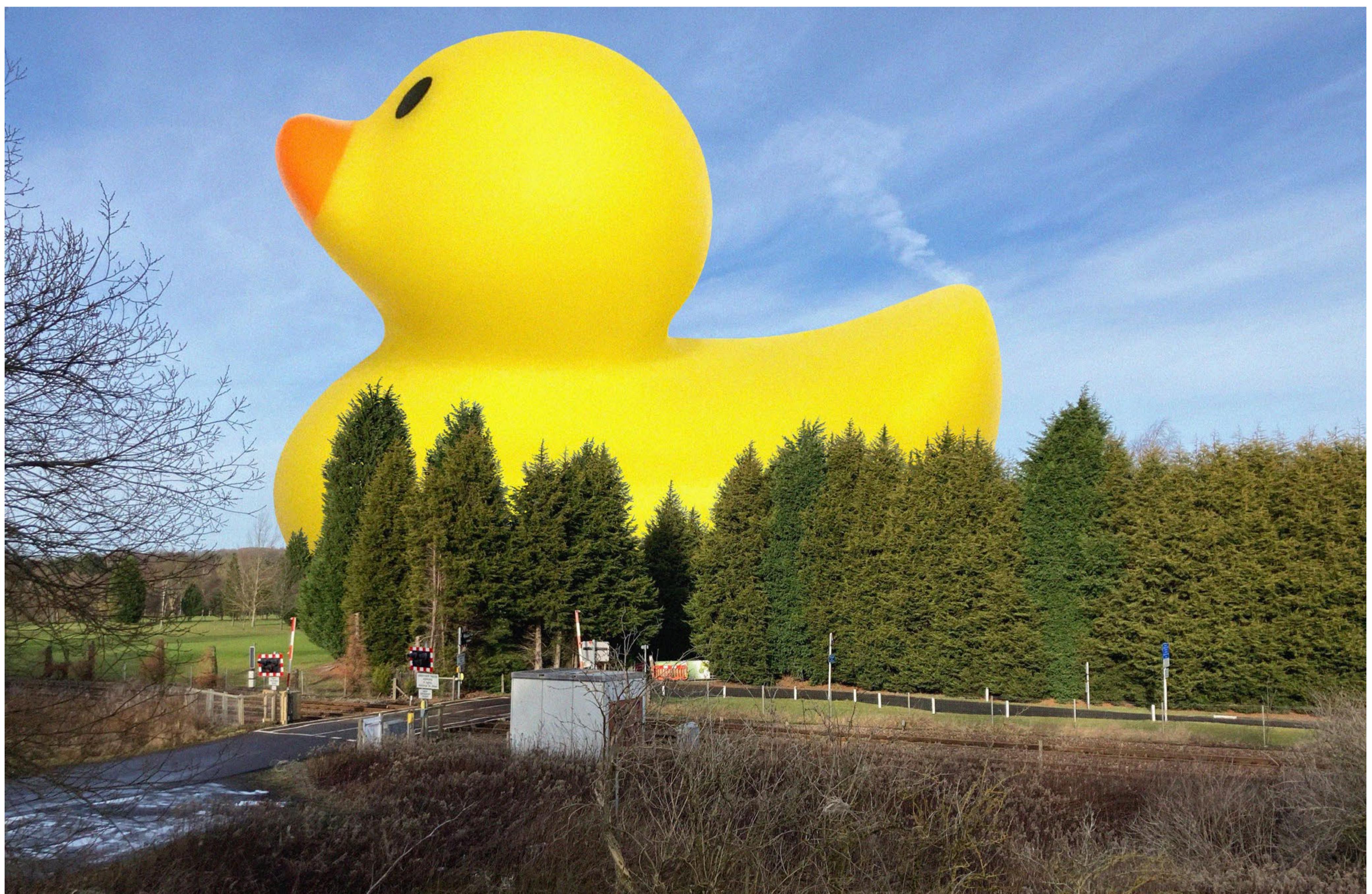
Was I scared? Yes. Would I do it again?
YES!



Things To Do

Foundation
Press suggest
things you may
or may not
like to do at
home.

VISUALISE
GIANT
SCULPTURES
MAKING
YOUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD









This sculpture is functional – it is a scarecrow for rats.



NOTES

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, the duo behind Middlesbrough's well-known sculpture *Bottle of Notes*, made lots of giant versions of familiar objects for cities around the world. Examples include huge pool balls, trowels, hats, a torch and a pick axe. Check out some of their pieces on this website:

[CLICK HERE](#)

If you are a reader of MIMAZINA from outside the Tees Valley send us a 'postcard' (in email form) about where you are. Share some interesting facts and photos from your home or describe what you've been up to recently.

Words and images: Paul Becker



My wife Nadia and I had twin boys in the middle of the first wave of Coronavirus so things have been intense. We live in a small cottage way up on the Stockholm Archipelago, part of the Baltic Sea. We have no kind of support network here. We have one or two expat friends back in the city but Swedish people, though universally kind and helpful are notoriously difficult to get to be friends with. We have been worried what we would do if one or both of us was ill.

As I write we are snowed in. It is coming down hard, whirling around the lamppost at the top of the road, the wind is whistling down the chimney but the fire is blazing away. We have lots of wood, a bottle of the true Laphroaig and enough baby food and nappies to last us a month. The roads are regularly snow ploughed but we have no car and public transport feels off limits. There has been more 'encouragement' to wear masks here recently but still only about 20% of people wear them. We tried to cycle to the supermarket but kept falling off and (as it was minus 12) the brakes kept seizing up.

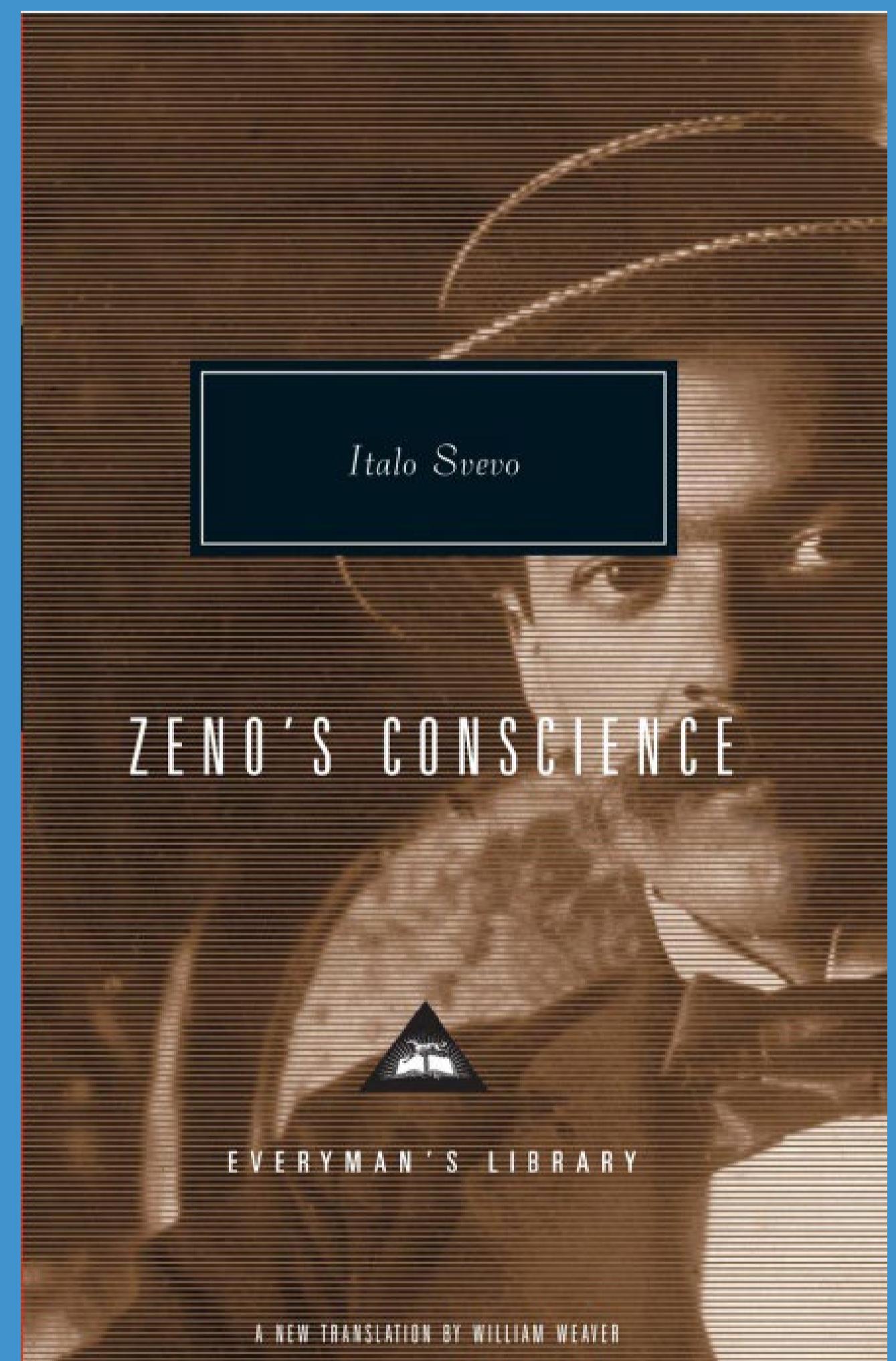
Our children are called Zeno and Linus Og. If we had had a baby girl we wanted to call her 'Hero' after a dear female friend of Nadia's. But we were understandably hesitant about giving that name to a boy. Zeno is the next best. I love the book *Zeno's Conscience* by Italo Svevo. It is a kind of confession from a deeply unreliable narrator. There is a whole chapter called *The Last Cigarette* which is about all the times he gave up smoking but had to start again each time as he had become addicted to the thrill of forsaking old habits and beginning life anew. Linus comes from the Peanuts cartoons and Og is named after a lovely old friend from Suffolk.

Our days are so completely filled we have little time for introspection, existential angst from the winter light or even the luxury of boredom. Sometimes 48 hours can go by before I realise I haven't eaten or washed. We wait until they are safe in bed and can usually get in an hour of work before we both collapse. I have mostly been drawing cats.

It is such a strange time for everyone. The weirdest part of it for us is that we are stuck in the middle of nowhere, in a strange country with no friends or family around, deep in a global apocalypse and neither of us have ever felt so utterly joyful. Anyway, sending all our best wherever you are, especially to those of you in our old stomping ground the North East which we know has been hit really hard.

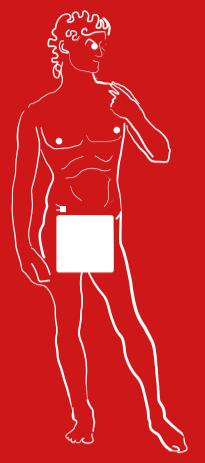
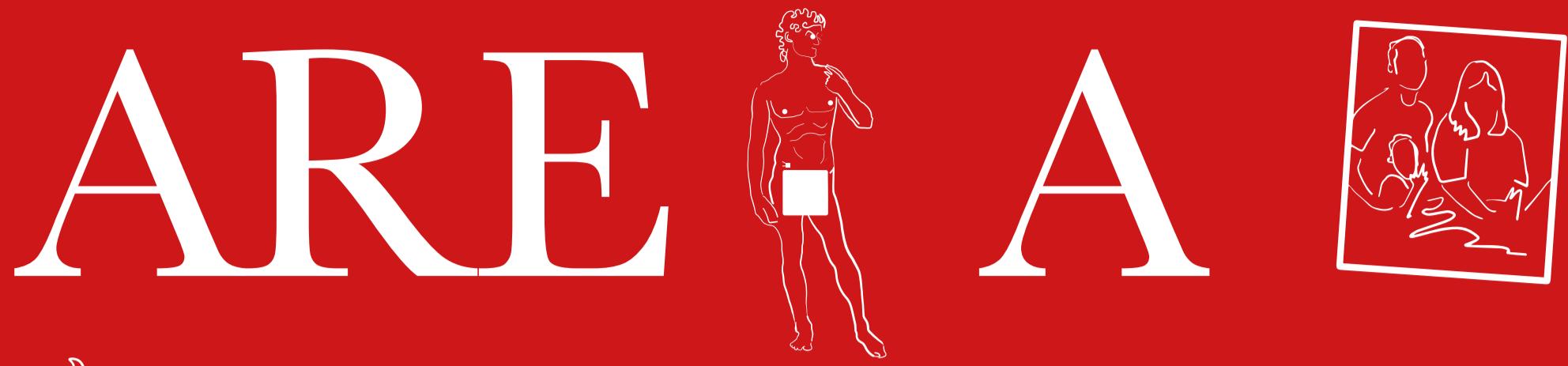
Paul

PS: I read Dawn Bothwell's incredible playlist in the last issue and in signing off, I thought you might like to know what music our boys are listening to...



1. Ol' 55 (Tom Waits)
2. Happy (Pharrell Williams)
3. The Barrel (Aldous Harding)
4. Rocky Road to Dublin (The Dubliners)
5. May You Never (John Martyn)
6. Observatory Crest (Captain Beefheart)
7. The Very Thought of You (Al Bowlly with the Ray Noble Orchestra)
8. Tradition! (From Fiddler on the Roof)
9. Fly Me To The Moon (Julie London)
10. Pink + White (Frank Ocean)
11. Days (The Kinks)
12. Mahna Mahna (The Muppets)

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM



- What object in your home would you add to these pages? It doesn't have to be a work of art, but it should be something of meaning to you.
- This month we hear from Louise Scott.



Words: Louise Scott / Image: Sarah Walton/
Onngaland, 'Lou-Lou' Cleghorn 3.

This print of a painting 'Lou-Lou' Cleghorn 3 by artist, designer and super-friend Sarah Walton hangs in my kitchen and makes me smile every day.

The artwork was a gift for my 40th birthday in 2020. Sarah stood on the lawn at the front of my house as she handed the picture over, keeping the recommended 2-metres distance. We wrinkled our faces and shook our heads at how wrong it felt not to hug or make plans to celebrate.

Sarah is a creative dynamo! Her background is Fashion Communication in which she is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Northumbria. However, her Cleghorn series is just part of a wider, personal creative project she named Onngaland.

Onngaland is a creative construct where Sarah can experiment and create artworks and artefacts within a kind of fantasy 'brand'. Whether a painting, print, textile or crafted object, each has a strong sense of personality and aesthetic identity. The cohesive sense of identity an Onngaland character inhabits is very appealing.



I have seen the Cleghorn series – with its folksy/sassy/moody attitude, develop from small wooden figures to embroidery and more recently paintings and illustrative works. Visual references to folk art/craft are complimented by a contemporary fashion-illustrative sensibility. The trademark stare and circular markings on the cheeks combine with Fair Isle prints and luscious colour schemes.

'Lou-Lou' Cleghorn 3 is named after me – an obvious reason to appreciate it! Beyond that, I enjoy the odd melancholy of her expression and the line running down her face like a seam, as if a dressmaker's dummy had come to life. I'm almost certain she has great taste in music. I long to be cool enough to sport her sharp, pink bob and borrow her sweater. I recall the first 'proper' artwork on my wall as a teenager – a Modigliani portrait of a sullen, long-faced woman who chimed with my often ghoulish persona.

It is comforting to me that, implicit in this picture on my kitchen wall is a real sense of the person who made it. Due to the nature of our long friendship, I respond to an image and a line drawn by my friend in the same way you might smile at the familiar handwriting of a family member. Having shared studios and collaborated on projects, the familiar sight of her drawing transports me to a happier and more productive time in places beyond the limits of home.

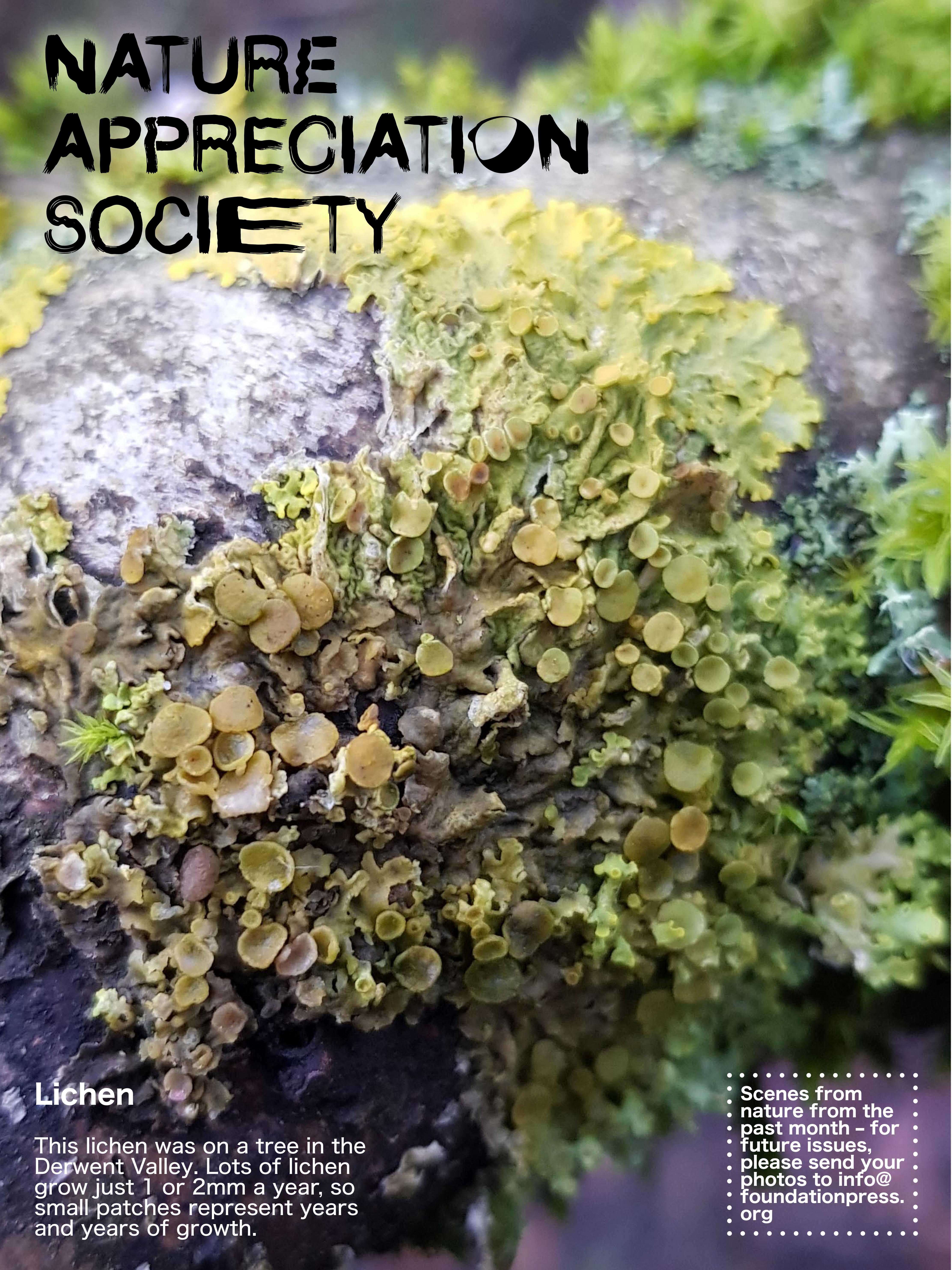
In this time of lockdowns and social isolation the picture has acted as a placeholder for my friend. I haven't gone as far as to pour 'Lou-Lou' a glass of wine and tell her about my day, but we're still in lockdown so never say never. However, it's a comforting reminder that my friend is still there and that hopefully before too much longer we will spend time together again.



Image: *'Lou Lou' Cleghorn 3* hanging in Louise's kitchen / Credit: Louise Scott

For more
Onngaland
imagery and
information visit
@onngaland on
Instagram.

NATURE APPRECIATION SOCIETY



Lichen

This lichen was on a tree in the Derwent Valley. Lots of lichen grow just 1 or 2mm a year, so small patches represent years and years of growth.

Scenes from nature from the past month – for future issues, please send your photos to info@foundationpress.org

1. Common Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*

Agnes is intrigued by the first flowers of spring, which were there as soon as the snow melted.

2. Common Chickweed *Stellaria media*

This chickweed was a brilliant flash of green on a grey day. It's also edible and eaten on the Festival of Seven Herbs, or Nanakusa no sekku, in Japan on 7 January. A healthy start to the New Year.

3. Tree

Mike spotted this funny tree formation between Henshaw and Melkridge. Possibly a sycamore, and looking like it's holding up another little tree.

4. Background image

This is a Canadian goose feather that has been sitting in the house, seen through a microscope. I'm thinking of all those feathers hard at work keeping their birds all warm these past few weeks.

1



2



3



4



Funghi

This is some kind of bracket mushroom, which are only found growing on dead or living trees. As well as beautiful colours and textures on the top, it's always worth looking underneath these kinds of mushrooms - their pores or tubes can have really lovely patterns.

The Middlesbrough Collection, held at MIMA, encompasses 2,250 works from 1870 to 2020, made by local and international artists. The Tees Valley's art historical depository, it holds many voices and stories, intertwining various media, styles, periods, and subjects. Each month we select artworks to share.

COLLECTION REFLECTION

Group Show #8 Dance

Works gathered by Helen Welford.

This month's Collection Reflection Group Show brings together three artworks from the Middlesbrough Collection that take dance as their subject matter. Ed Pien's ink study depicts fantastical creatures engaged in a gruesome dance with death. Susanna Heron's wearable headpiece in the collection was used and documented in contemporary dance performances throughout the 1980s. *The Joyous Band* by nineteenth-century artist Thomas Shotter Boys presents a cheerful scene of communal dancing and decadence. This feature is followed by an alternative reading of Shotter Boys' work by Kingsley Hall.



Words by Alireza Safaeian Rizi and Helen Welford.

Dance Macabre (1999)

Ed Pien

Taiwan, 1958
Ink on paper

Dance Macabre comprises nineteen black ink drawings on individual sheets of paper presented in a grid arrangement. The human-like studies can be viewed as unique characters, perhaps demons, spirits or ghosts, with different personalities and gestures. Each figure is composed of human forms that multiply and transform into strange, grotesque and fanciful creatures. They seem to resist the containment in a single body and move as if to escape the boundaries of the page to venture into another part of the composition.

The work considers the universal experience of death which unites all people. It aims to evoke empathy and bring people together in this shared condition. Dance Macabre means 'dance of death' and derives from the late Middle Ages where in the visual, literary and performing arts the character 'Death' calls people from all positions in society, including a pope, emperor, king, child and labourer, to dance with them to death.

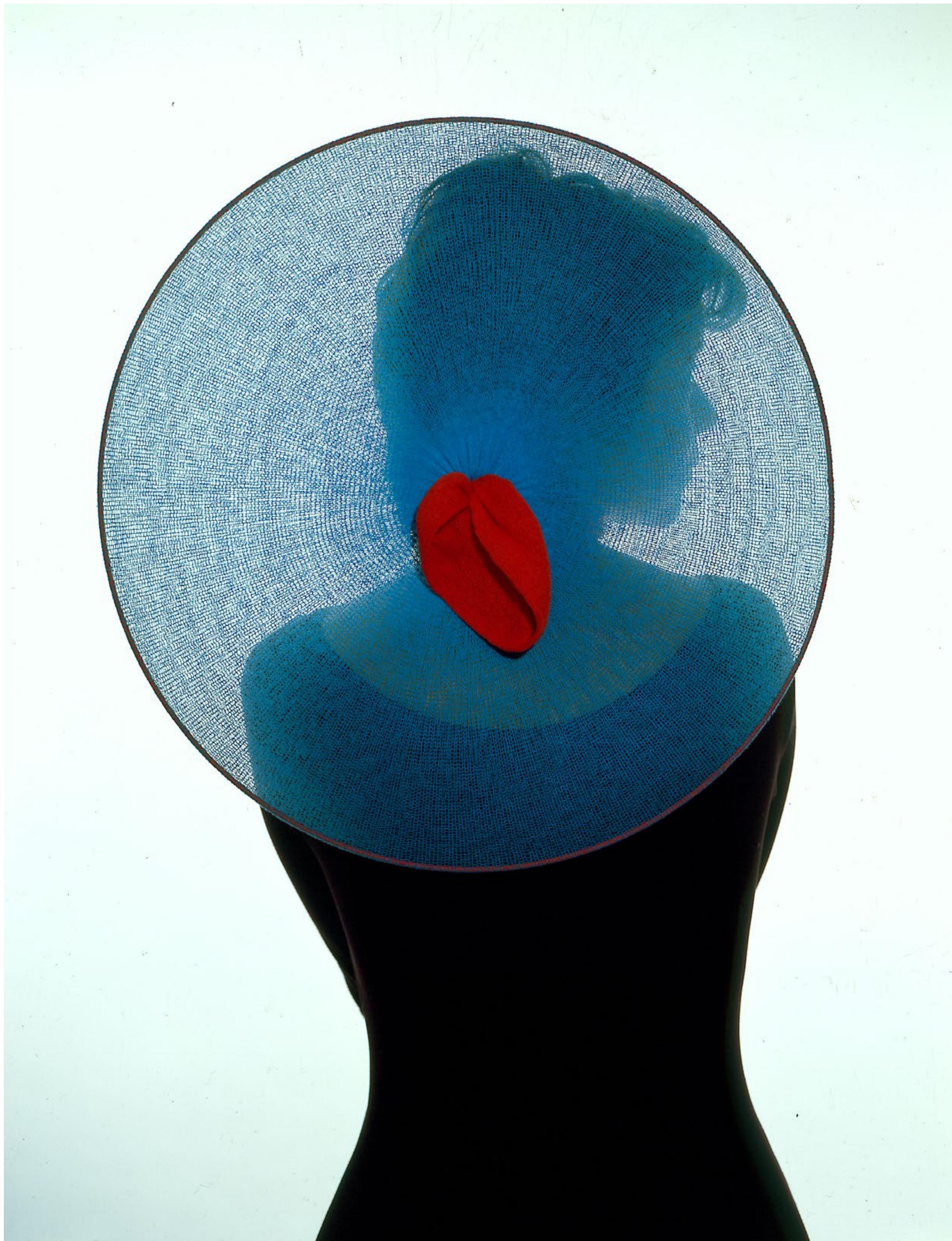
Ed Pien was born in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1958 and emigrated to Canada in 1969. He represented Canada in the Sydney Biennale 2012. He works across drawing, video and installation to express deep-rooted and universal human fears.

Wearable (1982)

Susanna Heron

England, 1949
Cotton and metal

Words: Amy Brannan



Wearable – as the name suggests – is a piece of wearable art which was created by British artist and former jewellery maker, Susanna Heron in 1982. It forms part of her *Wearables* series of works which, according to Heron, “were named as they were meant to be seen – as useful objects to be worn – they were not to be seen as sculpture.”* This series signified the end of Heron’s jewellery making and the beginning of a new venture in sculpture.

The piece itself comprises a large wire hoop covered with a form of stockinette that is knotted into place. The contrasting colours of blue and red are really vibrant together, especially in this image that showcases the piece eclipsing the wearer’s identity from behind, whilst simultaneously creating a striking silhouette. It’s almost reminiscent of a cyanotype print.

Heron explains that these “flat discs were to be worn like hats – reminiscent of a circular brim, set on top or tied against the side of the head, pushed off the head and worn on your back like a sunhat – or hung on the wall as much as one hangs hats in a hall.”

*Quotations from RIBA Journal April 2009

The Joyous Band (date unknown)

Thomas Shotter Boys

England, 1803-1874

Oil on canvas



Words: Kingsley Hall

Thomas Shotter Boys was born in Pentonville, North London in 1803 and his astonishing engraving and painting skills provided him with a rapid rise to fame in the early nineteenth century. When he was still in his early twenties he had exhibited at London's Royal Academy and The Salon in Paris and in his next decade would pioneer innovative techniques in creating colour lithographs and even draw favour from King Louis-Phillippe I of France, receiving a diamond encrusted ring engraved with the initials "L.P." He would go on to live a colourful life, constantly moving around the cultural epicentres of European society, until his career drastically declined in the 1850s leaving him scrambling for any work he could get. He died in poverty in 1874.

In *The Joyous Band*, Boys paints a decadent scene. In the distance the striding characters appear strong and triumphant, (despite being dressed in fashions that were outdated even for the mid-nineteenth century) but as we look along the line of the main group there's a gradual deterioration of poise, balance and decorum. There's a suggestion that they're mid-way through a drunken dance but (possibly due to levels of intoxication) some of the participants seem more able to stand up than others resulting in the pair at the end collapsed in a heap on the grass clambering to get up.

The Joyous Band (date unknown)

Thomas Shotter Boys

England, 1803-1874
Oil on canvas

An alternative reading

Words: Kingsley Hall

If you didn't get in the Green Dragon by 6:30pm on a Friday night, the only seating available was on the floor. We'd finish Sixth Form for the week, have our tea, watch Neighbours, then wander to town. The door opened with a sweaty creak, cigarette smoke billowing like a goth concert, the bar three-deep with teenagers in Britpop gear and locals who seemed ancient at the time but were probably in their early 30s. The beer was cheap, it still is, and the landlord had a big stick to attack people who got out of hand. I remember the first drink I ever ordered was from here: "a bottle of Newcastle Brown please mate", said in a squeaky voice, the brand chosen as I'd seen people drinking it around me and on the telly so presumed it must be nice and the sort of thing an underage drinker masquerading as a young man would drink. They didn't even sell it. Rumbled. "Errr that one then please."

The jukebox would blurt out the Rolling Stones and the Happy Mondays for hours and I'd ruin the mood by putting The Sisters of Mercy on, it would usually get skipped after about two minutes. We'd sit there on the step next to the fire smoking and drinking, kings of our little shabby castle on the beer sodden, tab trampled floor.

In order to get in the Waterfront club for free we'd have to get down early as they charged a couple of quid after ten, plus we'd get to claim a sofa in the conservatory for the night, like a load of adolescent Tony Montanas. It was a twenty-minute walk to get there, just enough time to neck the bottle of MD20/20 you'd bought at lunchtime and take a few swigs of the vodka that was always floating about. Down the steps, over the dual carriageway, along the river, arm in arm all the way, holding each other up and laughing.



ABODE
PROJECT
SPACE
MIDDLESBROUGH



- This month
- Helen Welford interviews Anna Byre and Liam Slevin who run the Auxiliary Project Space in Middlesbrough.



Can you describe the work that you do?

We run an eclectic programme of contemporary exhibitions, events and festivals from our space in Middlesbrough. We offer opportunities and platforms for regional artists through residencies, exhibitions and bursaries. Since 2019 we've also started offering studio spaces at our warehouse space in Middlesbrough.

What inspires and motivates you?

Our son's nap time tends to be a big motivator. North Gare is a favourite place to go for a walk and a think. And a hot whiskey around 4pm can do wonders on a winter's day.

What are you reading/listening/watching at the moment?

We are reading up lots on the artist Gordon Matta Clarke. Working with his estate, his work will feature at Middlesbrough Art Weekender over the next two years. We are listening to future folk artist Me Lost Me. Liam can't get enough of the new Bush album, either!



Image: Alan Hathaway, work in progress as part of ABODE Residency
/ Credit: Courtesy of the artist and The Auxiliary



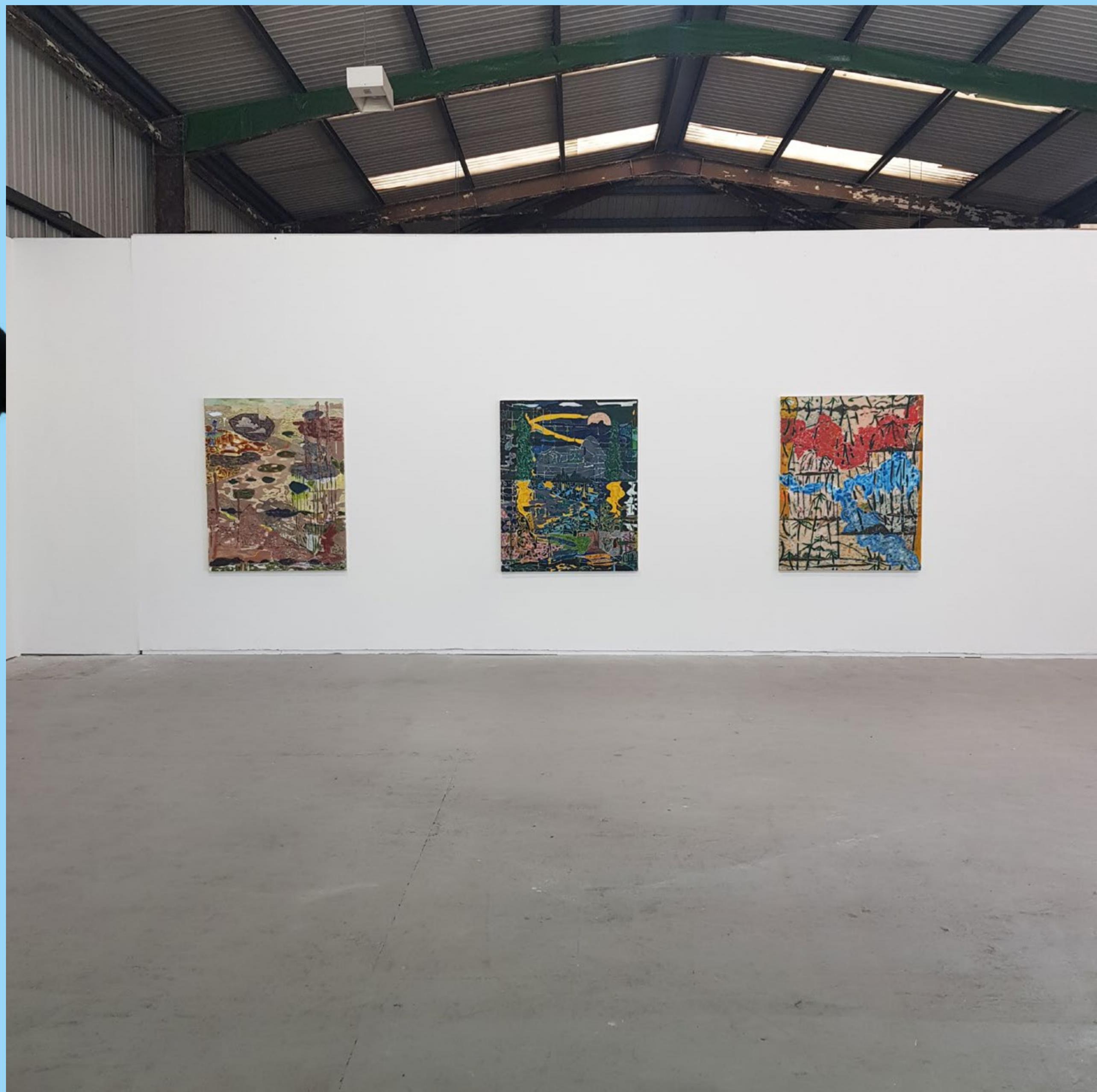
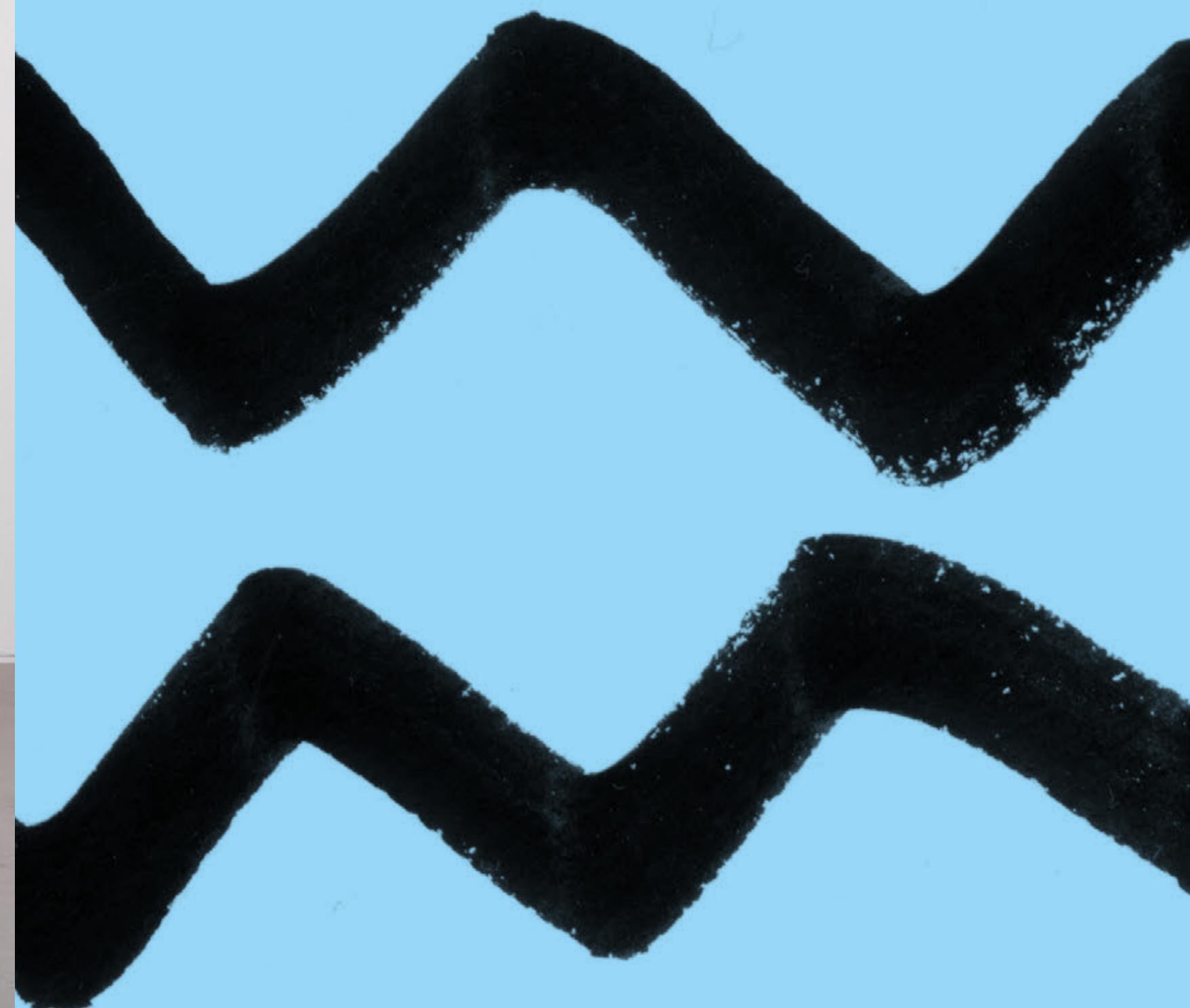


Image (this page):
Gordon Dalton, install
view from Dead
Reckoning at The
Auxiliary / Credit:
Courtesy of the artist
and The Auxiliary

Image (previous page): Annie O' Donnell, Sarah Tulloch, Katy Cole, work in progress as part of ABODE Residency / Credit: Courtesy of the artists and The Auxiliary



Who is an important voice for you right now?

Both Prosper North and Vanessa Rawlings Jackson from Cultivate have been really important for us this past year. The voices of our studio holders and listening to what they need has really shaped our programming.

If you could share one idea, thought or message, what would it be?

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." - Anna's dad shared this with us, and the original quote comes from Goethe (we think). There's real power in being bold. It's something we admire in others, and something we strive to do.

What's great about the Tees Valley?

We came to the Tees Valley back in 2016, on a trip to see Anna's brother, who was living here. We couldn't get over the incredible post-industrial landscape. It was a beautiful cold blue day, and we stopped at the Dorman coke tower. That clinched the deal for us – we moved here three months later, and never left!

WHAT CHINESE NEW YEAR MEANS TO ME

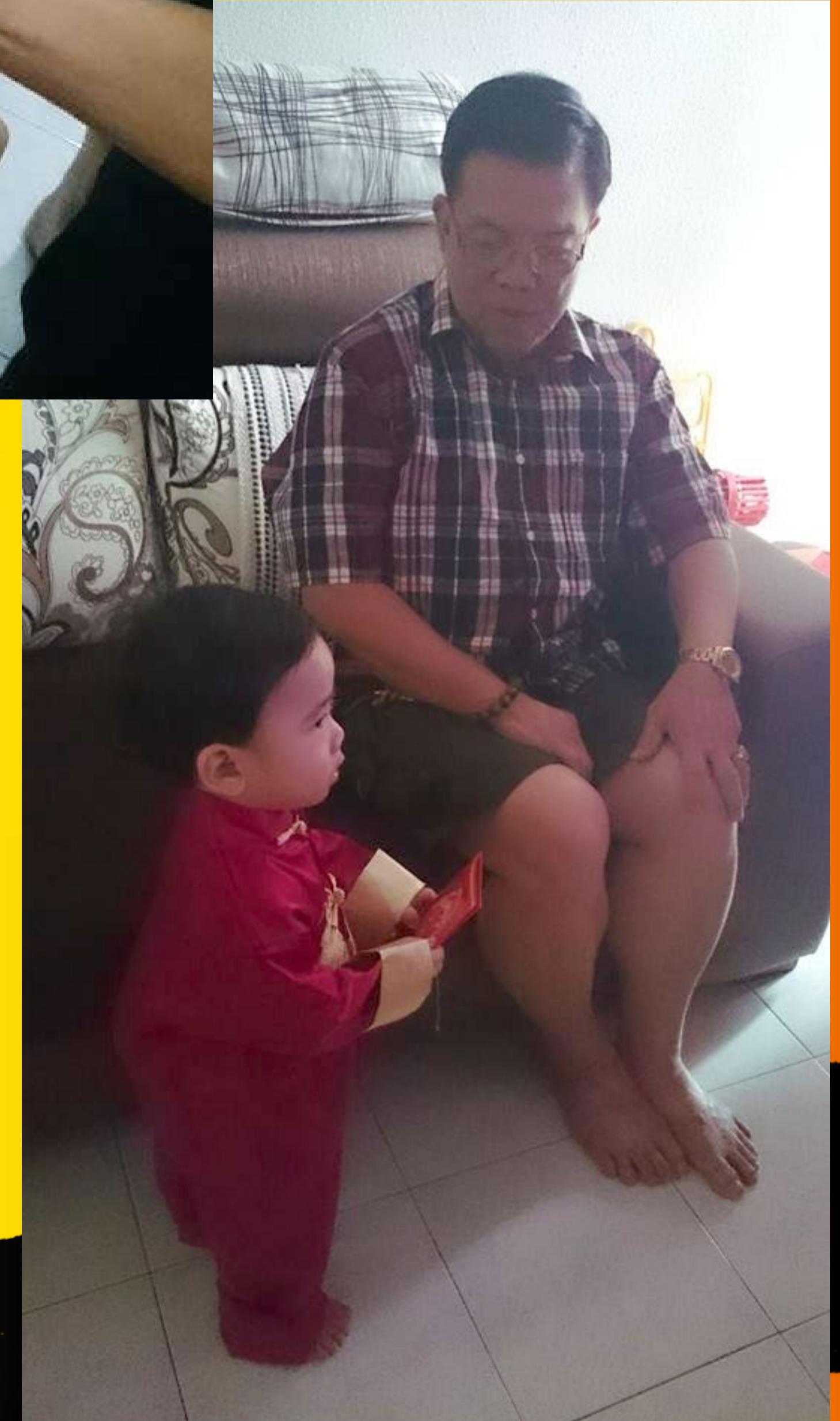
Gathered and edited by Ali Reid / Images: Rachel Lee



1. Rachel Lee

Chinese New Year means celebrations, family, reunion, joy, and prosperity. I personally think Chinese New Year brings new beginnings and new potential. It is the time I let go of the past and unhappiness, and usher in the New Year with another set of new opportunities and new hope. Happy Chinese New Year to everyone, and let's bring in the new year with positive minds and let it signify new and better things for you.

Chinese New Year – also called Lunar New Year or Spring Festival – is the most important time of year for millions of people, with celebrations happening all over the world. This year celebrations are taking place through the second half of February, welcoming in the Year of the Ox. We asked our Teesside University colleagues based in China and Malaysia to share their perspectives on New Year, from memories and traditions to hopes for the year ahead.



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Image: Rachel Lee.

2. Zhou Jiaqi

Chinese New Year is also known as the Spring Festival which is determined by the lunar calendar. However, only after the Spring Festival can I really feel it is the beginning of a new year. It was the happiest moment of the year when I was a kid. It meant I would be 'spoiled' with feasts, new clothes and red pockets without worrying about assignment or school. After going to university, Chinese New Year meant holidays when I could spend quality time with my family. When I studied overseas, Chinese New Year made me feel homesick. I had never missed my home, my parents and the flavour of my hometown that much until celebrating Chinese New Year abroad.

Now Chinese New Year means a 'battle' and reunion for me. Billions of people have to travel back home at the same time. It is exactly like a battle that every time I'm scrambling to get the train tickets for going home. I feel quite fortunate I can get back home and reunite with my family in time every year. The meaning of Chinese New Year varies from individual to individual, but it cannot be denied that Chinese New Year is the most important festival for every Chinese person, no matter who we are, how old we are or where we are.

3. Gao Zisong

Since my childhood, the most anticipated thing for the Spring Festival every year is to set off firecrackers. There is actually a myth about the Chinese New Year. There is a beast called "Nian" who comes to the world to spread the plague at this time of the year. People set off fireworks and firecrackers to drive away the beast through loud sounds and lights. Setting off fireworks and firecrackers to celebrate the Chinese New Year is an ancient Chinese tradition, thousands of years old. If I can, I hope this year when we set off the fireworks, this beast with plague can leave the world.

4. Tang Tianyu

When the Spring Festival hit my mind, deep in my memory was the first the time I had it far away from my family. Usually Chinese Spring Festival is the longest holiday in China, and every family member goes back to their hometown to have the New Year's Eve Dinner with elders. When I was studying abroad in the USA in 2010, Chinese Spring Festival was the final week of studying before winter break. There was only coffee, sandwiches and deadlines, but I still managed to see my family through a video call. This year under the epidemic control, we will celebrate Chinese New Year in different cities. But we can still count down together in the same time zone.

5. Katherine Kui Manling

Spring Festival is the most important holiday for Chinese people, gathering all family members from different places to celebrate the New Year together! Since I turned 18 years old, I have lived away from my parents. Spring festival has become one of the few opportunities in the year when I could go back to my hometown and spend the time with my parents and other family members.

The Spring Festivals I had as a kid were much busier and more crowded than the ones I had after I went to university. When I was a child, my relatives from my mother's side were all in my hometown. In that way it was easier to gather all the family members for the holiday. I still remember playing firecrackers with my cousins and watching the National Spring Festival Gala on TV. Also, as the most exciting part of the festival, receiving red envelopes from the elders had always been my favourite. After I graduated from university, I could no longer get red envelopes from the elders. I now need to give them instead - to the juniors! Nevertheless, Spring Festival remains the most important holiday in the year and reminds me of spending more time with my family.

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6. Yaoyao Sun Pingyao

Chinese New Year for me is just one word: family. It is the most relaxed and happiest time of the whole year. My husband and I grew up in big families and have relatives in different cities in China and some even live in the UK. Spring Festival is the only annual special time that all the family members get together to share stories, cook and eat – simple but satisfying. Because of the pandemic and travel restrictions, this New Year may be different. I'm sure that we will celebrate the festival as we did before – but online! After all, 2020 made us realise that everything could be online. The way we work and study may have changed, but the love we share will be always the same.

7. Wang Mengsi

Spring Festival means the start of the New Year in China. It is the most important occasion for Chinese people staying together with their families. No matter how far away they are from home, people try their best to get back. I miss the old days very much, when I could see my father and my grandma when I got home. Since they left, I usually choose to travel with my mum during the Chinese New Year. It might be an easier way to spend those days, for people who have lost loved ones. To make good efforts to live happily, with my mum - this is the only task for me during the festival. We will appreciate what we have and make good wishes for the New Year, as others do.

8. Yoli Zhai Jiayue

The Spring Festival is endowed with family reunion meaning in China. Nearly all the people who work away from their hometowns will come home to celebrate this holiday with families. When I was a child I could wear new clothes, receive red pockets from my relatives, and play firecrackers with my young cousins. My parents would take me to temple fairs, where I could feel the full festival atmosphere everywhere. These are my precious memories of the Spring Festival. As a grown-up I have less chance to do the same things during the festival, but it is still the most significant holiday for all Chinese.

*Decorative banners with poetic phrases, displayed at special occasions

9. Guo Ying

Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year, is the most meaningful festival for Chinese people. All the family members get together to celebrate Chinese Lunar New Year. People spend lovely time with their closest family members after a busy year. Like my family, my mom and dad look forward to seeing me before New Year's Eve.

There are many traditions during Chinese New Year. My favorite one is to put up the antithetical couplet*. The character 福 "fu" in Chinese means blessing and happiness for everyone. When these red paper cuttings are seen on windows in the house, I can even feel it – the New Year has arrived.



10. Hou Liang

Chinese New Year is around the corner once again. I realise that I rarely collect my thoughts on it. When I sit down to think about it, my fondest memories are from when I was a kid celebrating in my grandparents' home. Expectations, happiness, and excitements, these emotions all become stronger and stronger as the New Year approaches. Nice food, fireworks, TV programmes and cousins you don't normally meet make the festival unforgettable for each kid.

In recent years, it gradually becomes less exciting for me. It is partly because New Year means a lot of work for me. It is not only about getting the whole household ready for the festival, also it is a once-in-a-year opportunity to strengthen relationships with business partners. And partly it is because all the reasons kids enjoy New Year are no longer there for me. Nice food is readily available all year long (as a matter of fact, I worry about eating too much "nice food" now), fireworks are banned in most cities for environmental protection reason, and who watches TV programmes?

The only thing that hasn't changed for me is that New Year offers the only opportunity to meet relatives you don't get to see in the rest of the year. A chatty afternoon tea with your uncles, aunties and cousins can be really enjoyable. I hope the year of Ox brings a bit of good luck and the whole world gets rid of COVID. And then I will enjoy my family afternoon tea next Chinese New Year once again.

11. Hanis Atiqah

Chinese New Year is also called Lunar New Year. The origins of the Chinese New Year are steeped in legend. One legend is that thousands of years ago a monster named 'Nian' would attack villagers at the beginning of each new year. The monster was afraid of loud noises and the colour red, so those things were used to chase the beast away. Celebrations – to usher out the old year and bring forth the luck and prosperity of the new one – often include firecrackers, fireworks and red clothes and decorations. Young people are given money in colourful red envelopes. Chinese New Year is a time to feast and visit family members. Generally, when Chinese New Year comes around, on the first day, the oldest and most senior members will be visited. The visits serve to strengthen family ties.

Among other Chinese New Year traditions is the thorough cleaning of one's home to get rid of bad luck. Some people prepare and enjoy special foods on certain days during the celebrations. The last event held during the Chinese New Year is called the Lantern Festival. People hang glowing lanterns in temples or carry them during a night-time parade.

As a Malay, it will always be a time when I celebrate with my Chinese friends around. We dress in Chinese traditional clothing which is red in colour, and eat yee sang and mandarin oranges. It is also the time where everyone gathers at big round tables with families or friends. In Malaysia we get to celebrate three different festivals throughout the year: Diwali for Hindus, Eid-ul-Fitr for Muslims and Chinese New Year for Chinese.

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12. Ronnie Chai

In my family, Chinese New Year has always been an absolute must event to celebrate. When the time is near (at least two weeks before) my mother will elaborately clean the house from every single angle possible. The house kitchen will accumulatively stock up with lot of festive snacks and of course many are my favourites (pineapple tarts, bakkwa, prawn crackers and many more). All these delicious treats definitely play a vital role, but what's really important is that the occasion brings people together to reunite as one. This year I will be celebrating the festival remotely from my families because of the annoying Covid-19 pandemic. This will not cease my spirit to enjoy the holidays and charge myself for a better and more prosperous year ahead.

13. June Chai

Pineapple tarts, steamboats and super sweet mandarin oranges come to mind thinking about Chinese New Year. As a child I looked forward to having these goodies, as I could have them for days without any limitations from my parents. I always thought this was what Chinese New Year meant to me. Reminiscing about these moments, I realise the food tastes better as I get to spend time with my family members – chatting and having a blast!



Image: June Chai.

WORST

burglars

EVER

1. they make their plans in public!



2. They get to the museum at day time!



3. They alert themselves to the security!



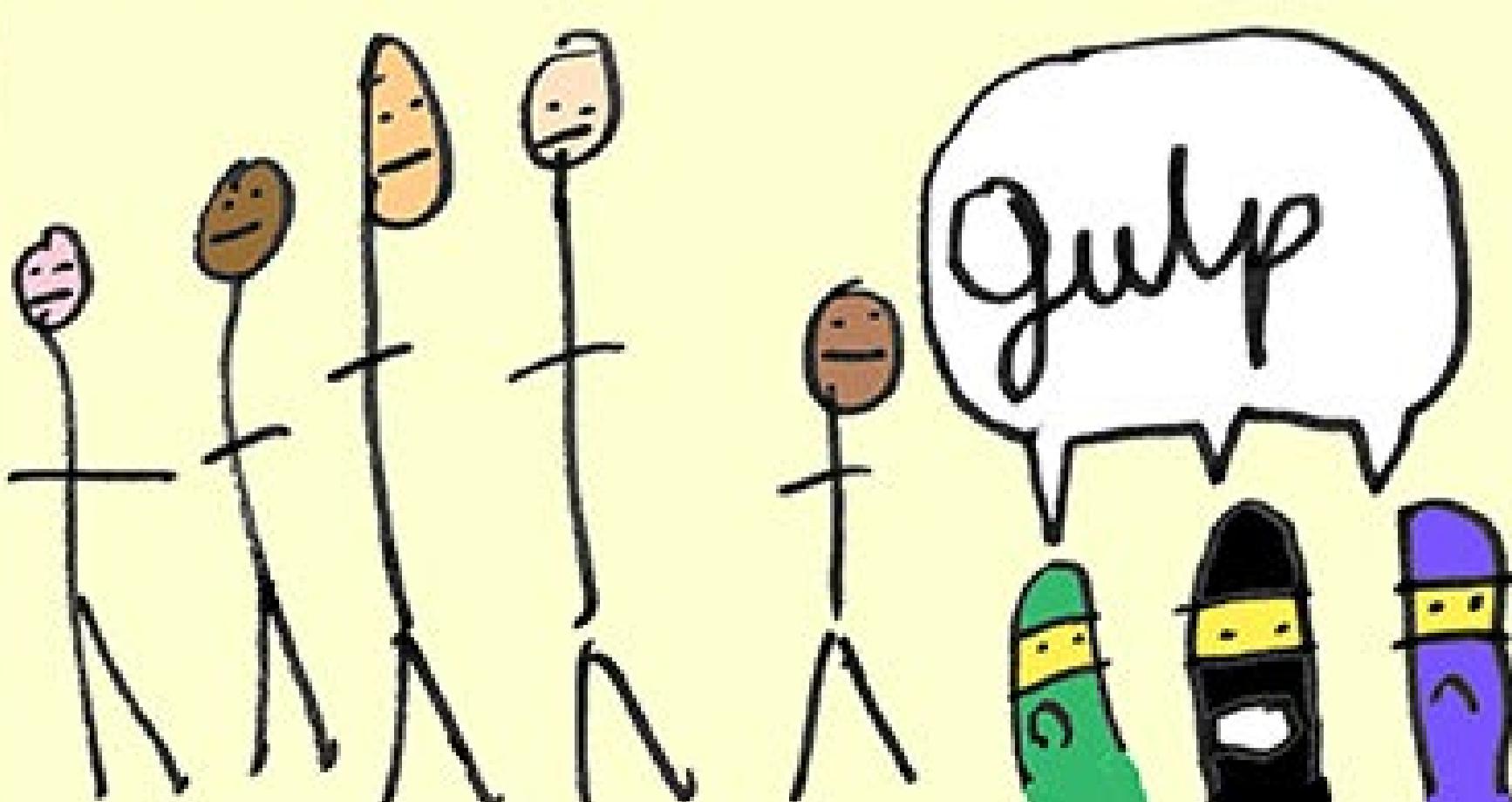
4. they accidentally break the paintings



5. They run into the staff room!



6. Whoh



Gulp

IF PAINT
OVER A
WINDOW
IS IT
STILL A
WINDOW?

CONTRIBUTIONS

WE ARE LOOKING FOR WRITING, IMAGES AND MORE:

BACK COVER

Propose a bold, eye-catching or meaningful image for our back cover. It could be a photograph, drawing, print, pattern...

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

Share an artwork from your home that you love or that has an interesting story behind it.

TEES VALLEY TREASURE

Suggest intriguing artefacts. We are interested in a real variety of things with a story to tell! They can be historical, more recent and better still, a bit left field.

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Tell us about someone you remember – perhaps mothers, grandparents, old friends. A page to remember and share descriptions of people past.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY?

Share your own stories and myths relating to the region. It could be an urban legend, folk story or a tale of the unexplained.

NATURE APPRECIATION SOCIETY

Share with us a photograph of a wildflower, tree, bird or vegetable that you've spotted this month. Collectively we will observe the changing of the seasons and miracles of nature.

GREETINGS FROM...

If you are a reader of MIMAZINA from outside the Tees Valley send us a 'postcard' (in email form) about where you are.

POETRY CORNER

Send us a poem you have written, it can be about any subject of your choosing.

ONE-OFF ARTICLES OR STORIES

Share a short article on a subject of your choosing. We are especially interested in writing relating to the Tees Valley past, present and future, but whatever you want to publish – we would love to hear from you.

Share your stories, photographs and letters in future issues of MIMAZINA.

NOTES

- Content should be sent via email to info@foundationpress.org
- Please keep written contributions to less than 1000 words.
- Please only submit content that you would be happy for us to publish in MIMAZINA.
- We will try our best to share as much content as possible but cannot guarantee to publish all suggestions and content we receive.
- Content may be edited before publication.
- Content should be appropriate for audiences of all ages.
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See you next month!



Scratch #1 (2020)

Louise Scott

Pencil and ink on paper

