



## Sheffield Visual Arts Group Newsletter September 2023

Sheffield Visual Arts Group (SVAG) campaigns to promote and celebrate Sheffield's outstanding visual arts at a regional and national level.

The City of Sheffield owns an internationally recognised collection of 20th-century paintings and works on paper, as well as a huge array of other treasures. We want to improve access to this vibrant collection.

Our group wants the economic and cultural importance of Sheffield's extraordinary art to be reflected in local and national policymaking, and ultimately for Sheffield to have the pioneering cultural centre for the arts which it deserves.

New members are always welcome at our monthly meetings, for more information about SVAG and our objectives: [www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/our-aims/](http://www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/our-aims/)

**Musings** These are posted monthly on our web page by one or other members of our group exploring local culture. The most recent is by Janet Beautyman detailing a recent example of partnership working. <https://www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/art-musings/>

Musings from previous months can be found here:

[www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/our-past-interests-and-activities/archived-art-musings/](http://www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/our-past-interests-and-activities/archived-art-musings/)

### **Cultural Strategy update**

SVAG member Kevin Duffy reports that though there is nothing to report on Sheffield Culture Collective nor Sheffield Consortium, we have been informed there will be progress in the Autumn: this is something we have been pressing for.

Stop press: We do now know a consultant has been appointed. Details to be announced

### **John Lewis Building**

As part of the consultation in the summer of 2022, we made the suggestion that the Central Library be moved into the John Lewis building and Graves Building on Surrey Street be turned into an Arts Centre. Our support for an arts/culture hub in the former department store was also detailed in a letter published in the local press, in

response to pressure to prioritise purely commercial projects by some local members of the business community.

The City Council has now made a decision to award the 250 year lease for this building to Urban Splash, the developers involved in the Park Hill redevelopment. Although final details of proposed usage have not yet been released, outline plans indicate some space for community use.

### **SVAG Contacts with other Sheffield Groups**

Andrew Calow, a member of SVAG, gave an illustrated presentation about the public art included on the Art Trail to the Friends of Firth Park.

Janet Beautyman, another member of SVAG, attended a local event organised for volunteers working in the local creative industries, organised by “ignite Imaginations”, and alerted us to the Young Artists Open Exhibition Winter Gardens which ended on 5 September

Contact [www.igniteimagnations.org.uk/young-artists-open-exhibition](http://www.igniteimagnations.org.uk/young-artists-open-exhibition)

**Sheffield Public Artworks Project (SPAR)** We have continued to work with Wessex Archaeology on this project, to help map local public artworks. The project is on-going and there is still time for the public to suggest additional pieces to include in the Sheffield Public Artworks Map, a free digital map that details over 180 public artworks across the city. [www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk).

### **City Centre Walking Art Trails**



We have long thought that Public Art trails have their place in such a vibrant city as Sheffield. We worked with Sheffield Museums and Wessex Archaeology staff, on the first Art Trail on the 16th August, taking around 90 minutes in glorious weather. The

well attended trail explored 5 sculptures in detail within the town centre with more discussed briefly en route.

The trail began at Rain Sculpture outside the Winter Garden followed by the work of George Fullard on the Winter Garden steps and in the Upper Chapel courtyard. See *image above*

A stroll down to Fitzalan Square revealed the White Building sculptures by prolific Sheffield sculptor, Frank Tory. Then it was up to Barkers Pool to visit Covid Memorial Sculpture concluding with Women of Steel.

For a detailed report of the trail: [www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/art-musings/](http://www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk/art-musings/)

The walk will be replicated twice on the 16th of September, as part of Sheffield Heritage Open Days at 11.00 am and 2pm. Booking required. The event is number 95. [www.sheffieldhods.com](http://www.sheffieldhods.com) More details in Future events page: Also follow the QR Code here:



### **Art All Around: Family Activities**

SVAG Volunteers also assisted on the **Art All Around** activities on the 29th August at the Millennium Galleries

Organised by Sheffield Museums as part of their programme of free summer family events, families were encouraged to explore some of the public art around the area of the Millennium Galleries. Children were able to create their own mini sketch books with their drawings of the "Rain", "Barking up the Right Tree" and the "Standard Weights and Measures" on Cheney Row.

Volunteers were on hand to provide additional information and encouragement to families. The event was well attended on a fine day and many positive comments were received.

## Friends of Sheffield Museums Appeal



An appeal has begun to raise money for the conservation of an astonishing painting '**Davy United, Blooming and Slabbing Mill**' (1953) by much-loved Sheffield artist, Kenneth Steel.

The painting has been gifted to Sheffield by Mr Brown who bought it in the 1990s. It evokes the city's industrial and social past, and was one of several commissioned by the manufacturer Davy United and shows the company's Darnall works.

Kenneth Steel's oil painting flourished after the Second World War and he was commissioned by several companies. His work forms a record of the city's reconstruction. Steel was born in Sheffield in 1906 and lived in the city for his whole life, giving us a unique picture of Sheffield in the early and mid 20th century. Some of you will remember the recent Kenneth Steel exhibition at Weston Park Museum in 2022, which was very popular with visitors.

The conservation is estimated to cost £2500, and if you are interested in learning more, follow this link: [fundraising@sheffieldmuseums.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@sheffieldmuseums.org.uk)

## A New 'Little Mester'

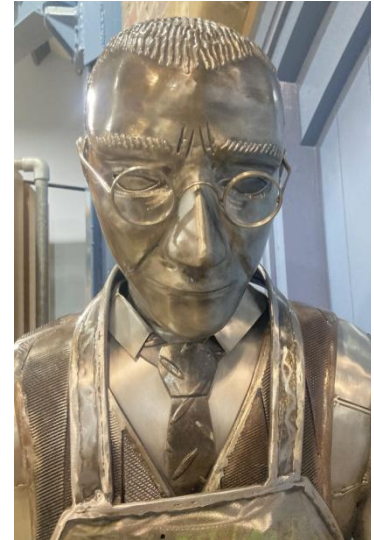
A stunning new Sculpture in Kelham Island Museum is a tribute to the Little Mesters, celebrating all those who worked in Sheffield's metal working industry. A figurative piece, it is located in The Hawley Collection at Kelham Island Museum.

Image, courtesy of the [www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk)

The unveiling in July was attended by members of SVAG along with the Lord Mayor, representatives of The Cutlers Company, The Hawley Trust and Sheffield Museums.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery, The Sheffield Treasures Project unveiled the sculpture by renowned scrap metal artist Jason Heppenstall, already famous in the town for his Salmon outside Midland Station.

The artist is understandingly quite pleased with the sculpture, declaring the trousers are made from Sheffield spanners, the boots from reforged blacksmith tongs, and the waistcoat meanwhile is made of large files or rasps. The remainder of the sculpture is composed of similarly diverse items. The artist created the work in partnership with The University Technical College, the sculpture is inactive with members of the public being able to contribute using tokens designed and made by the students.



### **Awards: Call for nominations Keith Hayman Award 2023**

This award commemorates the life of Keith Hayman who sadly died in 2013. Keith had retired from a career with Sheffield City Council to which he brought his skills as town planner and environmentalist, to enhance the quality of the public realm; he was also a committed and talented artist and a founder member of SVAG.

Two awards are made annually: one for a sculpture or relief, and the other for a mural, with the possibility of commendations.

The work should have been created, installed, relocated, or conserved within the Sheffield city boundary between 1 June 2021 and 31 May 2023.

For more information about how to enter, please contact Jim Monach of the Civic Trust. [jim.monach@gmail.com](mailto:jim.monach@gmail.com) or visit [www.sheffieldcivictrust.org.uk/keith-hayman-awards](http://www.sheffieldcivictrust.org.uk/keith-hayman-awards)

**The closing date for entries is Monday 18 September 2023.**

### **Site Gallery: Wishful Thinking**

Experience an exciting new sensory exhibition **Wishful Thinking**, designed by Site Gallery's youth collective Society of Explorers.



The exhibition marks Society of Explorers' tenth anniversary, and explores how gallery spaces can best serve us as a space for reflection, immersion and rest. Society of Explorers, aged 14 - 19, meet weekly at the gallery to collaborate with artists, create their own artwork, and help to develop Site Gallery's programme. For **Wishful Thinking** they have co-created an immersive sensory space with artists Lucie Kordacova and Gregory Herbert, to be activated by a programme of workshops and performances. FREE, running 3rd August - 10th September at Site Gallery, Brown Street.

### **Dina closed on 21 July.**

For 8 years, DINA supported an amazing array of arts activity – be that exhibitions, events, festivals, performance or music – firstly in their converted pub on Cambridge Street and more recently at Fitzalan Square. They hosted all types of events, supported new and emergent talent and were a hub for Sheffield's LGBTQ+ community and will be missed.

### **Public Art Research**

[Beam](#) have partnered with [ixia](#), the national public art thinktank, to launch new reports and research which underline major issues and development potential within the visual arts and public art sectors for: under-represented artists and producers; emerging artists and producers working in the sector; and the provision of up to date sector support and guidance.

### **News from Yorkshire Artspace Artists**

Get yourself a limited edition! Alex Szabo-Haslam recently produced two posters for Arctic Monkeys' homecoming gigs at Hillsborough Park. The posters, printed on highly-metallic paper, were a limited edition of 600.

Jason Thomson unveiled a new public sculpture for the gardens at Wentworth Woodhouse. The large tin camel - named Camellia - was made in collaboration with Community Connect day service.

Seiko Kinoshita completed her Growing Colour Together project with Woven Kirklees, exhibiting the natural-dyed textiles she produced with communities at All Hallows Church in Kirkburton.

For more news see: Art History in Focus - Dazzling array of events to while away Autumn days! [Arthistoryinfocus.com/online-events](http://Arthistoryinfocus.com/online-events)

## **Future events**

### **Sheffield Heritage Open Days 8-17 September**

The previously mentioned art trail will be repeated twice as part of Sheffield Heritage Open Days on the 16th of September at 11.00 am and 2pm. Booking required. The event is number 95. [www.sheffieldhods.com](http://www.sheffieldhods.com)

Sheffield Visual Arts will also have a stall in Channing Hall, Surrey Street on Friday the 15th and Saturday the 16th at the Upper Chapel's Open Days displaying information about our activities, campaign work and celebrating Sheffield's outstanding visual arts collections. Sheffield Printmakers will also be in attendance. To visit their website use the QR Code here:



Upper Chapel's Channing Hall, Surrey Street. Sheffield S1 2LG

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 11.00am - 3.30pm

### **Photomathon**

This opportunity, advertised in the Sheffield Culture Guide, returns on the 28th of October. This is a one day photography event for all ages, 6 hours to take 6 photos on a topic announced on the day. Bookings open soon. Contact [hello@ourfaveplaces.co.uk](mailto:hello@ourfaveplaces.co.uk)

### **Secret postcard art returns to Cupola Gallery**

In 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, Cupola Gallery hosted its first ever secret postcard show as a fundraiser to help with critical building works at the gallery. It proved hugely popular and helped raise much needed funds. So, by popular demand, it has returned. Artists, professional or amateur, adults or children, are invited to create a postcard sized original artwork in any media, maximum 10 entries with contact details on reverse. These works are kindly donated to the gallery, displayed anonymously and priced at £15 each irrespective of who has made it. You only get to discover the author of the postcard after it has been purchased, hence the secret.

The secret postcard Show: 26 August – 30 September. 7:30-9:30 pm – All welcome – hospitality provided. Venue: Cupola Gallery 178a Middlewood Road Sheffield S6 1TD

### **Sheffield Visual Arts Group - Who We Are Our Manifesto**

We campaign to promote and celebrate Sheffield's outstanding visual arts, at a regional and national level.

The City of Sheffield owns an internationally recognised collection of 20th-century paintings and works on paper, as well as a huge array of other treasures. We want to improve access to this vibrant collection.

Our group wants the economic and cultural importance of Sheffield's extraordinary art to be reflected in local and national policymaking, and ultimately for Sheffield to have the pioneering cultural centre for the arts which it deserves.

Our Group Objectives:

- To promote the city's outstanding collection of visual art
- To improve access to the city's collections and to expand these collections
- To develop, with others, a long-term strategy for the arts relevant to all the citizens of Sheffield.

### Where we stand

The Visual Arts Group came together originally when the existence of the Graves Art Gallery was threatened, back in 2011. Finding long-term solutions for the protection and accessible display of Sheffield's major art collections is inseparable from support for a wide range of contemporary art practices; both are fundamental to the future life of the City. Together we should be developing networks of interested parties, practitioners, communities etc. in order to be as inclusive as possible in our planning. Public engagement is vital.

### How we work

We continue to campaign, lobby and influence by writing occasional papers, letters and emails to the Arts Council, art and cultural organisations and charities, MPs, South Yorkshire Region Mayoral Combined Authority officials, City councillors, Council officers, Local Area Committees and the press, community newsletters etc. We network widely, and are members of "Joined Up Heritage Sheffield" (JUHS). We have an active partnership with Wessex Archaeology over the Sheffield Public Art Recording (SPAR) project. We attend relevant meetings of JUHS and SPAR and report back to our own monthly group meetings.

In addition we initiate our own occasional public meetings in the form of Study Days.

We hope you will find our newsletters of interest. We welcome your comments and suggestion

**Not of interest?** Just let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Kind Regards from  
Sheffield Visual Arts Group      [sheffvisarts@gmail.com](mailto:sheffvisarts@gmail.com)

[www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldvisualartsgroup.co.uk)      [www.facebook.com/VAGS](http://www.facebook.com/VAGS)