

Artist Statement

I use an expansive visual vocabulary to make my work, which manifests itself in small scale collages, wall-based assemblages, temporary site-specific outdoor sculptures, community engaged projects, live actions or moving image documentation. Working in this 'multi-disciplinary' way allows freedom to best communicate an idea, process or decision at any given time or place, transgress fixed identities and operate in between areas - deliberately seeking grey.

I continue to find inspiration from my immediate surroundings, everyday life, personal experiences and interaction with other people, which informs how ideas for the work evolve. I approach making my work with an imaginative spirit, employing a resourcefulness and economy of means. I liberate rubbish from the streets, buy cheap items from charity shops, plunder internet sites and receive donations from friends and family - making do and getting by with the stuff in the world as I find it now. These items will often have personal, cultural or collective significance and trigger memories of their former function and value through recognition, association and suggestive forms.

In the studio low-tech processes such as cutting, binding, wrapping and slicing are applied to alter and re-arrange these non-hierarchical objects, which are transformed into new hybrid things with strange sensibilities. Eclectic materials become stretched and nailed into walls or bound tight with tape, whilst others sag and droop down a wall, hang in space or grow upwards from the floor. The physical action, gesture and touch of its making can reveal or give character to a work depending on the treatment involved. They can at once appear beautiful, funny, up-beat, painful, tragic and sad and are presented in precarious states of coming together and falling apart. When the work emerges from the studio it is usually presented as provisional installations in both gallery settings and off-site locations and it is here where the work 'comes to life'. Recently I have also been making work 'live', during short residencies, in relation to specific architectural features or outdoor landscapes. These projects often rely on the participation/activation of an audience and are open to change with varying people's suggestions, comments and input. When working in such large public spaces I have sought out a level of risk-taking to test the limits of what I feel to be my comfort zone.

Essentially, I am interested in how my works become vehicles to signify personal communication (in the 3rd person). I deliberately project my own subjectivity, both physically and emotionally, during every stage of the making process, enabling a sense of intimacy and transparency to emerge – wearing my heart on my sleeve and allowing the materials to speak for themselves. Shapes of bodily references and sexual organs are ever present. Mysterious and indeterminate pieces appear saturated with peculiar texture, wetness and viscosity bestowing suggestions of age, life, history and character. Eccentric forms are imbued with contradictory, human characteristics and emotions such as isolation, embarrassment, anxiety, violence, failure, vulnerability, mutual support, sensitivity, bravery and strength. There is a fine balance between humour and disgust in the work I make and a conflict between seduction and repulsion, pathos and alienation.

David Kefford 2010