



Walnut Works

Guest Artist 2023/24

Carole Griffiths
Alison Lam
Stephen Nelson

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Walnuts Works guest artist 2023 - 24

We are pleased to showcase the work of Carole Griffiths, Allison Lam and Stephen Nelson. Throughout the year these three established artists have pushed the boundaries of their creative practices, enjoying working in bronze at the Walnut Works foundry in the Suffolk countryside.

Each artist received individual assistance, guidance and technical support from enabling them to expand and refine their artistic vision from this wonderful medium. This considered collaboration has culminated in a collection of bronzes, in which each artist's individual sensibilities have been given an opportunity to come to the fore.



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Walnut Works is Kabir and Vicky Hussain. We are a teaching facility, offering one to one consultation and further holding group workshops for adults and children nationwide. The Guest Artist programme initially arose after watching artists with long-standing practices and reflecting how some may benefit by having an experience working in bronze. Artists were approached and offered this unique experience and given an opportunity to realize a body of work which due to their technical and financial limitations would ordinarily be difficult for them to achieve. Unlike a formal foundry environment Walnut Works serves as an extension of studio practice, with guidance artists are able investigate in a hands-on manner. They initially come with pre-formulated ideas. To process these, they go through an explorative phase of handling the materials and familiarize themselves with the casting procedure. Through interaction and dialogue they formulate their responses. Following the lost wax process, Cire Perdue artists are given an understanding of the block investment mould, using the traditional materials of grog, luto and plaster.

This was practiced at the Royal College of Art, through the early teaching of the Angeloni Brothers originally from Rome. Learning the wax sprue system, to feed the metal into the sculpture, and then to witness the molten bronze is exhilarating. Cire Perdue extends the artist's vocabulary and establishes a bridge with the renaissance masters. After the physically grounded process of making the investment there is a significant moment of the great reveal upon seeing the new cast. The metal working stage allows for a greater understanding of surface and form of the piece. Patination completes the cycle giving the artist a bond with their own work and sense of satisfaction with their own endeavors, Kabir and Vicky would like to thank and have enjoyed the company of Alison, Carole and Stephen and have found the guest artist program personally enriching along with sharing their knowledge and facilitating the aspirations of the artist.



Carole Griffiths

During my residency at Walnut Works, I had the opportunity to revisit and examine the lost wax process. I wanted to gain a greater understanding of bronze casting and its constructions by appreciating bronze as a material hierarchy.

The body of work I created over the year, titled 'A Hand-Made Tale,' is a continuation of investigation into how the 'futensil', an assemblage of kitchen items with fragments of women, can be expressed through bronze to bring together a portable collection of memories. The material's permanence and tenacity have resulted in a substantial shift in my process, allowing for the preservation and recording of autobiographical ambiguities from my past.

The support and mentoring of Walnut Works at Butley Mills' Kabir and Vicky Hussain have been incredible, prompting me to consider larger works and working with further new materials realising sculptural possibilities of bronze.

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Alison Lam

Being interested in the use of modelling/playing with clay and paper, the move to explore bronze only felt a natural evolution of my practice. Most of my ideas are process led, meaning I often need to see 'what happens' as I am exploring and making. So the ability to work with full guidance and support to realise these new works was invaluable during the residency at Walnut

Works, to be able to experiment without the concerns of if it was going to work or not was a relief. Pushing the boundaries of the bronze by using the material in my own way has given me the opportunity to expand my practice. It has been an amazing experience, I am honoured to have been invited to the residency.

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Stephen Nelson

I had worked with Bronze before so the medium was not new to me but I always handed over the wax made in the studio and it magically reappeared in bronze. One of the lures of The Walnut Works residency meant I would be working on brand new works made on site from conception to completion. The residency takes place in a remote rural area of Suffolk

so no distractions just work to focus on. On one of my previous visits to see the site I had found some animal teeth in the woods nearby which were to become the starting points for the series of works. The first days I spent re-drawing from sketches I had made of skulls found at Monte Alban in Mexico. It was here the residency kicked in. How do I turn these drawings into three dimensional maquettes? Kabir and Vicky offered solutions that I would have never thought, to simply make cardboard formed constructions painted in wax. Teaching me how to soften the wax with a torch to create smoother surfaces. At the end of my first week I had several working drawings and several waxes ready to go in the moulds. The next stages were guided, the creating of the moulds for the kiln and the preparation of runners for the lost wax in the casting process. The point of the residency is to learn and be involved in all these complex moments that are all part of lost wax sculpture. By the end of the week we witnessed the bronze pour an alchemy like spectacle that is quite choreographed but magical. When the moulds are cracked open with a axe that's when the real work starts.....

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