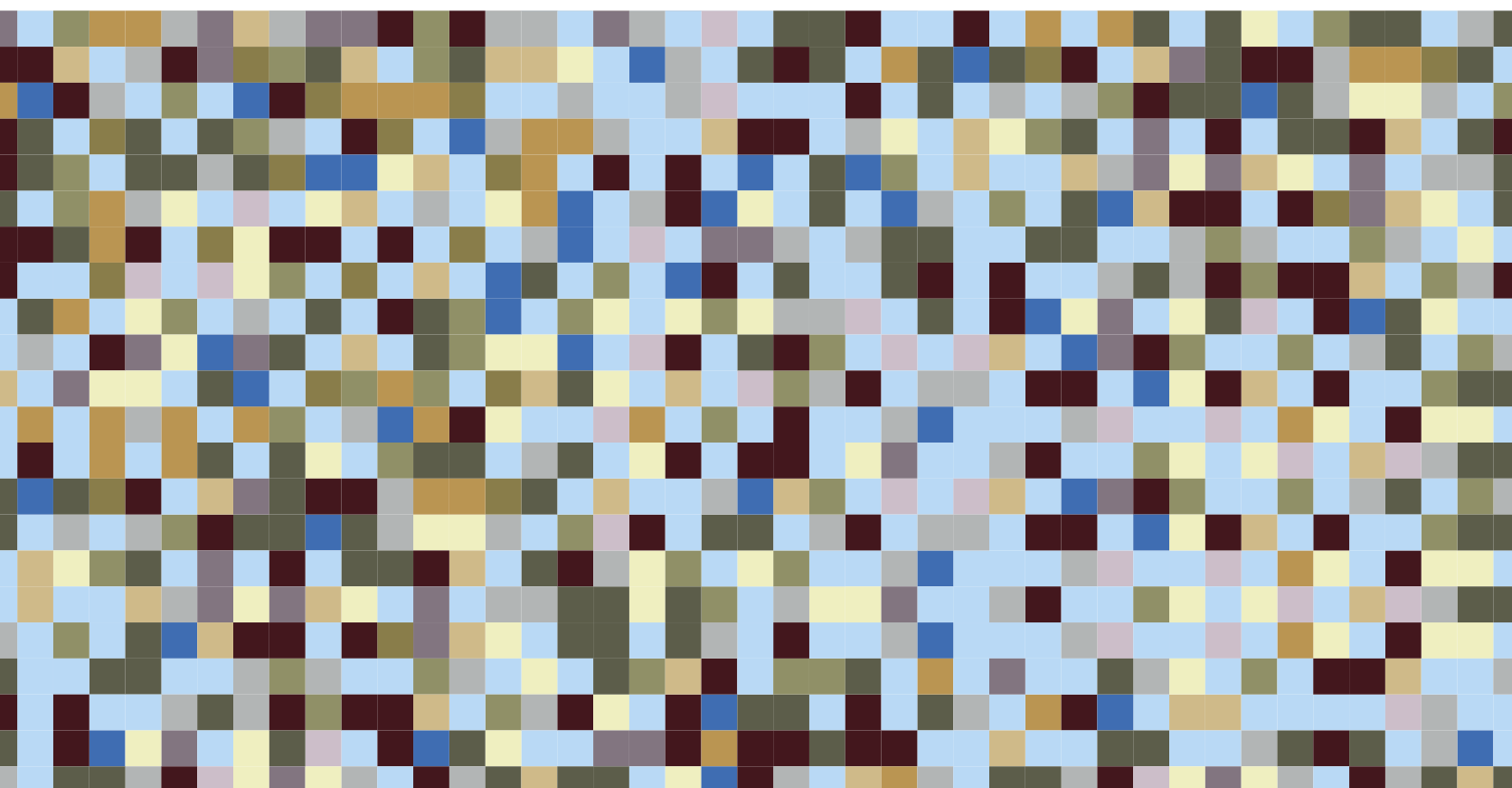


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# FABRIC PRESS



# Abbot Hall

Art Gallery

## FABRIC *Reinterpreting the House*

An invitation to  
**AN EVENING WITH THE ARTISTS**  
Friday 18 October 2002

Supported by Gerrard Ltd.

*Fabric: Reinterpreting the House*, inspiration from the unique environment, a diverse range of media including created connections with the physical objects.

Many of the artists have created and challenged the idea of decorative galleries upstairs, some of the artists

This is a special opportunity to meet the ways in which they have each created. The whole evening is FREE to Friar students. All places, however, MUST be booked.

**6.30-7.15pm WALKING TOUR**  
Jane Langley, artist and curator of this part of the evening are limited to 20 places.

**7.30-8.30pm DRINKS RECEPTION**  
The second part of the evening will feature other exhibiting artists.

Please complete and return the form to:

I would like to book ..... place

Friend/Patrons membership number or reference

I/we will/will not be attending the second part of the evening

NAME/S: .....

I would like to book ..... places

NAME/S: .....

ADDRESS: .....

I enclose a donation towards the cost

for the sum of £.....

Please return this form to:

Kate Morgan  
Abbot Hall Art Gallery  
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5AL  
t: 01539 722464 www.abbothall.org



# The Guardian Guide Oct 2002 'Fabric' Exhibition

## Versace At The V&A LONDON

There is definitely a Marmite syndrome about the late Gianni Versace. You either dig those flamboyant creations and dream of parading round in sequins and safety pins, or the thought of all that opulence makes you reach for the Littlewoods catalogue. Whichever, you can't knock the designer's genius for making a statement. Since his untimely death in 1997, the events of which

would make a thumper of an airport thriller, his sister has carried on the family business magnificently. This retrospective will look back at the last 30 years of the house of Versace, displaying 130 designs and dresses worn by Versace's favourite celebrities, including Princess Diana, Madonna, Jennifer Lopez and Elizabeth Hurley. There is also documentary footage



of the life and career of this extravagant couture creator. **JESSICA LACK** *Victoria & Albert Museum, SW7, Thursday 17 until January 12*

## Peter Harris LONDON

"It's an unflinching look at the past two years. Peter Harris of his show. And unflinching certainly is, for the watercolours compare the full gamut of emotions. Harris draws us through the happy to the sad, but the beautiful Pictures of him straddling his cat and reading paper are coupled with more poignant images of attending his grandmother's funeral.

But Harris is a romantic and the sound of his life is laden with references to 1970s bands. *Waiting For Man* is a sardonic portrait of the artist's dealer Andrew Mummer. *Lets Go Sniff Some* sums up the hustler's private views. He is not Dee Dee Ramone. Harris still manages to transform this diary into an artistic rock opera. **Andrew Mummer** *Wednesday 16 to November 20*

## Ian Dawson LONDON

Transform a Jackson Pollock or Larry Poons painting into 3D and you might end up with one of Ian Dawson's gloopy sculptures, psychedelic mounds of melted plastic that wouldn't look out of place in a sci-fi film. Dawson's method is to attack plastic buckets, chairs and coat hangers with a propane torch until

the substance buckles and stretches in the heat. Once pliable, he fashions the material into sprawling sculptures that either sit squarely on the floor or climb up walls like delicate spaghetti strips of multi-coloured chewing gum. This solo show will also feature some of Dawson's Spirograph drawings made using the children's toy



and executed in blue ballpoint pen. **JA** *Modern Art Inc, E2, Friday 18 until November 24*

## Fabric KENDAL

To celebrate the Abbot Hall being open to the public for 40 years, 14 contemporary artists have been asked to respond to the Georgian fabric and ambience of the building. Despite its rather grand air, Abbot Hall has staged countless exhibitions of real creative stature and the artists here give it the respect it deserves. Perhaps

appropriately, there is a spooky underlying theme. Elaine Wilson sets the



scene with *Phantom*, a levitating sugar and resin cowl topped with a ghostly nipple. The tangled pile of hair in Rachel Bracha's photo-work *Medusa Domestica* appears to be infected with poltergeists. Other artists include David Mabb, Jennifer Wright and Nicky Hirst. **ROBERT CLARK** *Abbot Hall, Tuesday 15 until December 21*



# Abbot Hall

Art Gallery

Kendal  
Cumbria LA9 5AL  
t: 01539 722464  
sk@abbothall.org.uk  
www.abbothall.org.uk

Open Mon - Sat: 10.30am - 5.00pm  
14 February - 21 December 2002  
Closed Sundays  
Closed 4.00pm in Feb, Mar, Nov, Dec  
Admission: £3.50

## Fabric: Reinterpreting the house

15 October - 21 December 2002

To coincide with Abbot Hall Art Gallery celebrating 40 years of being open to the public, the exhibition, *Fabric*, will contain work by 14 contemporary visual artists. Each artist has taken their inspiration from the unique environment of Abbot Hall - its structure, history and cultural context.

Abbot Hall's first Director, Helen Kapp, aimed for the gallery to "give much delight to the eye, but also we want to see it as a stimulating and vibrating place - a place where clashes of ideas and feeling will generate new thoughts and ideas that will reverberate in all our lives... On the surface it is tranquil enough, but somehow a tension is built up between the beauty, familiar though it is, of the 18th century rooms below and the more disturbing, challenging and less familiar images of modern art to be seen above."

The exhibiting artists are Rachel Bracha, Peter Dukes, Nicky Hirst, Jane Langley, David Mabb, Paula Mettler, Simon Morley, Kathleen Mullaniff, Kate Scrivener, Gary Simmonds, Finlay Taylor, Miranda Whall, Elaine Wilson and Jennifer Wright. They work with a diverse range of media including photography, painting, drawing and installations. Through their work, they have created connections with the physical spaces of Abbot Hall and its wonderful collection of paintings, furniture and objects.

In addition to the visible 'fabric' of the building, some artists are also responding to the inspirational landscape of the Lake District, to the people who lived in and around Abbot Hall, and to the trades that made the area at one time so wealthy, but which have now largely disappeared.

As well as displaying works in the neutral white walled upstairs galleries, pieces will also be installed in the furnished Georgian rooms on the ground floor. Many of the artists have created works that refer to the decorative arts and by doing so, they challenge the notion of decorative art playing a secondary role to fine art.

The exhibition has been curated by Jane Langley, who has also recently curated SHOWHOUSE at Pitshanger Manor, Ealing, and LOOP at the Bankfield Museum, Halifax.

PRESS ENQUIRIES CONTACT: Hannah Neale, Curator, Abbot Hall 01539 722 464

IMAGE REQUESTS: Head of Marketing & Publicity, Sandy Kitching 015394 46191

A few images are available in digital format, which can be provided as high resolution scans on disc or by email to your specifications. Please telephone or email your requirements. A press release and image sheet are available on the website [www.abbothall.org.uk/press.shtml](http://www.abbothall.org.uk/press.shtml)

### Note to editors:

Abbot Hall Art Gallery was officially opened by Princess Margaret 40 years ago on 28 September 1962. Jane Langley will be available for interview at Abbot Hall on Friday 18 October, prior to leading a talk on the exhibition at 6.30pm.



Elaine Wilson, Phantom, 2002, sugar and resin © the artist



## Abbot Hall

Art Gallery

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Cumbria LA9 5AL  
T. 01539 722464  
F. 01539 722494  
e. info@abbothall.org.uk  
www.abbothall.org.uk  
www.lakelandartstrust.org.uk

### Information for visitors

#### Open

14 Feb - 21 Dec 2002  
Mon - Sat 10.30am - 5.00pm  
(closing 4pm in Feb, Mar, Nov, Dec)  
CLOSED SUNDAYS

#### Admission

Adults £3.50 / Children & Students  
£1.75 / Family £9.00 / Adult Season  
Ticket £7.50 / Family Season Ticket  
£19.50

#### Facilities

Free visitors parking, Book Shop,  
Coffee Shop (non-smoking),  
Playground & picnic area in Abbot  
Hall Park, WC for disabled,  
wheelchair access (please ring in  
advance so staff can be on hand  
to help with the lift).

#### Group Visits

We offer excellent reduced rates  
for bookings of 15 or more people.  
Pre-booked school groups (under  
18 years) have FREE admission.

#### How to find us

Abbot Hall Art Gallery is situated  
next to the Parish Church at the  
southern end of Kendal by the  
River Kent. A 10 minute drive from  
M6 J06. Follow signs to South  
Kendal and Abbot Hall. Only a 20  
minute drive from Blackwell and  
Bowness-on-Windermere.



Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund



Images & Design © Lakeland Arts Trust 2002

# Abbot Hall

Art Gallery

## Exhibitions and Events

Autumn 2002



Kendal Cumbria

LAKELANDARTSTRUST

## Exhibition

### Fabric - Reinterpreting the House

15 October - 21 December

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In addition to the visible 'fabric' of the house, the artists are also responding to the inspirational landscape of the Lake District, to the people who lived in and around Abbot Hall, and to the trades that made the area at one

time so wealthy, but which have now largely disappeared.

Work will be installed in the Georgian rooms at Abbot Hall, as well as in the more neutral environment of the gallery spaces upstairs. Many of the artists have created works that use or refer to the decorative arts. By doing so, they challenge the notion of decorative art playing a secondary role to fine art.

The exhibition is curated by artist Jane Langley, who has recently curated *SHOWHOUSE* at Pitshanger Manor, Ealing, and *LOOP* at the Bankfield Museum, Halifax.

#### Exhibiting artists:

Rachel Bracha, Peter Dukes, Nicky Hirst, Jane Langley, Dave Mabb, Paula Mettler, Simon Morley, Kathleen Mullaniff, Kate Scrivener, Gary Simmonds, Finlay Taylor, Miranda Whall, Jennifer Wright, Elaine Wilson.



Rachel Bracha, *Medusa Domestica*, 2001, photograph



Elaine Wilson, *Phantom*, 2002, sugar and resin.

# Abbot Hall

Art Gallery

## Fabric

Reinterpreting the House



An exhibition of work by  
fourteen contemporary artists

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In 'Stranger' by **Kate Scrivener**, a pair of snakeskin gloves are covered with a minute text telling extraordinary tales of survival. 'If tomorrow were not an endless journey' is a painting that simulates a book; words appear to be flowing in and out of the centre of the book as if they have a life of their own, and describe both contemporary and historical observations of the land and sea. Philip James De Louthembourg's painting *Belle Isle, Windermere, in a Storm*, 1785 (Entrance Hall) is referred to in '258 miles North', which relays reports of storms and the elemental forces of nature.

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Chrome-plated landscapes 'Matterhorn vs Mt Blanc', 'Atlas' and 'East Dulwich Cow Parsley and Other Larval Food' by **Finlay Taylor** represent a reflection on the works of John Ruskin, in particular *Mont Blanc, St Gervais* (Watercolour Room) as well as his detailed observational studies of geological formations and botanical specimens. Taylor's 'British Butterflies and Moths' questions the notion of belonging and, given the cyclical life of butterflies, how one pinpoints the actual place of origin. This work forms a metaphor for the way tourists have 'settled', sometimes for years, in the Lake District.

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**Miranda Whall's** 'Paradise Place' is an intricate Lambda print from a digitally manipulated drawing, which mimics lace. Lace work would have been painstakingly made by the women of the house to mark special occasions or simply to decorate the linen. Whall's work however reveals intimate fantasies of the artist with wild animals. 'Bird in hand' forms a suggestive drawer lining which can be glimpsed in the sewing cabinet in the Dining Room. Charged with erotic symbolism, it too represents the private, interior world of women that often remains closed to the opposite sex.

**Jane Langley** shows three 'clouds' watercolours, which reflect several works in the collection, in particular John Constable's *Sky Study with Mauve Clouds* and *Sky Study, sunset* (Watercolour Room). Whilst Constable's are a result of the artist's actual presence before nature, Langley's express a detachment from it. The use of the 'cross stitch' mark refers to the female association with domestic craft while the sky represents a space of freedom and discovery.

**David Mabb** shows two paintings 'Reaper' and 'Haymaking' (transcribed from paintings of Russian peasants by the Russian artist Malevich in the 1930-1940s), and a photographic 'self-portrait' posing as Rodchenko (Russian painter, sculptor, designer and photographer), dressed in a Rodchenko 'production suit' made from 'Fruit' William Morris fabric. These works hang on top of a popular William Morris wallpaper. The 'revolutionary sentiment' and 'utopian ideals' of these artists are contrasted here with the bourgeois setting of Abbot Hall.

**Paula Mettler's** black and white photographs of young women in Victorian dress mimic the poses in a school group photograph taken in the late 1880s. The women appear to hover between past and present. Truth in portraiture is called into question here, as we acknowledge the blatant fabrication that has occurred in these photographs to create what (falsely) appears as a historical image. An interesting contrast can be seen in *Emma Hart as Miranda* by George Romney (Saloon), where the sitter was renowned for striking 'attitudes' in the manner of famous or notorious heroines from classical myths and literature. The portraits seem to 'inhabit' the architecture of their surroundings; recalling the memory of those people who once occupied Abbot Hall as a family home.

**Simon Morley** has laid a trail of postcards throughout the downstairs rooms. On each postcard there is a word from the first line of the artist Kurt Schwitters' poem 'Anna Blume' 'O beloved of my twenty-seven senses', creating a link between the words and images on the cards, as if Schwitters himself had passed through the house in spirit form. In the gallery 'A Guide Through the District of the Lakes in the North of England' (1835) by Wordsworth is reformed into a series of 'instant' abstract paintings. The shapes of the original text are translated into blocks of colour, offering an alternative reading. Morley's 'paragraph paintings' are in contrast to the anonymous painting *Thomas Braithwaite of Ambleside making his will* 1604 (Green Room) where text and painting are seen to fuse, as the act of writing itself is depicted.

Kendal flourished as a major centre of the textile industry in the mid-18th century and houses like Abbot Hall bear testament to that wealth. The imagery in **Kathleen Mullaniff's** large panel paintings 'Interior' is derived from a modest piece of cotton dress fabric from the Victoria and Albert Museum's textile collection and dates from 1785. Mullaniff alters the status of the fabric from dress-making to painting and asks the viewer to reconsider the aesthetic value of pattern.

**Gary Simmonds'** paintings have all been inspired by pattern. Abbot Hall is full of pattern too, from the decorative mouldings that cover the walls and surround the fireplaces, the circular arrangements of the miniatures in their cabinet and the glorious ruff collar and cuffs worn by *Lady Margaret Russell* in her portrait (Green Room), even the rug on the floor of the Saloon - all these dancing shapes and swirls are held within a grid in Simmonds' paintings.

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**Elaine Wilson** also deals with desire, this time the female breast is ornamented and fetishised in 'Honeysuckle', a curious work that teases the viewer with references to sexuality and servitude. 'Phantom I' and 'Phantom II' appear as empty skirts - these enigmatic ciphers are penetrated only by the light to reveal an absence of substance, their shapes crystallised in sugar and resin; they stand sentinel as if Romney's *Lady Rouse Boughton* (Saloon) had suddenly vacated her dress leaving a sort of exo-skeleton behind.

The tanning industry thrived in Kendal throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and this dirty and extraordinarily smelly trade provides the conceptual framework for 'Hide' by **Jennifer Wright**. Two 'prepared' animal skins are pinned on to the gallery wall, their shape referring to the torso-like backs of the gilt embroidered chairs in the Saloon. The rose tattoo images were originally constructed using children's plastic craft beads, which were then photographed and digitally manipulated. On one the 'luminosity' has been activated revealing a hidden or altered state. 'Domain' is developed from a drawing by the 18<sup>th</sup> century silk designer William Kilburn. This intricate, hand-crafted piece brings together the idea of fabric as a material and fabric as structure, and expresses the dual meaning of the title of this exhibition.

'Fabric: Rinterpreting the House' is curated by artist Jane Langley, in association with Abbot Hall Art Gallery.

Front cover image: Paula Mettler, 'Ana 8', photograph © the artist, 2002