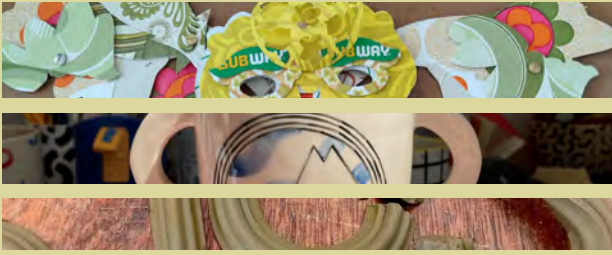




**Making  
History**



# What is Making History?

In 2021, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Craft Scotland invited the textile artist Zephyr Liddell to research Arbroath Abbey and its history. Using HES's archives and site visits, Zephyr then created two new unique objects based on her research.

The success of the project led HES and Craft Scotland to extend it in 2022. For Making History, as it was now named, four new makers were invited to create new objects based on their studies of four separate buildings, Dunblane Cathedral, Melrose Abbey, Dunfermline Abbey and Palace, and Arbroath Abbey.

The four makers for 2022 are glass artist Steven Graham, who researched the history of Dunfermline's Abbey, ceramicist David Gray (Dunblane Cathedral), jeweller Ali Forbes (Melrose Abbey), and ceramicist Steph Liddle (Arbroath Abbey).

As part of their research, the artists again explored HES's archives and conducted site visits to gain inspiration. They also worked with various community groups, including a refugee support group, Forth Valley College, the Boys' Brigade and a number of young people from YoungScot. Together they developed the ideas and techniques that would inform their final, finished artworks.

The results, we think, speak for themselves. Each maker has extended their practice. Each maker has worked directly with new audiences and new techniques. Each maker has produced a number of unique objects inspired by the past and looking to the future. In short, they are Making History.



**ARBROATH ABBEY**



**DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL**



Dunblane Cathedral ceramics

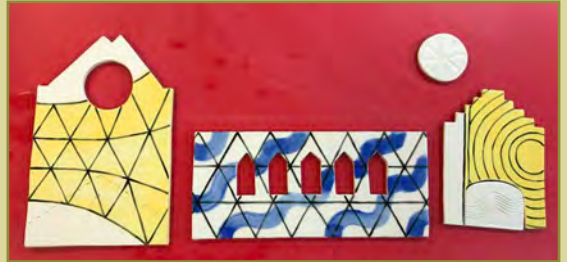


MELROSE ABBEY



DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

Ceramics inspired by Arbroath Abbey



Mask-making at Melrose



Dunfermline Abbey glass projects





# Ali Forbes

Born in Glasgow, Ali Forbes is a graduate of the Royal College of Art and Central Saint Martins. She creates jewellery and other objects in non-precious materials, inspired by the folklore of the places she has lived in, modular and mechanical design, and her Scottish heritage.

Ali's research into Melrose Abbey led her in particular to the gargoyles that adorn the string course on the building's exterior.

Working with a group of young Scottish schoolchildren, she led online workshops where the participants created headpieces from household materials. These have formed the basis for one of Ali's finished pieces, a gargoyle-inspired mask.

Also on display is a kaleidoscope made with storm-damaged wood from Melrose Abbey. The wood was gifted to Ali by GalGael Trust, a working community and social enterprise based in Govan, one of the most low-income areas in Glasgow. GalGael's purpose is to supply an avenue for its community to work together on demanding common

tasks that demonstrate ways of living with more humanity in our times. These include boatbuilding, the teaching of traditional woodworking bench joinery, and the creation of the Hidden Garden, which provides space to locals and the folks who come to GalGael to grow their own vegetables.

The kaleidoscope is inspired by the fact that Melrose Abbey is the resting place of David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope!

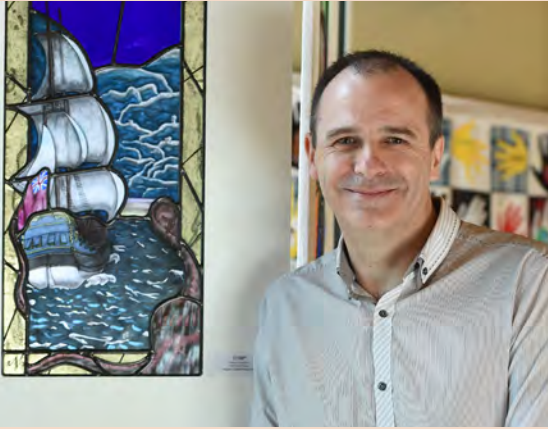




**“I’m inspired by the folklore of the places and communities I’ve lived in... modular and mechanical design.. my Scottish heritage and environmental concerns.”**



# Steven Graham



Steven specialises in painted stained glass panels and kiln formed and cast sculptural glass. His stained glass is influenced by art nouveau and Pre-Raphaelite art while incorporating contemporary themes. His cast glass also looks to historical and theological themes, with a contemporary presentation. Mostly working to commission, his work is in many private collections. Steven is also an educator, providing glass workshops to secondary schools and community groups.

For Making History, Steven explored Dunfermline's historic Abbey, its location, its people and its legacy. Inspired by the 750th anniversary of Queen Margaret establishing the first Abbey, he worked extensively with two local Boys' Brigade companies (aged from 4 to 18 years) and a group of Young Scots. Together they explored the medieval methods of making stained glass windows and their use in telling stories. Through a series of craft activities, each participant created their own personal stained glass design to tell small stories about themselves, their interests, and their lives, all of which were faithfully made into mini windows by Steven.



The experience of these community workshops and Steven's in depth research of Queen Margaret, her transition to Saint and her family's legacy, has informed his stained glass triptych outcome. The central panel is inspired by the shape of a rose window and depicts the Abbey surrounded by gilded medieval illuminated letters, each representing the nine monarchs buried at the Abbey. The Abbey panel is flanked either side by a panel portraying the life of Queen Margaret, executed in the art and colours of her time, and a celebration of Dunfermline's city status as part of Queen Elizabeth II's jubilee, this panel recognising Dunfermline's international damask linen trade.

Talking about his experience, Steven expressed the value of researching our cultural history, conveying that journey to the young participants, and witnessing their enthusiastic response to their activities, each making a memory.



# “It’s been fascinating tracing the hand gestures and marks of the boys”



# David Gray

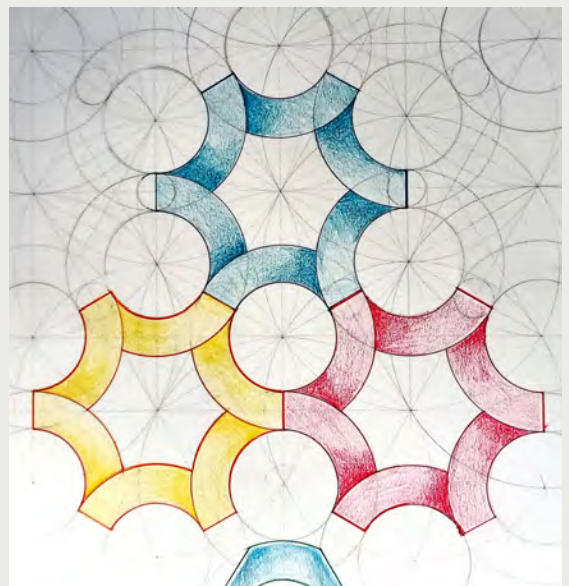


David Gray is an artist with over 15 years of experience working on a wide range of community and heritage projects, collaborations, and exhibitions across the UK, Vietnam, India and China. He is particularly interested in repetitive geometric shapes and forms.

His area of research for Making History was Dunblane Cathedral where he was drawn to the symbols found there such as the Momenti Mori seen on the gravestones that surround the site. With students at Forth Valley College, he explored medieval and modern symbology, looking at faith, power and narrative, using Monopoly board pieces as an example. The students also experimented with techniques such as moulding and extruding clay to create prototype pieces that have informed his finished pieces.

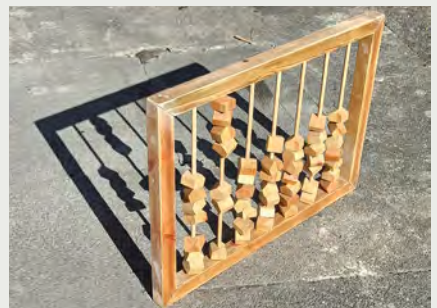


The grave stone motifs have influenced the large hourglass made from upcycled bottles, while the Monopoly houses have become the beads of an abacus that slide into stacks reminiscent of medieval depictions of the Tower of Babel. The lattice window of the Cathedral, meanwhile, provided the inspiration for the mobile phone lattice work shown here, created as a co-production with the students at the College. It is a very modern interpretation of the communicative power that stained glass windows once held for the congregation of Dunblane.





“The Dunblane Cathedral residency presented a wealth of historic artefacts and architecture containing meaning and symbolism that transcends politics, religion and culture. Site visits, community engagement and great source material facilitated explorations of our modern concepts of time, power and narrative.”



# Zephyr Liddell

Zephyr Liddell is an artist and craft maker based in Glasgow. Her practice spans costume design, textiles and teaching. An avid collaborator, Zephyr often works with performance artists and directors, creating garments and immersive environments.

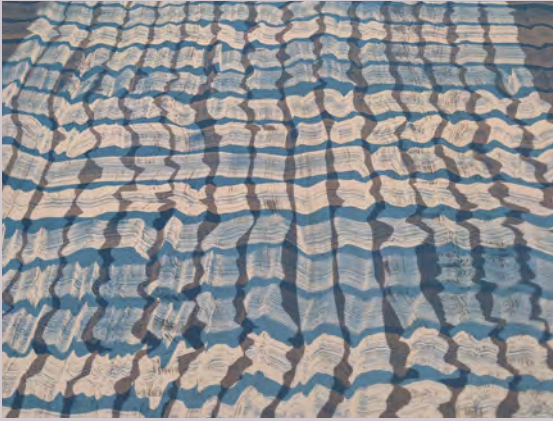
Zephyr worked with HES and Craft Scotland during the pandemic on an initial collaborative project that laid the foundations for Making History. Tasked with researching the town of Arbroath and its Abbey, the travel restrictions in place at the time meant that Zephyr's research was conducted entirely through HES's extensive online databases, in particular Scran and Canmore, alongside personal archives and memories of growing up in Angus.

Zephyr was struck by the ghost-like quality of textiles within the archive and identifiable gaps in the recording and interpretation of history (especially as it pertains to the complexities of women's, and otherwise marginalised, lives). She took a hauntological approach to exploring the archive and developing this new body of work. Zephyr used a collage technique to work with these 'ghosts', drawing a thread through items with limited context and her

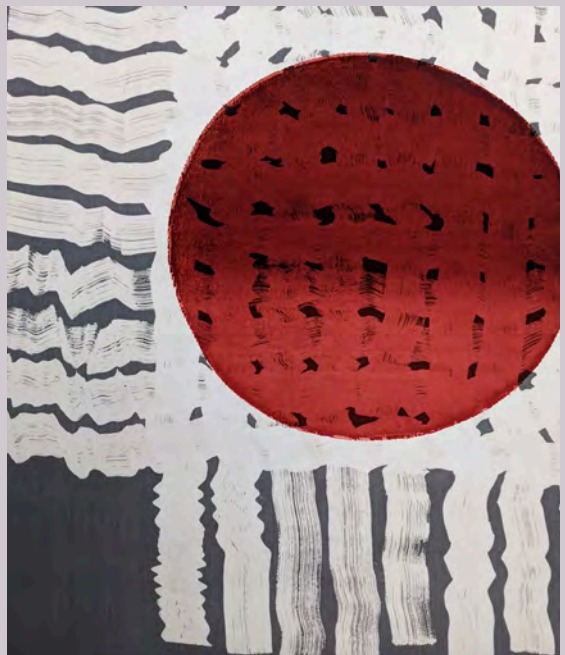
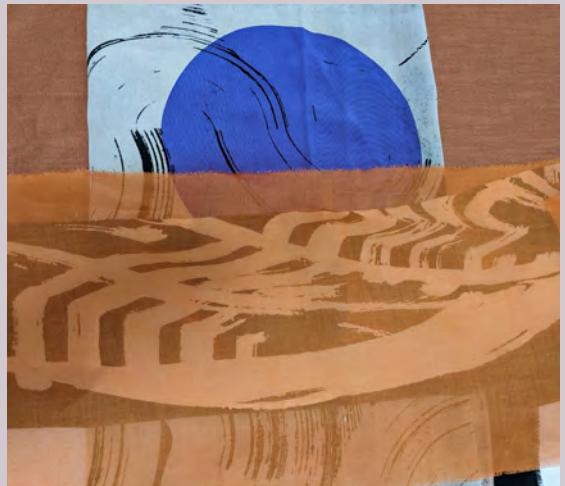
own childhood experiences of Angus, to create layered works that point towards the persistent past.

She focused on the town's workwear, specifically that of the fishwives, who would wear a particular type of basket, known as a 'rip', across the chest and upper arms. Reminiscent of being a teenager in Arbroath, walking home wearing a school bag strapped around her forehead, Zephyr has created a rip that references these layered histories that shape the material culture of the area. While initially researching the Declaration of Arbroath, the independent spirit of these industrious women inspired Zephyr to dive deeper into this legacy of independence. Through the repetitive making processes involved (drawing, printmaking and weaving) this interpretation of a rip evokes the repetitive tasks of the fishwives. The returning motifs and cultural elements found in the archival images have built the Angus fishwife into a figure akin to a local archetype.





Considering the reverence given to significant architectural sites such as Arbroath Abbey alongside the challenges of preserving textiles - and in turn the influence this then has on whose histories are archived - Zephyr created a room divider in order to display textile within an architectural form. The hand printed fabrics speak to fragments found within the archive, images of mostly unnamed women, alongside architectural sites interpreted initially in hand drawn images and collage. The textiles have been through various processes of screen printing and construction, layering these references to create an assemblage that connects legacies of independence across place, generation and gender.



# Steph Liddle

Steph Liddle is a Ceramic Designer/ Maker based in Dundee.

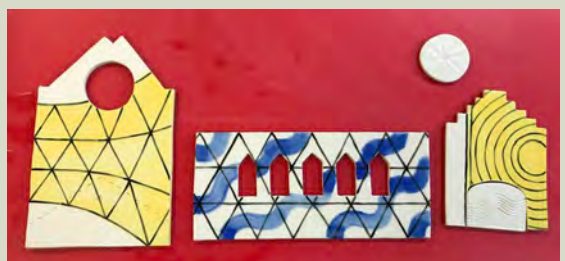
For Making History, Steph researched Arbroath Abbey and its history, and adapted her practice from serial production to one-off pieces, to produce a collection of unique objects. As well as being inspired by the shapes she saw in the Abbey buildings, Steph was drawn to a number of ceramic vessels in the Abbey's Visitor Centre which had been discovered on the site. One of these was an inkpot dating from the 1400s, which inspired a series of ceramic workshops with an Angus refugee support group. Combining their knowledge of the Abbey with traditions and shapes from their respective home countries of Afghanistan and Syria, the group created various hand-built ceramic vessels and decorated them. These became part of the research process and inspired Steph's finished pieces.



**“Coming from a background in illustration, ceramics was a bit of a tangent. But from the moment I picked up a lump of clay I was hooked!”**



Steph's artworks reflect her interest in function, but extend her practice with new shapes and glazes. One piece was inspired by the sexfoil (six-sided) cup that was used by the Abbey's monks to share wine. Two plates and a double-handled cup also nod to the extensive collection of Arbroath souvenir pottery that can be found in the HES archives. Both plates use a green glaze inspired by an Abbey floor tile. One plate features 3D shapes inspired by the Abbey buildings, the other has an incised geometric pattern inspired by lighthouse lanterns in reference to the Abbey's historical maritime ties. Both illustrations are contained within semi-circle shapes inspired by a photographic slide of Buddon lighthouse in the HES archives, with additional decorative details that reference the stonemasonry details around the arched doorways of the Abbey.



## Thanks

Ali Forbes, David Gray, Steven Graham,  
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All the Young Scot participants

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Patricia Mair at Dunfermline Abbey,  
and the staff at Melrose Abbey

Ben Ashton, Emily Smit-Dicks, Joanna  
Kinnerly-Taylor, Martha Williams

Helen Wyllie at Wylliecat Design

## Get inspired

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

[www.craftscotland.org](http://www.craftscotland.org)

<https://canmore.org.uk> -  
information about historic sites

[www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk) - information  
about places, people and culture

<https://scottishglassociety.com>

[www.scottishpotters.org](http://www.scottishpotters.org)

**Ali Forbes**  
[www.urbanfolkloredesign.com](http://www.urbanfolkloredesign.com)

**Steven Graham**  
<https://in-glass.uk>

**David Gray**  
[www.davidgrayceramics.com](http://www.davidgrayceramics.com)

**Steph Liddle**  
[www.stephliddle.com](http://www.stephliddle.com)

**Zephyr Liddell**  
[www.zephyrliddell.com](http://www.zephyrliddell.com)

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