



Fairhurst
Gallery & Framers



For immediate release

“Norwich has its own art scene which is becoming more and more vibrant, it is an exciting time to be an artist in Norwich.” Joni Smith

Norwich artist to debut new works at city gallery

A Norwich artist is set to show a collection of new, unseen works in the city.

Joni Smith, known for her paper art and site-specific installations, will exhibit *DISlocations* at the Fairhurst Gallery in the Norwich Lanes.

Joni, who completed a Masters in Textile Culture at Norwich University of the Arts, has been working on the new body of work for more than a year.

The work, some of which has been inspired by Norfolk and Norwich, plays with ideas of borders and divisions, using maps and atlases collected from her travels across Europe.

With many of her artworks constructed from hundreds of paper squares the work is laboriously time consuming with Joni combining darts and twists to enable the artworks to connect without glue or tape.

In 2015 Joni cycled 7500 km from Norwich to Croatia using a combination of GPS and paper maps to find her way through 14 EU countries. Along the way she collected maps and ideas which have helped form the basis for the exhibition.

Joni said: “I think one of the most important roles of an artist is to hold a mirror up to society, to reveal aspects of our world that might be subtle or obscure, but that resonate.

“As an artist living in Norfolk I use the map to talk about the space we inhabit, highlighting certain aspects of our world.”

In one of her works, *Sleeping Beauties: Woodlands*, she has used biro to delete everything but the wooded areas on a map of Norfolk, focusing the eye on how much, or little, woodland we have left.

Joni said: “I came to Norwich 13 years ago after travelling and fell in love with the city. I didn’t plan to stay here, but Norwich does something to you - it lures you quietly with its small city charm.

“I’m not going to lie, being a practicing artist anywhere in the UK at the moment is pretty tough.

“But I find that Norwich has always been a very positive place to be an artist. Norwich has its own art scene, which is becoming more and more vibrant, it is an exciting time to be an artist in Norwich I think.

“There are many groups and collectives, which offer a supportive network for local artists. And there are countless interesting spaces being used and events to get involved in.”

Accompanying the exhibition will be a range of silk scarves made by Norwich-based designer Bella Singleton who has developed a successful international brand, with stockists including the TATE Modern and The British Library.

The Fairhurst Gallery shop will be showcasing Bella’s *Vagar* collection which is based on a trip through Latin America.

Nina Fowler, of the Fairhurst Gallery, said: “The scarves compliment Joni’s paper collages and installation work, both Bella and Joni use a mixture of hand drawn and digital techniques to create their unique colour schemes and aesthetic.”

Bella, who moved to Norwich from London two months ago, said: “The Fairhurst Gallery was excited to see my designs which was wonderful being new to the city. Upon meeting the team their genuine interest for supporting designers was immediately apparent.

“I left feeling utterly inspired by their enthusiasm, it is a real honour to have the brand stocked at Fairhurst, a gallery that knows exactly what it wants in their contemporary shop in keeping with the gallery’s exhibitions.

“When I left London it was a choice between Cambridge or Norwich having grown up in Suffolk, and due to its creative buzz - Norwich won every time! I love the relaxed nature of people and the fact that you are in the countryside within minutes.”

Alongside Bella’s work, a signed, limited edition print by Joni will be available in the shop.

The exhibition is on at The Fairhurst Gallery from October 17 through to November 18 2017.

Joni will be working on *The Art of Letting Go* in the gallery on four Tuesdays during the exhibition. Visitors can see the work as it happens and chat to Joni about her practice.

(24 & 31 October and 7 & 14 November, all 12noon – 2pm)

The gallery, on Bedford Street, is open Tuesday to Saturday, 9.30am to 5.30pm with additional viewings available by appointment.

For more information visit www.fairhurstgallery.co.uk

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

About Fairhurst

Tucked away in the Norwich Lanes, once a 17th century skittle alley and formerly the Cat Trap jazz club, the Fairhurst is a unique gallery space, hosting regular exhibitions.

The Fairhurst Gallery champions contemporary fine art, bringing variety and brilliance to the city of Norwich. With a view to developing the careers of new professional artists and helping established practitioners reach new audiences, The Fairhurst repeatedly show inspirational work of the highest standards.

The Fairhurst Gallery also offers a traditional framing business as well as a bespoke restoration service, with clients including stately homes around the region, Norwich Cathedral, Norwich Castle and the Sainsbury Centre.

About Joni Smith

Since graduating from Norwich University of the Arts with a Masters in Textile Culture Joni Smith has worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, working on the Sculpture and Textiles BA courses. She has also lectured and run workshops at the Sainsburys Centre.

She has completed residencies at Norwich City College, Wymondham College and a summer residency with Stew which resulted in her first solo exhibition.



About Bella Singleton

Bella, who studied Printed Textiles at Leeds College of Art, began designing freelance for fashion houses before deciding to start her own brand.

She said: "I didn't like never seeing my hard work again under my own name, and thus the brand begun with a series of illustrations that were developed into my first collection in 2015.

Bella relocated to Norwich from London in the summer of 2017.



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