

PRESS RELEASE

Hand Earth Gesture Return **Sustainable Public Art Installation for Coventry and Warwickshire**

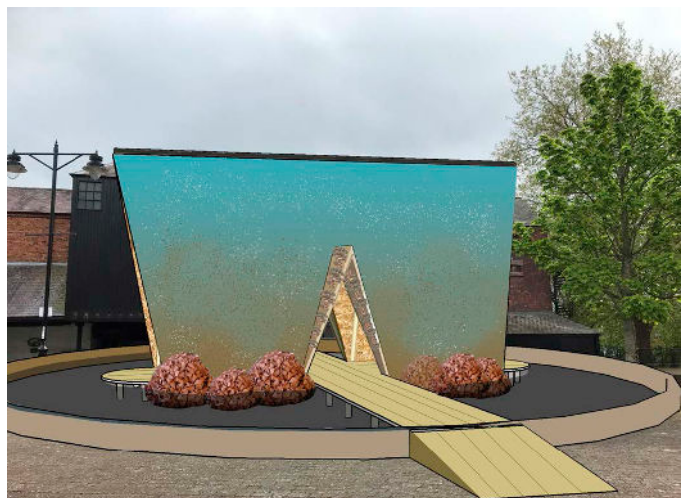
Tuesday 12th – Sunday 17th July, 12 - 8 pm
Coventry Canal Basin, CV1 4LY

Experimental public art installation taking place at Coventry Canal Basin from 12th-17th July; a site-specific collaboration between artists from the UK and India: Dolon Kundu (Kolkata, IN), Rachael Champion (Thanet, UK/US), Amy & Oliver Thomas-Irvine (Cornwall, UK) and Jim Woodall (London, UK).

- Join making workshops, experience performances and visit this spectacular temporary installation from 12 - 8 pm every day.
- Bring clay flower sculptures to adorn the installation; learn the techniques of Dolon Kundu through tutorials on our [YouTube channel](#).
- British Sign Language Interpreter on site throughout Saturday and Sunday 2 - 6 pm.
- A floating café / bar will be operating for the duration, run by the Village Butty.
- Recycle and return: Expressions of interest are sought from local community groups and individuals who would like to use the grain, clay, straw, timber and other materials once the exhibition is over.

As the production and origins of goods become increasingly complex and remote, this artwork addresses a wish to return to our roots and participate in the making of things. **Hand Earth Gesture Return** is made from earth, straw and water – natural, locally grown, sourced and sustainable materials. It celebrates the universality of nature and the raw and organic energy generated during the processes of making.

The central craft used takes inspiration from the [Kumartuli artisans of Kolkata](#), India, famous for creating clay and straw idols. Baked in the sun but never fired, the clay can be borrowed from the earth before being recycled or returned in a poet cycle of growth, transformation and rebirth. Connections are made with traditional clay and straw techniques from around the world, from British cob and thatching, via Egyptian mudbrick, Latin American quincha to African rammed earth. The artwork reveals the shared heritage of our diverse society by exploring cross-cultural connections to these materials; their uses, rituals, harvest, extraction, lifecycle and transformation.



Blue gate visualisation render; courtesy of the artists.

***“Gates are places of transition,
from one state to another.”***

The Book of Symbols

This installation consists of a series of sculptural forms, raw materials and paraphernalia that are designed to be interacted with by members of the public. Anchoring the installation will be a sculpture resembling a degrading and fragmented monumental gateway, constructed from timber, clay and thatching straw. 1000s of clay flower adornments will be both applied and piled up at the entrance of the gateway. Built in public by our lead artists, community volunteers and visitors, the installation will grow and evolve over the course of the week.

The public are invited to participate in the shared experience of learning, growing, building and letting go of this new installation, becoming part of the team, joining making-workshops and getting their hands dirty with clay and straw. This installation foregrounds the act of making, with the hands, as a way to make deeper connections between people, place and matter. Hands are a universal and personal symbol, which convey meaning. Connecting through their use, and working together, to realise a public artwork in the heart of the community, penetrates barriers including gender, age and race.

A SITE OF PERFORMANCE

Locally-based world-rhythm specialist musicians Parmjeet Bamrah (Indian Classical), Anabell Febles (Latin), Mahandra Patel (Indian Folk and World Fusion), Luke Weaver (World Fusion) and Abraham Paddy Tetteh (Ghanaian) will respond to the sculptural activities on site with a number of improvised drumming performances, further exploring the connection between making, earth and hand (timetable below). In partnership with Kadence Music.

Hand Earth Gesture Return turns the creation and erosion process into a series of performative events that the public can witness or participate in. From the growing and traditional harvesting of a field of Atle Spring wheat at Hatton Farm (summer 2021), to the processioning of the straw harvest to Coventry along the canal route as a moving sculpture, there have been opportunities for people to participate in the full lifecycle and transformation process. In this way we hope to create a greater connection to, and understanding of, our material environment and culture, embedding ecology, art and sustainability into people's experience of art and their city.

[An Artwork Experienced in Chapters - More >](#)

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Designed and produced by our lead artists; co-created with extensive input from communities in Foleshill, Radford and beyond. Many are contributing to the production of this ambitious public artwork including producing 1,000s of clay flowers which will be 'ceremoniously' added to the installation throughout the week, with a particular focus on Saturday 16th. They include members of Gurdwara Guru Nanak Parkash, Krishna Mandhir Temple, Cambridge Street Masjid, the Afgan refugee community, The Coventry Sacred Space Initiative, Active Inclusion Network, Coventry College, Coventry University, Broad Street Community Centre, Daimler Powerhouse Creation Centre, Imagineer Production's Monday-night Makers, Sitting Rooms of Culture, Coventry Peace Orchard, the Homeschool Network of Coventry and Warwickshire, local schools (eg. Stoke Heath Primary School), Foleshill Creates and many others.

RECYCLE AND RETURN

On Sunday the 17th July, there will be a 'water ritual' performance that marks the beginning of the erosion process and the return of the sculpture and materials to the earth.

Following this temporary installation, the materials are to be given back to the earth, reused or recycled. We are seeking expressions of interest from local community groups and individuals who could use the grain, clay, straw, timber and other materials - admin@pangaeasculptorscentre.com.

“How can temporary public art be created more sustainably, minimising waste and responding to the climate crisis? How can this generate original creative outcomes which enrich our experience of visual art, connect us to our shared heritage and resonate with our culturally-diverse society?”

***Lucy Tomlins,
Director, Pangaea Sculptors' Centre***



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THOMAS DANE GALLERY

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COLLECTION

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Supported clay making each day 12 - 8pm, led by local ceramic artist Zoe Petrie.

Friday 15th July | Roam + Dwell, Ludic Rooms 2 - 6 pm | Local Artists/Artisans Social 4 - 8 pm

Improvised Performances - Timetable

With Drummers Parmjeet Bamrah (Indian Classical), Anabell Febles (Latin, inc. percussion), Mahandra Patel (Indian Folk and World Fusion), Luke Weaver (World Fusion) and Abraham Paddy Tetteh (Ghanaian)

Tuesday 12th July | 2 - 3 pm

Wednesday 13th July | 1.30 - 2.30 pm | 7 - 8 pm

Thursday 14th July | 1.30 - 2.30 pm | 6 - 7 pm

Friday 15th July | 3 - 4 pm | 6.30 - 7.30 pm

Saturday 16th July | 1 - 2 pm | 5 - 7 pm

Sunday 17th July | 4 - 5 pm 'Water-erosion'

NOTES

Hand Earth Gesture Return is produced by Pangaea Sculptors' Centre.
Curators: Nandita Palchoudhuri (Kolkata, India) / Lucy Tomlins (Warwickshire, UK).

Pangaea Sculptors' Centre

Pangaea Sculptors' Centre is a Community Interest Company supporting contemporary sculptors and fostering technical excellence. The organisation promotes and enriches wider public engagement with sculpture through educational, critical and cultural programming. It investigates how artists might use materials to reflect on the key question of sustainability in contemporary society. Based between the Daimler Powerhouse, Coventry, and London, Pangaea also provides technical, fabrication and consultancy services.

www.pangaeasculptorscentre.com | [@pangaeacentre](https://twitter.com/pangaeacentre) | [Pangaea Sculptors' Centre YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Artist Rachael Champion (b. 1982, Long Island, New York, USA) graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art from the Royal Academy Schools in 2010. Champion lives and works in Thanet, UK. Rachael's artworks explore the physical, material, and historical relationships between ecology, industry, and the built environment. Her works are typically large in scale and consist of living organisms and ubiquitous building materials. Coalescing at an intersection between biology, geology, and architecture, Rachael's work addresses the corporeality of the materials we extract, transform, and consume and how these actions affect the physical characteristics of landscapes, ecosystems, and the built environment. Her work has been exhibited in a number of recognised institutions including The Whitechapel Gallery, Modern Art Oxford, Camden Arts Centre and the Zabludowicz Collection. Rachael has made numerous site-specific installations in a variety of contexts including commercial galleries, artist-run exhibition spaces, art fairs, and remote landscapes. In October of 2019 she installed Tower of Varieties, an ambitious eleven metre suspended sculpture at the Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham, UK. www.rachaelchampion.com

Artist / Artisan Dolon Kundu Mondal (Kolkata, India) is a rare woman "pinch potter", the art of pinching clay into shape. She won the President's National Award for Handicraft in 2019 and runs a dynamic studio with 625 female members called Maarttikee (Burdwan, West Bengal) where she loves the challenge of design collaborations. Though without formal, institutional training, Kundu has been practising as a ceramic artisan since early childhood, has trained under Sri Dhruva Sil, National Awardee India and is proficient in traditional Indian clay sculpture techniques. Her delicate objects are distinguished by original, subtle and intricate designs.

PANGAEA SCULPTORS' CENTRE

Kundu has received a number of awards including the National Ceramic Award 2017; 2003-2004 State Award from the Department of Small Scale and Village Industries, Government of West Bengal; State Award in Terracotta, State Academy of Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Art at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, 2005. Kundu's work appears in a number of important public and private collections including the National Museum of Scotland. She is associated with the Small Industries Services Institute, Kolkata as a master craftsperson (1995-2006).

Artists Amy Thomas-Irvine (b.1986, Manchester, UK) and **Oliver Thomas-Irvine** (b.1986 Portstewart, N.Ireland) live and work in Cornwall. They formed in 2008 due to a shared raw aesthetic and interest in the physicality of space and creating live sculptural environments. Within their work they aim to create shifting layers of connectivity and tensions; where image, form, structures and material can relate physically, politically or symbolically to the body and its present changing environment. Whilst their work is concerned with weight, balance, line and form, the core of their work stems from an interest in tensions that rupture those ideals, contextually and physically. It is this state of physicality that interests them and how material and form can be suggestive to that change. Selected solo exhibitions include: Holding Breath, public sculpture commission, Tremeneheere Sculpture Gardens, Cornwall, UK, 2020; Inhale, Exhale, SAPH, The Bund, Shanghai, China, 2019; Speaking Between Somehow The Spaces, Commissioned by Slate Projects, Averard Hotel, London, 2018; Binlang, Gallery333, Exeter Phoenix, Exeter, 2018, Monday Morning, OVERHEAD, To_Bridges, Bronx, New York, 2016. www.thomas-irvine.com

Artist Jim Woodall (London, UK) uses a combination of sculpture, video, photography and collage to reflect upon uncertainty within contemporary society. Uncertainty about the buildings we live in, the growth of cities, our connection with nature, our political and belief structures, digital memory, trust, and failure. His works reflect the cycles of collapse and reformation, presence, manipulation and absence that he sees both in the continuous building and ruining of the urban environment, and in our social and digital contexts. Selected exhibitions and commissions: Auto, Zona Mista, London 2021; Breeze de la Breeze, Zona Mista, 2020; Absinthe I, II and III, three groups show curated by James Capper, Charlie Mills and Billy Fraser, London, 2019; Recreational Grounds V, group show curated by Dateagle, London, 2019; Prevent This Tragedy, Von Goetz Gallery, group show curated by Dateagle, London, 2018; The Big Issue, collage commission for The Big Issue, Glastonbury Festival, 2017; If I Don't Have You, Matt's Gallery, London, 2016; Aggregate, Billboard collage commission and book launch, X-Marks The Bokship, Matt's Gallery, London, 2016; Los Angeles 2019 presents – Edge of Human, group show curated by French Riviera, London, 2014. Jim Woodall was also a founding member of Cutup Collective (2004-2009). www.jimwoodall.co.uk

Producer / Co-Curator Lucy Tomlins (Warwickshire, UK). Since graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2012, Lucy has evolved a hybrid practice, running a creative matrix that includes making her own art alongside curating exhibitions, discursive and educational residencies and programmes, and overseeing fabrication for other artists as director of Pangaea Sculptors' Centre. This sees her toggling between large scale collaboration and working solo; the blending of different strands of activity and understanding them all as essential parts of a contemporary artistic practice. Recent solo exhibitions / commissions include at Metropolis, Coventry (2022), Liverpool Parish Church (2022), Art Collection, University of Warwick (2019), Sculpture at Bermondsey Square, Vitrine (2017). Selected group shows include Museo etnológico, Castellón, Spain (2019); Mimosa House, London (2019); Chatsworth House, Derbyshire (2018); Galería de Arte Mexicano (GAM), Mexico City (2018); and Zabludowicz Collection, London (2016). www.lucytomlins.co.uk | [@lucytomlins](https://twitter.com/lucytomlins)

Guest Co-Curator Nandita Palchoudhuri (Kolkata, India) is a social entrepreneur, curating and consulting internationally in the field of Indian Folk Art Craft and Performance Practices. Her work creates cutting edge artistic and functional applications using traditional skills that often address a current social need. This explores the possibility of art to re-examine the old and create new relationships between social engagement and aesthetic gesture. She designs and delivers exhibitions, installations, educational workshops, seminars and lecture-demonstrations using Indian Folk techniques and traditional practices. Nandita is a Trustee of the India Foundation for the Arts, headquartered in Bangalore, Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta Regeneration Trust, Calcutta Carnival Trust and a Ford Foundation - International Initiative for Social Philanthropy Member. www.nanditapalchoudhuri.in

Kadence Music unites the rhythms of the world, bringing drumming to the community; teaching, supporting and creating social families through drums and hands. Without prejudice, it welcomes one and all with a big heart... and some drums! www.kadencemusic.co.uk

Village Butty The newly refurbished narrowboat The Village Butty is a floating event venue planning a never-ending tour of the UK Inland Waterways system. After a successful first stop in Coventry Canal Basin in May 2022, they return to provide refreshments and a space for guests to relax and enjoy the unique environment. www.villagebutty.com | [@thevillagebutty](https://twitter.com/thevillagebutty)

PRESS IMAGES

[More and high resolution images and credits here >](#)



1. Kumartuli artisans, in Kolkata, building the armatures for clay idols for Durga Puja; International Changemakers British Council / Coventry City of Culture Research trip, 2020.

2. Clay and Straw Workshop with Reception Year students at Stoke Heath Primary School.

ALL Credits: Pangaea Sculptors' Centre

1. / 2. [Sculpting Hands - Practical workshop between KCC in Kolkata and Daimler Powerhouse, Coventry](#) - Live-streamed, 10 November 2021.



1. Chapter 1: The Seed - Still from a short film documenting an improvised collaborative drumming journey that took place before the July wheat harvest in Hatton, Warwickshire.

2. Traditional harvest of Atle Spring wheat, Hatton Farm, Warwickshire - summer 2021.

3. Hairy Barge - Processioning the materials to the communities that will use them (Hatton Locks to Coventry Canal Basin) - March 2022.



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