



Donachie



Rhodes



Ryan

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This exhibition, and publication, would not have been possible without the following people: Jacqueline Donachie, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Dr Kate McMillan, Lis Rhodes, Lux, Nottingham Contemporary, Veronica Ryan, Spike Island, Anthony Williams & Beyond Surface, and the team at Freelands Foundation

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Exhibition curated by Henry Ward

Images of Jacqueline Donachie courtesy of Ruth Clark

Images of Lis Rhodes courtesy of the artist

Images of Veronica Ryan courtesy of Jules Lister, Alban Roinard (Veronica Ryan in the studio at Porthmeor, St Ives) and the artist

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Donachie Rhodes Ryan



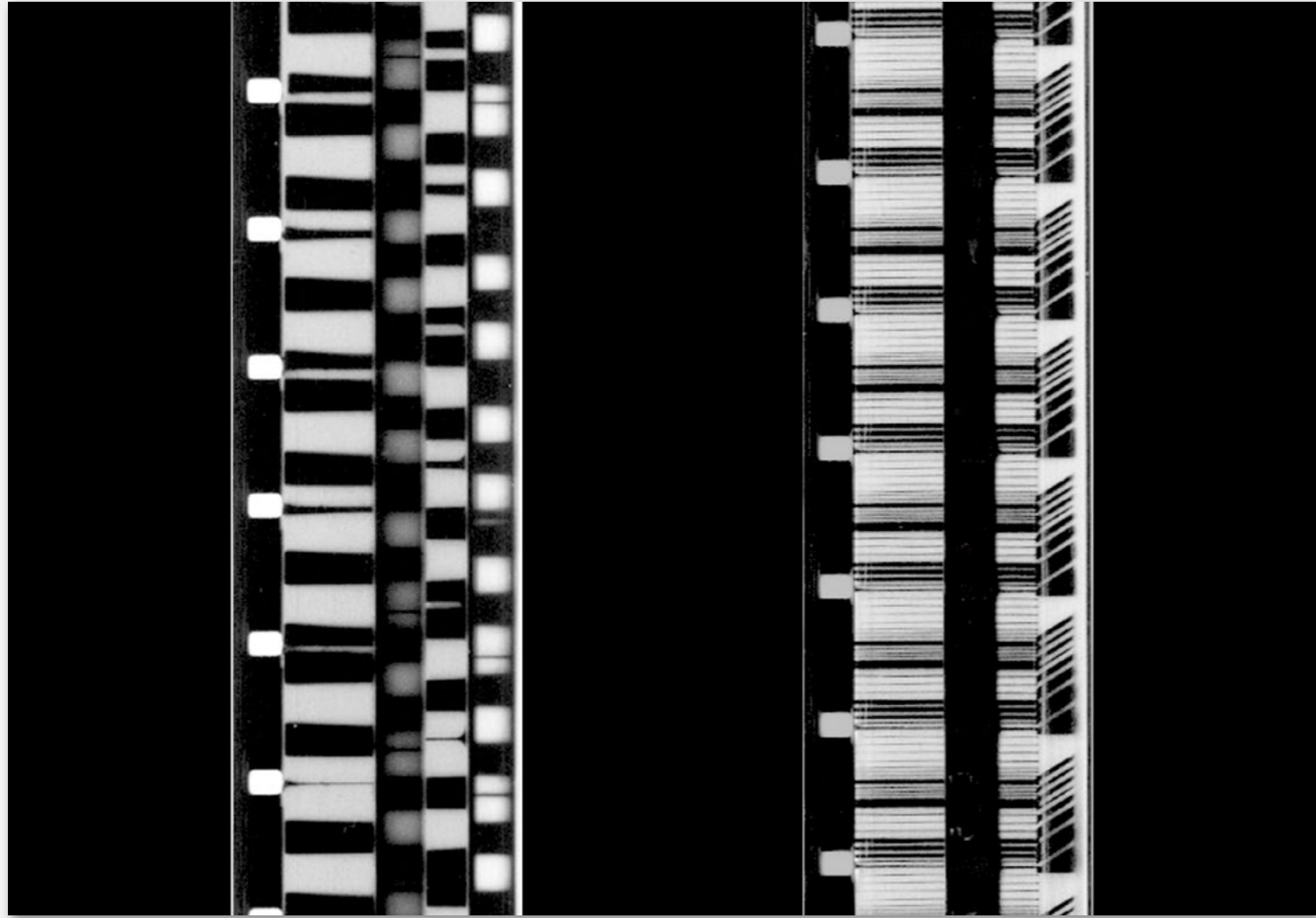
Veronica Ryan

Salvage
Veronica Ryan, 2017
Photo courtesy of Jules Lister



Jacqueline Donachie

An Era of Small Pleasures
Jacqueline Donachie, 2017
Photo courtesy of Ruth Clark



Lis Rhodes

Still from Notes from Light Music
Lis Rhodes
1975-77

 Freelands
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Donachie
Rhodes
Ryan

Foreword
Henry Ward

Donachie Rhodes Ryan marks the first three years of the Freelands Award and coincides with the publication of the fourth iteration of our research report into opportunities for female artists in the UK.¹ The exhibition includes works by the first three winners of the award, Jacqueline Donachie (2016, The Fruitmarket Gallery), Lis Rhodes (2017, Nottingham Contemporary) and Veronica Ryan (2018, Spike Island).

The annual Freelands Award was established to enable an arts organisation, located outside of London, to present an exhibition by a mid-career female artist who may not yet have received the acclaim or public recognition that her work deserves. In the inaugural year of this award, 2016, it was The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh and the artist, Jacqueline Donachie, that were selected by the panel of judges. Donachie embarked on a significant new body of work for her exhibition, including the piece, *An Era of Small Pleasures* (2017), which is exhibited in the current show. These new works were shown alongside existing pieces, demonstrating a substantial and consistent practice across a broad range of media. In 2017 the winner was Nottingham Contemporary with Lis Rhodes. Rhodes has been an important figure in art film for over 40 years, but the survey exhibition in Nottingham, which opened in May 2019, is her first major institutional solo show. More recently, her immersive installation, *Light Music* (1975), was a popular draw at Tate Modern, when it was displayed in The Tanks. At Freelands Foundation Gallery we are showing *Notes From Light Music*, a smaller related work from 1975–77. Veronica Ryan became the third recipient of the award, with Spike Island, in 2018. Ryan is now working towards a major exhibition for 2020, with the intention of creating a body of new works that form a conversation with those she tragically lost in the Momart fire of 2004. Here, Ryan is showing a recent work, *Salvage* (2017).

This exhibition celebrates the award and provides a forum and context where audiences can find out about the research published in the report and investigate the position of the female artist. As a key focus for the Foundation's work over the past four years, it is an appropriate time to be exploring how the climate is beginning to shift.

¹Dr Kate McMillan, 'Representation of Female Artists in Britain During 2018', Freelands Foundation, 2019.

In Conversation:
Jacqueline Donachie and Phyllida Barlow



In describing the work, *An Era of Small Pleasures*, included in this exhibition, Jacqueline Donachie refers to some writing by Patti Smith, where she reflects on a time when she and her husband retreated to raise their young children; of the appreciation of small moments or events like drinking a full cup of coffee, reading a newspaper or watching the sky. Donachie heard Smith speak in Glasgow about this during a poetry reading, at a time when her own children were very young, and it stayed with her, that juxtaposition of professional and domestic life. A period that gives small moments of genuine pleasure but that can also be very binding.

The following transcript is taken from a conversation, that took place in August 2017, between Jacqueline Donachie and Phyllida Barlow, in which they discussed Donachie's life, career and work.

PB I respond strongly to the contradictions of the leather paper chain. Its origins lie in ephemerality – materially, temporally and in terms of weight – it has been transformed into something permanent: paper into leather, enduring, heavy...it is magical.

JD It works as a line going across the space that droops and sags between the steel beams of the roof. It's very long and I wanted to hang it across

In Conversation:

Jacqueline Donachie and Phyllida Barlow

the gallery and let it end in a pile on the floor. The loops are similar in scale to paper chains and how it was made is important, that it references something that you tend to make in your home – which in part comes out of my horror of the studio I suppose.

PB I think it's got something almost sexual about it in some way. When you look at the work, not formally but as a sentient thing, there is something provocatively erotic about it. The leather. I like the edge between the formal and the very serious side of art historical legacy when it starts to break free of that, the object almost answering back.

JD There was a real defiance over what my sister and I wore in the early 1980s: wearing leather was frowned upon. It was associated with fetishism and bikers then but it's become much more commonplace now. I've not used leather that much but it seemed appropriate for this work.



PB Is letting an object go something that interests you? An object finding its own potential beyond your control?

JD Definitely. It's something that *An Era of Small Pleasures* does; it's not an object until it is hung up. Like a pile of string, it needs to be attached to something to take a shape.

PB The leather and the surface and even the clip that holds the links together make it an object in transition. It has departed from the paper chain and I don't know what it is going to become, but I do know that it is incredibly heavy. The transformation from something light and disposable to something heavy and impractical is a powerful subject in itself.

JD It's prevalent throughout my newer work, the idea of something being the same but different. Something that has the same characteristics as something that you are familiar with that has connotations of fun or the social activity of children making them (you always make paper chains collectively don't you?) becoming something heavier, harder; hard to hang and hard to make. It has the same form but it's not that thing.

PB Remaking the world we live in could be seen as utterly pointless but it is a new declaration of what an object is and what it does in our lives.

In Conversation:

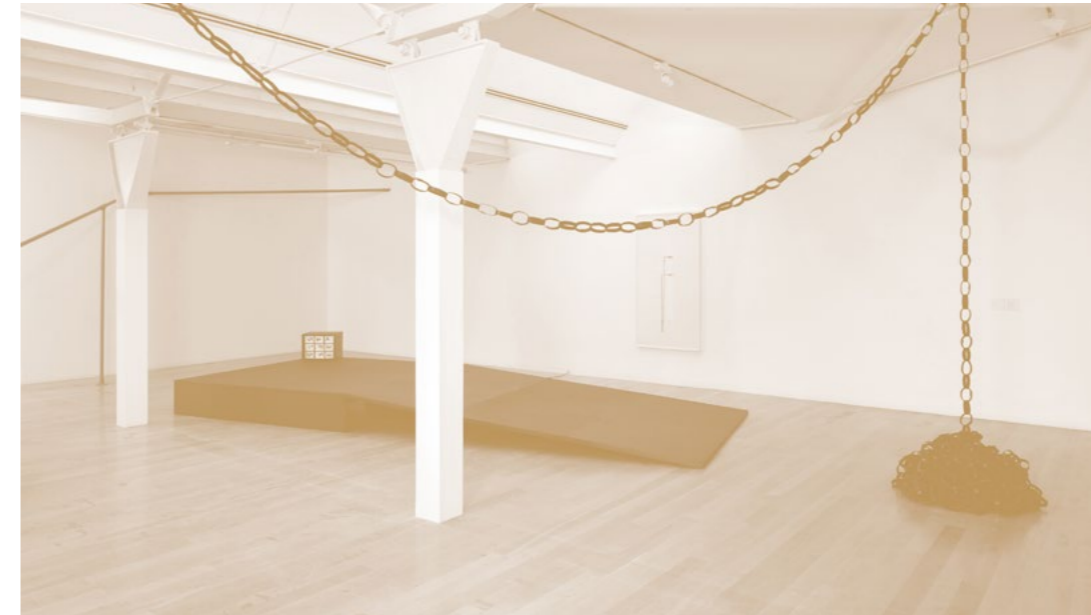
Jacqueline Donachie and Phyllida Barlow

I'm interested in exploiting the potential aggression of seemingly harmless things. The act of remaking makes the object angry.

JD Angry and threatening.

PB Exactly. It has qualities which are completely at odds with the status of the original. The fake copy is a form of performance for me.

JD And usually with fakes and copies you get a version which is made out of inferior materials and has had less attention paid to it, so there is something perverse about spending so much time making something that's flimsy and whimsical into a very solid object.



PB And using materials which transform that simple object into an extremely difficult one, this is something that is often incredibly difficult to explain.

This is an edited part of a longer transcript that featured in *Right Here Among Them*, the monograph that accompanied Jacqueline Donachie's Freeland's Award exhibition at The Fruitmarket Gallery (11 November 2017 – 11 February 2018).

In Somnia – Light Music in Context
Lis Rhodes



Edited transcript from a talk by Lis Rhodes at Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, 22 March 2013.

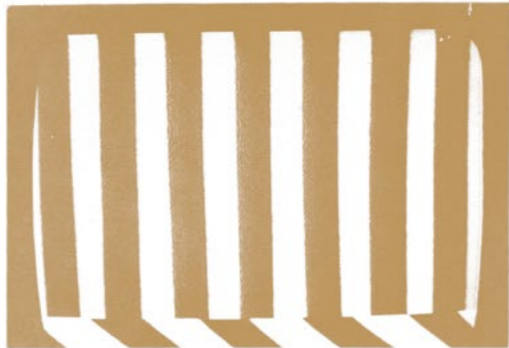
When the economies of Europe are being destroyed yet again by speculation, tax evasion and economic division, and where in England women are being hit hardest by government economic policies, is this the time to speak of work done in other times? Maybe and maybe not, but when financial support for education and the arts is being cut to shreds there is an immediate case for finding time.

In film a still image appears to move, images are made to move, to construct an illusion of movement. Isn't this a replica of what is happening in front of our eyes? The illusion that the present economic system itself can change, deflects our attention from the power of international corporations. In fact, the corporate / political elite has no reason to question or test its validity. Decisions are concentrated in the hands of the few. The profitable is the real and only the real is made visible. Reality is imposed to be believed.


There is no space for artifice between the sound and the image – the one is the other – making a material connection between seeing and hearing. The playing of the seen image track and the heard sound track cannot be played with. There is a curtailing of the politic of emotional manipulation. The film is perhaps a document – what is heard is seen and what is seen is heard. One symbolic order creates the other. The film is the score is the sound.

In Somnia – Light Music in Context
Liz Rhodes

Liz Rhodes
14 minutes.

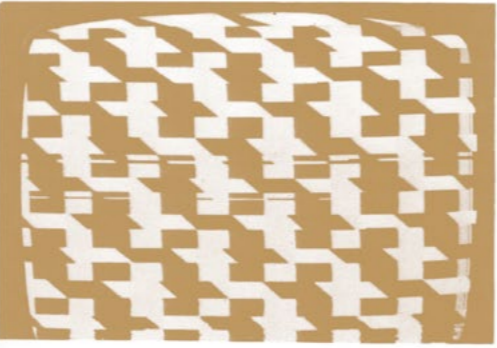
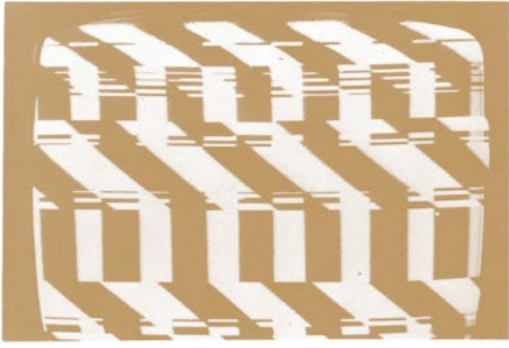



No.1 A 7 minute 16mm. film recorded on video tape: the optical sound track is formed by the image on the film overlapping the sound track area.



No.2 A 7 minute video, the visual of which is the result of the monitor screen being synthesized by the sound track of the above film.

Diagram to show structure of film and tape in relation to one another.



The Video Show 1-25 May 1975 Serpentine Gallery London

In Somnia – Light Music in Context
Liz Rhodes

In coming to *Light Music* (1975) I was motivated in part by the scant attention being paid to women composers in the European musical tradition. Writing in 1861, John Stuart Mill – a supporter of women's rights – said that the absence of female composers of the first rank was attributable to the fact that musically gifted women did not receive proper instruction in music theory. 'Women are taught music', he wrote, 'but not for the purpose of composing, only of executing it...'²

This emphasis on the importance of education for women was a central argument of the Barcelona feminist, composer and journalist Carme Karr. In *Femina*, a magazine she produced in Barcelona between 1907 and 1917, Carme Karr traced the careers of many women instrumentalists, singers and composers of the time. An article entitled 'Feminism and music', published in February 1914, suggested that there was an equity in instrumental performance but that women were denied the conditions for composition.

This void – or absence of women – years ago motivated me to draw a 'musical score' and *Light Music* is, in one sense, a musical score. It began as a composition in drawings, and in the filming of the drawings it developed into an orchestration of noise, in which the intervals between the lines (the gaps) register as differentiated noise or 'notes'. The drawings were filmed using a rostrum camera, and the movement of the camera lens towards or away from the drawings is heard as the intervals between the lines narrow or widen, and as the pitch of the sound rises or falls.

So, image produces sound – the playing of something which was literally 'light' music.

²John Stuart Mill, *The Subjugation of Women*, written in 1861 and published in 1869.

In Conversation:
Veronica Ryan and Henry Ward

In May 2018 Henry Ward visited Veronica Ryan while she was undertaking a residency at Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, Cornwall. Ryan was working in Studio 5, a space previously occupied by artists Ben Nicholson and Patrick Heron, among others. The following transcript is taken from a telephone conversation in May 2019.



HW When I visited you last summer you had lots of different things developing. Could you start by telling me about Porthmeor?

VR One of the things I liked about the space was these painting rails that went all the way around the studio and I started to display little objects on them.

HW They are fascinating, those batons on the walls for hanging paintings in different configurations. Did you use those to display some of the small forms you were experimenting with?

VR Yes, exactly. In the end I felt that I was competing with this space, and all this history, so I started making reference to some of the paint marks and placed small things, small objects, next to Ben Nicholson's or Patrick Heron's remaining painting blobs.

HW I was very struck to see the range of different processes you engage in, the different ways of working and the variety of materials. How important is process to you? The way you describe your work, there are so many layers and possible meanings there, but it strikes me that you are not an artist who is sitting at a desk coming up with a concept and then making something that illustrates that idea.

In Conversation:
Veronica Ryan and Henry Ward

VR I think the ideas partly evolve through working with materials. Sometimes I do sit at the desk with an idea, but it never stops there because when an idea forms in my head, it doesn't materialise in the same way. The process, the materiality, the rhythm is important.

HW Would you say that you have an idea, but once you engage with the materials a dialogue develops and the work might end up going at a tangent?

VR Oh absolutely! I start off with an idea, but the idea takes on its own materiality, the materials have their own inherent qualities, and the material speaks. It's like I'm having a conversation with the work. It's telling me where it wants to go. There's an element of intuition involved, giving the work space.

HW That's lovely. It's interesting because it speaks about the importance of your role as a maker, everything from your choice of materials to what happens when you use them. I wonder if I could pick up on the importance of 'accident' or 'chance', in relation to your use of the Dexion shelving. The piece in this exhibition involves these sets of shelves, which you were experimenting with when I visited you. How did this come about?

VR I make lots of tiny things all the time, and sometimes they get assimilated into other works. There was a whole alleyway full of this Dexion shelving in the storage space in Studio 5, so I grabbed it. I'd been making tiny things and putting them on the floor, but once I got hold of the shelving it changed the scale completely – it took on a sort of architectural resonance. I can see a connection between the shelving and the batons around the walls. I got very excited by all these connections.

I also went to one of the few remaining quarries in Penwith, where you get granite, with these beautiful huge blocks, and I collected off-cuts that were going to be thrown away, and I loved these. Some of my objects used these off-cuts. I found a jumper in a second-hand shop in St Ives, similar in colour to the stone and mossy lichen you find everywhere in that part of Cornwall, and I wrapped some of the granite in it. I had also kept an eye out for an orangey-lichen-coloured jumper. I cut up the seams and wrapped the granite with it.



In Conversation:
Veronica Ryan and Henry Ward

VR I'm interested in the tensions created by using different materials, in the relationship between them. Marrying different dialectics together.

HW Definitely. I think the contrast between the organic and the found forms, this granite wrapped with the woollen jumper, and then the relationship between these and the hard, straight lines of the shelving, is powerful. It reminds me of the delight in Brâncuși, the meeting between a piece of wood, contrasting with a smooth piece of marble for example. This is something you're also doing with the relationship between the small objects and the metal shelving.

VR I realise I am, in part, a process artist.

HW You have talked in the past about the context in which works are being seen, and perhaps by using these shelves you are, in some ways, controlling the immediate context that your objects are seen in. I'm interested in how one thing is translated into another, and arguably this is what you are doing all the time as a sculptor. But I wonder what you think about the idea that something in one language, when translated into another, might not really mean the same thing, it's just a 'best fit'. A subtle shift in meaning. I think this is very compelling in relation to artistic practice, but especially an artistic practice that focuses on making and process, where the artist is translating an idea into a physical form.

VR I find this endlessly interesting. I'm curious in how different people in different contexts perceive things; different world views. Part of the layered focus in the work is the psychological paradigms between materiality, nuance and meaning.

HW What has come across very strongly in this conversation is that you have a multilayered, complex practice with overlapping concerns. Your work is not about one thing, it is about many different things, but ultimately it is born from a conversation with materials. It was so clear, when visiting your studio in Cornwall, this excitement about materials, playing and experimenting, that spoke of an artist who is in conversation with 'stuff'. I think that's a very exciting place to be.

VR Well that's where I want to be. It's where I belong.



Freelands Foundation
Representation of Female Artists in Britain

In 2016 Freelands Foundation commissioned a report into the Representation of Female Artists in Britain. The report, by Dr Kate McMillan, highlighted some alarming differences between the opportunities for female artists in relation to their male peers. Since then we have commissioned updated reports each year, and the research is starting to demonstrate shifts in some areas.

The Freelands Award was, in part, established to respond to these findings, providing an opportunity for a mid-career female artist to be given the platform that their work deserved. There has been a noticeable move in favour of better representation of female artists in some areas: the improvement in the number of solo exhibitions by women, in both the commercial and non-commercial sector; the representation of Great Britain at the Venice Biennale and the winners of recent Turner Prizes, but there are still great discrepancies in the representation of women by the major commercial galleries.

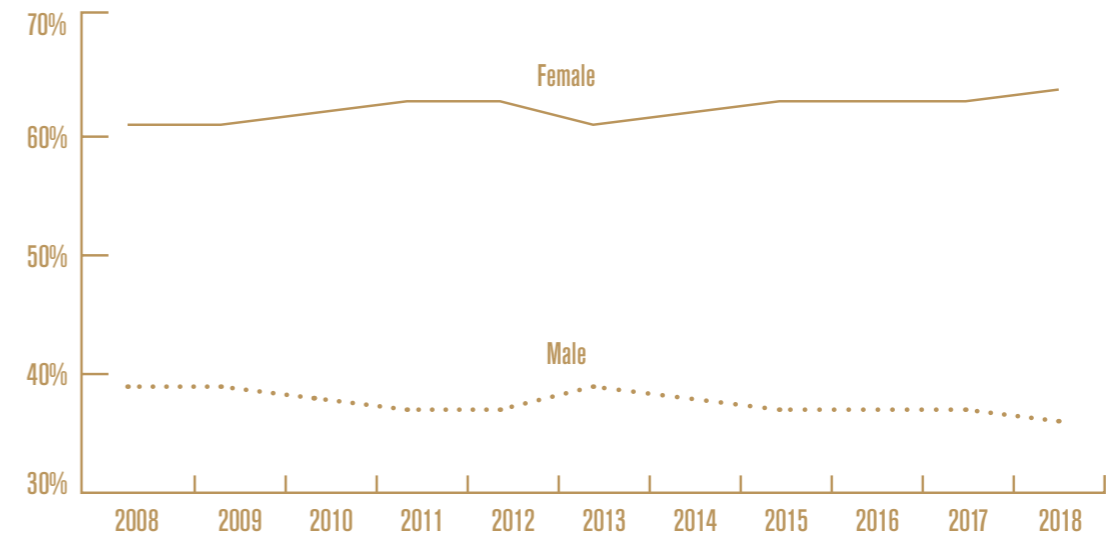
The gap between the number of female undergraduate students of art, as opposed to male students, continues to grow, leading to greater numbers of woman leaving art school but, not yet, leading to relative representation as they begin and continue their careers.

As the statistics represented here demonstrate the climate is beginning to shift, but Freelands Foundation remains committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity continues to improve for women across the visual arts.

The full report is available online:
freelandsfoundation.co.uk/research/representation-of-female-artists-in-britain-2018

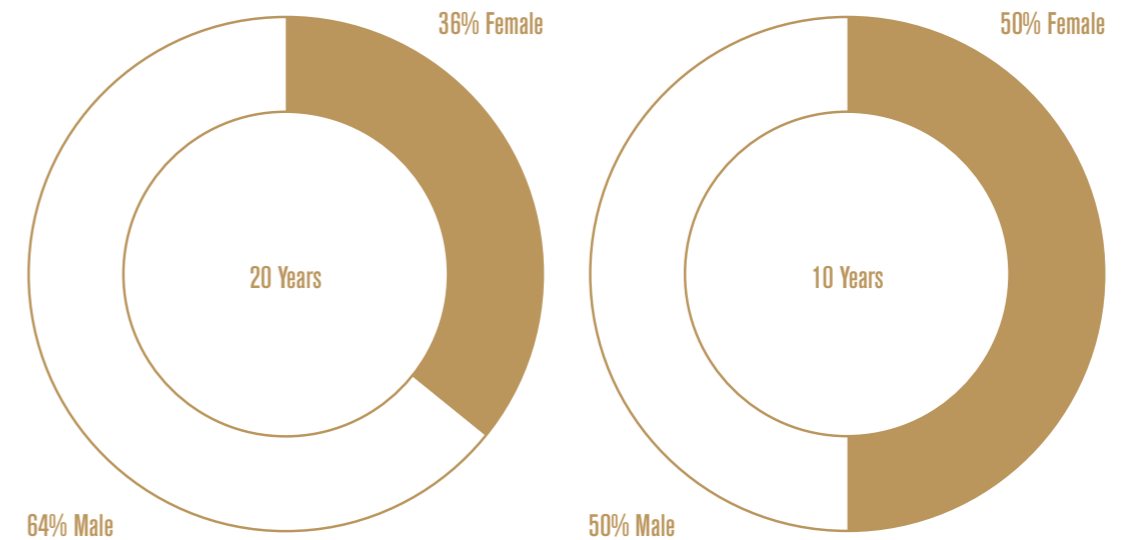
Evidence 1
Undergraduates Studying Creative Arts and Design in 2018

This first evidence explores what percentage of undergraduate students in the UK studied creative arts and design courses in the UK during 2018. At 64%, this statistic has slowly increased from 61% in 2008.



Evidence 4
Artists Representing Britain at the Venice Biennale

This evidence considers artists selected for the British Pavilion in the Venice Biennale. Over a 20-year period the figure is only 36%, but in the last ten years this has risen to 50%.



Evidences 7 and 8

Artists Represented by London's Major Commercial Galleries and Deceased Artists Represented by London's Major Commercial Galleries

28 of the major London commercial galleries showing in the main section of Frieze London were analysed. 32% of their artists were women, which has increased by 4% from 2017. In 2016 it was 29%, demonstrating that change is not linear and advances must not result in complacency.

10% of represented artists were deceased, only 2% of which were female, meaning that four times the number of deceased estates managed by London commercial galleries were of male artists. The number of deceased estates and the percentage of which were women artists remains unchanged from 2017.

