



LOVE ME

**WELCOME
TO THE
BEAUTIFUL
MATERIALS
GALLERY**

The **LOVE ME** exhibition explores memory, texture, and the emotional resonance of everyday objects.

At the entrance of the gallery, you will encounter an installation designed to evoke a “market hall from a forgotten time”. This area presents an abundance of bags showcasing the work of eleven diverse artists.

The interior contrasts the energetic abundance of the entrance, the **LOVE ME** calm interior of the gallery offers a space of quiet reflection. Here, eighteen black frames rest on shelves, displaying the **Intimate Detail** artworks. These artworks are photographs taken by Nicola of Belle & Sebastian’s velvet backdrop curtain at rest. Printed directly onto soft velvet, these works possess a “golden fluidity” that’s reminiscent of both landscape and a restful body. Uniquely, visitors are encouraged to engage with the tactile nature of the medium and are able to touch the artworks.

The band Belle & Sebastian have kindly signed a small ‘**Intimate Detail**’ artwork.

Installed within a scale model of the Linlithgow Burgh Halls Gallery are small ‘**LOVE ME** signs’ acting as emotional anchors, calling out and desperately reaching to be loved.

BEAUTIFUL

LOVE ME

MATERIALS

Alex Allan,
Alison Templeton
Caron McKenna
Despoina Isaia
Eilidh Weir
Joanna Rucklidge
Nicola Atkinson
Rosie Cunningham
Sadie Smith
Spencer Dent
Lorna &
Madeleine Swinney

BEAUTIFUL

LOVE ME

MATERIALS

Curated by artist Nicola Atkinson, the LOVE ME exhibition presented at the Beautiful Materials Gallery, located within the Avenue Shopping Centre. Taking place during and beyond Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, the exhibition invites the artists and public to explore the intersection of emotional connection and material necessity. It challenges viewers to reflect on the desire to be loved, while simultaneously addressing a practical logistical problem: how to balance our love for beautiful things with the need to carry our belongings resourcefully.

The exhibition frames this issue through the historical evolution of the carrier bag. The narrative begins in 1870, when American inventor Margaret E. Knight revolutionized packaging by automating the creation of flat, square-bottomed paper bags. This evolution continued into 1962 with Swedish engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin, who invented the plastic

carrier bag. Although now often viewed as an environmental scourge, Thulin originally designed the plastic bag as a reusable device intended to save trees. By the 2000s, the organic cotton tote bag became the emblem of sustainability; however, the LOVE ME exhibition highlights a startling counterpoint: such a tote must be used daily for 54 years to truly offset its environmental impact.

To address these dilemmas of consumption and sustainability, the LOVE ME exhibition presents a solution inspired by the resourcefulness of the World War II “make do and mend” campaigns. The Beautiful Materials Gallery features an installation of bags crafted from a repurposed golden velvet backdrop curtain. This specific fabric was gifted to Atkinson seven years ago by the band Belle & Sebastian, having been rediscovered in her art archive. Alternating with the bags, Atkinson is showing 18 landscape

photographs framed in black, all showing intimate details of the curtain backdrop. The photographs are printed on soft velvet, recalling the original fabric.

The curtain carries a rich history, originally created for the band's 2011 "Write about Love" tour. It served as the backdrop for 22 concerts globally, including performances at the Round House in London and the O2 Academy in Leeds. The exhibition posits that this velvet absorbed the "joyful force" of the audiences it stood before. By transforming this material into functional items, the LOVE ME bags act as vessels that carry not only goods but also music, memories, and love, turning a retired stage prop into a cherished, useful object once again.



Alex Allan

ENGAGED AT REST

The style of my bag is a combination of three of my own favourites. The thing they all have in common is a stiff bottom, which helps to provide stability for the contents when you put it down, I can't be doing with something that completely collapses at rest. The use of the fabric puts the comfort of the objects being transported as paramount, with the rougher side as the exterior. Salvaged bamboo and slate form the handles and base of the bag.

Alex Allan graduated with an MFA in Sculpture from Edinburgh College of Art in 2011. More recently he has been engaged in a number of public artworks and is co-founder and operator of Govan Project Space in Glasgow, where he lives and works. Using what's to hand since 1986, Alex's work acts as a type of real-time filter for our material culture, continually propped up by the basal urban surroundings of his upbringing.

@alexjallan

Alison Templeton

PORTABLE GALLERY

My gallery space is on my bag! I created a 'window' pocket to show a piece of my textile work which is a colourful collage of texture and stitching. In this exhibition my bag will be on a wall, but when the bag is in use, my art work will travel and be seen by a wider public and perhaps by some who would not usually enter a gallery. The inside of the bag is lined with a rich blue silky fabric.

I studied Interior Design at Glasgow School of Art in the sixties and taught in schools and worked with design students at two Glasgow Colleges. I was a member of the Embroiderers' Guild and now with CREST, the Newton Mearns textile art group, I work with a range of fabrics, stitching, printing and using colour to make something practical or simply to delight the eye. Techniques I use can be viewed on YouTube.

YouTube: Alison Templeton 9620

Caron McKenna

ICONIC

My bag had to be one of my favourites - the tote. I took inspiration from iconic bags of the 21st century produced by such renowned design houses as Chanel and Longchamp, while making use of preloved fabrics and accessories. The aim was to make a bag that was very functional, while adhering to the “less is more” minimalist aesthetic. I also wanted it to be very tactile.

Caron McKenna is self-taught in sewing but studied at Queen's College Glasgow where the late Professor Malcolm Lochhead was head of textiles and design. Malcolm was the first ever male student to study Embroidered and Woven Textiles at Glasgow School of Art.

Caron previously worked in the wardrobe department of various Scottish theatre companies, including Borderline Theatre and Scottish Opera, making costumes for a variety of productions, including the play *Mistero Buffo* by notable Italian playwright Dario Fo starring the late Robbie Coltrane. Today, Caron sews purely for pleasure.

@caronmckenna

Despoina Isaia

CURKET

I used a domestic metal basket, paper string I had and the piece of the venue curtain. The work brings together personal, domestic material and collective cultural memory. By re purposing an object designed for storage and a textile shaped by collective presence and music the bag becomes a carrier of memory. Sustainability here is continuity, a process of reuse that values endurance and transformation over novelty.

Born in Athens, Despoina Isaia is a multidisciplinary artist who has exhibited internationally. Her work has been selected by collector D. Daskalopoulos for his international collection and shown at the Whitechapel Gallery. She lives and works in Glasgow, exploring themes of loss, adaptability, and transformation through materially driven sculptural processes.

@isaiades

Eilidh Weir

HOME

‘Love me, comfort me, make me feel at home.

It’s all well and good dancing amongst the bright lights with gold velvet draping around me but at some point, eventually, I want to go home. I need to be wrapped in comfort and familiarity. Patch work blocks like the quilts of my childhood now glisten in gold. Pink brushed cotton X marks the spot - this is where I’m meant to be.

Eilidh Weir’s textile and sculptural work celebrates biodiversity, composting, community and care. They’re gathering speed, trying to take the whole world with them through regular textile workshops across Scotland. Reimagining what is waste and how we show care to the familiar and overlooked in the every day.

@eilidhweircomehere

Joanna Rucklidge

ROLL IN IT

I made a bag to hold one roll of toilet paper. The owner can carry a supply of recycled unbleached tissue everywhere they go. Statistics suggest individuals use around 130 rolls of toilet paper annually. This bag encourages visible monitoring of paper usage, whilst provoking playful conversations about the importance of using recycled material for a single-use disposable product.

Joanna Rucklidge makes work about consumer culture using disposable objects as inspiration, tools and visual communication motifs. She enjoys light-heartedly attracting attention to throwaway materials, whilst tackling issues around the lost value of resources. Her aim is to promote waste minimisation and re-use.

Rucklidge studied Visual Communication at Glasgow School of Art and the Royal College of Art and is now based in Sheffield as an artist, educator and researcher. She has recently embarked on a PhD exploring the correlation between detrimental climate change and consumer choices associated with sustainable toilet paper.

@joanna.rucklidge

Nicola Atkinson

MUM BAG & WALL OF BAGS

When Nicola was eighteen, completing an art and design foundation course in Brighton, she painted twenty-three square watercolour portraits of her mother whilst she was recovering from an operation. Rediscovered in her art archive in January 2026, eight of these portraits have been selected for this collection. Presented as two portraits within the interiors of each bag, the portraits are positioned so they look at one another when the four **MUM BAG** are opened.

Experience the sumptuous **WALL OF BAGS**, constructed with exteriors made from the golden velvet backdrop curtain. The interiors of these vessels feature bold and colourful velvet test samples preserved from the artist's solo show at Linlithgow Burgh Halls Gallery in Summer 2025.

Nicola is an internationally acclaimed artist and curator. In her artistic life, she has created one hundred and fifty public art projects, temporary and permanent in villages, towns, cities and museums around the world.

@beautiful.material

Rosie Cunningham

MAYBE THIS TOTE

“I give you the international sensation... Sally Bowles”

Inspired by the past life of this material as a huge curtain for music performance, I have reproduced it as miniature theatre curtains. The two textures of the fabric offer enough contrast so that the reveal of a hand drawn performer behind the velvet curtains has more impact, with the bag interior feeling luxurious. By pairing a simple tote bag construction with iconic imagery, some embroidery in metallic thread and the theatrical red tassels, I hope to match utility with a little playful fun.

Rosie Cunningham is an illustrator and artist based in Glasgow. She studied at the Glasgow School of Art 2003-2007 and now works as a freelance illustrator - always with an eye on sustainability and a sense of fun. Telling stories is at the heart of her work, through work for clients and organisations, live illustration at events; observational comics; collecting and pressing seaweed, and finding connections with people; connections within nature and within herself to communicate something universal and often joyful.

@illustrationetc

Sadie Smith

EFFIE

This bag comes from thinking about women's work and the kinds of labour we are taught to value or overlook. Textiles, sewing, mending and patchwork; repetitive work that often goes unseen. I wanted to use unfinished projects offcuts and patches to lovingly re purpose remnants. Effie is made from fabric offcuts from my collections printed in Dundee on cotton drill, patched velvet and cloth with overlocked seams used as decorative detail from an unfinished skirt belonging to a friend's late mum. I stitched the panels to show her original tacking, seam work and plaid structure while keeping the making visible. Everything was brought back together on the machine at my kitchen table. I enjoyed making her. (No swearing at the machine which is a first.)There was no pressure on the outcome. Just patching cloth and working on my top stitching which reflects a desire to do, make and consume less and better. Treat her well. She will weather with love. No hot wash.

Based in Glasgow, my practice is shaped by being a mum, designer and hosting textiles led workshops.

@sadiesmithstudio

Spencer Dent

BOOM BAG

The bag Spencer Dent has designed for the LOVE ME exhibition pulls imagery from their regular artistic practice. Abstract shapes are appliquéd onto the bag, creating a graphic and bold design that reflects their previous artworks. The one panel construction allows the decorative design to flow from front to back seamlessly. It also has an extra long strap that you can tie at different points to make it more modular and practical.

Spencer Dent is a London-born, Manchester based multimedia artist. They studied Fine Art Photography at the Glasgow School of Art, graduating in 2022. Their work focuses on the topics of shape, form and the organic environment. Their practice employs a variety of mediums to explore these themes, including photography, printmaking, weaving, sculpture and painting. Often, these mediums intermingle and are used concurrently within a single work. Their practice is focused on how shape and form can be distorted for the viewer, creating visuals that read as intangible or even confusing for the viewer.'

@_spencerdent

Lorna & Madeleine Swinney

FORAGE

‘Forage’ is made by a mother and daughter team. It is based on our shared love of using sustainable textiles and developing eco-printed fabrics. We like to think that this bag not only holds the essence of Belle and Sebastian’s performances but also holds on to the places where we travel and forage together. The patches include eco-printed silk with onion skin, rust, oak and sycamore, as well as pigment printed images of our walks beside the Forth and Clyde canal, near our home. The bag invites you to take it on your own foraging trips whether that is out in nature or off to the shops.

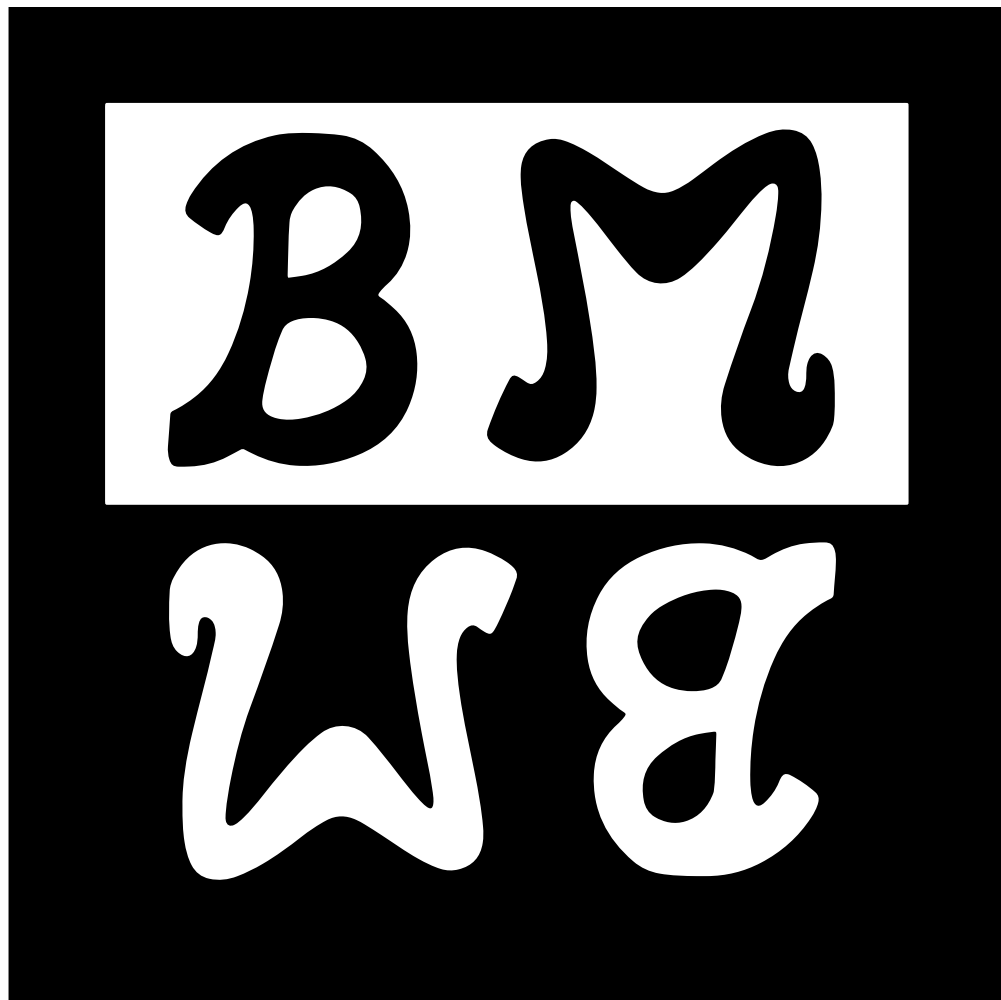
Lorna (mother) has a background in textiles and teaching. Her interests lie in journeys, mapping and disordered time that lacks chronology. Madeleine (daughter) is a costume designer and has a particular interest in historic costume.

@Lorna_swinney @Madeleineswinneycostume

BEAUTIFUL MATERIALS GALLERY

THE AVENUE SHOPPING CENTRE

BEAUTIFULMATERIALS.CO



OPEN EVERY SATURDAY 10-4

Beautiful Materials Gallery's is located in a shop at The Avenue, Newton Mearns, G77 6AA. The mission is to be a public facing art space, that uses the environment of the shopping to engage with the public. We aim to reach out to new audiences and provide a clear dialogue and conversation with them about the exhibiting artists and artworks.

Beautiful Materials is founded by Nicola Atkinson who is an internationally acclaimed artist and curator. She is known for her recent public artwork in Linlithgow. In her artistic life, she has created one hundred and fifty public art projects, temporary and permanent in villages, towns, cities and museums around the world. Nicola will bring her knowledge and understanding of public artwork and engagement to the gallery.

THANK YOU

Belle & Sebastian, Bill Breckenridge, Spencer Dent, Elisaveta Conlan, Seth Howe & Peter Allam.

Outer Spaces for this wonderful gallery space and everyone at the Avenue Shopping Centre.

