

Sarah Linda Cassels

[sarahlindac@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sarahlindac@yahoo.co.uk)

07592079522

[Instagram.com/@lindacasselsgallery](https://www.instagram.com/@lindacasselsgallery)

Linked-in: [linkedin.com/in/linda-cassels-1612711b9](https://www.linkedin.com/in/linda-cassels-1612711b9)

YouTube.com/ @lindacassels6679

## **Education**

1988-1989 Frere Nursing College- Student Nurse

1990 Frere Nursing College- Enrolled Nurse

1995 Frere Nursing College – Register general nurse

1997 Frere Nursing College – Registered Midwife

2007 Sheffield Hallam University – Mentoring your own and other Professions

2019 Rotherham College - Access to Higher Education

2019-2022 Sheffield Hallam University- BA Fine Art (HON)

## **Freelance performative work**

August 2022: Part of an art- trail as performance, through Doncaster city centre; ArtBombUK

August 2023: ArtBomb UK, "If ever I needed you, I need you now" - Performance

January 2024: Participated in Monumentalise, The Monument, video performance by artist Yuen Fong Ling, available at Graves Gallery, Sheffield

## **Exhibitions**

2024 September: Research Residency, ArtBombUK, mentored Mike Stubbs

2024 September: Social Justice Art, Paths, Palazzo Pisani Revedin, Venice; Curated by Amy Jackson SHIM Arts, I Recall- 2023 Sculpture

2024 July: Hide me, Steal Me, Be Nice to me; Arte M, Funchal, Madeira; Curated by Diana Ali, The Scarlet Letter- 2022 Photographs

2024 May-June: The Sea, Fronteer Gallery, Sheffield; Easy London -2023 Painting

2024 June 11-23: Home/Land, by The Socially Engaged Salon (SEAS), Worthing; Curated by Dr Gil Mualem-Doron

2022 Oct-Nov: Artly Mix-Reflexo- Video performance "I Stand" shown in Sao Paulo, Brazil

2022 Aug: ArtbombUK, Primivera, I am Human, costume installation

2022 Aug- Dec: Doncaster Gallery and Museum- "Emotions"

## **Publication**

2024 May: NowThen magazine, Meet the artists behind the most eclectic range of work yet... by Sam Gregory

2023: How Artists Make Decisions, Future Past Coalition

2022 Oct: Spirals, Cycles And Flowers, Intergraphia Books

## Biography

I was born in 1970 in the Eastern Province of South Africa, in Umtata to be exact, but I consider East London my place, as I was raised there. I was adopted and raised by my aunt and her husband. I grew up in a time of unrest and political violence in a country that had declared itself to be in a State of Emergency during my formative years.

I trained as a general registered nurse and midwife and practised as such until 2018. I moved to Benoni in 1997 from East London, and this time marked a very decisive period of my life. My married life was overshadowed by violence and ended in divorce. I applied for a nursing job in the UK and moved to Sheffield in June 2003. I needed space and time away from a very manipulative and aggressive ex-husband, and decided to come work in Sheffield for a couple of years and then return home after 2 years. And here I am... still in Sheffield after two decades.

My first few years in the UK were filled with hopes for a better outlook for myself and my children. The decision to bring my children to live with me was circumstantial, but it proved to be the catalyst for life-changing decisions made. Bringing my children here was the best decision I could make at the worst of times. The immigration laws were changing, and it was particularly difficult to secure visas for my children. Thousands of pounds later, we managed to secure visas for them.

Throughout the latter years of working as a recovery room nurse, I became very restless and felt that although I loved the work, it did not feed me any longer. I felt an emptiness, but my soul was overfull with untold stories with no way of being told. (I did not realise at first, I had all these stories until art happened!) I have always been interested in art, but never thought I was creative enough. In June 2018, as I was required to recertify my nursing credentials to continue working as a nurse, I decided not to continue and decided to jump ship.

Working as a nurse, I became very familiar with the body and its functionality, but I was more intrigued by our connection and disconnection of emotions concerning ill health and in life. It fascinated me trying to understand the control of the brain, i.e. nervous system, over the body and the concept of our personhood. The physicality of the body as space and place as we act out of the body, are transported into and out of both in time and with time, is an ever-changing playing field.

My body I see as a bank of both memories and dreams for the future, wherever and whatever that may be. The body, as a natural organism, contains traces from our past which may continue to infinity, but is also modified by the act of procreation. (Although with the discovery of cloning and DNA manipulation, this is no longer absolute.) The body is a space and a body in space, and its physicality can be seen as a material and, by extension, a canvas because of this materiality. My body as an object creates and forces space even in areas where I am not always welcome. My practice, therefore, is an attempt to reframe history, but also reimagine what the present and future could be, using storytelling and the placement of my body as a space of exploration, a place for archiving and a starting point for execution. In other words, my body is the nucleus of my practice, laying open what is my past through time and place and the ability to be the object through the casting of my body in fragments as subject matter or decorative to edify my retelling of stories true or imagined in a manner that does not make me the centre of the dialogue but asks the audience to imagine themselves in that position. It's a way to make the audience question their motives and reimagine what that may be. Making sense of meaning.

A greater part of my practice consists of performance. Through performance, I express my thoughts, feelings and deductions, asking questions in a manner that is not confrontational but direct. At times, it is an observation of our dialogue as people, our habitat and just an involuntary expression of my or our collective emotions. I explore the limits of my preconceived ideas of what is moral and right, but always leave a gap for the viewers to make up their own stories about what the question is, and its answer is always with the public. It is for this very reason I am reluctant to title my works, or the titles always change (it is an attempt to task the audience with what it means or says), as we tend to read the works and make assumptions based on the titles which influence the viewer's opinion of the work.



I use varied media to express meaning within my practice:

**-Performance**

-I have been using the classical act of life drawing to demonstrate power and the inherent power play amongst artists, models and the audience and questioning our use of language, about the body as a sensory object, by exploring a word or phrase either through repetition or the underlying message within the performance

-performance as drawing- through the act of life drawing, I use my body as a way of recalling memories, enacting the extent to which we can embellish our experience of life or just the openness of emotion and freedom. Trying to capture a moment within a movement is complicated, as movement without previous warning changes the whole composition of a drawing

The body moves from the moment the thought is secured by the involuntary muscles and encoded through the nervous system, interpreted by the voluntary muscles (which all happens without you being conscious of it at first until the moment your conscious mind is aware) through the sensory intuition of our bodies.

and expression of movement

Participative performance draws response and demands both the artist and the model to be present, and adds a dimension of tension, which I find exhilarating. This interaction between artist, model and audience enlivens the life-drawing activity as the model, who is the subject matter, unlike the historical expectation of the still muse, is always moving, but it also creates dialogue between the artist and the audience. It is this tension between the artist and the audience that I would love to explore.

Performance to Camera:



The Scarlet Letter: 2022- Digital photograph



Drawing as Thought I: 2024  
(Credit Luke Walsch)





The Scarlett Letter: Digital Photograph- 2022



The Scarlett Letter: Digital Photograph- 2022



Still from performance: I stand; 2022

Credit: Photography Jade Cassels



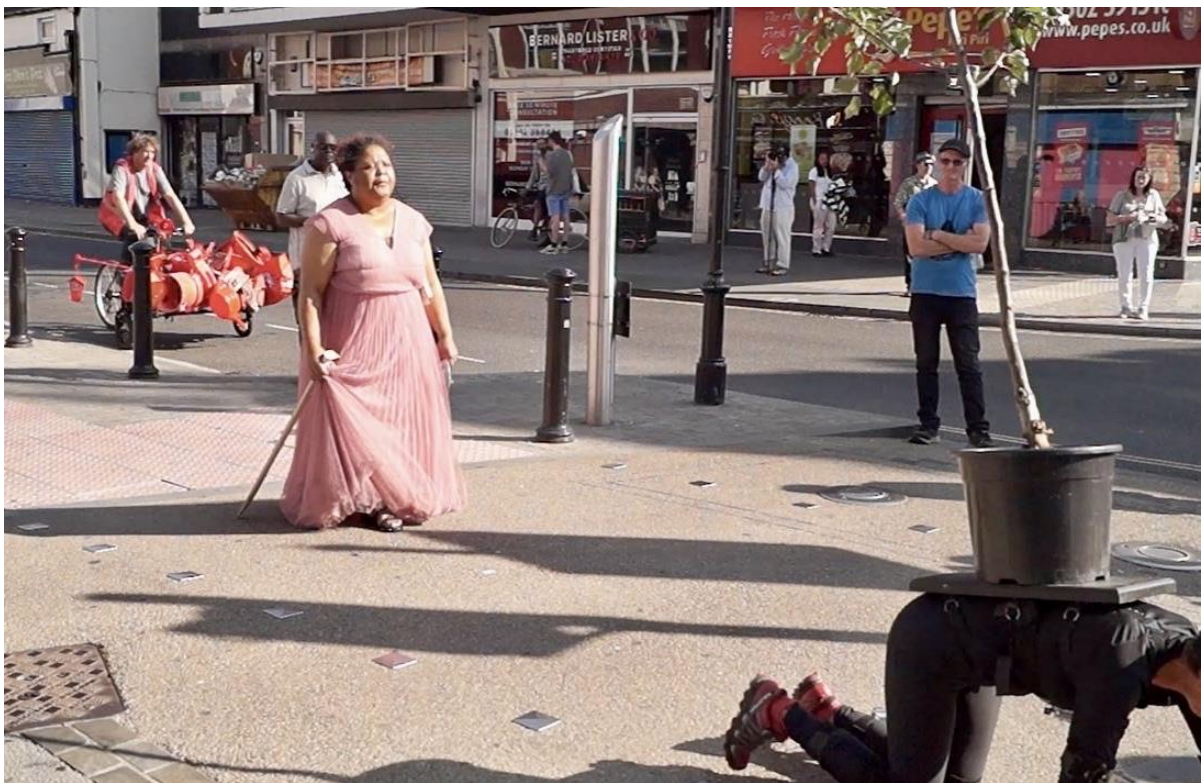


Self Portrait: Ja? – 2024

Life Performance



Still- ArtBombUK -2022  
Photograph Aswad Cassels



Still: ArtBombUK performance-2022



Credit: Photography Aswad Cassels

Expanded Drawing as a practice:







Photograph from performance 2023 Black as Monolith  
the power of the model. Photograph Charlie Hill





Still- 2024 Drawing as Thought, the performance II, photography Ravi Modi



Still: Photograph Sue Hare



Still from Life Drawing as Performance ii, 2024

Drawing thoughts, The Performance, was my attempt to investigate and depict how and where history and power intersect. Reflecting on the simple act of drawing as a means of subjugating and shaping history in plain sight. It is an attempt to explore language and phrases frequently used when communicating, such as "level up "or equality, when the disadvantaged are still left behind despite having 'equality'!

-Sculpture;

the body as both object and subject

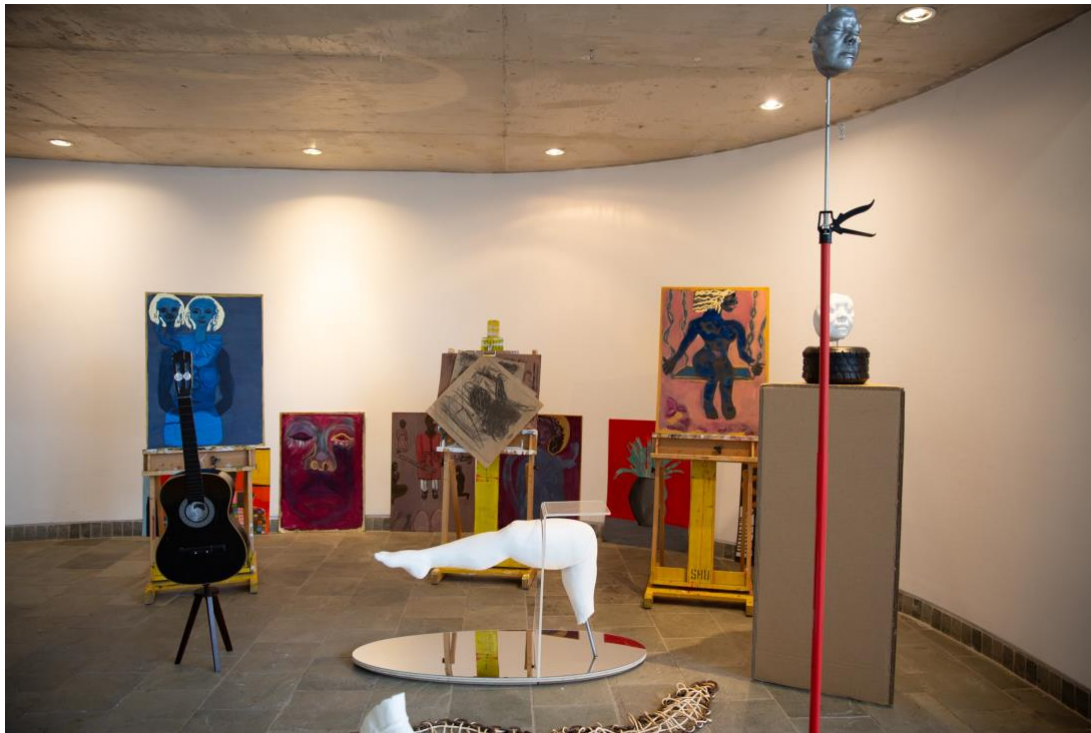
-the body in my work is situated in spaces historically critical of the body as a measurement of beauty but seen as grotesque and undesired.

During my time as a nurse, I realised how much the media's portrayal of the expected beauty standards, affected societal opinion of beauty, on the mindset of especially women and their appearance. Some people go to such great lengths to look a certain way that they jeopardise their health just to appear beautiful, not realising the implications nor the side effects of surgery, long-term maintenance of prostheses and possible adverse effects of these implants demand of their mental and general medical health

-the body as a memory bank of both societal and personal changes and growth to this end I attempt to freeze a memory by immortalising it in the form of sculpture and this is a way to ensure that that fleeting moment is not forgotten and that it is a true documentation of the moment. My reasoning is informed by my own experience whereby I did not know my biological mother and knew very little of my biological father and my father, in turn, knew nothing of his father, who supposedly was English, and came to South Africa looking for wealth by way of gold exploration, he died when my father was 6 years old (±1932) and at a time where black people's lives were inconsequential to country and rulers and in a time where the oral history was the only accessible way to document our existence. Making art is a way of ensuring the next generation will know the truth about my life and times. Art as a movement is very important to history in this way that it informs us somewhat of the lives of the artists.

I make use of found objects within my practice partly because of the challenge it offers; to make something new from something that already existed and had a particular function, changing the idea of what it now is from what it was before.

I find myself thinking more and more about the materials I use to make art, whether could I have used something else, what are the effects of my practice in the greater scheme of things, how it affects the environment as well as where we are as a society



Various art works created by Cassels and used during the performance. Post deinstallation of degree show 2024



I Recall, 2023





As We Wait; 2023



Selfie; 2023



Bronze Marquette: Selfie-2023



Conglomerate; 2023-24

Installation View: 2024  
Mike Larry Draw











Home Sweet Home-2024



View from within- Bronze- 2024





The Dance: Bronze- 2024



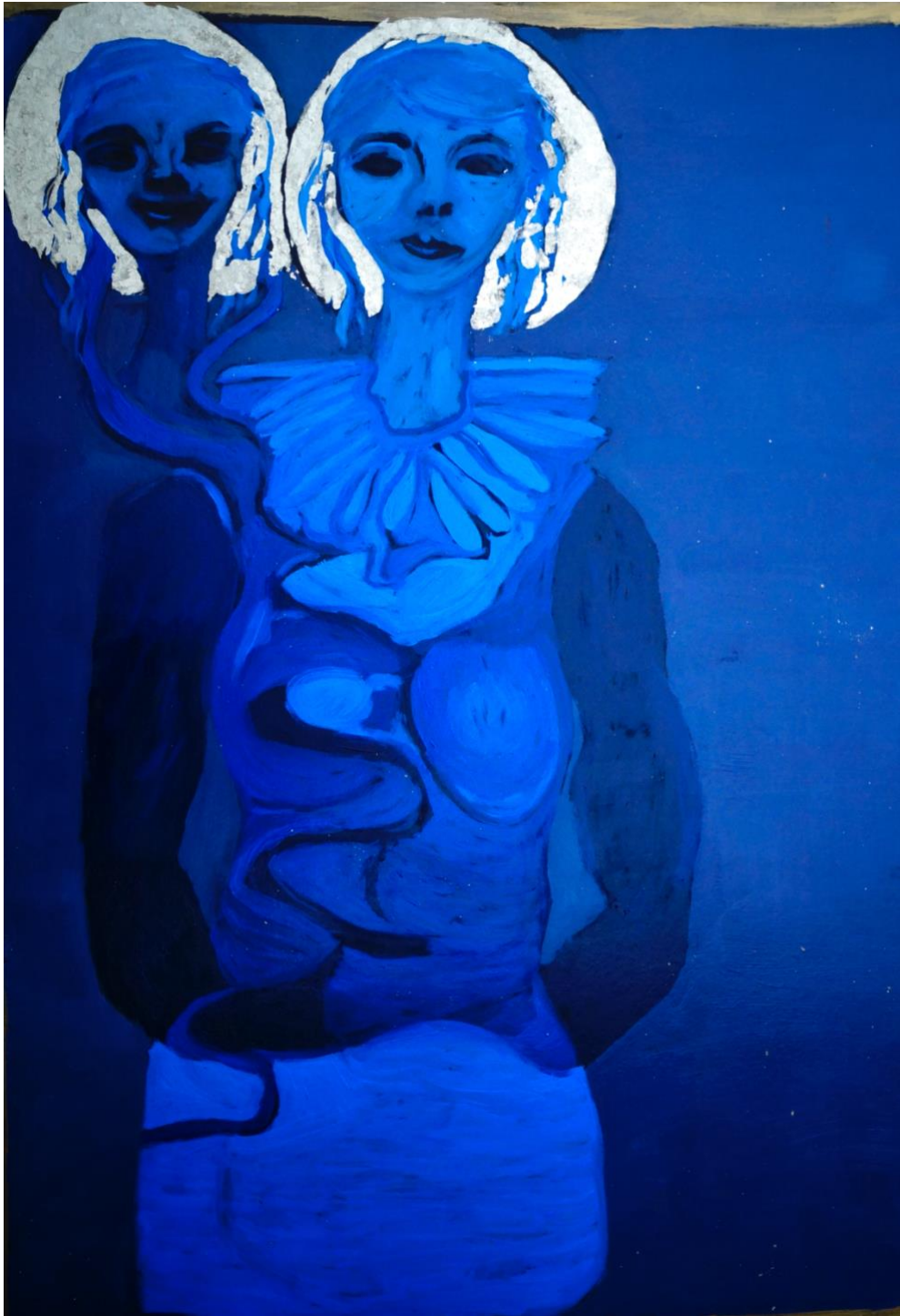
### **- Painting**

as an act or painting as drawing and storytelling

with painting I try to express and explore my love for colour in how when used, I feel and think and if it is relatable to the public. Surrealism as a genre, gives me the freedom to experiment and create my idea as an image explaining an emotion, a metaphor or a thought.

Painting is an opportunity to indulge my senses with the physical act of painting but also understand the movements my body forms as a performance of how an image is conceived as a work of art. It gives me the space to consider the idea as a point of departure and the physical manifestation of this thought made visible on paper, canvas or as sculpture. Not only the idea but the actual straining and labour of the process; converting something ideological into a physical object. The potential of my intangible, thinking self to find a place and occupy space in someone else's brain is what is so exhilarating to me. Knowing that there is a commonality in the information we share as humans makes us one. Ubuntu in action.





Starry  
White  
– 2023  
Oil Painting 80 x 60 cm

Night,  
We Wait



While we Wait- 2023  
Oil painting 80 x 60 cm





We Wait: 2023 – Oil Painting  
60cm x 80 cm



Wait! Another generation to wait?  
Oil Painting, 80 cm x 60 cm





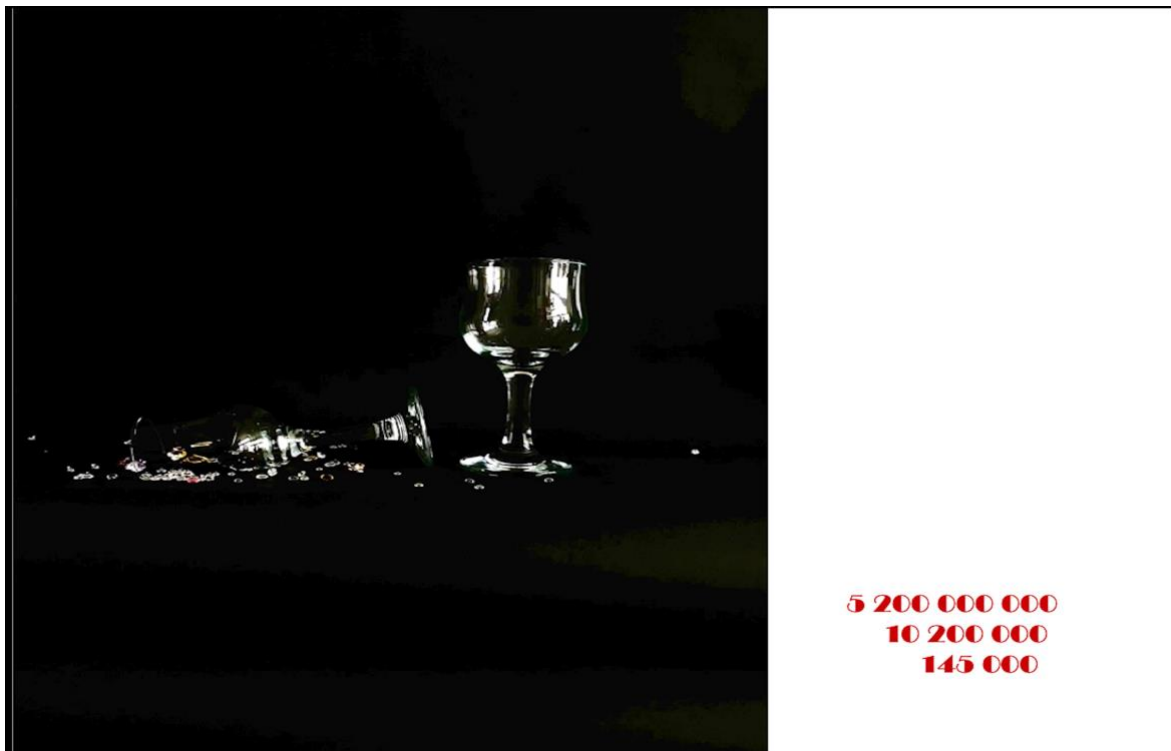
The Uncommon Seat 2022

## Photography

- as research, inspiration, experimentation or at times the work.
- gives me an outlet to explore, observe and document people in our different capacities,
- I use photography to document time and the passage of time, whether it is through reenacting cultural practices, documenting change or reality as it is.

Photography as a method is an immediate commentary on my occupation of place, interaction, as well as the environment around me.

Photography also offers me the chance to look deeper into the picture: a moment is very fleeting, and at times, you miss so many things around you that you only remember the one thing that attracted your consciousness. A photograph is a carbon print of that moment, but it also documents the things occurring alongside the catalyst. EG. Before the digitisation of accounts, we would write a receipt using carbon paper; the original or the top copy is the client and is detached from the book. A copy of this receipt remains in the book and this copy is evidence for the seller as to what occurred; it documents the transaction but also tells you about the person who wrote the receipt, tells you how hard they pressed on the paper, it shows the movement of the hand on the paper because of the carbon traces left behind. When compared to the top copy, you get information about both parties. The same for photography, it can create that chance for more detail to be extracted from the photo about the time, the person and an indication of their activity, it also shows their awareness of presence in the surroundings. If you place little pressure on the book, very little can be traced back, but with more intensity, you place more is revealed, but only noticed in retrospect. As with photography, the most banal photograph can reveal a lot of information when we are present in the moment.



Title: Our Systems, 2021

This photo montage was a response to the political turmoil during a very distressing time throughout the world, with people dying in thousands due to COVID-19, the swing to the nationalism of Western nations and BREXIT taking effect on the economy. These drastic upheavals highlighted our fickleness as humans and the deep-rooted incompetence, corruption and cronyism that were taking hold right around the world. The inspiration for this photograph came from the works of Peter Kennard. During a speech in Parliament, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the government had to make available a further £5 billion to the NHS to help with the fight against COVID-19. Although this was true (as this was a new illness and millions of people succumbed to the disease) the legacy of austerity showed how vulnerable the NHS and social services had become during the Tory reign: the national storages of emergency medical equipment were depleted and left empty due to cost-cutting which inadvertently caused a Serious Incident Event as quoted in [Revised Serious Incident framework](#) – March 2015. With this image, I was deducing what, according to Johnson, the cost of a single life amounted to at that point and that no amount of money is quantifiable to the loss of life, which is a fundamental right.



Utopia, No Cost; 2023  
Credit- Ravi Modi



Saturday Afternoon, 2023

Cost Of Living Crisis: In the past few years we have seen the cost-of-living soaring causing many households to struggle to cope with basic food and utilities. An unprecedented amount of people lost their jobs due to COVID-19, austerity and Brexit which led to households relying more on food banks and in some cases social benefits. Matt Collingshaw's series of photographs: Last meal on Death Row, inspired the dark tones. I wanted the viewer to feel and see the despondence and hopelessness many people are living with hence Still-life compositions with decaying fruit





Still life: bread, lamp and banana; 2022



Still Life with Fruit; 2022



Still Life with Bread and Lamp; 2022



Still Life -Self-portrait- 2022

Found objects

All wrapped up; 2022









## Temporary Installations

During my latest residency at ArtBombUK, I have been experimenting with site-specific installation. The idea of making work with material available to use prompted me to think about ways in which to work with limited resources and a public-facing space. ArtBombUK hub is on the high street and could be considered a shopfront. The passing pedestrians felt like a captive audience and motivated me to think laterally and out of the box, gauging the success of the installation by the interest people showed just passing by or stopping to have a closer look at things, some came inside and asked questions. The immediacy of public engagement with work is a new experience for me, but it helped me realise quite quickly that temporary work has its beauty. A short and quick exhibition has an intimacy to it, as not many people will encounter it and those who did witness the work will most likely feel closer to the work because of the closeness.





Bronze cast of Neck suspended on fish wire (install 3)



Bronze Cast suspended on wooden tripod, elevated over an abstract painted (install 1)



Install 4



Ochre wool Install 3





Chair Install 2



Wallpaper install 3 (layout discussed with curator: Mike Stubbs)



Mark-making detail on wall paper



Chair Install 3





Wall paper Install 2



Anterior View of Install 3



View through window install 3





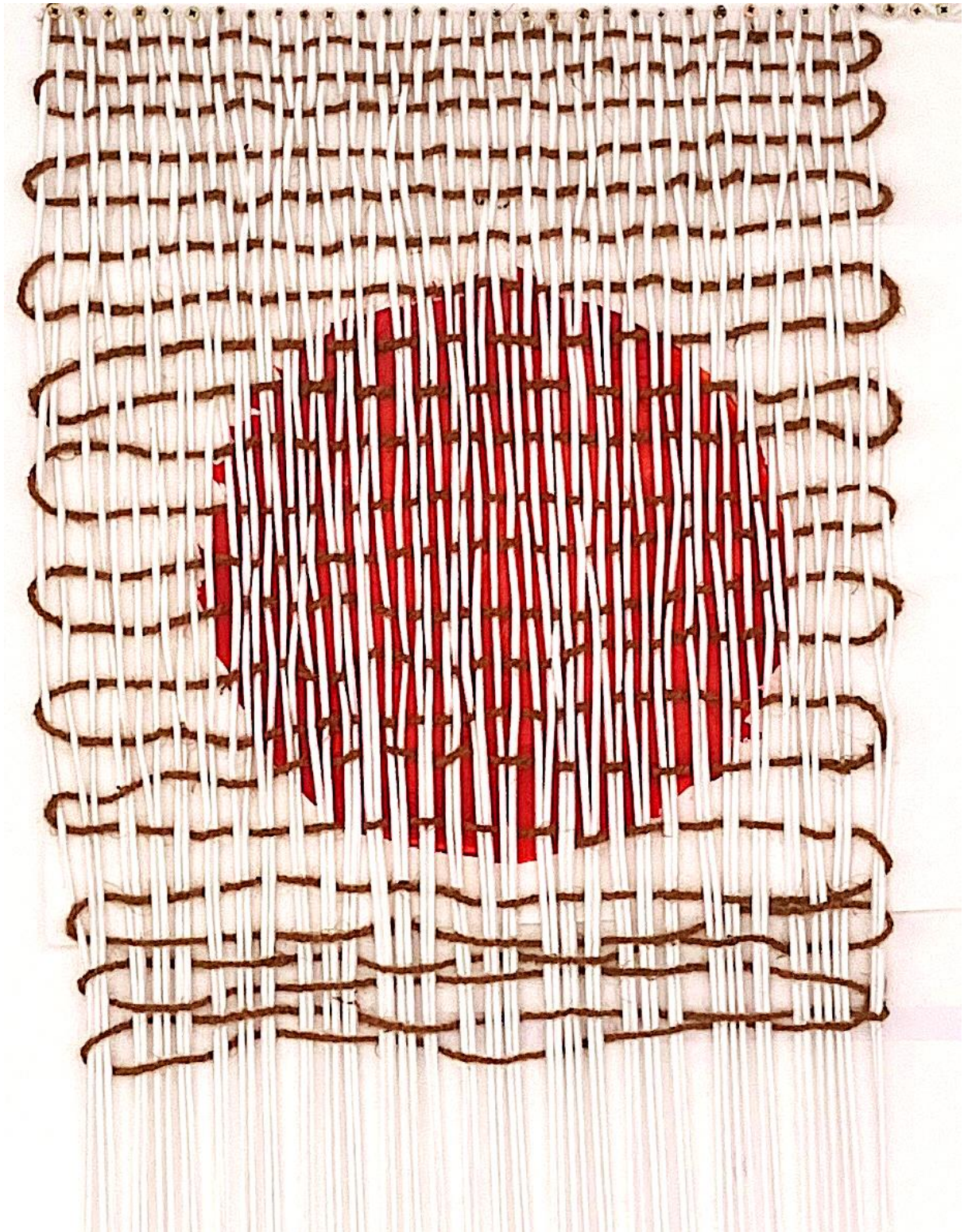
Chair install 1





Chair install 1





Brown cord weft into white twine with abstract painting in background