

Saad Qureshi (b.1986)

**Measures** 2017

Courtesy the artist

Saad Qureshi's work addresses issues that are at the heart of contemporary consciousness, from belonging and a sense of home, to migration and identity. He doesn't think of time as a linear narrative but as a collection of events, of important people and places, that are etched onto our evolving map of memories. From these memories he creates visual mindscapes. These are never exact replicas of actual places as our memories are imperfect and we can never recall with absolute clarity, particularly when remembering something that is far away in time or distance. Fact and fiction blur and real places become transformed by our imagination. **Measures** is a form of self-portrait: each mindscape is contained within one of three domestic drawers and represents a decade of Qureshi's life: the first spent in Pakistan, the second in Bradford and the third in Oxford.

Nigel Shafran (b.1964)

**Fruit Bowl Collecting Water and Kitchen Table** (from **Dad's Office**) 1996-98

In this series Nigel Shafran gives an honest and emotional portrayal of the way a human presence can touch a space. His dad's now empty office has a palpable yet indistinct feeling of absence and loss. Shafran studies the quiet, unspoken beauty of the everyday and transforms unremarkable objects, giving them a presence beyond their apparent worth. His works emphasise how people's possessions carry memories that can only be interpreted and made meaningful by those with a close connection to them.

Jo Spence (b.1934 – d.1992)

**Beyond the Family Album** 1979

In this iconic work, Jo Spence sets out to reveal the everyday, uncomfortable realities of life that are usually left out

of the family photo album. Combining photographs with intimately personal narrative and cuttings from newspapers and magazines, she reveals a candid and extensive self-portrait that deals with the unattainable ideals of beauty, with illness, imperfect families, divorce, and death.

Bedwyr Williams (b.1974)

**Hippo Campus** 2010

Coach journeys are a staple of school life: the camaraderie, noise, excitement, choosing who to sit next to. This self-portrait by Bedwyr Williams is a manipulated version of an original photograph taken of the artist by a classmate whilst he was asleep on a trip to France, and intended to make fun of him. This frozen moment in time, separated from its raucous context, and seen many years later, seems innocuous, yet these moments can be painful ones that leave a long-lasting mark. The title itself is telling, the hippocampus being the part of the brain responsible for memory and emotions.

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Sarah Coulson, Curator

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Louise Hutchinson, Damon Waldoock

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## Tread Softly

An Arts Council Collection National Partners exhibition curated by Yorkshire Sculpture Park Bothy Gallery / 27.05.2017–03.09.2017

**Tread Softly** is about the complexities of growing up, developing identity and family relationships. Childhood and early adulthood are rarely wholly comfortable or idyllic, and this exhibition tells a realistic story, embracing the joys and difficulties of finding our place in the world. Many of the artworks are concerned with looking back and reflecting, with artists revisiting defining moments, objects and people in their lives. They consider how childhood experiences shape us, leaving indelible marks on our evolving characters.

The exhibition begins with black and white photographs, largely from the 1970s, which capture a broad spectrum of family life and reflect the varied experiences of young people. Marketa Luskacova's two featured photographs were taken in Chiswick Women's Aid, the first ever refuge for victims of domestic abuse. Her work documents the women and their children rebuilding their lives within this pioneering safe house.

Vanley Burke's **Educational Outing** is from his famed **Handsworth From Inside** series (1968–1982). Burke is known for his documentation of the black, mainly Caribbean, community in his home city of Birmingham. He was influenced by the negative portrayal of black people in the media and wanted to provide an alternative record. His focus became the everyday lives of his community, including the joyful, personal moments such as weddings, graduations and school day trips. In doing

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Free guide to works  
in the exhibition

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so he built a picture of the lives of people who were not otherwise being documented: as he says, "It's about having themselves reflected, they are so desperate to see themselves".

Also featured is the work of acclaimed photographers Tony Ray-Jones and Dennis Morris. Ray-Jones was renowned for his nostalgic and often ironic images of traditional English society and leisure pursuits, such as trips to the seaside, whereas Morris found fame as a teenager after taking photographs of Bob Marley whilst playing truant from school.

Marion Coutts (b.1965)

**For the Fallen** 2001

The experience of PE as a child tends to divide people into those who loved it and those who hated it. This vaulting horse brings back memories of gymnastics and the horror it instilled in the non-sporty child. **For the Fallen** stands as a monument to them. Its engraved text also recalls the appearance and the language of war memorials, lending a more sombre sense. By subtly altering a found object, Coutts shifts our perception of something familiar.

Fiona Crisp (b.1966)

**TD35** 1999

Fiona Crisp talks with great fondness of spending family caravan holidays by the sea

in Berwick-upon-Tweed every summer as a child. This large-scale image of a caravan interior was taken using a pinhole camera, and the softness of the photograph suggests distance and even the passage of time. The net curtains, dralon fabric seats, and view of the sea make a scene that will be familiar to many, and Crisp explores how a particular space or an image can be the trigger for a rush of memories.

Tracey Emin (b.1963)

#### **Why I Never Became a Dancer** 1995

Tracey Emin's first video work tells of a harrowing event from her often difficult childhood in Margate. After leaving school early, as a young teenager Emin experimented with sex as a way to combat boredom and escape herself. Soon aware of the darker side of these experiences, she turned instead to disco dancing and hoped to win a national competition. However, her dreams were brought crashing down by a group of boys who turned up at the competition to taunt her. This work is a poignant reminder of the fragility of youthful dreams and a powerful statement on how negative experiences can sometimes strengthen people's resolve.

Mona Hatoum (b.1952)

#### **Measures of Distance** 1988

Mona Hatoum was born in Beirut into a Palestinian family. Whilst in London in 1975, civil war broke out in Lebanon and she was exiled. This complex, multi-layered work is about the artist's relationship with and separation from her mother. At its heart are frank and moving letters between mother and daughter, which are read by Hatoum. The letters also feature as Arabic text overlaid on top of images of her mother in the shower, symbolising how their relationship is also being laid bare. Hatoum says, "every frame speaks of literal closeness and implied distance".

Susan Hiller (b.1942)

#### **Sentimental Representations: In Memory of My Grandmothers (Part I – for Rose Ehrich)** 1980-81

Influential American artist Susan Hiller has lived in London since the 1960s. Although Hiller's practice embraces many different media, the ideas of collecting, remembering and monuments recur, whether through old postcards, maps or other found objects that become part of her work. Hiller has also made ongoing series of works dedicated to artists who have inspired her. This is a more personal work made in memory of the artist's grandmothers, both of whom were called Rose. Here the collecting and arranging of rose petals is a symbolic act of devotion, love and remembrance.

Perminder Kaur (b.1965)

#### **Innocence** 1993

Childhood is often the subject of Kaur's work and she is especially known for making sculptural figures that resemble soft toys, yet which have a pervading, sinister edge. Religious imagery also features in her practice and **Innocence** comprises a tiny child's dress in bright orange, a important colour in Sikhism that represents joy. Held in the sash on the dress is a Kirpan sword; on this small garment it suggests an uneasy confluence of adulthood and childhood.

Mary Kelly (b.1941)

#### **Post-Partum Document, Documentation VI: Pre-Writing Alphabet, Exerque and Diary / Experimentum Mentis VI: (On the Insistence of the Letter)** 1978-79

**Post-Partum Document** is an iconic feminist work that explores the relationship between the artist and her child, over six years. Kelly analyses women's domestic labour, making visible the hidden experiences and anxieties of women in the home. Earlier parts of the work were made using materials related to stages of her child's life, from stained nappy

liners to baby clothes. This part is about her son learning to write and uses slate to echo writing tablets. Its shape recalls the Rosetta Stone, and also has three tiers of writing – at the top are the child's attempts at forming letters, followed by the artist's handwritten interpretation, and then a typed diary style entry on Kelly's emotional state and concerns.

Jordan McKenzie (b.1967)

#### **Shame Chorus** 2017

Courtesy the artist

**Shame Chorus** explores memory and sexuality, using narratives about formative experiences of shame and coming out, which are transformed by the cathartic act of singing and sharing stories. Renowned psychoanalyst Dr Susie Orbach conducted interviews with members of the London Gay Men's Chorus. Giving voice to often-internalised feelings, their stories were set to music by leading musicians and composers Billy Bragg, Leo Chadburn, Shane Cullinan, Jessica Curry, David McAlmont, Verity Susman, and Jack White. McKenzie says: "Shame perpetuates silence. **Shame Chorus** comes from a need to tackle this silence head on, to empower and start a conversation about the difficulties we face and turn them into meaningful discussion and inspirational artistic experiences".

Tish Murtha (b.1956)

#### **Untitled (from Youth Unemployment in the West End of Newcastle)** 1980-81

This striking image is played out against the bleak background of an abandoned housing estate within which children are making their own fun regardless of circumstances. However, Murtha was driven to document the devastating effects in her community of very high unemployment levels, saying "society has withdrawn its contract from these young people". In later years Murtha's brother, who is in the photograph, looked back on that day, saying, "I'm going on 54,

and I'd still love to jump out of a window onto some mattresses".

Grayson Perry (b.1960)

#### **Mad Kid's Bedroom Wall Pot** 1996

On loan from the Crafts Council Collection

In a poignant reflection on an abusive childhood at the hands of his stepfather, Perry's work states, "I was a mad kid and now I ain't. I got out 'coz I could paint". The artist's already troubled early life became more complicated when he realised he was a transvestite. Feeling out of place, he would engage in a projected fantasy world with his teddy bear, Alan Measles. Art began to represent a route to freedom, and a place of tolerance: "It was imperative that I got into a proper art college after the foundation year because art was my ticket out of Essex – the pot **Mad Kid's Bedroom Wall** is about escaping my roots through art". When Perry left for art school he was told never to return to his family home.

Kathy Prendergast (b.1958)

#### **Hair Bonnet** 1997

#### **The End and the Beginning** 1996

Irish artist Kathy Prendergast works with universal themes around what it means to be human, such as the cycle of life and death, love, loss and grief. She often uses found objects from the domestic environment, including old furniture and items of clothing. **The End and the Beginning** initially appears to be a spool of thread, but is actually the hair of the artist, her mother and son. It binds together three generations through their physical and emotional connections. Hair has strong symbolic significance: not only does it carry our DNA and tell the story of our make up, it also has an emotional and sentimental aspect, such as keeping a lock of a child's or a lover's hair. **Hair Bonnet** is a tiny child's bonnet made of hair but has a more unsettling and even sinister quality.