

Janet Sainsbury

Points in a Constellation, 2023

The museum's collections and displays provide inspiration for artists locally and nationally to create new work. RAMM commissioned Exeter-based artist Janet Sainsbury in Spring 2023. She is known for her contemporary approach to portrait painting.

Sainsbury has a longstanding relationship with RAMM, nurtured over many years of visiting and attending events here. She chose to study four women artists whose work is in RAMM's art collection: two Exeter-based contemporary artists, Michelle Sank and Amy Shelton, and two artists with links to the southwest, Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) and Gillian Ayres (1930-2018). Sainsbury met, photographed and sketched both Sank and Shelton from life while she referred to historic photographs of Ayres and Hepworth to inform her sketches and create new portraits.

Sainsbury reflects that: 'An important bonus for me was that I could go and visit Amy and Michelle in their studios and hear them talk about their work, which enabled me to create better informed, personal portraits'. In contrast, we are presented with a painted response to a well-known, archetype image of one of the most famous women artists of the twentieth century, Barbara Hepworth.

Sainsbury also engaged directly with the work of all four artists, visiting RAMM's offsite stores to see paintings by Ayres and Hepworth and studying Sank's and Shelton's work in recent exhibitions at RAMM.

The selected sketches and finished paintings on display here are just some of those produced for this new commission. Together this range of work provides a fascinating insight into Sainsbury's artistic practice, illustrating a skill that combines both a bold palette and sensitive line, resulting in a unique style.

Part of RAMM's Contemporary Art Programme, funded by Arts Council England.

Janet Sainsbury talks about her inspiration and the making of the work for RAMM

Watch a short video filmed at the artist's studio nearby and in the museum. <http://ramm.uk/JanetSainsburyFilm>

The artist wishes to thank Lara Goodband, Contemporary Art Curator & Programmer, and the team at RAMM; and the artists Michelle Sank and Amy Shelton.

About the Artist

Janet Sainsbury graduated from Brighton Art College in 1991. Her work has been exhibited extensively, including in the national touring group exhibition *Bloomberg New Contemporaries* and in a recent solo show at The Plough in Great Torrington.

Janet says, 'I paint portraits of artists because I'm interested in their different paths and connections, how that relates to their inner lives and how that is expressed in their work. All four artists are connected, for me, by a passionate determination and how they emotionally and instinctively respond to the world around them.'

Meet the Artist

Saturday 9 March 2024

11 am to 3 pm

Free, just drop-in

Garden Reception Room

Janet Sainsbury will be in the museum with additional sketches and paintings produced for this commission. She will be 'in conversation' with Lara Goodband at 11:30 am.