



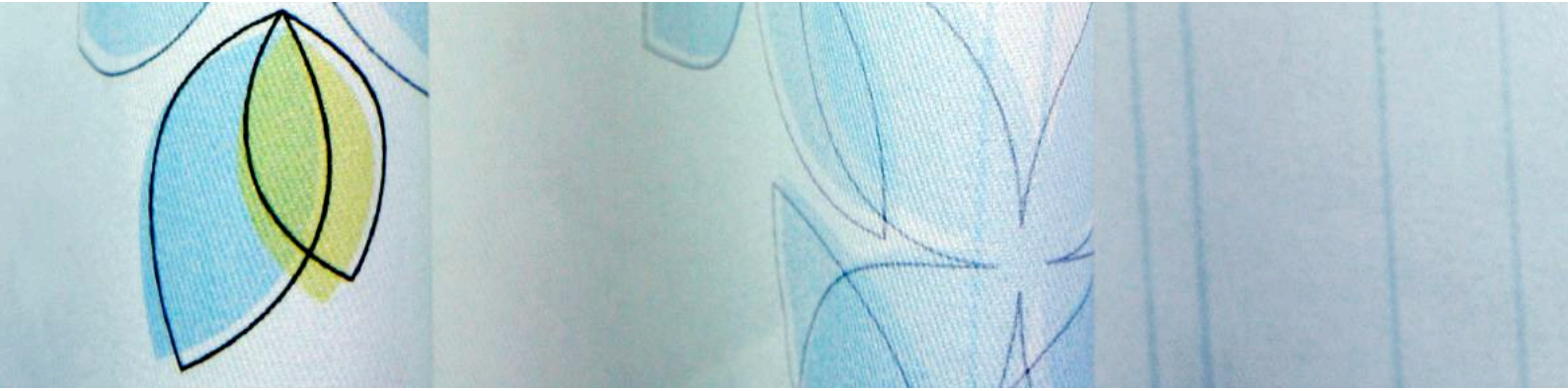
**St Hugh's Foundation for the Arts**

Personal Professional Development

**Arts Award 2014**

Sarah Daniels

**Final Report October 2016**



## Reflection & Professional Development

### Key Aims For Personal Professional Development

- Period of research and development
- Creation of new experimental work and prototyping
- Broaden networks, initiate visits & identify advisories
- Apply for residencies
- Seek mentorship &/or placement
- Establish partnerships with artists, the creative sector and industry
- Identify new markets beyond ones currently working in
- Embed skills and techniques gained from the professional development into commissioned practice

### Report Summary

Gaining the St Hugh's Foundation Award has allowed me to really concentrate and advance my professional and personal development. I have been able to transfer the skills gained by working with, and being mentored by a specialist digital illustrator into paid work and I have been able to create a series of designs, which in the short term, I am confident will provide me with a steady revenue stream.

The Award has also allowed me to set up and foster new working relationships and this has led on to being offered an industry-based placement in London. In addition, I have been able to establish contacts based in the Netherlands and have a visit to Rotterdam planned for early February 2017. I am hoping this will lead to further openings, long term partnerships and collaborations.

I have been working even more closely with the bespoke plastic fabricator based in Hull and we are about to launch a series of interior products for online sales.

Away from the constraints of my everyday work, I have produced a series of surface based designs and these have been made up into prototypes. These have included wall coverings, large format printed fabrics and layered, laser cut metals and plastics. I feel you can only ascertain if a design will really work through prototyping. An image on a screen or created on paper never really gives a true indicator of how something will look when manufactured at full scale, so the prototypes have been invaluable and have guided the design process through its various stages from inception to final production.

I have then taken photographs of the prototypes and used the photographs as supporting visual material when approaching large scale contract manufacturers. So far I have experienced very positive feedback because the prototypes show the potential in the design concepts and this is vital when speaking with the potential suppliers and clients.

In the last two months I have made contact with a leading manufacturer of polymer sheet and coated fabrics. Together we are working up some digitally printed upholstery vinyl for seating and very soon I expect to continue the process with Knightsbridge Furniture who will then upholster the printed vinyl onto chairs and bench seating. It is envisaged that the pieces made will be marketed for both the contract and domestic market.



## Residency Opportunity

### Gil Artist Residency, Akureyri, North Iceland

It has been proposed that the city of Hull's long-term cultural strategy is to strengthen its links with Northern Europe, Scandinavia and Iceland. I am genuinely excited by the openings this may offer in the future. I have recently applied for a residency placement in Iceland, which if I am successful will take place for one month in January 2017. The Gil Artist Residency is an artist in residence program located in Akureyri, North Iceland. I feel this will give me the freedom to experiment and create artwork completely unrelated to my paid work and I am keen to expand and develop the pattern ideas, which were formulated by photographs of hard frosts. The guarantee of cold weather and limited sunlight coupled with the Icelandic backdrop makes me very confident in being able to create the formulated photographs and patterns I crave. I feel very inspired by the potential opportunity.



Illustration: concept idea for patterns inspired by frost on glazing



Original photograph: hard frost on bus windscreen

## Marketing & Support

I have been working hard to lay the foundations for a new way of marketing myself, over and above applying/being approached for commissions as an artist or designer for set fees. This marketing and adaptations in how I approach my practice in conjunction with the traditional fee-paying work will lead to a secure, steady and sustainable future.

Over the last few years I have noticed that the way I make my living has shifted slightly. In many ways this has worked well for me as it has enabled me to work directly for interior designers and architects as opposed to working directly for the client or broker, and this has led to me being able to forge new working partnerships with contract manufacturers and suppliers. However, on the down side of this process I have witnessed that clients (particularly within healthcare) are less likely to advertise for artists and are subsequently reluctant to manage their artistic programme themselves. They are happy to hand over the management to contractors, procurement consultants, business strategists and architects and it seems that one of their most important roles (on behalf of the client) is to squeeze budgets as much as feasibly possible. In the long-term this will effect fees and production costs and potentially be detrimental to my financial welfare. This risk is heightened further by major cuts that are starting to filter down and predicted future cuts for the public sector, which invariably reduces capital building investment. As yet I have not been without work or affected by the shift in the management of the arts but I am very aware of the threat that lies ahead and want to protect myself by establishing long-term and sustainable revenue streams.

In recent months I have attended meetings, initiated by Arts Council England, which have been about artists making sure they are protected against future cuts and that they must adapt with the cultural landscape. Earlier this year the Hull based Goodwin Development Trust announced they were launching the Creative ENRG programme funded by Arts Council England's Creative Growth Fund. This programme offers individuals and creative businesses intensive specialist consultancy and tailored support. I have enrolled on the programme, which allows me a mentor to assist in the launch and marketing of a collection of designs and will assist with personal development funding applications, business growth and offer networking opportunities. This ties in well with the advancement in my personal practice, which has started to shift away from its photographic roots and has morphed into concentrating on surface pattern and fabrication. For much of the new work I have embarked upon over recent months, the photograph is not an end result but a beginning that kick starts the design process.

## London Based Industry Placement

The digital illustrator who mentored me during the first part of my development supported by the St Hugh's Foundation has introduced me to a London based textile importer who sells to Liberties of London. I have now been offered an industry-based residency with them, which will allow me to learn about the industry and gain a better and professional understanding of surface pattern manufacturing. This is a fantastic opportunity for me as it will be a 'hands on' placement and allow me to work with a team of experienced professionals, build a network and collaborate on exciting new ventures. This is planned for the mid part of next year.

## Rotterdam

I have also been liaising with the City of Culture team who passed on details of contacts based in Rotterdam. I have since made contact with the organiser of the Rotterdam Contemporary Art Fair NO WALLS EXPO and have been offered a VIP ticket for the five-day event next February. In addition, names of further contacts have been passed on to me. I am very excited about forging new networks in Holland because at least three of the commissioned pieces I have created for buildings in the last two years were manufactured in the Netherlands. I find the Dutch approach to contemporary art and architecture very inspiring.



## Business Connections with Hull

For the last year I have worked very closely with a bespoke plastic supplier and fabricator and following the development of prototype pieces created over the last year, we are now in a position to launch a collection of designs for direct sales online. Designs have been incorporated into marketable products including clocks, device-charging stands, socket and switch surrounds, furniture accessories and shelving. In addition, we are now working collaboratively with a locally based printing business that has invested in printing equipment that can produce bespoke wallpaper. The fabricated acrylic products will be launched at the same time as the wallpaper, fabric and upholstered designs and we are optimistic of gaining healthy revenue streams, which will allow further development and investment.

In the first instance, the products will be aimed at generating sales for the domestic market so we can establish a moderate income, but ultimately we want to tailor the design service and bespoke manufacturing, and offer complete packages to procurement agents working in the private sector including retail, hotels and leisure.

### Pictorial

The next few pages show illustrations, patterns & prototypes at various stages of their development.



Above photographs: lemon graphics printed directly onto 3mm acrylic

Below illustration: Lemons, vector based design concept

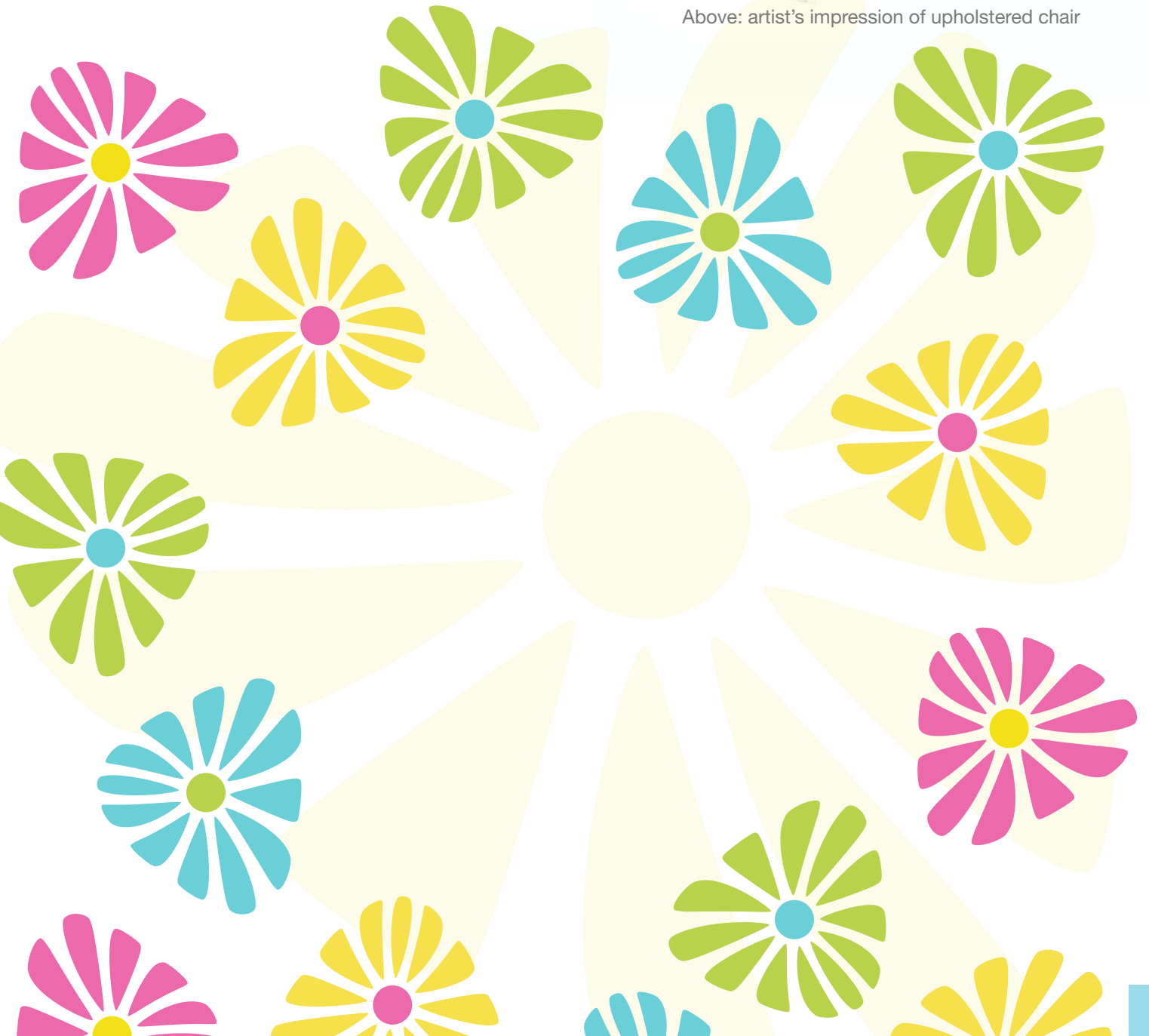




Above: photograph of switch surround prototype



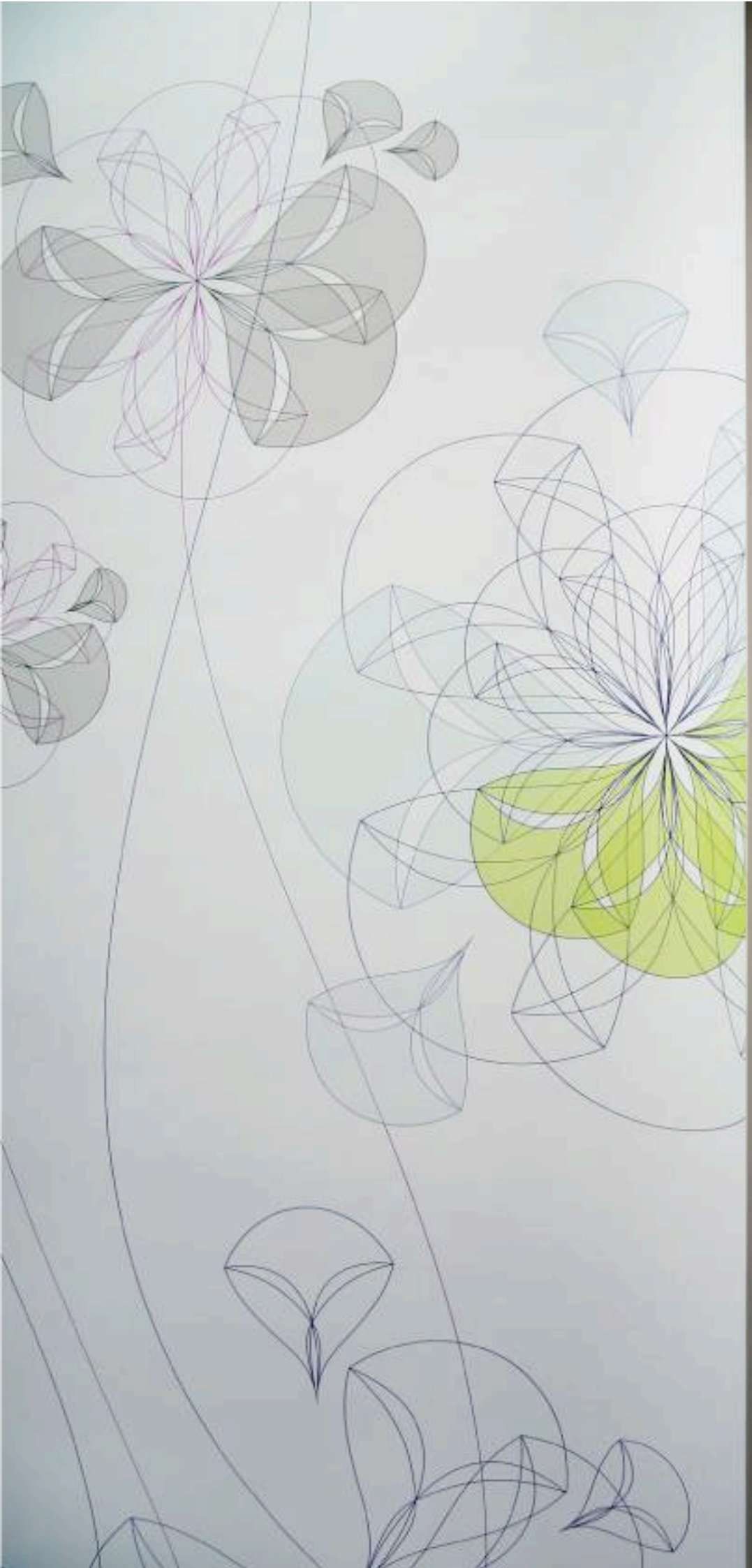
Above: artist's impression of upholstered chair





Above: photograph of wallpaper prototype - blue flowers







Photograph of cotton drill printed fabric curtain prototype





Photograph of wallpaper prototype - hearts





Photograph of cotton drill printed fabric curtain prototype - hearts