

# EXCHANGES, EXHIBITIONS AND EXPERIMENTS IN COLOUR

CARINNA PARRAMAN

## ABSTRACT

This past year, I have been working on a subject that I most enjoy – colour – and it seems that many others share the same passion. In April 2024, I hosted a celebration and exploration of colour featuring an exhibition and a colour seminar.

The **Colour Exhibition** (8-12 April 2024) included a fascinating range of artworks, including screen-based works, prints, bookworks, paintings, textiles, dye pieces, glassworks, installations, and sculptures, each artist exploring what colour means to them. In collaboration with The Colour Group GB, the **Colour in Art Seminar** was held at Bower Ashton Campus on Wednesday, 10th April. Colour experts were asked to present their insights and practices.

## THE COLOUR IN ART SEMINAR

Dr Carinna Parraman, Professor of Design, Colour and Print at the Centre for Print Research, introduced the seminars and presenters.

**Alexandra Loske**, an art historian and curator at Brighton's Royal Pavilion who is particularly interested in the history of colour in Western art, print culture, and architecture, presented her research on historical colour models, including watercolour colour studies by Mary Gartside (c.1755 – 1819), who published her colour theories in 1805, supported by highly painterly colour studies, which she termed Coloured Blots.

**Roy Osborne** is an abstract artist, colour educator, historian and author. In 2003, he was awarded the Turner Medal of the Colour Group (Great Britain). In 2019, he was awarded the Colour in Art, Design and Environment Medal of the International Colour Association (AIC CADE). In his presentation, *Pigments of the Imagination*, he delves into his creative practice works, reflecting on when and why they were made, as well as commenting on his experiences studying and teaching colour over 40 years.

As a textile artist, designer, and educator at UWE, **Stephanie Wooster's** presentation, "A Conversation in Colour," explored her methodology for working with colour, how she conveys concepts and stories through colour and pattern in her knits, and where she draws inspiration for her colour collections.

**Chuck Elliot**, a digital artist since 1992 and CFPR Artist-in-Residence in 2024, reflects on his practice and career history. He uses digital drawing tools to create studies that explore a fluid investigation of colour, including movement, line, light, colour, and geometry, or what he describes as "liquid geometry."

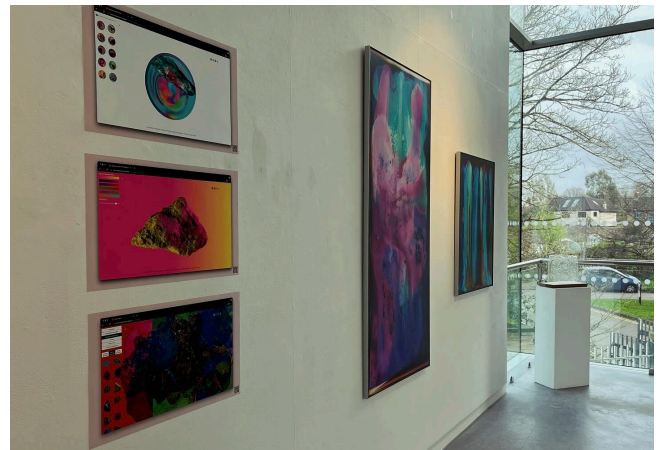


Figure 1

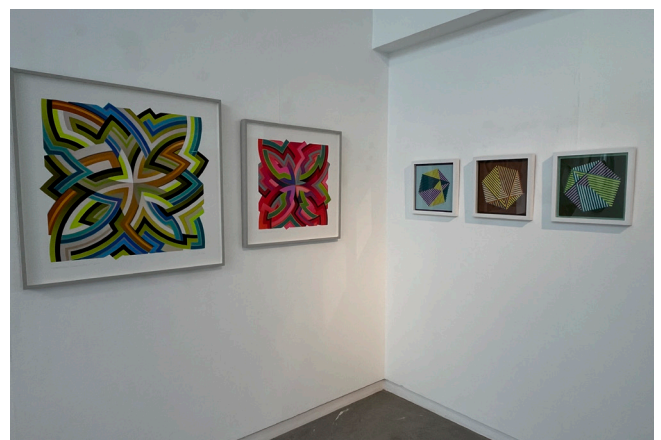


Figure 2

Figure 1 showing work by Jason Urban and Leslie Mutchler (left) and John A. Blythe (right)

Figure 2 showing work by Chuck Elliot (left) Naomi Kendall (right)

**Laura Berman** is an artist who was a Fulbright Scholar at the Centre for Creative and Cultural Research at the University of Canberra in 2024. In her presentation “Colour, Shape, and Space: Material and Conceptual Spaces through Print Media,” Berman focuses on colour and the building of relationships through abstracted forms; iteration is at the heart of her practice. Through printed layers and physical pattern-building, Berman’s images build narratives about the connections between time, play, and discovery.

**Jason Urban** and **Leslie Mutchler** of **JULMstudios** have been working collaboratively since 2012. They live and work in Brooklyn, New York. As a collaborative duo, their contribution was the Color Impracticum lecture video, which can be found here “Color is science- the science of light- but Color is also magical, mysterious, and meaningful. Color is a crossover field of study that impacts and is informed by many different disciplines.”

## THE COLOUR EXHIBITION

The Colour Exhibition, which included some speakers from the Colour Seminar, was held at the F Block Gallery, Bower Ashton, Bristol. It featured 25 artists and celebrated a variety of colour studies and explorations through different media.

It is not surprising that when an open call is made about a specific theme, the range and variety of interpretations are as varied as the submissions. In the following section, I have attempted to group just a selection of works.

**Barbara Balfour’s** book *The Inkiest Black* (2014) is inspired by David Foster Wallace’s novel *Infinite Jest*. It comprises three sections: Long List, Qualified Colours, and White and Black. It pays attention to DFW’s vocabulary, his descriptions of colours, and the various iterations of white and black in the novel. The book ends with Balfour’s favourite term, “the inkiest black.” Responding to Wallace’s succinct, poetic, and enigmatic colour descriptions, such as “indecisive green,” “the white of long death,” and “the inkiest black,” Balfour sets out to mix colours that she hopes might resemble those in the author’s mind’s eye. Given the subjectivity of colour perception, these results remain, of course, open to debate.

**Marian Kilpatrick’s** work *‘what was lost/what remains’*, consists of 74 pieces of colourful vintage cards, using laser engraving to burn away layers of the card, creating a depth and a tactile surface that appears like a scan or a map. Pieced together, they form an inventory of emotional experiences over time. The original colours of the cards - blue, turquoise, orange, and pink, have been scorched and transformed into unexpected shades, echoing the notion of inexorable change due to emotional events in our lives while retaining beauty, delicacy and resilience. She says “We all have experiences that have left something with us, embedded in who we are, that continue reverberating. Within

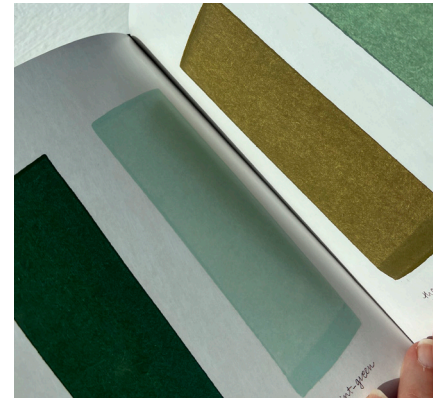


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 3 Detail from Barbara Balfour  
 Figure 4 Detail from Sam Nias  
 Figure 5 Detail from Stephanie Wooster

our bodies' soft and vulnerable flesh, we accrue incidences of emotional experience – fear, trauma, pain, love, joy and wonder”.

**Di-Andre Caprice Davis's** ongoing work *My Light My Love Vibration of Colours* (before the video art Masterpiece) (2019 — ) explores form and the development of non-standard languages by engaging the capacities inherent to new media. Abstraction, computer graphics, GIF art, glitch art, mathematics, photography, and surrealism are some of the fascinations that animate her practice. <https://diandrecapricedavis.com/my-light-my-love-vibration-of-colours-before-the-video-art-masterpiece>

**Jaime Cid-Lara's** *Nebulosa* series are images generated through code that explore color and form, using patterns and delving into the concept of complex systems and emerging phenomena in the universe. These structures are evident in nature at various places and scales, such as in fluids, galaxies, animals, and more. “The high density of color information in the images sometimes creates what we could call “sub-pixels in the eye.” This means the works are so large, that when viewed from a certain distance, the colors blend into each other and the eye perceives the resulting juxtaposition, which tends toward white (the combination of all colors) and red/pink (theoretically, this could be speculated to be due to its wavelength being the longest in the spectrum). The *Nebulosa* series belong to the project *Emerging Organisms* and is one of the more color-focused of the project.

The exhibition's textile pieces include works by **Stephanie Wooster** and **Laura Morgan**. The collection of scarves is part of Wooster's ongoing exploration of textiles for fashion, aiming to connect with an individual's lived experiences and create a visceral reaction to a piece of cloth that is a building block to manifesting their interests and aspirations in object form. She collects coloured yarn grouped and connected to a story or theme influenced by the world around her. Some stories are personal fascinations and some link to more global occurrences. The colours she selects are the first step. Secondly, she contemplates proportion and connections / contrasts / companions / neighbours, which come as a pattern. Her outcomes, knitted on a machine with lambswool and a simple two-colour punch-card patterning system, enable her to vary and mix colour, proportion and comparisons to shift the visceral responses she receives during the textile process. No one combination is final; it is at the intersection of dialogue and play.

**Laura Morgan's** *Kind Materials Research* explores sustainable alternatives to conventional dyeing and finishing by innovatively integrating bio-dyeing with laser technology. Experimental bio-mordants from plant, fungi and algae sources enhanced the natural, plant-based dyeing process, addressing toxicity in textile colouration by replacing petrochemical dyes and metal salts. Morgan adds digital control to bio-design. Laser irradiation was creatively employed as a print process to introduce precision surface designs. Combining these approaches resulted in linen textiles that reimagine traditional colouration and patterning practices, exemplifying a bio-digital design methodology and a kinder approach to materials production that aligns with circular design principles.

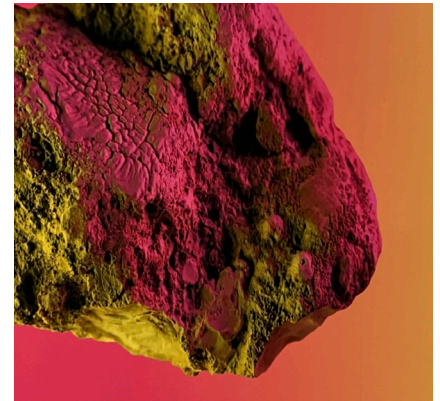


Figure 6



Figure 7

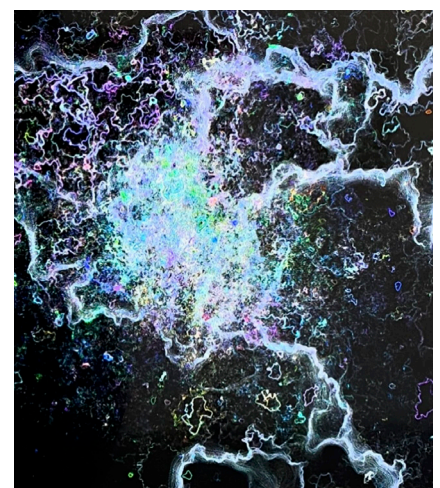


Figure 8

Figure 6 Detail from Jason Urban and Leslie Mutchler

Figure 7 Detail from Laura Morgan

Figure 8 Detail from Jaime Cid-Lara

Artists who delve into the unexpected and in-between colours, are the works by **Jon Malis**, **Samuel Nias** and **Chuck Elliot**. **Malis'** work initially stems from his *Transcolorations* project, which translates the digital colour science employed in digital photography and the computer/graphic arts into physical forms and images. By rendering and visualising a series of ICC (International Colour Consortium) Profiles—documents and standards that define how computers represent, interpret, and process colour data—into three-dimensional digital space, they effectively transliterate colour science from bits of data and abstract standards into tangible forms and objects.



Figure 9

**Nias'** work operates somewhere between the scientific and the playful, attempting to recreate experiences of light and atmosphere - similar to what one might find when looking at a rainbow, a sunset or a sunrise. The beauty here can also be found in the ultimate failure to do so. He undertakes a process-based approach to celebrate light and colour, especially the purest moments that come when, through experimentation, a certain combination unexpectedly catches the eye, presenting the challenge of trying to capture that moment through print.

**Chuck Elliot** draws from nature, maths, architecture, and life. The rhythms and beauty of number systems determine the drawings and explore the basic building blocks of everything we see around us: line, light, volume, and colour. As Elliot says, "In that sense, they get right to the heart of the most basic components of our lived experience. Studies are concerned with overlaying number patterns and exploring how those patterns can generate form, glazing with colours and using light to bring the underlying studies to life as single moments in time."



Figure 10

**Susanne Klein's** work explores the complex subject of light and how to combine two key components: printing with pigments, which is subtractive, and mixing spectral colour to obtain light, which is additive. Using RGB mica pigments printed onto black paper, **Klein** superimposes three layers of colour to create large landscape-scale prints, emulating the early photographic processes.

Paper works and manipulation of colours are represented by **Naomi Kendall** and **Carinna Parraman's** interactions of colour through the layering of colours and geometries. **Parraman's** work explores the colour laws of assimilation and contrast, the impact of colours and the perceptual presentation of colour relationships as described by Michel-Eugène Chevreul (1786-1899) and used as a creative device by Op Artists in the 1960s by mixing colour and patterns to create optical colour mixtures such as by Eduardo Paolozzi to create new ways of seeing.

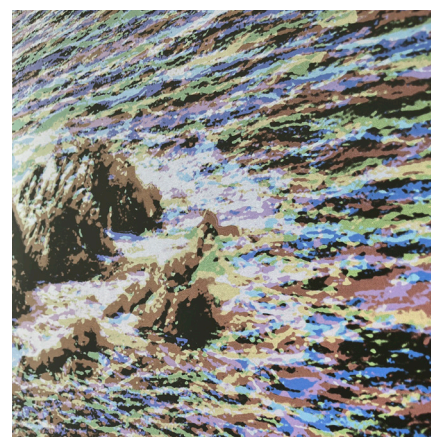


Figure 11

**Naomi Kendall** is inspired by geometry, pattern and textures in her manipulated paper compositions. She finds inspiration in museums, exploring colourful textiles, ceramics, architecture, and new cities and places. As **Kendall** says of paper "It's such an everyday material, yet it can be transformed in so many ways." She cuts, folds, layers and weaves the paper by hand. Her practice draws on techniques and processes used in textiles and sets out to push the possibilities of working with paper. Her tools are simple: a pencil, a ruler, a knife, a pair of scissors and glue.

Figure 9 Detail from John Podpadec  
 Figure 10 Detail from John A. Blythe  
 Figure 11 Detail from Susanne Klein

Emily Ketteringham's prints are part of a series exploring colour in memory, about being in the moment, "drinking in the colour of the landscape, letting the colour be all there is." They are also an attempt to answer the question, "How do you make work about landscape when you can't remember what the landscape looks like?" Ketteringham has aphantasia and so finds it difficult to retain visual memories. As Ketteringham says, "The numerous visually impactful landscapes I have seen in my life have strong visual and emotional impacts on me when I am in front of them, but the memory is lost to me as soon as I walk away. I am left with a sense of space, fleeting impressions and hints of colour, but no firm images in my mind." The prints are records of photos taken during an American road trip, the first captures the colours of a hot walk in Canyonlands National Park, Utah '38°11'34.2"N 109°49'01.7"W' and the second from the drive west through the endless golden grasslands towards San Francisco. '35°16'12.4"N 118°41'03.9"W' Each printed section's colour matches that section's dominant colour, where it intersects with a circle overlaid onto the photograph.



Figure 12

Paintings by Iasonas Bakas and Frea Buckler combine colour palettes and abstract compositions drawn from the geometries of architecture and interior environments.

Bakas' artwork seeks inspiration from the basic principles and iconic architectural, product and interior design examples. He interprets the shape and colour of objects, buildings, pieces of fine art and interiors, interpreting the inner thoughts and human desires. Likewise, Buckler's works explore our emotional and physical selves in an abstract language of colour, repetition, space and form. Buckler uses ordinary and often salvaged materials associated with DIY and constructs works through painting, sculpture, and installation, as well as replicating and repeating motifs and materials with a playful approach to their adaptation. She takes inspiration from geometry and objects in design, architecture and domestic environments to consider how we relate to, occupy or pass through these spaces.

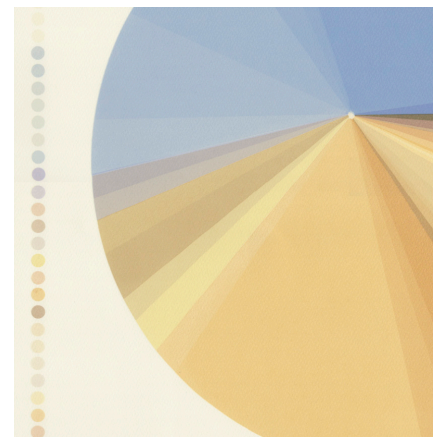


Figure 13

I thank the following exhibiting artists, whose unique perspectives and creative works made the event a truly enriching experience for all.

Barbara Balfour, Iasonas Bakas, Elaoise Benson, John A. Blythe, Frea Buckler, Jaime Cid-Lara, Chuck Elliott, Katie Evans, Susie Felstead, Daisy Fisher, Ollie Goodson, Stephen Hoskins, Olivia Kelsall, Naomi Kendall, Emily Ketteringham, Marian Kilpatrick, Kexin Liu, Jon Malis, Laura Morgan, Samuel Nias, Carinna Parraman, John Podpadec, Georgina Towler, Jason Urban and Stephanie Wooster

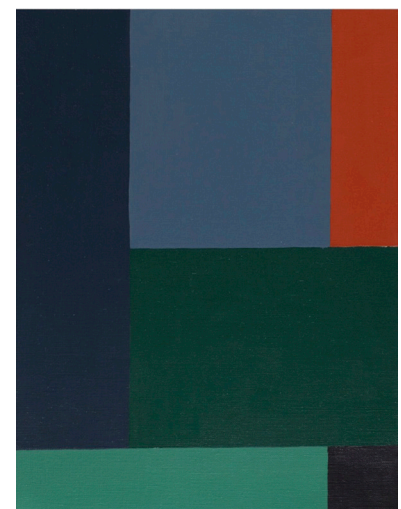


Figure 14

Figure 12 Detail from Carinna Parraman  
 Figure 13 Detail from Emily Ketteringham  
 Figure 14 Iasonas Bakas, Sequential, Oil painting

## LIST OF ARTWORKS

Barbara Balfour, The Inkiest Black, Offset hardcover book

Iasonas Bakas, Sequential, Oil painting (30.5 x 23cm)

Iasonas Bakas, Intentional, Oil painting (30.5 x 23cm)

Iasonas Bakas, Different Approach, Oil painting (30.5 x 23cm)

Elaoise Benson, Reclaiming Autumn, Acrylic and soil on canvas (80 x 80cm)

Elaoise Benson, Can't See the Wood for the Trees, Acrylic on canvas (70 x 70cm)

John A. Blythe, Print of FFFCP 160S 12 (2011) (DV508FCAP00C160M00Y) (PP01.1+Var-PF05.1+Var-CS03.1+Var)20220525 #1, Unique unexposed, chemically manipulated Fujicolor Pro 160S film negative, expiry date 2011, presented as a unique hand-produced c-type print on Fujifilm Crystal Archive paper (W77cm x H170cm x D3cm)

John A. Blythe, Study for KECh E100S 54 (2003) (DV507FCAP00C100M00Y) (PP01.1+Var-PF05.1+Var-CS03.1+Var) 20220524 #1, Unique unexposed, chemically manipulated Kodachrome E100S film transparency, expiry date 2003, presented as a unique hand-produced c-type print on Fujifilm Crystal Archive paper (W69cm x H170cm x D3cm)

Frea Buckler, Ratio 1 – 3, Acrylic on plywood, 23 x 30 cm

Di-Andre Caprice Davis (2019) #3, my light my love vibration of colours (before the video art masterpiece) ongoing, Computer-generated (1200 x 1200px)

Jaime Cid-Lara, Nebulosa 69386881 (2024), Digital image (11.520 x 6.480 pixels)

Chuck Elliott, Radial / ONE, 10 colour pigment print. Kays Diasec mount, clear and black Perspex. Laser cut disc, with MDF subframe (100cm diameter)

Chuck Elliott, InterStella / QUAD 1 pt2, 10 colour pigment print (64 x 64cm)

Chuck Elliott, Lino / bronzed, 10 colour pigment print/ Kays Diasec mount, clear and black Perspex. Laser cut disc, with MDF subframe (100cm diameter)

Katie Evans, Three landscape studies, Oil, acrylic, powder pigment, house paint, ink, metallic pigment, masking fluid, painting on canvas sheets

Katie Evans, The Three Nereids, Oil, acrylic, and watercolour on canvas (70 x 70cm)

Katie Evans, Glasswork I, Slumped glass in wooden stand with light (20 x 30 x 10cm)

Susie Felstead, Nice-o with Riso, Risograph digital print on paper

Daisy Fisher, Nothing Unnatural, Dye work (30 x 37cm)

Ollie Goodson, Prince, Acrylic ink screenprint on paper (59 x 68.5cm)

Ollie Goodson, Quilt, Acrylic ink screenprint on canvas (110 x 75cm)

Stephen Hoskins, Lilienthal Feathers, Age of Innocence, Screenprint and Lasercut

Stephen Hoskins, Golden Section Arabica, Screenprint and Lasercut

Olivia Kelsall, The Ocean's Rage, Watercolour paper (30x42cm)

Olivia Kelsall, Lava Falls, Watercolour paper (30 x 42cm)

Olivia Kelsall, Cellular Garden, Watercolour paper (30 x 42cm)

Naomi Kendall, Jive 1, 2, 3, Hand-cut, woven paper

Emily Ketteringham, 38°11'34.2"N 109°49'01.7"W, 39 Colour screenprint (55 x 55cm)

Emily Ketteringham, 35°16'34.2"N 118°41'03.9"W, 39 colour screenprint (55 x 55cm)

Marian Kilpatrick, what was lost / what remains, Laser engraved cards 73 pieces, wall-mounted using magnets on a neutral painted ground (81 x 152cm)

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Susanne Klein, Baum, Screenprint with Spectral pigments on Plike black

Susanne Klein, Strand, Screenprint with Spectral pigments on Plike black (100.5 x 60cm)

Susanne Klein, Fells, Screenprint with Spectral pigments on Plike black

Kexin Liu, 3607 - Bacteria Soundscape: Vinyl record, Vinyl record containing soundscapes generated from the artist's bacterial data. Bacteria pigment, vinyl, resin (30 x 30 cm)

Kexin Liu, 3607 - Bacteria Soundscape: Clamshell box, Clamshell box for storing vinyl record and catalogue. Bacteria dyed silk book cloth, paper (34 x 34cm)

Kexin Liu, 3607 - Bacteria Soundscape: DNA Catalogue, Catalogue containing the DNA reads of the 3607 bacteria found in the artist's body, arranged in descending order according to species abundance. Hand-bound book with bacteria pigment screenprinted cover (23.5 x 23.5cm)

Jon Malis, MaxRGB.icc, C-Type photographic print mounted on Sintra (28 x 36cm)

Jon Malis, ProPhoto.icm, C-Type photographic print mounted on Sintra (28 x 36cm)

Jon Malis, ACEScscg-elle-V2-g10.icc, C-Type photographic print mounted on Sintra (28 x 36cm)

Laura Morgan, Bio-Digital Textile Designs, Linen textiles, 3 x hangers (45 x 32cm)

Laura Morgan, Laser Garment Pattern Pieces, Linen textiles, 2 pieces (43 x 76cm)

Laura Morgan, Laser and Bio-mordant Research Testing, Selection of material testing samples in acrylic case (50 x 50 x 10cm)

Samuel Nias, Colour Field IV, Screenprint on Perspex

Samuel Nias, Sundown, Screenprint on Perspex with C-type print on Corian shelf

Carinna Parraman, Assimilation and contrast, Digital print with overlaid laser cut, magnets (100 x 60cm)

John Podpadec, V Domu, 10 minute excerpt of a longer film, monitor with audio.

Claudia Tong, Colours & Sounds, Video, made with code (p5.js and Python) and original music

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Georgina Towler, WHISH, Acrylic on Canvas (46 x 36cm)

Georgina Towler, SWISH, Acrylic on Canvas (46 x 36cm)

Georgina Towler, LOVING, Acrylic on Canvas (31 x 41cm)

Stephanie Wooster, Scarves, wool, woven textiles (4 x 24 x 210-230cm)

## **AUTHOR**

### **Carinna Parraman**

Dr Carinna Parraman is Professor of Design, Colour and Print at the Centre for Print Research, University of the West of England, Bristol

She is coordinator and host of the Colour in Art Seminar and Exhibition, and Curator of the Cabinet of Curiosities and Artist in Residency Programme.

<https://cfpr.uwe.ac.uk/people/carinna-parraman>

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