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# the Art of Faith



## *Self Spirit Surroundings*

*Both The Art of Faith and Art of Faith Today : Self, Spirit Surroundings are part of the  
Art of Faith Research Project, a collaboration between Norfolk Museums & Archaeology  
Service and the University of East Anglia and supported by the Arts and Humanities  
Research Council; Castle exhibition catalogue special price £9.95; RRP £12.95.*



# Introduction

**A**rt of Faith Today: Self, Spirit, Surroundings investigates the expression of personal beliefs in Norfolk through the work of eight local artists. The exhibition explores the transmissibility of spirituality to viewers, in the absence of shared belief-systems or communal iconographic languages of faith.

The artefacts displayed in the associated exhibition, The Art of Faith: an exhibition of 3,500 years of art and belief in Norfolk (showing at Norwich Castle until 23rd January 2011) directly engage with religious groups and are often used for ritual purposes. However, Self, Spirit, Surroundings is an exploration of the works of artists that, although faith-driven or spiritual, do not have an obvious ritual function and cannot easily be associated with any specific faith group. The artists presented here – including several members of the Norwich 20 group – each engage with a very personal, often eclectic and inarticulable dialogue with religious beliefs. This quest often relates directly to the artists' local community, its histories and to the land they inhabit. Some artists draw inspiration from Norfolk's raw coastline, from visual traces of religious activity left upon the landscape or from ancient burial mounds and Norfolk's many churches. Others are inspired by past ideologies associated with the region. For all, the quest is inextricably linked with the negotiation of identity.

In her unique, scraper-board paintings, Juliet Wimhurst explores Norwich anchoress Mother Julian and her feminization of Christianity. Print-maker Martin Mitchell merges his Christian beliefs with his awe of rural Norfolk, through meticulous mezzotints inspired by Rembrandt. Trevor Ashwin casts an archaeologist's eye upon shamanism through a series of thought-provoking landscape photographs. Employing controlled geometry, renowned artist Peter Baldwin uses paintings of the local coastline to tussle with layers of belief from childhood Catholicism to Quakerism. Internationally exhibiting artist, Maz Jackson fills her tempera sculptures with an extensive mix of religious and mythological iconography, placed within a local landscape of ancient woods and earthworks. In his striking exhibition piece, Keith Pomeroy presents his personal interpretation of a Chinese myth through abstract forms. Dominique Rey investigates her Persian ancestry and current Norfolk identity through constructions that engage with residual religious beliefs and ideologies bound to both regions. Louise Richardson contemplatively hand-sews the very material traces of departed souls and their communal identities, producing astonishingly beautiful silk sculptures that test the bounds between life and death.

Liz Mellings

# Credits

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**Marketing & Preview**  
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Ioanneta Vergi  
Sophie Hawkins  
Henry Yallop  
Sarah Sandall

## Acknowledgements

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Art of Faith Today: Self, Spirit, Surroundings is associated with the exhibition The Art of Faith: an exhibition of 3,500 years of art and belief in Norfolk (showing at Norwich Castle until 23 January 2011). Both exhibitions are part of the Art of Faith Research Project; a collaboration between the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service and the University of East Anglia, supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

# Catalogue



**Juliet Wimhurst  
(1940, Malaysia)**

*Christ, the second person, embodies  
the motherhood of God (2010)  
Ink on scraper-board*

**J**uliet Wimhurst is a Norwich based artist who, although having no set religious affiliation, has a “deep interest in the life of the spirit”, an interest which is present in many of her works. The piece exhibited here is one of a series of water-colours on scraper-board that Juliet produced based on the key moments in the revelations of Mother Julian of Norwich. This representation shows Julian’s revelation that God is our Mother in addition to being our Father, and that the maternal aspect of Christ is a literal, not metaphoric concept. Christ is literally the mother; the mother-child relationship being the closest temporal comparison to the relationship a Christian can have with Christ.

**Henry Yallop**



**Trevor Ashwin  
(1963, Reading)**

*Caistor St Edmund (1990)  
Photography*

*Guestwick (2006)  
Photography*

*Salthouse (1996)  
Photography*

*(Based upon air photograph by  
Derek Edwards, 28 June 1996,  
© Norfolk County Council*

**T**revor is an archaeologist of prehistory who has lived in Norfolk for over twenty years. Over time, he has also become drawn to Norfolk’s historic landscape as an artist: Many years’ immersion in archaeological sites and their settings, and a growing interest in possible prehistoric shamanism, have led him to record very subjective responses to ancient sites. Through his photography, he seeks to convey intangible links with Norfolk’s past inhabitants, invoking their spiritual presence within the landscape. Although he is not of any faith, Trevor acknowledges the reality and importance of elusive and immeasurable forces; traces that may respond to shamanistic sensibility. In his endeavours, Trevor sometimes experiences a conflict

of interests: archaeology demands ‘factual support’ and ‘balanced interpretation’; creative work requires a ‘personal and entirely subjective viewpoint.’ By communicating his own navigation between the two, he hopes to encourage a deep and vital understanding of the landscape we inhabit, preventing it from ever becoming too fixed or settled.

**Sara Clifton & Kathryn Jones**



**Peter Baldwin  
(1941, Sheringham)**

*Slaughden (2006)  
Oil on Canvas*

**P**eter Baldwin, an acclaimed local artist, was born in Aldeburgh, a seaside town on the coast of East Anglia, but has spent most of his adult life in Sheringham, where his mother's family can trace much of their ancestry. Painting and exploring the local surrounds, including Slaughden marsh, were an important part of his life from an early age, as a means of escape from his tempestuous relationship with his father. Raised an Anglo Catholic, Baldwin now considers human belief in religious ideas and personal freedom a more fulfilling spirituality.

'Slaughden' is an immensely personal piece for Baldwin. It is in homage to 'Poor Fisherman' by Purvis de Chavannes, hanging in the Louvre. Baldwin was haunted by

the isolated figure and was inspired to recast the scene in a location with particular significance for him, recalling his sense of isolation in the final days before his traumatic departure to Canada with his family. His emotional ties to the East-Anglian landscape prompted his solo return soon after. The land and especially the seaside as a liminal space feature prominently in Baldwin's modernist work, alongside themes of liberty and existentialism.

**Sophie Hawkins & Sarah Sandall**



**Louise Richardson  
(1969, Norwich)**

*Sunday Best (2005)  
Paper, silk, thread*

**A**lthough the Church has never played a large role in Richardson's life, her background is based primarily within the Church of England. She is fascinated by the idea of memory, identity, superstition and storytelling; these elements all being part of faith. 'Sunday Best' was made for an exhibition for St Nicholas church, Salhouse, in 2005, and the work speaks about spirituality, although it is not fixed to a specific religion. She was inspired by the idea of churchgoers getting dressed up ritualistically in their 'Sunday Best'.

The work is made from Louise's own hymnal - she decided that she couldn't use a Bible to make the work as it seemed too sacred. She describes the process of making as being almost ritualistic and

obsessive, and liked the idea of the thin pages disintegrating with the stitching and then the cotton holding them together to produce a new object, with its own life and stories. In many cultures, moths represent the soul, and here they pull the dress either heavenward or earthbound. After completing the work, Louise found the following quote particularly resonant: 'like a moth you eat away all their desires' (Psalm 39, Vs. 12).

**Emily Crane & Wei-Hsu Lin**



## Martin Mitchell (Norfolk)

*Wiveton Church (2010)  
Framed mezzotint*

Mitchell is a renowned printmaker in Norwich and uses traditional and experimental printmaking techniques, including mezzotint. Churches are an integral part of Norfolk's landscape and, as such, are the main focus of his work. Mitchell has cycled the length and breadth of Norfolk and believes that "you can feel the day, experience its moods, hot or cold, windy or still, silence and birdsong", which is apparent within in his pieces. Mitchell has said of his work, "it is as much a memory of place; personal, my own travels and the thought of ancestral family connection with Norfolk."

Wiveton church is considered to be one of the most splendid buildings of the period in the district. This print is a superb example of the level of quality and richness that mezzotint can produce. Mitchell is an active member of both Norwich's artistic and Christian communities. He set up the Norwich Print Fair with the aim of supporting other printmakers and to promote the method. He is a member of St Giles church in Norwich, and so it follows that Mitchell's Christian faith is personified in his artwork of churches. His prints evoke an emotional response and show that churches envelop a sense of time and place.

**Lauren Ephithite & Katy Houston**



## K R Pomeroy (1948, Great Yarmouth)

*Five Sages (2010)  
Acrylic paint on canvas, industrial plywood, gold leaf in acrylic paint*

Although a one-time Buddhist, K R Pomeroy identifies more with the Buddhist philosophy than with its religious beliefs. In fact, he considers himself an atheist. Yet Pomeroy sees painting as a meditative process, which puts him in touch with "something" that is not God in the conventional sense.

Five Sages continues Pomeroy's work considering chaos/order and creation but this is his first piece that has been inspired by a particular myth. This piece also sees the reintroduction of colour into his work.

Despite the work being rooted in Chinese mythology, Pomeroy wished to avoid pursuing a specific cultural track and so incorporates a very personal interpretation of the Aristotelian element symbols for Earth, Fire, Air and Water on the relevant panels of this work.

**Diana Pereira & Ioanneta Vergi**



**Dominique Rey  
(1968, London)**

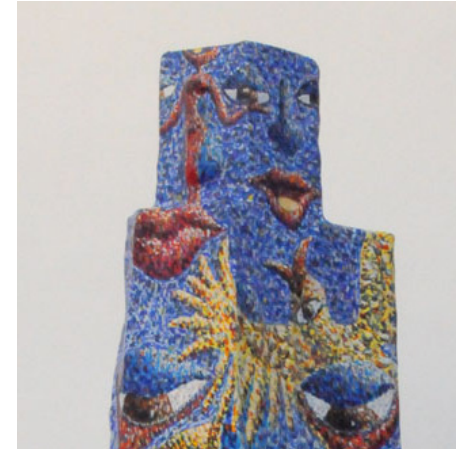
*Rose Garden (2008)*  
Sandblasted glass, concrete  
blocks, directional light

Inspired by Sir Thomas Browne's writings, *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, Dominique is interested in the intertwined notions of the cycle of life and death and the afterlife. Here, Rey focuses on the origins of the word 'paradise' as a 'walled garden'. 'Rose Garden' presents an amalgamation of Iranian images and floral patterning of Old Persian textile designs, these organic patterns providing a balance for the minimalist architectural form of the sculpture.

The construction is a simplification of the layout plan of an ancient Persian garden: sharp, geometric glass shapes are placed on concrete blocks. The delicate structure suggests an interesting contrast of meanings in which the lightness

of life lingers on the brutality of death; fragility and perpetuation. Shadow always goes with light; the transient span of life on earth is paralleled with the volatile nature of shadow, as it changes constantly in reaction to light and is never solid. The projection of the shadow of 'Rose Garden' may be seen as a continuation of life that goes beyond earthly existence into another world: a timeless paradise. Partially obscured by sandblasted flowers are words from the introduction to *Gulistan* by Persian poet, Sa'di: "But this rose garden will live forever".

**Anne Mok Nga Yi**



**Maz Jackson  
(1953, East Harling)**

*Time (2009)*  
Egg tempera and 24 carat gold leaf  
on gessoed and linen wrapped oak

Maz Jackson is a Norfolk artist, recognized worldwide for her egg tempera panels, which follow the 15th-century methods of Cennino d'Andrea Cennini. Into these works, Jackson injects the many facets of her religious and spiritual beliefs and often combines familiar places with old myths and legends of the Norfolk countryside, creating a Surrealist image which can express much more than its individual graphic elements ever could.

Created on a piece of oak and painted with egg tempera, Jackson crafted this piece entitled 'Time'. In it, she depicts Garboldisham Heath, a Neolithic Barrow said to be Iceni Queen Boudicca's place of burial. By taking this place, filled with Norfolk history, and populating it with spirits and shamanic indications, Jackson creates a Surrealist image that shows us the deep relation between landscape and belief-systems that are echoed throughout the world.

**Rene Garcia**