

**Alison Kershaw
Curriculum Vitae**

Born Oldham UK

Contact details

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I am artist, whose practice aims to challenge the boundaries of contemporary art practice. My practice involves working with people, places and situations where I am operating at various levels of creative direction, organisational structure and production. The questions that drive my practice are: What is the role of the artist in society today? Who can be an artist? What can art be? Why is art important and How might art interact with everyday life?

My strategy (being led by my instincts) has been to test how an artist might exist in spheres of life outside the art world such as: business, work-places, mental health; communities of interest, historic buildings; sailing or bird-watching. At the same time I strive to find ways to bring that work back to the contemporary art world in order to challenge its conceptions and make my mark in that space.

Some of my work has been about supporting individuals, creating networks or developing new organisations, with limited resources and over significant lengths of time, in order to activate art in supposedly insignificant or overlooked spaces - such as community centres, abandoned swimming pools or garden sheds and with those artists apparently excluded through mental ill health or other factors.

For example with the development of Pool Arts, I am working with a small band of artists inventing structures and rules together that are then inserted into the culture through formal registration as a company and a charity. Commissioners and collaborators have been Health Trusts, Heritage organisations and art agencies and galleries. Audiences are sometimes the participants in the work. Projects can be lengthy, ongoing and multi-layered in terms of my involvement.

The form of my practice manifests variously, from physical objects (such as a printed list on a scroll – or a collage) and installations (such as a Bird Song Juke Box in a psychiatric hospital) to the archived documentation of creating a new organisation - or developing exhibitions or events (such as a musical performance) in different environments.

I have also worked with more established artists, as a curator. Before the explosion of Arts and heritage initiatives, one of my main art projects since 2000 was as a self made “curator of contemporary arts” at the then derelict Victoria Baths, in Manchester, within a disused but much loved and palatial Edwardian swimming pool that was saved by the local community. Here I have intervened making opportunities to host both local and International Artists, encouraging them to respond to the architecture environment and social history of the place in a series of residencies and exhibitions. The baths is now semi-restored and still hosts occasional exhibitions.

Art Education:

2001 Manchester Metropolitan University MA (Art as Environment)

1985 Falmouth School of Art BA(HON) Fine Art (1st)

Selected Public Art Projects / Commissions

2015 *Your Name Here* Joshua Sofaer. Heart of Glass, St Helens (video workshops with elderly tenants)

2015 *The Storming* with Humberto Velez and St Lukes Art Project Cornerhouse Manchester

2013 *The All Singing All Dancing* (with Jonathan Raisin) – a musical performance written and performed with elderly tenants about the impact of technology throughout their lives . FACT / Tenantspin and Liverpool Mutual homes

2011 *Modern Nail Art* Grizedale Arts, Cumbria / Castlefield Gallery Manchester

2009-11

In Defence of Pigeons / Picnic / Bird Song Jukebox

Commissioned by FACT Liverpool. 4 interrelated projects: Installations and film for the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit. Mersey Care Trust

2010 *Secret Gardens and Car Wash Cultures*

Buddleia Research Commission: Cheetham Hill Manchester

2009 *Alison Kershaw's All New Abstract Nail Art* Anti-Freeze Manchester

2005 and 2009

International Pound World SHED gallery with Pool Arts

2004-2009 (ongoing)

SHED Gallery – collaboration with pool arts

2004 *HEART* (permanent text installation) – St Luke's Church Manchester (collaboration with poet Tess Lomas and artist Paul Jelen and the local community).

2002 *Well Loved* – Lit Sign for Victoria Baths, Manchester

Selected Curating / Production

2015 *A Dinner with Penny Arcade* (co-curated) with Pool Arts HOME Manchester

2015 *Dreaming of New York* Federation House Manchester / Horsfall Space Manchester (co curated) Pool Arts

2014 *UN-REST* at Victoria Baths (curator) 10 days programme of events and exhibition with William Tittle / Naomi Kendrick / Another Adele / Humberto Velez (Panama) / Ivan Capote (Cuba) / Bethany Cassidy /

2014 *Furiously Mad* (co curated Nicola Smith) Pool Arts – Peoples History Museum

2009 *ONE AND ALL / I dont Know About Community*
Castlefield Gallery (curator) inc Grennan and Sperandio, William Titley, Hafsah Naib, Joe Richardson(UHC) Jil Moore, Andrew Wilson, Jo Lewington

2008 *Stuck Cities* Ally Wallace, Victoria Baths (curator)

2007-9

I don't know about community networks but I know what I like (curator)
commissions by contemporary artists and exhibitions in community centres
across Manchester Commissioned by Community Network for Manchester

2007 *Pink and Blue* Pool Arts at The Elizabeth Gaskell House (co-curator with Pool Arts)

2006 *Victoria Baths Centenary Arts Programme* - Victoria Baths (curator and coordinator) with International Artists: Michael Pinsky, Neil Bromwich & Zoe Walker; Mishka Henner & Liz Locke.

2004 *For The Time Being / A Promise of Progress* – Victoria Baths (curator) - with advisors Pavel Buchler and Kerenza Hines and Jane Gant inc International Artists: HumbertoVelez, Tod Hanson, Claudia Pilsl, Joanna Karolini, Lizzie Hughes, Ellie Harrison, Paul Jelen

Selected Exhibitions

2015 *Dreaming of New York* Horsfall Space at 42nd St Manchester (co-curator + artist)

2015 *Group Therapy: Mental Distress in a Digital Age* FACT Liverpool (artist)

2014 *Furiously Mad* at People's History Museum, Manchester (co-curator and artist)

2014 *UN-REST* at Victoria Baths (curator and artist)

2011 *Knowledge Lives Everywhere*. FACT - Liverpool (PICU PICNIC commission, group show)

2005 *Nothing to Break Your Fall* – Victoria Baths, Manchester (Pool Arts show) (co-curator + Artist)

2003 *SWIM* – Victoria Baths Manchester (curator+artist)

2002 *The Cobweb Laboratory* – Holden Gallery, Manchester (curator+artist)

2002 *Bienamada (Well Loved)* – Victoria Baths, Manchester (artist+curator)

2001 *CAST* Holden Gallery, Manchester (MA group show)

2000 *Remember To Breathe*. Arts Council England Year of The Artist Residency at Victoria Baths with Pool Arts

- 2000** *A Bunch A' Rouses* St Helens Group Show
1996 "3" The Link Gallery. M.R.I, Manchester
1985 *NEW DIRECTIONS* Penwith Gallery St Ives, Cornwall .

Projects / Residencies / Commissions

2010-11

Artist: FACT/ Merseycare Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit

2010 Artist: Buddleia Projects in Public Space: Cheetham Hill, Manchester

2009 Curator *ONE AND ALL* – Castlefield Gallery, Manchester

2008 – 09

Curator: CommunityNetwork4Manchester / Culture Pool / *Dont Know About Community Networks, But I know What I Like*

2002 Curator / Artist: transition programme + VB Arts Victoria Baths Manchester.

1999 - now

Artist + development advisor: Pool Arts Manchester

1997 *Ingenious Creator* Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham. (Gallery Talk about "Outsider" Carl Pepløe)

1996 Artist / drawing tutor: The Arts on Prescription. Stockport

1995 King and Queen: gegant making project Melbourne Australia

1993 - now

Artist in Residence / coordination: St Lukes Art Project, Manchester

1985 – 88

Artist in Residence at Budock Hospital Falmouth + ARTSHARE

Publications and online

a-n http://www.air-artists.org/artists_talking/article/568548

a-n http://www.a-n.co.uk/artists_talking/projects/single/387542

blogs <http://www.indefenceofpigeons.blogspot.com/>

<http://atp08.blogspot.com/2008/01/alison-kershaw.html>

<http://www.carwashcultures.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.castlefieldgallery.co.uk/event/one-and-allcurated-by-alison-kershaw/>

<https://www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/i-dont-know-about-community>

<http://www.artplayer.tv/video/413/alison-kershaws-modern-nail-art-at-grizedale-arts-2011>

<http://www.corridor8.co.uk/online/review-the-storming-cornerhouse-manchester/>

<http://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/content/010468357-'300-years-legal-insanity'-exhibition-explores-history-mental-illness-around>

