

Transcript of interview with Samantha Emmons

I'm Samantha Emmons and I create work that's very organic using lot of oil paints, varnishes, and things I can get my hands on really – bits of thread, torn paper, recycled bits and pieces of packaging, and experiment with lots of materials and combine them all together to create abstract pieces of art that represent things in nature.

What drew you to that specific art form?

Well, I've always loved colour and using lots of different colours and using paint and mark making and making a mess really. And through my degree and my MA I learnt about a lot more about materials and I was always questioning why are you doing it? What is it about? What do you want the person looking at your piece of artwork to get? So I always wanted the person looking at it to maybe have their own inspiration to it as well so I like that fact of it being abstract so everybody has their own connection with it and their own thoughts about it and they can make it more personal to them really.

Whenever we do get a family come up, particularly the young kids are always mesmerised by your space. What inspires you?

I'm really inspired by the fact that nothing stays the same, that it's always changing, whether it be the world around us, the light of the day, minute by minute, the fact that you can't have a hold on anything for very long and I love the fact of looking at the little things in our world, the kind of... small things... the bee coming to get honey from a plant, the decay of a leaf, as well as the bigger picture, looking at our world from above and that sort of map-like effect and planets and cloud-forms. So bringing that macro and micro element of our ever-changing world together.

Why would you say the visual arts are important?

I think, because I'm a teacher as well so I have lots of pupils, the fact that you can give every pupil the same bit of inspiration and the same instrument or bit of media and everyone will come up with something really different. And that's inside us, and I think by doing that you are connecting with who you are as well as making something physical. I think it's really important, especially at the moment, where people did have a bit more time, just having that kind of connection. And I think it just takes your mind off of everything, when you start doing a drawing or a picture, making something with clay, suddenly time stops and you really focus on what you're doing and I think that bit of mindfulness is really lovely.

What advice would you have for someone who wants to become an artist?

Don't do it! No, honestly, it's great. I think you just need to try it. There are so many different materials and media out there to maybe what you did at school or that somebody is now using or discovered, technology brings out more things... I think just give things a go. There's loads out there on the internet, on social media, things like Pinterest... there's loads to choose from. But I think maybe it's having that bit of confidence as well. I often get people saying I don't know whether I can do it, and maybe having someone to join a class or a network of other people who want to do it... and I think having the same experience of being worried about making that mark on the paper, r making something, I think once you start doing it and seeing other people doing it, that hurdle's overcome and you can enjoy and play with anything. And there'll be something out there that you just find is you and you love doing. And there'll be lots that you don't like as well but until you do that I think it's important.

I think one of the best things about being upstairs [in the Resident Artists' studios], you see how broad visual art is and everyone is doing their own thing. It's really lovely to see.

And I think when you first start out you maybe don't know what your thing is so it's great to join classes where there's lots of different activities going on and people can say 'oh have you tried this? Could you try that?' And I think finding that out is great.

Finally, what are you working on at the moment?

I'm working on some pieces that are based on some walks to the beach. So lots of where the tide goes out and the marks that are left in the sand, the ripples of little bits of rock pools, bits of seaweed. So it was just inspired by the marks the water makes and again that's quite a... the tide going in and out is a symbol of change and maybe the beauty that's found in that. And that feeling of changing and moving that is beautiful, but it will come in and change again, and everything has another beauty to it. So looking at water.