



## Press Release

# Takahashi McGil and Emma Lawrenson: Balance and Form

24 June – 22 October 2023

YSP Centre

Yorkshire Sculpture Park's (YSP) latest exhibition *Balance and Form* will bring together the complementary practices of exquisite woodworkers, Takahashi McGil, and the intuitive printmaking talent of Holmfirth-based artist, Emma Lawrenson.

With Takahashi McGil based in Devon and Emma Lawrenson firmly rooted in Yorkshire, the traditional north south divide has been dismantled in this latest artistic collaboration. Lawrenson is an exceptionally gifted screenprint-maker, with lovely hand-drawn details combined with subtle colour. She takes inspiration from the rural Yorkshire landscape as well as artists such as Agnes Martin and the American Colour Field painters. Her minimal, abstract and understated style has picked up admirers around the world.

With a careful approach to form and space, Lawrenson creates a thoughtful and harmonious balance of colour, tone and shape. Her recent works are weighted

towards a hand drawn element, using a painstaking scraping and scratching method to produce differently textured surfaces within each print; sometimes working into them with white conté crayon or pencil. Each piece of work is hand printed and meticulously layered, built up little by little; a labour-intensive process that is testament to the artist's sincerity and craftsmanship. Lawrenson has an MA in printmaking from Royal College of Art and her work has been displayed in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition multiple times as well as in exhibitions across the UK and Europe. Her work is held in collections internationally and she has been commissioned by organisations including Faber & Faber, Netflix and NBC Universal.

Said Lawrenson: *"My work stems from observations made in my surrounding landscape; observations of shapes, spaces, textures and colours. These are initially recorded as photographs, small sketches or collages and undergo a series of fine-tuning once back in the studio before being translated into prints.*

*"Drawing goes hand in hand with the screen-printing process. Combining the two enables me to produce smooth, crisp images in which I can explore shape and form. My work has evolved over the past few years, as I have become increasingly drawn to the textures of the rural landscape which is part of my everyday life.*

*"I am very much inspired by surface; its patterns, textures, layers and colours. Recent works are weighted mainly towards a hand drawn element; scraping, scratching and combining different textural surfaces within each print. I strive to create something beautiful and understated in my work, and I have always been drawn to work that feels calm."*



Takahashi McGil and Emma Lawrenson. Photo © Red Photography, courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Amanda Peach, Retail Programme and Development Manager at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, said of Lawrenson: *“Emma trained under Richard Wilson and Anya Gallaccio and their minimalist aesthetic is evident in the work she creates today. The subtlety of her skill shines through in her printmaking, meticulously drawing stencils prior to the printing process and then hand rendering the finished print with conte crayons to add further detail.*

*“She understands her craft and excels in it, pushing the limits of the screen-printing method to the maximum to achieve technically precise works of art.”*

*As a local artist, Emma takes inspiration from the softness of the Yorkshire landscape which surrounds her. Shadows, shapes, and colours within each work communicate with the next, creating a poetic language which binds her work together.”*

Sharing the exhibition space with Lawrenson, is husband and wife team Kaori Takahashi and Mark McGilvray who work collaboratively on the creation of decorative vessels and functional homeware, all formed from locally sourced sustainable hardwoods. These are all created at their studio in Cockington, Devon.

Combining ancient Japanese traditions honed in Tokyo with Western techniques, the pair work in tandem to plane, chisel, turn, wax and lacquer the pieces. McGilvray works on the shape and form while Takahashi carves the surface, always celebrating the imperfections inherent in the materials used. Urushi lacquering, made from the sap of a tree, is a Japanese technique where several layers of lacquer are then applied within a warm and humid wooden chamber – often used to heighten the character and depth of a piece. This makes the wood waterproof as well as adding strength to each piece.

South African-born McGilvray and Takahashi, from Japan, both graduated in Fine Art at the Wimbledon School of Art. Though they started making simple pieces for themselves, their craft has now happily become their livelihood.

Said Takahashi McGilvray: *“We are both incredibly excited to be exhibiting in Yorkshire for the very first time and visiting this beautiful part of the country. YSP is an exceptional space and will form an amazing backdrop for our new body of work as well as Emma’s.*

They added: *“Most of tools we have are traditional Japanese hand tools but with a few traditional western tools. Working in this way gives us more control and allows us to create special features, both intentional and accidental, which makes every piece unique. Every single work has its own characteristics and working with green wood also adds character, as when the wood dries it naturally moves by itself. It’s a fascinating medium to work with that is forever changing.”*

YSP’s Amanda Peach added: *“There is something extremely satisfying about wood; the smell, feel, warmth it brings, the colours and strength it offers. Kaori Takahashi and Mark McGilvray create wooden vessels with a subtlety of form and complexity of surface, which highlights the versatility of this natural material.*

*“They hone their work from seasoned hardwoods and, more typically nowadays, from green wood locally sourced from near their Cockington Court studio in Devon. With sustainability at the forefront of their work, they are able to help manage the land by using wood which comes from the landscape in and around where they work.”*

Peach concludes: *“Both Emma Lawrenson and Takahashi McGil have a deep understanding and a breadth of knowledge and experience for the materials they choose to work with. They have created a body of work which can sit alongside each other in perfect harmony, and we are thrilled to showcase these talents at YSP.”*

**-ENDS-**



Takahashi McGill. Photo © Red Photography, courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.



Emma Lawrenson, *In The Sand*, 2023. Photo © Red Photography, courtesy the artist and Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

## Notes for Editors

### Press enquiries

Elise Hammond, Sutton / +44 (0)20 7183 3577 / [elise@suttoncomms.com](mailto:elise@suttoncomms.com)

Deborah Hastie / +44 (0)7799575558 / [deborah.hastie@yvsp.org.uk](mailto:deborah.hastie@yvsp.org.uk)

YSP Communications / +44 (0)1924 832 515 / [comms@yvsp.org.uk](mailto:comms@yvsp.org.uk)

Download images at [yvsp.org.uk/press](https://yvsp.org.uk/press)

### Listings information

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG

Near Wakefield and Barnsley – M1 Junction 38

+44 (0)1924 832631 | [yvsp.org.uk](https://yvsp.org.uk) | @YSPsculpture

Open seven days a week, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Booking essential, via [yvsp.org.uk](https://yvsp.org.uk)

### Social media

Instagram and Twitter: @YSPsculpture

Facebook: @YorkshireSculpturePark

LinkedIn: Yorkshire Sculpture Park

#ArtWithoutWalls #YSPSculpture

### About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture. Welcoming 380,000 visitors in 2022, YSP is an independent charitable trust and registered museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West Yorkshire.

Founded in 1977 by Sir Peter Murray CBE and since 2022 led by Clare Lilley, YSP is the largest sculpture park of its kind in Europe. It is the only place in Europe to see Barbara Hepworth's *The Family of Man* in its entirety, alongside a significant collection of sculpture, including bronzes by Henry Moore, important pieces by Phyllida Barlow, Roger Hiorns, Damien Hirst, Studio Morison, Hemali Bhuta and Ai Weiwei, and site-related works by Katrina Palmer, Andy Goldsworthy, Alfredo Jaar, David Nash, Sean Scully and James Turrell.

YSP mounts a year-round temporary exhibitions programme including some of the world's leading artists across six indoor galleries and the outdoors. Recent highlights include exhibitions by Fiona Banner, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Robert Indiana, Amar Kanwar, KAWS, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Annie Morris, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Sean Scully, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Chiharu Shiota, David Smith, Joana Vasconcelos, and Bill Viola.

Across its 45-year history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries, on varied projects from short-term residencies to major surveys. YSP supports artists at vital stages in their careers and is rare in having the accommodation, workshops and expertise to enable open-ended and risk-taking practice, giving artists space, time and support to think and to develop new ideas.

Over this time, YSP has sought to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar. It enables open access to art, situations and ideas, and continues to re-evaluate and expand the approach to considering art's role and relevance in society. Supporting 40,000 people each year through YSP's learning programme, this innovative work develops ability, confidence and life aspiration in participants.

YSP's core work is made possible by investment from Arts Council England, Wakefield Council, the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and Sakurako and William Fisher through the Sakana Foundation. YSP was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014 and awarded VisitEngland's gold accolade in 2021-22 for an

outstanding visitor attraction.

### **Creative Case for Diversity**

Yorkshire Sculpture Park was founded in 1977 to enable fairer cultural access and opportunity and we are committed to being part of change towards a fairer world. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form and are proactive in our programme, policies and behaviours to address inequalities locally, nationally and internationally. We recognise that economic, social and cultural disadvantage is complex and intersectional and shape our activity accordingly. Diversity and equality are crucial to the arts because they release the true potential of our nation's artistic talent – from every background. At YSP, we support Arts Council England's mission – great art and culture for everyone. We share ACE's commitment to promote and embed diversity in our workforce and cultural programme. This is called the 'Creative Case for Diversity'.



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