

S O F A
ART & DESIGN
NEW YORK

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RUTHIN CRAFT CENTRE

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The Galleries at Ruthin Craft Centre are Wales' premier space for generating monograph and survey exhibitions, by the very best contemporary applied artists from both Wales, the UK and beyond.

SOFA New York 2012, marks the return of Ruthin Craft Centre to the SOFA stage following our previous attendance at the Chicago events during 2003 – 2006. This will however, be our first time exhibiting at the New York show.

For 2012 Ruthin Craft Centre will be exhibiting the work of 2 of Wales' most eminent applied art/craft artists:

Eleri Mills – Textile/ fibre art
Walter Keeler – Saltglaze Ceramics

Eleri Mills is a maker that takes Wales with her wherever she goes. Eleri's work magically conjures landscape and the enduring history and feel of place, time and myth, using stitch and pigment. Eleri is the recent recipient of an Arts Council of Wales 'Creative Wales Ambassador' Award. These awards are made by nomination and bring together a Wales based host with an international partner to afford the award recipient time for explorative practice, exposure and support simultaneously. As such, February/March 2012 sees Eleri as visiting artist at Columbia University, New York and subsequently linking in to the SOFA New York event where Eleri will also be presenting a booth talk during the event – Roots & Stitch – A Threaded History

"My instinct has always been to embrace both painting and textile traditions without having to conform to either. While the act of drawing is central to all my work, I delight in the raw beauty of all my materials - whether they are fabric, thread, paint or paper. The content of my work is my main concern, and while the processes have varied and evolved over the years, the subject matter has always been consistently influenced by the landscape of mid Wales and the glorious Bardic tradition of Wales".

Alongside Eleri's evocative wall pieces, visitors to SOFA will be treated to the functional ceramic ware of **Walter Keeler**, who is undertaking a lecture tour of the U.S. culminating at NCECA 2012. A professor in ceramics, Walter is renowned internationally for his contribution to contemporary studio pottery. His work reflects a deep-rooted interest in traditions of pottery from the past and illustrates the integral values of functionality and form. Walter's distinctive saltglaze range celebrates material and process and belies his aim to create "an extraordinary object to do a commonplace job."

"The pottery tradition is at the heart of all my work. Pottery has been central to all settled human communities. Seldom merely functional, it has been a vehicle for expression and the fulfilment of delight in the pleasure of handling a sensual and incredibly versatile material; the useful bound up with the intellect and the imagination.

I discovered pottery as a boy, becoming intimate with fragments of ancient pots picked up on the beaches of the Thames in London. They infiltrated my mind and senses, giving me an insight to the syntax of thrown pottery; a sense of what is authentic, which I only understood as I gained experience in the craft.

So my work is informed by my passion for pots from the past, but also by making and firing, and the world and times in which I live. Sometimes I make simple useful things like mugs or jugs; on other occasions my work is less straightforward, making demands, even challenging the user to negotiate with an unexpected pot to do an ordinary job. I hope my pottery brings with its seriousness, some humour and sensual pleasure".

Ruthin Craft Centre's presence at this year's event will showcase and highlight the vast and diverse wealth of Applied Art and Craft that can be found within the many galleries throughout Wales.

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Ruthin Craft Centre

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