



THE Divine 9

COLLECTIVE

PREVIEW
Sat 10th Jan 2-4pm
ALL WELCOME

www.thedivine9.co.uk
EXHIBITION & CREATIVE PROGRAMME
January 10th - February 8th 2026



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WELCOME TO THE DIVINE 9

OVER the past six months, I've had the absolute privilege of working with eight incredible artists on a mentoring journey that was anything but gentle.

They've shown up, dug deep, wobbled, laughed, cried (*in a good way*), pushed past their comfort zones, and grown not just in skill, but in confidence, ambition, and the courage to let their true artistic voice loose in the world.

Each one brings something entirely their own — different backgrounds, different stories, different ways of seeing — coming together in a glorious mix of painting, textiles, ceramics, sculpture, and reimagined furniture that shows just how rich and brilliantly diverse Ayrshire creativity is.

What began as a programme has become a proper community — one that listens, learns, nudges, supports, and lifts each other when needed. The work you'll see here is bold, heartfelt, and beautifully individual, just like the artists who made it.

Alongside the exhibition, we're delighted to offer an inclusive Creative Programme with short, welcoming taster workshops for everyone — the perfect chance to try something new and unleash your own creativity.

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate nine artists, one extraordinary journey, and the place we proudly call home.

I give you The Divine 9.





GILLIAN PARK

How would you describe your style to someone seeing your work for the first time?

Fast & Loose! Bold, colourful with lots of movement and energy - joyful.

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

Oh following on from the previous question - joy, memories, uplifted.

Is there a story or memory behind your current collection?

My D9 collection is ALL about the memories of chairs and being reimagined, becoming a piece of art in themselves instead of overlooked and stuck in a corner.

If you could give your younger self one piece of creative advice, what would it be?

Be yourself - don't try to fit in and stop trying to please.

Tell us about your studio space — is it calm, chaotic, or somewhere in between?

Jeez - TOTAL CHAOS! There are easels, 1m oil paintings, vintage chairs, standard lamps, fabric, fabric and more fabric, sketchbooks piled high ... and of course, the pigs.

If you could collaborate with any artist (past or present), who would it be and why?

Joan Eardley ... no brainer. But Dali would be fun!



Who would play you in the movie of your life:

A hybrid mix of Melissa McCarthy & Helena Bonham Carter - a good laugh with good hair!

CAROLINE DYET

Is there a story or memory behind your current collection?

The Ayrshire coastline often appears in my work, but this collection was sparked by an art retreat to Arran earlier this year which brought back fond childhood memories of family holidays and trips along the coast. These joyful feelings and places have shaped my D9 paintings.

How has being part of The Divine 9 influenced your work or confidence?

Being part of a group of like minded female artists has been confidence boosting. When 'imposter syndrome' creeps in there's always a friendly encouraging voice to keep you going.

If you could give your younger self one piece of creative advice, what would it be?

I'd tell my younger self to keep a sketchbook and play in it more. I always take one on holiday or when I'm off exploring in my motorhome, and it's become an important part of how I create. Even now, I'm reminding myself to experiment more, to loosen up, try new things, and discover fresh ways of making marks.

What does being an artist mean to you, in one line?

For me, being an artist means I'm finally following a lifelong dream.



What's your go-to studio snack or guilty pleasure?

A bowl of plain crisps with tomato sauce drizzled over them (delish, you can thank me later!)





LESLEY HERD

Where do you find your inspiration — or does it sneak up on you?

Anything which catches my attention inspires me, but mainly the sea, rivers and the surrounding landscape. I'm inspired by the history of the landscape – the geology of a place, the erosion of natural and manmade materials by the elements, the natural decay of things over time.

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

As an abstract artist, I hope people feel emotionally connected in some way - and to notice tiny details – the collaged text, the pop of unexpected colour, the layered history within the work which provide intrigue and surprise.

Who or what has had the biggest influence on your creative journey?

That's an easy one! Both artists and educators, Gillian Park and Louise Fletcher have been a huge influence on my artistic development. Both have encouraged me to paint for myself, to be bold and courageous with techniques, and confident in my own skin and for that, I cannot thank them enough!

If you could collaborate with any artist (past or present), who would it be and why?

I really enjoy the Cornish artist, David Mankin's work and would jump at the chance to collaborate! His use of storytelling within his work with collage and marks is sublime!



What's your go-to studio snack or guilty pleasure?

I don't eat much when I work but my guilty pleasure is chocolate. I love a bit of salted dark chocolate!

SUE HOWATT

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

I hope they pause for a moment and look a little closer — that they realise there's more going on than they first thought. Intrigued by how it was created, wondering about my process or just completely drawn in by the colours.

If you could give your younger self one piece of creative advice, what would it be?

Don't chase every shiny new creative fad or feel you need every art supply ever made. You don't have to own it all to explore it! My imagination, my hands, and a bit of curiosity were all I really needed.

Who or what has had the biggest influence on your creative journey?

The realisation that you don't need to stick to one technique or medium in a piece of work. Once that clicked, everything opened up. Yes it has to hang together visually but I love the freedom of experimenting so it feels cohesive, intriguing, successful and a little bit different.

What does being an artist mean to you, in one line?

Absolutely everything — I've found my thing, I trust my wonderfully chaotic process, I've found my happy place (so I'm sticking with it).



If your art had a catchphrase, what would it be?

*Step away from the canvas when you're 95% there!
I'm a serial overworker - I never know when to stop!*





MORVEN HOWELL

Is there a story or memory behind your current collection?

All of the paintings in this collection have been painted (or started) en-plein air. This is a new experience for me. I wanted to explore what difference it made to my work painting in the landscape - it's inspirational. I see colours and tones that are just lost in photographs and working quickly with no time to overthink.

If you could give your younger self one piece of creative advice, what would it be?

Paint what excites you and don't listen to anyone who tells you that there is anything more important than doing what you love.

If you could collaborate with any artist (past or present), who would it be and why?

Kurt Jackson. He paints en plein air transporting the viewer right into the landscape with him. His pieces are full of energy and evoke the muddle and disorganisation of nature. It would be a complete dream to join forces with him!

What does being an artist mean to you, in one line?

It means giving myself permission to do something that I completely love, without it having to mean any more than that. I really hope that I can share some of that love with you in this collection.



What's your go-to studio snack or guilty pleasure?

I love shortbread so a small stockpile of the homemade sort is perfect to fuel creativity.

DEBRA INGHAM-BARROW

How would you describe your style to someone seeing your work for the first time?

This collection I would describe as Graphic and colourful, almost design-like. I'm really enjoying working in this way with a limited palette in these juicy bold colours and stylised shapes. I love to experiment with different approaches in my art.

Where do you find your inspiration — or does it sneak up on you?

I find inspiration from the natural world. For this collection my inspiration came from my garden, surrounded by the most glorious trees.

How has being part of The Divine 9 influenced your work or confidence?

I have loved being part of the Divine 9. It hasn't always been easy because I don't want to let the other artists down, but this experience will definitely influence how I create in the future and collaborating with other artists.

If you could give your younger self one piece of creative advice, what would it be?

Just get started - do something to get you going, even tiny baby steps to feel that sense of progress ... and then don't stop!



What's your go-to studio snack or guilty pleasure?

When I'm working I get lost in my art and don't eat but my guilty pleasure is art materials





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ELIZABETH LAWSON

What first got you hooked on making art?

I picked up a paintbrush in 2018, at one of Gillian's workshops, not long after retiring from a career using a whole other part of my brain! Painting opened up a whole new world of joy and colour. What was an experiment quickly became a passion that's now part of my everyday life.

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

I hope people feel an instant attraction. If a piece lifts them, moves them and creates a connection strong enough that they want it in their life, then that means as much to me as it does to them.

How has being part of The Divine 9 influenced your work or confidence?

Divine 9 has given me the opportunity to redefine my limits. I've ventured into completely uncharted territory which I simply could not have done without the support of Gillian and the group. It's been fabulous to explore and collaborate, to blur the boundaries and pursue ideas beyond the canvas.

If you could collaborate with any artist (past or present), who would it be and why?

Canadian artist Danielle O'Connor Akiyama who brings together eastern and western influences in her vibrant, impressionistic art.



What would your alter-ego artist name be?

Violeta Bloom .. and if I had to choose one colour to paint forever ... Purple of course!



LOUISA MAESTRANZI

What first got you hooked on making art?

Probably the sheer pleasure of throwing paint at an easel when I was three years old. I then discovered the joy of making stuff and I miss it if I'm not creating.

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

Curiosity. The subject matter in my art is not obvious but it is full of energy. You will see rough and controlled marks, split forms, translucence and opacity. It's the sheer joy of finding what art materials can do when you get to play with them.

Tell us about your studio space — is it calm, chaotic, or somewhere in between?

I feel calm despite being in the middle of a very chaotic space. Almost everything has its place but I keep bringing in new tools and materials so it's becoming a bit piled up.

If you could only paint in one colour for a year, which would you choose?

Aquamarine, it is such a calming colour but I would find it almost impossible to not chuck in few contrasting oranges and hot pinks.

What does being an artist mean to you, in one line?

Being an artist means I can be me.



What's your go-to studio snack (or guilty pleasure)?

Herbal tea and ginger nut biscuits. I really try to limit myself to two biscuits ... really I do

JANELLE PATON

What would you like someone seeing my art for the first time to feel?

I would hope that they would see I had my own impressionistic style and pick up on the emotion in my work, especially in my portraits.

What do you hope people feel when they stand in front of your art?

I hope that people feel when they stand in front of my work that they connect at an emotional level hopefully provoking feelings that inspire curiosity again particularly with my portraiture. With the animals I hope they get a sense of movement and power behind each piece.

Who or what has had the biggest influence on your creative journey?

Has to be Christian Hook! I love his style and diversity in both human & animals. How he is able to get such a likeness to his subject then he obliterates part of his paintings to leave it up to the viewer to fill in. That is going to be my goal in the future.

What does being an artist mean to you, in one line?

Being an artist to me has to be the joy of creating, learning - art, painting and creating takes me to my happy place.



Who would play you in the movie of your life:

Melissa McCarthy just because chaos just always seems to find me



The background of the entire advertisement is a close-up, artistic photograph of various paintbrushes and splatters of paint in shades of yellow, orange, red, and blue. The paint is thick and textured, with some brushes showing bristles and others just the tips. The overall effect is one of creative energy and professional skill.

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THE DIVINE 9

CREATIVE PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 10TH JAN
2-4PM

EXHIBITION PREVIEW - All welcome!
Join us in the Gallery for a fizz and creative celebration!

SUNDAY 11TH JAN
10AM - 12PM

MAKE IT, LIGHT IT, LOVE IT - £60
Gillian Park - *Lampshade making workshop*

SUNDAY 11TH JAN
1PM - 3.30PM

LANDSCAPES IN GOUACHE - £40
Sue Howat - *With a twist of Indian Ink resist*

SATURDAY 24TH JAN
10AM - 12.30PM

TREESCAPES IN CHARCOAL - £40
Morven Howell - *Capture the character of trees in charcoal*

SATURDAY 24TH JAN
1.30PM - 4PM

ADVENTUROUS ABSTRACTS - £40
Louisa Maestranzi - *An introduction to creating abstract art*

SATURDAY 31ST JAN
10AM - 12.30PM

PAINTING THE TIDE - £40
Caroline Dyet - *A seascape acrylic taster workshop*

SATURDAY 31ST JAN
1.30PM - 4PM

FOLD & FLOW - £40
Lesley Herd - *Create an abstract concertina sketchbook*

EMAIL: HELLO@THEDIVINE9.CO.UK TO BOOK

ALL EVENTS WILL BE HELD IN THE BARONY, WEST KILBRIDE
WATCH OUT FOR MEET THE ARTIST EVENTS - RELEASED IN JANUARY



Sun 11th Jan 10.30am-12.30pm
MAKE IT, LIGHT IT, LOVE IT
Gillian Park

You'll create your own 30cm lampshade using my new sumptuous fabrics in whatever design or colour you fancy (*I'll give you a wee nudge in early January to choose which you'd like for your lamp*).

Everything's included — fabric, shade kit, some bloomin gorgeous trims — all you need to bring is yourself and a pair of scissors
 Suitable for everyone!

Sun 11th Jan 1-3.30pm
LANDSCAPES IN GOUACHE
Sue Howat

Come & enjoy a creative afternoon making a small landscape & bookmark exploring one of Sue's favourite techniques — Gouache and Indian ink resist giving a printerly and unexpected result.

All materials will be provided

This workshop is perfect for beginners and for artists looking to add a new skill to their practice.



Sat 24th Jan 10am-12.30pm
TREESCAPES IN CHARCOAL
Morven Howell

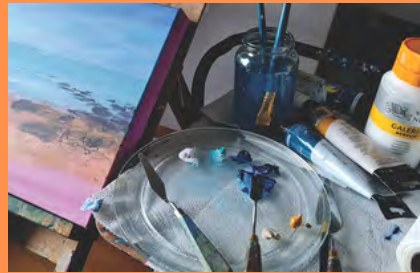
Join me in exploring Treescapes in Charcoal. All materials will be provided - you need only enthusiasm and a willingness to explore something new. I'll provide step-by-step demonstrations and personalized feedback, and by the end of the workshop you'll leave with a beautiful treescape artwork.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with nature through art
 Suitable for complete beginner or more experienced artists

WORKSHOPS SUITABLE FOR ALL LEVELS - UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY

Sat 24th Jan 1.30-4pm
ADVENTUROUS ABSTRACTS
Louisa Maestranzi

Adventurous Abstracts will allow you to follow your intuition to create visually dynamic abstract art. This will be an afternoon of experimentation, new approaches and ideas which you can bring to your own art practice. Suitable for experienced artists looking for new inspiration and those beginning their artistic journey.



Sat 31st Jan 10am-12.30pm
PAINTING THE TIDE
Caroline Dyet

An Acrylic Taster Workshop
Discover the joy of painting with acrylics in this relaxed, beginner-friendly taster session.

With step-by-step guidance, you'll explore various techniques, pick up helpful hints and tips, and learn how to build depth, colour, and movement in your artwork.

By the end, you'll have your very own West Coast seascape to take home and enjoy.

Sat 31st Jan 1.30-4pm
FOLD AND FLOW
Lesley Herd

Unleash your creativity – squiggle, splash and play to make an abstract concertina sketchbook. Working freely on a large piece of paper using a variety of tools and media, we will play with shape, texture and colour using the finished piece to create a mini concertina sketchbook.

Includes all materials and a variety of tools, but feel free to bring along any tools or paint/drawing media you enjoy - anything that makes a mark is welcome!



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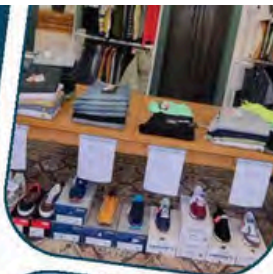
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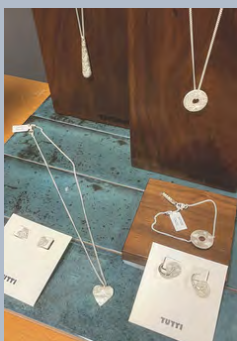
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