



## MEDIA RELEASE FOR APRIL 2024

Double Take is an exhibition of recent work by three artists with strong bonds to East Anglia: James Evans, Susan Gunn and Tassie Russell. The exhibition coincides with Norfolk and Norwich Festival, running from Friday 10 to 24 May 2024, at The Crypt Gallery, Cathedral Close, Norwich NR1 4DD

**FREE ENTRY | OPENING TIMES:** Monday – Friday 11am – 5pm | Saturday 11am – 4pm | CLOSED Sunday

Double Take comprises work by three artists with strong bonds to Suffolk and Norfolk: sculptor, James Evans; painter, Susan Gunn; and painter, printmaker, and photographer Tassie Russell. The quality of their work draws the viewer in, encouraging us to look closer and overturn our assumptions, exploring the familiar as locations for ambiguity.

The idea that there is nothing more deceptive than certainty, is not new. These three artists prove the point using their considerable skills to make accomplished art that vacillate between initial appearance and more covert qualities that become evident upon further inquiry.

Sculptor **James Evans** has been navigating variants in his ceramic forms for several decades now. He uses surface textures, glazes, and firing techniques like Saggar to bring incident to folds and hollows in his sculpture. They could at first glance be interpreted as flint, tendon, bone, cast iron, or soft tissue. And yet they are none of these materials. He has developed transfers applied with such delicacy to the surface of a trunk or torso shape that they read as tattooed skin or a bruised limb.

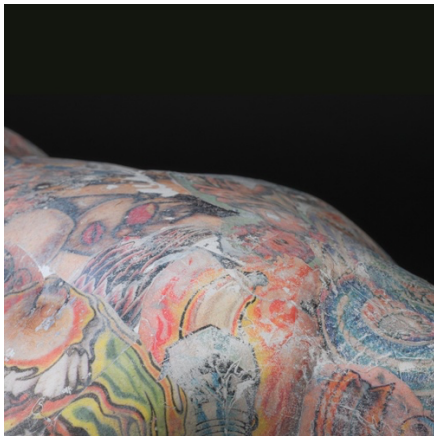
Painter **Susan Gunn** has created painted surfaces scattered with physical incident in canvas after canvas. Using a variety of techniques that include gesso, and mineral pigments that lay down their surfaces laced with delicate hairline breaks across an otherwise immaculate plain, their apparent fragility creates an emotional resonance for the viewer. The tension Susan creates between the precise control of her painted surfaces with these moments of vulnerability, set them apart.

**Tassie Russell's** striking photographs of interiors in this exhibition are deceptive both in terms of what they depict, as well as how they inform her work as an established painter and printmaker. Her photographs in Double Take are interiors, but there is something amiss in how they read. The architectural space that fills each frame, does not quite make sense. Unobservant viewers could easily dismiss these beautifully composed images depicting the trappings of an English country house for exactly what they seem. However, appearances can be deceptive. The photographs are of a magnificent Georgian Doll's House. Each room is a time capsule of what was 'of the moment' in English interiors during the late eighteenth century, reproduced in large black and white prints and smaller colour compositions.

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## MORE ABOUT THE ARTISTS

We have selected recent work for The Crypt Gallery, Norwich by three artists whose work is highly skilled, built around specialised production processes to take into consideration, that will sit well together, displayed in this small, yet perfectly formed building that saw the establishment of Norwich School. Their work will provide opportunities for visitors, young and not so young, to be engaged by their expertise in an exhibition that runs alongside the Norwich and Norfolk Festival. The materials and techniques used by them shall appeal to seasoned art lovers as well as non-art or 'new' audiences. Each of the artists is highly regarded in what they do, leaders in their field. Each are known for creating work that is accessible on several levels in terms of content, yet their work requires the viewer to question what they are seeing. James Evans lives and works in North Norfolk, spending part of the year in France. Susan Gunn used to live and work in Norwich and still has ties to the city, although she now lives and works in Salford, Manchester. Tassie Russell lives and works on the Suffolk coast, near Aldeburgh.

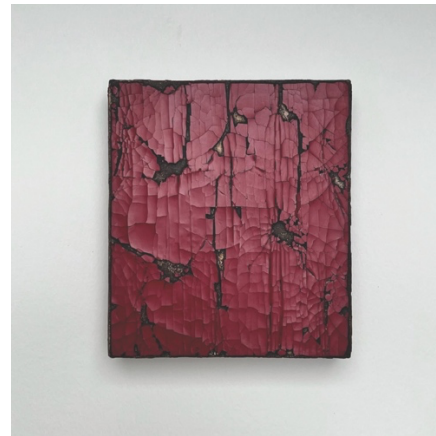


**James Evans** ceramic works can be enjoyed on a variety of levels, limited only by the viewer's willingness to loosen the strictures of material, artistic, and even social hierarchy. Evans' sculptures, despite their high sheen and glamorous gloss, are always imbued with a humanistic imperfection which contributes greatly to their genality.

James offers up ergonomic bulges and creases that reciprocate manual touch and suggest some purposely ambiguous use. The interplay between function and form has characterised Evans' work for many years.

James Evans studied at Ipswich School of Art, to be a graphic designer. He followed this by doing a BA Honours degree in ceramics at Central St. Martins in London. The work completed on the course led to a full scholarship to study at Colorado University in Boulder, USA.

James has exhibited internationally, he has work in the collection of the V&A Museum and was shortlisted for the prestigious Jerwood Applied Arts Prize 2001 and the Arts Foundation Fellowship in 2004. He grew up in Suffolk, lived in South London for many years and moved his studio to North Norfolk. (Photography © Valerie Bernardini)



**Susan Gunn's** paintings reveal a sculptural physicality that embody a tacit strength and fragility. Gunn explores a historical technique of building layers of gesso, incorporating an organic binder with natural earth and mineral pigments and base substances such as chalk, coal, and marble dust. Cracks and fissures, typically considered a defect in the gesso surface, are induced in the work during the curing process.

Susan studied Fine Art Painting at Norwich University of the Arts and was an inaugural member of Contemporary British Painting group. Her studio is based in Salford, Greater Manchester. Susan has exhibited widely over many years and held solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. Her work is held in several public and private collections around the world including Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, the Norwich University of the Arts, Rollo Contemporary, The Fine Art Society, Bo.lee gallery, and The Royal Academy, London.



**Tassie Russell** is best known for large canvases with subdued colour and nuanced use of geometric form. Travel for Russell, as for many artists, is the impetus for new work. Reflecting her interest in painters who move back and forth between the figurative and the non-figurative, like Richard Diebenkorn, Tassie searches constantly for compelling compositions of architectural space. The inspiration may be a building or a landscape, but the solution is always achieved by a lengthy reworking in the studio.

As a photographer, Tassie still uses a medium format film camera together with a selection of specially constructed pinhole cameras to photograph forgotten domestic interiors and abstracted elements in the landscape.

Tassie studied painting at the University of Kingston, cultural history at the Royal College of Art, postgraduate printmaking at the Slade School and photography at St Martins College of Art. She works from her painting and printmaking studio in Suffolk.

#### DOWNLOAD IMAGES USING LINK BELOW

<https://we.tl/t-zVtRV5vuji>



## NOTES TO THE EDITOR

Contemporary and Country (C&C) present contemporary and applied art by artists and makers based in the east of England in pop-up exhibitions celebrating our rural surroundings.

C&C work with artists and makers inspired by their environment who use sustainable natural materials in their production process. Many live and work in rural areas, the villages, and small towns of East Anglia. They bring about a closer understanding of the countryside and reveal how their surroundings influence their creative thinking.

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