



Developing Art and Audio Interactivity

Alastair Duncan

Originally trained in tapestry weaving and design at Cleveland College of Art, Alastair moved to Wales in 1983 where he established a studio in Swansea's Maritime Quarter. He went on to develop his professional practice completing numerous major commissions for the corporate, private and public sectors with clients such as the Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Banks, City and County of Swansea, Monmouthshire County Council and many more. He has exhibited widely in the UK and Europe.

My work uses the traditional techniques and materials of tapestry weaving and also steel (wire, rods, mesh) plus conductive thread and sensors. See my website and CV at www.alastair-duncan.com and www.alastair-duncan.com/sound-and-weave

Project Proposal

Context

During the past three years I have been developing the integration of audio to my tapestry weaving. In 2018 I received an Arts Council of Wales Research and Development grant as well as an award from the Theo Moorman Charitable Trust towards the development of my work in this area.

I was invited to exhibit a large interactive woven tapestry with the British Tapestry Group exhibition "Sound and Weave" which toured to Scotland, England and Wales and following this I have been invited to show this tapestry and other new work in group exhibitions in Northern England, Nottingham and London. I have also been invited to give a solo exhibition in Sunbury-on-Thames, London in the Summer of 2020 (26th July - 2nd August).

An important aspect of the inclusion of audio in my work is that the means of activating it should encourage the audience to interact with it and that, to a degree, this should allow an element of creativity. The challenge is to find suitable means of prompting interaction with art work that normally forbids the audience to touch it.

A section of the audience for my exhibition in Sunbury-on-Thames will be people with a wide range of disabilities, including visual impairment. This is not necessarily relevant but it is important to me that the potential techniques, design and structures of my work that uses audio interactivity make it accessible to everyone. This includes the audio content as well as the mechanics and electronics of integration to the work.

Proposal

Having worked in the past with Disability Arts Cymru and other related organisations, I would like to consult or collaborate with any interested artists registered with DAC and others further afield, with a view to finding appropriate solutions to the challenges described above. I am also very keen to explore the audio world from different people's viewpoints and experiences. This could include audio interpretation of an artist's work.

Experienced in helping others to interpret the world in audio terms, I am particularly interested in field recording and also voice recording and enjoy experimenting with and manipulating sound in order to achieve the results I am looking for.

If any artists registered with Disability Arts Cymru or anywhere else are interested in discussing the possibilities for working with me over a period of time within the next year, I would be very pleased to meet them. Meeting may be virtual if that is more practical or convenient - i.e. Skype or FaceTime.

Aims

- The primary aim of this project is to **produce and exhibit new interactive woven tapestries for exhibition** where the audio element of the work is both relevant to the themes of the individual tapestries/artworks and **accessible to the audience** in its terms of engagement, both practical and creative.
- The works, varying in size, will **prompt the audience to become part of the creative aspect of the work** - the design, both visual and aural, and the means of interaction. Different levels of individual creativity will be made available in each work through techniques of practical accessibility and the audio produced.
- Currently booked exhibitions will take place in 2020 and through collaborating with DAC and artists with a range of disabilities from Wales and the UK I will **curate an exhibition of work carried out by artists participating in the project** to take place in Wales and the UK.

Objectives

- Deliver regular **consultative / collaborative meetings and workshops with artists** with a range of disabilities focusing on the use of sound as an integral or interpretive aspect of the work - both my own work and that of the participating artists.
- **Workshops** will be regularly carried out throughout the project period **with participating artists and other interested groups enquiring about the project** - workshops may be done at the group's location (if extra travel and material costs can be covered).
- Workshop guidance will be produced with the **potential to deliver the content remotely or online**.
- Encourage participating disabled artists to **produce new work for exhibition** as a result of the consultative and collaborative approach to the project and **approach galleries in Wales and the UK with a view to booking group exhibitions** of the new work produced.

Benefits

- Developing new interactive tapestries by working in consultation and collaboration with artists with a range of disabilities will **help me to understand some of the issues that may be experienced by anyone viewing and engaging with the works** produced.
- **Improved understanding of designing** with different materials and techniques in a world where technology can create a disconnection from society and the environment but **which could be used to improve our recognition of interconnection with our surroundings**.
- Working on audio interpretations of work by and with other artists as a means of exploring and **learning how audio may effectively be used as a means of abstract communication** will be valuable to the development of my own audio and tapestry weaving and also the work of the collaborating artists.
- **Through exhibition and workshops**, included tapestries/artworks will introduce the audience to different ways of listening and perceiving sound; texture, colour, shape, form and more will be explored. The tactile nature of both weaving and audio will be experienced and investigated with a view to **developing a better understanding of the interconnection of all aspects of a natural or built environment**.
- **Workshops arranged to accompany exhibitions will be a good opportunity to put into practice some of the insights gained from working with artists with a range of disabilities**. Feedback from workshop participants will provide further information on how best to address the challenges of interactivity and engagement.
- **The audience will be increased for creative interactive participation** in artworks.
- **Improve exhibiting and promotional opportunities for disabled artists**.

Timescale

The first exhibition in 2020 where workshops will be carried out is in May. There will also be workshops specifically for disabled groups and the visually impaired during the solo exhibition at Sunbury-on-Thames between June and August 2020. The third exhibition in 2020 takes place in October.

Opportunities for new exhibitions featuring artists with disabilities will be sought throughout 2020 and 2021.

The workshops and exhibitions will form part of the learning experience of the project and an evaluation of the project will be made following these exhibitions and workshops.

The timescale for the project is therefore from September/October 2019 after first meeting with disabled artists with Disability Arts Cymru, to November/December 2020 after the end of the third exhibition - this equates to 15 months work. Work will continue to develop after this time but by this stage it is expected that new work will be created with a much higher level of understanding of how best to integrate sound and weave in ways that will encourage a wide audience to take part and engage creatively with the work.

Funding/Donations

The time required during the project period to investigate, consult, collaborate, develop and produce new work as well as manage and administer the project, is anticipated to be 4 - 5 working days per week. Experience tells me to expect more hours than this to be required.

I am therefore looking for full time funding for this project and hope that this can be achieved over the duration of the project which will require between £22,000 and £32,000 or between £1500 and £2000 per month. This amount will cover materials, travel, development of weaving and audio production, workshop costs, and administration.

Funding will also be required to allow the project to pay participating disabled artists, thus addressing the costs incurred by them for such things as materials, exhibiting expenses, travel, etc. and for which they would otherwise need to raise their own funds.

Recurring donations can be cancelled at any time, or indeed, they may be increased or decreased as desired. This is controlled by the donor via the donations button.

Incentives/Rewards

Those who support this project through donations will be able to follow the progress of the work on a regular basis. Updates and images will be published on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) and I will be starting a new blog or vlog on my website in order to document the developing work.

Rewards - Tapestries and other work is also available as rewards for your support. This means that if you support the project to a value equal to the price of a piece of my work, you will be able to ask for that work to be your reward for support. Prices range from £250 - £20,000 and commissions are also welcome.

Availability of work is limited. Currently available work can be seen on the tapestry weaving, print and photography pages of my website (www.alastair-duncan.com) along with prices. All tapestries are "one-offs" and will not be repeated. However, if you would like a tapestry "along the lines of" an unavailable work such as the small tapestries mounted or suspended on steel mesh, I will be happy to produce these. Larger tapestries will need to be commissioned and inevitably there will be a waiting time for these as the "Sound Weave" project will take precedence.

The current "Sound and Weave" tapestries are also available but will not be delivered until after the project has been completed. This, however, allows regular donations to build up your purchase fund and spread the cost over a maximum of 16 months. The tapestry(ies) desired to be bought in this way must be named in advance so that they can be made unavailable to others and a full record of this and payments made will of course be held by both parties. For commissioned work, a commission agreement will be provided.

Example donations - one-off or recurring donations of any amount are welcome, anything from £5/\$5/€5 to as much as you like. While a smaller tapestry costing £250 could be paid as a one-off donation or would take a regular monthly payment of £25 over 10 months, larger and more expensive works such as "INTERCONNECTION" or commissions at higher costs would obviously require higher donations.

NB See Terms and Conditions regarding large/interactive works.

Terms and Conditions

1. **All funds raised will be used to finance the project** - these include but are not restricted to the following:

- material and equipment for design, weaving and audio production for exhibition

- workshop expenses
- travel
- insurance
- studio costs
- administration
- liaison/consultation/collaboration
- production time and subsistence

2. Donations can be for any amount.

- Donations may be regularly or irregularly recurring - i.e. you may make donations more than once but not necessarily on a regular basis.
- Recurring donations can be made as frequently as the donor wishes and can be for any amount.
- Recurring donations can be cancelled at any time.
- Recurring donations can also be increased or decreased at any time.

3. Your donations safeguard

For all donations, either as a one-off or recurring payment, I will provide you with a guarantee that your money is being used for the sole use of the project. As part of this you will be provided with a breakdown of the project activities, management, research and production time and expenses as the project progresses.

4. Rewards

- Artworks by Alastair Duncan in the form of woven tapestries, digital prints, photographic prints, digital images or digital image collections are available on request by donors.
- Rewards requested in any of the above media must not have a value above that of donor's level of donation in accordance with the price shown for the works. This must include the cost of postage and packing and where appropriate, P&P insurance.
- Prices for available works are on the website www.alastair-duncan.com
- Rewards requested will be dispatched at the earliest convenience (usually within 24 - 48 hours - extra time may be necessary for larger items or items being sent internationally).
- Items being sent internationally may require an extra level of funding due to potential customs costs.
- Requested rewards that are currently booked for exhibition will be made unavailable to others and dispatched to the donor soon after the events they are booked for. **NB** This likely to be after November 2020.
- A reward may be requested in advance of the donor's donation value achieving the level at which the reward can be made. This relies on the donor making regular donations at a rate and regularity that will achieve the required level within the period of the project - i.e. by end November 2020. **NB** If the donor cancels donations before the value level is reached for the requested reward, the reward will again be made available to other donors.

5. Large works

- Large and/or interactive tapestries may require installation (especially if the audio element is required). Instructions and assistance (virtual) will be provided but physical assistance may also be required - this can be arranged at additional cost.

Contact/Help

Alastair Duncan

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FaceTime/Text/Phone: (44)(0)7887 906236

Also Facebook Messenger and the contact form on the - website www.alastair-duncan.com/contact