



PILLOW TALK

conversations with women

SOUTH LONDON WOMEN ARTISTS
collaboration with the WOMEN'S ART LIBRARY

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Conceived by Melissa Budasz

Curated by Melissa Budasz, Moira Jarvis, Jasmine
Pradissitto, Kim Thornton

Pillow Talk is a collection of art pillows that captures stories giving a visual dialogue on women's histories, experiences and psyches. Sixty hand painted, printed, appliqued and sewn pillows explore diverse themes ranging from love, memory and loss, to science and the environment, to politics and war.

The pillows are laid out on the floor in the shape of the female symbol and visitors are offered a place to sit, read and have conversations. At its heart, sits a mobile library full of publications, catalogues, magazines and ephemera about women artists, echoing the themes of the pillows and selected from the Women's Art Library - women being inspired by women.

Paying homage to the centenary of women getting the vote in February 1918, *Pillow Talk* contributes to a collective multi-layered memory of women's art history and the achievements of contemporary women artists.

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Since the early 1980s, the Women's Art Library has been introducing women's art to readers, listeners, viewers, walkers, talkers, mothers, writers, makers, takers and all this activity thrives on sampling, writing, documenting, collecting and moving through. So, Reader, you are very welcome. Feel free to lift a book, take a file and open on to the latest addition to your personal collection of known women artists... and then take care to remember and then make room for the next and the next and the next....

Into the centre of *Pillow Talk* the trolleys carry printed matter that speaks to a few of the many themes explored in the pillows' artworks. The feminist scholarship is barely 40 years old and of course, we are still processing the work of women artists into our collective circulating bodies of knowledge.

This makeshift centre piece/reading space is on wheels but delivers a still point of study at the heart of a lush aesthetic experience. *Pillow Talk* works up a flow of feminist stories that reach through visitors' senses of texture and space. There is a tradition of women's group shows that defy the stasis of the institutional art world as well as the logistics of mobility. I witnessed how 15 women artists each turned a train carriage into a work of art and created an extraordinary group show that travelled across as many national, historical and traumatic borders as possible.¹

What is it about travelling that suggests a feminist conscience and a liberated space? What if the feminine space is not the house, the set walls, the 'castle' that needs to be fortified, owned, worked, inherited, passed on, bloodied for and tied to deeds, loyalties, ranks, enslavement? What if the feminine is powered by seeing through the walls, fixing on possibilities and following the urge to move?

"For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force" ²

Althea Greenan

Curator, Women's Art Library Goldsmiths University of London

¹ Zij-Sporen (Side Tracks) 1996

² Virginia Woolf A Room of One's Own 1929

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Artwork pillows made by

Helen Adie
Andrea Blair
Juliet Blake
Kate Bowe
Jackie Brown
Lisa Brown
Melissa Budasz
Joan Byrne
Ilinca Cantacuzino
Francesca Centioni-Dene
Bula Chakravarty Agbo BEM
Liz Charsley-Jory
Claudia Iuliana Ciofu
Anna Cocciadiferro
Pat Cove
Leonie Cronin
Karin Dahlbacka
Liz Dalton
Claire Dorey
Gill Dove
Robina Doxi
Yolanta Gawlik
Chantal Gillingham
Pia Goddard
Mary Gordon-Smith
Julia de Greff
Hayley Hare
Jane Higginbottom
Margaret Higginson
Catherine Hollens

Moira Jarvis
Pat Keay
Joan Kendall
Valerie Lambert
Christine Landreth
Linda Litchfield
Wenchi Lucas
Yoke Matze
Jennie Merrell
Paola Minekov
Carol Misch
Laura Moreton-Griffiths
Emerald Mosley
Karen Piddington
Marnie Pitts
Gillian Best Powell
Zoe Powell
Jasmine Pradissitto
Izzi Ramsay
Vivienne Richards
Daisy Shayler
Lucy Soni
Selena Steele
Chrissy Thirlaway
Kim Thornton
Louise Townsend
Eithne Twomey
Caroline Underwood
Kim Winter

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Helen Adie southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/helen-adie

My pillow is inspired by classical actresses Ellen Terry and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, who were immortalised in paintings by Sargent and Sickert. Ellen wears a magnificent beetle-wing dress as Lady Macbeth, while Gwen looks like a cathedral as Marlowe's Queen Isabella. An actress can live many lives, shape-shifting into a mistress, demon, heroine, monarch... Theatre is by nature ephemeral; this is an attempt to pay homage to the transformation at the heart of performance.



Andrea Blair andreablairart.co.uk

"Thou shalt have a fishy ..." is a conversation with my mother who inspired my craft skills and creativity. She grew up in Blyth, Northumberland where her father was the coxswain of the lifeboat. Once a thriving dock - the shipbuilding, coalmining and fishing have gone. The images are symbolic of an empty place; we are re-imagining our relationship since my father died last year. This year Blyth will host the Tall Ships Race ... when the boat comes in."



Juliet Blake theoldmortuary.design

Sally and her friends set up Family Planning Association Clinics in Essex towns during the sixties. At the time only married women were allowed contraceptive provision with the written permission of their husbands or vicar in the case of women who were soon to be married. At the clinics run by this group of women, all women were offered sexual health advice and regular smears. Male permissions were faked, a library of sexual health, techniques and lifestyles was provided.



Kate Bowe katebowe.com

Friendship - relationship, attachment, alliance, association, bond, tie, link, union, camaraderie, comradeship, companionship, fellowship, affinity, rapport, understanding, harmony, unity, intimacy.

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born."

Anaïs Nin, The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Vol.1: 1931-1934



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Jackie Brown southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/jackie-brown

Each night I would perform a ritual of spreading my hair evenly across my pillow, reaching the edge and over the sides. Once the hair was arranged I could immerse myself into sleep and dreams and plot my escape into the future. The pillow cradled my thoughts and kept my secrets;

"Give me your nether lips

all puffy with their art

and I will give you angel fire in return" Extract, *Rapunzel* by Anne Saxton



Lisa Brown

lisasketchpaddrawing@gmail.com

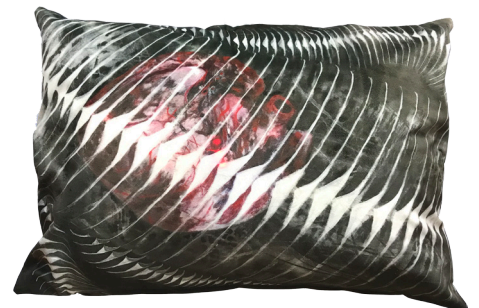
Poor Dolly Doo Da can't talk anymore. This is a tragic tale of Dolly Doo Da, who takes on and suffers our woes and blows. Patch-worked together from old worn pillow cases, she is hand stitched to life. Using found objects she is shackled into her penance. She is accused of being outspoken, swearing and cursing, getting a little drunk and unruly. Soap is rammed in her throat and her mouth washed out whilst the Scold's bridle barb wires her mouth; quiet, muzzled and humiliated. A visual reminder of all repressed voices and those who've been wrongly silenced throughout history.



Melissa Budasz

melissabudasz.com

The Four Chambered Heart is my homage to the writer Anaïs Nin, who has helped to shape my thinking for years. The heroine of the novel is Nin's alter ego, Djuna, that documents her emotions and passions, her thoughts and decisions and her doubts and sacrifices. Nin used the experiences of her own life to weave her novels and was able to integrate her femininity with her independence and wrote intimate and psychologically perceptive novels on the nature of women. These complex threads unite all women, making the feminine principle of love and sexuality more visible and conscious.



Joan Byrne

joanbyrne.co.uk

The Peckham woman of newspaper headlines is deviant. I live and photograph in Peckham and can confirm that it is a robust area. But why point out that these troubled women come from Peckham? If they lived in Penge would that be highlighted? Then again, we don't mind as we have a reputation to support.



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Ilinca Cantacuzino

ilinca.co.uk

Pillow Talk is the intimate talk between two people after sex. It usually contains an element of disclosure. My interest is in subverting this: the intimate talk here is between a mother and daughter. The letters and diaries of a destructive relationship have been ritually burnt, their residue ground into the pillow and the heartbreak stitched 'out'. The first white hairs exist, seem preserved as relics but are the first tentative steps towards a new wisdom, a new life.



Francesca Centioni-Dene

francescacentioni.com

As a starting point I often search through boxes stored in my studio. Old photographs, notebooks, remnants of textiles and scraps of paper become emotive objects. My pillow is inspired by female voices ranging from my mother, best friend, Maya Angelou and Kiki Smith. The embroidered fragments represent shared dialogue deep rooted within the woodland. Each word depicting strength co-existing in a landscape of wanderlust, transience and the passage of time.



Bula Chakravarty Agbo BEM

bulacagbo.wordpress.com

Born Free, Born Wild represents the generations past, present and future, yet the struggles of the human psyche remains until a truce is settled between the world and the soul. Transcendence occurs only when her creativity dances from the very edge of chaos... In touch with her divinity, she is potent, strong, instinctual, wise, fearless and wild. She seeks beyond the myths and legends. My work realizes the interconnectedness of these different elements within us, triggered by a chance meeting with silence. As women, we all run with wolves... a notion that Dr Clarissa Pinkola Estés explores so eloquently in her seminal book *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, citing worldwide folk and fairy tale characters, roles we frequently play and emulate in life.



Liz Charsley-Jory

lizcharsley-jory.com

This series *Manufactured Meadows* is an investigation of the forms of ordinary wayside plants that proliferate in inhospitable urban environments, and in parks and gardens where they are usually not wanted. Referencing the blue of the cyanotypes that preceded them, my plant drawings allude to the tradition of female botanical art, made before women were allowed to address the higher-ranking genre of history painting.

Artists that have inspired me: Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), Elizabeth Blackwell (1707-1758).

Historical note: both women supported themselves and their families with their art, and produced groundbreaking reference books.



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Claudia Iuliana Ciofu

artcice.wix.com/cice

A Madonna icon found in Mexico City, dated 1531, inspires my pillow. According to witnesses, the painting appeared on Juan Diego's cloak, without any mechanical intervention. Although controversial, the icon is still the subject of scientific research, after another miniature portrait was discovered in the Madonna's eye. As an archetype and symbol of Christianity, the portrait of Madonna in general represents the ideal features of womanhood in the last two thousand years.



Anna Cocciadiferro

coccia costumier.co.uk

Cosset. An appendage that represents my changing state in pregnancy. Reflective of the support, care and advice given by those women that surround me and the feeling of being cosseted positively. Mesmerising sensations that drive attention inwards. Internal dictatorship on whims of taste and emotion; inner steering. The comedy and curiosity of purposeful expansion.



Pat Cove

southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/pat-cove

Granny with the Green Hair

Constance Howard, CBE, was inspirational. She realized that embroidery was worth recognition at a time when textile crafts were regarded as of minor importance. She communicated her enthusiasm with such excitement that her lessons were a joy. She was a pioneer in the field of Textile Design and established an Embroidery department in the Art School at Goldsmith's College. Before the era of punk, she dyed her hair green and kept it that way the rest of her life.



Léonie Cronin

leoniecronin.com

Mona Hatoum's glass blown shapes held in cages; the slumped, round fluid glass, set shiny red, and hard. The rigid hard wire cages with clean padlocks regimented into stacks and rows. I interpret Womb, Heart, Blood. Containment of human expression. My pillow seats that part of our body held in society by both shame and desire; that is covered, protected, filled or emptied, that leaks but must leave no mark, trace or trail.



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Karin Dahlbacka

karindahlbacka.blogspot.co.uk

My pillow is an attempt to create a friendship pattern. The pattern will be hand dyed with ink making it's own surprise direction on the wet surface of the canvas. I like the idea of twisting, turning and dipping the pillow to create patterns. The pattern will connect my dreams and energy as well as remind me of my friend. My work is very much about finding our inner voice, sharing stories and celebrating creative freedom.



Liz Dalton

lizdalton.co.uk

These images place woman at centre stage symbolizing Earth, Air, Water and Fire. I drew them when I felt closer to the elements, in the countryside away from urban smog and feelings of fragmentation. This process gave a sense of connection with feminine mythology. Entitled *Sophia's Elements*, she in Jewish tradition is the personification of a wisdom holding all of creation together. Whilst drawing these images I became in touch with a realisation of personal spirituality.



Claire Dorey **southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/claire-dorey**

Pillows are a place of rest as well as nightmares, they are where the conscious shuts down and the subconscious takes over. For this reason I have chosen to depict a horse mounted upon a ceremonial cushion, both because it represents the dreaming self as well as the role of women, the work horses of most societies. I have cut the horse in half because you can lose your identity when you play a role to fit in with other people's expectations. I replaced the back legs of the horse with a hammer to represent toil, hard work and the forces that drive us forward. I dedicate this pillow to Emily Wilding Davison the suffragette who fought for votes for women and died after being hit by King George V's horse Anmer at the 1913 Epsom Derby when she walked onto the track during the race.



Gill Dove

gilldove.com

My pillow catches whispers from the past ... Mary Anning, fossil collector and palaeontologist who became known around the world for her important discoveries, such as the first Ichthyosaur skeleton correctly identified, which contributed to important changes in scientific thinking about prehistoric life and the history of the Earth. My work responds to the breath-taking but fragile beauty of our North Sea coast; reflecting dramatic environmental changes as sea breaches the coastline, causing erosion but revealing iron-age footprints, amber and fossils linking these modern finds to those of Mary Anning.



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Robina Doxi

doxi.org

This pillow is mainly a tribute to my mother, grandmother and the generations of women who came before them. They often worked together, weaving, sewing, mending and recycling, using their accumulated know-how and ingenuity, to craft strategies enabling them to survive - even thrive in unyielding circumstances. Some of those skills have been passed on to me, others I believe will be lost. However, I have also learned different ones, which will hopefully make for a blend of the old and the newly formed and one day be passed on.



Yolanta Gawlik

yolantagawlik.com

To Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte, thank you for writing *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. You taught me to pay attention to every moment, to count my blessings and to aim high - in myself, but also to go with the flow. You lived in difficult times for women. You fought and you were the only survivor. Your truth is felt strongly to this day, it has never diminished. I wish I could convey the depths of feelings so clearly and beautifully as you did.



Chantal Gillingham

chantalgillingham.co.uk

A tribute to love and loss

A working drawing, a map, an indexical trace.

A separation.

Reading like X-ray, light frames, questioning what came after or before.

Surface, line, inscription combine but hold uncertain positions.

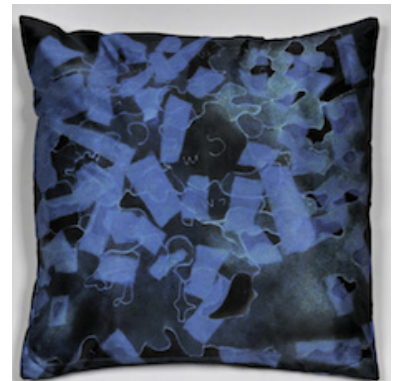
Remembering and forgetting.

Beyond the moment of drawing and beyond the photographic, a space.

Ambiguous clarification, measure, exactness.

Closeness.

This tribute is inspired by the writings of Julia Kristeva and Susan Sontag



Pia Goddard **southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/pia-goddard**

When Louise Bourgeois was asked 'why spiders?' she began her answer with "*because my best friend was my mother ...*". Ancient mother, weaver and guardian of alphabets, spiders pass knowledge down the generations. Louise Bourgeois was the first artist whose work informed my own, and now in later life as poet and photographer, mother and daughter, I am making my own claims on the spider.



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Julia de Greff

juliadegreff.co.uk

My pillow is about Gina Miller, pro-European campaigner who has been fighting to uphold democracy in the UK. I have felt extremely grateful to her during this very dark time in Britain's history post EU referendum. She has suffered abuse and even death threats and still she goes on campaigning. A strong, determined woman with her moral compass intact.



Hayley Hare

hayleyhare.com

"Life is so much more exciting now than it used to be"

This piece is homage to the book *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, which has been of great influence and inspiration in my work and personal relationship with depression. *The Yellow Wallpaper* is an illustration of the way a mind that is already plagued with anxiety can deteriorate and begin to prey on itself when it is forced into inactivity and kept from healthy work.



Jane Higginbottom

janehigginbottom.co.uk

Anthropocene - the proposed geological name for the era when human activity started to impact significantly on the Earth's ecosystem.

Anthropocentrism - the belief that human beings are the central or most significant species on the planet. I have come across the English philosopher Mary Midgely and I would choose to read her book *Gaia the Next Big Idea* on this pillow.

Planet Blue - the new planet in the book *The Stone Gods* by Jeanette Winterson. This book is my original inspiration.



Margaret Higginson

margarethigginson.com

My pillow symbolizes the fight of women against the campaign by religious groups to smother the voice of women. Malala Yousafzai, when only 15 years old, was shot by the Taliban in the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan because her family dared to believe and promote girls education. She was given the Nobel Peace Prize (2014) and continues to campaign for the right of women to speak.



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Catherine Hollens

catherinehollens.nailinthewall.com

Life Cycle

The feminist conceptual artist Mary Kelly famously exhibited her baby's nappy liners as part of her installation *Post-Partum Document*. In this spirit, I have created 'Life Cycle', documenting the stages of my biological clock. Using pads instead of nappies, I explore issues around femininity and identity. I hope this piece will encourage other women to share their own thoughts and experiences.



Moira Jarvis

moirajarvis.co.uk

Child Goddess of the Earth

In the book *Animate Earth, Science, Intuition and Gaia*, Stephan Harding likens our bodies to the Earth. Both are self-regulating. The flow of blood in our bodies is equivalent to the vast global flow of water around the world. These complex self-regulating systems between life, atmosphere, rocks and water have been named Gaia, after the Greek Goddess of the Earth. I have used a painting of my granddaughter curled up into a ball to represent Gaia.



Pat Keay

Kwa Ya Wanawake (Kiswahili for 'For the Women')

My design is informed by conversations, loving and argumentative, trivial and profound, with Kenyan women I know. Here, amongst millions of the 'wanawake', are some friends who are generating new ideas, challenging societal conventions and remaining strong under pressure.

- Ngendo Mukii (animator)
- Lulu Kitololo (designer)
- Catherine Anyango (RCA lecturer)
- Petronila Shikulisiei (carer)
- Tabatha wa Thuku (artist and teacher)

The applied imagery being borrowed, original or traditional, this is my homage to the awe-inspiring sister-hood in Kenya.



Joan Kendall

soulweaving.co.uk

My mother's hard drive is full
No new memories are being laid down
And everyday more of the old ones fall away
Activities become ever more restricted
Often reduced to just sitting
Afternoon and evening the time of growing anxiety
To leave the room brings fear of abandonment
And so we sit, my mother in her world and I in mine
All travel now confined to the inner world
Accessed from the confines of our chairs.



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Valerie Lambert southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/valerie-lambert

In December 2015, Maryam Namazie was prevented from speaking freely at Goldsmiths. The event was filmed, and can be easily accessed via the Internet. Inspired by her determination to be heard, I have represented the human face reduced to a set of mathematical proportions. I made this image when teaching art to a culturally mixed group of children. I had been advised by administrators that realistic representations would be problematic. I have resolved to challenge such misled censorship in future.



Christine Landreth

christinelandreth.co.uk

"I need to listen well so that I hear what is not said" Thuli Madonsela, South Africa's first woman Public Protector. Pillowcases conceal what lies within. They are the surface articulation of internal stuffing. My interest in making my pillow has been the "challenge of articulating something beyond articulation" - borrowing an expression from visual artist, Karen Schiff. Traces, forgotten characters, the common place: binding layers of personal history through images on raw surface material.



Linda Litchfield

lindalitchfield.co.uk

I have long admired the work of Angela Carter (1940-1992). Her writing reflects her personality – sharp, passionate, irreligious, exotic and demotic, raunchy, foul-mouthed, challenging. It is her short piece *The Company of Wolves* that is my favourite. In this 'fairy story', Granny is unceremoniously despatched by the "carnivore incarnate" and Red Riding Hood, it is suggested, might easily be as amoral and savage as the wolf and conquer him with her own predatory sexuality.



Wenchi Lucas

wenchi.co.uk

At the age of seven my grandmother ran away on a boat from China to Singapore because she overheard that her feet were to be bound the next day. I have a very strong memory of my grandmother's pillow and her night-time rituals. She would prepare for bed, spending a long time dressing her hair before lying down. She would tie it in a very specific way, not a hair out of place. My pillow and the plaiting symbolise her brave journey. I want to capture my feelings and memories of her in this artwork.



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Yoke Matze

yokematzephotography.co.uk

'I cannot solve the problem of life by losing myself in the problem of art' Tina Modotti

Modotti (1896) was an Italian born photographer and revolutionary activist in Mexico. She photographed Mexican women and revolutionary symbols. I am inspired by both the commitment to radical causes she showed in her life and the directness of its expression through her photographs. Photographs can evoke complex emotions and associations specific to a particular time and place.



Jennie Merrell

jennifermerrill.com

This tiny carving was found in 1908 near the Austrian village of Willendorf. Was she a fertility Goddess or an erotic object? Hand sized and tactile with her large breasts and bottom, her rounded stomach and thighs. She is the opposite of our tall and slender idea of the perfect female body. Yet the average British woman is a short size 16. Over 25,000 years old, the Venus of Willendorf is the eternal everywoman.



Paola Minekov

paolaminekov.com

What is pillow talk? There is a constant chatter in my mind. A monologue with myself. A pretend dialogue with others. Words in a maze. Rearrange. Pause. Restart. Repeat. Ideas decorated in ribbons and feelings imprisoned in chains. In my mind I create thousands of plausible combinations, thousands of different outcomes, of the past and of the future. I may share them, or I may keep them to myself. I may invite you to play with them, too.



Carol Misch **southlondonwomenartists.co.uk//carol-misch**

I have always been inspired by the work of American artist Sarah Sze. Her work embraces the ephemeral minutiae in our lives, from domestic to work space, in large installations that are theatrical and always surprising and playful. I love the tension in her sculptures and the use of light and movement. There is a delicacy and leap of faith in the constructions that appeals to me, and that I find both unsettling and life affirming.



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Laura Moreton-Griffiths

lauramoretongriffiths.com

US M4 General Sherman Battle tank.

21st century owners include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Cameroon. Out of the same fabric others have made beauty, a tank rides rough shod in this place of apparent safety. Unpicked and reworked, the blank canvas accepts impressions of truth reported back from the reality of war. *"Do they not know that stability is like a lover with a sweet mouth on your body one second and the next you are a tremor lying on the floor covered in rubble and old currency waiting for its return."* Warsan Shire

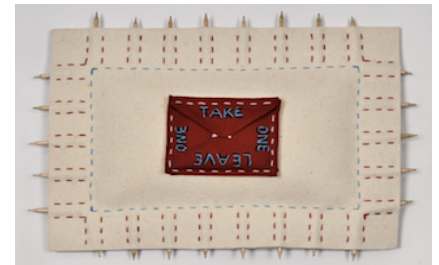


Emerald Mosley

goldtop.org

Take One, Leave One

My piece is an object made for people to interact with. An offering. Like moving along the bench so there is space for you to sit; a share of a sandwich; a role in my game; a hand to hold. Connection. A felt pillow with an envelope affixed to it. There is an idea on a card in the envelope. Please take it. Leave an idea of your own for another person to take. Take a photo of the idea card you have taken, and email it to [pillowtalk.takeoneleaveone@gmail.com](mailto:takeoneleaveone@gmail.com) or tag it #PillowTalkTake1Leave1 on social media.



Karen Piddington

karenpiddington.co.uk

Lee Miller is inspiring on many levels - her free spirit, creativity, talent and courage. Her path was controversial, imaginative and in many ways profoundly sad. But her legacy is astonishing. Her work highlighted the experiences and lives of women across Europe before, during and after the war. Her work mattered: she revealed to the world the worst horrors. Miller worked with Man Ray, mastering 'solarization' and creating some of the most radical nude photographs of the Surrealist era.



Marnie Pitts

marniepitts.com

The words 'pillow talk' immediately made me think of books. Lying in bed reading, getting lost in conjured worlds. I am interested in the collaboration between the writer and the reader, the power to pass on information and to be entertained by these words. The way we bring our own experiences together with the intentions of the author to make the reading of a book a truly powerful and enjoyable experience. This quote on my pillow is from the Harry Potter books that contain Hermione Granger, my favorite magical, fictional heroine.



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Gillian Best Powell

gillianbestpowell.com

My work is a visit to the past, depicted as a flying dream I had to my childhood home. I grew up abroad far away in a house full of women: circumstances determined that those who remained as I grew into my own womanhood were my mother, grandmother, our family housekeeper (a second mother) and my sister. The dream was very real; recreating it as a story gives it permanence. I used my own practice of printmaking, using textile inks directly on the fabric.



Zoe Powell

zoepowell.com

From a conversation: we can all find hope and light from the shadows, no matter where we are from or what we have experienced. I connect to women mostly; through a smile, a shared interest or even heartbreaking story... whether they are a close friend or a stranger I've just met. Focusing on these connections, visions of these women are depicted in my design, which I have created using various techniques with waste textiles.



Jasmine Pradissitto

pradissitto.com

"In each of us two powers preside, one male, one female... The androgynous mind is resonant and porous... naturally creative.... undivided." Virginia Woolf

Much like my world of science and art, it is the power of art with literature that can remove the divides between the feminine and masculine, old and young. My quotes are burnt into a cushion to reinforce this androgyny of machine process with soft furnishing; a paradox, which as physicist Neils Bohr once said 'can now lead us to progress'.



Izzi Ramsay

izziramsay.com

I never thought I was going to die because the truth is one never thinks that thought. It is a general universal truth that we are all living - though not a thought only a vague awareness in the unthought thought - of life without end. The idea is beyond grasp - until danger comes along. There are different degrees of danger. And women's work has never been comfortable.



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Vivienne Richards

vivrichardsart.co.uk

My work is based around my love of the coast. I experiment with layers of mixed media, letting the materials dictate the final result. I recently discovered the work of Pat Steir, a New York artist, who experiments with oil paint. She says, *"It's chance within limitations, I decide the colours and make simple divisions to the canvas & then basically the pouring of the paint paints the painting"*. Her beautiful paintings and the way she works is inspirational.



Daisy Shayler southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/daisyshayler

The extremists are afraid of books and pens, the power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. My inspiration for my pillow comes from 18 year-old Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai. Having been shot in the head at 16 for protesting the Taliban's treatment of women, Malala has become a renowned activist for female education and the youngest ever Nobel Prize laureate. I felt her message was extremely fitting with our collaboration with the Women's Art Library, therefore I have used Malala's story as the inspiration for my piece.



Mary Gordon-Smith

marygordonsmith.co.uk

Mum was 94 and losing her memory.
This marmalade in a jar in a bowl with a spoon
on a tablecloth she embroidered herself
way back when girls embroidered
appeared at the breakfast table.
I saw it as a symbol of her life.
Unwavering standards, do things right,
make do and mend, never waste anything,
be good to everyone, pay your way,
don't make waves,
do your best.
I drew it, and then embroidered it as best I could.



Lucy Soni

[instagram.com/lucysoni](https://www.instagram.com/lucysoni)

I'm interested in revaluing the everyday, what gets overlooked, forgotten, thrown away. Many of my paintings start with scribbles made by my daughters when they were toddlers. Currently I'm investigating how paintings can become things that perform: by becoming like other things (tassels, bunting, curtains) acting in relation to space or place. For *Pillow Talk* a painting becomes a cushion with unapologetically oversized tassels. It is playful and cloying, tactile and absurd, useful and useless.



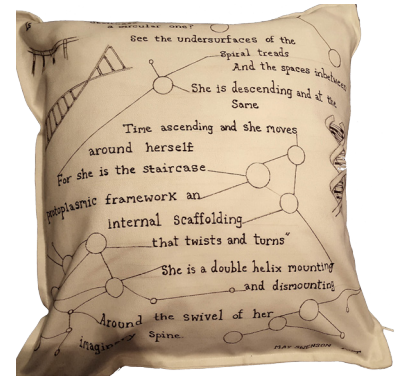
PILLOW TALK

conversations with women

Selena Steele

theshadowedtale.com

My pillow is inspired by the poetry of May Swenson. I first discovered one of her poems as a child in an anthology of poetry for children. I found the visual imagery conjured by her words compelling. For my pillow I chose to use an excerpt of her poem the 'DNA Molecule' in which she likens the double helix of DNA diagrams to Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*.



Chrissy Thirlaway

chrissythirlaway.com

Staring Out The Night

The honesty and courage in Edna St Vincent Millay's poem *What Lips* inspires me to acknowledge my vulnerability at three in the morning. Memory is romantic. I remember what I crave - passion, lust, obsession; moist full lips, tight smooth skin, rosy brown nipples, thick pubic hair; and then tenderness, affirmation, the illusion of certainty. What was is dead. I let it go. The end rushes up. Death will be oblivion. My heart still beats. I want to live forever.



Kim Thornton

kimthornton.co.uk

Notes to Self

Money is fundamental to everyday life and the pillow has long been a site of cash transactions for prostitution, hotel tipping and even the Tooth Fairy. The 2013 campaign for women to feature on British banknotes, led by Caroline Criado-Perez, highlighted how the establishment undervalues the contributions of women to history and to the present in all walks of life. *Notes to Self* is a banknote transformed to parody value.



Louise Townsend

southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/
louise-townsend

Diane Arbus was a female photographer from the 1960s who first inspired me to pick up a camera whilst studying at university. I found her complex, yet simple ways of photographing people and finding beauty in their flaws very enduring and it fascinated me and still does today. I started looking at this medium myself and experimenting with street photography, especially people, those whom I myself find visually interesting and appealing. I have been applying this concept to my work ever since.



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Eithne Twomey

**[southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/
eithne-twomey](http://southlondonwomenartists.co.uk/eithne-twomey)**

I have been making a record of a place, painting fabric and lino patterns, also painting numerous photographic images of that home. The patterns in particular speak of a certain time and conjure up the idea of home. It seems appropriate to put one of these patterns back onto fabric to become 'soft' again. I like the idea of a bit of my 'home' being part of this travelling project.



Caroline Underwood

carolineunderwood.com

My pillow is inspired by Helen Sharman, who became the first Briton in space, after responding to a radio advertisement. A chemist in the chocolate industry, Helen was chosen from over 13,000 applicants following a rigorous selection process. Helen became an astronaut by putting herself forward for the opportunity, and then committed to an intensive training programme. I wanted to celebrate this example of a woman who worked hard to make her dreams reality.



Kim Winter

flextiles.wordpress.com

Like the portable Women's Art Library, snails are nomadic, carrying their home wherever they go. And the spiral is traditionally a symbol of growth as we progress through life. Don't be scared to sit on this pillow - your weight will help embed the spiral! Alternatively you can gently pull the tip of the spiral up from the centre to create a physical representation of your mind and imagination, expanding by spending time in the library.



South London Women Artists 2018

Pillow photography: Yoke Matze

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Project participation in **VOTE100** celebrations

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