

Jupiter Artland 2018: Art Magic

This year Jupiter Artland, a uniquely odd sculpture park only a bus ride out of Edinburgh, hosts **Joana Vasconcelos'** precious objects and offers a beautiful landscape for **Phyllida Barlow** to embrace. Jupiter is a spotless, vast estate, offering a special place for artists to make work in. The two new commissions for 2018, both from internationally respected artists, follow the winding routes and spaces that make up Jupiter Artland.



While she has been creating work for decades and teaching at the Slade, Phyllida Barlow has only recently been widely recognized for her epic and deft approach to sites and materials. Her new permanent piece '**quarry**' is plotted in Jupiter's forest. Two tall pillars of concrete, constructed from separate pieces made in the artist's studio, sit among the historic trees, like remnants of an industrial communist past.

The large rock piece next to these pillars appears to have a ruined set of carved steps trailing down the front. Barlow resists the narrative of a lost architectural past, it is

rather, a sympathetic meditation on nature, and a physical manifestation of her understanding of the forest. She previously exhibited in Edinburgh, in the Fruitmarket Gallery three years ago with an exhibition entitled 'set'. The white gallery floors led to a series of very different installations, stacked upon each other, creating an irritating barrier, like a natural land matter, but made from manufactured supplies.

Whereas 'set' was an intervention in a formal interior, 'quarry' is a moment of peace in nature, understood through Barlow's signature materials. The mountainous rock form sitting next to the columns is made of concrete and not the natural stone I assumed. The concrete pillars are marked with pastel paints along the joints and topped with metal tilted shapes. The pastels carefully pushing the balance between feminine mark-making and the masculine materials.

Barlow explains that when she first visited Jupiter she was confused by the surroundings. It was only when she walked into the woods and found herself constantly looking up, did the ideas start to come to her. The metal shapes she created urged my eyes to look up too, using them as windows, to view the same sky she saw.





Only a short stroll away, visitors can see Joana Vasconcelos' work steeped in theatricality. A teapot made of twisted brass can be found in the Steading Gallery garden, outside Jupiter's café (which is decorated with charming and distracting pink, permanent murals from Nicolas Party). It is large enough for visitors to sit in the teapot's belly and admire the delicate wrought work from within.

It is a refined spectacle inspired by the historical tale of a Portuguese queen introducing tea to the British aristocracy. Vasconcelos is an international artist and has exhibited similar pieces elsewhere, in some cases allowing jasmine tea plants to grow up and through the brass grids. Unfortunately, visitors to Jupiter are left imagining this aromatic experience.



Vasconcelos work at Jupiter continues in the exhibition '**Gateway**', and will be on display until 30 September. She has also created a piece for one of the estate's older buildings. A revolving heart made from red cutlery and over two metres tall, turning in a Georgian room with operatic melodies playing inside. I immediately recognised a delicate energy, even without knowing the detailed references to Portuguese culture Vasconcelos made.

The sculpture is a large-scale reproduction of the traditional necklace Portuguese girls wear when they 'come out', or are introduced as eligible young women, to society. The heart of these girls is presented outside the body, and instead of the necklace's usual gold, Vasconcelos has reproduced it in vibrant red. The sight is almost bloody and turns this delicate piece of jewellery into something surgical. The use of cutlery relates to the moment when the Portuguese place down their knives and forks in restaurants when a *Fado* singer begins her song.

While that installation is captivating, less successful is Vasconcelos' shoe sculpture placed outside and down the steps from the building housing 'Red Independent Heart'. 'Carmen Miranda' is the artist's examination of contrasting notions of gender and domesticity. A similar piece named 'Marilyn' was exhibited in Versailles in 2012, as was the red cutlery heart,

and were not loved by all. The open toed heel was made of different cooking pans, all manufactured in Portugal.

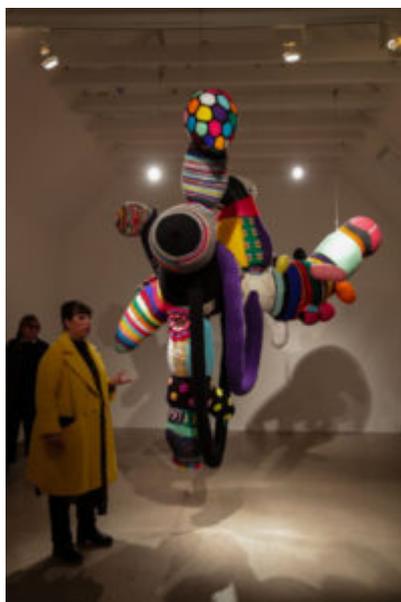
The artist spoke of Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe, describing them as 'woman who changed history with a shoe'. On closer inspection, I realised the piece had been made in collaboration with the department store Selfridges, and so I could imagine this shoe would make a stunning window display, but as an address on conflicting views of femininity, it feels like an oversimplification.



More of Vasconcelos' sculptures can be seen inside the Steadings buildings. A homunculus creature, 'Valkyrie' created from stuffed recycled textiles floats in one room with a yellow tiled column with draped beads and gargoyles stands to the opposite.

The colour bounces off the yellow tiled column, revealing purple as the viewer walks around, and sees the gargoyles spewing fabric strands. Another piece also uses textiles to express water, with dark blues and greys possibly representing a couple bathing. Vasconcelos collected the fabrics from friends and family as well as her own home. She revels in the exposing of these private items into public objects. The fabrics cover her sculptures and act as domestic protection.

This idea is taken further in her smaller works on the first floor of the steadings. A collection of animals, including dogs with sharp teeth and frogs reading to jump, are caught and covered in crocheted fabrics. They are made stationary through a simple feminine interaction.



The notion of animals acting against their nature is continued in the work of **Ollie Dook**, who is exhibiting as part of a new commission where Jupiter supports an emerging artist. Instead of animals caught up in pastel crochet, creatures are drawn from the imagery of the BBC series 'Planet Earth', which Dook examines by constructing a sculptural enclosure inspired by zoos and the way they mimic the natural habitat of animals. He aims to invert the zoo spectacle so that us, the viewer, is observed instead of the animals.

The commission is an example of the ways Jupiter is starting to encourage younger artists, students, and art lovers, to make the short journey out of central Edinburgh to the sculpture park. The introduction of **Pay What You Want Mondays** makes it even easier for them to enjoy what Jupiter offers.

It is a place which allows artists to create a direct connection with nature and different sites, something which is restricted in the city centre by the limited amount of space

and freedom on offer. This liberation can lead to ostentatious pieces with little connection to reality, but it also allows a sense of fantasy.

For artists, young and old, to have such a grand wonderland to visit and be inspired by, is a place to adore. A mystical woodland theatre for art, which this summer, even more can enjoy.

Details of these and other exhibits at Jupiter Artland can be found on [their website](#), along with ticketing information.