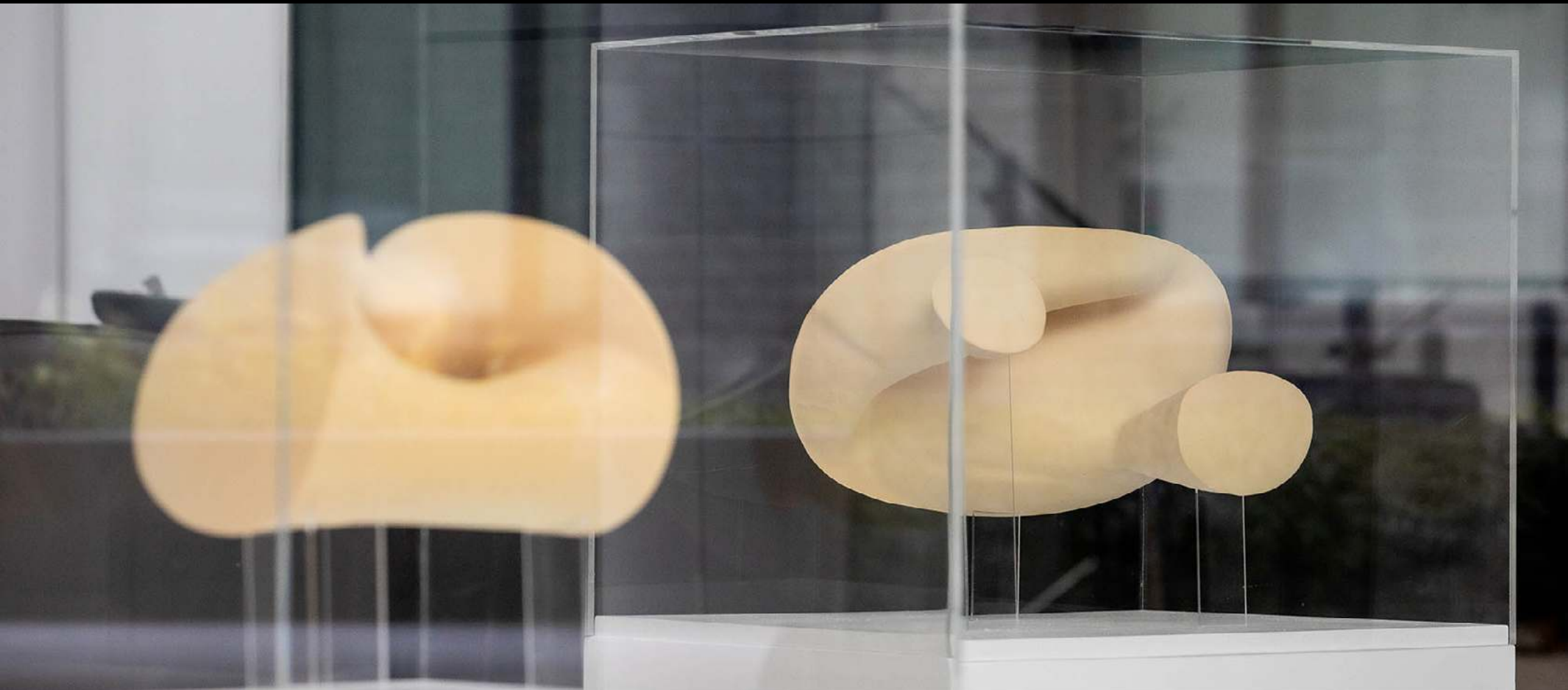




POSITIVE PATTERN





Type of output:
Artefacts

by
Christine Borland

CONTENTS



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	5
TIMELINE	6
RESEARCH CHALLENGE	7-8
CONTEXT	9
METHODS & PROCESSES	10-15
DISSEMINATION	16-18
REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	19

SUMMARY

Positive Pattern is the culmination of practice-based research developed while embedded in the cycle of human organ retrieval and donation at the Freeman Institute for Human Transplantation, Newcastle.

The research aimed to;

- Find non-figurative means to represent the intimate, corporeal engagement of the staff, patients and families involved in organ retrieval and donation.
- Trial contemporary reproduction and visualisation methods and non-traditional materials to explore the current juncture of radical change in the field of organ donation, enabled by developments in biotechnology.
- Explore the artistic copy as means to reinterpret the concept of human organ donation using a series of canonical, sculptural works by Barbara Hepworth as source material.

The context is cross-disciplinary artistic practice, which engages with expert cultures across a wide spectrum of science, technology and medicine, framed through feminist perspectives on biotechnology, practices of scientific knowledge and the ethics and aesthetics of care. (Catts & Zurr, 1996, de la Bellacasa 2017, Haraway 2016).

The methodology;

- Developed socially engaged research as a practice-based means of exchange within the hospital and medical environment.
- Employed 3-D technology as a cross-disciplinary means to explore the concept of the artistic copy in making manifest the negative spaces of five Barbara Hepworth sculptures.

Positive Pattern, the group of 5 rigid foam sculptures which are the culmination of the research were produced using non-traditional sculptural methods and materials; each sculpture replicates the interior void of hand-carved, wooden sculptures made by Barbara Hepworth. The research process and findings were shared in a series of public talks and in a short documentary film.

INTRODUCTION

Each of the 5 works in *Positive Pattern* is individually titled as follows, after the original Barbara Hepworth sculpture;

- Positive Pattern, 2017 (From Barbara Hepworth, *Pendour* 1947)
- Positive Pattern, 2017 (From Barbara Hepworth, *Oval Sculpture* 1943)
- Positive Pattern, 2017 (From Barbara Hepworth, *Pelagos* 1946)
- Positive Pattern, 2017 (From Barbara Hepworth, *Tides 1* 1946)
- Positive Pattern, 2017 (From Barbara Hepworth, *Wave* 1943 – 1944)

The materials used are; computer numerical controlled (CNC) Milling Foam, Perspex, Painted MDF. The data gathering and prototyping technology enabled the work to be produced in a small edition of 3. Edition 1/3 is permanently installed at the Institute for Human Transplantation, Newcastle, a prototype version was exhibited beforehand at Pittenweem Art Festival in August 2017. Edition 2/3 was purchased by and exhibited at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA) where it remains in the permanent collection.

“Alongside intimate conversations, Borland drew inspiration from the work of British artist Barbara Hepworth (1903-75), who placed importance on human connection and the role of internal intuition. As Hepworth once noted, ‘I rarely draw what I see – I draw what I feel in my body’.”

Extract, wall text NOW 3, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

Below: Detail *Positive Pattern*

Photo credit: Tom Nolan



TIMELINE

2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
<p>OCT 2015 - AUG 2017 Embedded research observing the cycle of human organ transplantation; including meetings and conversations with patients, families and staff at the Institute for Human Transplantation, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle & observation of Cardiopulmonary Transplantation Course, Newcastle Surgical Training Centre and presentations in the Institute lecture theatre.</p>	<p>AUGUST Prototype of <i>Positive Pattern</i> exhibited at Pittenween Art Festival. 13–20th August 2017.</p> <p>OCTOBER Launch of <i>Positive Pattern</i> at the Institute for Human Transplantation, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle. 12th October 2017.</p>	<p>FEBRUARY Give title of lecture series and hosts Last in the series of lectures based around the development of Positive Pattern ‘<i>Women working in sculpture in Britain from 1960 to the present day – towards a new lexicon</i>’. 5th February 2018.</p> <p>APRIL - SEP Edition 2/3 <i>Positive Pattern</i> Exhibited in NOW at SNGMA Edinburgh.</p>	<p>NOV 2019 - JAN 2020 Edition 2/3 <i>Positive Pattern</i> Exhibited <i>Cast and Copies</i> École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts Paris.</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER Edition 2/3 <i>Positive Pattern</i> Exhibited <i>Cast and Copies</i> Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon. TBC.</p>

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Aims

- To develop a non-figurative commemorative sculpture, which gives form to complex emotions located in the experiences of those affected by human organ donation and transplant.
- To develop a sculptural representation of negative space as a means to make visible the personal and societal contribution of organ donors.



Right: Detail *Positive Pattern*

Photo credit: Becky Rea

Objectives

- Primary engagement with and imaginative development of, the narratives and experiences of organ donor families and the medical staff who care for them.
- The use of experimental, digital techniques and related materials, to record, reveal and represent the negative spaces in a canonical series of carved wooden sculptures by Barbara Hepworth.



Right: Detail *Positive Pattern*

Photo credit: Becky Rea

CONTEXT

Consistent with Borland's practice *Positive Pattern* is in the context of cross-disciplinary work which engages with expert cultures across science, technology and medicine. It is closely aligned with Northumbria University Cultural Negotiation of Science research group. (Crisp, Donachie, Dorsett).

The work is developed through non-instrumental negotiation with participating staff, patients and donor families and employs feminist perspectives on the ethics and aesthetics of care and practices of scientific knowledge and biomedical science. (Catts & Zurr 1996, de la Bellacasa 2017, Haraway 2016)

In the context of Borland's contemporary sculptural practice *Positive Pattern* extends her inquiry into the representation of the body through casting: in its use of new technology the work aligns with artists extending the physical and conceptual possibilities of the artistic copy (Whiteread 1997, Fujiwara 2012, Laric 2016).

Below: Detail *Positive Pattern*

Photo credit: Becky Rea



METHODS & PROCESSES

A formative period of time was spent embedded in the cycle of organ retrieval and donation, concentrating most specifically on the journey of organ donors and their families, at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle; from admission to the ITU, to acceptance for organ retrieval. In meetings with the families of donors (supported by the specialist transplant team) visceral but tender descriptions and imaginings of interior and exterior spaces of the body featured in the majority of the narratives.

Attending a 2 day Cardiopulmonary Transplantation Course where cadavers are used as Simulated Patients for both the removal and replacement of organs provided further valuable insight into the haptic experiences of transplantation, from the view-point of the medical professional.

“One of the ambiguities of the donor family’s grief is that recipients remind the family of the death and the ‘separating’ of parts of the body and simultaneously represent a sense that the donor is ‘living on’. Subsequently, some families experience a connection to recipients who sustain part of their relative”.

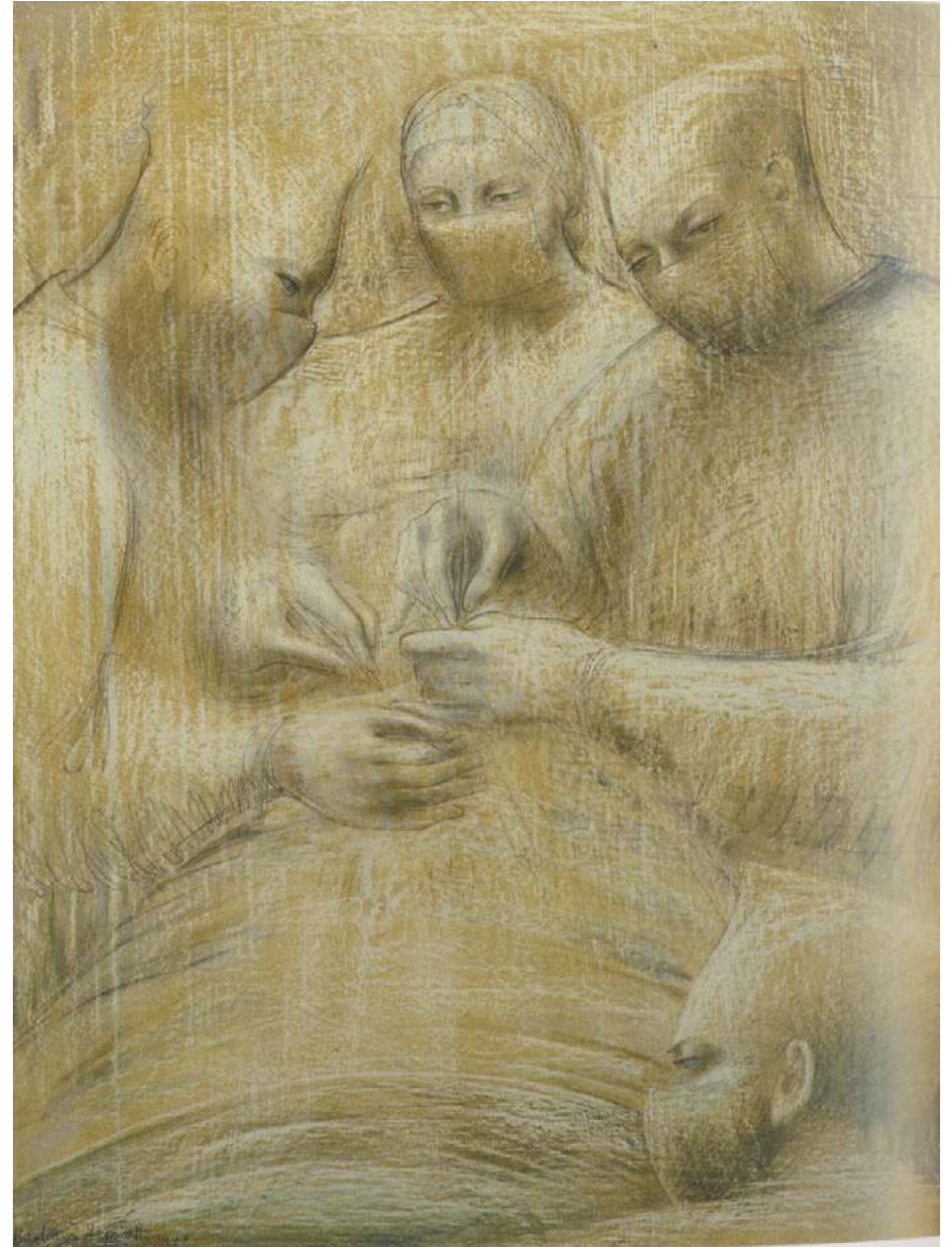
From; ‘An exploration of the relationship between families of deceased organ donors and transplant recipients: A systematic review and qualitative synthesis’. *Health Psychology Open*. DOI: [10.1177/2055102918782172](https://doi.org/10.1177/2055102918782172)

Right: Detail *Positive Pattern*
Photo credit: Becky Rea



The intimate portrayals, descriptions of surgery and consideration of proprioception involved in these processes, led to revisiting Barbara Hepworth's pastel *Hospital Drawings* of operating theatre scenarios, which represent the pioneering post-war, work of the NHS.

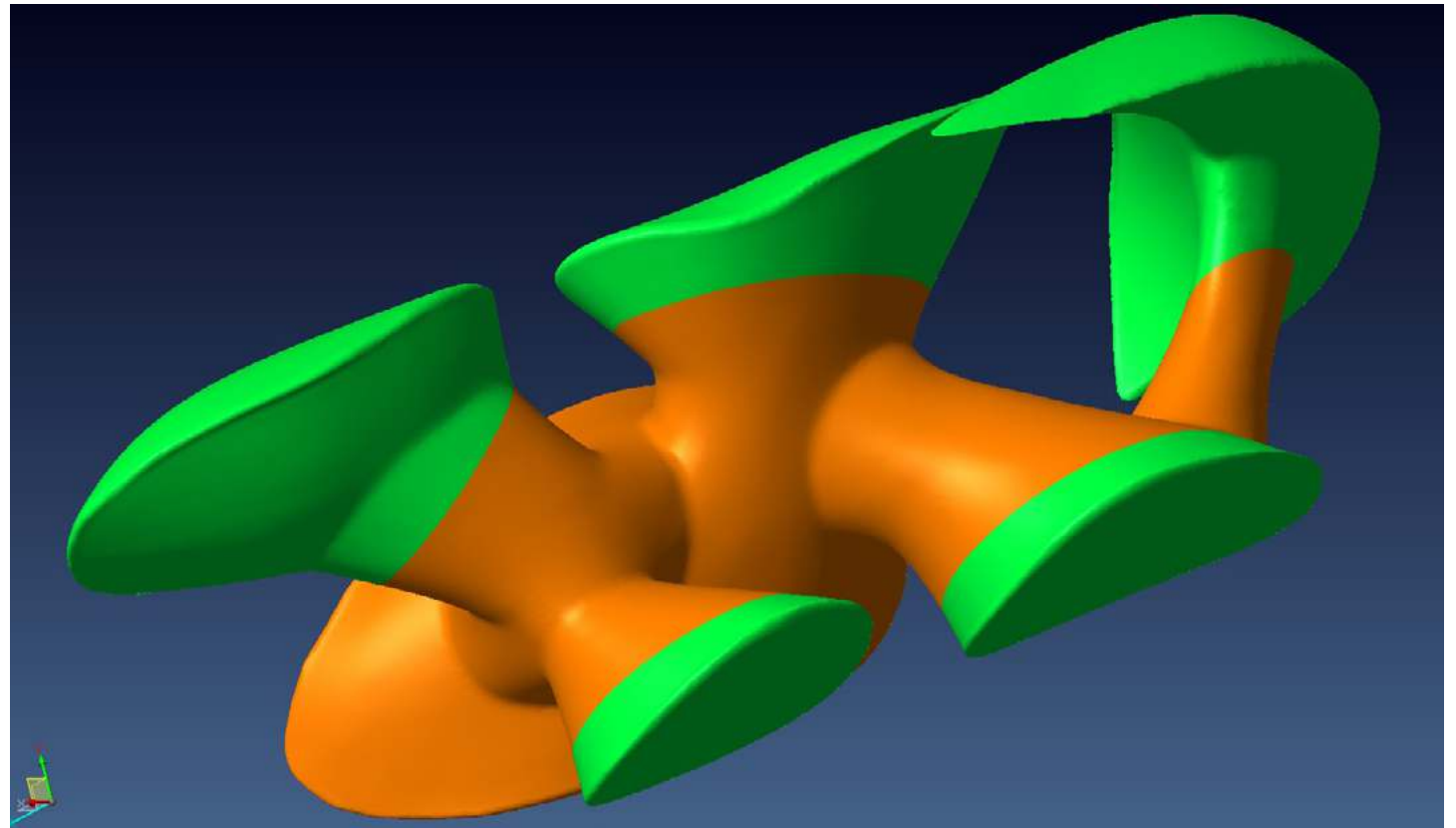
The *Hospital Drawings* and the series of 5 abstract wooden sculptures made around that same post-war period, resonated with the research aim of exploring the difficult, tangible, physical relationship to the body expressed by organ donor's families.



Right: *Concentration of Hands*,
Barbara Hepworth 1948 © Bowness,
Hepworth Estate

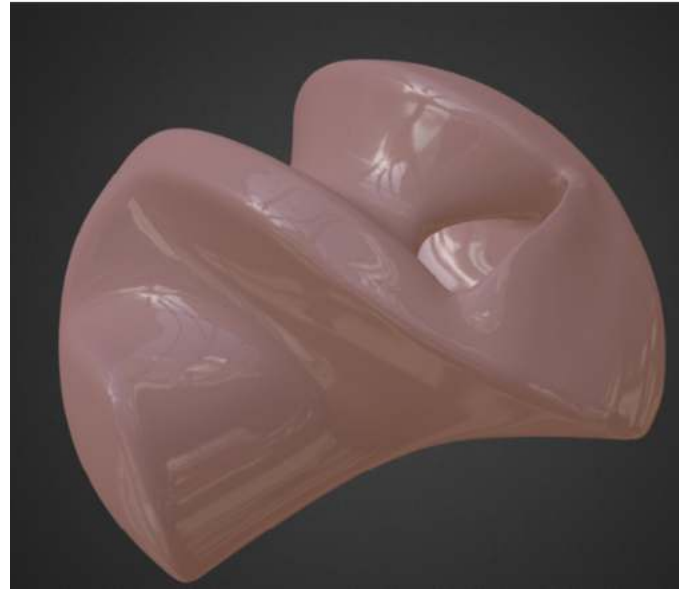
Consideration of the chambered interiors of the five Hepworth sculptures suggested a way to visualise that which is usually kept hidden, to liberate it from (yet keep a primary relationship to) its' supporting exterior. Experimentation with materials, forms, shapes, compositions and construction followed in the studio and with computer simulations.

Tests established that laser scanning and printing the concealed shapes and negative space held within the sculptures, in positive form, could produce novel, human-scale shapes. When placed at average heights corresponded to the brain, chest and abdominal cavities, these unfathomable new structures suggest futuristic forms with an ambiguous function.

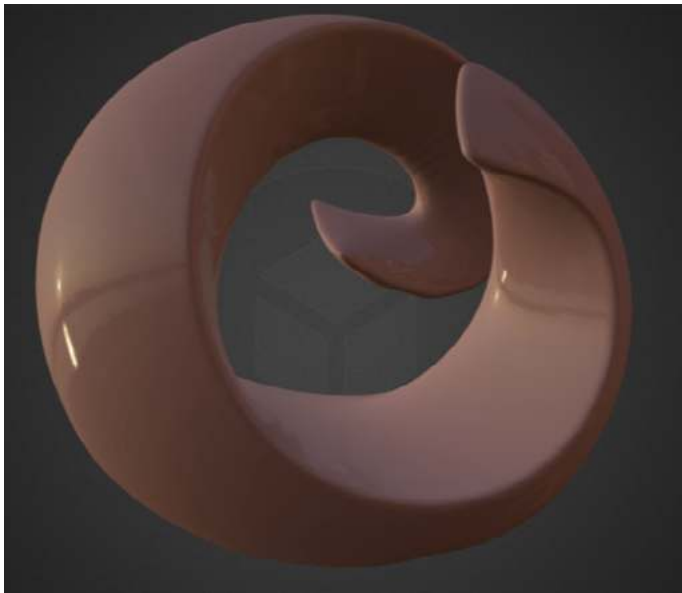


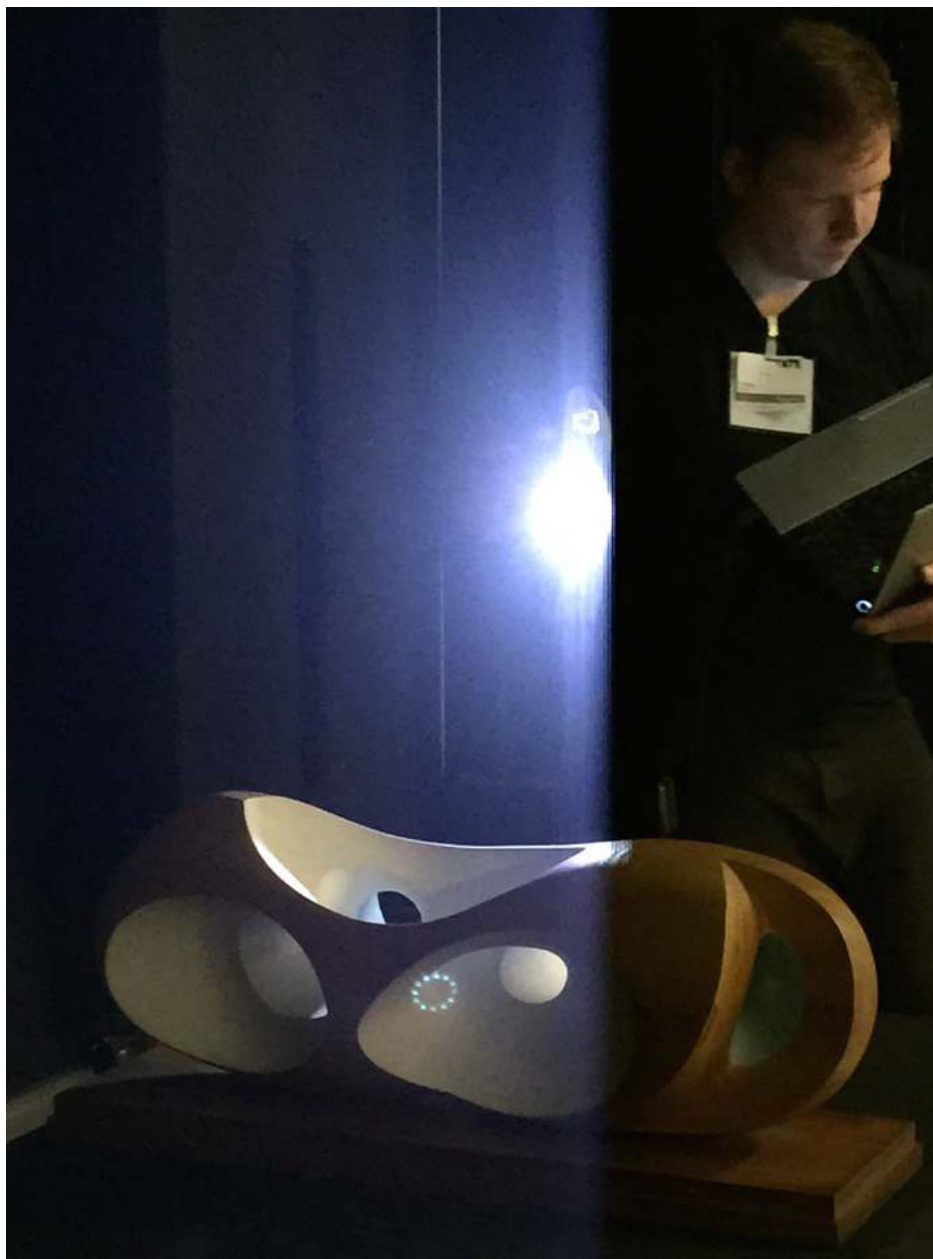
Right: Detail Methods & Processes

Photo credit: Christine Borland



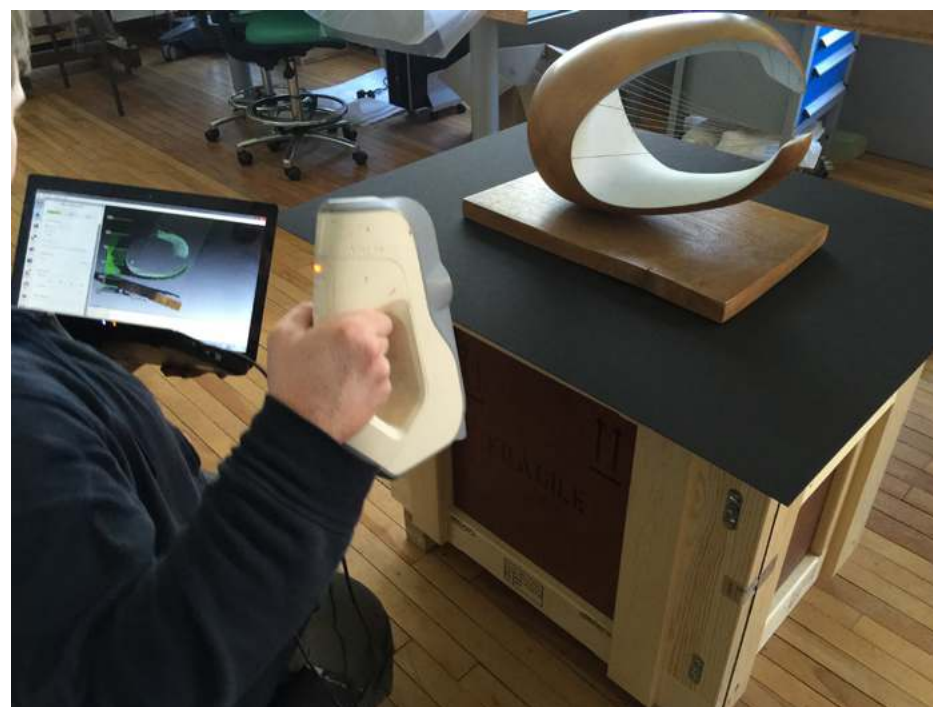
Methods & Processes - Digital
 Visualisations of *Pelagos* Barbara
 Hepworth 1946 © Bowness, Hepworth
 Estate & Digital Visualisations Pelagos





Left: Methods & Processes - Laser Scanning, *Pendour* Barbara Hepworth 1947 Collection Hirshorn Museum, Washington © Bowness, Hepworth Estate

Below: Methods & Processes - Laser Scanning, *Wave* Barbara Hepworth 1943 - 44 Collection Scottish National Galleries, Edinburgh © Bowness, Hepworth Estate



Embedded methods enabled conversations with young doctors and medical students which was followed up in the practice based research; many expressed their hope that advances in bio-technology would soon mean that replacement organs grown from the patient's own tissues would supersede the need for donated organs. These considerations led to the use of contemporary reproduction and visualisation methods and materials to represent this very particular juncture when radical change is likely, through the use of methods linked to new bio-technologies.

Below: Newcastle Surgical Training
Centre (NSTC) Freeman Hospital
Photo Credit; Newcastle Hospitals Trust



DISSEMINATION

Positive Pattern, the group of 5 rigid foam sculptures which are the culmination of the research, is on permanent public display in the Institute for Human Transplantation, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle; all patients, staff and relatives entering and leaving the building pass it.

3 talks for public, patients, families and staff were held in the Freeman Hospital Lecture Theatre at different stages in the development of the work:

Positive Pattern; Prototypes for Commemoration, Christine Borland and Katherine Pearson, Managing Director Flo Culture 9th June 2016.

Positive Pattern, in Context, Christine Borland, Bishop Bill Wright & Prof Derek Manas, 12th October 2017.

Women working in sculpture in Britain from 1960 to the present day – towards a new lexicon with Christine Borland, Natalie Rudd, Senior Curator, Arts Council Collection, Sheyda A. Khaymaz & Dr Catherine George, 5th February 2018.

Approx attendance 230

(the sculptures) “offer a gentle reminder to all who work there, and the patients who have received their gift of life there, that there is no transplantation without donation – that the act of donation underpins everything we do here.”

Prof Derek Manas,
Director of the Institute of Transplantation.

Right: Staff and the artist, opening
night of *Positive Pattern*, Institute for
Human Transplantation

Photo credit: Ross Sinclair



A prototype version of *Positive Pattern* was trialled at Pittenweem Art Festival, August 2017.
(Attendance: 25,000)

The data gathering and prototyping technology used enabled the work to be produced in a small edition of 3. *Positive Pattern* (2/3) were purchased by Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA) and exhibited in *NOW*, 24 March – 16 September, the 3rd in a series of exhibitions staged at SNGMA, forming part of the Edinburgh International Art Festival. The exhibition focused on themes relating to the body; movement, performance, gesture and material.
(Attendance: 236,276)

SNGMA produced a short YouTube Documentary to accompany the work *Christine Borland: Answering Anatomy*.
(9,597 views, 2nd July 2020)

SNGMA's version of *Positive Pattern* was on loan for *Cast and Copies* exhibition, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, from 27th November, 2019 to 12th of January 2020; and Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon DATES tbc September 2020. Accompanied by Catalogue.



Above: *Positive Pattern*,
Pittenweem Art Festival
Photo credit: Tom Nolan

Right: Detail *Positive Pattern*,
NOW SNGMA
Photo credit: Scottish National Galleries

Christine Borland; Answering Anatomy YouTube film was produced as part of the gallery's Artists in Profile series.

Appendix 1:

- <http://www.instituteoftransplantation.nhs.uk/news/north-east-organ-donors-gift-of-life-honoured-by-turner-finalist-sculptures/>

Appendix 2:

- <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/163099/positive-pattern>

Appendix 3:

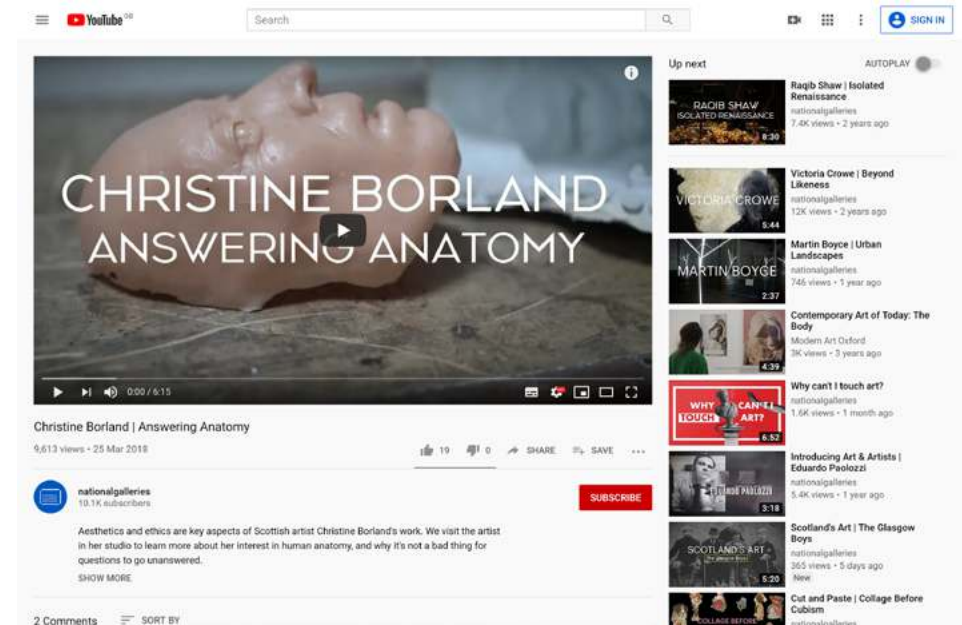
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAEHDzLd_Es

Appendix 4:

- <https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/art/ones-to-watch-in-2018-artist-christine-borland-1-4657027>

Appendix 5:

- <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/new-works-art-gone-display-13823428>



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Grateful thanks to The Hepworth Foundation and the museum collections (Tate, SNGMA, Hirshorn Museum) who gave permission for the scanning and reproduction of the original Hepworth Sculptures.

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