

Lucy Garnett

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About the Artist



Lucy Garnett is an Anglo-Indian artist and musician living in Seattle. Using a variety of media ranging from printmaking to video installations, she explores themes of migration, music, health, globalisation, and family. Lucy's artwork draws upon her life in the United Kingdom where she grew up, raised two daughters with her husband, and worked as a primary school teacher and arts specialist until she immigrated to the United States in 2012.

Coming from a musical family, Garnett interprets music by visually representing her experience of learning to play particular pieces on oboe and piano. The artist invites viewers into her intellectual and emotional states of mind across auditory and visual genres through the use of pastel, paint, ink, sheet music, and parts of broken instruments. Garnett's work on

personal and communal health includes references to her own spinal condition through printed and drawn images alongside textile and sculptural responses to family lifecycles, concerns about childhood deprivation of play, and her husband's research on HIV. She also explores social issues around outsourced manufacturing, using installations to visualize the invisible labour of exploited garment factory workers and provides opportunities for ethical self-reflection.

Some of Lucy's work shows an appreciation of the landscapes in which she has formed her life: human structures that become part of and blend into their surroundings, natural structures that evoke human edifices, and the resilience and fragility of our lives in those spaces. Recent work has evolved around issues of identity, community and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lucy earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts [Hons] from De Montfort University, UK. She has shown artwork in group and solo shows in the UK and US, including at Modern Art Oxford (UK), Davidson Galleries (Seattle, WA) and a solo show covering three floors of Shoreline City Hall (Shoreline, WA).

About the Artwork

The Question

Woodcut & letterpress (2021)

Image size: 8 1/2" x 6" on 12x9" paper

As a person of mixed-race heritage, born in a white society with a long history of colonial domination, I have faced this question many times, sometimes with genuine curiosity but mostly with aggression. I'm actually shaking as I write this.

Racism was one of the many difficult topics that was not discussed when I was growing up in the UK in the 1970s–'80s. During 2020 I started learning how to share some of my lifelong experiences which, whilst not "life threatening," have had a significant impact on who I am. This is an ongoing process.

Permanent Residency Process

Woodcut with screenprint and thumbprint elements on paper (2019)

11x14"

Applying for permanent residency in the United States in 2018 - 2019 was extremely stressful. In this piece I used text and patterns from several Department of Homeland Security envelopes to screenprint over a woodcut self portrait based on my visa photo. I added my thumbprint, remembering the multiple times my fingerprints had been collected over the previous 8 years whilst living in the US.

This process involved an overwhelming amount of paperwork and questions about my identity. How much harder would this have been without my privilege and English literacy? At the USCIS office in Tukwila, before my immigration interview even started, I had to fill in yet another form at the reception desk. I was only allowed to tick one box to represent my mixed racial identity—with a living white mother and an Indian father who died long ago—and was genuinely afraid that answering one way or the other would invalidate my case. I chose my white half despite my distress.