

Corsock based Amanda Simmons will be working with indigenous artists in Western Australia. Through research and field work she will explore how art can help create a narrative of history, place and identity. Amanda will bring new ideas back to her studio in Scotland and create a new body of work for a solo exhibition. Amanda is also an internationally respected, in-demand teaching artist and will use what she has learnt to develop new teaching techniques. She will then deliver workshops across Dumfries and Galloway and with Upland's 2020 cohort of Modern Makers who she is mentoring this year.

Amanda said: "I am so thrilled to get the support and funding from the Bright Sparks fund for my project. This comes at a time, after much reflection, where I am seeking new opportunities that will lead me to redefining a modern craft making practice".

Stuart Macpherson is based in Moniaive and his creative idea will see him working with filmmaker Emma Dove, sound designer Peter Smith and the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) on his Solway to Svalbard project which he has been developing since 2017.

When we told Stuart he will be receiving a Bright Sparks award he said: "This is very much a new direction for all three of us and although it feels intimidating and out of our comfort zones, it represents a really positive development within all of our practices and for the project itself. Support from the Bright Sparks fund allows us to take the creative risk of venturing into this new and exciting dimension and will really help us to make the most of the expertise that NTS has in this area and provide a massive boost to the project."

Castle Douglas based Carolyn Yates will be collaborating with a dramaturg for the first time whilst exploring a new way of writing in the development of a script called Gaze: Looking at Me Looking at You. Gaze will be a performative response to photographer Kim Ayres' bold nude portraits of women over 50.

A thrilled Carolyn said: "This award is invaluable because it supports the unusual. So few funding streams provide a 'level playing field' for older artists without an established reputation." She went on to say "It is a new way of writing for me, working with actors, verbatim material and the support of a dramaturg, Drew Taylor, with a national reputation for creating new theatre, blending poetic text, movement, music and narrative."