

Margins and borders are present in many of Rugg's works, creating frame-like compositions. Interestingly his work never seems to stay within their self made boundaries reflecting his disinterest in being bound to a single form or space.

This is also a practice associated with another artist whose work is displayed at The Hatton, Kurt Schwitters, who created the *Merz Barn* wall. Schwitters was not bound by the demands of society, media or space, always seeking extraordinary and bizarre art forms.

Matt Rugg's art breaks boundaries between 2D and 3D by combining drawing and sculpture.

In many of his works, Rugg imitates musical notation by using grids and lines to create some of his best drawings. While he was making his work. Rugg would listen to different forms of music but notably mechanical-sounding compositions which seem to have no melodic quality. This is reflective of the inspiration for the Basic Course which avoided using traditional art teaching as inspiration and instead looked to music, poetry and architecture.

The industrial nature of Rugg's work is reflective of his time in Newcastle surrounded by local industries. Early in his career, Rugg simply didn't have the money to afford new materials and relied on found ones instead.

He enjoyed the tactility of the materials as well as the repurposing of something industrial into something beautiful and artistic too.

Rugg used a lot of found materials, which can typically be seen in industrial settings.

Matt Rugg's work has a flexibility of process and form. He would frequently edit and abandon work resulting in pieces that span years of progress

Later in his career, Matt Rugg chose to avoid public view to recentre his artwork to something he felt a passion for, rather than conforming to the rise in the value and commercialisation of his artwork.

We found this extremely inspiring; Matt Rugg was a popular artist who has not received much recognition due to his decision not to exhibit between 1988 and 2011. He valued the connection and meaning of his work more than fame.

As a result of this break, Rugg was able to create the *Anatomies* which are being displayed and celebrated here.

As young people coming into the space of selling artwork, there is a constant pressure to make art people want and like, however, Rugg's work reinstalls the idea of creating art you enjoy which we found impactful.

This fluidity is also apparent in Rugg's use of media - beginning his career in painting and wood he continued to evolve his work and returned to various styles and used different media throughout his lifetime.

Images: Jamie Orlando Smith
© Matt Rugg Estate
Matt Rugg, *Anatomy V*, 1999
Galvanised wire
Matt Rugg, *Untitled*, 2015
Wood, perforated galvanised steel sheet, industrial plastic sheet, plastic coated wire and industrial webbing
Matt Rugg, *Grey Notation*, 1978-1979
Wire mesh and paint with wire thread extensions
Matt Rugg, *Untitled*, 1984
Galvanised steel sheet and galvanised steel wire
Matt Rugg, *Bound Edge*, 1984
Galvanised steel sheet and wire
Matt Rugg, *Untitled*, 2016 (original state)
Galvanised steel wire with industrial belt
Matt Rugg, *Untitled*, 2002
Conte crayons on hand-made paper
Matt Rugg, *Town Template*, 2005
Conte Crayons on Hand-made paper
Matt Rugg, *Anatomy VI*, 2010
Galvanised Wire

L-INK are a group of young people who work with the Hatton gallery to create art work, work with artists, make exhibitions and organise events.

This leaflet has been created by L-INK group members
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Hatton

L-INK

Newcastle University
Institute for Creative Arts Practice

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Hatton Gallery
23 September 2023
- 13 January 2024

Connecting Form

A retrospective of Rugg's work from 1960 to 2020.

