

'The Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Project Grant' at City & Guilds of London Art School

Aim:

*To support a student in their final year of study to realise a sculpture project.
Encouraging students to be ambitious in their work regardless of financial circumstances.*

To continue Sir Denis Mahon's legacy.

Open to submissions annually from second year BA students of Conservation, Carving and Fine Art working with sculpture for use in the third year.

Up to £5,000.00

Deadline for proposals 5pm Friday 8th October 2021

The selection panel will include representation from all departments

We are seeking proposals that are:

- A great final project idea - ambitious and worth doing;
- Reflective of Sir Denis Mahon's studies, research and interests which are indicated in his biographies. (See appendices)
- Able to show the potential impact of the grant on the project's realisation.
- Able to show a clear budget and itemized use of Art School facilities.

Please complete the proposal form (type only). You should also submit some visual material to support your application – drawings, photographs etc up to 4 pages at the end of the form. Please be aware that anything received after the deadline will be deemed ineligible.

Checklist:

- Proposal form completed
- Up to 4 pages of visual material to support the application.
- Send as a single document (word or pdf) attached to an email titled "Sir Denis Mahon Grant - Name Surname" to Hannah Travers Head of Development & External Relations on h.travers@cityandguildsartschool.ac.uk
- Deadline 5pm Friday 8th October 2021

Your name:	Robert Heffernan
Your course and year of study:	BA fine art 3 rd year
Your @cglas.co.uk email address:	r.heffernan@cglas.ac.uk
Current bursary recipient:	No

1. Tell us about your final project:

Please keep your answers to 300 words

1.1 What do you want to do?

Having recently travelled to Marrakech I was immersed in the diverse culture of craftsmanship that helped me understand the cultural significance of weaving. The techniques created by Berber and Moroccan artisans have been preserved over many centuries dating back to 1500 BC, which over the years has been infiltrated into western culture. I want my work to hone into and examine the exquisite masters of the past and bring it to the forefront of what I do.

I intend to bring forward these techniques into my practise and further understand the reasons for my work by building a loom and weaving tools, such as bobbins and beaters, from scratch. This level of dedication and craftsmanship will push me to be absorbed into the process of weaving and allows me to develop an understanding of historical traditions of everyday life. I believe this exemplifies the interests of Sir Denis Mahons' who took pleasure in traditional Italian and baroque artworks which have a similar impact as tapestries with direct and dramatic intentions appealing to the senses and emotions of their audience.

I think Sir Denis Mahons' foundation would welcome this interactivity with my craft and to absorb other's in my process. With this in mind, alongside the loom I will make large scale weavings that combine both traditional and contemporary styles, taking inspiration from the colours of Marrakech, and presenting them not only as fabric but as sculptural pieces.

1.2 What does it involve?

This project will involve two stages the first being the manufacturing of the loom and the second producing multiple tapestries.

I will be using the great facilities at the university including the wood work shop, to use the machinery such as a lathe, and using joinery techniques such as spline joints along with the metal work shop being a huge contribution to helping this project. I'd like to understand how to forge steel together to create relevant tools such as a beater, through this experimentation I'd also like to show these materiality's in their natural purest forms and show them as individual objects as part of the final project. Furthermore, I intend to record the labour that goes into the project to create a freeze frame so that the audience have accessibility to the whole process of making. This is fitting to Sir Denis Mahons' belief that art should be accessible to everyone.

A big part of my research is to perfect and develop the colours for my wool and to find the perfect yarns. My trip to Marrakech was enlightening to see wool being dyed with natural pigments and I bought many colours back to experiment with. I will also be taking a trip to

the Fairfield yarns in Rochdale to look into a variety of wools. It is important to me to find the qualities that I want from specific wools and understand the process of how it's made.

I will also be partaking in an online class about blending colours into weavings, and how to build up a gradient of colour. This will be helpful in learning new methods of creating a nice composition within my work.

1.3 What do you hope to achieve?

By the end of the project I'd want to present a loom that not only works in a fixed location but works anywhere, with the intention for me to easily take it out of the studio doors. Making it accessible would be so that I could utilise it with my further studies.

As a final idea I'd ideally present the loom as a work that is in it's organic process, with bobbins and the beater still functioning practically, showing the audience what a working loom looks like. Alongside this I'd like to produce multiple large scale weaving's that exist past being just a flat piece of cloth and present them hanging from a wall. This is something I am keen to experiment with to transform them into their own narratives. In doing so I hope to encourage the audience to get involved with the piece, which I believe Sir Denis Mahon would welcome and for people to consider and understand the history of weaving. The works will hopefully stand alone as artworks but also have a place in a domestic setting showing that I understand the role of carpet weaving throughout history.

I'd like to create works that embodies the process of a painter, taking interest in different subjects and textures. I find deconstructing an image into a grid plays a big part in my approach to making work allowing me to enlarge ideas easily, this has been helpful in the past as I've mainly looked at zoomed in textures in photography images of my surroundings. Developing this process as part of my language is something I would like to pick up again and explore more in depth. I'd like to gain a peacefulness from my practice which embodies the methods of Japanese craftsmanship, creating tools and machinery will help me gain a control of this and enrich my experience of weaving.

1.4 Why do you want to do it?

Weaving has become a true passion of mine and ties in and has deep connections to a lot of my family heritage. My mother was a fashion designer who adored knitting and crochet she often would take many work trips around the world to explore the textile industry. On one of her trips, she brought back a carpet from Marrakesh which I absolutely loved and the carpet remains in the house still to this day. My mother sadly died after a short fight with an illness and the carpet reminds me of her and her abilities as a craftsperson so it holds huge sentimental value to me. As for my father, he grew up in Kidderminster, a traditional carpet weaving town in the Black Country. He grew up witnessing the factories close by to him and would often share stories with me about this time as he used to watch the affect weaving had on people's lives and their families.

I thoroughly enjoy my time weaving it has made me slow down my practice in every single aspect as it is a demanding and thought-provoking task which has taught me a lot about the world we live in today.

Through my designs I will develop narratives which will make people think about craft as a serious art form and I look forward to challenging myself in this way.

1.5 How does this relate to the interests of Sir Denis Mahon?

I'd ideally like to create work that combines the cultural significance of weaving in different cultures, translating the significance of weaving in Irish culture, creating tweed loose weavings and evidencing the significance and diversity of weaving. I believe Sir Denis Mahon would have enjoyed the construction and my attempt to build things from scratch and apply myself through every step of the process. I think from an art histories point of view understanding African art and its significance in influencing western art and reflecting on the traditions would have been of interest to him from a historical context. Weaving is accessible globally as a craft and I'd like to continue to make it accessible to those in the art world and I think Sir Denis Mahon would welcome this.

2. How will you spend the grant funds?

Please keep your answers to 300 words

2.1. Please give a total and break down of the budget. (include: materials, travel, research, beyond average use of specific Art School facilities, additional technician time, exhibition installation materials)

No.	Equipment	Add ons	Total cost
1	Wool	Return travel to Fairfield yarns, Delivery costs	£1,500
2	Natural dyes	Brought some already, Delivery costs	£200
3	Steel, inc forging steel	Metallic spray, delivery costs, metals4u.com	£350
4	Wood/timber	Inc ply + softwood Morans builders merchant	£200
5	Screws/bolts, glue	Morans builders merchant	£50
6	Castor wheels	Load bearing, delivery costs	£50
7	Sketchbooks	For drawings/paintings development work	£30
8	Paint sets	Development work	£70
9	Metal mechanisms	For bobbin	£20
10	Trip to the carpet museum	Return trains to Kidderminster	£50
11	School of weft face	Zoom class on blending colours in weaving	£200
12	Trip to London cloth company	Travel	£30
13	Casting silicones	Brought at the university	£20
14	Forging class, for the beater	May have to pay extra for a special class	£250
15	Wood	High quality hardwood	£200
Total	Not yet confirmed	+/- £500	£3,220

2.2 What difference will the grant make to your project?

During most of my summers off I have been able to work aside from my art practise, saving money to fund art materials and educational trips to galleries for my work. However, this summer has been cut short due to the academic year being pushed back because of covid-19. Therefore, I would be truly grateful to receive this award and grant so that I can have

the freedom to create and explore my work through extensive use of materiality, that would make a massive contribution to the outcome of the work that I am so passionate to make. I want to make a loom that is long lasting for many years to come so that I can continue to create artworks when my degree finishes, and the grant would allow me to achieve this.

I would gain freedom and time to be more creative with colour and texture through the weavings as last term I found it especially hard with having to work part time and apply myself fully to my practise.

Furthermore, I'd love to visit the Fairfield yarns, and have the opportunity to buy many yarns and explore the differences of wool and their benefits and how I can give my work the best finish possible. I've seen the shop online for a while and would love to have the freedom to go to the shop and buy what ever I like the look of, exploring the vast variety of wools, differing in thickness, strength, stretchiness that they have on offer.

Finally, it would be an honour to have a title of Sir Dennis Mohan award which will help boost my career in the arts which I'm dedicated to achieving. It will help aid my applications to postgraduate courses and to have this on my cv as such a prestigious award will stand out hugely and something that I would be incredibly proud of.

2.3 If the project will require beyond average use of specific Art School facilities or technician support, please give more information here (e.g. Kilns, metal workshop, wood workshop, print room)

Potentially a forge, a forge could be set up at the university however I'm unaware if it's offered given the health and safety risks of forging pieces of metal together. This can be done at any forge and most forges do evening classes, in fact I already know one in my local community I'm sure if inquired a beater could be made outside of the university one evening.

2.4 Will you need any equipment the Art School does not currently have?

No additional equipment will be required outside the art school, if a simple forge can be set up.

3. Tell us about yourself (300 words maximum word count for each question)

I am a person who loves to get hands on and involved in lots of creating, I see myself as a maker. I enjoy learning new skills and applying them into a different area that I'm used to challenging myself in the learning process. Weaving has become this new unknown exciting project for me and I'm constantly thinking of creating more time/cost affective methods for producing tapestries. Colour has always played a huge part in my life and I love to play with colours in a way that they interact with each other. Josef Albers fuelled my passion for colour experimentation. I have always had the intention of using colours to create a meaningful language, whether it be used to draw attention to a certain composition or used to bounce off the eyes of the viewer to create a certain mood for the audience. I've recently been fascinated with Japanese's way of life and culture, combining traditions with newly thought out techniques. The way energy plays a big part in all aspects of Japanese life with good energy synergy being brought towards you, as evidenced in their carpentry tools, is something I'd like to bring forward into my works. Japanese weaving and dyeing has become somewhat of a huge interest of mine and alongside African and historical influences it is shaping how I view and understand societies and their cultures.

statement: *I certify that this is my original idea.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

signed:

date:07/10/2021

PLEASE INCLUDE VISUAL MATERIAL HERE (up to 4 pages):

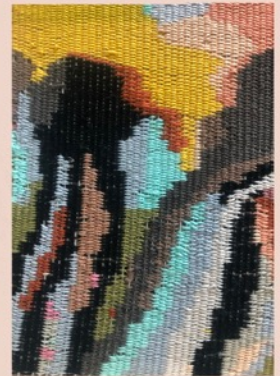
West Norwood Weaving



Presented as a carpet



Photograph of me in my 2nd year studio

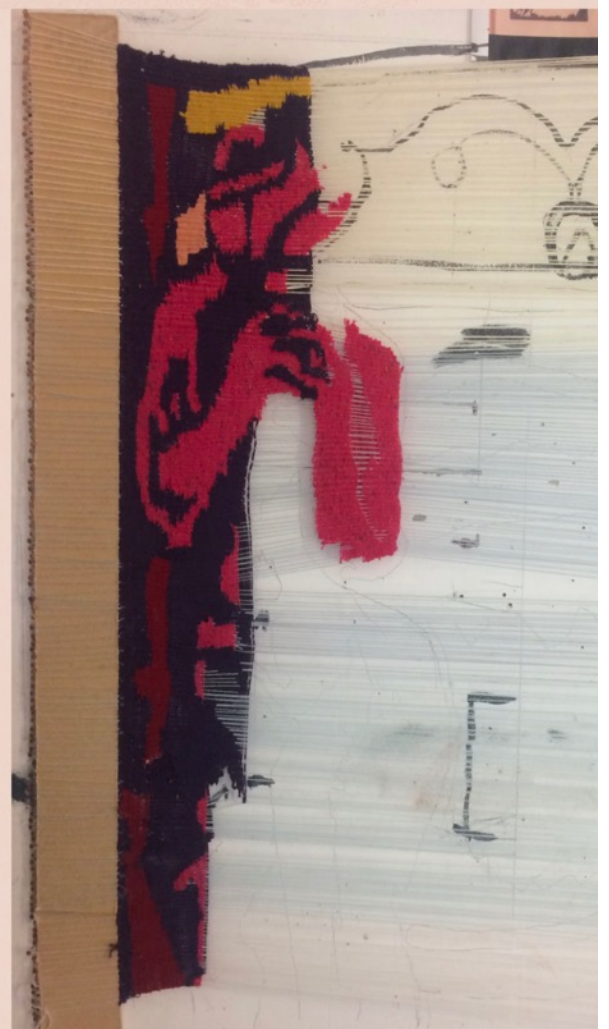


Small details of weaving

Lockdown chair weaving, of still life



My first weaving - crying woman





Sculptures from
the past, working
with grids and
realism.

Developing a
language through
space and depth.

Works vary in
material, from
copper bashed
into a fabric like
state, to cast
bronze capturing
the motion.

