

Phantasmagoria

Audio guide

**Steph Linn and
Philip Speakman**

**HENRY MOORE
INSTITUTE**

Stop 11.

Steph: My name is Steph Linn and I'm a sculptor, and my practice is mostly based around the textile industry and specifically about knitting.

Philip: I'm Philip Speakman. I am an artist who mainly works with moving image and performance and writing and generally exploring, but also using storytelling. Working with Steph has been really nice because I think we share certain interests maybe to do with traditional forms of craft or traditional forms of storytelling, but looking at them through, I guess quite a contemporary lens.

Steph: The work that I made in collaboration with Phil is my aspect of it are this kind of large, I think of them almost as like reliquaries. They're surrounding the screens. And they're made of bent mild steel, which has been bent by hand, and kind of suspended between the steel is knitted textile, and the textile is mostly made of wool cotton. I tried to use a lot of sheep's wool because the movement we're talking about, Kett's Rebellion is in Norwich, and Norwich has a really rich history of wool textiles, specifically worsted wool. So I tried to use as much of that within these as possible.

They are one and a half metres tall by one metre, and they kind of protrude away from the wall, and they're almost supposed to

surround the screens and give the screens, kind of like a feeling of a body behind them. Because on the screen are people recounting this history of Kett's Rebellion.

Philip: Three portrait hung screens, each of which has got two different speakers. So there's kind of six characters, I guess across in the work or six narrators who speak to camera in kind of the way that we recognise from people recording TikToks or Instagram Stories to their own phone screen or something. So kind of replicating that kind of language of social media. And between them, they tell the story of rebellion, which began as a protesting enclosure in Norfolk when land suddenly became more valuable for sheep. The wool that could be produced from that people were dispossessed of the land, which led to a large kind of movement led by this guy, Robert Kett, to protest this enclosure and led to this kind of armed encampment on the hill above Norwich.

And it's a story that exists in kind of local Norwich folklore. It's something that I was taught about at school. Like there's Kett's Hill in Norwich, sort of just outside Norwich still. So I was interested in this as a history of kind of a particular form of protest that was quite successful for a long time.

But the other element of this story is the way that it ended was to do with, there was a prophecy that began to be spread amongst the rebels which was kind of ambiguous and could be taken as a prophecy of their final victory or prophecy of their doom. And because of this prophecy, they moved off of their high ground, their encampment on Kettle Hill went down into, Dussindale, which is where they were eventually slaughtered. So kind of thinking about this idea of prophecy as this kind of particular type of story that has a purchase on reality because it drives people to do things or because it produces forms of belief.

Steph: I think that knit and wool and textiles also have a lot of relationship to war, to violence, to kind of a lot of the political situations that we're in, you know, the economy of textiles has driven a lot of things. But yeah, basically combining these two things and kind of putting this tension on the knit to take it away from a feeling of coziness or comfort, and bring it into something that will hopefully make people reconsider the kind of associations with.

I hope people come away understanding and more about the way that we have gotten to where we are in the world and the things that we often take for granted, such as like the concept of an enclosure, are not things that have always existed and are not things that are immutable, and just as easy as something can come about, it can also go away.

Philip: The fact that as much as technologies progress and with that, we might think that we move further away from irrational kind of like beliefs or behaviours like believing in prophecies, that actually these things persist and are reproduced by new technologies. And there are forms of folklore that still get repeated by those in positions of power.

This is the end of Stop 11.

This is a transcript of an audio guide produced by Henry Moore Institute for the exhibition *Phantasmagoria*, on display from 15 May to 30 August 2026. For more information visit henry-moore.org/phantasmagoria