

EMMA DOVE

CUSTODIAN

THE KATY DOVE ARCHIVE

YOUR BACKGROUND

I am an artist filmmaker based in Dumfries and Galloway, working across moving image, photography, sound and collaborative projects. I also I work part-time with CAMPLE LINE, supporting exhibitions, events, film screenings and accessibility across the public programme.

Alongside my own practice, I have been custodian of the Katy Dove Archive since 2015, caring for and activating the multidisciplinary work of my late sister, the Scottish artist Katy Dove (1970–2015). My experience as a filmmaker – and our shared interests in landscape, psychology, the body and collaborative ways of working – offered an intuitive route into caring for Katy’s archive, and has helped me navigate the creative, technical and ethical decisions involved in its stewardship. My role includes cataloguing, digitisation, exhibition support and developing new contexts for Katy’s work. Recent projects include an Archive Open Studio in November 2023 and ongoing preparation for *The Subtle Body*, a major exhibition and public programme for Glasgow International 2026.

Katy was an important mentor in my own creative development, and caring for her archive allows that dialogue to continue – I continue to learn from her through the processes and materials she left behind. This relationship shapes the sensitivity, responsibility and long-term commitment I bring to her legacy.



Emma Dove, Custodian of The Katy Dove Archive

YOUR ARCHIVE

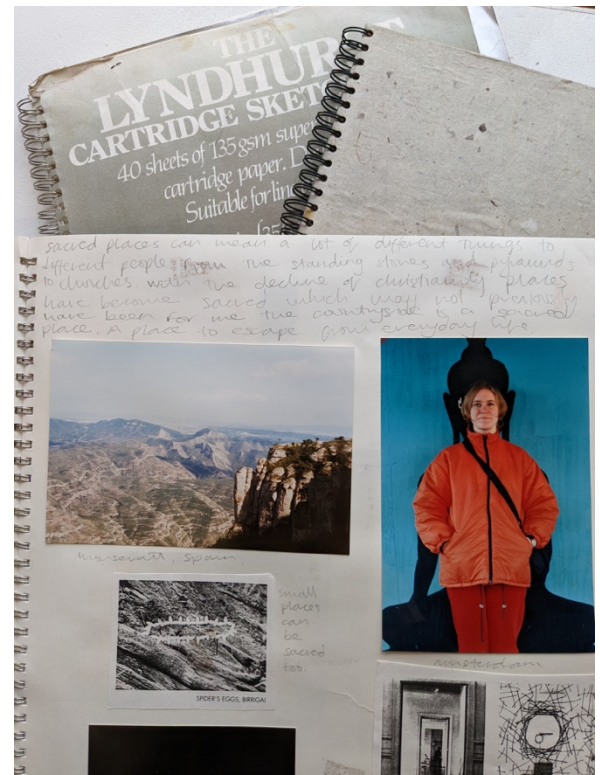
The Katy Dove Archive brings together the multidisciplinary practice of Scottish artist Katy Dove (1970–2015), spanning animation, film, painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, sound and collaborative work. The archive contains 17+ animations, 58 framed works, more than 800 unframed drawings and prints, over 25 sketchbooks, and a substantial volume of digital material including scanned drawings, edit files and documentation. It also holds extensive ephemera – diaries, notebooks, project notes, correspondence, and materials from collaborations, residencies and workshops – alongside legacy media such as VHS, MiniDV, Hi8, Super8 and 16mm film.



Katy Dove

Katy's practice was grounded in rhythm, improvisation, colour, sound and gesture, often developed in dialogue with musicians, choreographers and communities. The archive reflects this breadth, holding shared legacies from projects including residencies, collaborations and workshops, and recordings from bands Muscles of Joy and Full Eye, of which Katy was a member. Together, these materials form a rich record of process, experimentation and cross-disciplinary exchange.

Since Katy's death, I have acted as custodian of her archive, working to consolidate, catalogue and digitise the collection and to develop ethical approaches to its care, interpretation and future visibility. The archive is now stored in a studio at Solway House in Dumfries, with around 90% of physical works catalogued and a public-facing digital collection available via [Artwork Archive](#). My role includes responding to enquiries, supporting exhibitions, and developing new forms of engagement with the archive, including the forthcoming GI2026 project *The Subtle Body* and related public programmes.



Materials at The Katy Dove Archive

YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE

One of the central challenges in stewarding Katy's archive has been navigating the question: what would Katy do, say or want? In the early years, I felt the need to defer every decision back to an imagined version of her wishes. As I have learned more about the realities of caring for a posthumous archive – and spoken with others managing the creative legacies of loved ones – I have gradually gained more agency in decision-making, informed by Katy's ethos but also by my own learning and the advice of experienced peers.

Katy died very much mid-career. She had no opportunity to consider her legacy, articulate her wishes, or prepare her archive. She left behind a rich and complex body of work, but relatively few clues about what she considered "finished," what she felt comfortable exhibiting, or how she might have hoped her work would be organised and cared for. This creates ongoing challenges around interpretation, selection and presentation. Much of her working process involved gathering: sketching, free drawing, painting, collecting photographs, sound recordings and video footage, and scanning, layering and animating shapes, sounds and textures. These materials are compelling and invaluable in understanding her practice, yet were perhaps never intended to be shown publicly.

A significant challenge is determining how to honour this abundance of working material – and the insight it offers – while respecting Katy's privacy and the ways she presented her work during her lifetime. This is particularly acute in relation to her final project at Duff House, which remained unfinished when she died and includes video and animation work-in-progress. Deciding whether, when or how to share elements of an incomplete artwork requires careful ethical consideration.

Beyond the conceptual and emotional dimensions, there are also practical challenges. The archive has no commercial gallery representation, which creates difficulties around pricing, valuation and selecting works for sale in a way that is ethical, appropriate and aligned with Katy's career. A sustainable funding model is also needed to support the archive's ongoing work and ambitions, as well as a long-term legacy and management plan to ensure that Katy's work remains visible and cared for beyond the breadth of my own custodianship. We have created a partnership model of working to help support capacity and deliver on our goals alongside constantly needing to fundraise to deliver our program and cover our core costs. We don't receive core funding so this a huge part of our weekly activities and remains a constant ongoing challenge!



The Katy Dove Archive

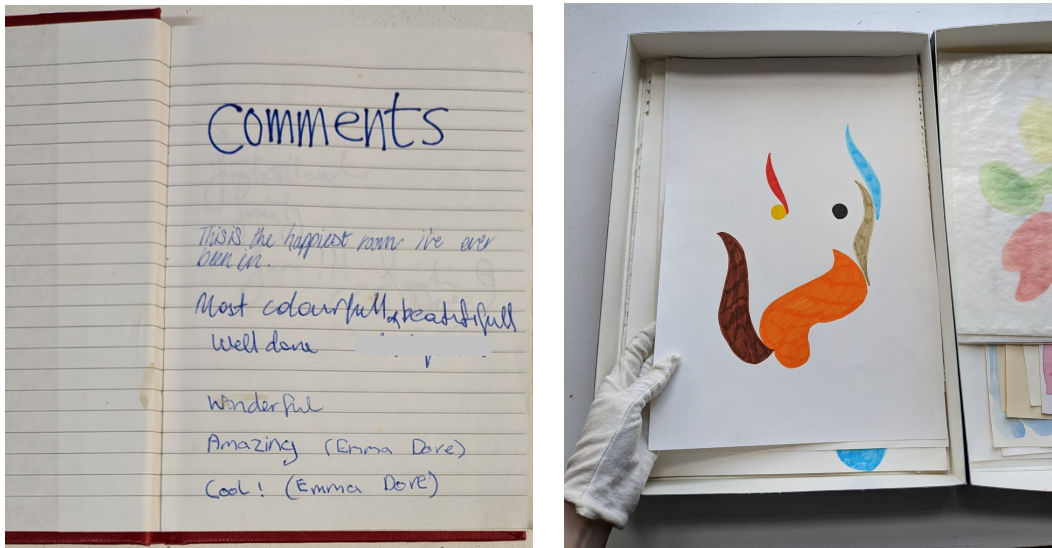
YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR COLLECTION

Choosing a single favourite item from the archive feels almost impossible, because my connection to the collection is rooted not only in aesthetic appreciation but in memory, relationship and discovery. Some of the most meaningful moments emerge when I come across something I didn't know existed, or when I find an object that unexpectedly intersects with my own memories.

One example is the guestbook from Katy's degree show at DJCAD. Tucked among the comments is a message from my childhood self – "Cool! - Emma Dove" – something I have no memory of writing. Yet I vividly remember the exhibition: the bright neon-pink sculptural tunnel, the drawings and shapes emerging from walls, copies of Katy's first animation *Fantasy Freedom* on VHS, and the sense of pride all of us felt. I remember thinking the artwork was cool, but even more so, that my big sister was **super** cool.

This is what I value most in the archive: the way objects hold layers of significance that shift depending on who encounters them. A sketch may simply be admired as a drawing by one person, yet for someone else it can unlock a cascade of sensory memory – a shared moment in a studio, a collaboration, a gig, a holiday, a rehearsal, an install, a conversation.

During the Archive Open Studio in 2023, we invited friends and former collaborators of Katy to choose a work and share its personal resonance. Their responses revealed how each item becomes a bridge between Katy's life, relationships and creative practice. So rather than a single favourite object, I cherish the archive's capacity to reveal hidden memories, forge connections and continually expand my understanding of Katy's work and the many lives it touched.



Archival materials at *The Katy Dove*