

# Edinburgh based anthropologist and artist auctions her painting to raise funds for the NHS, writes Ashaluck Bhatiasevi

Inês-Hermione Mulford is a resident artist at the Royal College of Surgeons. She graduated from the University of Edinburgh in Social Anthropology in 2018. She combines the disciplines of the arts and sciences through anthropological research and uses the medium of paint to present her findings. She wanted to do something to help raise funds for National Health Services (NHS). Her mother is a midwife based in Oxford, while she lives in Edinburgh.

“We are in a health crisis and are told to stay home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and to protect our NHS. My sister Felicity and I wanted to do something, but during these times, we can’t go on long distance runs or organize a social activity to raise funds. We’ve been discussing over Facetime as she’s in Oxford,” said Ms Mulford. They decided to develop a website where they could auction one of her oil paintings to help raise funds.

She has relocated her studio to her flat and developed her website during the lockdown. The oil painting she chose to put out for auction was recently created as part of her surgical art series from her flat during the COVID-19 pandemic. It displays the white gowns and hands of a surgeon and a nurse performing a surgery. She has named this painting “PPE” (personal protective equipment). **The auction will be closed at 5pm on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2020.** The funds from the auction will be managed by the NHS Trust, with the

contributions going to NHS Edinburgh and NHS Oxford.

To create the paintings, in normal times, she captures images of surgery in real time, while performing the surgery, through sketches and photographs. She then follows-up with discussions with surgeons and nurses. When she gets back to her studio, she reviews these materials, and then begins to work on her painting. "I try to reflect on the complexity of the surgical artform, both in the theatre and on canvas," said Mulford.

Ms Mulford is currently working on a set of paintings on robotic surgery where she explores relationships between the surgeon, the robot and the painting. This piece of work is part of 'The Body Voyager' exhibition which will feature work on the future of surgery. It was scheduled to be on display at the Surgeon's Hall Museum in October 2020, but due to the pandemic, the exhibition has been postponed to March 2021.

*Aphaluck Bhatiasevi is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh*