

Peter Heywood

Personal Profile

I am an inventor, designer and maker whose work is driven by ideas and the challenge of working out how to make them happen. I particularly enjoy developing new making processes, solving technical problems and experimenting with materials rather than starting with a predetermined medium.

My first career was as a chartered civil engineer, followed by more than two decades as a journalist and internet publisher. In 2018 I returned to creative practice, gaining a First-Class BA (Hons) in Contemporary Craft from Plymouth College of Art.

My work ranges from sculpture, automata and installations to large-scale community art. I have worked with metal, glass, ceramics, electronics and a variety of unconventional materials. Increasingly, my practice involves not just making things myself but developing projects, finding solutions, bringing the right people together and working out how ambitious ideas can actually be made to happen.

Education

BA (Hons) Contemporary Craft – First Class
Plymouth College of Art, 2018

BSc (Hons) Civil Engineering
University of Nottingham, 1967

Selected Creative Practice

United by the Sea — 2025–present

Major community art project in Looe, developed through Creative Looe CIC.

- Played a leading role in developing the project from an initial idea for a painted mural into a large-scale ceramic installation involving hundreds of local schoolchildren.
- Prepared clay for children in four local schools to make ceramic fish.
- Bought and refurbished a kiln to enable the project to be produced at the required scale.
- Developed the practical processes for firing and glazing hundreds of fish.
- Recruited and coordinated more than 30 local volunteers to assist with glazing.
- Currently leading the next stage of the project: installation of the completed fish as a major community artwork on the 60-metre Lower Quay Stores wall in Looe.

The Snake Pit / Snakebots — 2018–present

Robotic snake installation developed in collaboration with a retired software engineer as my degree project at Plymouth College of Art and selected as a “Pick of the Show” at the London Design Fair.

When I approached Discovering42, Cornwall’s “Science, Art and Sustainability Museum”, about exhibiting some of the snakes, it became clear that they needed to be substantially more reliable to withstand a museum environment. I re-engaged my software engineer colleague to re-engineer the

electronics, mechanics and control systems. Three of the five snakebots were subsequently adapted for Discovering42: two were installed at the museum and a third became part of its travelling exhibition.

Teapot Project — 2016–2019

A series of experimental and unconventional teapots. Each pot presented a different technical and creative problem, requiring new approaches to forming, joining, construction and firing.

The project exemplifies my interest in process: the challenge is often less about choosing a material or technique than about inventing a way of making an idea possible.

Other Selected Work

- **Devonport Column Gates — 2012** – Won an open design competition to create new gates for the Grade I listed Devonport Column in Plymouth. Developed the design and helped fabricate and install the finished gates.
- **Giant Sunfish — 2013** – Selected by Plymouth City Council in a design competition to decorate one of a series of fibreglass sunfish created for a Plymouth tourist trail. Painted the finished sculpture, which was installed on Armada Way outside the Council's offices.
- **Eden Project**, 2018 – designed part of a mining exhibition.
- **Tate Exchange**, 2017–18 – collaborative project between Plymouth College of Art and Tate Modern.

Community Arts & Creative Leadership

Director, Creative Looe CIC — 2025–present

Developing and delivering participatory arts and heritage projects involving schools, community groups, volunteers, artists and local organisations.

Trustee, Looe Shedders CIO — 2025–present

Supporting community projects based around practical making, repair, restoration and shared skills.

My community work increasingly combines creative development with practical problem-solving, project coordination and volunteer engagement.

Earlier Career

Co-founder and Founding Editor, Light Reading — 1999–2007

Co-founded and developed a technology news and information website in the USA, subsequently sold as a successful internet publishing business.

Journalist — 1977–1999

Journalist based in London and Paris, specialising in technology and business.

Chartered Civil Engineer — 1967–1977

Worked on major infrastructure projects in the UK, Algeria and Zambia.

Approach

I am particularly interested in the **process of making** — the experiments, failures, discoveries and solutions that turn an idea into something tangible.

I rarely begin with a particular material in mind. Usually there is an idea first, followed by the question of what materials, techniques, people and processes might make it possible.

That might mean inventing a new way to make a teapot, finding a software engineer to help turn an unreliable robotic snake into a museum exhibit, or organising hundreds of children and volunteers to create a community artwork. The finished object matters, but for me the fascination often lies in figuring out how to get there.