

Peter Heywood

SUMMARY

I'm an inventor, designer and maker whose practice is driven by ideas, problem-solving and experimentation. My projects usually start with an idea, and I'm particularly interested in finding ways to express it — often by inventing new making processes, experimenting with unfamiliar materials or collaborating with people with specialist expertise.

My background combines creative practice with ten years as a chartered civil engineer and more than two decades in journalism and internet publishing. Increasingly, my work also involves orchestration: developing ambitious ideas, solving the practical problems they create, finding appropriate expertise and bringing people together to make them happen.

EDUCATION

Plymouth College of Art

BA (Hons) Contemporary Craft — First Class

2018

University of Nottingham

BSc (Hons) Civil Engineering

1967

EXPERIENCE

United by the Sea

2025–present

Looe

Major community public-art project, Looe

- A large-scale ceramic mural being developed through Creative Looe CIC for the 60-metre Lower Quay Stores wall in Looe.
- Developed the original mural concept and subsequently reshaped it to incorporate local schools.
- Prepared clay for hundreds of children across four local schools to make individual ceramic fish.
- Bought and refurbished a kiln and developed the practical processes required to produce and handle the work at scale.
- Recruited and coordinated more than 30 local volunteers to help glaze the fish.
- Currently progressing the next stage: installation of the completed fish on the Lower Quay Stores.

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. 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 for a museum environment.
- I re-engaged my software-engineer collaborator to re-engineer the electronics, mechanics and control systems.
- Three of the five snakebots were subsequently adapted for the museum: two were installed there and a third became part of its travelling exhibition.

Teapotty

2016–2019

A deliberately perverse exploration of materials and making. I challenged myself — and invited others to challenge me — to make the same everyday object, a teapot, from completely unsuitable materials including nails, cocktail sticks, tea leaves, chocolate and wool.

- Each material presented a new technical and creative problem, requiring me to invent a way of making the teapot through experimentation and trial and error.

Devonport Column Gates

2012

Plymouth

Winner, open design competition

- Won the competition to create new gates for the Grade I listed Devonport Column in Plymouth.
- Developed the design and worked with architects and fabricators to develop, fabricate and install the finished gates, including making the glass elements.

Giant Sunfish

2013

Plymouth City Council

Armada Way, Plymouth

Winner, Plymouth City Council design competition

- Designed and painted one of a series of giant fibreglass sunfish created for a Plymouth tourist trail.
- The completed fish was installed prominently on Armada Way outside Plymouth City Council's offices.

Director

2025–present

Creative Looe CIC

Looe

Director of a community arts organisation developing creative projects and public art in Looe.

- Key involvement includes conceiving and developing United by the Sea, coordinating schools, volunteers and specialist support, and solving the practical and organisational challenges of delivering large-scale participatory artwork.

Trustee

Looe Shedders CIO

Looe

Trustee of a community making and repair organisation in Looe, supporting practical projects, volunteering and community engagement.

Co-founder & Founding Editor

1999–2007

Light Reading

New York

New York-based technology news and information business.

Journalist

1977–1999

London and Paris

Technology and business journalism in London and Paris.

Chartered Civil Engineer

1967–1977

UK, Algeria and Zambia

Major infrastructure projects in the UK, Algeria and Zambia.

PROJECTS

Eden Project | Designed part of a mining exhibit.

Tate Exchange | Participated in a collaborative project between Plymouth College of Art and Tate Modern.

Earlier community artworks | Collaborative public and community artworks in Looe and Plymouth included Message in a Bottle, Rainbow Fish, Carnival Dragon and Reindeer.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Concept development and creative problem-solving

Inventing and developing new making processes

Hands-on making and prototyping

Cross-disciplinary collaboration

Community engagement and participatory art

Project development and orchestration

Practical organisation and delivery

Working with specialist expertise