

## Start at home #25

### Spangled stocking faces



“Once my sculptures are coming to life, I feel an affection for them... I can tell when they’ve come to life because they make me laugh!”

Tarryn Gill

#### About the artist

Growing up in Perth, two of Tarryn Gill’s favourite activities were drawing and dancing. She imagined her grown-up self as either a paint-splattered artist at an easel, or a glamorous performer draped in sequins and wafting across a stage. Her art practice today reflects those twin passions, using costuming materials to craft strange, theatrical soft sculpture installations.

#### About the work

Tarryn Gill’s installation *Guardians* features a solemn group of sparkling, totemic figures who chatter, hum and sing to each other in overlapping waves of sound. They are human, animal and monster, self and other, spirit and mind. Tarryn carves the figures out of foam, covers them in fabric, and sews the facial features by hand. The work is imbued with associations from Tarryn’s own life: her cat meowing, fabric from callisthenics costumes, and the sound of her feet tap-dancing. Inspired by Japanese *Haniwa* terracotta figurines, Tarryn imagines these characters watching over her in the afterlife.

**Guardians is on display in Gallery 8 until May 8, 2019**

We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at [public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au)

@agsa.adelaide #agsastart

**Image**  
detail: Tarryn Gill, Australia, born 1981, *Guardians*, 2014-16, Perth, nine sculptures with soundscape, composition by Tom Hogan, mixed media including speakers, (dimensions variable); Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2016, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Courtesy the artist, installation view: 2016 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide.

#### Materials you need

- A pair of nylon stockings or tights, any colour
- Sewing thread and a long needle
- Two shiny beads or sequins
- A pencil or texta
- Polyester stuffing / hobby fill
- Scissors
- A long sewing needle
- A short length of tinsel
- Someone to help if you are new to sewing

#### Create your own work of art

- 1 Cut off one leg of the stockings. Tie a knot halfway down and turn the stocking inside out so the knot is tucked in. Stuff hobby fill into the stocking and tie the top, forming a round ball.
- 2 Lightly draw two dots where the eyes will go, a large circle for the nose, and a curved line for the mouth. Will your face be smiling or frowning?
- 3 Thread your needle and knot the end. Push the needle up through the knot in the stocking and pull it out next to the nose circle. Pinch some stuffing into the circle and stitch around it, pulling tight to hold the nose in place. Sew back through the knot and secure the thread.
- 4 Push the needle through the knot again and pull it out on one of the eye dots. Sew on a bead or sequin. Sew back through the knot, tugging slightly to recess the eye. Knot the thread and repeat this step for the second eye.
- 5 Sew up from the knot again, coming out beside the mouth line. Sew small stitches along the line and pull to tighten. Sew back out through the knot, and tie and clip your thread.
- 6 Finally, sew the tinsel onto the top of the head to make sparkly hair. Your face is finished!

#### Take it further

Tarryn’s figures are like protective talismans. Do you have a special toy or figurine that feels as if it keeps you safe?

Try adding extra features like cheeks, ears or eyebrows. Does the face look human? How would you make an animal face?

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