

## STROKES OF GENIUS

The best of new art emerging in the Midlands...

Sharon Farrelly took a new direction in life when she left her job with the prison service to follow her dreams.

She had always painted but on turning forty Sharon realised she wanted to become an artist. Her work features in the New Art West Midlands exhibition, which is being shown at four major Midlands galleries, including Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and The Barber Institute, until May 18.

Sharon is inspired by 70s TV shows, pop art and Hollywood movies. Having studied Fine Art at Birmingham City University, she is currently applying to the Royal College of Art and Royal Academy to study an MA.

Sharon said: "I was a prison officer and then a probation supervisor, and I got to my late thirties and thought 'What am I doing?'"

"You only live once and I realised how much I love art. Taking the course at Birmingham was the best thing I've ever done. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

Sharon is influenced by anything from Caravaggio to Les Dawson.

She added: "I love British humour, and there was a simmering intelligence to his act. I love to see the laughter in fine art. I feel very honoured to be in this exhibition."

Wendy Law of Turning Point West Midlands said: "We have one of the most vibrant and authentic art scenes in the country. New Art West Midlands is a unique project, with nationally renowned galleries and our universities working in collaboration."

New Art West Midlands features the work of 24 artists from five regional universities. For full details of participating galleries see listings below.