

Material Evidence

Menier Gallery Quilt Art

Cas Holmes

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A Quilt Art exhibition of new work.

meniergallery

18th - 29th June 2019
11.00 AM - 6.00 PM
51 Southwark Street,
London SE1 1RU



Memory, as part of telling stories, is a powerful creative resource in the art of stitched cloth. Material Evidence, the new touring exhibition by Quilt Art, was launched at Menier Gallery in a prime London location close to the Shard at the end of June. Inspired by the life and art of Mary Fogg, the inspirational founder member of Quilt Art, each maker layers their own meaning within the cloth using a diverse range of materials and methods with an 'artist's eye'. Mary, who trained at the Slade School of Art as a painter, would wholeheartedly have approved.

'A quilt is (a covering for a bed), made of two layers of cloth with a layer of soft filling between them, and stitched in lines or patterns through all the layers.'

This definition by the Cambridge dictionary applies in all the works on show as a component element, the 'soft filling' in some cases replaced by other elements or even 'air'. Equally the use of text, found materials and personal narratives are shared by many pieces. Diversity and individuality are claimed in the application of colour, technique, intention and meaning.



Mary Fogg

I like to find my 'way in' to the works before reading anything. I am drawn to the shroud-like presence of Cherilyn Martin's 'Seven Souls' - simple stencilled text combined with stitch and antique textiles echo lives past. It is only later I discover these are cleverly re-purposed industrial cloth bags hung upside down, hanging sentinel in the gallery space. Almost by contrast the ethereal double-layered richly-dyed organza of Charlotte Yde's 'The Ones That Got Away' suggests fragility in the layers of colour, of things 'just being held lightly'. The only solidity is in the richly stitched boats: an ancient symbol of transport for the soul.



Cherilyn Martin, Seven Souls and Charlotte Yde, The Ones That Got Away

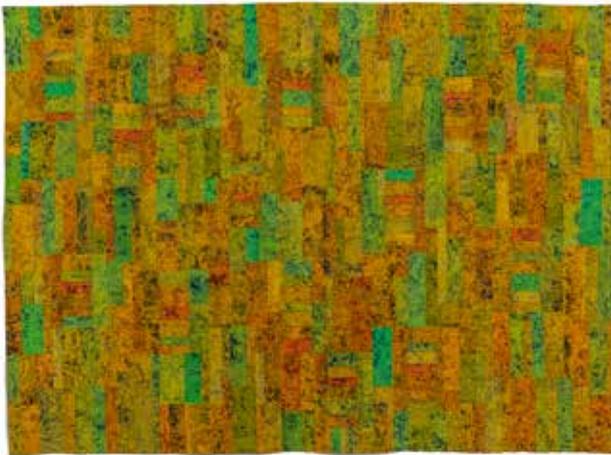
Landscape is referenced in much of the work. In 'Hazel Grove', Elizabeth Brimelow echoes the everyday sounds of a familiar space in a three-dimensional quilted drawing. Noises of birds, sirens and children and silence provide inspiration for abstracted marks. Equally, Sue Hotchkis and Sandra Meech reference specific places, Sue's complex richly coloured and stitched sculptural work 'Phoenix' is inspired by the scorched wood of a door seen on an old barn in France. By contrast, Sandra Meech's carefully positioned painterly panels 'Passages of Time' takes you through her much cherished Somerset



Elizabeth Brimelow, Hazel Grove, Sandra Meech, Passages of Time and to the right, Sue Hotchkis, Phoenix

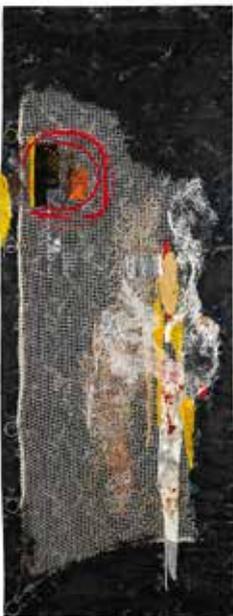
landscape as if viewed through a window. Lines and colour travel through the changing seasons.

The link between colour and cloth sits well with my practice. Working with colour is what textile artists do. Janet Twinn in 'Ridge and Furrow' and Inger Hueber with 'The Sea' use a reduced palette in their beautiful pieced works, which reveal the nature of the cloth in the raw edges and loose threads that no stretched canvas would contain. The colours shimmer on the walls of the gallery.



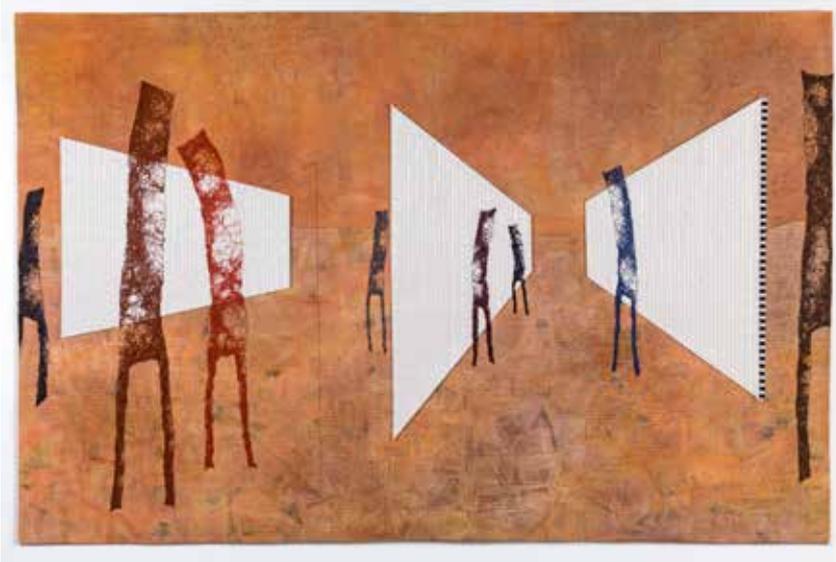
Janet Twinn, Ridge and Furrow, Inger Hueber, The Sea

Sitting side-by-side, the environmental references in Fenella Davies' 'The Catch' with its shredded netting and Eszter Bornemisza's earthy 'Allegro Barbaro' reflect a darkly brooding yet compelling presence. Both use plastic in their construction and the richly worked surfaces reminds us that the Earth and the Sea are subject to our demands and that needs to change.



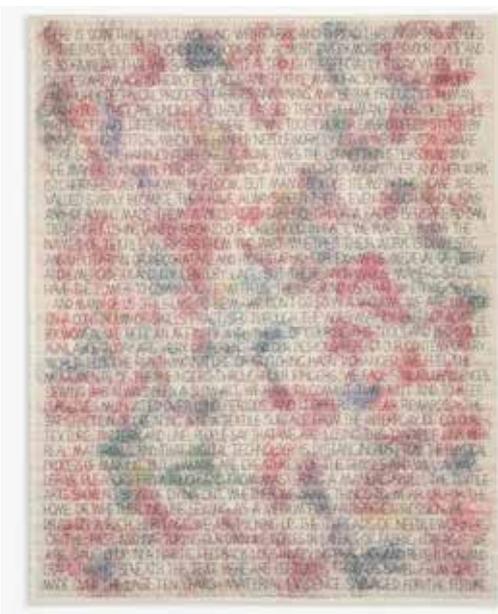
Fenella Davies, The Catch, Eszter Bornemisza, Allegro Barbaro

A comment on our place in the world can equally be read in the signature figures of Mirjam Pet-Jacobs. In 'Can We leave Things As They Are' they stand alone in a space divided by 'white walls', bending towards each other as if to make connection. Nothing we face is certain. In 'News Flash' Yael David-Cohen's newspaper embedded in shrouds of finely stitched reclaimed materials reminded me that today's news will be but briefly remembered in tomorrow's collection of waste.



Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, *Can We Leave Things as They Are* and Yael David-Cohen, *News Flash*

This referencing of text is continued in the works of Sara Impey's 'Haptic Feedback'. Words relating to memory and stitch are carefully worked over a quilted surface containing trapped thread off-cuts. These contrast with the handwritten text of Jette Clover's 'Words', drawing inspiration from family letters and keepsakes. This is echoed in Dirkje van der Horst-Beetsma's 'Summer 17'. Postcards stitched together with threads hanging loose are hung below a quilt of a family photo in which we read of the illness and loss of a child.



Sara Impey, *Haptic Feedback*, Jette Clover, *Words 9*, Dirkje van der Horst-Beetsma, *Summer 17*.

The domestic is reflected in the vessels in Dominie Nash's 'Stills from a Life 54'. These have echoes of the work by Georgia Morandi (1890-1964), an Italian painter, in their sensitivity to colour placement. Similarly Willy Doreleijers explores placement of objects in shapes in her pieces 'Industrial Revolution' and 'Invisible Revolution' - strong architectural forms and objects shift in space.



Dominie Nash, Stills From A Life 54 and Willy Doreleijers, Industrial Revolution

Honouring the domestic heritage of the quilts (and textiles in general) Christine Chester's 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants' acknowledges the centuries of 'unknown women makers' who have readily shared their skills so she has the power to make new works and narratives today. Her finely worked abaca paper pieced work contains the fragility and wear of a much loved and worn quilt. Finally, we return to the quilt as a 'comforter' in 'Recovery Quilt 1, Let Go' by Karina Thompson. Using images taken from



Christine Chester, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants and Karina Thompson, Recovery Quilt 1; Let Go

richly patterned Yuzen paper, the writing worked on to the surface is almost unreadable until you get to a certain distance away from it and then you read 'What Will You Do With Your Anger?' before closer inspection once again loses the text in the details. Therein, for me, lies a message: women feel, are hurt and can be angry and this is not always expressed. This becomes more powerful as the words wait to be discovered.

Traces, Quilt Art's sister exhibition containing connected smaller works will be at the Festival of Quilts. The artists Sandra Meech and Karina Thompson will also have individual galleries there.

All the quilts from both exhibitions are featured in a **book**: Material Evidence & Traces, which will be available at the Festival or from www.quiltart.eu
Material Evidence and Traces will tour separately around the UK and Europe from 2019-2022. Full touring schedule here:

Material Evidence

International Biennial Quilt & Textile Art, Villefranche sur Saône, France, 15 - 18 April 2020

International Quiltfestival Luxembourg, Wilwerwiltz, 21 – 24 May 2020

Fuga Gallery, Hungary, 21 October – 15 November 2020

Museum De Kantfabriek, Horst, The Netherlands, 2 May - 26 September 2021

Handwerksmuseum, Deggendorf, Germany, end of November 2021 - March 2022

Traces

Festival of Quilts, Birmingham, 1- 4 August 2019

Farfield Mill, Cumbria, 30 October 2019 - 3rd January 2020

New Brewery Arts, Cirencester, 11 January - 15 March, 2020

Die Schierstins, Veenwouden, The Netherlands, April - May, 2020

High Five Art Gallery, Baarle-Nassay, The Netherlands, 4 September – 20 November 2022

Quilt Art members:

Eszter Bornemisza, Elizabeth Brimelow, Christine Chester, Jette Clover, Yael David-Cohen, Fenella Davies, Willy Doreleijers, Dirkje van der Horst-Beetsma, Sue Hotchkis, Inge Hueber, Sara Impey, Cherilyn Martin, Sandra Meech, Dominie Nash, Mirjam Pet-Jacobs, Karina Thompson, Janet Twinn, Charoltte Yde

Note: Mary Fogg was a pioneering quilt artist who created commissions, lectured and taught intentionally. She died in 2016 at edge of 95

Cas Holmes

Cas Holmes is artist, author and tutor. She studied in the UK, Japan and India and exhibits and works internationally. A senior tutor at West Dean college she has written four books for Batsford publications. Her most recent, Textile Landscape (2018) is in its third print.