

LITSA ARIS

ROBIN BRAY-HURREN

PHILIPPA CLARKE

JANET DOREY

LENA FINN

ANNIE HARDY

RUTH HEATON

CHRISTINE HOWELL

SARAH JOHNS

JEMIMA MOORE

CHANTAL NEW

SYLVIA RADFORD

KATIE SONNENBERG

WEST DEAN SUMMER SHOW 2022

ANY
DAY
NOW

YIA
YAD
WON

14 - 17 JULY 2022
COPELAND GALLERY

*Unit 9I, Copeland Park, 133 Copeland Rd,
London SE15 3SN*

WEST DEAN FINE ART
GRADUATE DIPLOMA
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WEST DEAN COLLEGE
ARTS & CONSERVATION



LITSA ARIS

litsa-aris.co.uk | *@litsaaris_art*

The work of Litsa Aris focuses on strategies for ecological survival in the context of global climate change. More recently, such concerns have interwoven with a personal understanding of health and ageing over the last few decades, aligning toward a creative investigation of acceptance through focussing on the wider world.

Litsa is currently working on a series of site-specific interventions entitled 'Archive of Impermanent Strategies'. The first of these concerned symbiosis between tree species – the outcome being a series of co-dependent tree fragments exhibited in a half-renovated Edwardian glasshouse. Caught between death and decay, the uniquely intricate natural forms could only have come about by growing together. A more recent work takes inspiration from entropy as well as decay: when a closed system breaks down it inevitably makes way for a

new one to evolve, whether that be on the scale of ecological relationships, societal infrastructure, the family, or the individual.

Although predominantly focused on site-specific projects, Litsa also produces other works in a variety of media, including cast objects and reliefs, printmaking, photography, and film.

1. *Archive of Impermanent Survival Strategies: Entropy* (2022)
Part III Entropical Cosmos, evolving
Galleries of wood borer larvae cast in plaster
30 cm diameter
2. *Archive of Impermanent Survival Strategies: Symbiosis* (2022)
Wood, twine, copper tags in Edwardian glasshouse

3. *Archive of Impermanent Survival Strategies: Entropy* (2022)
Part III Entropical Cosmos, element
Galleries of wood borer larvae in Jesmonite, vegetable oil inks, acrylics and mediums
20 cm diameter





ROBIN BRAY-HURREN

@inkysloth

Using traditional embroidery techniques, cyanotype printing, patchwork and appliqué, Robin Bray-Hurren explores queer and non-normative bodies, identities and histories through textiles.

Working by hand is central to Robin's practice. Through quiet, intimate detail, he invites people to get up close and spend time with images and objects. The effort spent in making the work underlies the fact that his subjects are also worth care and attention. The repetitive nature of hand sewing provides a meditative space for work to develop slowly, with the hand of the maker always present as a reminder of the human lives integral to the work.

Robin is also interested in exploring the ways that societal constructs overlap and interact with the less defined boundaries of the biological world,

using visual art to examine various methods of understanding and organising our world. He seeks to make work that challenges inequalities in a way that recognises the diversity of experience within every audience.

1. *Q Angle* (2022)

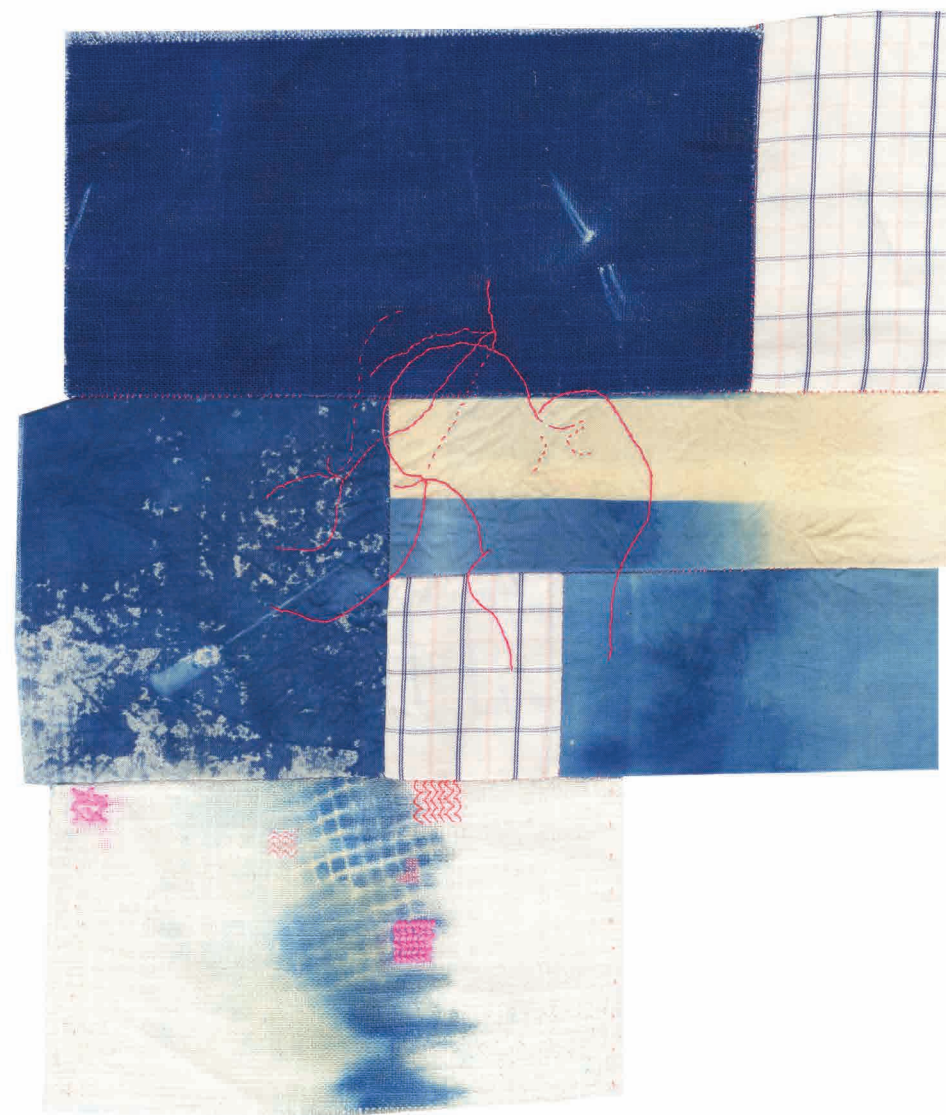
Cyanotype on cotton, cotton shirt fabric,
cotton thread, polyester thread
31 x 31 cm

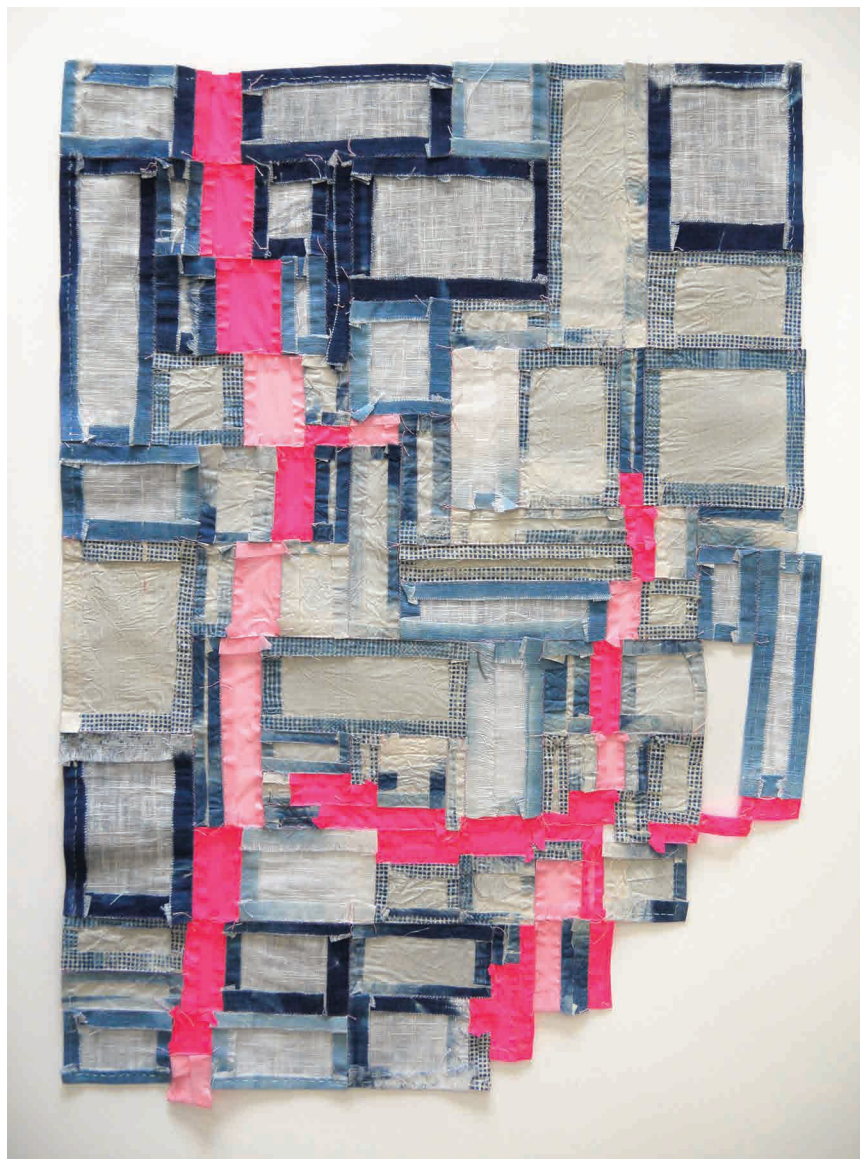
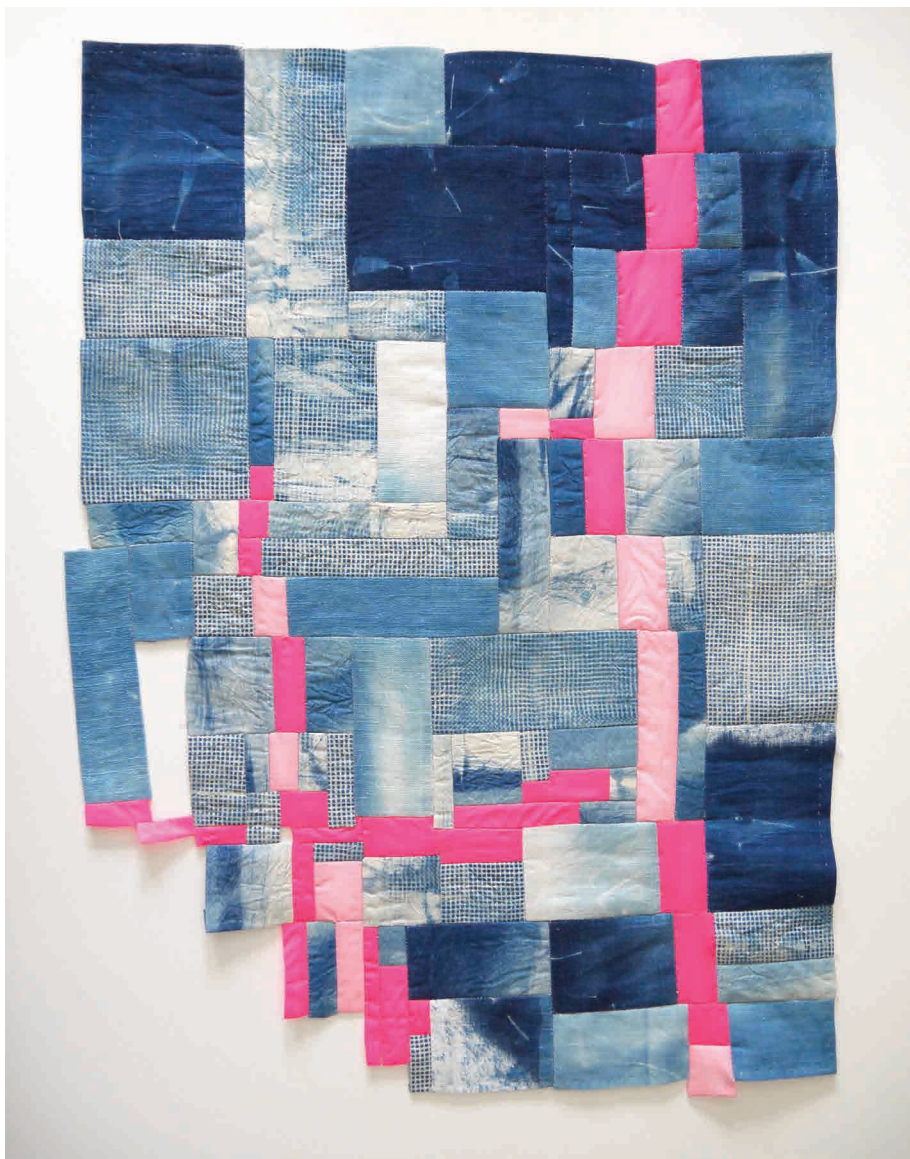
2. *Curvy Hip & Bum* (2022)

Cyanotype on linen, cyanotype on cotton,
nylon ripstop, cotton thread
56 x 41 cm

3. *Curvy Hip & Bum, reverse* (2022)

Cyanotype on linen, cyanotype on cotton,
nylon ripstop, cotton thread
56 x 41 cm





PHILIPPA CLARKE

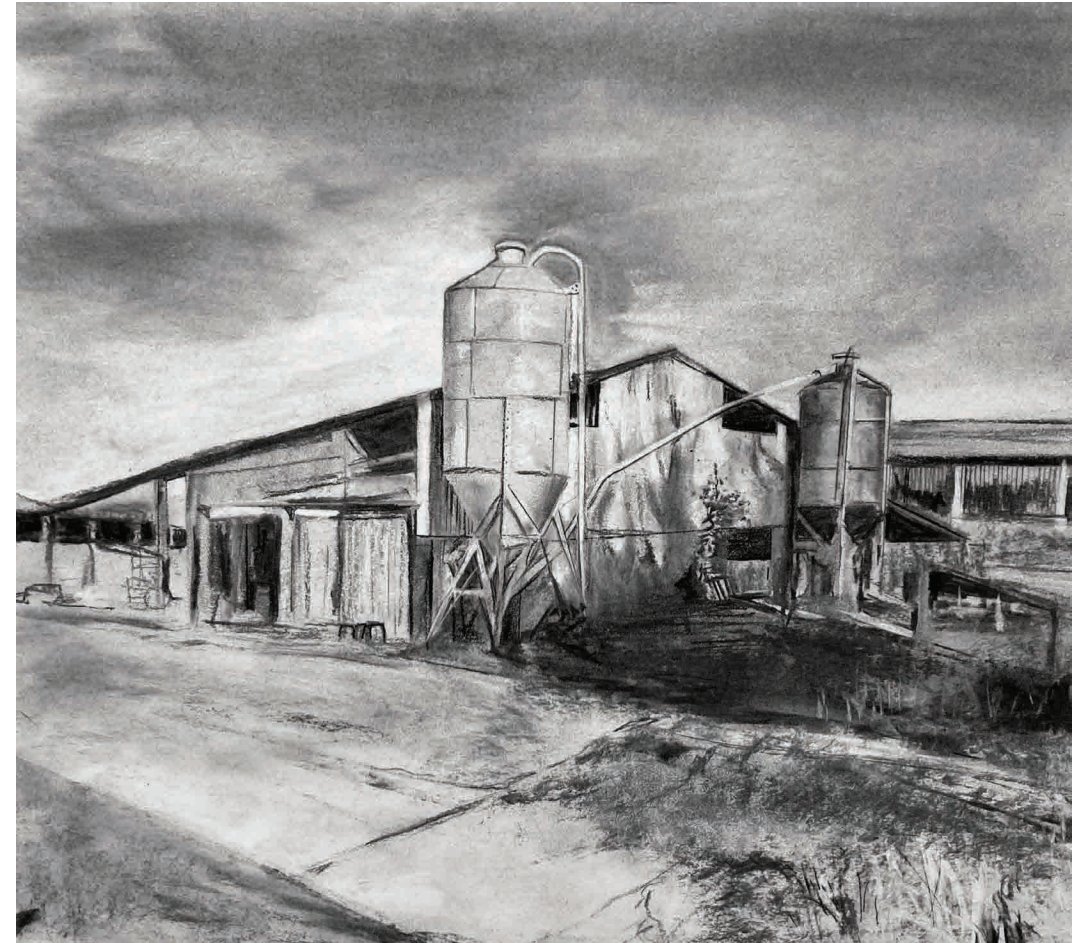
philippaclarke.com | @philippajclarke

Grubby fingers and muddy boots are indicative of Philippa Clarke's studio practice and her investigations into contemporary landscape. Frustrated by binary thinking, she uses the tonality of her paintings, drawings and installations to express a more nuanced version of the world. Having studied at the Royal Agricultural College in the early 1990's, Clarke maintains a keen interest in how land is used and managed. She is curious as to how the countryside is shaped by those who own it, work it, live in it, and encounter it. Clarke's ongoing research focuses on the areas where art and agriculture come together. By paying attention to this intersection, Clarke prompts questions about farming, food production, and the way we regard rural life. In her *Dairy Farm* series Clarke rejects the artifice created by traditional representations of landscape, drawing on her own photographic source material gathered on farm visits throughout the year. After

selecting images based on complexity, degrees of abstraction, and narrative possibilities, Clarke translates her photographs into large-scale charcoal drawings. These depart from photographic exactitude by employing energetic mark making, tonal intensity and a sheer enjoyment of the expressive possibilities of charcoal. The resulting work provides glimpses into the workings of a British dairy farm, confronting the viewer with the physicality of the dairy cows as they relate to one another and the agricultural environment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Clarke produced a series of drawings and writings that documented daily life in extraordinary times, recently published as *The Heavenly Moment between the Argument and the Wasp Sting*.

1. *Farm: 281777* (2022)
Charcoal on Flat White recycled paper
47 x 42 cm
2. *Clocking On* (2022)
Charcoal on Fabriano paper
150 x 200 cm

3. *Weighted Blanket* (2022)
Charcoal on Fabriano paper
150 x 200 cm





JANET DOREY

janetdorey@hotmail.com | @jadartstudio

Exploring ideas of light and space in a post-human city, Janet Dorey works across painting, sculpture and printmaking to explore anthropomorphic organic matter. Using combinations of analogue and digital technology, her abstracted imagery repeats across multiple layers and surfaces – matte, glossy, transparent – their focus emphasised and offset by shimmering effects of colour and reflected light. Dorey focuses on visual plasticity as an integral quality to be developed in the studio. Dorey also works with found images. Retired books are playfully overlaid with an otherworldly aesthetic that opens existing texts, diagrams, and photographs to new interpretations. Blurring the emphasis between two and three dimensions, Dorey attempts to re-compose associations between form and colour, slicing into images and presenting them as ambiguous suspensions. Drawing on influences as diverse as post-modern architecture, microscopic cell structures and matter in near-orbit space, Dorey often works in series.

1. *belles courbes I* (2022)

Oil, aerosol, and plexiglass on canvas
107 x 120 cm

2. *la belle plage I* (2022)

Oil, paper, aerosol, plastic, fibre-glass, magnet on aluminium
40 x 50 cm

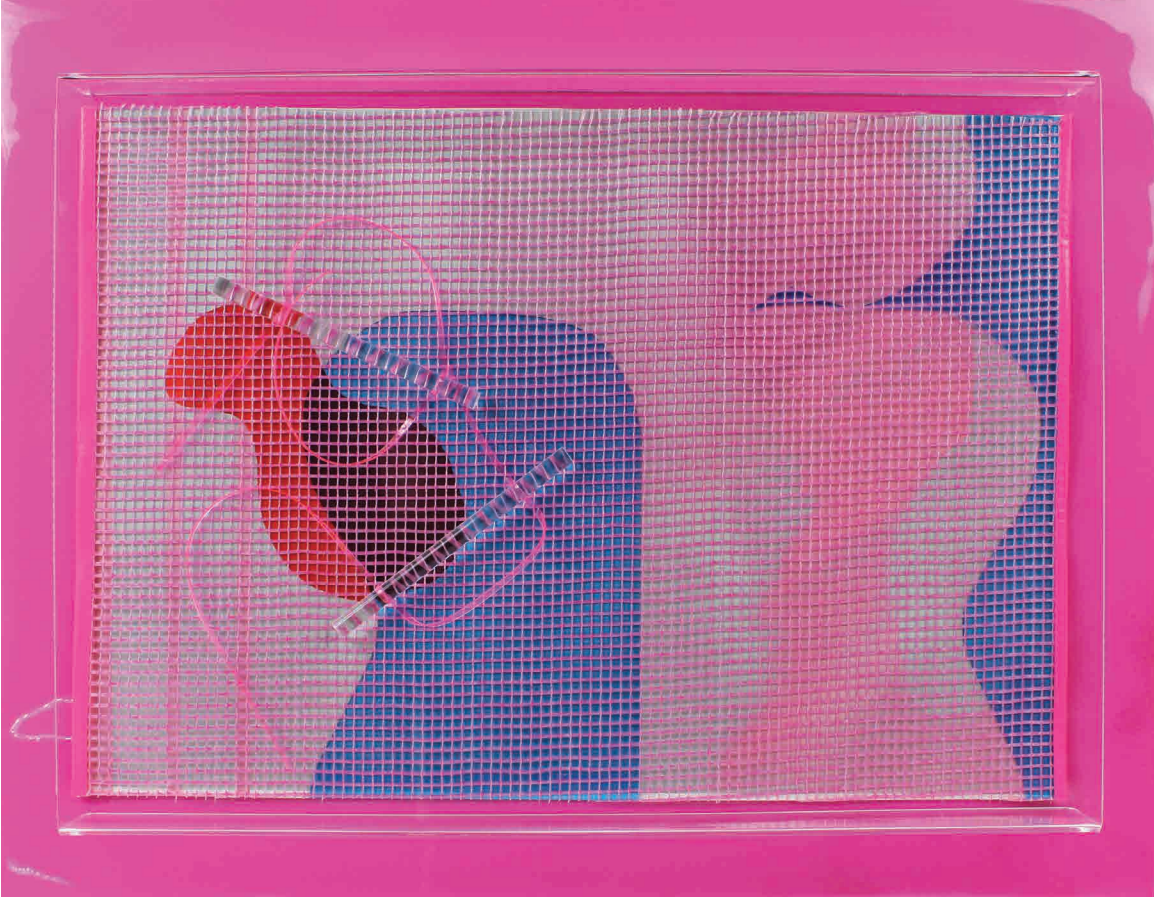
3. *Margaritas at the Sticky Velour* (2022)

Oil, aerosol, plastic, posca on aluminium
50 x 23 cm

4. *Golden Bear at the Sticky Velour* (2022)

Oil, aerosol, plastic, posca on aluminium
92 x 48 cm





LENA FINN

lenafinn.com | @lenafinn.art

Lena Finn is an artist living and working in rural West Sussex. Her current body of work is an intimate exploration of her dual role as artist and subject matter, exploring the conceptual dialogue between the two. Although the bodies in Finn's drawings and prints are her own, they are not traditional self-portraits. The figure is cropped, fragmented, exaggerated, often to the point of excluding the head. Such proximity and connection with the body-as-subject is both familiar and uncomfortable – an unsettling quality that is heightened by the use of dark tonal materials.

These intense, honest, yet anonymous drawings form part of a sensitive process of self-reflection that questions themes of female objectification and the male/female gaze. Finn's scrutiny appears to break down the female figure as she questions how our bodies define us as women, especially

in the context of the long-standing tradition of women as model or muse for the male artist and audience. The work examines notions of beauty and desirability, addressing its attention to the perceptions of the aging female body within a culture that favours the youthful.

1. *Untitled I* (2022)

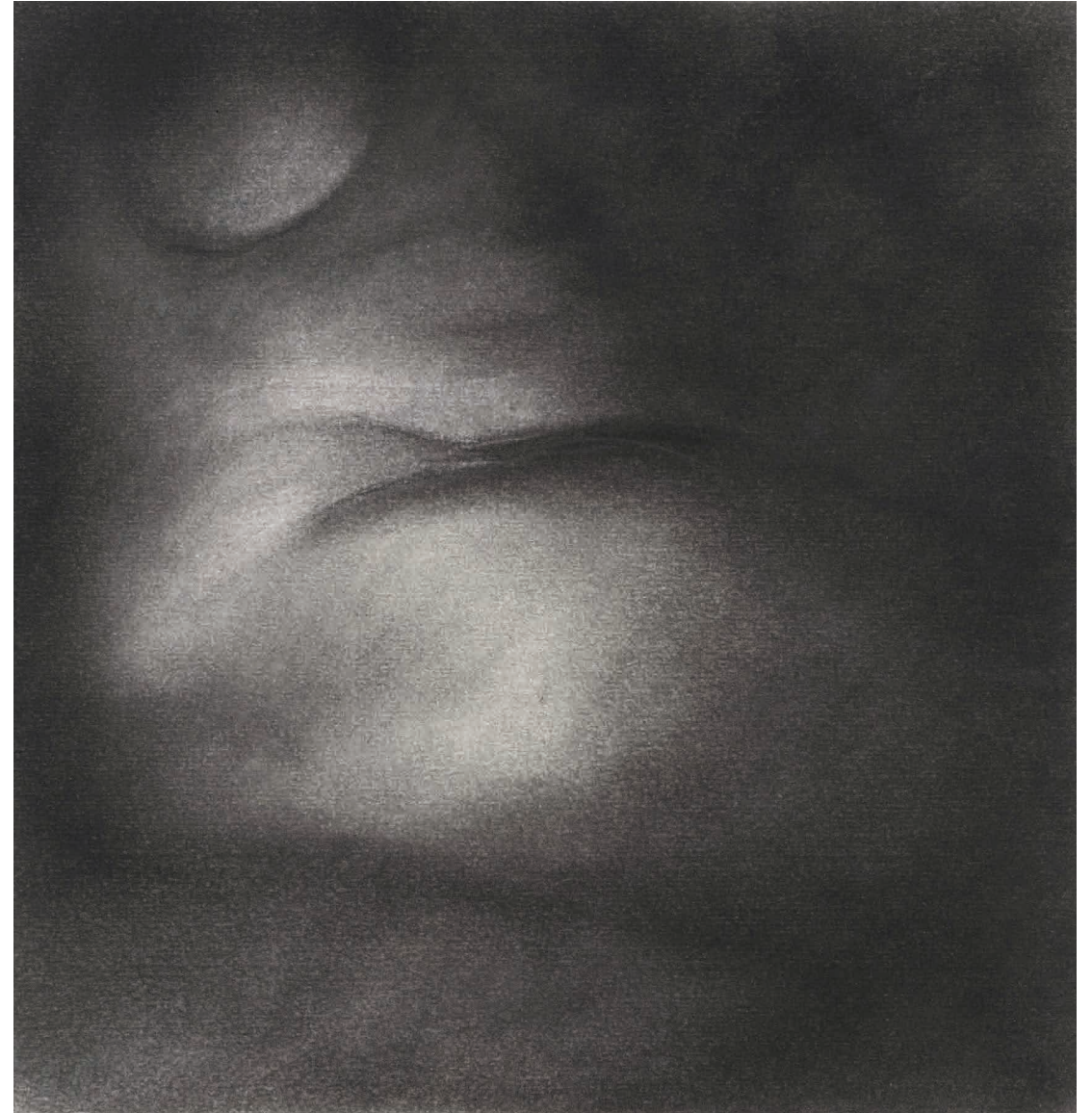
Charcoal on paper
30.5 x 42 cm

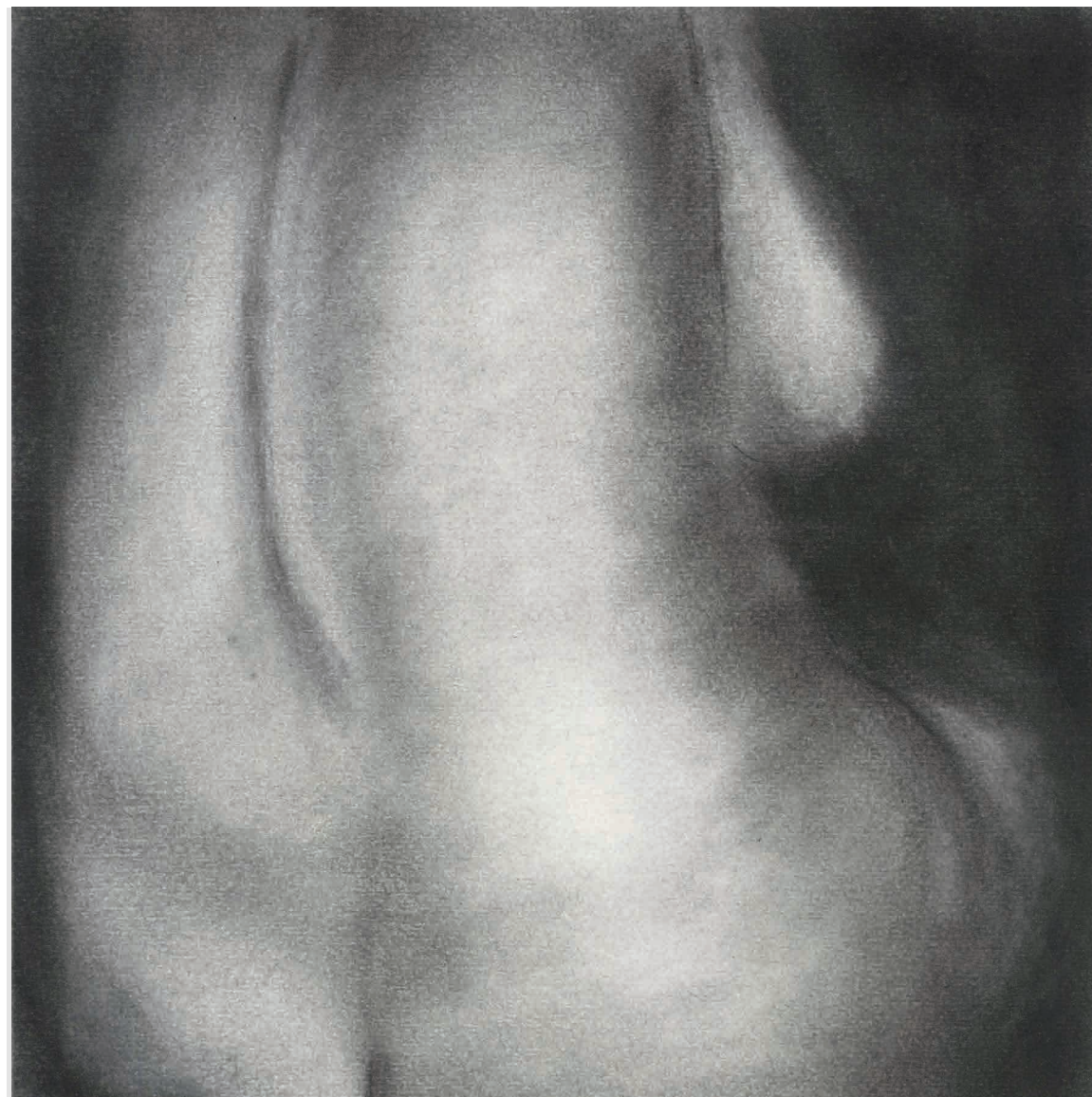
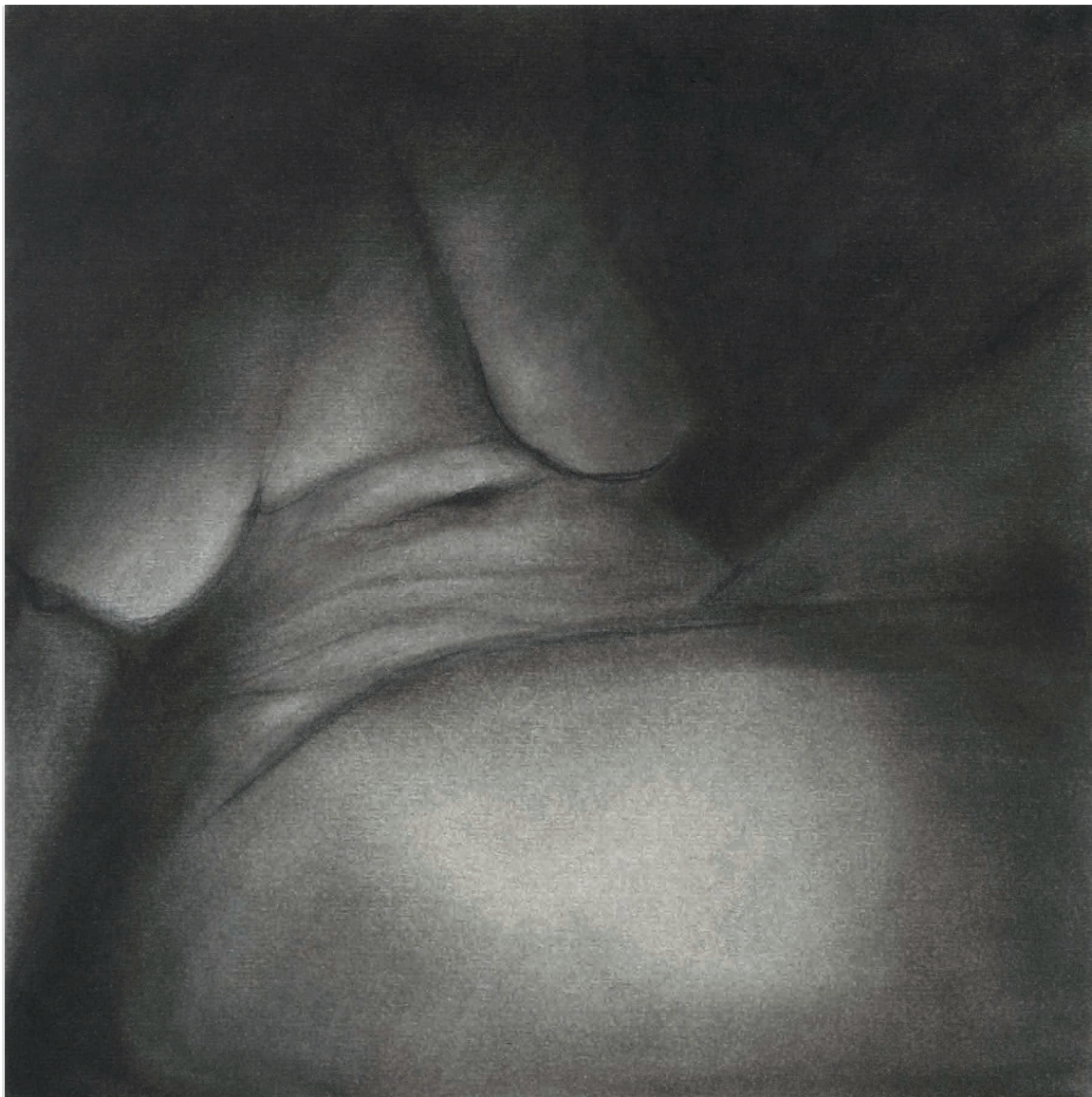
2. *Untitled II* (2022)

Charcoal on paper
30.5 x 42 cm

3. *Untitled III* (2022)

Charcoal on paper
30.5 x 42 cm





ANNIE HARDY

anniehardy.com | @annie._.hardy

At the heart of Annie Hardy's painting practice is a combination of observation and recollection. These processes are transcribed as a stream of consciousness before coalescing into what Hardy calls 'abstract memory maps'. These retrospective diaries develop in intuitive and spontaneous ways, emerging as both sets and series. Through processes of addition and subtraction, multiple layers of acrylic paint suggest mysterious landscapes of memory accumulating.

Time spent living abroad, in Australia and Africa, is reflected in a rich colour palette, which adds another dimension to the work. The resulting images are both curious and familiar, provoking a visual sensation that is often beyond words and rational thought.

1. *Memory Series 5 (blue columns)* (2022)

Acrylic on board
100 x 100 cm

2. *Memory Series 4 (red box with blue)* (2022)

Acrylic on board
30 x 30 cm

3. *Memory Series 4 (green cones)* (2022)

Acrylic on board
30 x 30 cm

4. *Memory Series 4 (Six green ovals)* (2022)

Acrylic on board
30 x 30 cm

5. *Memory Series 4 (red circles)* (2022)

Acrylic on board
30 x 30 cm

6. *Memory Series - Sculpture I* (2022)

Acrylic on metal
40 x 40 x 20 cm





RUTH HEATON

ruthheaton.com | @ruthheaton

Ruth Heaton's work explores the perception of spatial complexity and terrain-as-composition across drawing, painting, sculpture, and installation. Combining the abstract and figurative in an exploration of form, space, and colour, Heaton's approach reflects an ongoing dialogue between precise visual placement and intuitive mark making.

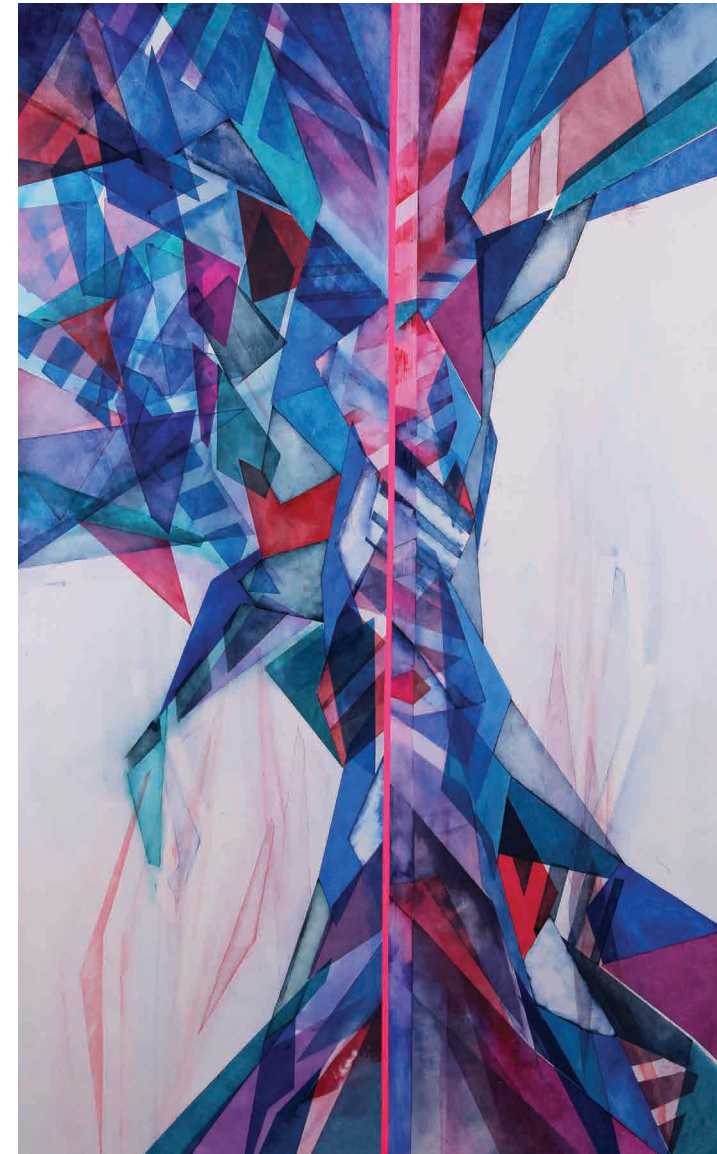
Heaton intentionally questions boundaries between two- and three-dimensional work, in that both sculptures and paintings are informed by disrupted grid systems and fragmented perspective. References to landscape, and the embodiment of her experience of walking through the northern mountains, permeates the work. Seasonal variations provide a lens through which to explore kaleidoscopic abstractions of colour and shape.

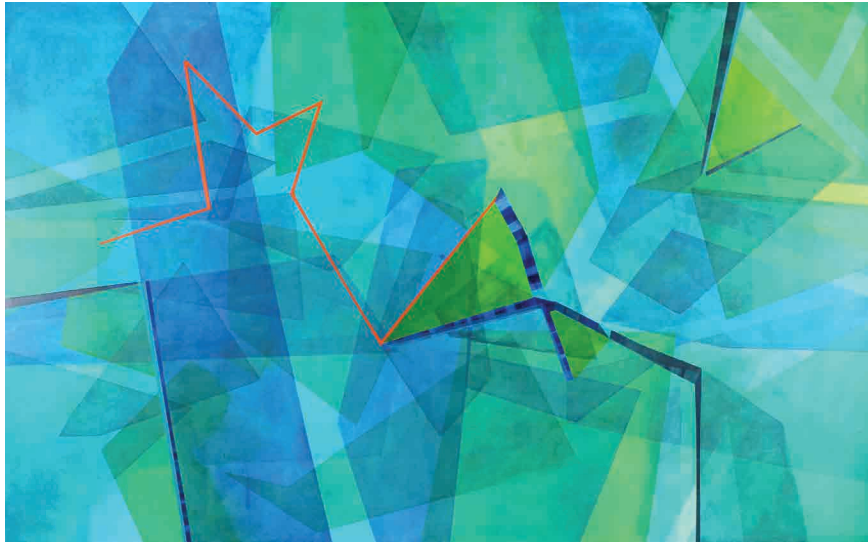
Having built up a sense of rhythm through the repetition of compositional structures, the

paintings nonetheless provoke a perceptual ambiguity, leaving the viewer free to navigate an uncertain path through the spatial complexity of each image.

1. *Meg as Muse* (2022)
Acrylic on board
100 x 160 cm
2. *Long Meg* (2022)
Powder coated steel
Variable dimensions

3. *The Women's Constellation* (2022)
Powder coated steel, board, acrylic paint
Variable dimensions
4. *(Eden)* (2022)
Acrylic on board
100 x 160 cm





CHRISTINE HOWELL

christinehowellartist.com | @christinehowell99

Christine Howell is a contemporary textile artist. The layers of wool that ground her abstract compositions are the result of an engagement with the meditative process of feltmaking, in which paper, textile, paint and thread build up as complex combinations of markmaking and surface detail. Simple raw materials become transformed into intense, minimal works in which a repetition of marks and texture emphasises a serene, elemental quality.

Howell's work is inspired by expansive landscapes in which one's thought can extend and where anything seems possible. Her work seeks to convey the atmosphere of this 'infinite possibility', openness and awe. She is also intrigued by smaller details of the everyday and her work merges these contrasting perspectives with its essential ambiguity.

The focused time spent in the process of making and capturing an atmosphere in the textured monochrome is an important focus of her work. The work invites the viewer to take a closer inspection of its potential meaning.

1. *Infinite Possibilities I* (2022)
Wool, textiles, paper, thread
53 x 53 cm (framed)
2. *Infinite Possibilities II* (2022)
Wool, textiles, paper, thread
53 x 53 cm (framed)

3. *Infinite Possibilities III* (2022)
Wool, textiles, paper, thread
53 x 53 cm (framed)





SARAH JOHNS

@skjohns.01

The work of Sarah Johns challenges us to reconsider the material qualities inherent in the relationships we attribute to our experience of the world. Properties of different materials are contested in this process: fluid forms (derived from tears or Suminagashi marbling) are replicated in the non-fluid medium of woodcut printmaking; solid forms (such as rocks and stone) are created through drawing, and an ink wash automatism, derived from the Surrealist practice of Decalcomania. Used in conjunction, they create ambiguity and disorientation in images that are both microscopic and cosmic in scale, suggesting an interconnectedness between things we traditionally view as separate. The use of automatism combined with the quality of repetition of the woodcut print allows for different interactions to emerge.

1. *Fecund* (2022)

Woodcut print, watercolour and pencil
100 x 71 cm

2. *Lacrimosiana (Dig)* (2022)

Woodcut print, watercolour and pencil
100 x 71 cm

3. *Occasional Anywhere* (2022)

Woodcut print, watercolour and pencil
100 x 71 cm

Sarah's work also explores deep time. She makes work about forgotten, imagined or hidden stories, often allegorical, using archetypal symbols to convey narrative. The work distils universal ideas into simple forms and patterns. Woodcut printing is central to this approach: a medium that creates a singular effect and which has been used historically to convey folk histories, esoteric concepts, as well as to inform and incite.

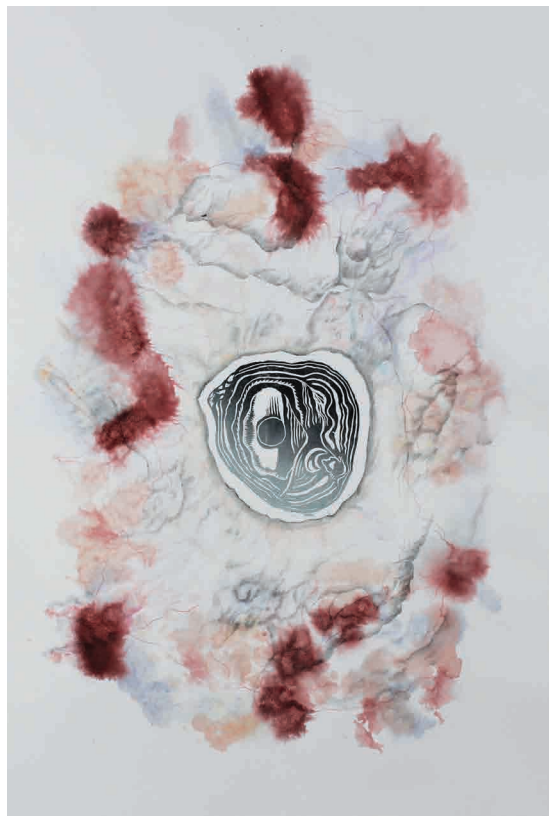
4. *Fossil Tear 1* (2022)

Woodcut print, watercolour and pencil
100 x 71 cm

5. *Fossil Tear 2* (2022)

Woodcut print, watercolour and pencil
100 x 71 cm





JEMIMA MOORE

jemimamoore.co.uk | @Jemima_Moore_

Jemima Moore is an artist working primarily in oils to create large abstract paintings. The paintings are unplanned. The first brush mark leads to the second, which leads intuitively to the third. Sections of the paintings are built up and overpainted in turn. Figurative objects appear and are then obscured. Areas of space are constructed, then constricted and conflated with the flatness of the canvas. For the artist, painting becomes an arena to enact a state of flux and becoming.

Space and narrative is constructed through colour and rhythm. Thinner constructing lines are employed to delineate areas of textured colour and areas of flat colour are used to create space within highly worked surfaces. The interplay between colours creates depth within the surface of the canvas.

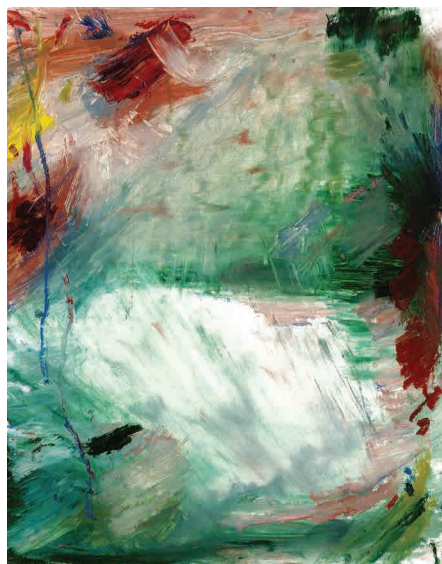
The paintings are supported by smaller works on paper, for which the artist uses oil pastels. These are experiments in composition, colour and forms and inform the larger works indirectly.

The final paintings are often exhibited on unstretched canvas. The artist aims to draw the viewers' attention to the materiality of the paintings and to create works which respond to the particular environment of the exhibition space.

1. *Doubling (I)* (2022)
Oil and oil stick on canvas
145 x 190 cm
2. *Pond Dive (II)* (2022)
Oil on canvas
110 x 140 cm
3. *Doubling* (2022)
Oil stick on paper
22 x 28 cm

4. *On Play* (2022)
Oil stick on paper
22 x 28 cm
5. *pond pile* (2022)
Oil stick on paper
22 x 28 cm
6. *Injest* (2022)
Oil stick on paper
22 x 28 cm





CHANTAL NEW

chantalnew.com | @chantal.new

The work of Chantal New negotiates tensions between presence and absence. Working predominantly in drawing and collage, she critically examines sites of controlled visibility – such as archives and prisons - through methods of erasure, distancing, and close observation. Chantal's subject is expressed in the gaps and deliberate omissions within her images. She communicates through what is hidden or unseen, raising questions about the power structures implied by what is visible. Using both digital and physical photographic archives as departure points, found images are deconstructed both physically and conceptually. Existing texts and images are appropriated and combined to suggest new readings, leveraging the complex interaction between language and image.

The minimal yet emotionally charged works offer a sardonic view of the world highlighting the unjust

hierarchies of our social structures. The politics of the everyday are examined both analytically and poetically, as part of a critical dialogue with the systems and structures that surround us. Using both a representational and conceptual approach, the work reflects Chantal's efforts to find meaning in a dramatically changing and unstable world.

1. *Chalkboard Archive* (2021)

Chalk on board
122 x 122 cm

2. *Stoney Mountain Institution* (2022)

Graphite on concrete
47 x 36 cm

3. *HMP Maidstone* (2021)

Graphite on mylar
29 x 42 cm





HMP Maidstone, 36 County Rd, Maidstone. ME14 1JZ
November 16, 2021
15'01

SYLVIA RADFORD

@sylvia.radford

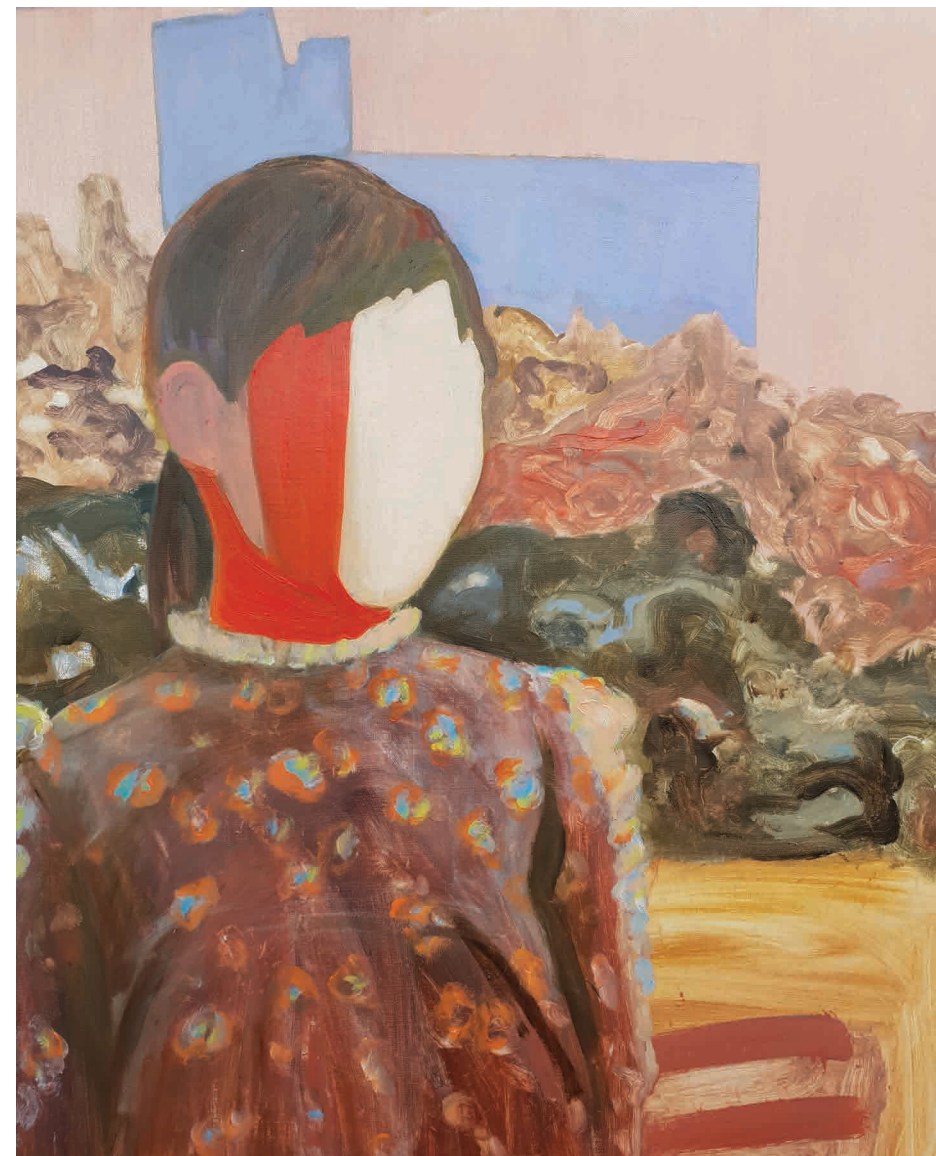
Sylvia's work engages with notions of nostalgia and belonging. As a biracial British-Singapore Chinese artist who has lived both in South-East Asia and in the UK, she meshes her varied life experiences in her work, exploring a hybrid identity about the feeling of cultural ambiguity that arises from being caught between worlds. Her subject matter engages her generational inheritance, globalisation, and her experience of cultural osmosis.

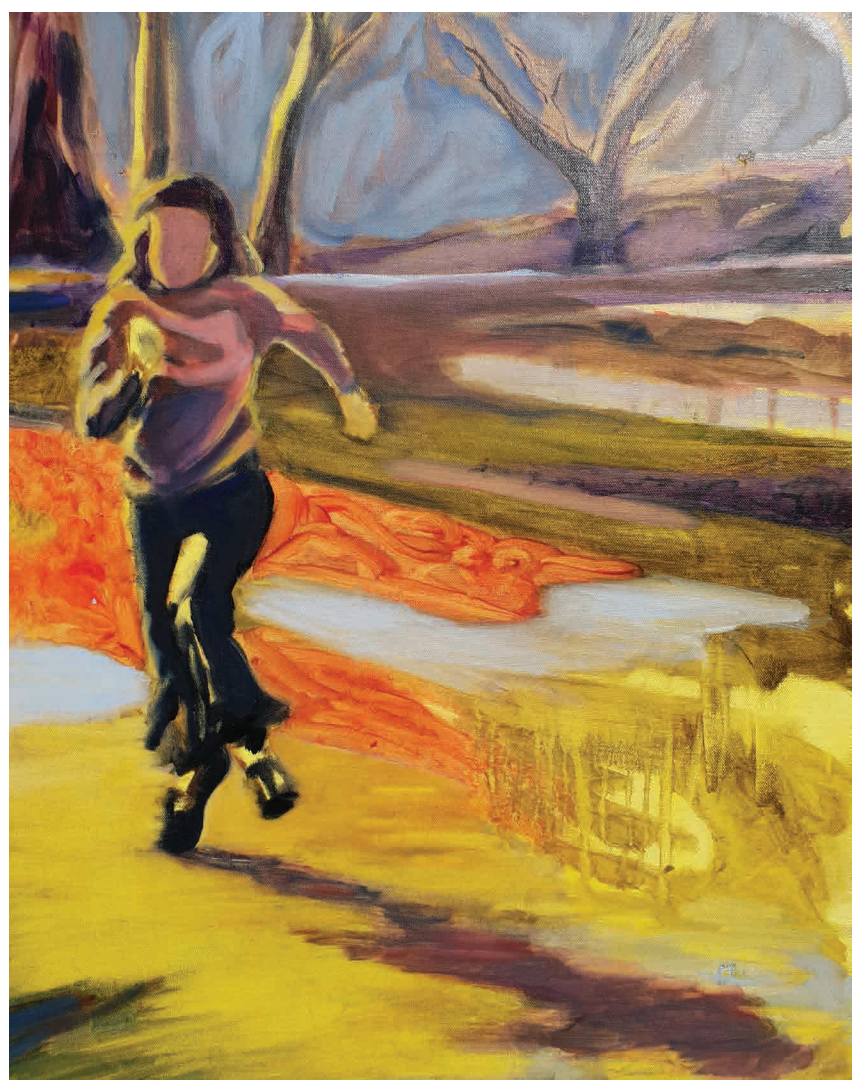
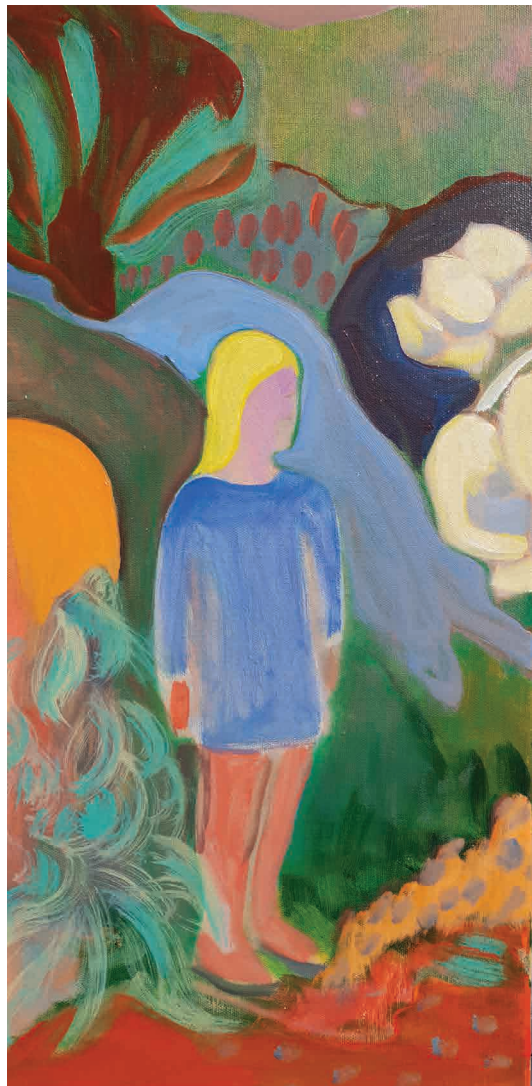
Images of fleeting memory, contingent on information that is variegated and constantly edited is key. She develops 'portraits' that capture the strangeness and fragments of a remembered subjectivity, framed around the unreliability of memory. The re-telling distances us further from objective truth. She is interested in the familiarity of family photographs and exploring appropriation of imagery and its re-contextualisation. In shifting and reframing the imagery, she takes ownership of the narrative.

Her approach is investigative and she often works on several pieces at the same time, articulating possibilities of narrative and composition, provoking avenues for expression. Her work highlights an emotional content beyond what the eye perceives in the physical image. Her paintings are also about exploring the vocabulary of paint. In the *Park Run* series, she experiments with colour keys and paint application to create alternative narratives.

1. *My Home is Beyond* (2022)
Oil on canvas
91 x 76 cm
2. *Leap of Faith* (2022)
Oil on canvas
61 x 30 cm

3. *Day Dream* (2022)
Oil on canvas
61 x 30 cm
4. *Park Run* (2022)
Oil on Canvas
61x51cm





KATIE SONNENBERG

@katie_in_studio

There was a young artist called Katie
Her thoughts and emotions felt weighty
To give herself worth
And purpose on earth
She exclaimed her feelings with great glee

1. *Honey Never Spoils* (2022)

Felt, hot glue
45.5 x 45.5 cm

2. *Ball, Penis, Ball* (2022)

Felt, hot glue
45.5 x 54 cm

3. *You Should Thank Me* (2022)

Felt, hot glue
89 x 45.5 cm

4. *The One, The Lonely* (2022)

Felt, hot glue
86.5 x 45.5 cm



BALL,
PENIS,
BALL

YOU SHOULD
THANK ME

THE ONE,
THE LONELY

ANY DAY NOW

A Sometimes Dense Series Of Ideas On What Is To Come, When And Why

DR. JON SHAW

oooooh!
I just know that something good is going to happen
I don't know when
but just saying it could even make it happen
~ Kate Bush, Cloudbusting (1985)

I'M BEGINNING this meditation with a handful of lines from Kate Bush's Cloudbusting. As with a number of her works from this period, the song is heavily inflected by two themes: the parent-child relation and the quasi-independence of oneiric space, time and experience – that is, the reality of dreams. In this song in particular, the themes combine through an imaginative leap – she gives voice to imagined adult recollections of a young Peter Reich as he watched his father, Wilhelm, being arrested at the behest of the American Food and Drug Administration.¹

There is not the time, here, to delve too deeply into Wilhelm Reich's sprawling, complex philosophy and practice, nor to fully tease out the nuanced response that the genius and inappropriateness of his work requires. Suffice to say that we can

learn from his ideas and from where he erred – the connections he established between economic and sexual oppression, for example, ring soundly today, and as seekers of truths, we have much to thank him for; but it is no less true that as patients and women and friends and animals, there are those who have cause for censure. His delusions of grandeur were not only pathological, but also damaging to others. Perhaps it is only through the young Peter's eyes that Kate Bush manages to avoid these problems.

The FDA's prosecution of Reich, though, was specious. The body that has approved endless Sackler opioids, and considers raw milk to be degrees of magnitude more deadly than automatic weapons, saw fit to refuse Reich permission to distribute his greatest invention. The Orgone Box,

a construction the size of a festival toilet, at worst does nothing and at best focuses the primal orgone energy of the universe into the occupant, curing them of diseases minor and major, and topping them up with orgasm energy should they find themselves in deficit.

Kate Bush's song opens with Peter setting the scene: "*I still dream of Organon*" – the Reichs' farmstead, its name derived from Orgone energy – "*I wake up crying*." Dream, here, is a place of passive recollection. Anything, any detail of any day can and does return; any moment of our past might become now. But another valency of dream drives the song's chorus: "I just know that something good is going to happen." The music bristles with anticipation; but it also recognises the power, the agency, of the one who anticipates: "just saying it could even make it happen." This is Reich's artistry, just as it is his crime against the State. He encourages us to speculate, to desire, to attune ourselves deeply to real abstractions and deep energies, to change ourselves and the world. He encourages us to see what might be coming, any day now – be it the march of fascism that forced him from his home, or the deep sympathy between the psyche, our innermost being, and the energies that influence weather patterns, climate. From this attunement, this sensitivity to what makes the world, he encourages us to develop practices and executive influence to make that day, today, the right day.

If we skip to the final pages of Peter Osborne's 2013 book *Everywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, we find a brief – and only verging on impenetrable – gloss on the work of one Reinhart Koselleck.² According to Osborne – who is culminating his book under the chapter title "*Art Time*" – Koselleck's contribution is to interrogate a distinction made by Martin Heidegger between expectation and anticipation. His aim, it seems, is to open up the distinction as a political or historical difference.

We can, perhaps, readily see how these two categories differ as affects: I've sent the husband to make me a cup of tea. I expect it to be made in the manner that he has been carefully trained in. I anticipate the scent, the heat and texture and taste in my mouth, the long, vocalised exhale – aaaaaah! – of a locked in breath I hadn't realised the weight of. Expectation, then, sets a threshold or low bar – something will happen (or will be adequate) or it will not. Anticipation does not clearly quantify, nor demark the qualities of, that which is anticipated; the edges remain soft. Perhaps it is the distinction between a plan and a dream.

But Koselleck isn't so much interested in desire or feeling, in the domestic and everyday settings. Rather, he is concerned with anticipation and expectation as a "historical category", as a collective politics of time.³ What, he might ask, do these particular relationships to the future

¹ Wilhelm Reich was arrested as an Alien Enemy by the FBI for several weeks on America's entry to the Second World War, but Peter was not yet born. Bush was moved to write the song whilst reading Peter's book: *Peter Reich A Book of Dreams* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1973)

² Peter Osborne *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (London: Verso, 2013). ³ *ibid.*, p200.

enable or reveal about our agency in history; about what we can or must do? And how might we think differently about the modernist taste for grand utopias when we introduce these different notions of relating to the future – less positivist, constructivist, pre-emptive notions?

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It is surely of paramount importance that Koselleck writes of these imminent future times in terms of a “horizon”. The horizon delimits anticipation as being toward something in particular, and as something within reach. It is not entirely nebulous and it is not endlessly deferred. If we acknowledge that our age is one defined by anxiety, we can perhaps begin to see that it is, indeed, the lack of a horizon, of a more-or-less defined edge, that allows anxiety to permeate everything and to undermine any capacity to imagine things otherwise. Indeed, what characterises our sense of self, our economy, the world, more than a highly enervated yet strangely static mode of permanent crisis? We begin to recognise that we are trapped in a time without time – the anxiety roils, but it cannot settle as a focused worry about something in particular... or, if it does settle, like a bee choosing a flower, all the other things to worry about begin to latch on, and we return to the overwhelmingly ambient, swarming anxiety. The particular unfolds itself back into the general; the incidental invokes the structural and it all feels too big.

The film *I, Daniel Blake* makes a good fist of

representing the unrepresentable, structural causes of one man’s anxiety – with some, albeit ultimately inadequate, acknowledgment of the relative easy ride our male protagonist gets compared to his single-mother friend.<sup>4</sup> Her story must be told again, told better, elsewhere. Mr Blake has received contradictory assessments of his fitness to work – his doctor says no, the Work Capability Assessment says yes. The impasse, whereby Mr Blake must seek work in order to receive benefit payments, but is medically unfit to accept work when he finds it, can only be resolved at “a hearing”. At the appointed time, in the appointed place, Mr Blake can ask for a final determination as to which of these authorities – or, rather, which of these bureaucracies – outweighs the other. But no appointment is forthcoming, no horizon is set that might begin to turn the omnipresent anxiety into “just” worry about a particular event and its outcome. With the latter, at least, the sixty-year old joiner, so used to keeping busy, would have something to do: collect the relevant documents, polish his shoes, check the bus route, time the journey. Repeat. Narrate what he’s doing to his dear, dead wife. Repeat. Overwhelmed by the vacuum and by the capacity of anxiety-without-horizon to endlessly spread whilst, paradoxically, intensifying, Mr Blake scrawls a desperate graffito on the front of the dole office: “*I, Daniel Blake, demand my appeal date before I starve*”. It is a sad, useless attempt to establish a horizon, to demand to be seen in both the prosaic and existential sense; to make some day, any day at all, into this day, the appointed day, now. It is also

an attempt to shape his fear and indignity – all he has left, it seems – to set the horizon: this isn’t stasis for me, he tells us, because it will get ever more desperate until all that remains is bare life. This is the horizon that the passive-aggressive bureaucratic gaze will not see: the scheduling cannot be “any day” because sooner or later, starvation will be “now”.

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In a sense, Daniel Blake’s spray-can howl is a grimly enervating, social realist version of romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin’s breakdown, screaming from his tower in Tübingen, “*Nothing is happening to me!*” This is the real “power of now”: not the crypto-racist appropriation of timeless (read: dehistoricised) Eastern wisdom, nor the neo-individualist, self-infantilising colouring-in book of McMindfulness[®]. There is the possibility, here, of re-inventing a horizon; which is to say, the reforging of a connection between the unbounded, free-form, open elaboration of “any day” dreaming with the pragmatics, action and immanentisation of now. And it seems to me that Art is in a particularly privileged place to reforge this horizon, to send tendrils out into the ambient, the Otherness, the unknown and eerie present, whilst also sensing for the lumpiness of that chaos, teasing out the bits of structure, the actual and the actualisations, the manifestations of something in particular taking shape and being shaped. Artists know the mycelium, but they also know that the fruiting bodies are precious and necessary. The question I am trying to draw out, here, concerns how these

two meaningfully relate to each other; how does everything touch on something; how and where does any day touch now; how do we find a fairy-ring or join the alvedans?⁵

But the word “now” is a bloody minefield when it comes to Art; and “the contemporary” was always a messy term. When and why did the need for a new word for “now” emerge? What happened to “modern” that it no longer did the job? What did “postmodern” point at that had to be so quickly abandoned, incomplete and, frankly, embarrassing? The extent of the muddle of this differentiation is never clearer than in relation to Art, where it feels like the difference is both more and less than arbitrary. There is a difference, surely – maybe even a profound one; but it is somehow not possible to pin it down. A difference without characteristics; a difference without differences.

Indeed, Art seems particularly caught up in a pickle of conundrums about time and agency. Who has the time to make art? Who has the time not to make, to take a step back, to relax? What anticipations and expectations structure our preparations, mark-making, note-making, our record-keeping and selection of archivable materials? What is the time of the sketch – not just its duration, but its relationship to the future (of a) work? What does it mean to use resources like pigments and stone and iron that connect us to geological time? Or to plug in a monitor, one of those audiovisual contradictions that flickers in the

³ *ibid.*, p200.

⁴ *I, Daniel Blake* dir. Ken Loach (UK, 2016).

⁵ Alvedans, the Norwegian term for a ring of mushrooms, translates literally as “elf dance”.

now through copper and platinum and silicon from elsewhere, elsewhere, binding us to the negotiable plasticity of the semiconductor? Does Art necessarily possess a historical, political dimension? Can it attune our experience and agency within history? In relation to the future? As an increasingly abstractedly commodified field, what times and temporal engineering does financialised Art become complicit in – whose securities and what “futures”? If, indeed, as Peter Osborne suggests, “the contemporary” must be “anywhere or not at all”, what happens to time-zones, seasons, locality; what happens to distance or (mis)communication or novelty or love or hybridity? What contradictions do we create when we send an artwork like, say, Mona Hatoum’s *Grater Divide* (2002) – a two-metre-tall cheesegrater that looms over the viewer with sharpened teeth, recalling the weird contents of the nonetheless intimate domestic space of Hatoum’s first Western European kitchen – on tour; as if a particular movement and encounter with place, so reflective on domesticity, ethnicity, gender, can somehow be made a generic one; as if some universal viewer populates the globe – the anyperson (at all) to live in the anywhere (at all), any day (at all).

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As the seminal science-fiction writer William Gibson once tweeted “*the future is already here, it’s*

just unevenly distributed.”⁶ It’s telling that as this bon mot spread so wildly across the twitterverse, accreting bundles of retweet tribbles on its nose – “RT; RT; RT; RT” – the reference to Poppa Gibson shuffled off the edge of the 140-character cliff. In a classic example of what has been called “attribution decay”, the tweet hurtled onward and outward, losing its tail like an autotomised lizard. Released from its maker, the insight became unable to name its past – a painfully ironic echo of Gibson’s own 1994 project Agrippa, a poem written soon after his father’s death, distributed on floppy disc, that could be read only once, the text being deleted as it scrolled off the top of the screen to make room for the next line.⁷

More recently, an oddly redolent point has been made by environmentalists like Disha Ravi. The co-founder of India’s chapter of Fridays for Future, jailed for a time last year on charges of sedition – for having done barely more than making available through her social media channels a resource pack of documents to support India’s striking farmers – Ravi takes a necessarily intersectional approach to climate crisis, one that recognises the role of factors like race, ethnicity, class, caste, sex and gender in determining who, and to what extent, is affected. As she observes, when it comes to climate crisis, in India, “*We are not just fighting for our future, we are fighting for our present.*”⁸

6 Gibson discusses this in more depth on “The Science in Science Fiction” NPR 22 October 2018. www.npr.org/2018/10/22/1067220/the-science-in-science-fiction?t=1654508871486 7 William Gibson, Dennis Ashbaugh and Kevin Bigos Jr Agrippa: A Book of the Dead (New York, NY: Kevin Bigos Jr Publishing, 1992) 8 Disha Ravi quoted by Fiona Harvey “Young people resume global climate strikes calling for urgent action” in The Guardian 25 September 2020, www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/25/young-people-resume-global-climate-strikes-calling-urgent-action-greta-thunberg

In Gibson’s formulation, “the future” that is already here but unevenly distributed pertains to the availability of electronic, networked devices and the ownership of the means of digital production (and distribution and consumption). The future, here – whilst by no means unproblematically desirable in and of itself – indicates privilege and a direction of travel. Conversely, the privilege that Ravi expects white Westerners to acknowledge is that we do not (yet) have to reap what we have sown. Our privilege lies in not inhabiting the future, in our residing in an elsewhere that is also an elsewhere. Here, any day and now touch under the name consequence.

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Under the aegis of C19 lockdowns and new normals, a novel set of times, anticipations, expectations, consequences and immunities (of various sorts) has made claims on daily life and collectivity.

ANY DAY NOW is not, cannot be, an insurgent, revolutionary, utopian promise – whether that would resemble the hateful tragedy of Stalin or the cute, feckless posturing of Wolfie Smith. We must ask, rather, how we can look to the future when the future is not desirable; and how we might see a different future, when that future is already playing out as the present in places that cannot afford to cushion themselves from it. ANY DAY NOW prises open the disaster of times in which we anxiously live, and from where we must begin the task of reconstructing the notion, the very possibility, of hope.

Kate Bush’s own vision has become decidedly less ambitious over the years. Many will defend the music and the return to live performance; fewer her drift to conservative politics. Yet nearly forty years on, the insights of *Cloudbusting* remain vital. Fear in the face of monstrously large authorities and the free-form uncertainty they leave in their wake are certainly not the sole preserve of children; but it is not irrelevant that these things can move us to a more childlike state. Whether through Peter Reich’s dreams of childhood or Kate Bush’s imaginative leap into the song’s character, becoming-child manages to be something more than becoming-victim; it is also the reinstatement of hope, of wonder. Amidst all the care-taking and pedagogy and scheduling and admin, perhaps we have forgotten to take lessons from children, just as we have largely forgotten to listen to our elders. The playful child, the protesting teens, the muddling through – much more robust than they think – if we can dream our way into those ways of being, it is a springboard to dreaming yet bigger, but also an anchor to a more intense experience of the realities of now, to the presence of the future.

This, I have felt, is what these artists have been doing with their committed play and playful commitment, their expectations and anticipations, their wide dreams and pragmatic horizons. And it is, I think, is where hope resides, where anticipation can take on just enough form to become directed, to afford us agency in the unfurling of history at the most local and most global scales.

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