

Jennings Kerr

Harriet Goodall
In-Land

Shadows of dry land flora on the red earth, light play shifting across the sands and rock faces over the day, a more mesmerising version of the hands of a clock ticking away as mercury soars and then plummets. The immovable falling victim to the constant pressure of wind, water and time chipping away, repurposing the crust and crumbs. An olive green wrapped semi-trailer punctuates the arid tones as its wheels kick up dust and flick back pebbled rock. It crosses the country marking its journey as a line on a map or tyre track in dirt. Its waxed canvas siding protecting its cargo, patched and darned with care, and carrying with it a history of movement and use. I imagine the driver leaning out the window to catch the breeze and a glimpse of a rock face, sun beaten skin, driver door tanned and pushing out to far points of this special land. The truck's line and journey lives on in this show through Goodall's guiding and patient hand. The found given new life, a continuation of the line. There is care continued, care to observe and accentuate the language of darning, the stitched, patched, sewn, and reborn. Here the truck siding becomes a painting substrate and a new layer to Goodall's wall relief, an extension of her painting but also as a textile. *In-Land* is Goodall's journey to find her place, to continue her deep rooted connection to the beautiful lands that she calls home and once again stamps her authority and distinction on fibre based wall relief sculpture.

This show is about slow shifts, about finding a line, mapping a journey and the changes that occur in our lifetime in relation to the laying down of sediment over millennia. Rock is broken down, moved around, deposited and reformed. It is occurring at a pace and in a way that we don't often observe but Goodall on her travels will closely examine rock faces, observe valleys, cliff edges and in many circumstances is drawn to boundaries and borders. The edge or periphery of space, how we define and demarcate, and our invisible and invented borders and territories are a subject that continues to inform this work. The compositional structure is equal quilt and aerial perspective, while the relief portrays undulation and topography. Goodall is drawing our attention to the way these landscapes are fluid, how they are sculpted naturally by the elements and she echoes this in her soft and sensitive treatment of her material palette. In the studio we find a more concentrated crushing in a mortar and pestle. Pigments extracted with great care and natural material repositioned in order to represent itself. Rock and charcoal impasto coatings as material and colour, stacked up in plastic containers, a pigment library that has come about through Goodall collecting, breaking down, repurposing patiently applying it as an organic surface treatment. This impasto coating is a means to softening the industrial and utilitarian qualities of the factory finished steel. The rock and charcoal in suspension is a soft to the hard, an organic finish that brings the sculpture and weaving back to painting.

Goodall grew up on a farm, she lives on one, works on another and the farm is part of who she is, how she was raised and how she continues to raise her family. Goodall recalls hessian being strung up at family festivities, to divide space and create zones in the expanse of nature. The material has stayed with her and its simple utility value is outweighed by this nostalgia. The 'sacchi' works of Italian artist Alberto Burri have informed and inspired this series. Through Goodall's travels to Rome she was able to experience the 'Arte Povera' pieces in person and to understand the care and elegant handle of the burlap material but also the power the pieces possess. Burri combined textile and painting and expressed the material qualities through stitching and repair. I also feel some of his compositions have had an impact on Goodall. We see the circular motif in 'Salt Pans', 2024 and its rendering of clay pans from above as well as in the forms of some of the other relief works. The 'Arte Povera' movement occurred in Italy in the 1960's and 1970's and was defined by experimental approaches to found materials, often industrial and natural but certainly accessible. Goodall continues in this approach to the found, she is able to breathe life back into materials that we would not immediately think of within the traditions of art history. Goodall gravitates towards the time worn, weathered and deteriorated, full of life and stories to reveal. It might be a rendered wall, a cobbled path, or stone worn down by centuries of use. It is an appreciation of history, an observance of textures, surfaces and materials that connect her to her past or to places of significance. These works are sophisticated but possess an honest approach to material and its handle gravitates between the lightest intervention and a full transformation through techniques such as dyeing, weaving, knotting, burning, waxing, welding, crushing, painting, stitching, stretching, and wrapping.

The shadow and light play that is activated in these works continues the drawing in space, the line and form extended out into its environment. The light allowed into the piece where in a Lee Bontecou it would be bounced off the steel frame by its skin. The American female artist has been an inspiration, perhaps in the willingness to engage in industrial process, dancing with the geometric but I think in a more dense and commanding way. Goodall's steel is softened through wrapping in fibre, coating in impasto to a point of resembling the branch like frameworks of Ian Gentle. I also think of the incredible sculptural pieces of Giuseppe Penone with their carved tree forms, branching limbs, and thorned surfaces. Penone known for a practice that examined our relationship with and involvement in the natural world. The organic spliced together with the industrial seems to be where Goodall shines. The studio once again bursting with her foraged and found materials from local walks and trips further afield.

Goodall mentioned that she often observes the land from the aeroplane window, in many instances she has woken from a slumber as the plane crosses from ocean to land. It is like her body is set to the frequency of these lands, a connection with home, the lands that she holds so close and in her. This aerial perspective a little different to that of the old green 'semi' shifting through the gears and heading down the asphalt, but I think it is not so much from where you look, but more importantly how you look. Goodall frames her landscapes very cleverly with compositions that echo her plane trip vistas, but in many cases the work also resembles topographic charting models through her expression of undulation. The line bounces up and down, in and away from the wall. The borders and boundaries defined in steel but containing shifts between muslin, linen, jute, paper, abaca, seagrass, raffia, and more. Goodall shifts between material with ease and these variations once again speak to her varied interests in the history of textile including a respect for processes of repair. Something that I noticed on my recent visit to Goodall's studio was how seamlessly she is able to integrate the found into and amongst the new. The result coming out of great care to acknowledge the specific qualities of each of her materials, to squeeze their essence through her control and knowledge of fibre.

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Like the sun kissed and leathery face of the truck driver, these surfaces wear their scars with pride. The creases, folds, fraying and mending bring the pieces to life through the expression of history. The truck now decommissioned but the journey continues in a different language, one that still attempts to consider the great natural beauty of the land. Goodall's voice and hand so sensitive to all that she sees, representing her surroundings with a humble attempt to find her place, to plot her journey. We are all here on this rock, moving material around from one place to another, making work for ourselves, calling it home but only seeing a slight glimpse at the true dynamism of where we inhabit. We see these lands in different ways, from different perspectives, but we each only get a short insight into their journey.

James Kerr, 2024