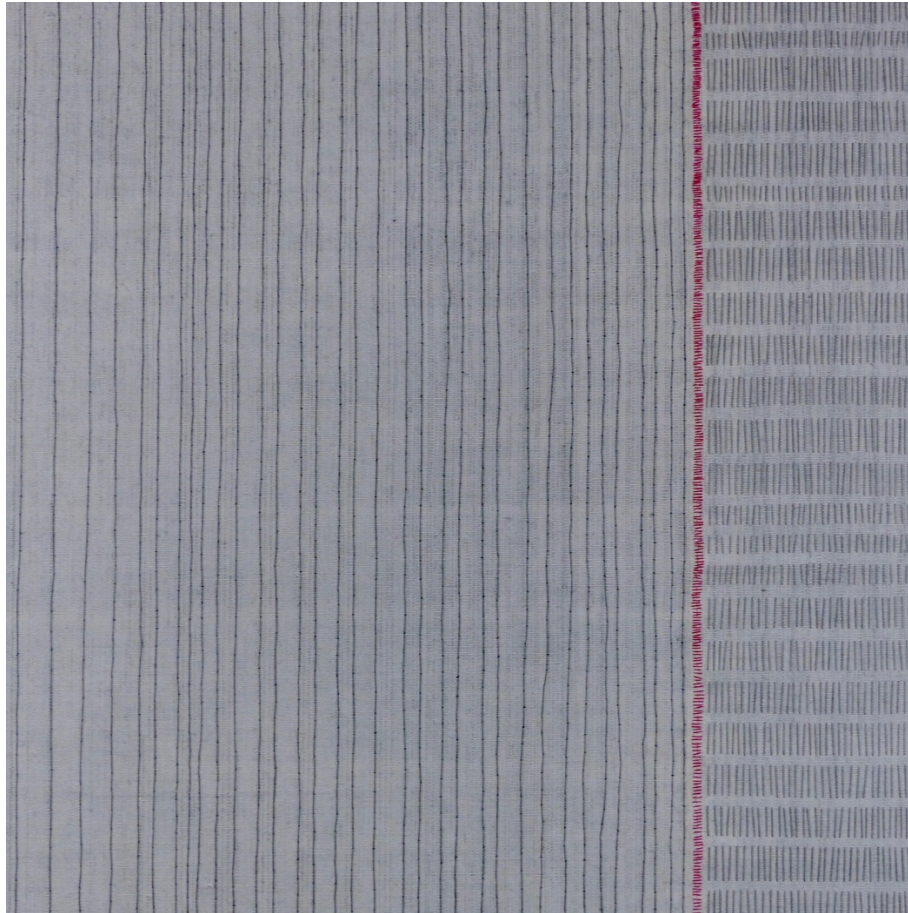


## ViewSeven | A Sense of Place

*Contemporary Art Textiles*

5-9 December 2017, The Menier Gallery, London SE1



*Claire Benn, 'In the Fullness of Time IV' (detail) antique hemp, cotton thread, hand-stitch 2M x 2M*

ViewSeven is a group of seven abstract artists whose work all begins with textiles. 'A Sense of Place', the group's third exhibition at the Menier Gallery, 5-9 December 2017, reveals a new body of contemporary art made using a combination of innovative and traditional art and textile techniques.

### **New Material**

There is a huge resurgence of interest in art textiles. From Chris Ofili's 'Weaving Magic' tapestries at The National Gallery to 'Entangled' at Turner Contemporary earlier this year, to retrospectives of work by Hannah Ryggen (1894-1970) at Modern Oxford and Anni Albers (1899-1994) at Guggenheim Bilbao this winter, museums are putting material works at the top of their agendas. Tapestry, embroidery, weaving and fibre art are all in trend, in both fashion and in interior design. Furthermore, Art Textiles as an oeuvre has shifted in public perception - from being seen as a 'female', craft-based pastime - to being viewed as Fine Art, a place it occupied for a long periods of history. Other art textiles in the news include works made by Grayson Perry, Tracy Emin, Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Bourgeois, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Sheila Hicks, Sonia Delauney and Richard Tuttle, who created his largest ever sculpture for the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in 2014, entitled 'I Don't Know. The Weave of Textile Language'.

## **Common Thread**

The themes that bring the ViewSeven artists together are a piece of cloth and a length of fibre. This is summed up by artist Claire Benn: "From the moment we're born, there's barely a moment when we're not in contact with cloth. We're wrapped in swaddling, dried off with towels, tucked in to linen, clothed with garments, kept safe from drafts and eventually, shrouded in our coffins. These are the functional, practical elements of cloth and fibre is deeply rooted within us, which is why at an art textiles exhibition, people reach out to touch the works in an unconscious response to their connection with cloth. Textiles radiate their tactile quality and it is this that also binds together the ViewSeven artists. The medium also offers huge artistic potential. Fibre is so flexible, so giving. You can do almost anything to it and the cloth will respond; colour, discharge, stitch, weave, tear, distress, pleat, fold, swathe, stiffen, stretch, laminate – the list is endless. Cloth accepts and responds to most other media; dye, paint, paper, glue etc. and is often the 'foundation' for mixed media work, as it is for painting, in the form of canvas. Art textiles can combine the visual element with the practical – think of tapestries and embroideries – they warm the environment up in both a visual and literal sense. They create soft spaces within hard environments comprised of concrete, steel and glass, and absorb the harsh acoustics that can come with modern architecture".

## **ViewSeven | The Artists**

### **Claire Benn**

Claire works with heavy cotton or linen and earth pigments, using mono printing and stitch to produce abstract, contemplative and reductive works. Her sources for these pieces are desolate, 'empty' landscapes with long vistas and huge skies; currently New Mexico and the Atacama Desert. For Claire, Georgia O'Keefe sums up how she feels in these remote places: "... as soon as I saw it, that was my country., it fitted me like a glove." Works made entirely with hand stitch on antique hemp and linen form her second stream, and the slow process of stitch offers a balance to the more physically demanding aspects of working with pigments. Claire Benn says "For me it's about reduction, quietness stillness, and conveying the sense of place".

### **Karen Farmer**

For Karen, it's all about the cloth; colouring it using immersion, surface and Shibori processes, cutting it up and re-structuring it to produce abstract quilts. Her colour palette is generally drawn from nature, particularly the trees in her native Pennsylvania. Karen states "I love working with cloth; it's soft and pliable; forgiving. It responds to my hands. I react strongly to visual stimuli, and often use a highly colourful palette. Lately, I've been playing with fabric collage in very bold and saturated colours. This technique has been very freeing. When exercising my passion for the delicacy of structure found in the natural world, I usually prefer to work in more neutral tones. Coming from an American heritage, there is a deep-seated influence of the tradition of making patchwork and quilted textiles throughout my work".

### **Claudia Helmer**

Claudia continues to explore the process of paper lamination, fracturing and abstracting images taken on her travels. She is also now engaged with the concept of how our perception or view can often be veiled, blurred, unclear or obscured; how things can look through mist or fog, how people can veil or hide aspects of themselves. "I am a tactile person" she says. "I love cloth. My favourite things are unpredictability, surprises and challenges and I like to explore new ways of working that reward me with these."

### **Claire Higgott**

Claire's background in graphic design has always run side by side with her interest in cloth and stitching, though recent work with text and handwriting has brought the two strands closer together. Other interests, including archaeology and maps, fences and hedges and the ever-increasing bureaucracy faced by small businesses, have all inspired and continue to inform Claire's work. Layers of

graphic marks, printed or stitched by hand and machine, contribute texture and a visual language to her textile pieces.

### **Daline Kiff Stott**

Daline could best be described as an intuitive artist with a background in traditional quilt making. Her deliberately unstructured approach to design and content produces work with a distinctly New World flavour, full of unusual angles, and often subtle colour, with stitch being ever present. Lately she's been exploring hand stitch on screen printed cloth, along with making 'funky functionals' - quilts that are spontaneous, fun and designed to be used. "The process of creating my art is more enjoyable to me than the response evoked by a particular piece". She says.

### **Susie Koren**

Susie is exhibiting work produced using raw earth pigments and prints made with carborundum grit. These techniques give her the subtle tones and marks that influence her hand stitching. She describes the inspiration for her work as "the emptiness of bleak winter landscapes, windswept beaches, the repetitive rhythm of nature and the colours of the earth."

### **Leslie Morgan**

Colour – bold or neutral, crazy or calm – is important to Leslie. Using dyes (in the bucket and through surface design on the bench) and paints, Leslie creates whole cloth pieces and also cuts and re-structures cloth to create abstract quilts. Her pieces are a narrative between herself and her work. If the viewer sees a different story she is delighted. Her present work is about the passage of time, especially with hindsight! "I love creating layered cloth, building up meaning and texture, atmosphere and mood. I am faithful to many of the images that I have developed over the years, and the many ways they can be used. They are security and adventure." She says.

## **MEDIA INFORMATION**

ViewSeven | A Sense of Place

5-9 December 2017

Private View: Tuesday 5 December 6.30pm-8pm

The Menier Gallery, 51 Southwark Street London SE1 1RU

T: 0207 407 3222

Open: Monday - Saturday 11am-6pm

[www.viewseven.com](http://www.viewseven.com)

Twitter: @QuietMaterials

Facebook: @HerQuietMaterials

Instagram: @HerQuietMaterials

Note: ViewSeven art textiles are available for fashion and interior shoots.

High res. visuals available.

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