

REVERBERATION.

A Dialogue between Alex Learmont and Jill Trappler.

Jill Trappler sees her work as being like water. Fluid, yet caught between earth and sky, it flows as narrative, finding its way into vision and image. Like water her work through time has cut the natural course that defines this exhibition.

Jill's initial concept for this exhibition was one that followed "*Where the water runs*". In choosing the works she was confronted by a deep central thread of echoes and reflections - an ongoing interplay of effect and resonance running through her past and current work. This meeting of her own influence moves both forwards and backwards, uninterrupted in time. In her new work there are powerful echoes of the past which, in its own time, clearly predicted the strength and vision found in her current work. She identifies this interface of past and present as *Reverberation*. It begins in 2015, when she worked in a Triangle workshop in upstate New York.

This gave me the opportunity to engage with artists, not only in the workshop, but at work in their own studios. I was also able to visit galleries and museums that I had long wanted to explore.

The New York experience enabled her to widen the scope of her life-long community work, which continued through to the end of 2018. Requiring to assess her own statement through retreat, she re-established her studio at home.

I was able to look back without distraction, and allow specific images to surface. While working on a few experimental pieces the ideas began to describe the way a new body of work would come together.

I wanted to bring what is seen in the mind's eye, first into consciousness, and then into images and forms - particularly sculpture - that I had not fully explored.

I found great meaning in simply coming home, where I can work alone yet collectively with family and friends.;

Ideas and Influences.

The specific ideas for this exhibition are drawn from three different sources; a personal sculpture made by Jill at the Triangle workshop; and two pieces of work seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The two images that attached themselves to me from the many that I saw at the Metropolitan Museum were the Iris paintings by the Japanese master Ogata Korin (circa 1707), and ceramic tiles used on the threshold of the Damascus room. One of the aspects that unites them is time itself –

both were created in the same time period, the early years of the eighteenth Century

Ogata Korin's irises, as an expression of nature, sweep across a six-panel screen. The image illustrates a pivotal moment in *Ise Monogatari*, a collection of love poetry. A poet, exiled from Kyoto after an affair with a lady of rank, reaches a stream where the beauty of the irises, floating on shimmering water, prompts him to write of love lost. It is both a lover's and an exile's cry. "Here are my roots, here is my heart..."

A sense of home resonated for me in the Met's Damascus Room, a reception chamber brought intact from Syria. Like the rock paintings found in local mountain caves, the walls are inscribed with poetry. Visitors enter the chamber through what used to be a cupboard. Gold leaf and gesso painted on wood bring the surface to life. The texture and varied surfaces respond to the changes in light. There is a small fountain; soothing sounds of trickling water bring a sense of calm and awe to the beauty as we enter and wait. We are visiting a person's home; we can share a book; we can be there and imagine the past as we place ourselves within and outside of all that this room shares with us.

The tile I was most affected by is the middle one of seven that form the threshold. If we half close our eyes the tile, decorated by off-centred squares and triangles, gives us the experience of an ascent into a place reverberating with personal memory in which I found myself deeply connected.

The third source is in my own Triangle Workshop sculpture. I wove abandoned strips of Perspex on the river bank, then immersed the woven frame work into the shallow water. I engaged with the changing reflections and the fish as they played within the fabric of colour and shadow. This creative and grounding experience is one which I am able to refer to, and relive in the making of new work.

The influence of these very different sources has driven this exhibition, which includes paintings, wall, free-standing and mobile sculptures, video, music and tapestry.

The Influence of Family.

The exhibition is, in the deepest sense, a response to the value and importance of the gift of understanding an inherited consciousness, deeply rooted in family and community.

My father has always worked with wood. He made spinning wheels and looms. Together he and I learnt to weave. My mother taught me to spin,

sew, knit, draw, paint, crochet, read and listen to music. They gave me both love - and a love of the creative process.

The influence of Community.

I have not always worked alone. Throughout my life I have worked with many artists, in workshops and in the teaching spaces. I am able to be a friend to myself through deep friendships with others.

The “reverberation” of my early work has contributed greatly to what I now make, and how my process happens. I hope to do justice to the skills, craftsmanship, thoughts, values and ideas that have been passed on to me by so many. In a swiftly moving world I hope to understand the daily shift of time and circumstance. My duty, through daily observation, is to transform the consequence of our time, into new images emerging out of exploration and experiment.

I am very aware that it does not happen alone, but in a conscious collaboration with the community around me. You, the viewers of this exhibition, the readers of this catalogue, are my generous collaborators, and I thank you.

Extracts from Jill Trappler’s studio journal.

The following thoughts, extracts from Jill’s studio journal, give us an insight into her vision and process.

Painting arrives, not through the eye, but from within. I feel free to move with work and life and not career and fashion.

I find inspiration and encouragement in the written word, be it in poetry, novels and essays. I rarely listen to music when I work; I like the sounds of the day and the night.

The space created by an image extends my imagination, and then I find myself involved in an edit; erasing, losing, finding, scratching and balmng are all part of the cycle.

The difference between disordered seeing and practical seeing is very important to me. Disordered seeing happens when you go down a rabbit hole of narrative, or are seduced by colour. You become fascinated and intrigued, become didactic. Ha!

I back pedal after adventures like those and try to keep to the language of the materials, the language of the aesthetic perhaps, the language of the eye.

At times I talk to myself, as if I am not alone in deciding what colour or brush to use - and I am a good listener!

It is difficult to express what happens in being with an image. When the work has been physically hard, it feels good to rest and close my eyes. Then I am drawn on, as if waiting for the sun to rise, and let the dream eye see clearly.

Colour is feeling and feeling becomes colour. It has scent; it is both loud and quiet.

For me the edge of the frame, is the outward edge of an inner world – and I wonder how much more is there in the infinity beyond the frame.

Numbers quietly define everything - rhythm, pattern, dimension and time itself. I play with numbers as I work - adding, subtracting, shuffling - from small to large, from dark to light. This playfulness loosens my mind, frees me from the prison of expectation. When I allow my mind to move easily, the hand and brush follow.

What is seen by the eye differs from that seen by the mind; the image is most surprising. Embracing the differences is the beginning of artistry.

A variation of visual rhythms, velocities and amps, creates its own silent music, leading the listening viewer into a world of allusion, association and deep memory. Every brush stroke is part of the greater movement, a single note within a symphony.

Narrative is vital. Every painting is part of a journey, over the earth, through water or air, and through the ever-present shadow that lays itself over life's great spaces. There is no need for a beginning or an end to the journey. I wish to embrace the narrative - and let it be.

END TEXT