

TOPOPHILIA : a sense of belonging

Solo Exhibition by Helen MacRitchie

3 September – 2 October 2022

The Exhibition

In this exhibition Helen examines her life in Scotland, Australia and England, reflecting on her feeling of home for each of these particular places. Topophilia, more than simply a liking of a place, suggests a cultural connection, a sense of belonging.

As one moves around the exhibition from the Scottish hills to Sydney back to the Oxfordshire countryside, as Helen did in reality, the colour and atmosphere changes but feelings of personal connection remain. Recurring felting, wrapping and embroidery techniques with intertwining and nest



motifs express this visually. Ancestry, heritage, memories and colourful vistas past and present are her inspiration and points of topophilic identification. Her thoughts and feelings during the very act of 'slow making' are infused in these pieces and strengthen that personal connection.

The Artist

Helen MacRitchie is a textile artist based in Oxfordshire UK who lived in Sydney for 15 years. Wherever her location she explores personal connections to the landscape and the scientific world, focusing upon the detail and colour found in nature and medicine. Her abstracted designs use mark making techniques, drawing and printing research to give metaphorical representation within her work.

Wet felted wool is her base of choice with free machine or hand embroidery blended to create layered textural surfaces or sculptural forms as the design dictates. She often naturally dyes her materials using leaves, seeds and bark found locally to give them a sense of place and grounding within her environment. The hand felting process allows her to explore the relationship between natural organic forms and human manipulation, connecting her emotionally and physically to the work.