

*Nathaniel Faulkner
Anna Hughes
Ian Jackson
Hannah Rowan
Jessica Wetherly*

Rhinoceros

Curated by Kristian Day & David McLeavy

Rhinoceros

Haarlem Artspace, Wirksworth
7th May - 5th June

A group exhibition exploring themes of land, excavation, history, material and alchemy.

In the early 1820's, a remarkable discovery was made in the hillside above Wirksworth. Known as the Dream Cave, this natural cavern on the hillside looked to house the remains of several animals, along with a series of minerals and rock fragments. Amongst the remains were that of a *Coelodonta antiquitatis*, better known as the Woolly Rhinoceros.

The discovery of these remains could be thought of as purely of archaeological interest, however it could point to a more expanded idea, that of time itself. The remains of an animal, once known for its physical prowess and stature, has been slowly transformed into delicate fragments that speak of a time lost to history. The discovery of something connecting us to the past allows us to think of our relationship with our present circumstance in different ways. What remains will be excavated from our present in centuries or millennia to come, and how do objects of ancient history tell something of that time?

This exhibition, which takes its name from the discovery in question, explores our relationship with ideas of excavation, land preservation, history, alchemy and how stories can be told through objects.

New work by Nathaniel Faulkner takes cues from vernacular architecture, a style which is characterised by the use of construction materials and traditions specific to its particular location. A small geometric glass vessel hold models of spaces, stemming from examples of sun and sweat lodges, often sites for purification ceremonies, but also a space for magic and ritual. Sharing some similarities to musings around uses of the Dream Cave, Faulkner's studies present themselves miniature sites for transformation.

Anna Hughes' work appears to be fragments from buildings lost to ruin, or tablets used in ritual activity. Hughes has been fascinated with ancient markings carved into stone, whether they are protective symbols, masons marks, mediaeval or modern graffiti. Being able to trace the small personal scale of a human hand inscribing a sign suspends that specific moment in time. Rather than a purposeful or antagonistic defacement, this form of mark making as a gesture seems triumphant, like a proof of being a part of something, a pilgrimage, a symbol of allegiance or respect for a specific site. These ritual inscriptions catalyse a kind of magic spell upon the surface of the stone that might pass on to anyone that notices them.

In *Farmer's Tan*, Ian Jackson makes direct reference to crop circles, a common agricultural scene in rural pastures, but presents these somewhat temporary arrangements in a more permanent printed format. The colours speak to the slow alteration of skin pigment through exposure to the sun; the farmer tanning their body in the heat of the sun. Departing towards something more architectural, in *Making Something That Fits*, Jackson re-orders fragments used as templates, allowing skilled stonemasons the chance to recreate damaged elements of York Minster. These Zinc plates could be seen as a way of trying to freeze history, a manual of sorts to ensure the style and craft of a particular period is held in place, suspending the story of the Minster for future generations.

Hannah Rowan's work makes us consider time and how objects of nature can warp, change and be malleable through processes of melting, pooling and reforming. In *Flowing as Frozen II*, a glass vessel appears to flow and drip into a copper tray littered with salt crystals. Seemingly suspended in both solid and liquid state, the work hints at time passing, materials shifting and matter transforming. *Aloe & Tentacle* are ceramic versions of living fragments, both plant and animal, these fragments are used to perceive and adapt to the world. These works, along with a cast of a ram's horn suspend something in a frozen state, at least to the perception of human time, however, similar to the remains found locally, these are also subject to change in deep time.

Jessica Wetherly's work reflects on the mixture of our wild and industrial landscapes, observing the ubiquity of human effect on the landscape and exploring the invisible language of electromagnetic waves in the natural world. The main symbol found within some of Wetherly's work is the raven, slightly oversized with a direct forward facing gaze. The raven symbolises intelligence, magic and mystery within many cultures but they also have the quality of the mischievous trickster. The somewhat mystical relationship between

different species often leads to unexpected relationships forming and histories being formed. Like other works in the show, what appears in Wetherly's work is an exploration of the visible and the invisible, both in terms of forms of communication but also in relationship to time.

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More information about what was discovered at the Dream Cave can be viewed at the Wirksworth Heritage Centre. See their website for more details - wirksworthheritage.co.uk