

NEW EXHIBITION

GALLERY1

PATH:TOWARDS THE IRON WELL

10 JUNE – 29 JULY 2006

PATRICIA SHONE

Process of collapse and regeneration
Transformation of ground
My feet on this land

I'm aware that people from this area have a strong sense of belonging here; a close connection to the place which I don't have. I find it hard to say where I come from.

Looking at the land and seeing the history of human habitation in traces left on the surface. Paths, seemingly going to nowhere.

I took a walk on the hill behind the house, Cnoc an Eorna (the hill of barley) heading towards 'the iron well', the path to which is almost obscured now. Because the weather was wet and cold I was thinking about the people in the past having to be out in the elements and walking the same paths. I felt a sense then of connection; that by walking the land we are connected to it and to the people who have walked there before. It helps me feel that it's ok to be here.

The cumulative effect of people walking a certain route opens a way through a terrain; connecting communities to each other, facilitating communication. It's an activity which is fundamental to humanity because it's essential to survival.

Is it flippant to align one person out for a stroll along with the generations who walked to get the basic necessities of life?

This got me interested in the paths around Caligary, and then the roads. I started taking pressings in clay of certain points along the way, portraits of a specific moment in time, in order to witness the changes. And to place myself along the route and acknowledge the past.

The pathways fade with disuse along with the memories of their purpose.

In January 2005 Skye experienced a hurricane which destroyed the road along the shore and blew down huge numbers of trees. Overnight 'the peat road', was obliterated. It was one of the routes onto the hill where peats were dug, now it doesn't exist except as memory and as a clay pot.

I wanted to use ideas of collapse and change, of the balance between human intervention and processes of nature.

Being given the opportunity to develop an installation for this exhibition rather than new pots is a challenge for me. I'm quite comfortable with making pots. I now constantly question my decisions and feelings about why and how I do something.

In its simplest form the material I use for my work is the ground I walk on. Working on this installation has become a journey for me and the process of change is interesting me. Creatively and personally it is working on all sorts of levels and the ideas are becoming clearer and less complicated.

Probably something to do with my age – the knees are a bit stiff these days.

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