

The Errant Muse

Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones

November 16th 2019 - March 28th 2020

The Victoria Gallery & Museum, Liverpool

The Errant Muse brings together work by artist Charlotte Hodes and poet Deryn Rees-Jones and is a result of their close collaboration over the last five years. At the centre is a focus on the nature of creativity, and the particular histories of the women whose lives and writing have inspired them. Three interlinked spaces contain text, image and artefact, blending historic material from the University of Liverpool's Victoria Gallery & Museum and Special Collections & Archives, alongside Hodes' and Rees-Jones' own creations. Visitors are encouraged to move through the exhibition, daydreaming, making new stories of their own.



The Errant Muse

Deryn Rees-Jones

To err is to travel as much as it is to transgress, and both senses of the word are held in the idea of our errant muse. Historically the muse has been constructed as a female presence who is somehow incorporated or subsumed to generate male creative practice; in this exhibition we wanted instead to bring together our work both as individuals but also as collaborators, to foreground our processes as female practitioners, as well as to explore the cumulative dialogue of our work as artist and poet over the last five years. To muse is also to think, to ponder; to do that errantly, idly, suggests that both the muses of our exhibition as well as the visitors to it, might engage with traditional ideas of inspiration and creativity somewhat against the grain.

As we have collaborated together, our methods have evolved; the challenge was to do this in a new environment. The cathedral-like space of the Victoria Building, with its grand scale, its pillars and ornate tiling, also holds histories and memories. **Gallery One** had, in the early twentieth century, been home to the women's reading room, while **Gallery Two**, with its art nouveau fireplace, had been the women's common room. Although it was a space I felt I knew quite well, as we re-encountered it as collaborators I found myself returning over and over to lines that have always puzzled and intrigued me in Baudelaire's poem 'Correspondences', from his book *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) (*The Flowers of Evil*). The poem begins

In Nature's temple, living pillars rise,
Speaking sometimes in words of abstruse sense;
Man walks through woods of symbols, dark and dense,
Which gaze at him with fond familiar eyes.
Like distant echoes blent in the beyond
In unity, in a deep darksome way,
Vast as black night and vast as splendid day,
Perfumes and sounds and colors correspond.
Trans. Jacques LeClerq, *Flowers of Evil*
(Mt Vernon, NY: Peter Pauper Press, 1958).

While the forest of the imagination began to animate, and the tree-like pillars of the museum offered a stage for thinking about the relationship between word and image, Charlotte and I exchanged emails, skyped, met in person or talked on the phone. We trusted the way each exchange of image or text became part of the process of 'not-quite-knowing'; we were both learning to become a holder or receptacle for each other for those things that couldn't be contained or understood as we worked alone.

As we began to think about the exhibition, how texts and objects might work to create new patterns and narratives, Charlotte also continued to talk to me about the image of the woman in motion that has been so much the hallmark of her work over the last thirty years. Early on, she sent me some images of nymphs, and introduced me to the work of the art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg. *Mnemosyne Atlas*, which was begun in 1924, and remained unfinished

at the time of Warburg's death in 1929, brings together images from ancient Greece to Weimar Germany, which cumulatively take on symbolic import. Arranged intuitively the atlas is created as a 'thought-space'. In *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum* (2007) art historian Griselda Pollock draws on the models of both Warburg's and Freud's private museum of antiquities as well as the theorist Bratta Ettinger's concept of 'subjectivity as encounter' to propose a way of writing and thinking about art history, setting up the museum space as 'a differencing journey' through time, space and archive. With these models in mind, we approached the display cases in the museum as spaces in which multiple and complex narratives of association could be assembled, setting our own work, written and visual, in a new alignment, to create what we began to think of as an archive of correspondence and feeling.

The writers whose work has informed our practice -- Felicia Hemans (1793-1835), Helen Thomas (1877-1967), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) -- have in some ways travelled errantly towards us. Each project we had worked on together, beginning with a first commission in 2014, had its own life and purpose. In bringing earlier works together with new, we do not set these women up as icons in themselves; rather they are stopping points for exploration, women whose life-stories, significant losses, geographies (two, Hemans and Thomas, were born in

Liverpool), and accounts of creative practice, have ignited in us sparks of connection and curiosity. All were advocates of female independence; all in various and important ways addressed issues of women's creativity, and despite their many privileges of race and class, errancy was often a brave departure from societal norms and expectations of womanhood. We place them not as a lineage but see our engagement with them and their work as a series of attempts to think through ideas in an ongoing imaginative process.

PERPETUAL NIGHT

The exhibition begins with a sequence of pictures, *Perpetual Night*, on the **Red Wall Gallery**. Placed on the balcony outside what was originally the women's common room, these images introduce the viewer to the two further spaces of the gallery. Loosely gesturing to Woolf's groundbreaking work on the conditions and aspirations necessary for a woman to become a writer, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), the series of papercuts shows a woman moving across domestic furniture, exploring it, finding a space for herself within it, sometimes escaping it. Much of our work together prior to this series had been in film, and stepping back in to dialogue over a few months -- Charlotte sent sketches, and I wrote fragments in response -- we created together a space for a co-habitation of image and text. In *Perpetual Night* the image of a woman moves from picture to picture, left to right, and in doing so travels across the wall. This is not an animation, but in her halts and

hesitations the figure of the woman gestures to the way she might in a film move from frame to frame. With its melancholy feel, *Perpetual Night* is an assemblage of broken fragments of thought, gathered together in an order that suggests transformation. The Q code beside the images allows the visitor to hear the poem in full, held together by the poet's voice.

To engage with an archive necessarily means engaging with both history and with methods of classification. All the objects gathered together, whether found or made, at first glance carry with them ideas of beauty and gentility; ceramic and glass, especially, are fine objects indicative of wealth. Close scrutiny, however, reveals unfolding narratives of violence, precarity or loss, a violence which is also a part of their histories of collection or production. **Gallery One** foregrounds the work of poet Felicia Hemans, herself a poet who, despite her popularity in her lifetime, has been largely 'lost' within the literary tradition. Each of the four main cabinets in the gallery might loosely be seen as staging an imagined moment from her life. Hemans published her first book of poems in 1808 when she was fourteen, married at the age of eighteen, and gave birth to five children in successive years. When her husband removed himself to Italy in 1818, when their children were still young, Hemans managed to continue her life as a writer; she became increasingly well known and published 19 volumes before her death aged 41. Her most famous poem 'Casabianca' includes the line 'The boy stood on the burning deck'; her other poem 'The Stately Homes of England' is

credited as coining the term 'stately home'.

THE ORCHARD OF LOST THINGS

Gallery One, The Orchard of Lost Things, features three wall banners, *Heat, Heart, Unfurls* (2019) and six glass cases, **(I) Ghost Orchard, (II) Sound of the Sea, (III) An Errant Muse, (IV) Fires, (V) The Writers, and (VI) Unfurls**. Set against the long windows of the room, the banners provide a backdrop to the show and the narrative sequence of the text: 'Heat, Heart, Unfurls'. These three banners take their inspiration from a previously displayed copy of Robert Hooke's *Micrographia*, (1665), and flowers inspired by an earlier exhibition at the VG&M of botanical models made by the Berlin firm R. Brendel and Co.. Brendel's gorgeous papier-mâché plant models were widely used for both education and demonstration. In 2018 Charlotte had made extensive drawings from that exhibition and the memory of it metamorphosed into a series of papercuts, which were re-translated into the current printed banners. The process of papercutting in itself, whereby a picture systematically, by hand and scalpel, has elements removed, allows Charlotte to create an ongoing tension in her work between art and craft, fragility and strength. The ghostly presence of the papercuts and the original flowers, as well even as of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, is marked by the presence of a single Brendel flower, a Dog Rose, which is now on display in **Case III**.

The 'lost' objects in the glass cases, juxtaposed and in dialogue with all that is around them, hold

affective charges and resonances. Their removal from other parts of the collection and archives makes them a part of a new story at the same time as their absences may remain visible at other parts of the museum.

Case I, Ghost Orchard, contains the poem 'The Orchard of Lost Things', a surreal attempt to think about how we might feel about potential losses in the natural world: flowers on the edge of extinction. Here, tiny exquisite etchings from William Blake (1757-1827) are recast in the intricacy of the papercuts, and placed beside images from the archive that echo their shapes and colour. Both the botanical slides and the scrimshaws, etched by 19th century sailors with needle and ink into the bone of the slaughtered whales, offer symbolic histories of taxonomy and collection but also of a world in which flora and fauna are constantly at risk of extinction. The botanical slides, themselves objects that curate and classify, become little microcosms, structures echoed elsewhere by the engravings made by Hodes on glass in **Case VI**, or by the cut down images from Blake's etchings, with their richly-suggestive titles 'What is a Man?' and 'I Found Him Beneath a Tree'. Each engraving on the scrimshaw offers a contrasting story: the woman who is the object of a duel, fought over by men; and the women who sit companionably, reading together.

'The Lovers' poem, in **Case II, Sound of the Sea** offers a model for errancy and singleness. This poem sits beside a pair of jugs, one with an

image of a woman waving goodbye to a departing ship, which makes silent reference to a poem by John Gay (1685-1732) 'Sweet William's Farewell to Black Eyed Susan'. On the jug beside it, unattributed, are lines from Alexander Pope's 'An Essay on Man' (1733-34). Next to these jugs is a book, opened somewhat arbitrarily to lines from Hemans' poem, 'The Sound of the Sea' alongside which is an illustrated engraving. Here also sits a dolphin used for teaching purposes, and a piece of coral. The delicate forms of the coral echo the images of foliage on the jug. But we may also start to make links between the dolphin and the whalebone in **Case I**, or the etching of the sea in the book with Blake's etchings. Throughout the cabinets, we play with text and image as well as doubleness, and this case also in its 'wateriness' sits in contrast to the warm fires of **Case IV**.

Facing 'The Lovers' and its exploration of independence, **Case III, An Errant Muse**, contains the poem 'Passion Flowers', suggesting a new encounter of both independence, companionship and a moment of contemplation. A finely-made black and white urn stands resplendent, and on it we see the iconic male poet sing; alongside this is the closed red bound book by Felicia Hemans, and a pair of porcelain vases on which are pictures of birds.

In **Case IV, Fires**, the porcelain figure of Apollo holds up a flame that is met by the ship on the box of matches, reminding us of the image of the ship on the ceramic jug in **Case III**. Emerging from the flames on this little statue, with its

companion Mercury, is also a bird which, at first glance, we might not notice, but which we might see differently if we associate it with the birds or winged creatures on the vases in the previous case. Here Hodes' art continues to contain the female body as it moves; the striking glass sculpture 'Silhouette, burnt orange' contains another image of a woman, who this time lies down as if by the seashore.

Cases V (The Writers) and **VI (Unfurls)** offer insights into the creative process. In **Case V** curated spillage of the drafts of one of the poems, and a series of sketches, sit alongside each other. Foregrounding the essence of the show, the process of repetition and redraft is emphasised not just as working method but a method of encounter. The engraved square tiles, like the woman in 'Silhouette, burnt orange', remind us of the botanical slides in **Case I**, and interrogate our mode of seeing, asking us to look, as well as to look through.

In **Case VI** we see glimpses of the women and their writing, their photographs from book or archive. Helen Thomas, who like Hemans was born in Liverpool, is pictured here both as the young Edwardian who would marry the poet Edward Thomas, and, in an extraordinary photograph taken much later in her life, standing in front of a picture of Botticelli's 'Primavera' which hangs above her fireplace. Also here is an early draft of Elizabeth Bishop's 'Questions of Travel' which, with its erasures and indecisions, shows a poem in slow, brilliant progress. A

postcard of Woolf and a copy of *A Room of One's Own* remind us of the struggles particular to the woman writer. Compass and pocket watch ask us to think of time and place, but are also rich in personal association and memory.

FIRES

Gallery II, Fires, with its focal wooden fireplace, is home to a series of paintings, sketches and three animated films. Artworks by Hodes on both paper and wood are hung to create more echoes and resonances that appear in an animated film, also titled **Fires (2019)**. This new film takes as its starting point the work of the philosopher Rosi Braidotti whose concept of the 'nomadic subject' has been a central part of recent studies in posthuman thinking. Here we continue to think about movement and creativity, following on from the work in the cabinets as Hodes' images continue to emphasise the process of ongoingness, and to offer an answer to a question posed by Braidotti when she visited Liverpool as our Hope Street Writer-in-Residence, about the nature of poetry.

Braidotti's question is here answered in a lyric essay, *Fires*, (Shoestring Press, 2019), specially published to be read alongside the exhibition. This little book, small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, acts as an anchor for the various works shown across the galleries. Images from the exhibition slip in and out of its fragmented pages; with its red cloth cover it gestures to Hemans' book in **Case III**, but also reminds us of the red-backed book of poems 'The Oak Tree', written by

Virginia Woolf's heroine in *Orlando* (1928). 'The Oak Tree' is written and re-written across the centuries, its author changing sex in the process as eventually the poem is buried beneath the tree that it is supposed to represent. Woolf's own question in *Orlando* about what poetry is, which she answers with the phrase, 'a voice answering a voice', is quoted in the essay.

The three animated films, viewed on small screens with headsets, offer a quiet space as the visitor is asked both to look and listen in an intimate way. Like the image of the woman wearing headphones engraved on the glass tile in **Case VI**, the visitor puts on the headphones to listen. In its exploration of a creative moment **Fires** (2019) addresses a fantasy of the muse, famously described by the poet Robert Graves as 'the ancient power of fright and lust – the female spider or queen-bee whose embrace is death'.

And You, Helen (2014) was commissioned by Ledbury Poetry Festival, supported by Arts Council England and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, to commemorate WWI. Edward Thomas' original poem 'And you, Helen' was the starting point for a new 12- part set of poems and images, as Thomas' life and death are seen through Helen's eyes. Ongoing collaborative processes are used to work through questions of artistic practice, exploring wider visual and poetic preoccupations with constructions of a female self, and relation to the female body. Helen Thomas is configured both as the refused and refusing muse, instead writing her own story after the death of her husband.

In **Questions of Travel (2016)** the poet Elizabeth Bishop asks: 'Is it a lack of imagination that makes us come/ to imagined places, not just stay at home.' Here we respond to Bishop's poem by creating a film that experiments with the differences between image, text and voice to think more generally about poetic process, and the parallels that might be drawn between actual journeys and the poetic and artistic journeys of reading, drawing, thinking and writing. The film follows Bishop's poem in deconstructing the binaries of 'here' and 'there' to develop the idea of travel as a metaphor for creative practice. Bishop's phrase 'must we dream our dreams and have them too?' is made central to an exploration of anxieties about empirical thinking and the workings of the imagination.

Deryn Rees-Jones

Liverpool, November 2019

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Red Wall Gallery / Perpetual Night



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Gallery One / The Orchard of Lost Things



>> 38 - 47

Gallery Two / Fires



movements in which
complex interdependence
of embodied relations,
ask, how do we find the
occur?



Red Wall Gallery Perpetual Night

Perpetual Night draws on Virginia Woolf's seminal text, *A Room of One's Own* (1929). In this series of papercuts by Hodes from 2019, women move playfully in and out of the shapes and spaces the domestic furniture provides. As we read from picture to picture, from left to right, we are asked to reflect on the way we understand a poem, as we hear it read aloud, or as it moves in fragments across and through the images and their frames.



Perpetual Night

<https://charlottehodes.com/portfolio/perpetual-night?audio=true>

What serves now
the body's brokenness,
its bones, embodiments

such late rehearsals
making me fur, fin
bright wingy spines.

Forever now
your mouth has taken me.
So here --- in dark waters

--- come now, break in.
Error, fragility, perpetual night.
Unspeakable dreams

do not fear the
the light, crevice, leverage,
dislocations,

What serves us now
is an umbilicus.
Stars furnace, erasure

to our making.
time making
strange, this slip

into space, again now
hibernations
explosions

with urgency
furnishing
your moving towards

glittery,
death now, life,
set in its place.



What serves
the body's brokenness,



its bones, embodiments

such late rehearsals
making me fur, fin



bright wingy spines.

forever
your mouth has taken me.



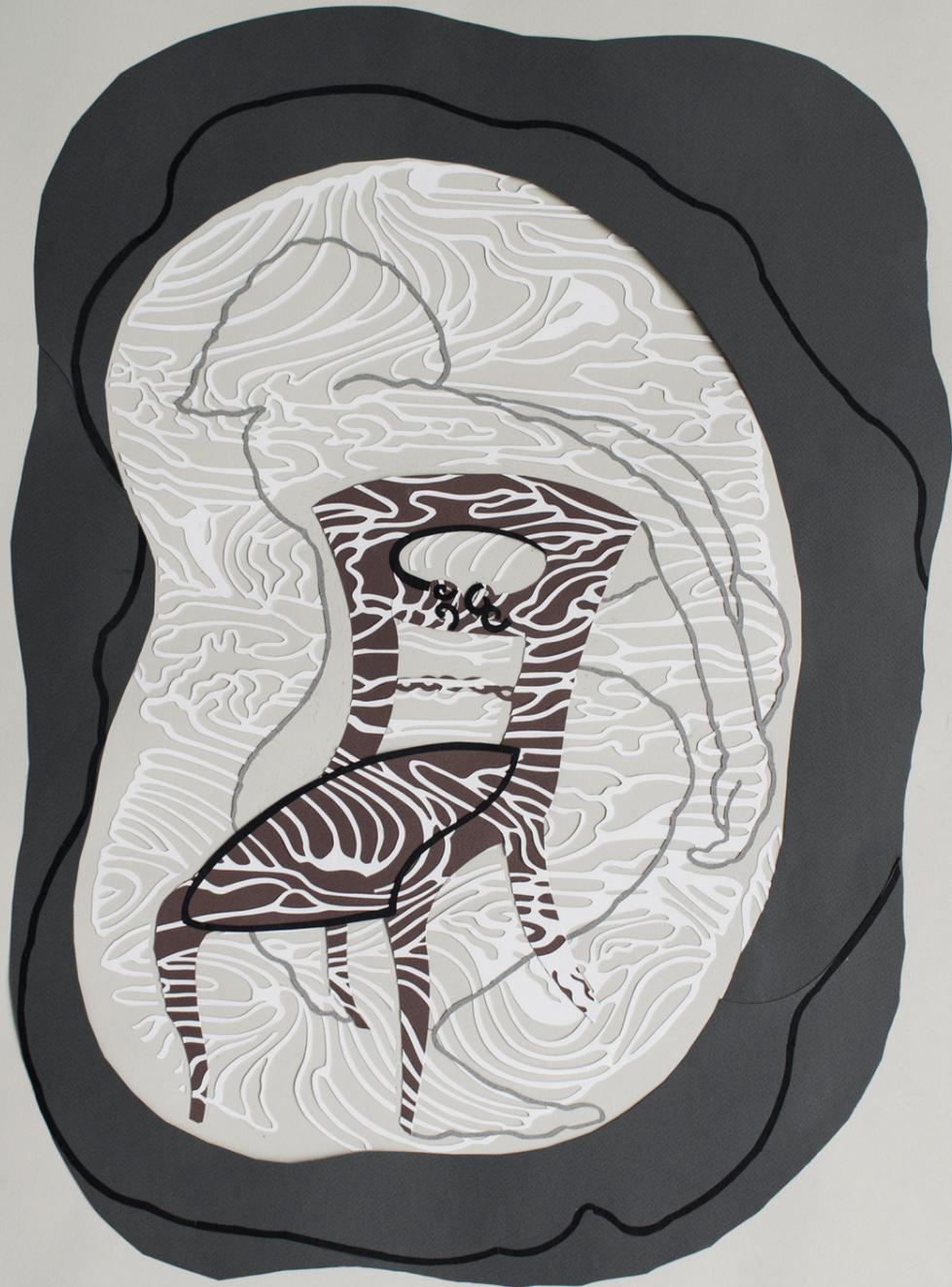
So here --- in dark waters

--- come now, break in.
Error, fragility, perpetual night.



Unspeakable dreams

do not fear the
the light, crevice, leverage,
dislocations,

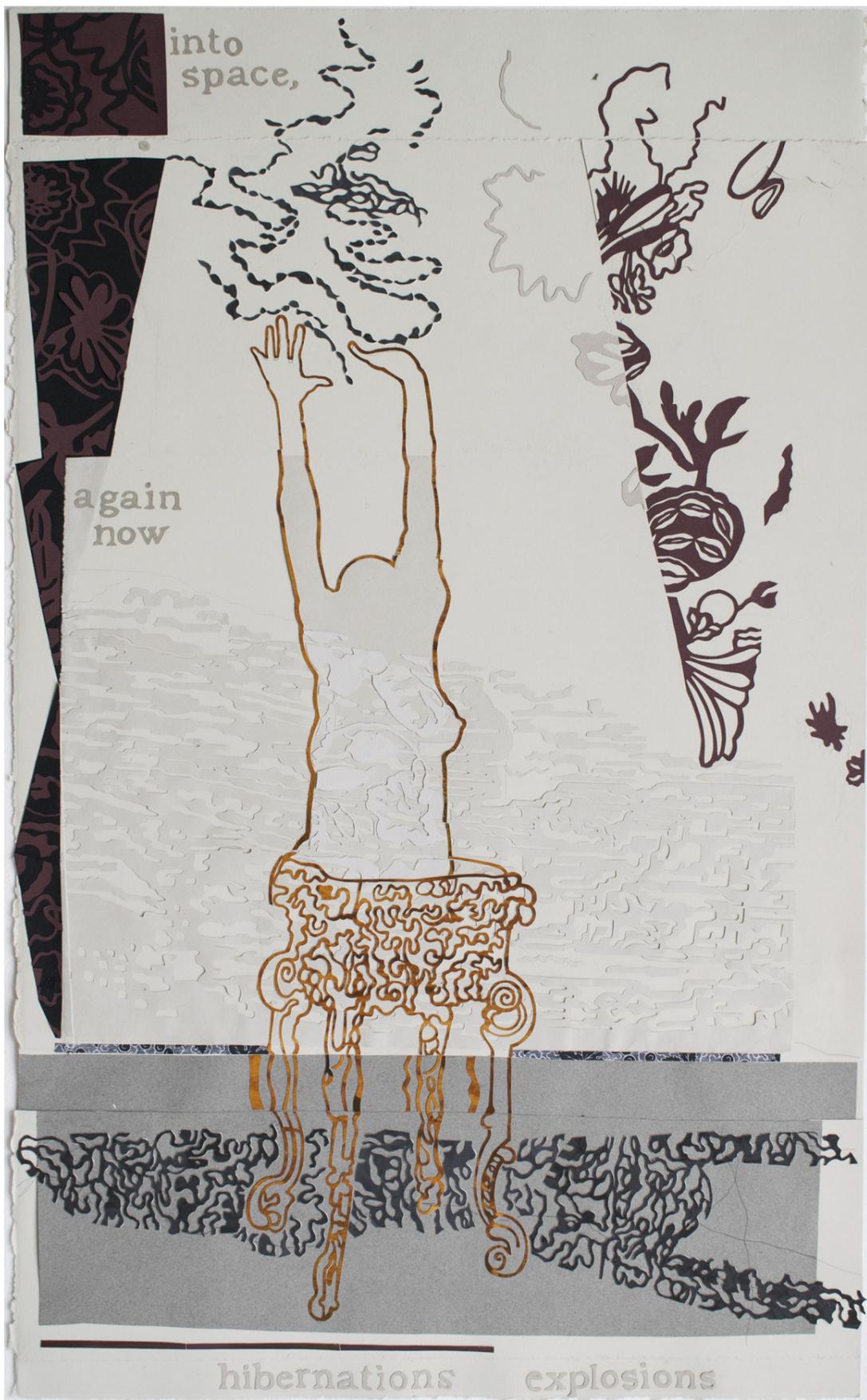


What serves us now
is an umbilicus
Stars furnace, erasure.

to our making. time making



strange, this slip



glittery,

death, life,



set in its place.

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Charlotte Hodes (images)

Deryn Rees-Jones (poem)

Perpetual Night, 2019

10 papercuts

100 x 64 cm

Gallery One The Orchard of Lost Things

In this gallery Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones take inspiration from the now largely-forgotten Liverpool-born poet, Felicia Hemans (1793-1835), as Hemans' 'errant' life as a poet gives shape to the narrative journey.

Objects often encapsulate private memories and associations that are sealed to wider experience. Many on display here feature images of the female body, and are placed alongside each other in glass cabinets to create lines of connection, echoes, repetitions and anticipations. Here we encounter words and images by Alexander Pope and William Blake, alongside botanical slides, ceramics, a flower model and scrimshaws etched on bone by 19th century sailors.

Imagery on the window banners, **Heat, Heart, Unfurls** is sourced from drawings made from the microscopic creatures and plant-form engravings in *Micrographia* by Robert Hooke, 1665, found in the University's Special Collections & Archives. From these tiny elements, re-drawn and re-configured freely with silhouettes of women, Hodes created monumental papercuts that now inform the banners.



Window banners



Right:
Charlotte Hodes
Heat, 2019
315 x 197 cm
Print on fabric

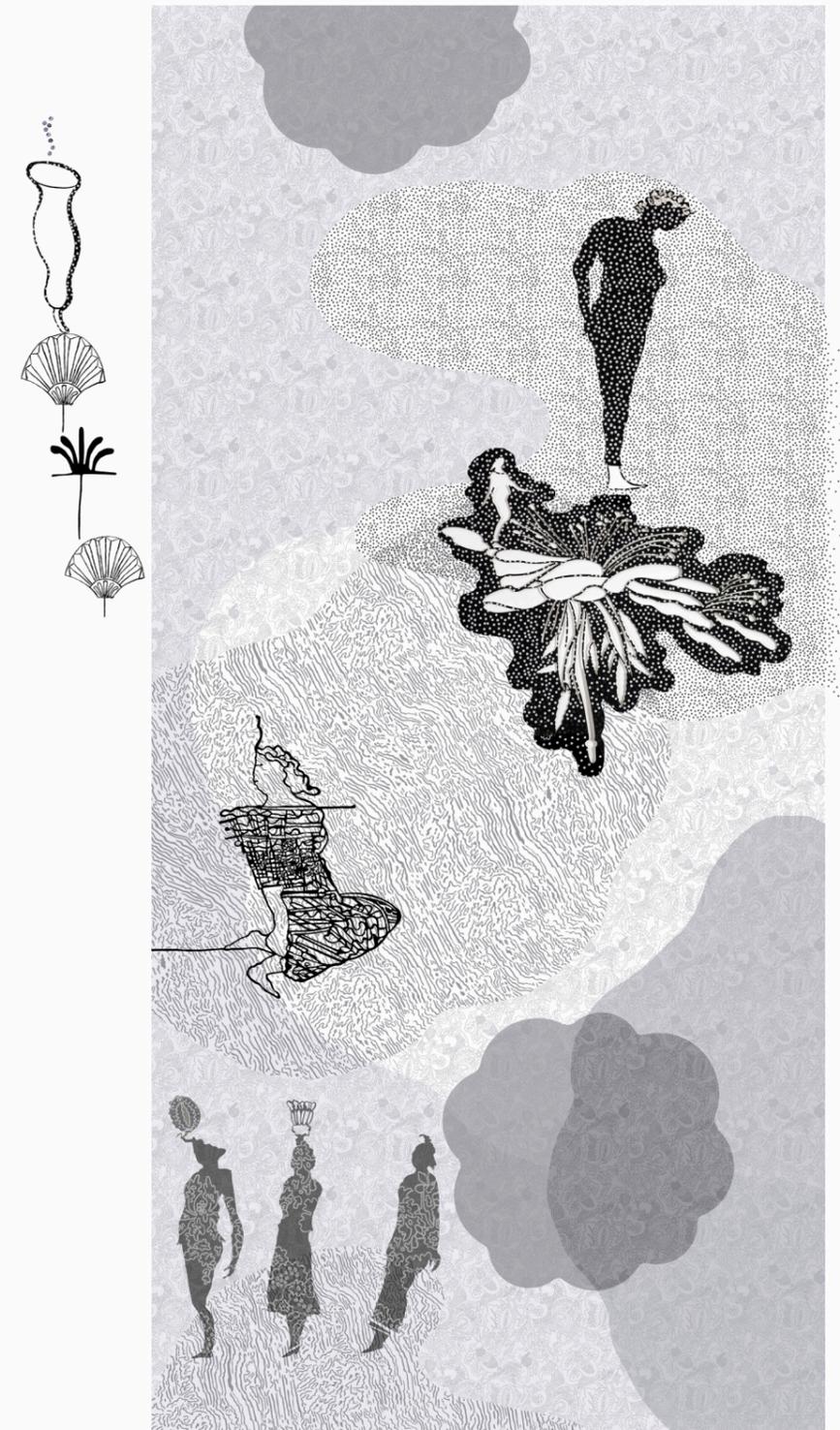
Far right:
Charlotte Hodes
Heart, 2019
315 x 197 cm
Print on fabric

Page 17 Left:
Charlotte Hodes
Unfurls, 2019
315 x 197 cm
Print on fabric

Page 17 Right:
Charlotte Hodes
Heat, 2019
Detail



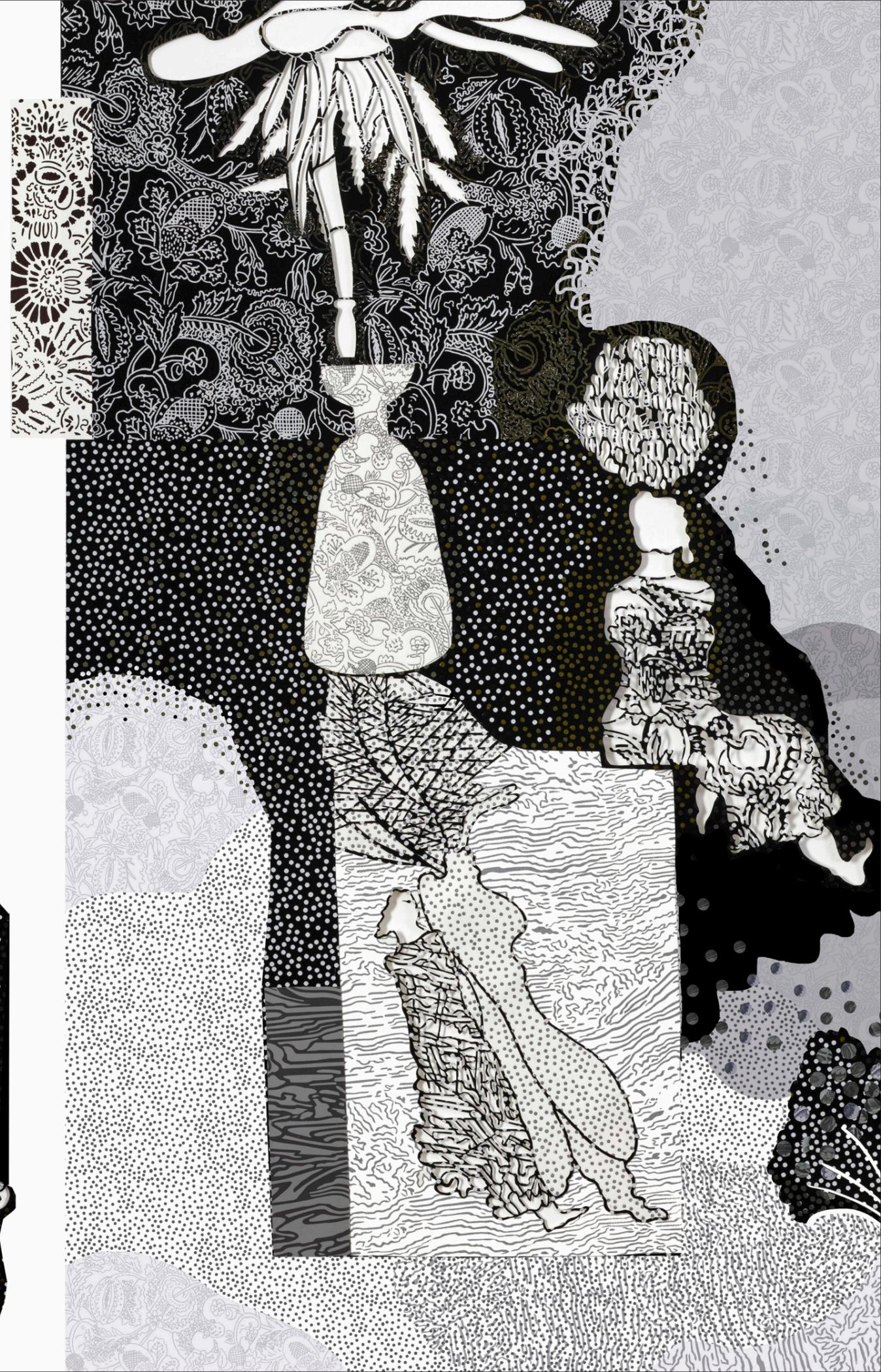
Heat



Heart



Unfurls



Charlotte Hodes
Ghost Orchard I-IV, 2019
4 papercuts that informed the window
banners, (not shown)
184 x 112cm



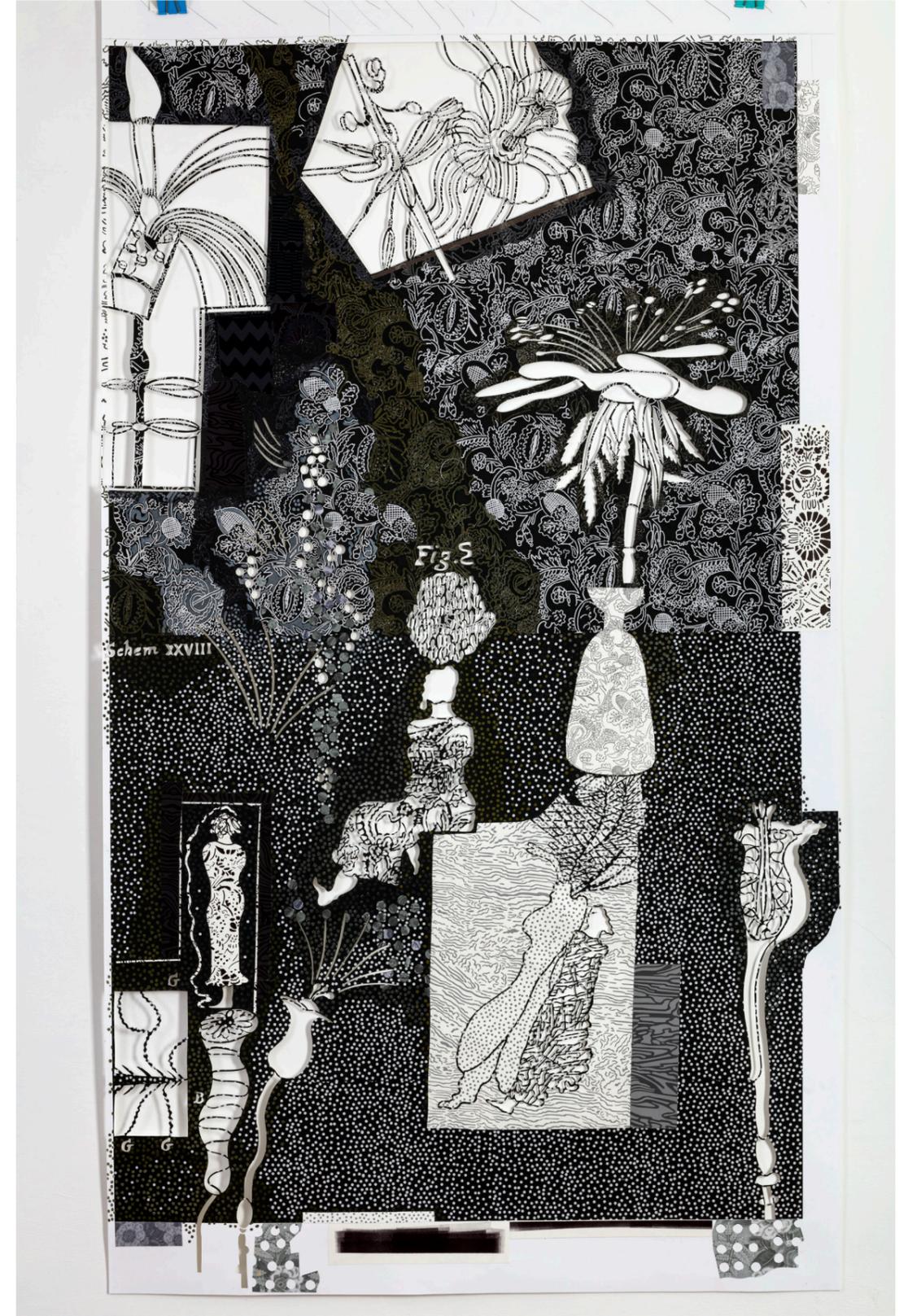
Charlotte Hodes
Ghost Orchard I, 2019



Charlotte Hodes
Ghost Orchard II, 2019



Charlotte Hodes
Ghost Orchard III, 2019



Charlotte Hodes
Ghost Orchard IV, 2019

Case I
Ghost Orchard

The Orchard of Lost Things

Once, to set my heart aside from grief, I made a film of grass, the wind blowing like some complex machine keeping the spaces of earth between green, holding the sky on fictional shoulders the vegetal debris of stalk and twig. Later, it became a dream-film, splashed in red. I saw a field of flowers, the movements of the heart repeating: bellflower, wood calamint, green hound's tongue. And repetition, frame by frame, became an orchard of my spooling summer; trees like pillars, my words strung between. It reminded me of the end, somehow, a last afternoon in a blazing world. How impossible the grass is when it asks: how to keep everything close to your heart, as it burns, and let go.

Deryn Rees-Jones
2019

Right
Charlotte Hodes
The Orchard of Lost Things, 2019
103 x 61 cm
Papercut





Above
William Blake
 'What is Man'
For Children: The Gates of Paradise,
 1793 (modern copy)
 Facsimile Edition by Trianon Press,
 London, 1968.
From the Special Collections &
Archives, University of Liverpool



Above
 Edwardian botanical epidiastroscope
 glass slides
From the Victoria Gallery & Museum Life
Sciences Collection

Above
 Scrimshaw bone engravings, c.1860
From the Victoria Gallery & Museum Dental
Collection

Above right
Charlotte Hodes
 Revelry II, 2006
 44 x 23 cm
 Slip, hand-cut stencil & enamel
 transfer on slipware

Case II

The Sound of the Sea

The Lovers

Over and over I see them, the lovers,
the ones who have loved so long.
I watch them, arm in arm, as they lean into each other.
Umbrellaed in the early evening light,
their softening bodies wear, grow round or thin together,
their faces learn exactitude, start to be the same.
And so the years move on, and move them.
Their children look to them and leave them.
They love them, as their children do again.
How unfaithful I've become to them, the intimate.
Instead I make a pact with errancy.
The streets' sad candles light us up.
I turn my face towards the broken weather.
It wets us with its rain.

Deryn Rees-Jones
2019

Charlotte Hodes
The Lovers, 2019
103 x 61 cm
Papercut



Right, background left
Jug featuring quote by
Alexander Pope, c.1780

Creamware, made in Liverpool
*From the Victoria Gallery & Museum
Collection*

Right, background right
Jug with Black-Eyed Susan,
from a verse by John Gay, c.1800

Creamware, made in Liverpool
*From the Victoria Gallery & Museum
Collection*

Right, foreground
Felicia Hemans, 'The Sound of
the Sea', c.1890

From Poems by Mrs Hemans,
published by George Routledge
and Sons, London

From the Collection of Deryn Rees-Jones



Above, foreground right

Model of a Dolphin

*From the Victoria Gallery & Museum's
Zoological Collection*

Right

Charlotte Hodes

Pattern Shadow, 2017

26 x 22 x 40 cm

Colour glaze, hand-cut enamel transfer
on stoneware

Made at The Clay Studio, Philadelphia



Above

Charlotte Hodes

In the Clouds, 2017

24 x 10 cm

Colour glaze, hand-cut enamel transfer on stoneware

Made at The Clay Studio Philadelphia



Coral

*From the Victoria Gallery & Museum's
Zoological Collection*

Case III
An Errant Muse

Passion Flowers

The room was empty, so I brought you flowers ---
bound on an arching vine of tendrils,
bright as a picture drawn by a child,
propped up against your window.
Oh, my crazy girls, my wild extravagance,
fierce trumpeters of the night's occasion!
Forgive me if I wait to watch them with you,
linger as the evening falls.

Deryn Rees-Jones
2019

Charlotte Hodes
Passion Flower, 2019
103 x 61 cm
Papercut





Above, background
Charlotte Hodes
Filigree Grey, 2017
Hand painted, engraving on glass
Made at Berengo Studio in Murano, Italy

Above, foreground
The Poetical Works of
Mrs Felicia Hemans , c.1873
Published by E. Moxton, Son & Company
From the Collection of Deryn Rees-Jones

Above
Wedgwood Pegasus Vase, c.1850
From the Victoria Gallery & Museum
Collection

Above, background
Two porcelain vases with bird decoration,
c.1815
Made by Spode
From the Victoria Gallery & Museum Collection

Above, foreground right
Model of Rosa canina (Dog Rose), c.1910
Teaching model made by R. Brendel & Co, Germany
Kindly loaned by National Museums Liverpool, World
Museum

Charlotte Hodes

Filigree Grey, 2017

Hand painted, engraving on glass

Made at Berengo Studio in Murano, Italy



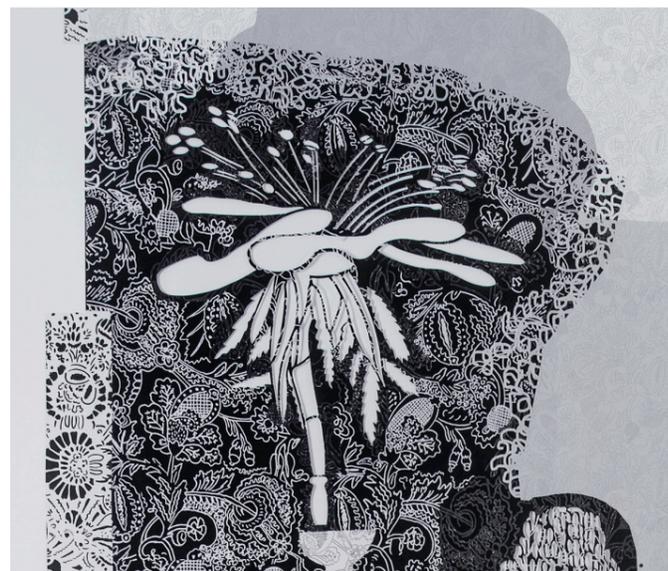
The Brendel Flower

'The nineteenth century was the golden age of scientific discovery, and as the century progressed, the teaching of science in schools, academies and museums evolved to reach a new mass public audience. Botanical models were used to illustrate and demonstrate plant anatomy. Unlike living material, their use was not restricted by seasonal availability and they were ideal for demonstrating small or ephemeral details which are difficult to preserve.

The Brendel Company of Berlin was founded in 1866 and produced papier-mâché models. Other materials such as feathers, gelatine and glass beads were added to illustrate particular features. Many could be dismantled to show the inner structure of the flower.

World Museum holds the largest known collection of Brendel models in the UK, with over 200 examples.'

Donna Young, Curator of Herbarium, World Museum, National Museums Liverpool.



Charlotte Hodes
Heat, 2019
315 x 197 cm
Print on fabric
Detail



Model of *Rosa canina* (Dog Rose), c.1910
Teaching model made by R. Brendel & Co, Germany
Kindly loaned by National Museums Liverpool, World Museum

Case IV
Fires

from Fires

It is autumn, and a leaf falls.

For a moment

I think I will subtly change the pace and structure of my stride

and catch the leaf.

'To be with rather than to be beside.'

It is autumn and a leaf falls.

A bird launches itself from a telephone wire... and the leaf,

flamelike birdlike,

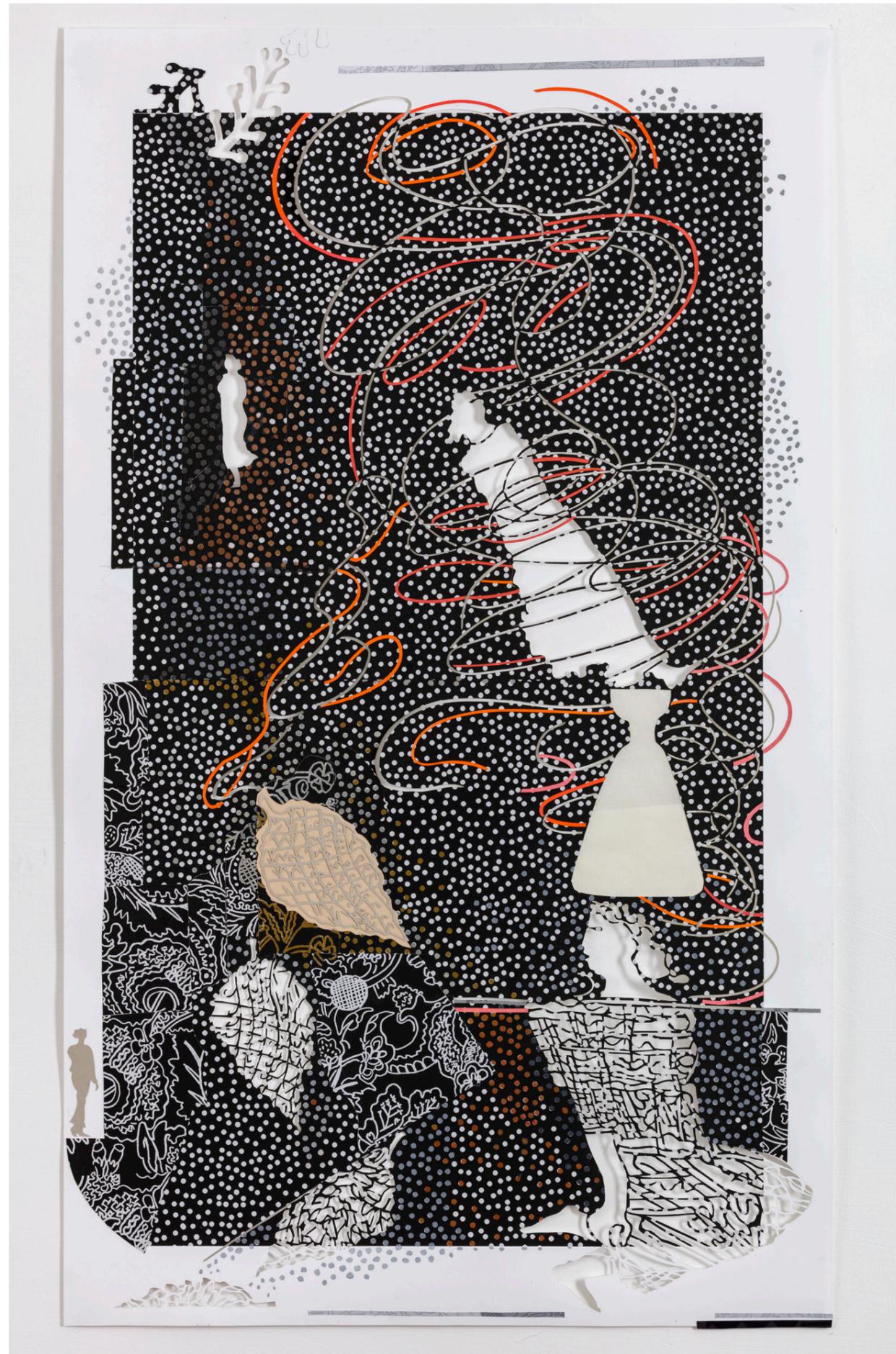
caught on the breeze
and the movements of the passing traffic, edges

gently forwards, down, resisting the air until

it reaches the floor ... a pace, or so ahead,

rests on the pavement in front of me.

Deryn Rees-Jones
2019



Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 2019
103 x 61 cm
Papercut



Porcelain figure of Mercury,
c.1760
Made by Bow
From the Victoria Museum & Gallery
Collections

Boxes of Ship matches
*Gifted to Deryn Rees-Jones by Charlotte
Hodes in 2019*



Charlotte Hodes, Silhouette,
'burnt orange', 2013
34 x 40 x 6 cm
Silver leaf, millefiori in glass
Made at Berengo Studio in Murano, Italy

Porcelain figure of
Apollo, c.1760
Made by Bow
From the Victoria Museum
& Gallery Collections



Charlotte Hodes

Silhouette, 'burnt orange', 2013

Detail

34 x 40 x 6 cm

Silver leaf, millefiori in glass

Made at Berengo Studio in Murano, Italy

Case V
Unfurls

Upper and middle shelf

Right

Charlotte Hodes

Heat

Heart

In-breath

Unfurls

2019

22 x 22 x 0.6cm

engraving on glass

Far Right

Deryn Rees-Jones

Scroll draft of Passion

Flowers

Enlarged copy

Extreme right

Charlotte Hodes

Scroll drawings for

The Errant Muse,

2018/19

Reduced copy



Lower shelf

Charlotte Hodes

Fires, 'a story on the radio', 2019

26 cm diameter

Five china plates with hand cut enamel transfers

Scroll draft of Passion Flowers

Deryn Rees-Jones

Remember the passion flower? Its martyrdom?

A heart, putting a place of hurt
blousy amoeba, heavenly
jellyfish,
purple stripe-eyes, heart, extravagance?

I have stolen you like
Is there a cure for this?
Often, often
A place

Where love can be stolen

How I held her blinking darkness visible
attaching onto pores and veins , my body

Is there a cure for this I asked her

THE ANIMALS

I like the way they've started to ignore me,
the animals who move across a room, our house,
shifting the weight of my love amongst them,

blatant in their fuzzy habitation

how their differences hang out my heart for fur or wing,
my in-breath looking for a feeling as they stare,
or halt, sometimes, see through me –

Remember that little pot of arch and twines I nearly bought
in the last days of summer on the Rue des Martyrs
unable to imagine the thing it might become?

Small tendrilled flower of my heart
With your sepals and stamens,
Budding and splitting

PASSION FLOWER

Remember the passion flower? I
That little pot of arch and twines I bought,
imagining the thing it might become —
wild trumpeter of the nights occasions,
such gaudy, purple-hearted life, extravagance.
All arch and twine, I like the way you've started to ignore me,
I like the way you sleep, how thought
escapes you, the long hot summers
now unpinning, rooms where even dreams
now are ghost. O my starry gazer,
with your creeping tendrils, you are taking your time.
When I look you are a woman, ageing,
leaning gently at the window,
watching the print of her breath become glass.

I am not passion flower enough.

how once I was flower, once passion
planted where the heart finds hurt.
Looking back, suddenly amazed as a child might be,
You asked me for a cure for this slipped time,
gathered blooming at your chest.

Blooming medusa,
psychedelic,

I like the way you've started to ignore me
You're the look of a woman, ageing,
leaning gently at the window
and me,
suddenly amazed as a child might be,
looking back at the print of breath on glass.

You'll be here,
And then you won't.

How it asked me how once I was flower, once I was passion

Once I was a flower. No, once I was Passion. Time slipped
Remember the Passion flower, though, on the rue des martyrs
How I nearly bought her
Allarch amd twine in her little pot.
Imagining what she might become
Her huge eye with its eye lashes

immersed in the hopefulness of their loops and twines.
like a child's picture propped up at the bedside, I put them
at the window. There was something incidental in the way they
they might still be a thousand things.

And the print of our breath warms the glass.

Blousy girl
like a jellyfish

An ice cube
melted in a glass. an eyelash fell like an autumn leaf.
A voice late in the evening said —
You'll be here and then you won't

All week I was

Did happiness walk into

When my daughter had grown
I remembered

So that being flower being passion
It reminded me of something marine,
the dance of a became its own becoming
a martyrdom

The passion flower

A voice in late evening falls into the grass

Ike a thought thrown to litter the grass
Somehow it's mine,
Me late on as I whispered to nobody how
once I was flower, once was passion,
and here was the passionflower
and I wanted to trust
To hold you, blinking
In the darkness visible
Who put you here,
Puts a place of hurt
Old purple stripe eyes
Heart, extravagance
O little pot of arch and twines
who could Imagine what you might become

The thin skin of the world unpeeling — —
The forests alight
checked in the pool
of my phone's bright face.

O my crazy blousy girls
And a voice insists. First you are here, and then you aren't.
Those rhymes now of bliss extravagance

In blinking darkness, I imagine a passionflower,
Sketch out the things it might become in arch and twine

All arch and twine,
I like the way you sleep, how thought
escapes you, the long hot summers
now unpinning, rooms where even dreams
now are ghost. O my starry gazer,
with your creeping tendrils, you are taking your time.

A Passion Flower
Might take her time.

When I look you are a woman, ageing,
leaning gently at the window,
watching the print of her breath become glass.

In the darkness, there are passion flowers,
the whole room their dimmed summer,
unspooled to arch and twine.
I like the way they sleep,
ignoring rhythm.

Around them, nights occasions unpin themselves.
O my starry gazers, my crazed girls,
I take you up then, gathered

wild trumpeters of the nights occasions.

Charlotte Hodes (images)

Deryn Rees-Jones (poem)

Fires, 'a story on the radio', 2019

26 cm diameter

Five china plates with hand cut enamel transfers

A story I heard on the radio rises from the back of my mind.

A woman had who fostered children for over thirty years tells of a boy who lived with her.

One day he set fire to a chair in her hall.

His usual response to his unbearable pain is to self-harm.

At some level, in creating this fire, she tells us with relief that he had chosen not to harm himself.

And so they arranged the building of future fires (poems?) - safely, out of sight, amongst the trees, far away from the house.



Case VI
Writers

Upper shelf left & right
Photographs of a portrait bust of
Felicia Hemans [modern copies]
*From the Special Collections & Archives,
University of Liverpool*

Middle shelf left
Felicia Hemans, Manuscript
of 'To the Passion Flower',
September 1815 [modern copy]
*From the Special Collections &
Archives, University of Liverpool*

Middle shelf right
C.J. Allen, Designs for a
medal (unmade) for the Felicia
Hemans Prize for Lyrical
Poetry [modern copy]
*From the Special Collections &
Archives, University of Liverpool*



Upper shelf left
Charlotte Hodes & Deryn Rees-
Jones, *And You, Helen*, 2014
Published by Seren Books, Bridgend,
Wales
Copies available from the museum shop

Upper shelf right
Deryn Rees-Jones, *Fires*, 2019
With illustrations by Charlotte Hodes.
Published by Shoestring Press,
Nottingham
Copies available from the museum shop

Middle shelf left
Helen Thomas, *As it Was*, 1926
Edition by William Heinemann Ltd,
1931
*From the Collection of Charlotte Hodes,
gifted by Deryn Rees-Jones in 2015*

Middle shelf right
Photographs of Helen Thomas
[modern copies]
*Courtesy of Special Collections and
Archives, Cardiff University*

Lower shelf left
Elizabeth Bishop, *Poems*
Edition by Chatto & Windus, 2011
From the Collection of Deryn Rees-Jones

Lower shelf centre
Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete
Poems*
Edition by Chatto & Windus, 1991
From the Collection of Michael Murphy

Lower shelf right
Elizabeth Bishop, Manuscript
for 'Questions of Travel',
[modern copy]
*From the Collection of Vassar College,
New York*

Lower shelf left
Compass
From the Collection of Paul Coldwell

Lower shelf centre left
Victorian Pocket Watch
Silver with coloured enamel
From the Collection of Charlotte Hodes

Lower shelf centre
Postcard of Virginia Woolf
*National Portrait Gallery. Collection of
Deryn Rees-Jones*

Lower shelf right
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's
Own*, 1929.
Edition published by Penguin Books,
London, 2000
From the Collection of Deryn Rees-Jones

Felicia Hemans, Manuscript
of 'To the Passion Flower',
September 1815

From the Special Collections & Archives,
University of Liverpool

MS. 28.32.2
HEMANS 3/2/2

To the Passion flower.

Flower of a day! how proudly bright &
Thy beauties met the morning light!
Thy purple disk so richly glowing,
Thy tendrils green so lightly blowing,
Ah! who could view a fairer flower
In woodland shade or cultured bowers?

Where is that early splendor flown,
Where are those tints of radiance gone?
Did the light Zephyr as it sprung,
Sweet beds of balmy flowers among,
Brush with soft wing thy bosom gay,
And bear the pencilled hues away?
Did the Bee steal those colors bright
To deck some other favorite?
Or is thy gorgeous mantle fled
With the bright dews that bent thy head?

Once lovely bloom! so faded now,
How like to human pride art thou —
Children of beauty, wealth & power
Like thee may shine one little hour,

Gallery Two The Errant Muse

Fires

Situated in the former women students' common room, with its focal wooden fireplace, this part of the exhibition foregrounds the animations made by Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones, which have been at the heart of their work together.

Here Hodes' artworks on paper and wood move freely across the gallery space, taking on new energies. A lyric essay, *Fires*, by Rees-Jones, is the basis of a new animated film that asks us to think again about the nature of the muse, and to directly explore the embodied processes of composition. Earlier works, **And You, Helen** (2014) with text by Rees-Jones and **Questions of Travel** (2016) take their inspiration respectively from the memoirs of the Liverpool-born Helen Thomas (1877-1967), wife of the poet Edward Thomas, and the poet Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), on whose poem the film is based.



Animated films

Fires, 2019

[09.03]

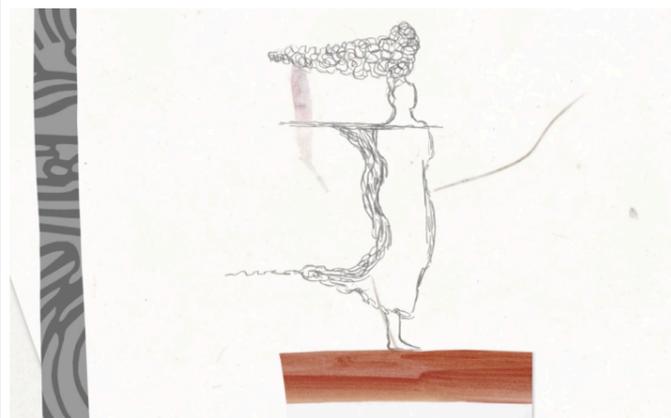
Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones

Link to animated film:

<https://vimeo.com/376811611>



f movements in which
omplex interdependence
s of embodied relations,
ask, how do we find the
t occur?



And You, Helen, 2014

[16.39]

Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones

Link to animated film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRp9Cx7tWLA>



Questions of Travel, 2016

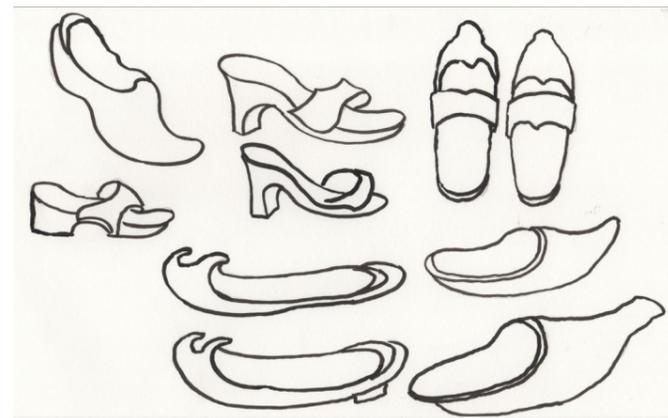
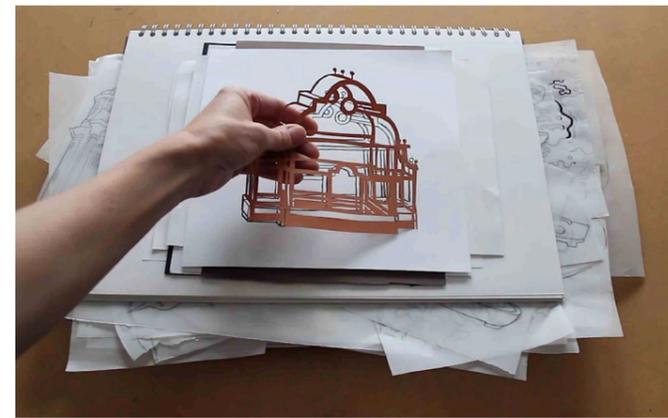
[08.18]

Charlotte Hodes and Deryn Rees-Jones

Link to animated film:

<https://vimeo.com/274264840>

Password: Hodes-Rees-Jones



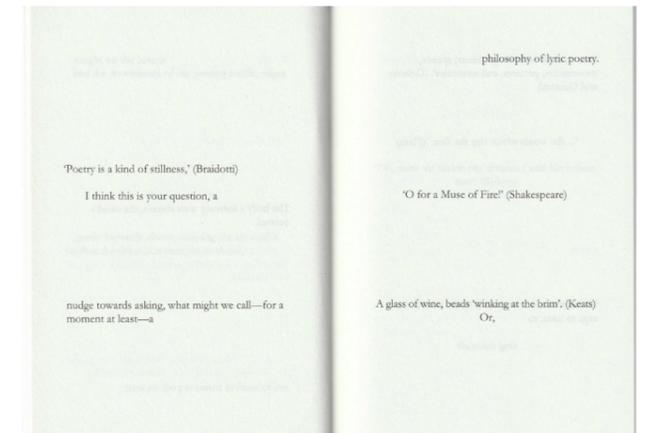
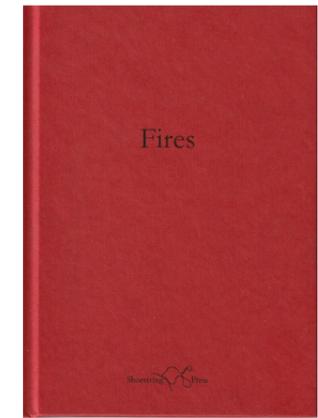
Book

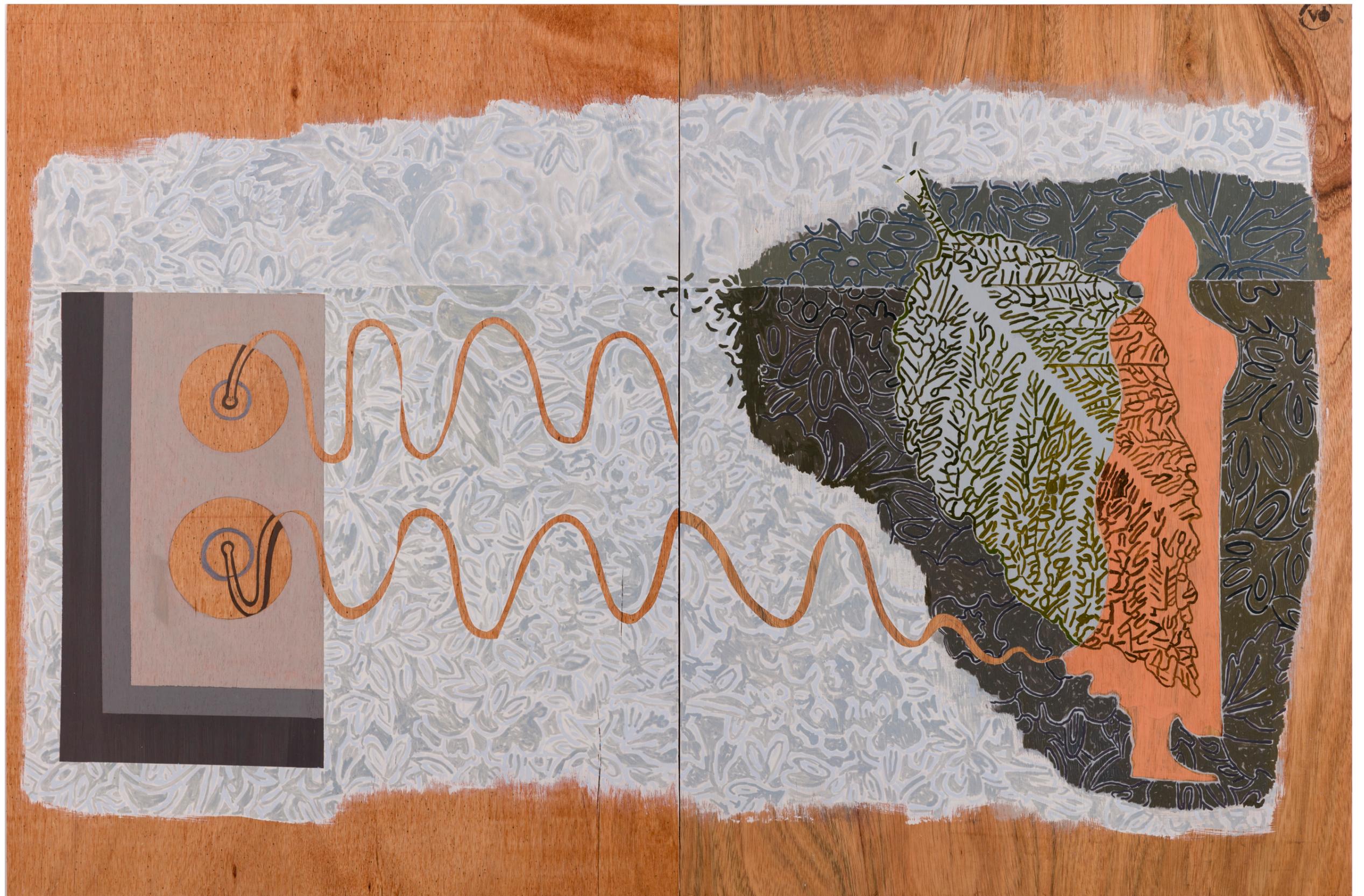
Fires, 2019

Deryn Rees-Jones

Link to order a copy of the book:

<http://www.shoestring-press.com/download-order-forms/>





Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 'falling leaf', 2019
acrylic, oil on wood
80 x 120 cm



Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 'caught on the breeze', 2019
26 cm diameter
china plate with hand cut enamel transfers,



Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 'caught on the breeze', 2019
80 x 60 cm
acrylic, oil on wood



Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 'a glass of wine, beads winking at the brim', 2019
80 x 60 cm
acrylic, oil on wood, china plate



Charlotte Hodes
Fires, 'bird song as a leaf falls', 2019
80 x 60 cm
acrylic, oil on wood

>>42 /43

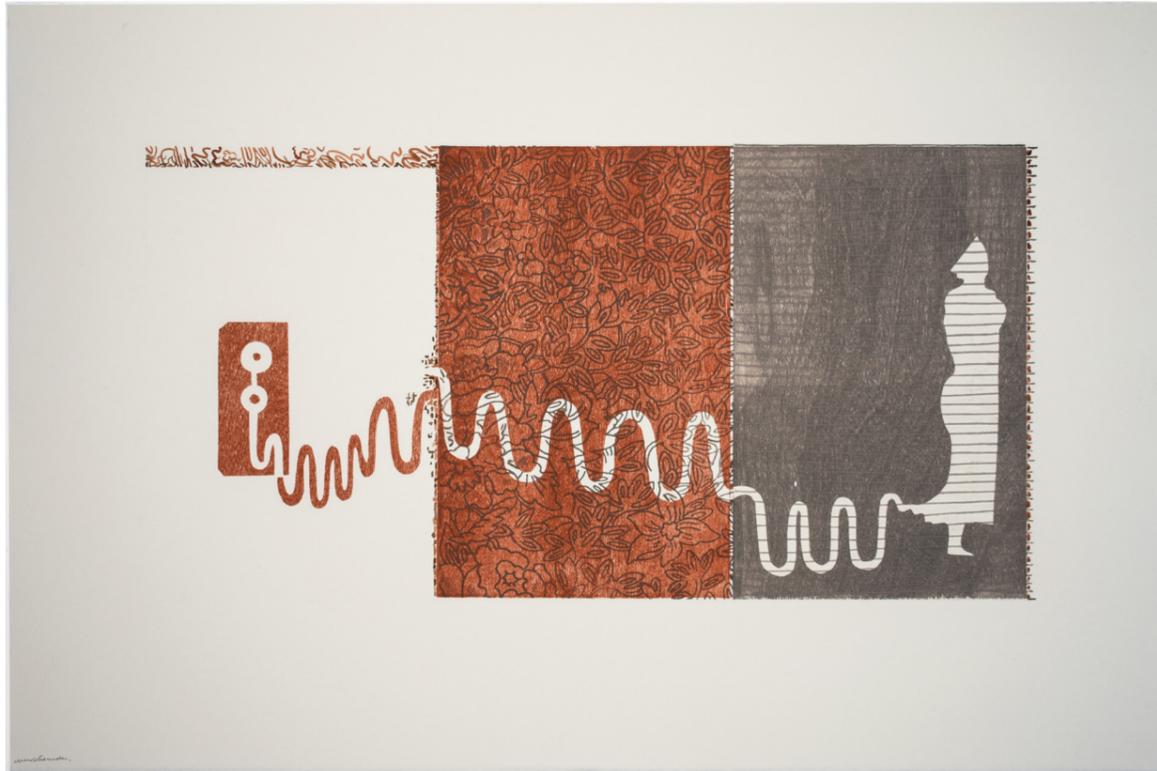
Charlotte Hodes

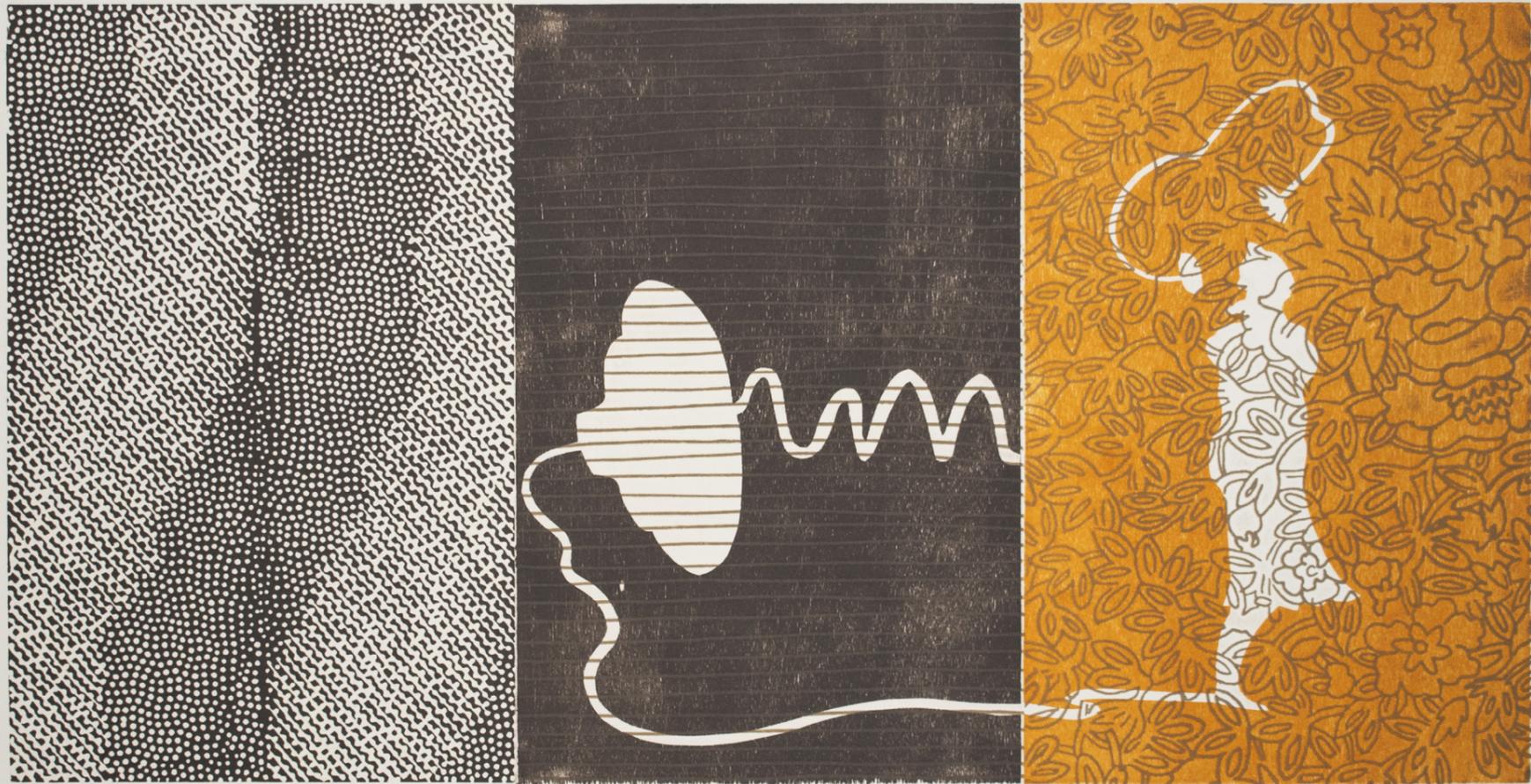
Fires 2018

From a series of
21 woodcuts with
watercolour on paper that
informed the paintings.

(not shown)

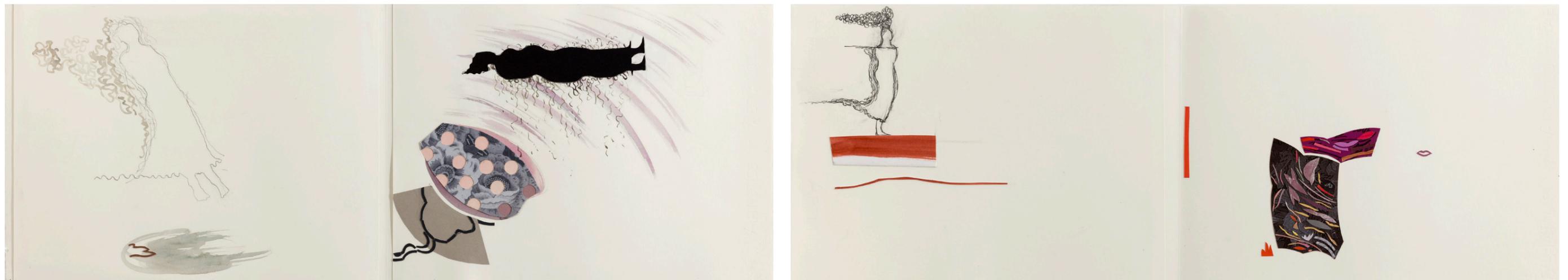
50 x 74cm

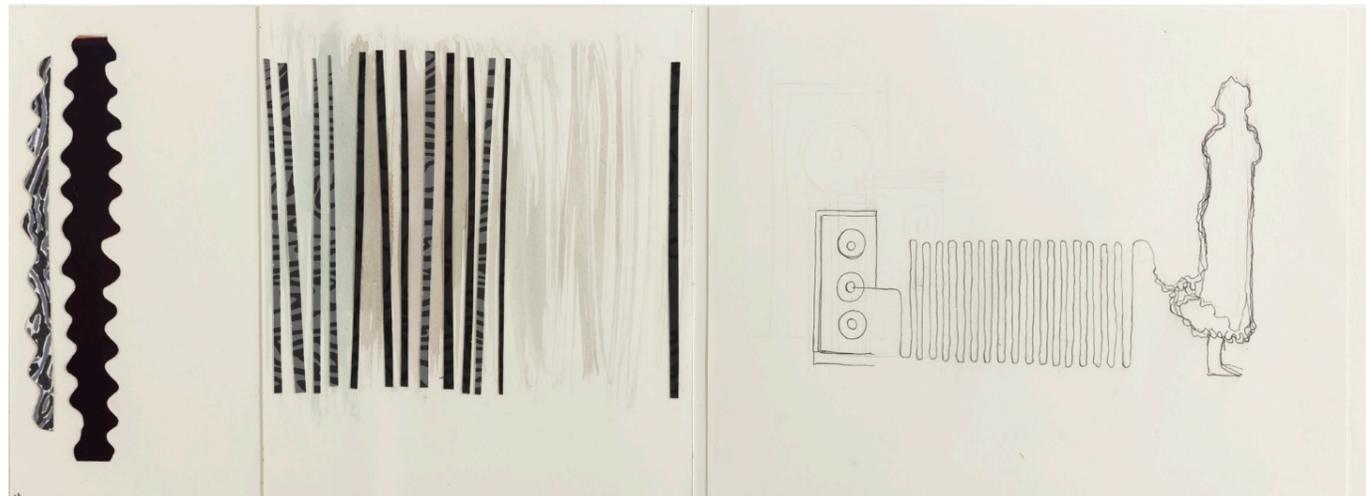
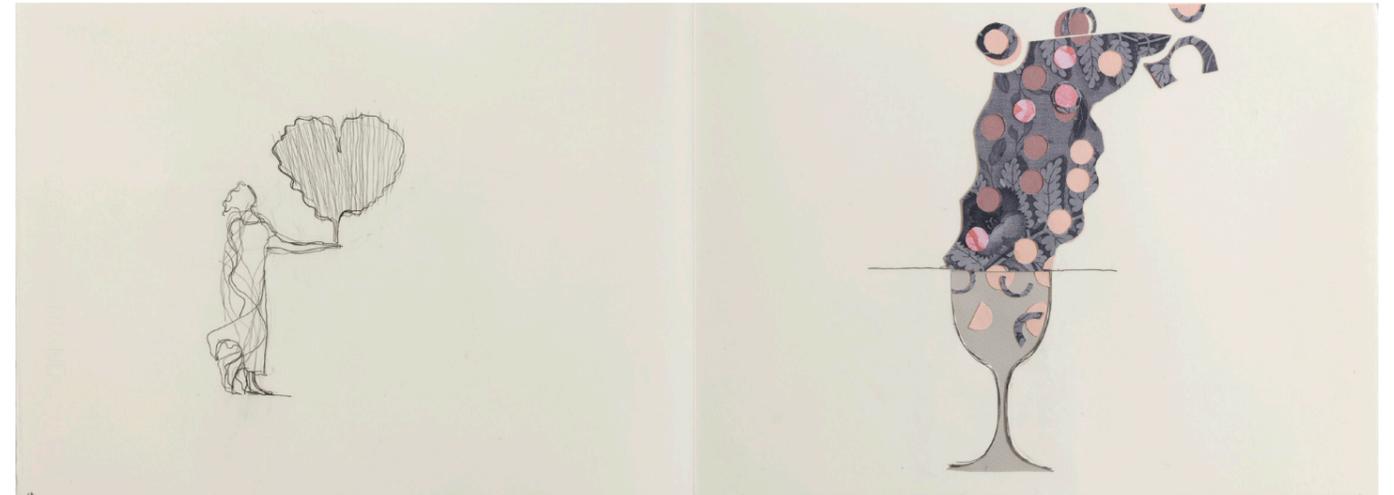
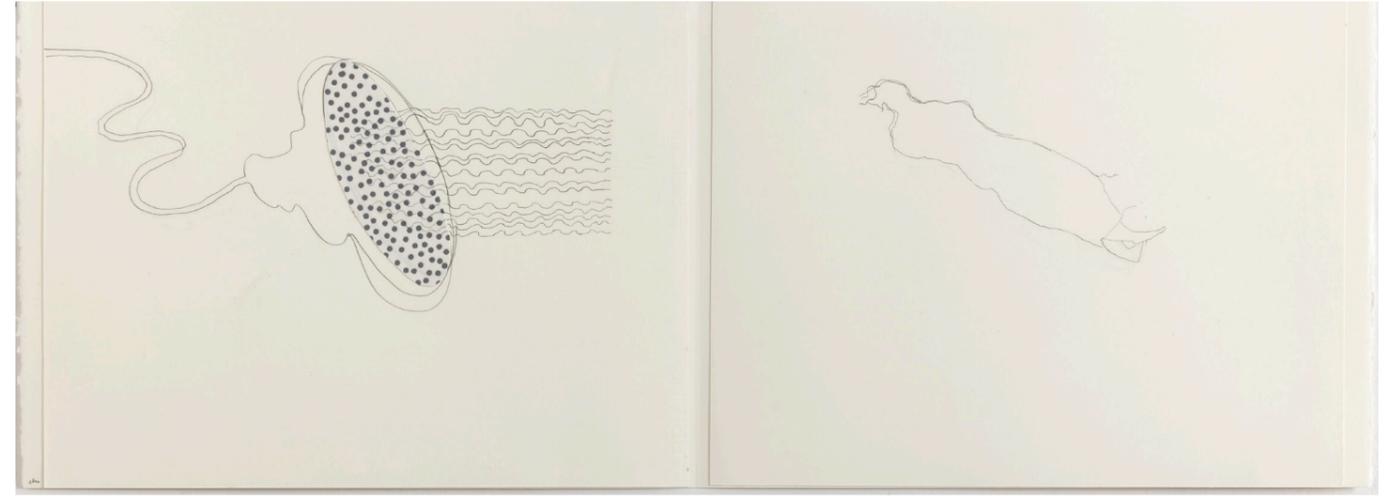


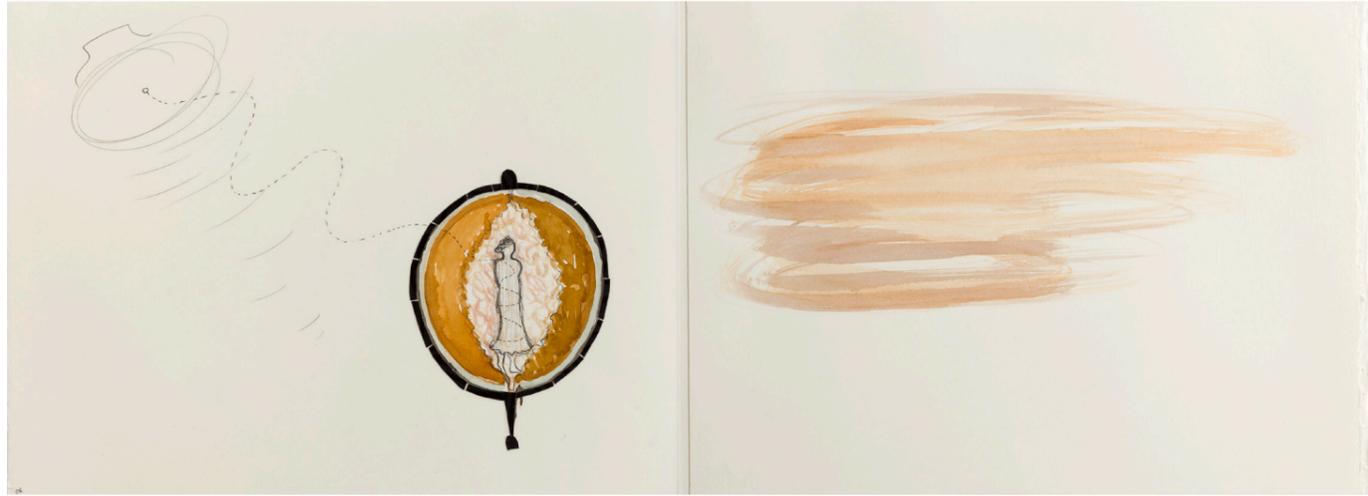


minutissimo

Drawings for animated film 'Fires'







The Errant Muse

Victoria Gallery & Museum,
University of Liverpool,
Ashton Street,
Liverpool L69 3DR.

16 November 2019 to 28 March 2020.

Catalogue Design: Roger Walton Studio

Gallery installation: Museum Exhibition Services (MUS.E.S.)

Photography, gallery installation: Joel Chester Fildes
Photography, artworks: Peter Abrahams

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Text: Deryn Rees-Jones

Images: Charlotte Hodes

A special thanks to:

Nicola Euston (Head of Museums & Galleries), Amanda Draper
(Curator of Art & Exhibitions), Lorna Sergeant (Collections and
Exhibitions Officer), VG&M.



Charlotte Hodes is an artist and Professor of Fine Art at London College of Fashion, UAL. Solo exhibitions include *After the Taking of Tea* (Ruthin Craft Centre, 2019), *Remember Me* (Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 2017, touring to National Centre for Art and Design, Sleaford in 2020) and *Fragmented Images* (The Wallace Collection, 2007). Hodes has participated in exhibitions at the Design Museum London, Jerwood Space Gallery, and the Venice Biennale. Her work is held in many public collections including the Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, British Council, New Hall Art Collection, University of Cambridge, and the V&A. In 2006, she won the Jerwood Drawing Prize. She was a selector for the 2019 *ING Discerning Eye* exhibition.

Charlotte Hodes is represented by Andrea Harari, jaggedart.

<https://charlottehodes.com>

charlottehodesstudio@gmail.com

Deryn Rees-Jones is a poet, editor and literary critic. Her selected poems, *What It's Like to Be Alive*, was published in 2016 and was a PBS Special Commendation. Her monograph, on the intersection between image and narrative, *Paula Rego: The Art of Story*, is published by Thames & Hudson in 2019 ('compelling and an absolute *tour de force*', *The Artist*). She has received numerous awards for her poems, including shortlistings for the Forward and T S Eliot poetry prizes. She is the editor of the Pavilion Poetry list and Professor of Poetry at the University of Liverpool where she co-directs the University of Liverpool's Centre for New and International Writing. Many of the images and ideas in the exhibition are closely linked to her new collection of poems, addressed to the muse of love and lyric poetry, *Erato*, which was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation (June 2019).

<http://derynrees-jones.co.uk>

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