

CLOTH AND MEMORY: SALTS MILL, SUMMER 2012

**CLOTH HOLDS THE MEMORY OF OUR TIME AND
CONNECTS US WITH MEMORIES OF OTHER TIMES
AND OTHER PLACES.**

**THE THREE ARTISTS IN THIS EXHIBITION HAVE
DEVELOPED THESE IDEAS AROUND CLOTH AND
MEMORY THROUGH THEIR OWN CONCERNS AND
MEDIA.**

**THEY ALL VISITED SALTS MILL AND SALTAIRE
AND HAVE CREATED THEIR WORK AS A RESPONSE
TO THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE: THE MEMORY
OF CLOTH AND THE MAKING OF CLOTH THAT HAS
SEEPED INTO THE FABRIC OF THE BUILDING.**

LESLEY MILLAR: CLOTH & MEMORY CREATIVE DIRECTOR
www.clothandmemory.com

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**BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH
CAROL QUARINI
BOB WHITE**

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INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege to host this exhibition at Salts Mill, so perfectly titled 'Cloth and Memory', conceived and directed by Lesley Millar MBE, Professor of Textile Culture at the University for the Creative Arts.

I have long wished to re-establish a meaningful connection with textile art and industry at the Mill where, it is said, a mile of cloth could be produced in just one day. Sir Titus Salt opened this great Mill in the year 1853 as a vertical operation, receiving raw wool and processing through to dyeing and finishing. Within the vast complex of the Mill, most spaces are still described in terms of the first intended purpose, so whatever the current use of the Spinning Mill, the Weaving and Wool-sorting sheds, the transformation of wool to cloth is an ever present memory.

There are a few people in Saltaire who remember when the Mill was in production; their memories are vivid, their senses still alive to the smell of raw wool, machine oil and the sweat of toil. Casablanca lilies now scent the air and the Mill is a place for leisure as well as commerce; it is certainly BIG enough for both to work successfully together and a mutuality of pride has developed over the last 25 years.

This wonderful symbiosis was achieved by Jonathan Silver when he acquired Salts Mill in June, 1987 and soon after, opened the 1853 Gallery dedicated to the work of David Hockney. Jonathan studied Textiles and Art at Leeds University from 1968 - 71 (this combination of study was expressed throughout his life) during which time he worked at Mills in Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield, designed and wove cloth on a hand-loom, carried pieces to the burlers and menders and met Wool Barons of the time.

Many thanks to Lesley Millar, June Hill and Jen Hallam for their enduring dedication to this project and to the artists, Beverly-Ayling Smith, Bob White and Carol Quarini for their generosity, enthusiasm and particularly for braving and surviving the blustery weather on their recesses.

'Cloth and Memory' is open all summer and as always, everyone is most welcome at Salts Mill.

MAGGIE SILVER: SALTS MILL



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CLOTH AND MEMORY, SALTS MILL, SUMMER 2012

Cloth, in its intimate relationship with our body bears the marks of our being, both on the surface and embedded within the structure. The strains, stresses, stains and smells we impress upon this second skin form an archive of our most intimate life. At the same time, cloth is also the membrane through which we establish our sense of 'becoming', and formalise our relationship with the external world, while the fabric remorselessly records the evidence of those interactions. Cloth holds the memory of our time and connects us with memories of other times and other places.

The three artists in this exhibition have developed these ideas around cloth and memory through their own concerns and media. All visited Salts Mill and Saltaire and have created their work as a response to the history of the place: the memory of cloth and the making of cloth that has seeped into the fabric of the building. Their works reference the importance of cloth as the accompanying witness to our life and the lives of others.

Beverly-Ayling Smith is using cloth – its wear, tear and embellishment – as a metaphor for the stages of mourning we may encounter as we move from loss to acceptance. Carol Quarini's installation transforms the domestic net curtain from witness to complicit malefactor in the hidden lives of others no longer present. Bob White is making paintings of cloth and clothing as a carrier of discovered memory that becomes embedded within the cloth of the painting itself.

The narrative contained within the work of all three artists is engaging and ambiguous, inviting us to bring our own stories to the table, our own memories activated by their attentiveness to the surface, structure, fold and crease of the cloth.

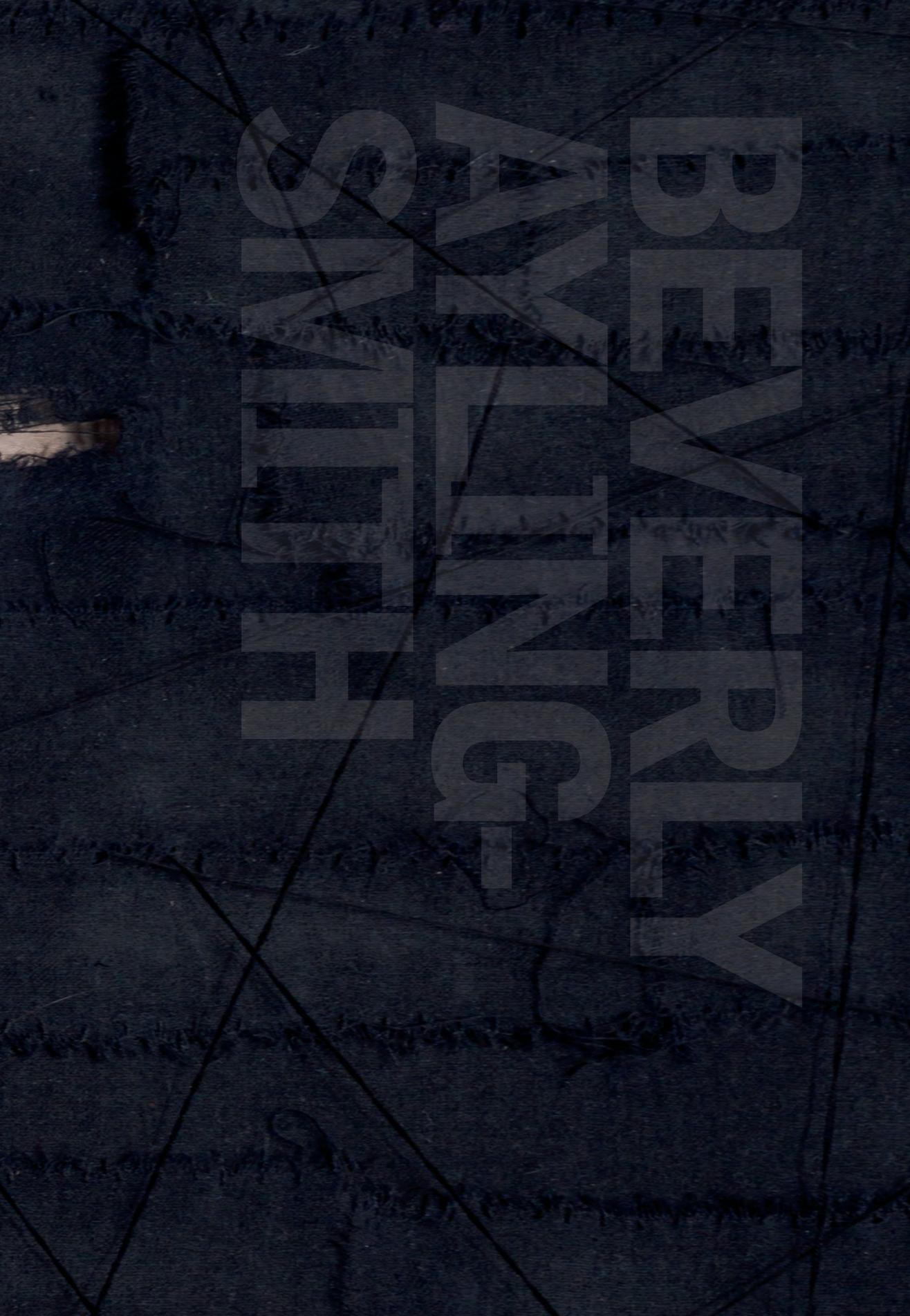
This exhibition is the first of two; Cloth and Memory 2 will take place in 2013.

LESLEY MILLAR: CLOTH & MEMORY CREATIVE DIRECTOR

PROFESSOR OF TEXTILE CULTURE, UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS



PHOTOGRAPH: BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH



BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH

The creation of cloth is fundamental to the building of Salts Mill and the weavers, spinners and dyers who worked and lived there. The peeling paint in the derelict rooms reveals the layers beneath and echoes the layers of memories witnessed and contained within the building

It has been said that 'it is virtually impossible to imagine memory – what it is, how it works, where it lies - without recourse to metaphor'¹ and so artists have used cloth whose long association with the body throughout a lifetime and afterwards in death makes it uniquely placed to be used as a metaphor for grief, mourning and loss in contemporary art practice.

By using textiles to evoke the psychic pain of being marked, stained, repaired and remade it is possible to connect with the intense emotions of mourning. Mourning, melancholia and grief are all emotions that we experience through the course of life which indelibly mark our memory and all can be understood through the medium of cloth.

Mourning is a complex state with many stages through which we must pass in order to resolve our feelings about the deceased. It involves recognising and accepting the loss of a loved one and moving on to live our lives without them.

In this exhibition I have focussed on the creation of textile pieces that evoke emotions such as melancholia, loss, absence and grief. During a visit to Salts Mill, I discovered a small room in the corner on one of the upper floors which, with its broken glass and peeling paint, had an atmosphere of abandonment and loss. I have installed some lengths of fabric, reminiscent of winding sheets or shrouds, and photographed them to bring some of the atmosphere of the upper floor to the main exhibition area.

'remembering, repeating and working through' [detail]

SIZE: 5.6 x 3.0 METRES

MATERIALS: HOLLAND LINEN

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BRAYSHAW

1- Antze, P. Lambek M (1996) Tense past: cultural essays in trauma and memory p xi



BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH AT SALTS MILL - PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BRAYSHAW

ABOVE LEFT & MAIN IMAGE: HEALING SERIES
MATERIALS: CALICO, LEAD WIRE
SIZE: EACH 0.4 x 1.93 METRES
PHOTOGRAPHS: THE ARTIST

ABOVE RIGHT: FRAGMENTED MEMORY
MATERIALS: SILK VISCOSE ROMAN GEORGETTE
SIZE: 0.45 x 0.50 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: THE ARTIST





CAROL QUARINI: EMBEDDED MEMORY

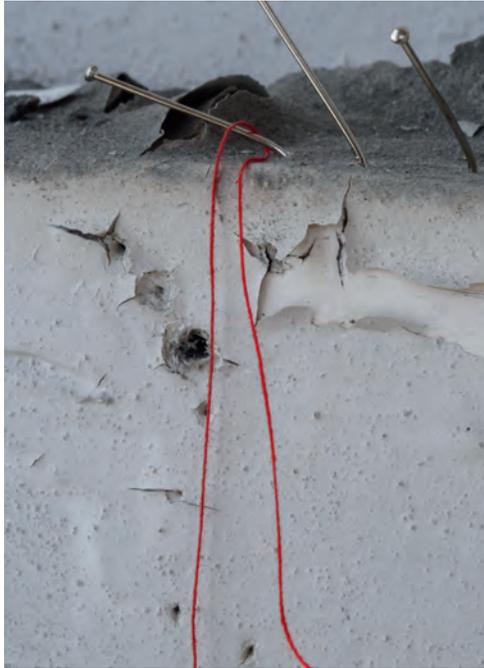
This work explores the process by which memories are embedded into cloth and the fabric of a building.

The condition of the six 'windows' in this installation suggests the gradual immurement of the industrious needlewoman trapped in the room by domesticity, whose thoughts are revealed in the fragments of cross stitch samplers framed on the walls. The net curtain is used as a metaphor for the duality of home as sanctuary and prison in its combined role as airy, transparent furnishing and claustrophobic barrier to light. The first curtain is pierced by pins and needles in the traditional tally pattern of counting units of five, but these marks also suggest a prisoner marking time, while the misuse of sewing equipment suggests a subversion of the domestic. In succeeding windows the tally marks metamorphose into chalk marks on board, then chalk on brick, and finally they disappear completely, suggesting the windows are insidiously becoming blocked up as cloth turns to stone, sanctuary becomes prison, and memories become part of the fabric of the room.

Beside the 'windows' hang three small net curtains, embellished with tambour lace trims that include ambiguous phrases, such as 'I can see through you'. They suggest that the fabric of the curtain acts as a silent witness in the home, retaining memories. However, all is not as it seems. Photographic images of the curtains, taken in sites within Salts Mill, suggest that the curtains have agency and are playing a more active role in the entombment. Rather than retaining memories, the curtains seem to be discussing the events, implying they played an active part in them. Most tellingly, the wording on one of the curtains reads 'Appearances can be deceptive'.

Rather than revealing the gradual solidification of memory with the passage of time we seem to be witnessing its gradual erasure and destruction of the evidence.

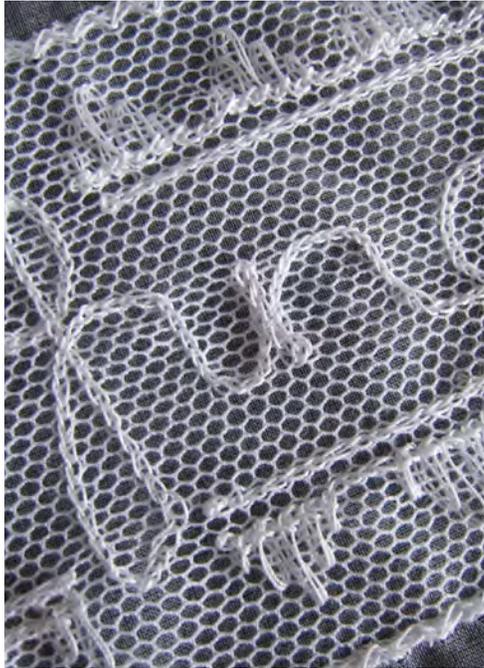
TITLE: MARKING TIME [detail]
MATERIALS: NET, PINS AND NEEDLES
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



ABOVE: PIN WITH RED THREAD [detail]
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



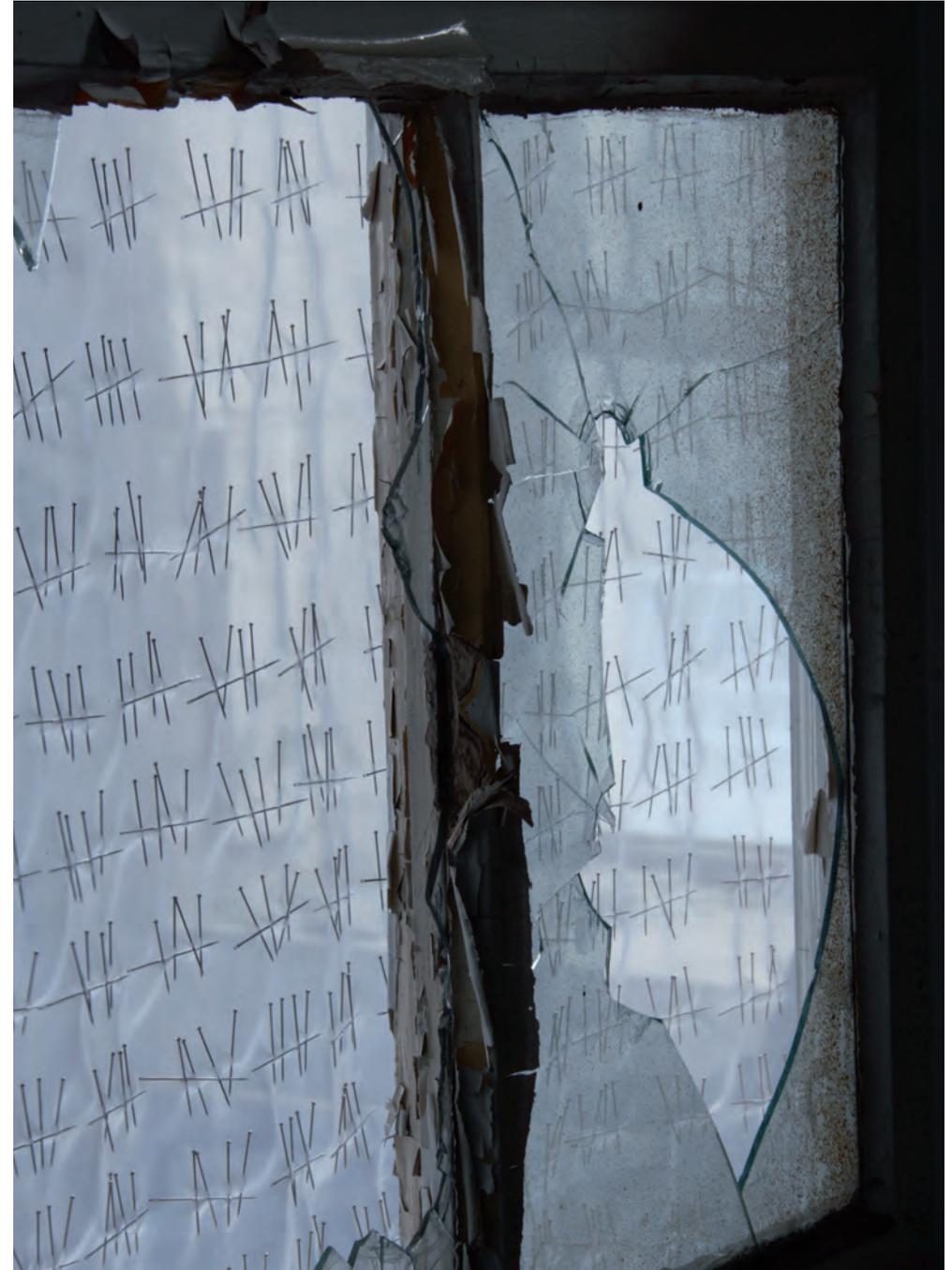
BELOW: APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



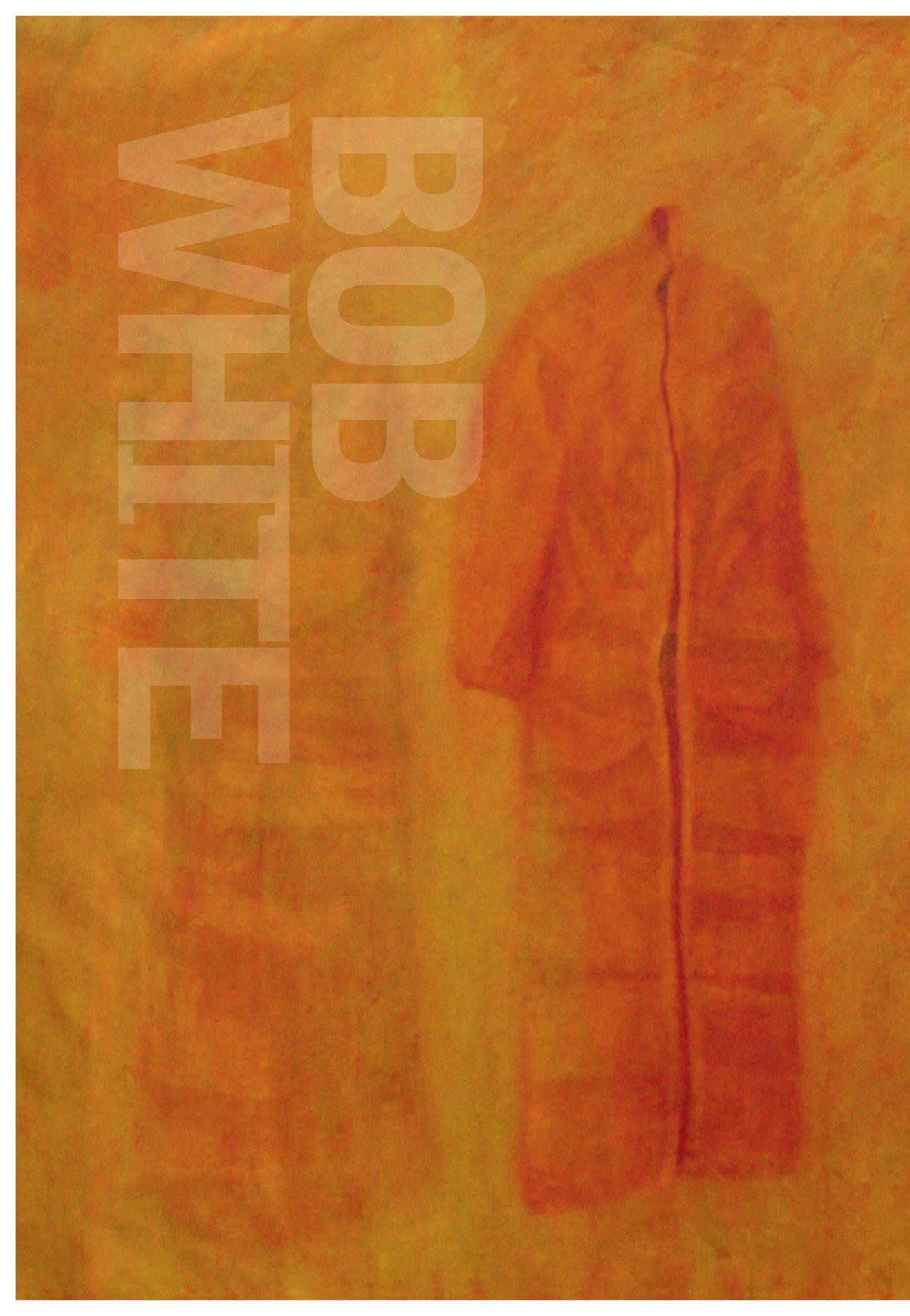
ABOVE: I NEVER LAID A FINGER ON HER [detail of tambour lace]
SIZE: 0.6 x 0.6 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: THE ARTIST



BELOW: PINS WITH WHITE THREAD [detail]
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



TITLE: MARKING TIME [detail]
MATERIALS: NET, PINS AND NEEDLES
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



BOB WHITE: A RESPONSE TO SALTS MILL

At Salts Mill everything is larger. It is possible to feel the cloth of the past, not like a weight, but more like breath; the breath of the past, which in turn becomes my breath, and my version of cloth, which is redolent of my history, transformed by paint into a metaphor of a memory of cloth.

The grandeur, the generosity of Salts encourages the memory to avoid the narrow focus of given moments, more to experience that unravelling of cloth and how it appears against a broader backdrop.

After a while, the memory of cloth becomes a memory of the memory of cloth. How it is to experience that picture in the mind, which may have attendant texture and smell, but it is how the picture has become resolved in the mind, sometimes divorced from the original circumstances surrounding the experience.

I find that cloth lingers in the memory, forming markers signifying experience that are not immediately identifiable. This history, this memory of cloth, entwined with artefacts seen and experienced, becomes the redolence of a lifetime's experience of looking. The delight in the improbability of a figure enveloped in cloth in a Poussin or Rubens, in particular the way in Titian where Bacchus trails his gravity defying bolt of cloth as he gazes with outright lust on Ariadne as she vainly hitches up her swathes of blue silk with her left hand.

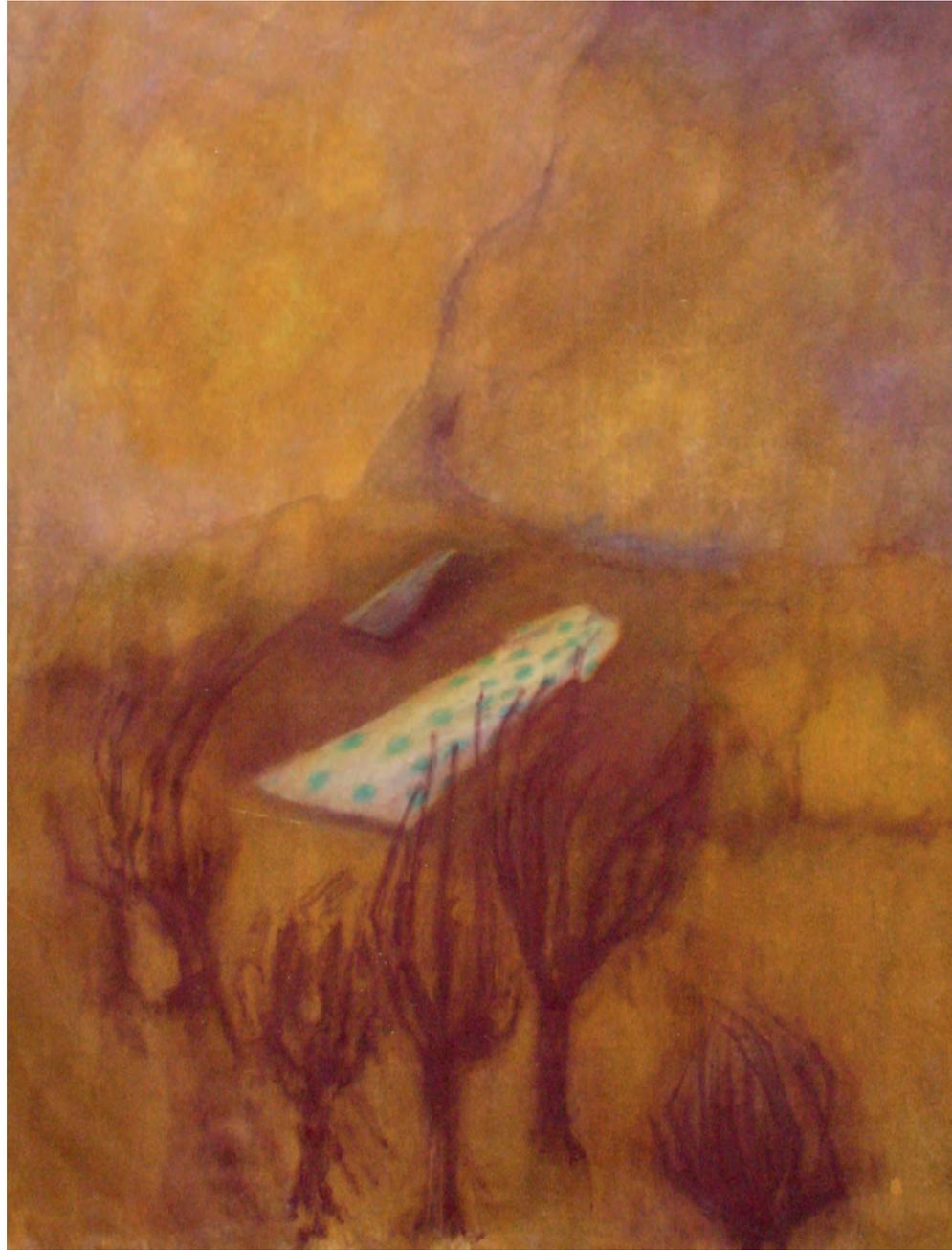
The way I work – over-glazing and washing the calico, encouraging the image to emerge and to combine with the initial drawing through successive veils of colour, is more about the elusive nature of memory than the direct apprehension of things seen, though that is there also. The process is however much like those unwanted images thrown up in moments of reverie, but at least the paintings can be torn up, leading at times to a depressive failure rate. It is like picking up a stone from the beach on that perfect afternoon. After a while the stone becomes significant for its 'stoneness' while still retaining the memory.

TITLE: FADING [detail]

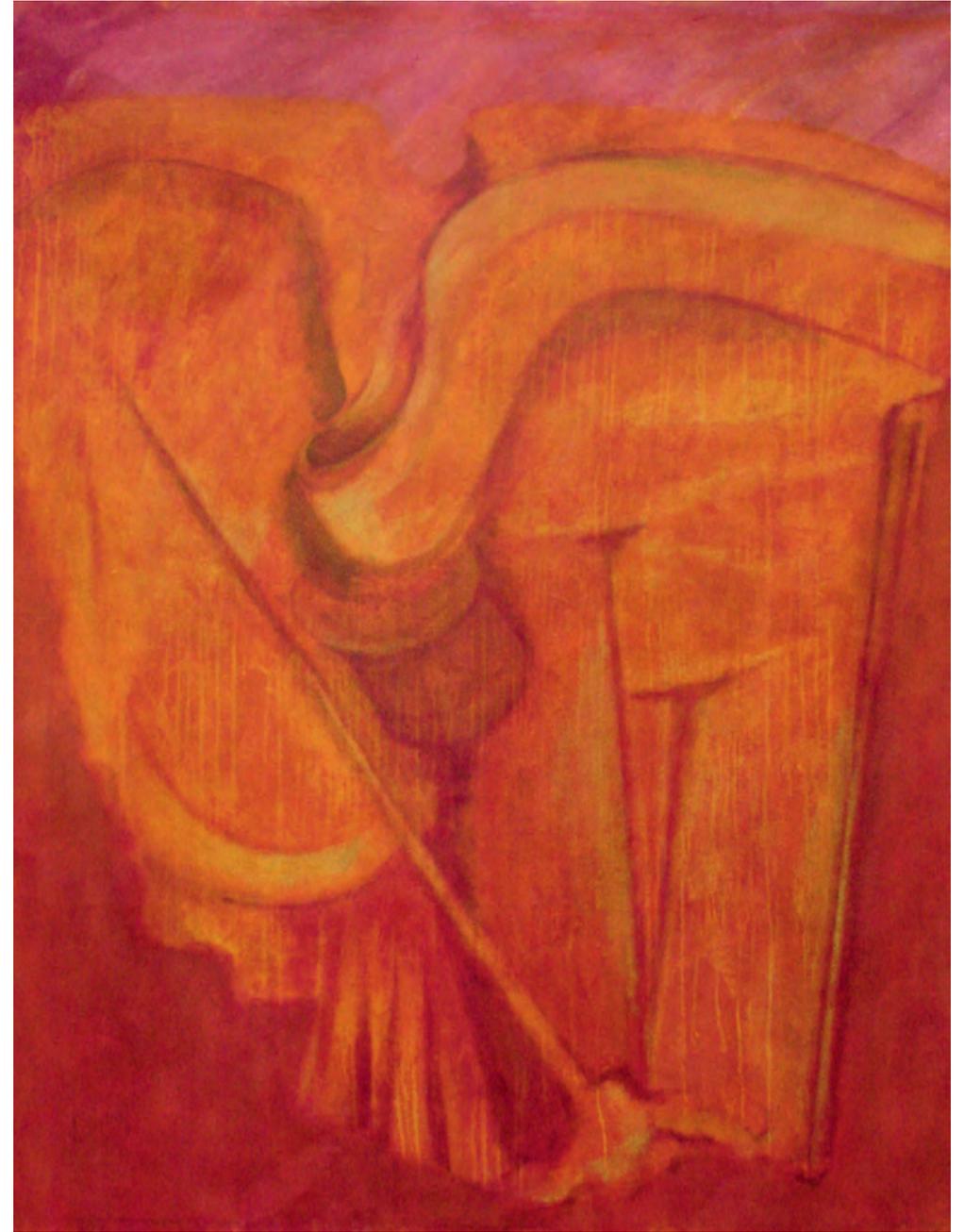
SIZE: 1.6 x 1.2 METRES

MATERIALS: ACRYLIC ON CALICO

PHOTOGRAPH: GERRY DIEBEL



TITLE: LEFT
SIZE: 1.6 x 1.2 METRES
MATERIALS: ACRYLIC ON CALICO
PHOTOGRAPH: GERRY DIEBEL



TITLE: KNOT
SIZE: 1.6 x 1.2 METRES
MATERIALS: ACRYLIC ON CALICO
PHOTOGRAPH: GERRY DIEBEL

BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH

Beverly graduated with a first class honours degree in Embroidered Textiles (Middlesex University) and completed an MA in Contemporary Craft (Textiles) at UCA Farnham. She has taught at City and Guilds and degree level for Opus School of Textile Arts and is a full member of the Society of Designer Craftsmen. Beverly shows her work regularly with Prism and ReOrsa exhibiting groups and is currently a post-graduate research student at the University for the Creative Arts. More information is available at www.beverlyayling-smith.com and www.transitionandinfluence.com.

CAROL QUARINI

Carol's textile work reflects her background as a lacemaker. She makes and studies contemporary lace and uses it as a medium for conceptual work. Carol is currently studying the net curtain as part of her research for a practice based PhD at the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, where she also completed her MA. She is using the net curtain to re-read the relationship between the uncanny, the gothic and the domestic. Carol exhibits internationally and her work is held in private collections. More information about her work can be found on her website www.carolquarini.com and at www.transitionandinfluence.com.

BOB WHITE

Bob White has exhibited widely in the UK, Europe and Japan where he also has work in private and public collections. He has also been involved extensively in art education: as a teacher from secondary to post graduate levels, as an examiner and as an Inspector of Schools, he is the co-author of several textbooks. He is represented in the UK by the Beardsmore Gallery London and in Japan by GalleryGallery.

LESLEY MILLAR: CLOTH & MEMORY CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Lesley Millar, Professor of Textile Culture, Director of the Anglo-Japanese Textile Research Centre at the University for the Creative Arts, is an exhibition curator specialising in textiles. These have included 7 major international touring exhibitions: 'Revelation' (1996-98), 'Textural Space' (2001), 'Through the Surface' (2003-05), '21:21 – the textile vision of Reiko Sudo and NUNO' (2005-7), 'Cloth & Culture NOW' (2008), 'Cultex (2009-11) and 'Lost in Lace' (2011-12.)

She is currently leading EU project 'Transparent Boundaries' (2012-13) with partners in Denmark, Greece and Italy. In 2008 she received the Japan Society Award for significant contribution to Anglo-Japanese relationships and in 2011 was appointed MBE for her contribution to Higher Education. More information about her work can be found at www.transitionandinfluence.com.

JUNE HILL: CLOTH & MEMORY CO-ORDINATOR

June Hill is a Bradford based freelance writer/curator. Her work is focused on the relationship between, and contextualisation of, historic textiles and contemporary practice. She is also interested in the role and place of process. She has been publishing ongoing research into UK textile collections for Embroidery since January 2006; is a contributor to The Textile Reader (Berg, 2012) and the author of a monograph on Diana Springall (A&C Black, 2011). Recent ventures include: The Sleeping Bag Project (2011-12) with Claire Barber and exhibitions at Ruthin Craft Centre on the work of Jilly Edwards (2011) and Michael Brennand-Wood (2012).

JENNIFER HALLAM: CLOTH & MEMORY ADVISOR

Jennifer Hallam has curated numerous fine art and craft exhibitions, often in partnership with artists and museums in Europe and the USA. Moving into the arts funding system, she has worked with artists, organisations and other agencies to create new opportunities for the production and presentation of work, including capital projects resulting in new studio spaces such as Persistence Works, Sheffield and The Art House, Wakefield, and new venues such as The Gallery at Ryedale Folk Museum and The Hepworth Wakefield. She has worked on a freelance basis since 2010, primarily with museums and galleries across Yorkshire.

MAGGIE SILVER: SALTS MILL

When Jonathan Silver was given the keys to Salts Mill in June 1987 he was a man in the prime of life, thrilled and excited by the challenge ahead. He loved everything about the Mill and in a very short time knew every nook and cranny by heart. In November the same year, he opened the 1853 Gallery, dedicated to the work of David Hockney. When asked on T.V. about his plans for the Mill, he said: 'It's very early days, but it looks as if the project will involve leisure, entertainment, the Arts and generally having a good time. A day out at Salts!'



No doubt many eyebrows were raised at his bold assertion but 25 years later, it more or less sums up what the Mill offers today. Over recent years, Jonathan's achievements at Salts Mill have been built upon and now continues on the basis of his ambition. There is an indefinable atmosphere in the Mill, the essence of which must relate its' history. Many years ago, someone said to me 'This place has SOUL' - I really couldn't put it any better than that.

CLOTH AND MEMORY: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Maggie Silver for her generosity in giving us the opportunity to hold this exhibition in the wonderfully inspiring Salts Mill, for her insightful introduction to the catalogue and for all the myriad kindnesses shown to us along the way. Thanks also to Zoë Silver for her support and enthusiastic input to our discussions, to Linda Wilkinson for all her help and patiently answering all our questions, and to all the support staff at Salts Mill. Thank you to the University for the Creative Arts for their support for Professor Lesley Millar, and to the Arts Council England for their support of the exhibition. Thank you, as ever, to Gerry Diebel and his team at Direct Design for the advice and input which has resulted in yet another beautiful catalogue. Grateful thanks to the specialised technical helpers Louise Anderson and Gail Baxter. Thank you to Lutz Becker and Marek Budzynski for the video interviews; and to Richard Brayshaw and Steve Smith for their photographic help for Beverly Ayling-Smith and Carol Quarini respectively. And most especially thank you to the artists Beverly Ayling-Smith, Carol Quarini and Bob White for their remarkable responses to Salts Mill.



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