

EDEL ASSANTI

The use of textile in the work of Jodie Carey – Jodie Carey

Written by Jodie Carey.

I am very interested in ideas centered around the passing of time, ageing and memory and how these subjects can occupy threshold positions; those which exist between self and society, our outer and inner worlds and the shadowy boundary between forgetting and remembering.

For the past few years I have been working with the idea of the monument, often subverting the traditional stone and marble choosing instead to work with fragile, ephemeral materials that question sculpture's traditional relationship to the solid and the permanent and also explore further the idea of sculpture as a carrier for collective memory.

Textiles and textile processes such as weaving, crochet and embroidery allow me to investigate the idea of production - craft, skill, time and process - as a way of making objects that bespeak a fragile, tentative and ephemeral existence.

Juxtaposing crafts traditionally associated with women, that historically were considered outside the realm of fine art allows me to make work that offers a counterpoint to the traditional idea that sculpture needs to be heavy, solid, carved or cast but instead can be sewn or woven, made by women and created in places outside the studio. Such textural works can bring a lightness and a softness yet still occupy and hold space no less than a work in bronze or stone. They draw on different histories and associations and challenge the idea that sculpture has to remain solely in the domain of the permanent and the solid.

Untitled (Bouquet) is cotton yarn coloured with handmade dyes extracted from the individual flowers in a bouquet. It is crocheted by hand using the stitch Solomons Knot. Solomons Knot as a motif is deeply rooted in decorative tradition. It has been associated with wisdom and knowledge. As it has no end and no beginning, it is also commonly associated with immortality and eternity. It is also called The Lover's Knot as it incorporates two entwined shapes. The dyed yarn enabled me to transform the original bouquet of flowers into an enduring memorial, monumental in scale yet still delicate and fragile.

Untitled (wall hangings) are a series of large-scale handwoven canvases made by dying, then dipping long strips of canvas and hessian into plaster and weaving them together before the plaster dries. The resulting canvas is then worked on using a mixture of colouring pencil and paint. Weaving is one of the most ancient forms of making and part of the everyday fabric in our lives. The work is multi-layered in its references to craft, tradition and routine. Despite bearing no discernible narrative, in medium and appearance they recall folk-traditions of recording and recounting collective memory through tapestries and quilt making. The physical labour involved in weaving these large scale canvases emphasises the human value in such works, relative to their scale, there is little material value - they are created using hands and time.