

Stephen Friedman Gallery

This Is Tomorrow
Holly Hendry: The Dump is Full of Images
Harriet Smith Hughes
8 October 2019

this is art

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Image: Holly Hendry, Amulet, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Photo copyright Mark Reeves

Holly Hendry's new exhibition at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park features three pieces: 'Amulet', 'Borgorgysmus', and, clinking quietly and hugely in the centre of the room, the 7.5m-long 'Slacker'. 'Slacker' is Hendry's first moving sculpture, and as the exhibition's centrepiece it presents a remarkable evolution of her thinking around the tensions between inside and outside, value and waste, viscera and machinery. Each of the three pieces of the exhibition reveal their innards, unearth things bodily and fabricated, in what comprises a rich exploration of the act of making, and the stuff that arises in the process.

The three works are not easy to describe. 'Slacker', which dominates the sunlit Weston Gallery, should feel intimidating: it's a monster machine of revolving cylinders and silicone, on which a body is splayed, cartoonish guts and innards spliced into its fabric. But instead, its presence is oddly comforting. That speaks to the dualities that Hendry's work engages: 'Slacker', like her

2017 exhibition 'Wrot', is made up mainly of pastel pinks, greens, and blues, which slip smoothly past the eye, carrying with them hard-to-place associations of splints and medical scrubs. The silicone on which the body is printed has been made by coating a cotton fibre band - like a supermarket checkout belt - with liquid silicone, which moves in one great, seamless continuum around the structure. Here the body ticks along, its innards exposed, as Hendry exposes in massive scale the systems that, as she says, 'make our daily life seamless'. Hendry also melted found objects from her studio into the silicone belt, building that circular impetus into the body of the work. She refers to these plastics - pens, stuff like that - as being 'swallowed by the silicone', making them into a flattened surface, and so 'forcing them to move again'.

Just as the found objects from Hendry's studio are revived in the silicone corpse of 'Slacker', the cylinders which guide the belt's movement are similarly oddly re-animated. While each appears to move independently, in fact a single rotary engine at one end of the structure turns the entire belt, so that the silicone body itself spins each cylinder in the course of its movement. There are manifold cyclical processes at play: in the organs of the work, which are brought into an interdependent moving whole; in the materials which make up those organs, which have been re-moved from studio to gallery, from object waste to valued art; and also in the collaborative efforts of making 'Slacker', in which Hendry worked with Prof. Parik Goswami of Huddersfield University to consider new materials being used in science and medicine, and with 3D design studio Jailmake, to build the rotary engine that sets the thing in motion.

Suspended on the side wall - as though facing outward to Slacker, the windows of the Weston Gallery, and the great park beyond - are 'Amulet' and 'Borgorgysmus'. 'Amulet', a layering of mounded plaster, slabbed steel, leather, jesmonite, foam, and plasterboard, could recall anything from a cross-section of skin, to geological strata, to the innards of an interior wall. 'Borgorgysmus' similarly, with its addition of Ryeland wool, from local sheep, and oak. Together they bring the outside into the gallery space, embedding the context of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the exhibition, just as Hendry's studio objects are born into the silicone corpse of 'Slacker'. All

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three works also gesture outwards, questioning the boundaries of the gallery space as they publicise the stuff of their own insides.

In all this, we can begin to see the weighty ideas that Hendry's engaged with: the role of art and its relation to the community; geology, the anthropocene, and the environment; the body, in public and private; the structures and systems in and through which we live, consciously and unconsciously. It's an exciting set of work, with intimate wit and serious ambition—which like the soft ticking of *Slacker*, only underlines the size of the thing in movement.