

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Hyperallergic
Designing a Sculptural Synthetic Skin
Anna Souter
11 October 2019

HYPERALLERGIC

Designing a Sculptural Synthetic Skin

Holly Hendry's works offer an innovative view on the repurposing of materials in art, exploring how things usually considered to be trash can be recycled.



Image: Holly Hendry, "Slacker" (2019), installation view, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

powerful contradictory sense of calm and unease.

To create her first animated sculpture, "Slacker" (2019), Hendry worked with Parik Goswami, a professor of technical textiles at Huddersfield University who studies the development of new scientific materials. Hendry subsequently produced a band of silicone synthetic skin, which is pigmented with powders made of plastic detritus from the artist's studio. The material is passed through a system of metal rollers in constant motion.



Image: Holly Hendry, "Slacker" (2019), installation view, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

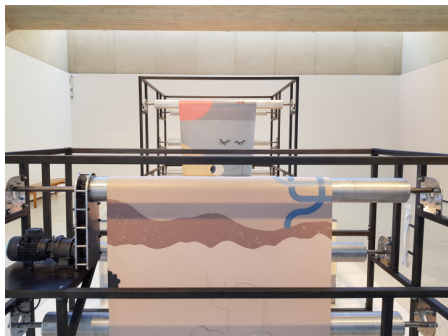


Image: Holly Hendry, "Slacker" (2019), installation view, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

While the kinetic structure of steel and Perspex initially resembles an industrial machine such as a printing press, the band of "skin" features various motifs referring to the human body and, particularly, to the digestive system. A sense of tension between the body and the machine emerges, and the composition of the apparatus begins to recall a semi-abstracted reclining human figure, with a motorized mechanism for its head and Perspex feet — complete with a cartoonish Band-Aid where one of the toes has gone missing.

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The allusion to a reclining figure in the context of the Yorkshire landscape evokes the sculptural legacy of artists such as Henry Moore, who had close connections to Yorkshire county, and many of whose works are on view elsewhere in the Yorkshire Sculpture Park's extensive grounds.



Image: Holly Hendry, *The Dump Is Full of Images*, installation view, Yorkshire Sculpture Park



Image: Holly Hendry, *"Amulet"* (2019)

Hendry also offers an innovative view on the repurposing of materials in art, exploring how things usually considered to be trash (the "dump" of the exhibition's title) can be recycled. Much of her work features layers of materials, drawing on archaeologists' practices of uncovering objects or substances before assigning them meanings or values. Hendry creates strata of commonplace or discarded items to imbue them with the mystery of archaeological discovery and to suggest their value as symbols of

place or culture. In the large-scale work *"Slacker,"* this layering is hinted at through the imagery embedded into the loop of artificial "skin," and through small objects, such as a plaster bone nestling under the mechanism.

The *The Dump Is Full of Images* also features two smaller wall-based sculptures, *"Amulet"* (2019) and *"Borborgysmus"* (2019). These works combine panels of undulating plaster with substrata of various materials, including steel, wood, leather, jesmonite, and local sheep's wool. Although structurally simpler than *"Slacker,"* the show's centerpiece, these two works illuminate Hendry's process, and highlight her interest in the tension between surfaces and interiors, both corporeal and geological.



Image: Holly Hendry, *"Borborgysmus"* (2019)

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Image: Holly Hendry, "Slacker" (2019), installation view, Yorkshire Sculpture Park



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Hendry's Yorkshire Sculpture Park solo show opened only days after the Lyon Biennale, where she was commissioned to make a major site-specific installation. Moreover, the last couple of years have seen her presenting a number of significant solo offerings on the international art stage, despite only graduating from her masters program at the Royal College of Art in 2016. She is undoubtedly having a moment, and her innovative new work for *The Dump Is Full of Images* indicates there is little chance of her work becoming stale.

Holly Hendry: *The Dump Is Full of Images* continues at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (West Bretton, Wakefield, UK) through April 19, 2020. The exhibition is curated by the artist and Helen Pheby.