

Exhibition Review

Coastal Matters

Jane Riley - Solo tapestry and ceramics

Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar

2 July to 30 September 2022

Review by Sally Reckert, July 2022



Clay and Carbon (2021) - 107 x137cm,
assorted yarn including mohair

The coastline between Saltburn and Scarborough is a rich and fascinating area that Yorkshire artist Jane Riley has explored since childhood.

Centuries of heavy industry have left their marks: rusting mine buildings; detritus from iron, coal and chemical works; scars in cliffs from alum mining. Seaweeds wash in with the tides, and plants have colonised the shores and cliffs.

Jane's latest solo exhibition, **Coastal Matters**, at Kirkleatham Museum in Redcar until 30 September, focuses on the natural environment of this area, and the impact of climate change, while honouring the area's industrial past. Ivi Fox, a local visitor, commented:

"I am interested in industrial remains, and looking through this exhibition highlighted for me the importance of documenting our national story in a way that not only monumentalises past industrial achievements but also honours the hot, sweaty, back-breaking toil of past generations."

Jane's sketches of coastal plants and seaweeds are a delight, as well as being botanically accurate sketches



Small paintings (2018-19) 20 x 30 cm from a 20 x 315 cm long concertina book



Back in her studio Jane abstracts her seaweed sketches into woven rhythms of light and colour, as though viewing them under water. Jane's glass-making enables her to explore this effect, colour and shape distortion through the translucency of water.

Bobbin and glass (2022) 30 x 30cm, terracotta, linen
and painted glass

In Jane's hands the most garish and unlikely yarns sing in unison with the more traditional linen, wool, silk and cottons. These works are joyous celebrations of the natural world under the sea.



***In Suspension 1** (2020) 118 x 98 cm, wool, cotton and mohair*



***Landscape** (2021) 40 x 55 cm detail from 40 x 315 cm long charcoal and pastel concertina book*

Jane's work in ceramics, like her drawings and glasswork, are experiments in capturing the colours and textures of distressed metal, glazes particularly influencing her choices of tapestry yarns and colours. See image 'Clay and Carbon' above.

The industrial flotsam and jetsam that she finds on the beach are reimagined in the studio as robust sculptures. Lumps of clay are fired at very high temperatures to encourage cracking and damage without disintegration; a metaphor for the remnants of industrial and mining works along the North Yorkshire coast.



Triptych 1 (2022) 60 x 60 cm, terracotta – ***Triptych 2*** (2022) 40 x 40 cm, terracotta and wool



A wall in the exhibition displays her thought processes: words, photographs, sketches of plants and seaweeds, together with some of the detritus that she picks up from the beach. We accompany her on her transformative journey, from what she sees to the freer and more expressive medium of tapestry.

By sharing her thought processes, Jane encourages the viewer to see and respond positively to apparently discordant objects around us.

Beachcomber fragments (2022) – (each) 30 x 30 cm, terracotta and assorted yarn

Jane Riley's studio in Darlington brings people together to share in the pleasure of tapestry weaving. Exhibited here at Kirkleatham are examples of their work, woven to the theme of tree bark: each work is 148 x 210 mm, and includes yarns such as wool, silk, linen, wire and cotton.

Coastal Matters is on until 30 September at Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar, TS10 5NW

[Kirkleatham Museum Exhibitions](#)

[Jane Riley website](#)

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/jane_riley_art/



Margaret Bennett 'Birch' (2022)