

Land/ Stone/ Colour/ Sculpture by Tim Harrison

Land/Stone/Colour/ Sculpture by Tim Harrison

Tim Harrison's regard for stone is based in its indisputable relationship with landscape and the ways in which it forms landscapes. His intervention in the stone is purposely restrained; his carving slow and carefully planned to allow the qualities of the material to remain in balance. His carvings in this exhibition are made in a range of English limestone, sandstone and Carrara marble often used in combination to introduce contrasting colour and texture with great subtlety.

Since the Ancient Roman era sculptors have used Carrara marble quarried from hillsides of the Apennine Mountains in the Italian Province of Massa and Carrara. Its pale translucence and fine grain could mimic the smoothness of skin and delicacy of drapery, qualities favoured not only by artists but also by myriad designers and artisans who use the stone in a multiplicity of ways.

Eleven years ago a timely gift from the Trustees of the Hepworth Estate gave Tim Harrison his first opportunity to use Carrara marble that had

belonged to the sculptor Barbara Hepworth (1903–75). This provided him with a good reason to look afresh at the way his work was progressing and undeniably gave him responsibility for using the marble well. Its history and not least the provenance of having been chosen by one of Britain's leading modernist sculptors, gave him pause for thought.

Although he had carved Carrara marble before, when he received the first pieces from the Estate he visited the Hanraux Quarry in Carrara where they had been quarried. Long established like many quarries in Carrara, it is at the very top of a mountain and gives a rugged profile to the mountainside as though it has been systematically dissected by a vast cheese wire. The visit was important as it confirmed Harrison's use of the block in a new series of sculptures, mirroring the precise method of quarrying and also keeping the dimensions chosen by Hepworth, which for him

honoured her connection with the stone and her commitment to it.

One of the first sculptures Harrison made with Hepworth's marble was **Double Vision** 2004. The two elements that form this sculpture are the size and shape originally selected by Hepworth and Harrison's decision to make use of the basic cuboid was partly in respect for her choice as well as the fact that the carefully honed flat surfaces gave him the opportunity to carve minimally. He chose to reveal the inner stone gently, in layers that curve across the surface and wrap around the four facets of the vertical faces. The square sections of the two elements differ in detail, as the vertical carving alters the edges of the top surfaces. **Within the Edge** 2005 shows a similar use of the cuboid but the soft curves of vertical carving reflect the softness of Chicks Grove limestone in contrast with the crisp edges of harder marble. This limestone is also referred to as Chilmark Stone, and was used in the construction of Salisbury Cathedral when quarried near Tisbury in Wiltshire, close to where Harrison lives and works. **Across the Edge** 2005, also made in Carrara marble although not from the



Artist's studio 2015. Left to right: **End Piece** 2015. Carrara 2014. 'St Bees' 2014. photo: Steven Drewett

Hepworth Estate, has a more geometric feel as the slightly billowing 'curtains' are crossed with straight parallel depressions in a symmetry that disturbs an otherwise predictable surface.

Root 2006 is one of four larger pieces in the exhibition. The scale of this and a number of the new sculptures, such as **Carrara** 2014 and **End Piece** 2015, are made to stand just below the average adult height so that the top surface of the sculpture may be viewed, which Harrison considers to be an essential part of understanding

the three-dimensionality of his carving. The dark stone and robust carving in **Root** reveals him at his most expressive. This black carboniferous limestone comes from Belgium in an area close to coalfields and takes carving in interesting ways that alter its tone in response to the cut, becoming white when hit hard by the chisel. 'Belgian black', as the stone is commonly referred to, is known for its unique deep black when highly polished. Harrison has exploited this by carving the finished surface thereby drawing attention to the inherent brittleness and fragility of the stone.

Ten sculptures in the exhibition feature paired elements, either stacked or shown side by side, made in the same materials or in complementary ones. In **Drift** 2006, two identically carved pieces of marble and Chicks Grove limestone stand side by side. The contrast is subtle, their colours different but somewhat close in tonal range. Sharply carved linear detail contrasts with gentle inward curve. The simplicity of Harrison's working of the stone serves to reveal more of the contrast and differences than greater intervention on his part might achieve. **Return** 2011 shows two regular blocks, identical in shape. Here the Carrara marble sits on top of the Chicks Grove limestone, which has been cut to exactly the same size, respecting Hepworth's legacy. For Harrison the block of stone is enigmatic, and by combining two blocks he sets up rhythms of colour and texture irrespective of his further intervention. In **Silence** 2011, again using Carrara marble from the Hepworth Estate, Harrison kept to his self-imposed ruling of not significantly altering the volume of the original block. Here he carved with care and much forethought, setting a tempo of depth, space and repetition. Within his cuboid forms Harrison considers **Drift**, **Return** and **Silence** to have the most musical pitch. In **Drift** he also draws attention to the metamorphic relationship between limestone and marble.

In **The Hurdcott Stone** 2012, as in **North South** and **Fish Shadow**, both of 2013, the cuboid gives way to the oval, which Harrison says allows him to express more rhythm, a varying pulse and change in cadence. He has taken the title for this sculpture from the nearby hamlet of Hurdcott, also the name of the stone, quarried only three miles from Chilmark, in order to emphasise its unique and specific qualities. This Wiltshire sandstone comes from the valley cut by the River Nadder through the Vale of Wardour, exposing the green sandstone and older seams of limestone. The white purity of the Carrara brings out the green of the sandstone while subtle graining in both stones and the gentle undulation of continuing carving across their conjoined surfaces further unites them.

The greater contrast between the red Cumbrian limestone 'St Bees' and Portland limestone gives **North South** a robust presence, and the carving

too has greater depth. The title obviously plays on the locations where these stones are found, in the contrasting landscapes of Cumbria in northern England and Dorset in the south.

For **Fish Shadow**, the third of these ovoid stacks, Harrison chose to stand the marble element on top of the Purbeck limestone 'Spangle', aware that the lively fossil inclusions added visual weight to the lower part of the sculpture. His sculptural language is inventive, serious but not without humour.

Untitled 2014 features two horizontal carvings positioned in parallel. Both are of ovoid section and are the same size. Because of the differing composition of Carrara marble and Purbeck limestone, they appear to be of differing weight and although the carved surface in each is identical, it seems to be softer in the marble. The two elements offset one another, both through their differences and their similarities.

Harrison again used the ovoid section in **Untitled** and **Idea for a Monument**, both of 2014, but managed the carving differently in each. Whilst emphasising the delicate grain of grey through sharply carved diagonals in **Untitled**, he softened the stronger grain in **Idea for a Monument** with gentle undulations across the surface. Both appear as if they are portions of columns, whilst being consciously defined in height that may readily be viewed as sculpture.

Whilst not made with the purpose of being a pair, **Carrara** and 'St Bees', both of 2014, are the largest of the column pieces. Carved similarly, one is in the largest piece of Carrara marble from the Hepworth Estate and the other in Cumbrian sandstone 'St Bees', hence their titles. These complete a cycle of closely related sculptures highlighting the similarities and differences Harrison explored when pairing stones of differing colour and texture quarried in a range of locations. His role as artist has been that of interpreter and visionary, touching a monumental

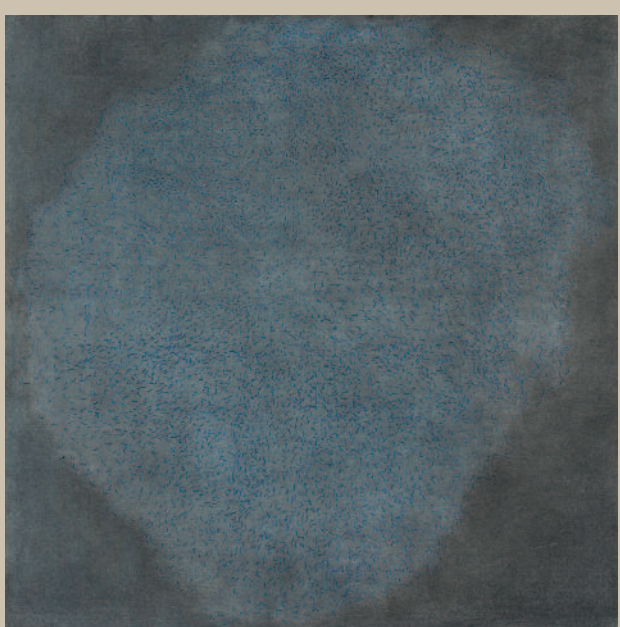


Untitled 2014. photo: Steven Drewett

history with contemporary thought and traditional means.

Looking at this body of work as a whole, one can see Tim Harrison moving steadily towards a minimalist approach to working with stone. In fact these sculptures tell us more about the stones and their history than complex detailing could. A telling example of this is **Rotherley Stone II** 2009 in Purbeck limestone, part of a series of sculptures and drawings made in response to the landscape of Rotherley Downs, an archaeological site of special interest in Wiltshire. With landscape as his initial reference in this piece, as in most of his work, he chose the stone for its fossil inclusions that speak of life before the stone was formed. In shape it remains as it was hewn from the quarry, and the carved 'tiles' are cut in shallow relief, not regularly as some are bevelled, others cut straight.

The last sculpture in the exhibition marks the beginnings of a new phase in his work. **End Piece** 2015 is formed from a stone that was cleaved from the quarry rather than being cut with care. Selected by Harrison for its size, colour and



A Pattern of Life II 2013. photo: David Cousins

Three of Tim Harrison's drawings are also shown in the exhibition, related large-scale pieces titled **A Pattern of Life I, II and III**, all made in 2013. They do much to explain the sculptures. Like them, they relate to experiencing landscape in a myriad of ways, from the smallest particles of matter to the mass that they form, to life created then changed, the way land is used and altered, and the mapping of it.

Ann Elliott March 2015

Tim Harrison was born in Essex in 1952. He studied at Hammersmith College of Art (1969–70), Norwich Art School (1970–73) and Byam Shaw School of Fine Art (1975). He initially worked as a woodsman and welder but in 1980 turned to lecturing in Adult Education for Wiltshire and Dorset Councils where he taught drawing and painting. In 1988, he was Sculptor in Residence at the Red House Museum, Christchurch, organised by the Hampshire Sculpture Trust.

Harrison has exhibited widely since 1981 in both group and solo exhibitions, including Rabley Contemporary Drawing Centre, Marlborough in 2011; Creswell Crags Museum; Atrium Gallery, Bournemouth University; Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, all in 2010, and he shows work regularly at the New Art Centre, Roche Court, near Salisbury. Commissions include *Sea Edge* for West Park House, Southampton City Centre; *Horizon* for The Russell Coates Museum, Bournemouth and *Granite Sculpture II* for Southampton Airport, all in 1995; *Reflection* for Epsom College, Surrey, in 2000; *Pegasus* for the Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire, and *Ring* for Wingfield Arts, Eye, Suffolk, both in 2002; and *Column* at Woodford Valley Wiltshire, in 2005. In 2013 a selection of his works on paper were acquired by the British Museum and in 2014 Creswell Heritage Trust, in collaboration with the Art Fund and the V&A Museum, purchased a series of six drawings referencing Palaeolithic inscriptions in the Creswell Crags Gorge in Nottinghamshire.

Tim Harrison was elected to the Royal West of England Academy in 2013 and in 2015 was a member of the selection panel for the RWA's biennial open exhibition, *Drawn*. Harrison lives and works in Wiltshire.

For further information see timharrison.com

EVENT

Tuesday 28 April, from 6.30 to 7.15 pm
Curator **Ann Elliott** tours the exhibition with **Tim Harrison**. The tour is **free** but please contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office at visualart@canarywharf.com to reserve a place

Some of the works are for sale

Contact Canary Wharf Public Art Office for a price list

List of Works

Dimensions in centimetres h x w x d

Sculpture

Double Vision 2004 Carrara marble, Courtesy of the Barbara Hepworth Estate 51 x 75 x 30	Fish Shadow 2013 Purbeck limestone 'Spangle' and Carrara marble 47 x 47 x 18
--	---

Within the Edge 2005 Chicks Grove limestone 57 x 39 x 13	Untitled 2014 Carrara marble and Purbeck limestone 17 x 94 x 69
---	--

Across the Edge 2005 Carrara marble 37 x 37 x 7	Untitled 2014 Carrara marble 37 x 37 x 17
--	--

Root 2006 Black carboniferous limestone 143 x 40 x 28	Idea for a Monument 2014 Carrara marble 54 x 40 x 17
--	---

Drift 2006 Carrara marble and Chicks Grove limestone 38 x 84 x 37	Carrara 2014 Carrara marble, Courtesy of the Barbara Hepworth Estate 125 x 52 x 46
--	---

Rotherley Stone II 2009 Purbeck limestone 5 x 135 x 180	'St Bees' 2014 Cumbrian sandstone 'St Bees' 125 x 48 x 44
--	--

Return 2011 Chicks Grove limestone and Carrara marble, Courtesy of the Barbara Hepworth Estate 44 x 60 x 30	End Piece 2015 Ham stone 127 x 130 x 57
--	--

Drawings

Silence 2011 Carrara marble, Courtesy of the Barbara Hepworth Estate 38 x 38 x 172	A Pattern of Life I 2013 Mixed media on paper 101 x 101
---	--

The Hurdcott Stone 2012 Wiltshire sandstone and Carrara marble, Courtesy of the Barbara Hepworth Estate 77 x 66 x 30	A Pattern of Life II 2013 Mixed media on paper 101 x 101
---	---

North South 2013 Cumbrian sandstone 'St Bees' and Portland limestone 104 x 86 x 35	A Pattern of Life III 2013 Mixed media on paper 101 x 101
---	--