



DI LIVEY

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Trace Patterns

7 to 30 April 2000 · The Studio Gallery, 519b Old York Road, London SW18 1TF

My father was an upholsterer. He died ten years ago, leaving in his shed the remains of his felt, cut moquette, deep pile fabrics and studs for studding panels. I brought them back to my studio and I have been using them in my work ever since. They have been the starting point for new work.

I have always constructed my paintings, often binding and wrapping flat surfaces with canvas until they become three dimensional and then layering them with acrylic glazes. The paintings come from a fusion of ideas. I take a variety of sources into my work, perhaps using museum objects, a visit to Lycian ruins in Turkey or carvings on the fallen stones in Myra. I have been intrigued by the way the slashed and cut fabrics are shown in the sixteenth century paintings of Cranach and Lotto in the National Gallery. I am fascinated by the surface of paintings and I love the description of fabric in the works of the great masters, such as the rich and shimmering clothes shown by van Dyck. I have been trying to recall something of this through my use of lustre powders in oil paint.

What I said in 1981, for Summer Show 2 at the Serpentine Gallery, still holds true. I wrote then that my work reflected the confused and fragmented experience of my everyday life; from travelling, sitting in a gallery, wrapping a present

or feeding the cat, all the time trying to hold onto the feeling of being separate. I liked to think my work had a sense of isolation, but could also laugh at itself and become absurd. In 1985, for Empty Vessels, I said that I worked a problem through rather than thought it through. I cannot keep the canvas within a frame. My work is about process; but it is also a vehicle to express myself. For me, technique is secondary to expression, but the nature of the process brings it to the fore.

My work deals with femaleness - the sense of emptying and replenishing, the changes that occur over the years, opening out followed by withdrawal. I include contrasting elements. Slashing and tassels are used in order to create tension. More recently, I have started using lead to represent a deadness or a void space from which a floral pattern emerges.

For some years I have been using fragments of clothes patterns. This came from an armour piece I made for in my exhibition Resting Place in 1991. I took the right side of a bodice pattern as a shape that might shield and protect the heart. From there I became interested in the patterns themselves. Trace Patterns, the title of this exhibition, refers both to the working process in the studio and the memories and journey that inspire it.



