



ODIHAM ART GROUP DEMONSTRATION REPORT

Illustrated lecture on 'The Orkney Project' by Julia Sorrell, 2nd December 2017

Julia Sorrell won a travel scholarship in 2015 from the ACE foundation to Orkney and the body of work produced as a result of her five weeks in Orkney was the focus of the talk and slides we enjoyed today.

Julia began with some autobiographical information explaining how her parents, who were both artists, would discuss artistic processes around the meal table as she grew up and so, not surprisingly, her love of drawing began at an early age. Her first enthusiasm was for embroidery but drawing and painting took over after the premature death of her father, Alan Sorrell, the archeologist and illustrator of archeological sites. His influence lives on through her interest in geology and archeology and these underlie all her work.

We were entertained by anecdotes of her time living in her 'van' in Orkney including near misses from arctic terns and the dangers of tides and rabbit holes - not to mention passengers from cruise ships - as she sat wrapped against the cold, sketching.

The sketchbooks from this trip were filled with en plein air drawings allowing Julia to produce paintings back in her studio. We were shown slides of the sketch followed by the painting which were usually in watercolour though Julia stressed that the media was secondary to the line. Most of the sketches were in ink with a watercolour wash. Julia explained what had influenced her as she developed her painting style - artists such as Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, John Piper and Henry Moore all had an impact on her work. The solidity of the abstract shapes in the landscape interested her. Her depiction of standing stones and sea eroded coastal features were full of colour and strong line.

Julia explained how she tries to put the emotional response she had to the various archeological sites as well as the geological features into her work. She never uses photographs and relies on close observation.

Finally Julia's husband modelled a jumper made primarily from wool collected from Orkney and the last slides were of a standing stone she had made from a wooden base, covered in wire and embroidered with Orkney wool.

We are fortunate to be able to show below examples of Julia's work, courtesy of her husband Ian. Everyone had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, for more information on Julia's work and details of The Orkney Project do visit the following websites.



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www.acefoundation.org.uk
www.juliasorrell.com

