

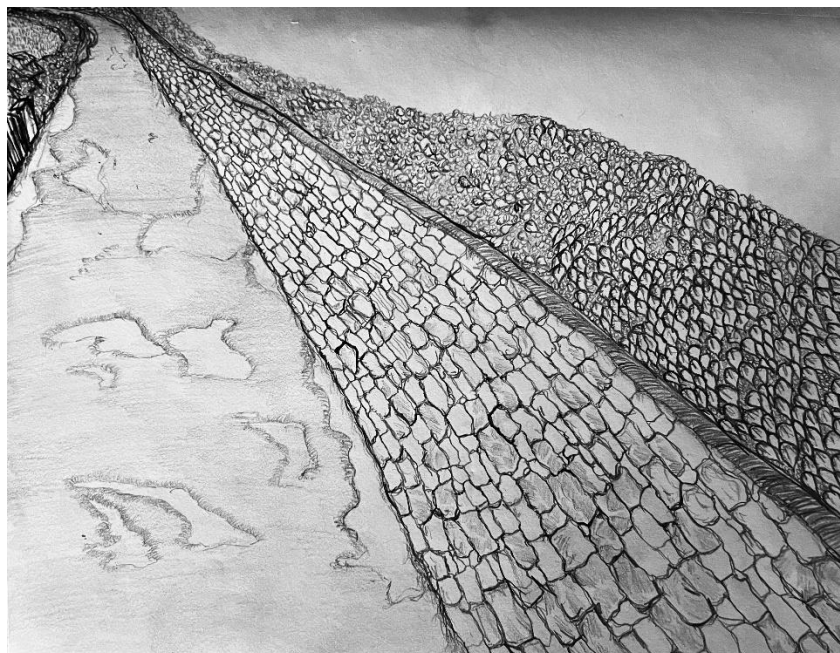
## Unit 1: MA Painting: Imogen Hill

### Process



My first drawing of the view from the top of Church Terrace that overlooks Holmfirth, Yorkshire, 28th August, 2023 (29.7 x 21cm)

A drawing from memory using pencil that I did just a week after my trip to Yorkshire, making it the most accurate to the actual view.



Sketch of a slate tiled wall leading to St. John's Church (Holme Valley), 27th September, 2023 (40 x 29cm)

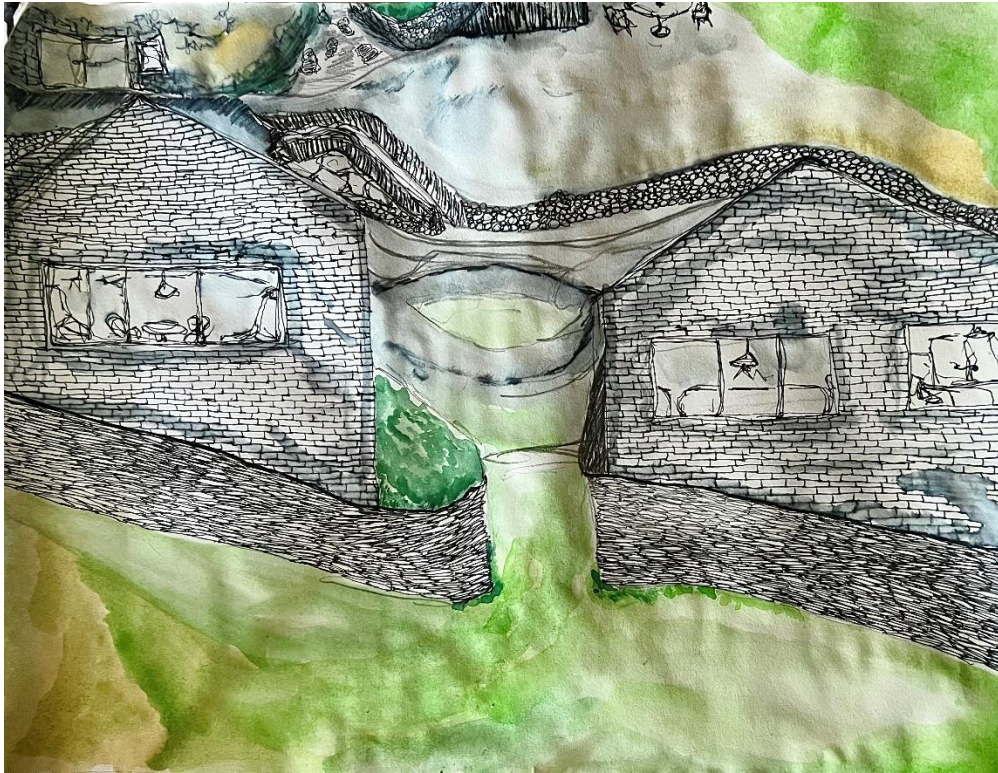
Slate tiles are everywhere around Holmfirth and I often came across them on walks with my dog around the town.



Second sketch of the view at the top of Church Terrace, 2nd October, 2023 (17 x 10cm)

My memory of the view is getting much more vague compared to the first drawing I did.

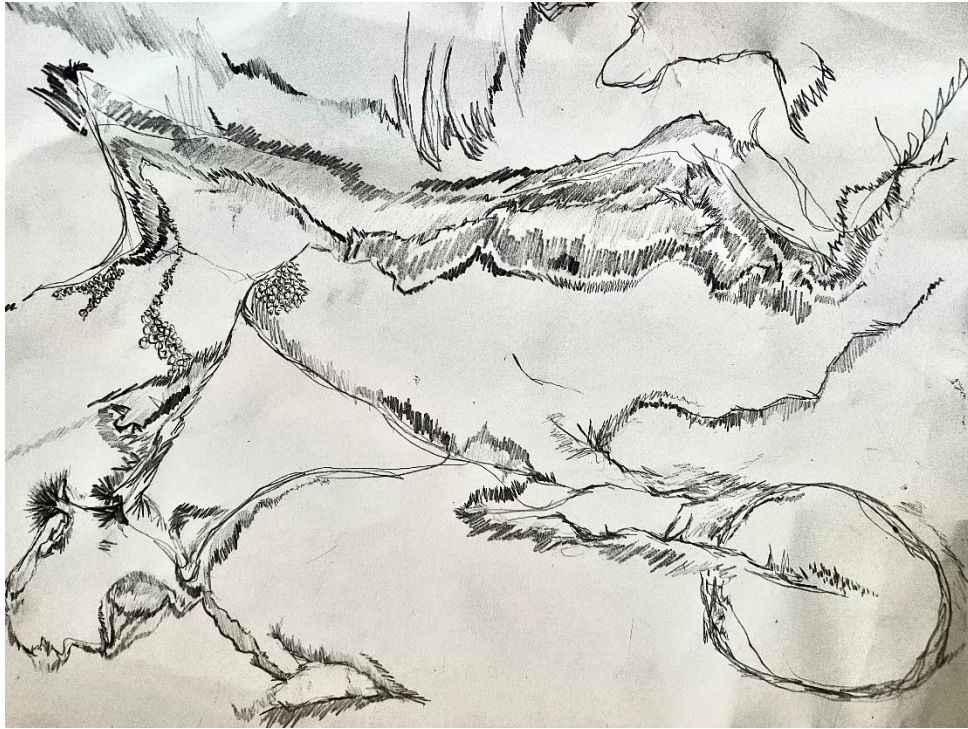




Third sketch of the view from the top of Church Terrace using fine liner and watercolour,  
16th October, 2023 (40 x 29cm)

My memory of the view is continuing to get more and more vague as buildings are starting to appear in different places and I can't quite remember exactly what is behind them apart from a roundabout, a bridge and music venue, The Picturedrome.





Fourth sketch of the view from the top of Church Terrace, which is now abstracted by other earthly elements, patterns and textures I remembered from walks around the town, such as the slate tile walls, grass patches and a clock tower.

3rd November, 2023 (40 x 29cm)



Using paint and brown paper to create another composition for my final outcome for Unit, an abstracted landscape using my memory from walks and views around Holmfirth, Yorkshire.

3rd November, 2023 (29.7 x 21cm)

- Trying to figure out what colours are significant to my trip to Yorkshire.

There were lots of intense orange rays of sunlight on walks with my dog in the late afternoon, a yellow door near my cottage, and many different tones of green in patches of grass, hills and trees surrounding the town.



Unfinished painting on canvas of an abstracted view of Holmfirth while on walks around the town, 10th November, 2023 (45 x 25cm)

Experimenting with embroidery by stitching into a canvas to try and build the texture of grass, and putting thick splodges of paint to resemble beams of light.





Slate tile wall effect using clay to recreate the texture, 15th November, 2023 (20 x 10cm)

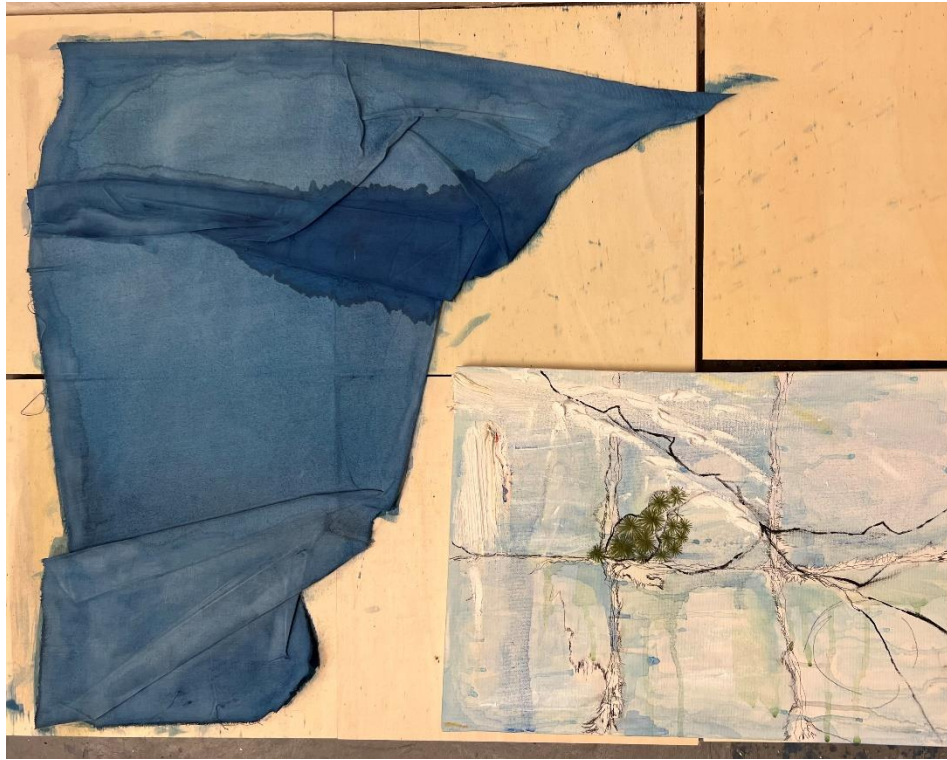
Clay has appeared in my work before, but I wanted to introduce it again in this unit because it encapsulates the sharpness / texture of the slate tiled walls in Holmfirth.



Digital painting of my final composition idea for my final outcome of an abstracted view of Holmfirth from memory, 17th November, 2023

By the time I drew this, I realised that the the slate tiled walls, a circle resembling a clock face on Church Terrace and pebbled patterns made up of small circles kept appearing in my drawings / paintings, so they were the elements of Holmfirth that are most significant to me and stayed in my memory more than anything other physical elements of my walks around the town.

### Process of Creating My Final Outcome



Soak-stain technique on wood panels, 21st November, 2023

A technique invented by Helen Frankenthaler. I thinned down blue paint so that it had the consistency of watercolour, then soaked a piece of fabric, which is laid on top of wood panels, with it, so that the blue paint prints onto the wood underneath the fabric.

Took fabric off and left a print on the wood panel, then added clay.

Photos of Holmfirth





Holme Valley on the other side of the slate wall leading up to St. John's church. The square patches of green are similar to the shapes that the fabric printed onto the wood panels when I tried the soak-stain technique.



A path that comes out of Church Terrace. The paths leading down to the centre of Holmfirth are very windy and fluctuate up and down constantly. I remember the confusion of finding my way around because of how narrow the paths were and not really being able to see around clearly - this effect can be seen in my drawings and paintings of the paths winding in unusual ways.



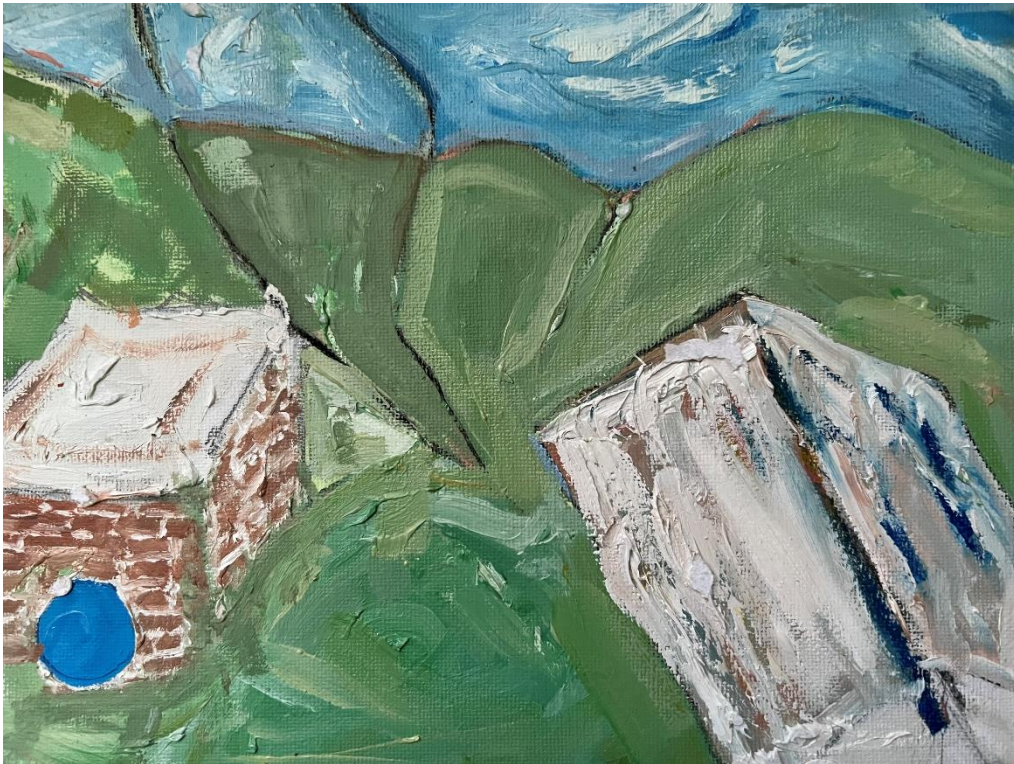


Rattle Row and Church Terrace are paths that are on the back of the buildings on the front of the centre road that cuts through the middle of the town, so on walks I was constantly faced with the back of buildings, which also appear a lot in my drawings from memory.

## Gallery



My Memory of Holmfirth, mixed media on wood panels, 96 x 66cm, 2023



A View from Church Terrace, oil paint on canvas, 30 x 20cm, 2023

## Critical Reflection



From the nineteenth to the twenty-fifth of August of 2023, I was staying at a cottage on Rattle Row in Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. The rural setting was vastly different to the urban setting that I am used to living in, which I found very refreshing. Being in a serene place without having to think about the responsibilities that are always spinning around my mind in the city, meant that I really felt as though I had the freedom for self-reflection, affirming my identity and being outside for the sole purpose of walking and looking. In the time that I spent walking I noticed different, unique elements of landscape around the small town such as slate tiled walls and patches of unkempt grass growing through the cobbled ground of the narrow lanes that wind around the back of buildings on the hills surrounding the valley floor at the town's core.

Buildings are scattered into the hills, where people decided to live higher up, 'a trend that continued into the 1700s' (Roy. S; 2022). However, when mills were built on the rivers, 'people required to run the mills would have to live' nearer to the valley floor when 'the rural village [became] a successful mill town of the Industrial Revolution' (Roy. S; 2022). On my first walk with my dog along the valley floor I came across a memorial plaque commemorating the 84 lives lost at the hands of two tragic floods in 1852 and 1944. The flood in 1852 is described as a 'man-made disaster' (Holmfirth Local History Group; 2024) because it had been 'caused when the Bilberry reservoir burst its banks' (Roy. S; 2022). The memorial, which had been built to show the height of the 1852 flood, emphasizing the absence and presence of historical events and how they are impactful years later to the memories of Holmfirth's residents, such as Bottoms Mill, one of the oldest mills that cuts through the valley floor today.

I took photographs of different aspects of Holmfirth that, when I think of them now, are very clear in my mind. I wasn't thinking deeply about composition for sketches or paintings at the time of taking them, I either just enjoyed the textures that I saw and felt, or wanted to have a way of keeping the view from the top of a lane named Church Terrace with me.

When I got home, I decided I would draw Holmfirth from my memory of it. While on my stay there I was reading a book by Christopher Neve named an Unquiet Landscape. I reached the end of it on the car journey back to London. I had an epiphany while reading the final paragraph and noted it down immediately.

'The landscape remains; and the pictures remain. The pictures I have discussed have altered the way we look at many places, and yet to look in an artist's place for his inspiration is all but pointless because his source is in his own mind... Any account of how they were seen like that, or how they were re-imagined, is not so much about the places as about us... The unquiet country is you.'

( Neve, C.; 1990; pg. 199)

The passage resonated with me after feeling a such a strong connection with Holmfirth, being outside everyday to just look, touch and smell - so I started to draw from my memory to emphasize my unity with the place.

The first drawings I did, as expected, were the most accurate to the exact view in mind from the top of Church Terrace.



Fig. 1, Ashley Jackson, Cliffe Nr. Holmfirth, undated, watercolour on paper, 87 x 107.5cm  
(Source: The Art Studio UK)





Fig. 2, John Peirson, Holmfirth Landscape, West Yorkshire, undated, oil on board, 71.5 x 49cm (Source: ART UK)

I visited the Ashley Jackson Gallery which is situated in Holmfirth, where I found out about his watercolour paintings. I spoke to a woman there about his main focus when it comes to his landscapes, and she pointed out his dramatic skies. Rays of light between dull blues can be seen in figure 1 and in Peirson's painting (figure 2), which focuses on the details of Holme Valley – I could see characteristics in both paintings in my early sketches and watercolour paintings of Holmfirth.

Rays of light, slate tiled walls, square shapes of fields on the valley, narrow paths, a yellow gate, a blue clock face, Bottoms Mill and the backs of buildings continued to appear in my drawings and paintings, unlike trees, bushes, fencing, roads and people, which began to fade from my memory after a few months of doing the same painting / drawing.

'Memory is crushed beneath a weight of images that might have been retained by nature is obscured' (Yates, F. A.; 1966; pg. 34), Cicero on memory.

What is so significant about the parts of Holmfirth that have stayed firmly in my mind?

'Sensory memory is recollection of perceptual types of how a stimulus looks, feels, sounds' (Cowan. N; 2008), I am conscious of textures because as a human, my instinct is to touch them, so that has reflected in my reimagining of slate tiled walls around Holmfirth on wood panels. Aristotle 'holds that remembering must be strictly distinguished from the original processes by which a certain sensation that we are recalling was first felt' (Dunne, L.; 2023), which suggests the importance of the placements of objects to be further explored by senses.



Fig. 3, a print issued for the survivors of the 1852 flood (Source: Homfirth Local History Group)



Fig. 4, Kev Hopper, Rainburst with Occular Disturbance, 2023, oil on canvas, 90 x 60cm. (Source: Instagram)





Fig. 5, Helen Frankenthaler, *Madame Butterfly*, 2000, One hundred two colour woodcut from 46 woodblocks, 201.9 x 106cm. (Source: Helen Frankenthaler Foundation)

The Proust effect – the effect that smell has on memory.

The sound of Bottoms Mill rushing through the valley along with the other aspects of Holmfirth that stayed in my memory merged together to make my final piece.

Using the soap bubble technique that Kev Hopper uses (Figure 4) to create circular patterns, and the Soak-stain technique of Helen Frankenthaler, who swore by no rules in art-making – working from memory has let me explore the significance of texture and pattern and it's link to landscape freely through these techniques.

To bring rural settings even further into my work, I'm going to start collecting things and making pigments from rural settings on my daily walks, an additional interaction that solidifies the feeling / memories I had of being in that place for the viewer even more.

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## Context

### A TALK BY SIMON CALLERY

Simon Callery's talk about his work, whereby he uses natural materials, dyes and substances from landscapes that he's been to, which really resonated with me because of my art's relation to landscape. I was intrigued by his thoughts on landscape in relation to painting and process. Callery mentioned in his talk about 'not thinking of landscape as an image but as a material' and thinking of 'painting as a physical activity', emphasizing the importance of bringing texture and natural substances into the process of landscape painting in order to encapsulate the feeling of really being in that location, or suggesting a unity between the painting and it's inspired location. The physicality of process is important in my own work, I tend to work on the floor so that I can completely immerse myself, use all of my limbs, focus and strength, just like I do all of those things to experience a landscape.

Callery was invited to an archaeological site by the Institute of Archaeology in Oxford, which was located in the chalk down lands of Southern England. Archaeologists were digging at an Iron Age Hillfort (pre Roman, 2,000+ years ago), where many circular forms are found, and were used to store food, and Callery made collages out of photography of them. Circular patterns situated within landscape is a common motif in my own work, but, like Callery does, I'd like to interact even more with landscape by bringing actual objects I find in rural areas into my art practice.

#### A TALK BY MARK FAIRNINGTON

Mark Fairnington worked with the Natural History Museum in a storage depot for taxidermy, creating compositions out of them with photos he'd taken, photo shopped and collaged before painting them, an intriguing and experimental way to express movement. Fairnington was invited to Cherryburn, a cottage in Northumberland, where Thomas Bewick, a natural history author and wood-engraver, lived and made prints of the 'radical as landscape images' – the connection between people, history and their surroundings, which reminds me of an exhibition named 'Radical Landscapes' that I went to recently at The William Morris gallery, which explores freedom and social class through reflection on how British landscapes have been connected to them as a setting that offers refuge through nature and a place to reflect on and affirm identities – similar to the unity between landscape and myself, my memories / experiences, that I explore in my own work.

Fairnington painted a series of small landscapes on wood panels based on walks around Cherryburn. Like his paintings of taxidermy, he photographs his walks around the cottage, creating collages and paintings out of them that became a reflection / conversation about different ways that the landscape can be represented historically. Though in my own practice I use materials, shapes, pattern and texture to represent landscape through touch and memory, there is a similar conversation between me and Fairnington's landscape work, even though his work is predominantly history based, he understands and presents the importance of 'perspective change' and building a 'sense of walk space.'

#### A TALK BY HANNAH MAYBANK

Hannah Maybank is a sculptor that explores the importance of the relationship between materials and 'the reality of sculpture and allusion of painting'. She now also makes paintings 'in a material based way' that emphasize 'the pull between reality and allusion, and truth and deception' through imagery of landscapes, trees and flowers. She 'thinks about surface in a physical way', but lays panes of glass over some of her paintings so that 'when you look at [the paintings] you're reflected back so you can see yourself', which

directly links back to my unit one project on my memory and self-reflection, portraying it through rural landscapes.

Maybank's process reminds me of Helen Frankenthaler's 'no rules' rule of seeing 'mistakes' as a way of inventing and experimenting with various techniques and materials to create a flow of natural forms. Natural pigments are common in Maybank's work of trees, but she also ruptures the surface with latex and acrylic paint to build texture by ripping away at the surface – similar to Simon Callery's work, except he builds texture by adding to it rather than taking away.

The significance of walking, looking and interacting with elements of landscapes is emphasized by Maybank as it 'helps thoughts happen' by having the freedom to let her reflect on her memories. Maybank's most recent work approaches memory by drawing peonies, layering them like one memory over another and watching how they blur and change – a test that I am trying too to express 'absence and presence'.