

## **Under the skin of the ocean, the thing urges us up wild**

**Alberta Whittle in conversation with Sophie Crichton Stuart**

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024**

SCS: Alberta, thank you for agreeing to talk about our project. Generosity and warmth imbue your practice and life, and we are very grateful to be part of your creative trajectory.

AW: Thank you so much.

SCS: The project – *Under the skin of the ocean, the thing urges us up wild* – is the culmination of two years of research on Bute. Research that began around the concept of waterways and their mystical, connective, and political implications.

Bute, because of its island location, is the site of various early migratory settlement sites, standing stones and archaeological excavations.

Can we begin by discussing the roots of your research, and your approach as one of excavation?

AW: Thank you so much for that lovely introduction. Thank you, Morven, as well and all of you for being here today.

The thing about excavation is it's so much about trying to figure out what has passed before, what is lying beneath the surface but also what we are missing. There are all these different traces and once we break that seal there's so much that then emerges. Since we began this project two years ago, Sophie has introduced me to so many folks on Bute. Paul Duffy is a fantastic community archaeologist and he gave me so many insights when thinking about islands and the commonalities between them; me being from Barbados and spending a lot of time there and what it means to be an islander on Bute. It was such a curious conversation because so many of the things he told me really resonated, even though Bute and Barbados are so different. They are relatively small islands but are in connection with this larger Great Britain. And all of the confusion and debate and disputes that go on with being a British person and also how that reflects on different contested histories, issues of transatlantic slavery and issues with migration. The conversations with Sophie, Morven and Paul were thinking about migration being a very ancient concept. That really surprised me, and I hadn't expected that when I spoke with you all, this idea that these waterways which surround these islands have always been incredibly active, they've been active since days when indigenous people were living here, in that kind of time span. Bute has this really rich migratory history, the Gaels, the Celts, the Vikings, and more recently migrants coming here from different parts of the world. I think that creates a really live way of thinking about access and barriers and doorways but also the idea of skin and the 'thing'. When I started thinking about the skin of the ocean it was a thought about piercing through these different barriers. When I think about my work or making the work it's often about a feeling, that feeling of when you're diving into water and it can literally feel like a skin, that you're suddenly just breaking through, it's not soft and yielding always. It actually can feel quite solid at times. For me this idea of excavation is about looking beyond

that skin but also this idea of the 'thing' culture. Sophie and I have been talking about that from the start and I really wanted to open up a space for this gathering but also to think about debate.

The bothy really was at the start of that. We all know the barrier for entering Mount Stuart, it's such a prominent building on this very small island and I was thinking about a bridge, a bridge to the knowledge and histories of this building, but also a different bridge in the landscape and the seascape. The position [of the bothy] is such that you can see it from the windows of the house but also from the woodland and when you're in the bothy you can see the ocean. These different architectural gestures are always in conversation with each other. Ideas of fugitivity and finding space to debate, to have conversations felt really important. The bothy, is modelled on a Barbadian chattel house which has a deep history of fugitivity. Bothies for me are gathering spaces of shelter within the Scottish landscape and I wanted to reimagine it with another island's history of making spaces. The Barbadian chattel house can normally be disassembled within a day, it has this sense of fugitivity in case a plantation owner wanted you off the land, you could pack up and go very easily. Someone asked me 'but why would they want someone to leave the plantation?' and it was really interesting being asked that question; well, they're probably a troublemaker, there are many reasons why they'd want them off the island but that brings up ideas of dissent. If you're a dissenter, if you're someone making trouble you have to always be on the move, in flight. It seemed like a really interesting proposition to create this space for flight, for dissent. It's going to be the start of a really interesting two-year research project and I really feel lucky that you are going to be the guardians of this space that is bookable by anyone for whatever purpose. Hopefully, the next artist that comes through the programme can also make use of it.

SCS: An important Viking meeting site or parliament termed a 'ting', was discovered on Bute in the late 1950's – Cnoc an Rath. An example of a 'Ting' or Thing, it was a space to discuss, to legislate, to feast, and to mediate, and your outdoor work is a fusion of 'ting', chattel house and bothy. The generosity of this work is that it will be a dynamic space for education, for community and workshops for up to two years, moving beyond the immediate legacy of your work here. It's a very generous gesture and it reflects the collaborative nature of your practice.

Moving back to the works within the house. Mount Stuart is replete with mythical iconography. In your work, and in particular the works in the hall - the pair of textile works *Beneath the waves we shapeshift* and the series of salvaged doors – *A knock, a kick and we grapevine* – you reference the Greek myth of Cassiopeia - the mortal woman in Greek mythology who was forced to sacrifice her daughter to Poseidon. The myth, for me, works on many levels as a modern story, and I wonder if you could give us your thinking behind this series of works.

AW: When I was thinking about this work, I kept on hanging out in the gallery and I was always looking up at the beautiful ceiling and really enjoying the sensuality, I think it's a really sensual place, you know, touching the marble but also looking up at these amazing stained-glass windows. I wanted to create – almost a recollection of these galaxies while also creating a space for these multiple portals. Sekai Machache, who was the last artist to show at Mount Stuart - I'm a very good friend of Sekai's - and I had this incredible conversation around wildness and cultivation. In that conversation

we spoke about respectability politics which as a Black woman is especially important, my family and my grandfather particularly always wanted me to look really respectable. Don't wear that hat, don't put your hair in curlers, don't eat on the street, all these weird rules, even not wearing gold before 6 o'clock. All these random things you had to do to be appropriate and respectable, which also relates to class. This idea of really thinking about appropriateness, especially for women and this code of decorum felt really important to continue that story so this work feels like a jumping off point from what Sekai was looking at. That conversation really struck me. The myth of Cassiopeia having to sacrifice her daughter to Poseidon because of her supposed arrogance and vanity seemed to me such a misogynistic myth. Let this woman enjoy her beauty, go with it. It still felt very relevant because taking pleasure in your wildness, in your joy, really trying to find joy and pleasure in just being yourself. I'm really sad that's still an issue because of misogyny but I think that it is, so creating this work with the juxtaposition of the constellation of Cassiopeia in the marble hall with those astrological symbols felt like an interesting way to create a subtle intervention on how we think about or how we regard or feel about our gender roles. It's still such a huge problem and I just feel really sad we're just still talking about it, frankly.

The tapestries became a really interesting way to think about pleasure, they were so pleasurable to make, I loved making them, the feeling of the sensuality of making and really just being at home with that. The different layering of it, there's a lot of feelings in this. It's about the recollection of feeling. When I made this work my memories of the feeling of breaking the seal of liquidity and of the water are very much informing the different shapes and formations that these women are held in. For me, they're very much celestial forms but they're also mortal forms so I wanted there to be these different gestures with the little stars but also to really own that pleasure, that pleasure in being, and I don't think we talk about that enough, the pleasure in being wild and being savage and being a baddie. I think we need to own that a bit more.

SCS: Or a seal or a whale!

AW: Or a seal or a whale!

SCS: We spoke of the importance of the symbolism of doors as portals between life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, and places of transition and memory. The doorway or portal is a numinous place rich in protective rituals. It stands between here and there. Looking at those works I'm particularly moved; I wondered if you could talk us through the various doors and the ritualistic approach you've taken with some of the works.

AW: When I was talking with Paul we spoke a lot about the Blue Economy on Bute and the role of Mount Stuart Trust in caretaking that and making sure the waterways are very protected, as best they can be. Living in this time of climate catastrophe it's really important that this is at the forefront of the work. When thinking about access; Barbados is a very unusual island because there are no private beaches, you can walk through a fancy hotel to get to a beach, you can always access a waterway. Now, we've got rising seawaters, rising waters everywhere, storms in abundance, it's really important, whilst these are portals, to ground them in this conversation. Thinking about the sandbags, to create these protective models for these spaces of potential fugitivity that you can access through the portals. There are these different layers of being in

transit but also the potential for these portals on a different level. When we first started talking about excavation – I loved going to see the standing stones, they were such potent objects but also thinking about how little we know about them. Everyone likes to have these explanations for everything but what happens when you release that accepted knowledge and allow yourself to think about different knowledges, which are generally indigenous knowledges, that have been completely swept away. I loved spending time there and seeing how people interacted with the standing stones and made their own little weird interventions, like leaving coins, weird interruptions or graffiti that just now become part of the standing stone. How they're kept upright, there are these metal poles or stakes.

SCS: Supports?

AW: Yes, supports and how they are bolstered. That conversation on how they're preserved but also just allowed to be in the landscape and erode and change and shift felt like something I wanted to bring into these portals. Maybe there's some magical way where if we all touch them at a particular point, we'll end up somewhere different. Whether it's a different point of thought, a different awakening, a different point of unlearning, there is that magical potential for them.

The first doorway when you enter it from the main entrance, the ante-hall, that's the first pathway and it's a very narrow door. Picking the doors was very important, we spent quite a bit of time at this great architectural salvage yard. That first door has the veve carved into it with gold leaf and it's almost like a petition to have entry and you need to do the sacred meditation to be able enter into these sacred spaces. That door is the only one that's ajar, suggesting something has already been released and there's a little nod to a figure coming through with the cast ear that also creates these breaks in all the verticals. On the reverse there's this small painting, an intimate miniature, of this masquerade figure. It's a motif that pops up a lot in my work, it's the first performance I ever did as a child that I was really into; it's a Caribbean or Barbadian folk figure called Shaggy Bear in Barbados, in Jamaica it's Pitchy Patchy, it crops up all over the Caribbean. It's this very free figure, that just dances and really enjoys the movement of its body, doing forward rolls, I loved performing as this character. It also really has potential as a creolised form because in many cultures a similar figure will emerge. I wanted there to be this very specific layering with the veve and with this painting to suggest there's something waiting behind that portal, either that you have to petition to or that is granting you entry. Keeping that door cracked open is about the suggestion that there's an invitation granting you entry into the space and also that certain entities or energies might be escaping.

The one on the right which has the cast foot, that one is kind of my favourite, because in thinking about these portals and doors we're back to thinking about the barriers and islands and waterways and who's allowed to have entry. It's a foot in the suggestion of a dance, it's on a flat foot but it's not doing a full kick, it's a dancing foot. I like that there would be this delicacy between force and the pleasure in movement; the pleasure is important too because sometimes pleasure is your greatest resistance, finding pleasure in the catastrophe of our times is a huge point of resistance. With that work, I wanted to allude to the idea of piercing skins. The glass panels have got this very rich, pink gel on them and the markings on the glass look so cellular and skin-like

so again thinking about skin and piercing skin, piercing borders, felt like another memory, another entry point.

The final door, which is the one with the bells – I had a wonderful art student help me make the beautiful rope knotwork. I love knots and I'm obsessed with this book the *Ashley Book of Knots*, it's a really big, fat book all about knots and the symbolism of knots. Katie, the artist, made this beautiful assortment of knots; but it also suggests broken industries because none of them are full nets, they're broken nets, but also, they were never meant to capture anything, they're a bit impotent, they can't quite do what they're supposed to. Having them in conversation with those bells, the bells are the kind of bells you would have had here, which speaks to the hidden labour that's going on beneath the surface, but they could also be a form of alarm bells. This door, which I absolutely loved beating, I had a giant mallet and did lots of bashing through doorways, which on a psychic level felt great. It's that impulse, as someone who has lived in Scotland or the UK most of my life but is still very much Barbadian, thinking about breaking through doorways, there is something very potent in that for me. To create these different pathways, there's no specific pathway, you can just go through them at will, wherever you feel drawn to. Each one, they are individual, they do have individual titles I've been working on, since I've been here, adding more gestures to them.

SCS: It's a very potent space, I find, your work in the hall.

Moving back to the chattel house-bothy, it is also frankly ironic sitting next to the pile that is Mount Stuart. Chattel houses were designed to be moved, reflecting issues around land ownership. Mount Stuart is firmly planted in a large estate of land which, before the formation of the charitable trust in 1989 was owned over generations by one family.

An extra level of irony is that the 4<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Bute did consider selling Mount Stuart, not in situ, but as a work to be dismantled and moved elsewhere.

AW: Best artwork ever!

SCS: We know this as we found the sale particulars in the archives. Clearly there were no takers!

[Laughter]

SCS: Bute lies in the trading waterway of the Firth of Clyde which flows into the historically merchant city of Glasgow which was a main hub of oceanic trade such as tobacco and sugar, bringing the conversation into the realms of the Atlantic economy and the legacies of slavery. The series of three screen prints in the upstairs gallery is named *What Sound Does The Black Atlantic Make?* Paul Gilroy refers to The Black Atlantic as a transcultural international formation, and he has written about specific forms of double consciousness, (or occupying a space of resistance between binary discourses) - are these ideas reflected in the works here?

AW: Definitely. When I first read Paul Gilroy that idea of sonic echoes, call and response, really sat with me and in particular with those prints, it's a very strong nod

to Gilroy's work, but they came from a very different body of research. It's resolved most here, [you and I] had a conversation about work being fixed and how challenging I am because work is not often that fixed, it can always alter a little bit.

When I was doing that research, I was looking at Edinburgh Printmakers and their new site, which was once the North British Rubber Company, which is the most weird phrase, that Edinburgh is called North Britain anyway, that's just weird. The archive was situated in Dumfries, and we met with the archivist and he was talking about different materials and how he'd had to salvage them. He had this phrase, and I'm always curious about different phrases and how familiar they are, he used this phrase 'gutties' to describe this type of rubber. It seemed incredibly localised in this particular part of the world, few people on the West Coast seemed to know what it meant. 'Gutties' are plimsols, like rubber soled, or you can use the word for golf balls; it's this quite niche word and I recognised it immediately because one of the things I used to play with as a kid was a 'gutter-perk', which is like a slingshot. This really strange word has found its way to Barbados - what sonic echo is that doing? – and the performance of pulling a slingshot is almost like sending out an echo, how it reverberates into the air.

The screenprints are of many layers and I wrote out the phrase *What sound does the Black Atlantic make?* using my very weird font and had that made out of Perspex. So, there's many layers and maybe that's when I first started thinking about excavation, what's hiding, behind these skins. It bears images of these broken catapults. I met this great maker in Barbados who just obsessively made them. He made them for women, very specifically, because of the abundance of monkeys in suburban Barbados. The monkeys were getting so familiar with living there that they were trying to get in your windows, interested in your car. In my home back in Barbados they are always on my roof, you can hear the sound of them at night. He thought women were feeling endangered by them, so he made all these catapults for them in the form of joysticks, guns, lots of things. He gave me a bunch of them, and I carried them around with me, not knowing what I was going to do with them, and the rubber kept on breaking, it would wear away, again these objects were becoming a bit impotent, a bit useless. I wanted to bring them in with these tuning forks and different shakers. There's something interesting when objects stop having their use, what happens when they're no longer useful and just become a really magnetic, interesting object. I'm a complete hoarder so I carried them around with me and it felt interesting having this broken voice, the voice is broken in the catapult, but the tuning fork is available to it to make a different vibration, I think they're really well placed in that hallway looking down on to the different portals but also leading into the final portal in the observatory.

SCS: Maybe we can talk about the final portal in the Conservatory which almost acts as a link between the works in the house and the chattel house.

AW: This was the one that I knew what it was going to look like straightaway, this is how it was from the get-go. I knew I wanted it to be flat on the ground, I knew it needed to have these shells that looked like they were growing on this wood. Whether it was a raft or a portal – *As above, so below* – this portal is really literally between worlds. I found it incredibly grounding to have it there in this place where historically one of your ancestors would have been looking at the stars, and the stars as a source of indigenous knowledge we don't rely on as much now has always been really

captivating. This door becomes a new way of thinking about navigation whether it's to another realm, or whether it's literally a raft, again thinking about migration and all the lives that are lost. The ropes beneath, begin to speak about captivity, but the key is also suggesting it's there for you and you can open it. The key was a final addition, I was very happy when that was found.

SCS: We had to excavate a key.

AW: That was the one - I knew. Everything else kind of came in the studio.

SCS: Finally let us focus on your beautiful self-portrait bust which is situated in the entrance to the house. It replaces a bust of Christ commissioned by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Bute and made by Black/First Nation US sculptor Edmonia Lewis, dated 1860. It is currently out on loan to the Tate, leaving an empty plinth on which your bust now sits. The work is named *Remembering Wildfire*, Wildfire being Lewis's First Nation name. Could you talk to us about the inspiration behind your work, I know the bust has had a previous life which has now culminated in it being an integral part of this exhibition, and why it is important to hold the space normally held by Lewis's work.

AW: When I was over here filming with Sekai Machache, she was telling me about Edmonia Lewis because you had shared with her a bit about Edmonia's life and all the trials and tribulations of being a Black artist in that particular time period. Edmonia experienced really violent racism and was often fearing for her life as a practicing artist in the US. That name 'Wildfire' – I thought, how incredibly potent is that, that proud name for you to own your wildness, your fire and how she suffered for it in that time. The mould of the bust has been worked on for a long time in different incarnations, made out of wax and made out of soap. This is my favourite version. Thinking again about this idea of wildness, embracing that wildness and really honouring it, and this incredibly legendary, vanguard sculptor just felt like a really important. It's not a memorial, but a gesture to her and to her memory. It's a real honour to show this bust in the place where her work is usually shown. We don't have that many images of Black women as sculptors. In some ways we're all part of her genealogy, I think of her as a distant ancestor, it's interesting being able to represent myself through her legacy. Hopefully it becomes this invitation as you enter Mount Stuart to think about who's normally missing, in the backdrop, we're used to seeing these classical, white marble statues of people we don't even really know anymore. That juxtaposition is really important.

SCS: You're right and if you walk further on into the ante-hall there are a raft of those sort of historical busts.

On an ending note, what are your future plans? You have mentioned some projects in the US? And has this project seeded any concepts for future work?

AW: Definitely, it's really interesting when you see the work in its fullness because I don't always work this large, you only really see the work in situ and then it changes. Also, the building functions as a really active space and a space for gatherings and tours, it was really important to think about the environment the work was going to be housed in which led to some really interesting experiments. The work is all on wheels, I've never done that before, and it's become really fundamental to how the work

operates with people because it suggests performance, an idea of theatricality but also, I like to imagine in some science fiction movie they'd be used and just carried about with people as their luggage to go travel somewhere. I really want to do a performance with them.

SCS: Which would be great.

AW: Doing a performance and creating these sonic echoes in that space would feel really special. That's what I hope is next.

SCS: Let's think about that.

Thank you, Alberta, as ever so generous. I'd like to open up to the room for questions.

Q1 –

TW: I'm particularly fascinated by the sculptures and structures that you've used to hold the doors and it's interesting to talk about the foot as a dance step because I saw it as not a force thing when I looked at it. I did wonder if you'd put the glass in because it's really particular, really mottled. I just wondered if you could talk about the colours and the degradation of the colours because when I see them - the way you've made them - it seems like they could travel. This [Mount Stuart] could not be here, and they could be here in the landscape, it's like a weird mirage of all this around it. It's like the portals existed more solidly than everything else and when Sophie mentioned this house could be taken down, I could imagine that this is just a piece of land with these portals on it.

AW: In some ways they feel really formal compared to a lot of my work and you know how much I hate having things on the wall and I wanted them to feel bodily, there's a real sense of bodily-ness in the work because it is a doorway that we can all potentially walk through. They were all made deliberately to feel almost like you're being dwarfed by them, it's my version of Stonehenge. The colours were chosen very deliberately, when we chose the door, we were very fortunate the panels were already with it and I needed the panels, it was the main reason to pick that door. And I do love a ready-made, what you can do with a ready-made and how you then start playing with that. The dollies, or guillotines as I sometimes think of them, because they do really look like guillotines when the doors aren't on them, I knew I wanted some of them to be giving way, have that sense of ancientness or degradation, they're being shored up or bolstered by these wooden structures - an echo to the standing stones. The colours: I love a gradient, but it was also a nod to the house, that colour scheme on the wood would reflect, almost give that power of a portal to the house. The green and yellow and the gradient falls into my knowledge of Caribbean buildings - that gradient is used so much, in different poster designs on the street. I like thinking about the outside world when I think about my work.

TW: I think the ear's really interesting...

AW: I love the ear. The body needs to be implied sometimes or you can't see yourself in the conversation. The foot, I didn't want it to feel too – I wanted it to be doing what you didn't think it was going to. I knew it could be read as a kick of absolute force. I



didn't want it to have that, the tension in it is a dancing foot, so it's someone maybe literally dancing up the door.

TW: But they maybe could be on some of the other structures too. It feels like that when you see it and you see the broken door, you feel the presence of somebody moving.

AW: I think that's also the spectral nature of the work and the unknown which I'm really curious about. There are ghosts everywhere.

Q2 –

MG: This happened yesterday down at the bothy, and I honestly don't know if it was you or somebody else, but we have these little notebooks and pencils, and somebody wrote in all of them 'what is the invitation?'

AW: So weird. Absolutely nothing to do with me.

SCS: A ghost?

AW: Maybe, who knows, some ancestor, Queen Charlotte!

But that's the kind of thing that you want, in making and thinking about the bothy. Whenever I do workshops, the best gift is when I stop running the workshop and the folks in the workshop take control and it becomes what they want it to do or what they need it to do. So, I think that's a huge success.

MG: We had some lovely drawings as well.

AW: The bothy is such a pleasurable object, it's a pleasurable invitation, it's also meant to have a casual use as well. It was really striking to me installing at different times of day how folks would just come on to the land. On the Thursday night there were those boys who came up playing football and soon it was a café when we put in the cups and things, which was great. It is those moments that aren't scripted which is what it was made for. It will be available for folks if they're just on a walk to go and shelter in if it starts raining or if they just want to sit down for a minute, you have got an awful lot of benches which I really appreciate, but it's nice to have a quiet space for all sorts of different purposes.

SCS: It was really fun to install.

AW: It was great.

SCS: Playing house!

AW: Morven was the model for the hands.

Q3 –

CHR: Your work is so richly layered, detailed, so many embellishments and really invites a second look, a third look, a hundred looks and that's also true of Mount Stuart so I wondered how you thought about, when developing the work, how your work would sit in this absolutely amazingly embellished building because I find the work to be really complementary to the space but so vivid and almost glowing within it.

AW: In some ways I really love the sensibility of the building so much, it's very much in keeping with my taste, I love the ornamentation, I'm such a maximalist. Before I started squatting here, we spoke about editing the work and how you know when it's ready to start editing back the work and as an artist it's a really interesting idea for a maximalist like me because I do try to edit things back. The presence of Mount Stuart, the history of Mount Stuart and all the questions it asks. In particular about how the bothy will be here for two years, I just don't know and it's a bit of an experiment.

Thinking about the works in the hall, just being in that space and thinking about the curiosity of other worlds, that the architect and designer and dreamer of this building thought about, felt really complimentary to where I was because I'm always thinking about other worlds and what's possible, what kind of world we would build - all of us together - grounded in our power, could build. Creating this portal, that fortunately does really glow and bring a new layer of light to the Marble Hall, and how to create light in that space and work with the environment. I wanted it to feel very natural here and not necessarily in opposition, because then that creates a lot of stress for the audience as well. I want it to feel like the work is asking questions but there's a flow - different aesthetics and conceptual decisions that go into it, - but it has to feel like it fits to a point.

Q4 –

JC: You described yourself as a maximalist and your work in this exhibition, there's material process, found objects, narratives, colour, a whole range of things that go into it, not just the materials but the processes behind the work are various. Is there something amongst all those processes, and in other work there's writing and film, that you would describe as being the origin of the work or are these all sort of plates that move in relation to each other and take on different importance. Is there a core practice.

AW: I really think it's the idea of excavation. I've always loved going on walks and seeing what's revealed in the landscape or on the land but also beneath the water. The idea of thinking in layers - with the body being in conversation with those layers - because it's about the experience of being with the work. The work wouldn't exist without you being here with it. For me, when I think about the different projects I do it is about thinking how I can experiment, I don't want to keep on doing the same thing, I'd get really bored, so actually taking a risk. This work felt really risky, to make something that's very different from my usual practice but you need to go with that, you need to trust. It's always about excavating something. Through a lot of my film works especially that layering is really intentional, the labour and glitching, because when I think about the tufted works, seeing the reverse, seeing the workings out of the loose threads, of the hanging bits, I forgot a needle in there on Thursday, Morven had

to remind me. Those workings out are really present, and this is also the case in my films, they're all a collage, multi-layered, of multi-perspectives. I think the lens of collage through the thought of excavation is really where I want to be.

VR: You talk very poetically about your work. A lot of thought connections coming together. I was thinking about how we were talking about our mothers collecting rich fabrics, we've never spoken before but it's interesting some of these connections.

AW: Seeing my mum make things, in her bed, at the kitchen table and the ease with which she did that, she didn't need a studio. How available it was to me as well, it's so natural, I'm always stealing her cloth and she's stealing my cloth. I always try to find a bit from home, there's always something that's come from home even a little part of me and how I understand being. When I grew up, the house we lived in was this old, really big, beautiful chattel house in this family compound. It's my favourite house. I was a wild child, me and my sister were always in the fields, and I used to collect snails. There was a joke I only had dead pets, filling up my bedroom with jars. So, I had to put the little snail [on the portal work] to recollect that childhood self. The doors in my house were very like the doors that were used here. That sense of doing what you know, on that gut level, not having a hierarchy of making is very much built in to my thought process.

[Applause]