



Artcore



Artcore  
Gallery



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ETHICAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

# UNTITLED

DRAWING AS MARKMAKING





# CONTENTS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### 4

#### INTRODUCTION

*An Introduction to Artcore as a platform for emerging and talented artists.*

### 6

#### UNTITLED RESIDENCY

*A glimpse into the residency and the importance of the medium of drawing in the contemporary art world.*

### 8

#### MEET THE ARTISTS

*Emily Bottomer and Nicki Dennett*

### 10

#### EMILY BOTTOMER

### 20

#### NICKI DENNETT

#### UNTITLED EXHIBITION

*June 2023*



# Artcore

Artcore is an international centre for contemporary art and creativity based in Derby, UK and home to Artcore Gallery, studios and workspaces as well as a shop and café. A vibrant hub for commissioning, production, presentation, and debate, we offer opportunities for diverse audiences to engage directly with creative practices through participation and discussion. We believe that contemporary art and creativity are central to the development of people and places.

Over 25 years we have developed links all over the world, building a global creative community that helps us support aspiring artists in the contemporary art world.





## Artcore Residencies

We have an extensive exhibition and residency programme which helps support early, mid-career and established artists to create work which deals with pressing social, political and environmental issues. The artists are selected following an open call and application process. Artist-residents are given the time, space, freedom and financial and mentoring support to create new work and focus on their artistic development.

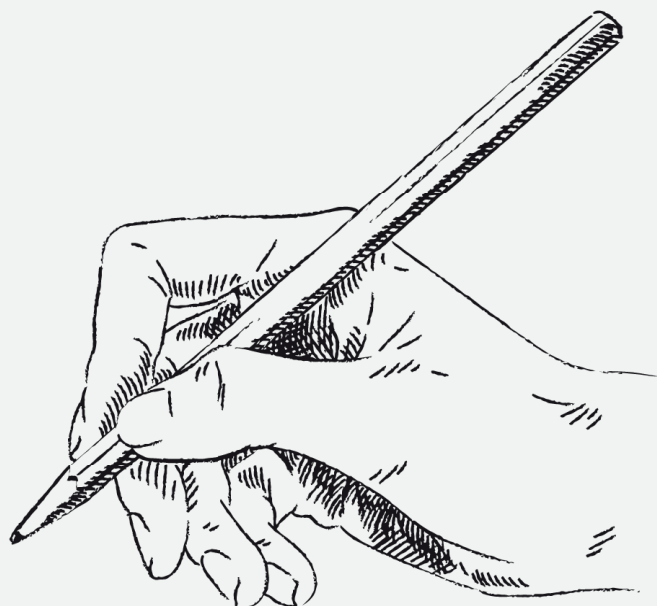
Each year we host thematic Residencies for emerging artists in the East Midlands, providing them with a studio space, a bursary and curatorial support to help them develop professionally and artistically.

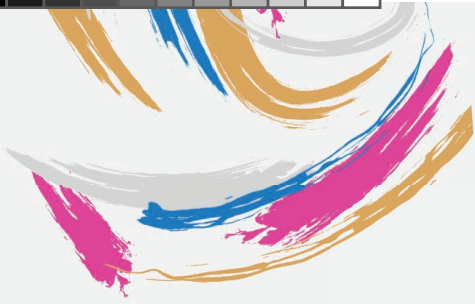
Through our residencies we aim to uphold art as a vital pillar of culture, providing a dialogue on current issues as well as enabling the expression, preservation, and understanding of diverse cultural identities, especially in Derby.



## Untitled Residency

Artcore 'Untitled' residency was an opportunity for artists and creative practitioners looking to hone their skills in drawing. Most drawings start from preliminary sketches, or mark-making to put down the ideas in our head onto paper. These however are not the final work and so are untitled recordings of the thinking process, hence 'Untitled'. We wanted artists to reflect on the role of the drawing medium, in their individual practices as well as the larger world today. The role of drawing need to be assessed especially in the post-pandemic context as our ways of creating have changed with the rise of AI generative art and digital mediums. We question, what does it mean to draw?





## Drawing as mark-making

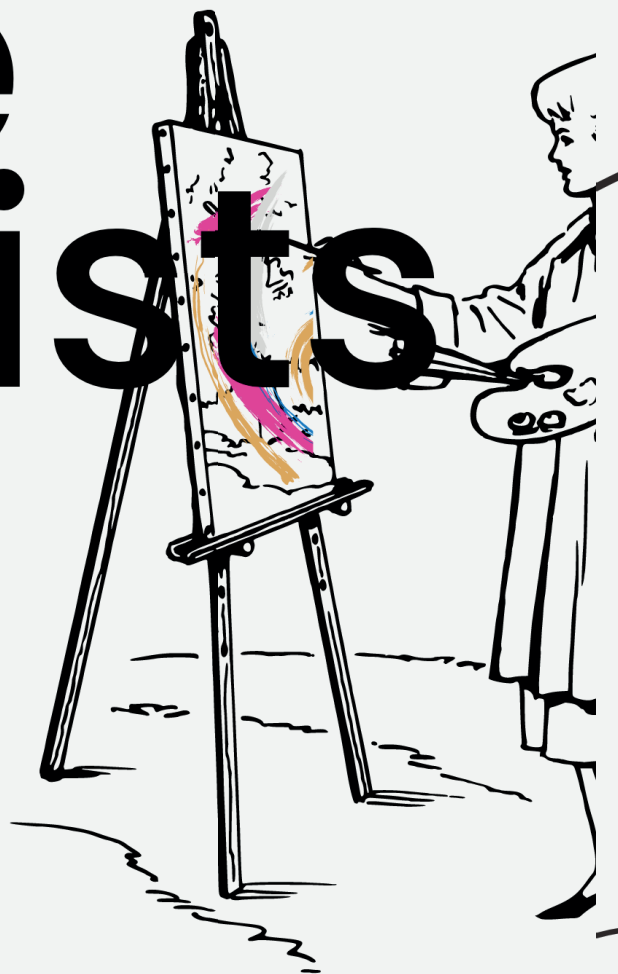
As human beings, we have always been involved in mark-making; traditionally, ritualistically, as a means of recording, expressing as well as communicating with each other. Drawings, be it on the floor, wall, cave, paper or canvas are everywhere. However, they are rarely thought of as works of art. The history of drawing too encompasses drawing as a technique, as secondary to creating the final artwork—a finished painting, sculpture, fresco or manuscript. A marker of artistic ability, drawing was an intermediate practice or a process of unfolding that always pointed to a future.

The advent of modernism and postmodernism however, changed the way artists perceived the technique. Drawing finally became a medium in its own right and was valued for its immense potential and ability to aid in experimentation, in the face of new media, technologies and concerns.

This residency has acted as a testing ground to reflect on the medium of drawing today, both in contemporary art practice and the larger world.



# meet the artists

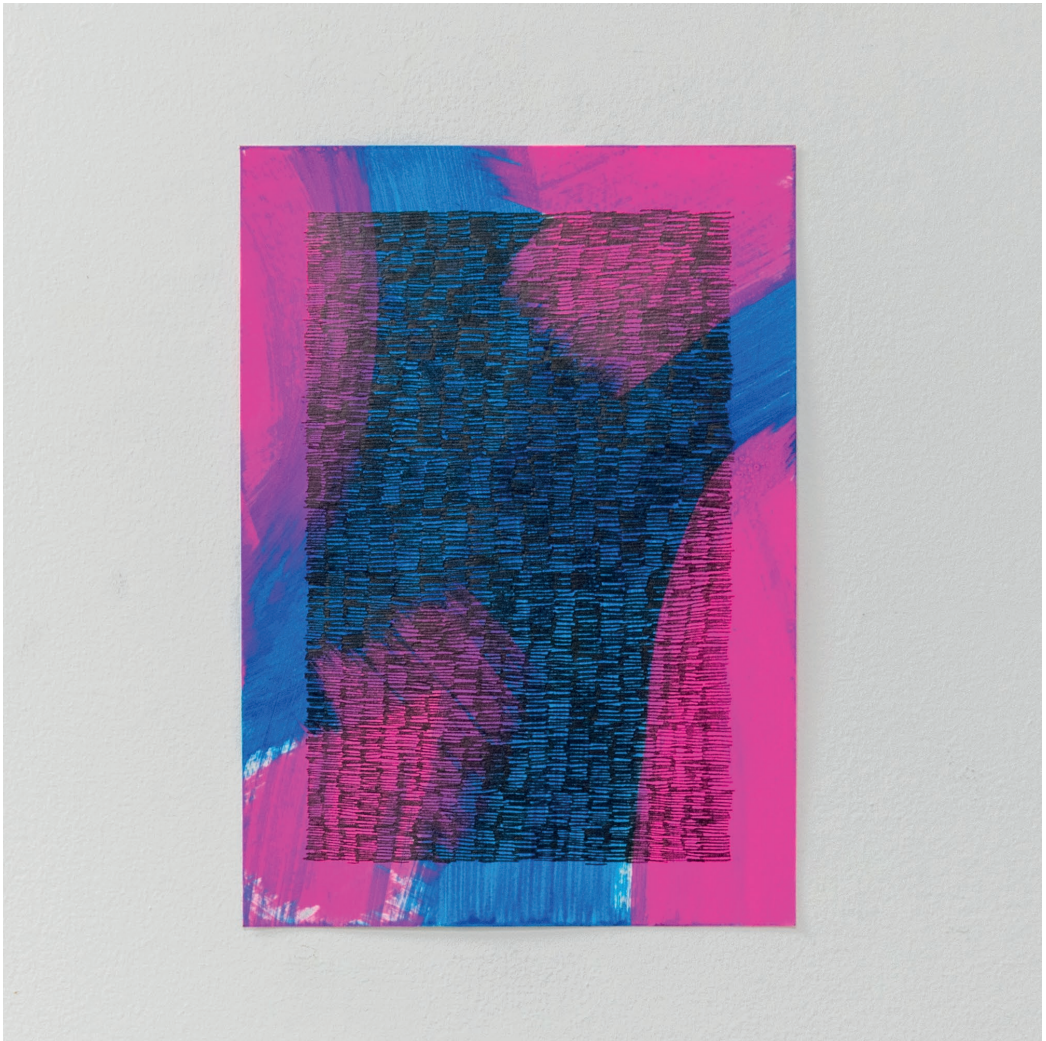




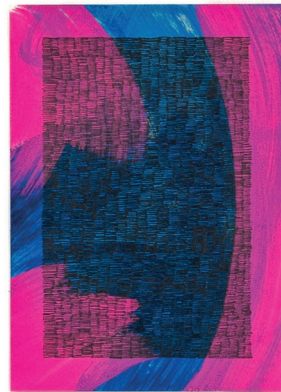
Emily Bottomer



Nicki Dennett

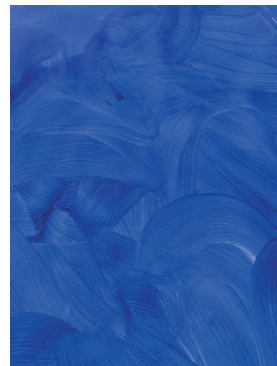


*Graftor I, 2023, Graphite and Acrylic on paper, 21 x 29.7cm*



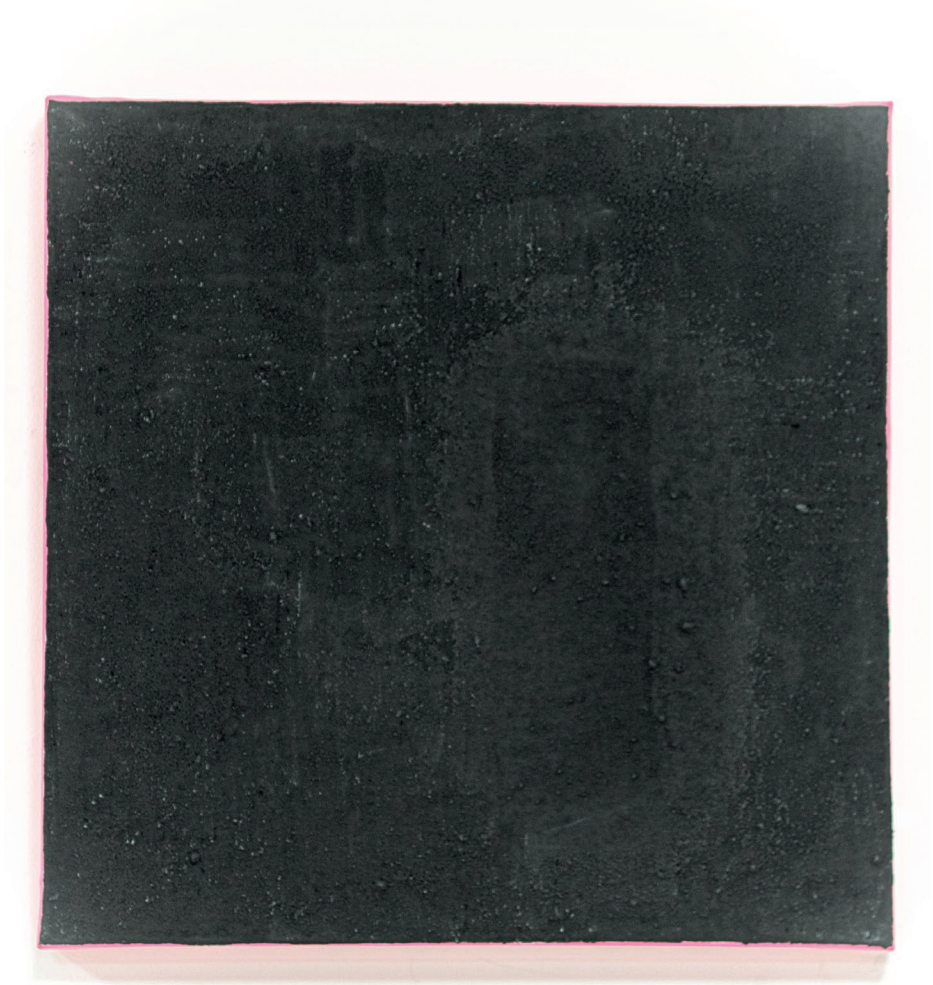
## EMILY BOTTOMER

Through her ongoing practice, artist Emily Bottomer explores the complexities of her identity and past experiences as a working-class British woman who grew up in a mixed Christian setting. Using techniques that are both laborious and time intensive, her processes are equally as important as the works she produces. With graphite, charcoal and paints she creates work that explores shadow and darkness in the presence of vivid and luminous colours.





*Divided (diptych), Acrylic and Graphite on paper*



*Untitled, 2023, Graphite and Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 40 cm*



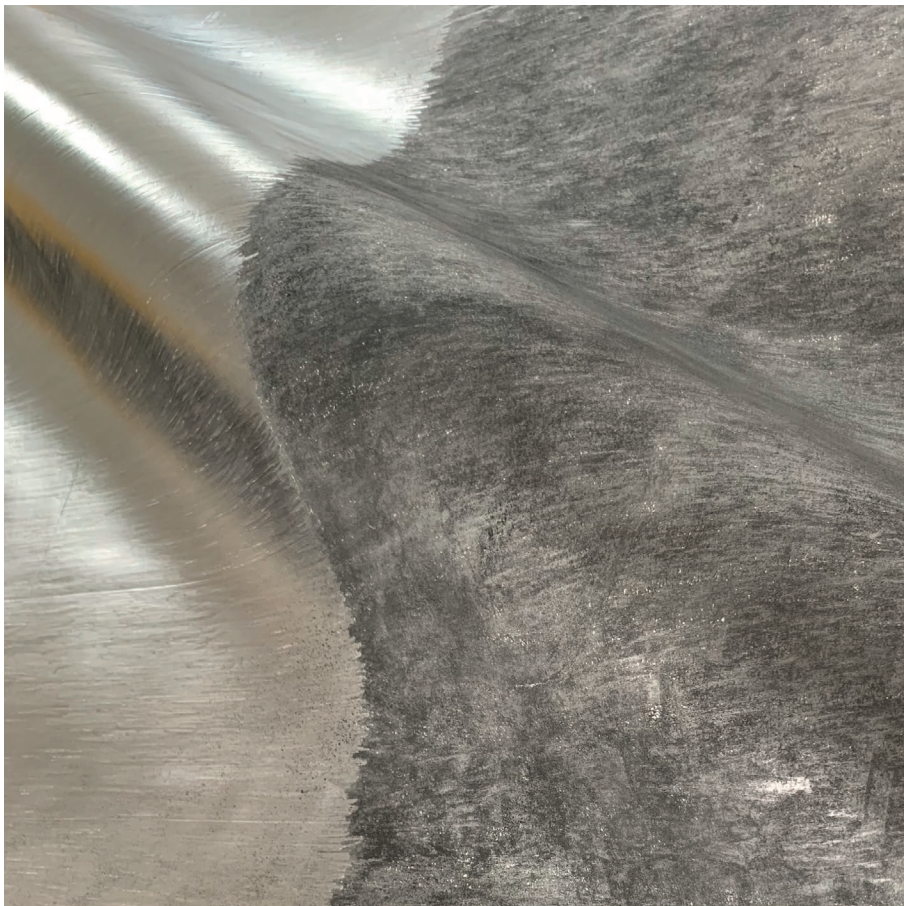
In her artistic journey, Emily finds herself captivated by two major inspirations that shape her current body of work. The first source is the Möbius strip, a unique three-dimensional shape with only one side. If you were to place your finger on one of its sides and trace it along, you could do so for an eternity. Discovered by two German Mathematicians 1858, the non-orientable continuum has been Bottomer's recent fascination. She quotes,

"I've always been drawn to the grey areas throughout art, the space between two-dimensional and three-dimensional, between a painting and a drawing, and so on."

The second inspiration stems from the Greek myth of Sisyphus, a tale of eternal punishment where a man is condemned to endlessly roll a boulder up a mountain, only to witness it roll back down for him to begin again. Philosophers have contemplated the story's reflection of the repetitive nature of the human condition. Despite its seemingly bleak implications, Emily finds joy in the day-to-day repetitions of life and aims to bring this joy into focus through her work.



*20 minute Möbius, 2023, Graphite on paper*

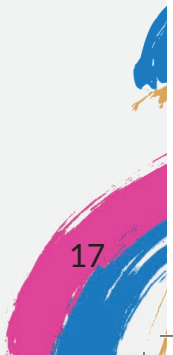


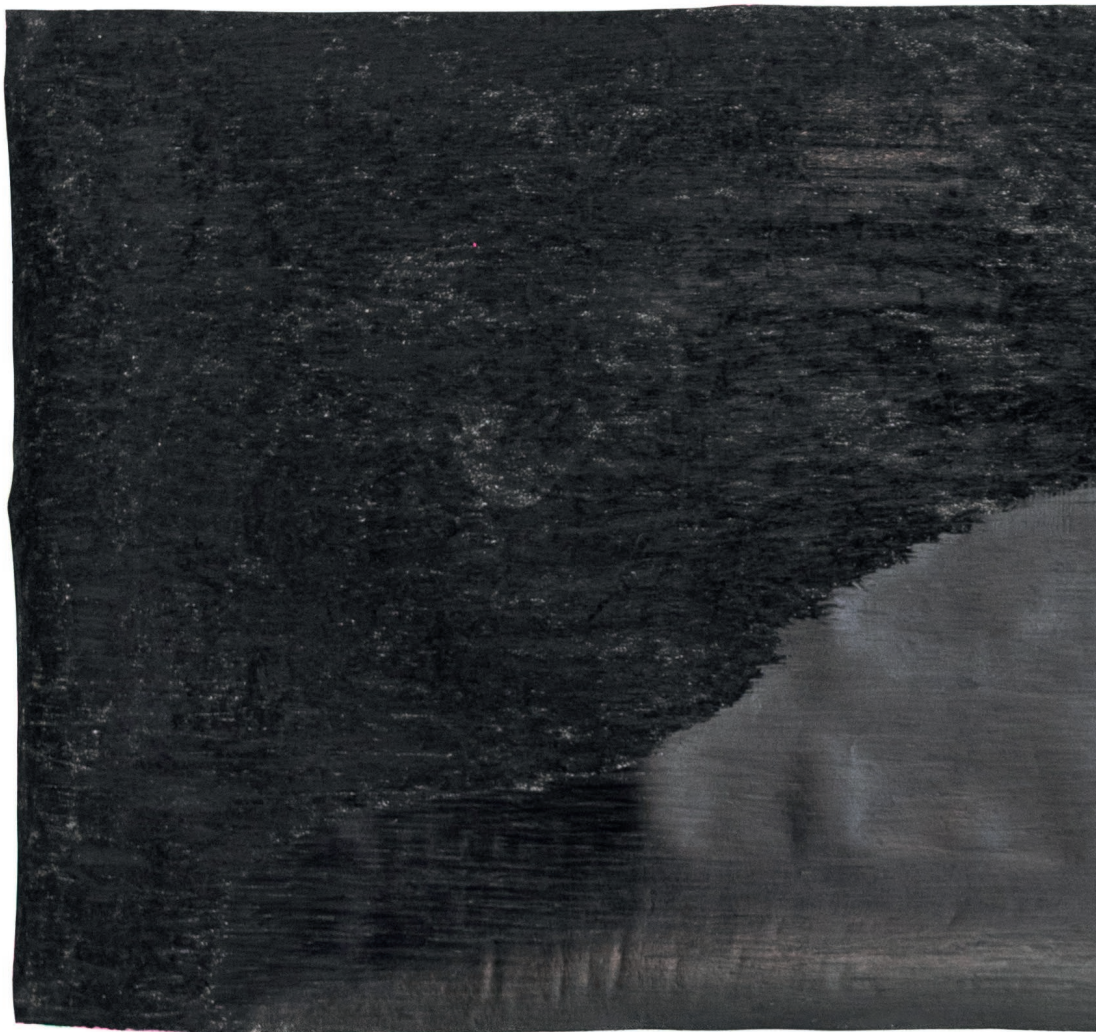
*Close up of Möbius, 2023, Graphite and  
Acrylic on paper, 150 x 750 cm*

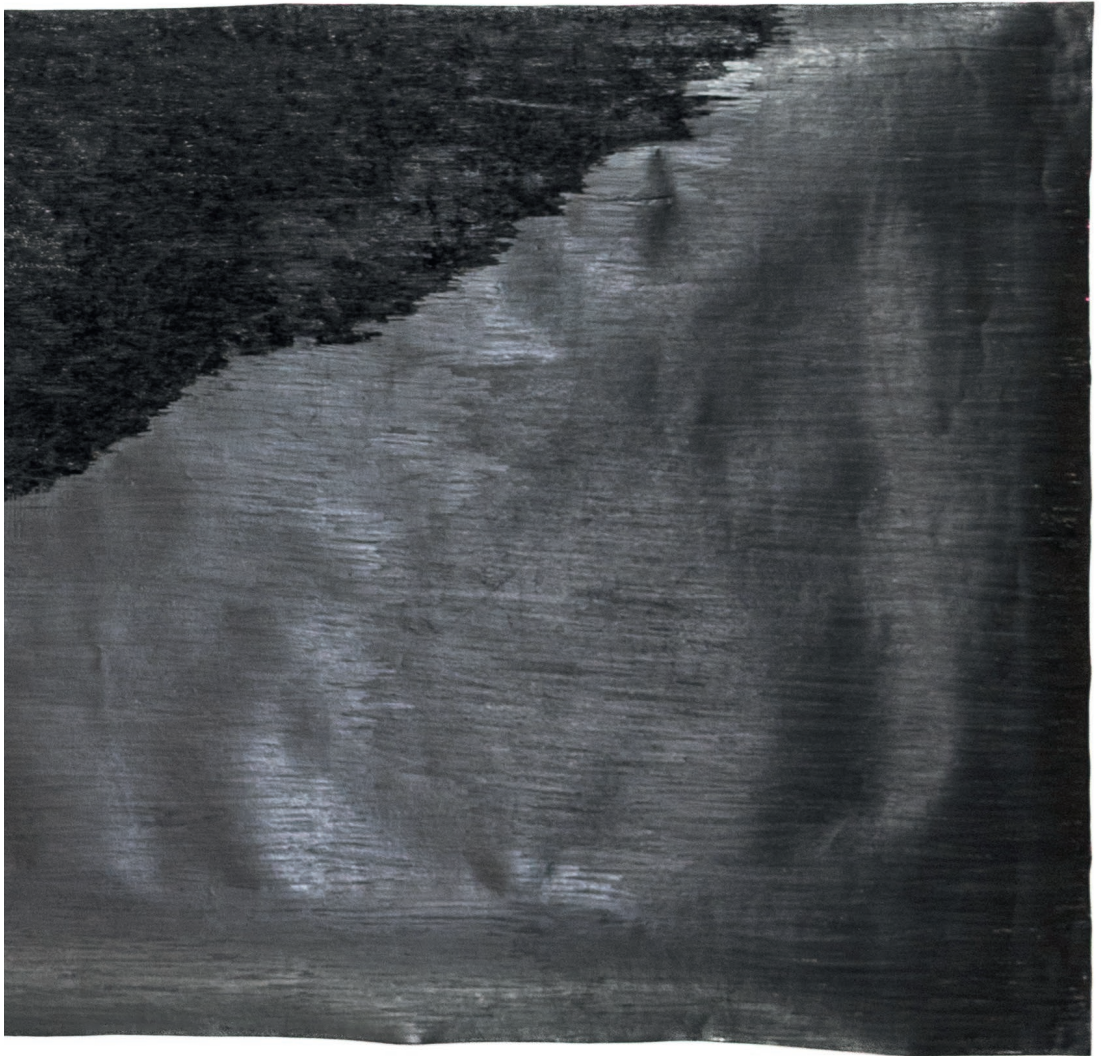


At first sight Emily Bottomer large-scale graphite drawings have a sombre, almost ominous presence. Their dark surfaces, made up of a long and slow accretion of layered drawn lines made with graphite and charcoal, create a highly finished surface that appears to be made of metal, or some other highly polished material. But the surfaces transform as the viewer approaches; the dense graphite both absorbs and reflects light, and what appeared to be hard and cold, unwieldy even, begins to take on the quality of cloth. The slight curl of the paper and its torn edges suggest a softness or 'give' – the capacity to bend or alter in shape under pressure – and hints at the corporeal presence of the artist – the agency of the hand and the body as she makes the drawing.

TIM SHORE  
Artist & Mentor







*Rift II, 2023, Graphite and Acrylic on paper*



## NICKI DENNETT

Nicki Dennett's art is deeply rooted in a connection to nature, inspired from changing seasons, patterns and textures of the landscape, and the way light falls on surfaces. The use of colour is also a prominent feature, with bold, bright hues that capture the energy and vitality of the natural world. Her work resonates with viewers of all ages and backgrounds, offering a unique perspective on the world around us. Whether depicting the beauty of nature or the complexity of human emotion, her work is a celebration of life, energy, and creativity.





*Journey to the Cove, 2023, Dye, Ink, Bleach and Stitch*  
148mm x 210mm

Often inspired by her journeys through landscape, Nicki Dennett focuses on the idea of mark-making as a method of documentation. She experiments with various substances to make ink, such as dandelions, coffee, seaweed and more. The process of how the paper reacts to these substances fascinates her even leading to “happy accidents”. In her work she experimented with both dyes and paints, investigating how they react when bleach is added. For Dennett, experimentation is part of the “play” of the mark-making process. Dennett’s work takes the viewer through a promenade of her memories through nature as if though a map that stretches along the length of the paper.



Gwbert Cove, 2023, Seaweed ink,  
Walnut Ink, Sublimation, Stitch  
and ink, 105 x 148mm

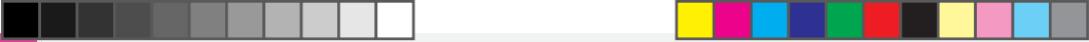




*Esplanade; a map from the campsite to the beach (Section I)*  
Fabric dyes, Walnut ink, Bleach, Ink, Pencil







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