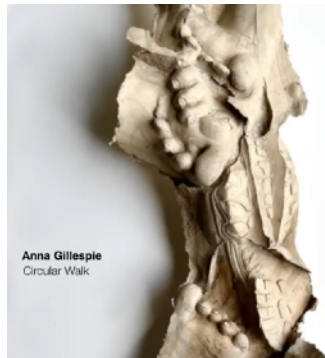


Friedrich Nietzsche **'Do not believe any idea that was not born in the open air and of free movement.'** Martin Holman takes a tour of **Wander\_Land**

Landscape and wandering are as integral to Tremeneheere's history as it is to this exhibition. First glimpsed near the entrance and continuing into the gardens themselves is St Michael's Way. The route led pilgrims on foot from Ireland and the West Country into a network of paths finishing at Santiago de Compostela, north-western Spain, where tradition maintains that the remains of St James, the first of Jesus' disciples to be martyred, were taken from Jerusalem.

A sense of that route is suggested by 'A Millesimus of St Michael's Way' staked out on open ground beyond the gallery. **Suzanne Blank Redstone's** sequence of poles condense the route into a symbolic section, identified by way markers colour-coded in a criss-crossed, painterly way, for the different types of highway met on the journey. The pilgrims probably inherited their north-south trail across Cornwall from generations of pre-Christian travellers. That possibility enables the theme of wandering in this show to span a broad arc in time – from ancient times to touch the present because the pilgrim's way is still followed.



Man's history is registered in walking. The accumulation of footprints in **Anna Gillespie's** works evokes the remorseless rhythm of feet on the earth's surface over centuries of moving forward in anticipation of a better life. What lies ahead has also been unpredictable: hopes for sanctuary, spiritual fulfilment, a secure future have often been entrusted to a higher power; whether it is God or a lottery win. In that respect, many people remain pilgrims. Gillespie casts footprints in plaster to symbolise this remorseless trajectory across generations, modelling them into lines and a circle, basic forms that carry meanings as diverse as onward passage and a halt for dance.

It is easy to imagine pilgrims engaged in both activities. Countless legends grew up about the journey to Spain and, of course, stories were embroidered upon and layered with fresh interpretations as centuries passed. Stories and their telling boost confidence, build community and pass the time. **Dallas Collins** alludes to one of these legends in 'La Piedra'. The rock-like form surmounting the steel pylon bears the imprint of a figure. It recalls the myth that, on arrival in Spain, St James's body left its mark on the stone where it first lay. Collins perceives that rock as a gold and rainbow-toned object; it is raised overhead as a marker to future travellers. It turns on a pivot like a compass activated by the elements.

The historical demands of what might now be called 'endurance' wandering seem embodied in **David Worthington's** marble and limestone 'Stack'. Reminiscent of ancient signs set into the

landscape as way markers, its bold silhouette and confident presence underscore its visibility from a distance. Way markers were usually constructed from local materials that weathered both the inexorability of time and an uneven climate, reminding travellers to be mindful of both.

The concept of the way marker started Worthington's own artistic journey towards finding a shape to fit his idea. For **Rebecca Newnham**, the land itself gave her four panels their appearance. The direct transposition of place into object is contained within the subtle colour variations from panel to panel. Her 'Sacred Water Series' comes from mixing into the other media constituting each piece the water Newnham collected from four locations between Uny near Lelant to the Red River, or Amal, at Marazion known as 'sacred wells'. Pilgrims would have known these sources and drawn water to sustain life and faith on the journey. The possibilities of making art arise from the mineral deposits, such as oxides of iron, that subtly colour the water itself. Transient patterns of light dart across the shaped glass surface of these works, bringing into the gallery sensations known from reflections on water as currents course into pools or down rivers.

The striding figure by **Ian Marlow** establishes a more direct connection with the long road. Using the transparency of glass, this artist implies the temporal scope of an expedition. Seen on both flanks, the figure sets out for the shrine and is witnessed on his return. The work might bring about a double-take in the viewer since the figure merges like an apparition into the reality of the green space we occupy at the moment of looking.

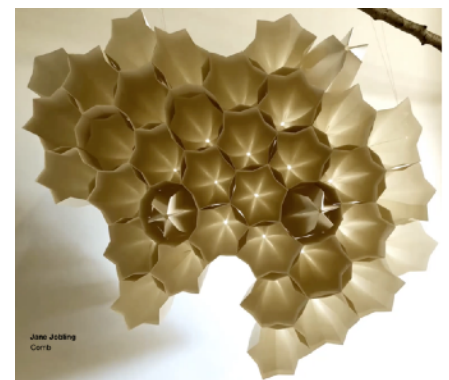
Just inside the lower gallery **Dallas Collins's** 'Staff' is the literal walking aid for the long-distance pilgrim. It sets up another presence, this time in the interior space. Vertical with readiness, it looks eager to depart. Or has a walker already passed and left a token of that visit? On the shaft is a scallop shell, the emblem of St James. It was a signal, too: if displayed on their clothing, it qualified the bearers for assistance from the faithful along the way. Its form is indistinguishable from the act of pilgrimage. Collins's deepens that connection: the object is partly composed of scallop shell. Ground as powder into plaster, shells contain minerals, like calcium, magnesium and iron, key to healthy body function. If faith no longer defines pilgrimage, this sculpture epitomises the contemporary search for sustainable resources to support growing populations on a finite planet.

'Wander-Land' is by no means a modern reliquary of 'pilgrimage art'. Indeed, **Robert Marshall** adopts a sceptical position towards religion in his contribution. An avowed agnostic, he is nonetheless sceptical of the rationalist arguments against a 'higher being'. He posits that possibility by using the quintessential symbol of a Latin cross. Writing about 'Quantum Leap of Faith', Marshall comments that 'This work does not make claims that there is now scientific proof that there is a "higher being" or by the same token disprove it. Quantum mechanics is a science, not a philosophy. I simply wish to encourage the viewer to explore, to reconnect the known with the unknown.' His open cross is rimmed by light from a hidden source. Folded into a suspended cube, does it still emit light? Light is symbol that pilgrims follow, regardless of their beliefs, as an image of vital energy.

Whereas the association of Tremeneheere with the pious phenomenon of sacred journeying has proposed ideas to artists, the overriding inspiration has been drawn from the much broader activity of wandering in landscape. The undulating diagonals of **William Lasdun's** wall relief have a pictorial abstract beauty. The work's construction from contoured, lath-like slats of fibreboard orchestrates the flow of shadows set up by the immateriality of light across its surface travelling on the sun's path during daylight. The piece is animated by the same phenomena that we might experience rippling across a stretch of water; a sandy beach or, equally, a landscape vista as clouds alternate sunshine with shade – allusions that give the panels the perspective of lived experience in nature.

Lasdun reinterprets the formal language of cartography to model the multi-valent visual terrain. **Seamus Moran** similarly delves into a non-representational idiom to create 'Desire Lines', those expressions of natural behaviour where walkers shortcut the bureaucracy of established footways by carving their own more direct routes into the public environment. Desire lines are a response to need; they defy the tidiness of maps with their chaotic shorthand of informal, beaten tracks. That instinct, in the form of gnarled and twisted knots from dead trees, is superimposed on the grid symbolic of officially sanctioned routes.

Two other pieces at first appear to abstract reality into diagrammatic form that opens out their significance. The first is **Alistair Lambert's** structure with slates balanced together on the hill outside the gallery like a house of cards. Lambert points out its various associations, which indicate that its 'meaning' is as open as its form and shaped by context rather than being intrinsic to its design: 'The lattice structure acts as a screen, solid when viewed at an angle and transparent from the side. The shape evokes an enclosure or shelter; a way point along a path, a settlement of roofs. The collapsible structure is transient [because] I want to maintain an element of improvisation and immediacy.'



The second is 'Comb' by **Jane Jobling**. The sculpture comprises numerous polygonal cells in an overall and unevenly profiled structure through which spots of natural light filter. In fact, the geometry quickly resolves itself into a passage of reality, a hive or nest suspended from an overhead beam. The sculpture exemplifies finding by looking, the search for the interaction between a location and its inhabitants, small stories in a big narrative: the role of evolutionary history in shaping living structures.

A similar overlapping of place and object is visible in **Fiona Campbell's** 'Flags of the Forest'. The thicket of stem-like upright forms and trailing translucent pennants on the grass bank above the gallery suggests another way marker or a minor encampment of a travelling band. At the same time as these colourful ideas emerge, others focused on sculptural properties like line, volume, space and surface occur. The piece assembles a wide array of natural matter and woven fabrics acquired in all manner of exchange and appropriation, or bring obliquely to mind the pattern of commerce, profit and exploitation in the manufacture of fashion items for western consumption.

A kind of serenity comes with simply following a path. Deep thoughts are processed and possibilities arise during repetitive movement through open country and the wide horizons of land and sea. Exposure to nature's fluid interactions of complex phenomena might well bring them on. But all occur on the basis of experience. **Ann-Margreth Bohl** captures that mindset. She collected a rock from the cobbled causeway that offers dry passage between Marazion and St Michael's Mount between tides that submerge it. Feet have trod its half-mile length for over 500 years. But the sea washes away any fleeting trace they might leave on a surface washed clean twice daily as memories are expunged.

Bohl removed her rock from this environment that cannot tolerate history. She took it away to discover and retain its story. The rock becomes a memento of the place and of her interaction with it, both alone and in the company of others. Those presences are folded back into her exploration, through handling, looking, even smelling its dense objectness for its coastal origin. In the process, she infuses it with aspects of her own story and being. Channelling all those associations into pencil and pastel drawings through the gestures of her hand, and casting the rock's form with beeswax, allowed her to shed its imagined skin and so reveal a relationship with nature and time that has unexpected fragility and intimacy. Bohl unlocks the deep, wordless poetry of matter.



**Simon Hitchens** is held in a similar fascination. He draws out the magnificence of dense matter and the primal urgency of its eruption from ancient tilts of the earth's crust. The surface carries the traces of that journey. Tectonic plates still jostle and scrape below ground to disturb the world that sits precariously upon it. In Hitchens's work, form suggests force and movement by its pointed wedge; the static shape nonetheless seems simultaneously to rear up and to plough forward. Its directionality is indeterminate – and then so is its bulkiness. This is representation and not reality; that is art's privilege. As the sculpture stands for something else, the possibility exists that it possesses no volume at all and that, in fact, the exterior encloses the negative space of a shadow made positive, a void of reflected light given substance by the mind willing it and wanting its shape to continue to shift.

**Jane Fox** is attracted to an elemental engagement with matter. Her sculpture addresses the organic in more than shape. The material comes from the symbiotic fermentation of bacteria and yeast cultures that form a cellulose 'skin' she grafts to the gnarled surfaces. As she points out, the process occurs in brewing kombucha, the tea drink consumed for its purported health benefits. Her three objects are difficult to describe so we naturally turn to the facility in our thought and language to explain it through similarities – with tree-life, bone or stone; that is, with the matter upon which existence is built, grows and advances.

Solitary wandering in nature can prompt both reflection on the most profound existential concerns – of eternity, solitude, time and space – and point to a path out of these labyrinths. Again, experience is the touchstone. **Tabatha Andrews'** 'Burden' lingers on the preparation of a journey; cloths are being folded as wrapping. The spellbinding subtlety of its materiality and its gentle tonality co-exist with the almost sacramental intensity with which she endows each element. This constructive geometry echoes the emotion and care in its assembly, the enquiry it prompts into each component for its relative value in formal and practical terms to the task ahead – of either conferring 'artfulness' on objects in the studio or preparing to travel from home. If such were possible, 'Burden' is a distillation of essence.

Walking generates transformative powers of physical exertion. We shed our identities in the course of the long, rhythmic move on two legs

across the landscape. **Pauline Antram** writes movingly of recently assuming the role of carer for her aged, ailing mother. To balance the almost claustrophobic intensity of caring, Antram took walks in multiple directions, switching inside for the outdoors. Temporarily, the carer role gave way to the artist self. An instinctive collector, she picked up objects as she wandered, not knowing what she would find. A walk can bring discovery or disappointment. For others, these finds were banal – shells, flowers and stones. But for her they were imbued with significance as way markers for an interior journey, a calendar of steps through uncertainty. She could then assemble an emblem of her own reality in distorted times. At the centre is her mother's home, set on shifting ground, from which other journeys radiate forcefully with no destinations shown. Because the journey is key,

**Michael Blow's** choice of subject was also influenced by health. One of the abiding by-products of the pandemic has been enhanced acceptance of the importance of mental wellbeing. The sudden cessation of routine habits – free association with friends and family, the usual liberty to come and go as one pleases, the sustaining regularity of work or school and pleasure – and their replacement by quarantine, isolation and uncertainty has left its shadow over many lives. It is not surprising, therefore, that for many reality itself seemed elusive. Blow decided to take a journey through carving almost to the degree zero of existence to reset his perceptions in a healthy direction. It took him to mycelium, the microscopic network of fungal threads that break down plant material. Vital to the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems upon which the creatures of the earth depend, mycelium can be used to make lightweight, inexpensive, and durable building materials; leather, packaging and foam can also be made from fungi. Then mycelium threads also float in air for humans to ingest the same material of which objects can be made. A common denominator, therefore, in all forms. This lusty builder deserves its almost phallic representation in stone: as it breaks down it builds up – a metaphor of sorts for transformation.

Philosophers are keen walkers. Immanuel Kant repeated the identical circuit of his surroundings every day to help him to think. Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed to be unable to work, or even think, when not walking. He promoted the idea of being in a state of nature. **Fiona Campbell's** 'Above and Below' distils that essentialness of the all-round effect of nature and transports it into the gallery as if challenging the enclosure that comes with architecture.



The large drawing by **Philip Booth** infers in graphic form a similar sensation of immersion but in a more strategic and deliberate fashion. That approach is developed in 'The Golden Way', his five-part installation outside the gallery which mixes the metal and stone on table-like structures. Metal outlines rectilinear shapes that appear ordered and sequential; onlookers naturally move from one to the next. They give the impression of stylised stepping stones, the sort that lead the way across water. Their angularity implies deliberation, planning each step. The objects arranged on the Perspex sections within the perimeter of each part, however, contradict that regularity with their organic outlines and varied positioning. Booth's work has a philosophical aspect, visualising the balance between order (or planning) and spontaneity that has to exist on any journey, whether the landscape is physical or mental.

In her highly visual installation, **Barbara Beyer** acknowledges the value of 'letting go'. At the heart of 'Making Stepping Stone Bridges' is the importance of connection that extends beyond the physical to reach emotional value. Her stepping stones are aligned to overcome obstacles in life as well as in nature; the objects collected into a kind of wall collage are both implements for spanning distances – by throwing, for instance, to create an imaginative link – or for making marks that register a presence. When we make marks, for instance with the charcoal sticks that Beyer offers as a prompt to action, they establish a channel of communication with others. Throwing is like breathing out: it expels energy into the surroundings. Maybe it is also an expression of renunciation. That has significance: Swami Ramdas, a wandering Indian ascetic and thinker, wrote in his pilgrimage diaries in the 1930s that it is when we renounce everything that everything is given to us, in abundance.

In contrast with these artists' concentration on tender proximity, two others look into the far distance. **Ros Burgin** reconstructs Cornwall in part through a play on words that nonetheless

brings to the surface the county's contribution to wandering the earth as well as exploiting its



depths. The metaphor she has chosen is the ubiquitous black plastic cable tie. Its uses are as widespread as the diasporas of Cornish people across the globe in search of opportunity. The ties feature in the fishing industry, fixing the rubber coils recycled from discarded tyres that help nets roll over rather than snag on seabed obstacles. Fishing once helped to keep Cornwall's communities fed and together. A 'cable' is also a unit of marine measurement. Then another form of cable was invented to keep far-flung populations in contact. Despite satellites circling the planet, 97% of telecommunications still travel by undersea cable, among the first of which landed in Penwith.

Impressed by the dark night skies of Cornwall, **Chris Dunseath** conceived his sculpture as a hollow, nut-like structure with an aperture through which is visible the peninsula outline of the county on one side with a lunar hemisphere on the other. Infinite space is a destination for a million minds by the minute: mariners still sail by the stars while many on land try to determine their futures by them. The moon is once again the prospect of resumed manned missions as a prelude to explorative journeys to farther planets. Yet mankind often projects his inner vision into the night sky as a metaphor for the interior search for self-meaning. The behaviour is far from new. One of India's most quoted poets and mystics, Kabir (1440-1518), recognised this romantic tendency: 'The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it;/The moon is within me, and so is the sun./The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it.'

The writer and activist Rebecca Solnit has written that to walk in the world, you can 'find what you don't know you are looking for.' You discover when you walk that it emancipates you from space and time, which perhaps is demonstrated by **Doug Burton's** sculpture. The shape has strong figurative overtones: it has legs, after all. To describe it as a figure would be to go too far. Instead, 'Cormelian' is a composite – of materials and shapes, and thus of origins. It looks constructed from concrete blocks, stone but also organic, green elements. It may be part-human and part-tree. So the imagination takes off on a journey of speculation. Its title suggests an adjective that people in West Cornwall might recognise as echoing the name Cormoran. The biggest of giants, he lived in the forest where birds, animals and probably humans cohabited before the flood came to cover it with Mount's Bay.



Kate Parsons

By walking, rather than by driving or cycling, we are exposed to mysteries of presence. **Jilly Sutton's** monumental head is carved from a piece of pine. Preserving the grain in a continuous, sensuous sweep of growth lines that widen and tighten, her handling of the wood preserves its history. At the same time, the artist seems to have recognised this face within the tree. Her journey by hand and eye over the surface seems to have emancipated the form in the wood, as if touching its spirit. Converging on **Kate Parsons's** 'Muramura' are resonances of the Bakonjo funerary traditions from Uganda and the processes of bronze casting, of making a transient object (a muramura is a plant imbued with spiritual symbolism) resolutely permanent by slipping from original into its representation. The process encapsulates transformation through material and its working.

This exhibition includes two works that might strike some as falling beyond the boundaries of sculpture. The first is the digital video by **Emma Elliott + Susie Olczak**. In fact, it is very sculptural as it deals with time, space, sound and the body in movement, as well as surface texture in terms of the nature of its image-making. This work is also the most emphatically contemporary here in terms of its subject matter: it belongs expressly to our

time. Two geographical areas, far apart, are overlaid – the Darién Gap, in Panama's narrow isthmus, and the western tip of the Cornish peninsula, where Britain itself becomes narrow. In the past that land accommodated the short overland route for Welsh and Irish pilgrims to Spain. By contrast, the Darién Gap is used by migrants in search of personal safety and economic security – the modern pilgrimage.

The second piece is 'The Calling' by **Mark Richards**. One element is unquestionably three-dimensional; Richards wore the sandwich board emblazoned with slogans in Oxford Street, London, in emulation of the lone figure he observed on first arriving in London as a young man: a raincoated Londoner who paced the streets to warn passers-by of the dangers to which they were exposed – mostly dangers of the flesh although his placard did warn against the seductions of sitting. For Richards, his object is an instrument and his public performance, his use of bodily movement, is the sculpture. By its nature, the work is ephemeral; its hold on time is restricted to the photo documentation of an event that has now passed. The instrument remains as documentation, too; as resonant of what once happened as a museum piece.

*Martin Holman is a writer and art historian based in Penzance.*



Doug Burton



Emma Elliott + Susie Olczak



**Wander\_Land**

