

Encountering a Boyle piece of work is an extraordinary experience. The title may read Australia but there is an ordinary intimacy of recognising the terrain that is similar to one that you traversed on the other day or maybe one that is outside your front door and is permanently overlooked. The microscopical detail and hollow resonance leads you to wonder to yourself "how do they do that", but their techniques remain a family secret. One answers this question oneself - with patience, but this isn't entirely satisfactory, knowing there is an x factor involved.

Although these artworks are made from fibreglass, incorporated is a degree of natural material from the site which acts as a template to work with. The real and the manufactured become indecipherable, further enhanced by the invisible layer of resin painted onto the surface which paralyses the work. Unlike the terrain it simulates it will never age or decompose.

As artworks these studies have a visual presence that one takes for granted when we meet them beneath our feet. They are both disconcerting and beautiful as slices of reality, that belong not only in a natural context but in a horizontal setting. These detached and removed ground selections tempt you to imagine what it would be like to walk on these textured surfaces. You make your own conclusions as to the audible collaboration between foot and ground. There is no right way round or upside down, there is no secret agenda or elitism involved. They are spectacles of the everyday, of a frozen moment in time that permanently changes. This is exemplified with their mud studies which in front of your eyes have been paused for an eternal instant during their journey into hardening. And you think to yourself what if it started to rain or if a violent wind encouraged leaves to fall, wouldn't that change the piece that you are gazing at? But Mark Boyle father of the close-knit foursome, stresses that it is not their intention to portray a given piece of reality just to present it to us literally as it appeared to them.

It is this pursuit of truth, a truth fuelled by objectivity which feeds the intention of each painting. An objectivity that does not pass comment on society or refer to other art works or feels allied with other associations. The artists themselves do not declare statements about their work in their work. They remove themselves emotionally to eliminate any interruption of

their own taste and desires and subsequently their own stories they have to tell. Only the title suggests the distances travelled and endured to achieve what one is confronted with. The journey is the destination's accomplice and often in today's artworks this is as celebrated as the result. The artist's subjective experiences of the process are not introduced. For the Boyle Family the journey is the destination's silent partner, integral to arriving at the work, but personal and not the focus of attention when engaging with it.

The amount of planning involved in each piece of work is a laborious affair. Firstly the actual excursion to the site, which may well be remote, is planned meticulously and once there the technicalities of gathering the information as faithfully as possible, despite potential adverse weather or people conditions, requires intense preparation. These extensive journeys could be likened to that of a scientific expedition. But unlike the explorer it is only a fragment of these extensive travels that one witnesses. Once back in London a single piece of work can take several years.

*"Contrary to the ideas of most people who know our work, there is no set formula for making one of our pieces. The one fatal mistake we can make is to imagine that we know how to do any particular surface. Every piece requires lots of tests and experiments. Both in the tests and in making the actual work, there is a great deal of improvisation and that's where the greatest skill and invention is required."*

*Mark Boyle*

*"It is about everything",* says Sebastian, who has set up a construction show space devoted to family's work, tells me and if those words had left anyone else's mouth I would have laughed with concern. Indeed nothing is excluded from being potential subject matter. It is the earthprobes that the family are most known for, mainly because they have been widely exhibited. However their resume is extensive and rich in diversity. In the sixties they were celebrated as light installation artists whereby insects, chemicals, fire no less and fluids of all descriptions (including bodily ones) were projected and visually amplified in a micro projector. The accompanying sounds were recorded and played a crucial role in these visual-