

Skin over Bone, Pathfoot Building, University of Stirling



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An untitled pot by Ann Hardie, whose family are all celebrated artists

“Surface” is a term that comes to mind constantly when looking at the ceramics, painting and film of the Hardie family.

Ann Hardie was born in 1938 and died at the age of 61. She made delicate porcelain pots and small ceramic sculptures with surfaces like ornate sand-patterns or river systems filmed from space. Here, a small vitrine is all that represents the work of a significant talent. Ann’s vision of

a fragile world is revealed in a number of spherical pieces. These are no bigger than an orange, but have ornate, painstaking surface additions.

Adjacent to this vitrine is work by Ann's second daughter, Gwen. These pieces consist of delicate, spidery lines defining a series of three circles. Clearly Gwen has inherited Ann's sensitivity, her need for slow, reflective observational calm and the paradoxical notion that surface is highly revelatory of greater depth. Although Gwen's fine lines are at a further observational remove from her mother's sense of seeing, tending toward abstraction, they clearly begin with a relationship to the observed world, while leaving room for interpretation.

Like Ann, Gwen Hardie focuses intently on what is immediate and available. In Gwen's case this is often her own body and, sometimes, that of another. In these pieces, three-quarter painted in a palette of soft yellow, green and creamy hues, it is possible to discern the veined skin of a wrist and a deep crease where the hand meets the arm. In other works we might detect the point where the arm joins the torso, or a chest with a distinctive mole.

In her film *The Edge of Dreaming*, Gwen's sister, Amy, aims to get under the surface of her own psyche. The film shows her family life in the Borders and examines the symbolism of her dreams. One foretold the death of the family's much-loved horse. A second appeared to suggest her own death in her 48th year, through the words of a former partner.

Their father, Jim, has combined a career as an art lecturer with a passion for flying. His painting is a synthesis of both, in which he uses imagery such as goggles, wings and propellers. His painting is often inspired by the surface of the earth, seen from high in the air. As a younger artist he created work on a smaller scale and some of these, such as *Brooklyn Bridge Study* (1988) combine sensitivity with painterly talent.

Exhibition runs until May 3