

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

604 SECOND AVE
SEATTLE, WA 98104

206 903 6220

JAMESHARRISGALLERY.COM

PRESS RELEASE



Claire Cowie

“Selvedge”

January 4 to February 24, 2018

Reception for the Artist:

Thursday, January 4th, 6-8PM

Left: **Claire Cowie**

Reversed Start Target, 2017

Collage, acrylic on various papers and printing felts
48” x 48”

Gallery Hours:

Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-5pm

Tuesday by appointment only

Images are available upon request.

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our eighth solo exhibition with Seattle artist Claire Cowie. For this exhibition, the artist includes large-scale collaged paintings and mixed media sculpture. The title of the show is “Selvedge,” which refers to the self-finished edge on a woven fabric that prevents it from unraveling. Inspired by craft traditions such as quilt making, this show presents an evolution in Cowie’s collage practice and introduces unique materials in both her mixed media paintings and her sculptural works. In the past, Cowie’s signature style has included an attention to negative space and a muted palette. In this new work, Cowie has saturated her surfaces with imagery and color that provide little rest for the eye and an uncontainable exuberance that activates the gallery.

The conception of the sculptural works began during Cowie’s residency at Pilchuck Glass School in 2016, which she followed with another residency at Museum of Glass, Tacoma. During these residencies, Cowie worked in this new medium to create abstract forms that would later become elements in large-scale stacked forms combined such materials as collaged papier-mâché, hand-sewn three dimensional fabric forms, found wood, plaster, and cement. Cowie has worked with stacked sculptures in the past, referencing to cairns, the stacked rock forms that serve as a marker for a particular pathway. Cowie’s work has long been interested in methods of mapping individual journeys, and she embeds narratives within each piece inspired by personal iconography and experiences.

Her collaged paintings are in many ways autobiographical, and include a personal history both in their patchwork form and in her use of collaged recycled materials. Growing up in North Carolina, Cowie was immersed in a craft tradition throughout her childhood, and quilting was an important part of her community in the rural South. Often made of a mix of ordinary and special materials, Cowie is intrigued by how the quilts become “a way to preserve memories and recycle cloth at the same time.” With this

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

**604 SECOND AVE
SEATTLE, WA 98104**

206 903 6220

JAMESHARRISGALLERY.COM

PRESS RELEASE

practice as a guide, Cowie constructed her “paperquilts” out of layered paper scraps from her own studio and recycling bins from classes she teaches. She then added the collaged elements using bits of paper and scraps of her own work spanning the last 20 years. The materials include printing processes, such as screen print, woodblock, etching, linoleum cut, drypoint, and monotype, as well as digital photography, drawing, painting and found media. In this sense, these pieces are a reflection of Cowie’s personal process as well as “an homage to the women of the South who influenced [her] when [she] was growing up - and to whom [she] owe[s] so much of [her] interest in community, story-telling, and making things by hand.”

Both the overall patterned treatment of her layered collage paintings and the stacking method of the sculptural works offer a potential to go on indefinitely, as there seems to be no necessary stopping point or end to the story. Cowie not only illustrates the reverence for the past in her work, but there is an optimism for a future that is informed by these histories, traditions and personal experiences.