

# Annie Cattrell

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## Timespan Museum and Arts Centre, Helmsdale, until 12 August 2012

**ANNIE Cattrell's current exhibition at Timespan presents a fascinating collaboration between disciplines of Art and Science.**

INSPIRED by natural elements and interior mindscapes, this series of dynamic works in glass and paper are perfectly sited in the gallery and within a local landmark, referencing a history of human interaction with land and seascape.



Annie Cattrell - Conditions

The installation of *Currents* in the old Helmsdale Ice House, just across the Telford Bridge from Timespan, provides a historical setting in which to contemplate Cattrell's hand-modelled three-dimensional surface of the sea. The site distils the sculpture by association, playing with the dynamic of "mutatis mutandis" so prevalent in the artist's work. The richly textured stone wall interior of the ice house as a man made structure and the visual representation of the ocean, responsive to elemental forces of nature above the surface through wind and weather and below in the movement of the undercurrent and tides, present surfaces of tension held beautifully in

balance in the mind's eye. The solid form of the sculpture (L 2,800mm x W. 800mm x H 200mm), tantalisingly similar to ice in its opaque, layered translucence, embodies human aspiration for permanence through Art coupled with the inevitability of ceaseless change in nature.



Annie Cattrell - Conditions

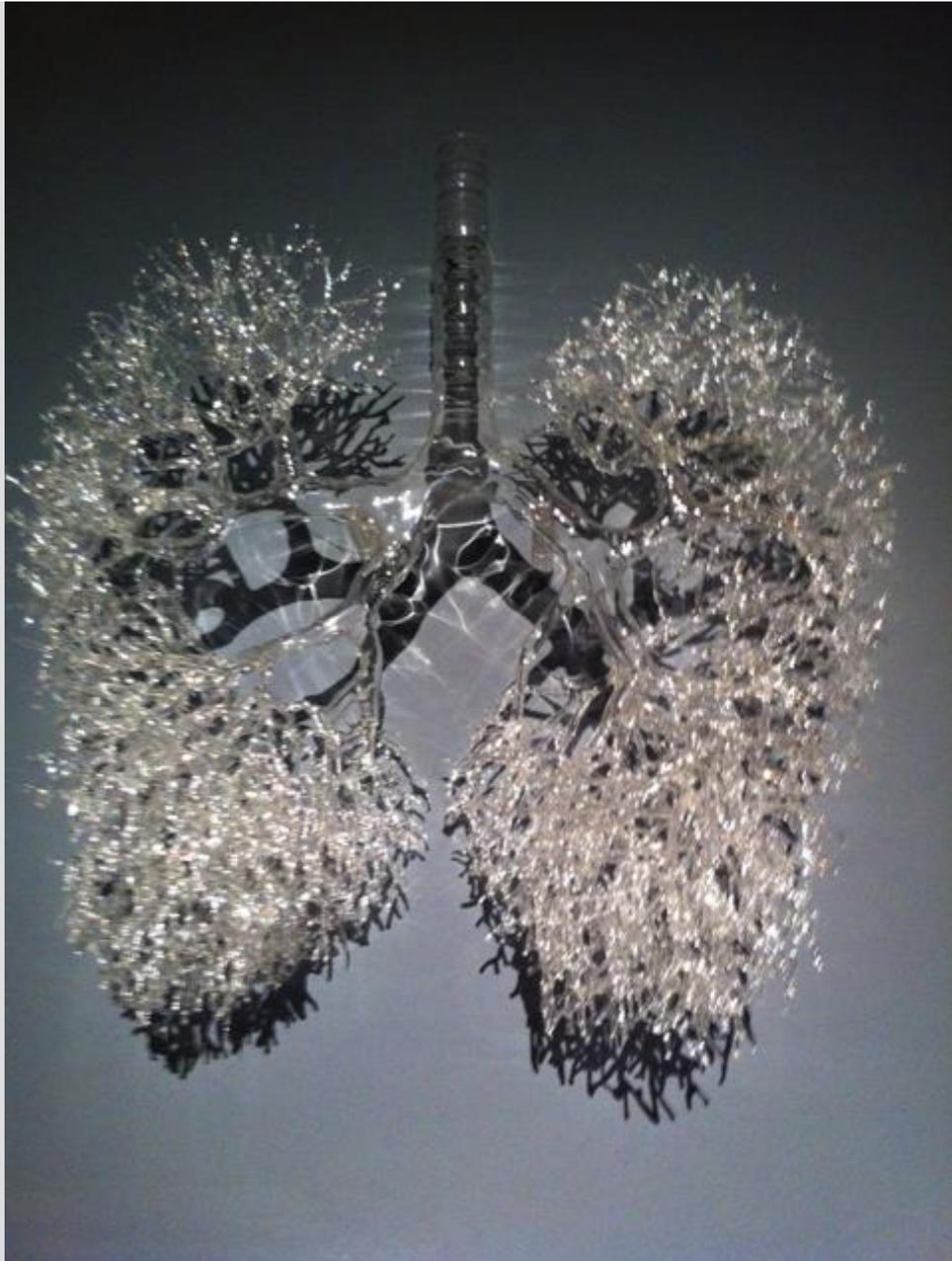
Similarly in Cattrell's *Conditions*, a series of twelve sculptures in sub-surface etched optical glass displayed on a wooden plinth, the idea of permanence meets the ephemeral nature of cloud. "Informed by dialogues with meteorologist Stan Cornford", the artist has created a fluid, multi-layered work where finely etched marks contained within the solidity of glass refract and reduce their confinement. The monumentality of cloud formations and their placement 40,000ft above the earth's crust echoed in the 400mm height of each sculpture could also be read as minute particles of dust caught in a heavy transparency of human construction. The documentation of different types of cloud is transformed into a poetic and supremely elegant work which heightens our sense of a human mind perceiving nature.



Annie Cattrell - Pleasure-Pain

Similarly the artist's use of scientific technology to map interior surfaces, including Lydar laser scanning and FMRI brain scanning techniques, reimagines this data, presenting a highly ambiguous model of physicality in the gallery space. *Pleasure/Pain* is a fascinating example; an S.L.S rapid prototype, displayed on a mirror and plinth which charts in three dimensions the physical parts of the brain linked to these dual sensations. Made in collaboration with neuroscientist Professor Morten Kringelbach from Oxford University, *Pleasure/Pain* is a curious hybrid of Scientific and Artistic enquiry; a strange new species resembling a piece of fossilised coral or bone from an alien subterranean world, something outside ourselves rather than within.

The placement of this object on the mirror, a surface of truth and deceit in relation to the Self and upon a culturally elevated plinth encourages narrative association, not with the emotional centre of Pleasure and Pain but the physical locus of it in the brain and as an idea. The contours and textures of the sculpture/ prototype are unexpectedly beautiful in their striated delicacy, a natural by-product of the mystery of our own creation.



Annie Cattrell - Capacity

*Capacity*, a fragile construction of Borosilicate glass made by human breath to form the delicate structure of human lungs, is another example of the way that Cattrell explores connections between Art , Science and knowledge. The way that light and shadow inform our reading of this work, displayed at an elevated height, brings traditional elements of visual language into play in a way that defies purely observational interpretation of the object or surface. The artist's use of a material usually used to make test tubes by glass blowing is utilised in a poetic way that reminds us of our own vulnerability. The illuminated clear glass with no hint of corruption or disease also suggests an ideal or aspirational state, a sense of human evolution or progression through Science and Art/ Culture.

An expansive definition of drawing in three dimensions is ever present throughout the exhibition. This human mark skilfully incised on 300 gram Bockingford paper has created an exquisite series of works, *Brink, Pour, Lift*

and *Pressure*, that extend beyond the confines of the frame. Cattrell's papercut drawings contain an extraordinary sense of movement and precision, physically altering the integrity of the pictorial ground in a way that captures elemental, natural forces.

*Brink* is both microcosm and macrocosm, suggesting an aerial view, the edge of a shifting continent in the ebb and flow of incisions across the surface. *Lift* is one of the most breathtaking works in the exhibition, a strip of ground contrasted with the sculptural manipulation of the surface; a series of minute movements of the hand and eye to create a living work of Art. The surface is cut and the imaginative space drawn in a way that feels organic, a quality also richly in evidence in *Pour*, a visualisation of gravity itself. The craftsmanship and persistence of Cattrell's papercut drawings is impressive and this physicality is equal to the conceptual element of her practice represented in this latest body of work.

Following Annie Cattrell's RSA/Creative Scotland residency hosted by the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness during 2010, this first exhibition by the artist in the Highlands will also be shown at the Inverness Museum and Art Gallery from August to October 2012.

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