

hadfield

2023 — MY HEART BELONGS TO CORNWALL





02. photo credit: helene hadfield 2019

my cottage studio. we built this while isolating during COVID.

“The end of the journey is never as important as the journey itself.”

- Paulo Coelho

hadfield 2023 content

about me

05.

**artist
statement**

07.

**big artistic
breakout year**

08 - 09.

**i see you in
my dreams**

10 - 11.

**it's a real
stitch up**

12 - 13.

**down by the
river to play**

14 - 15.

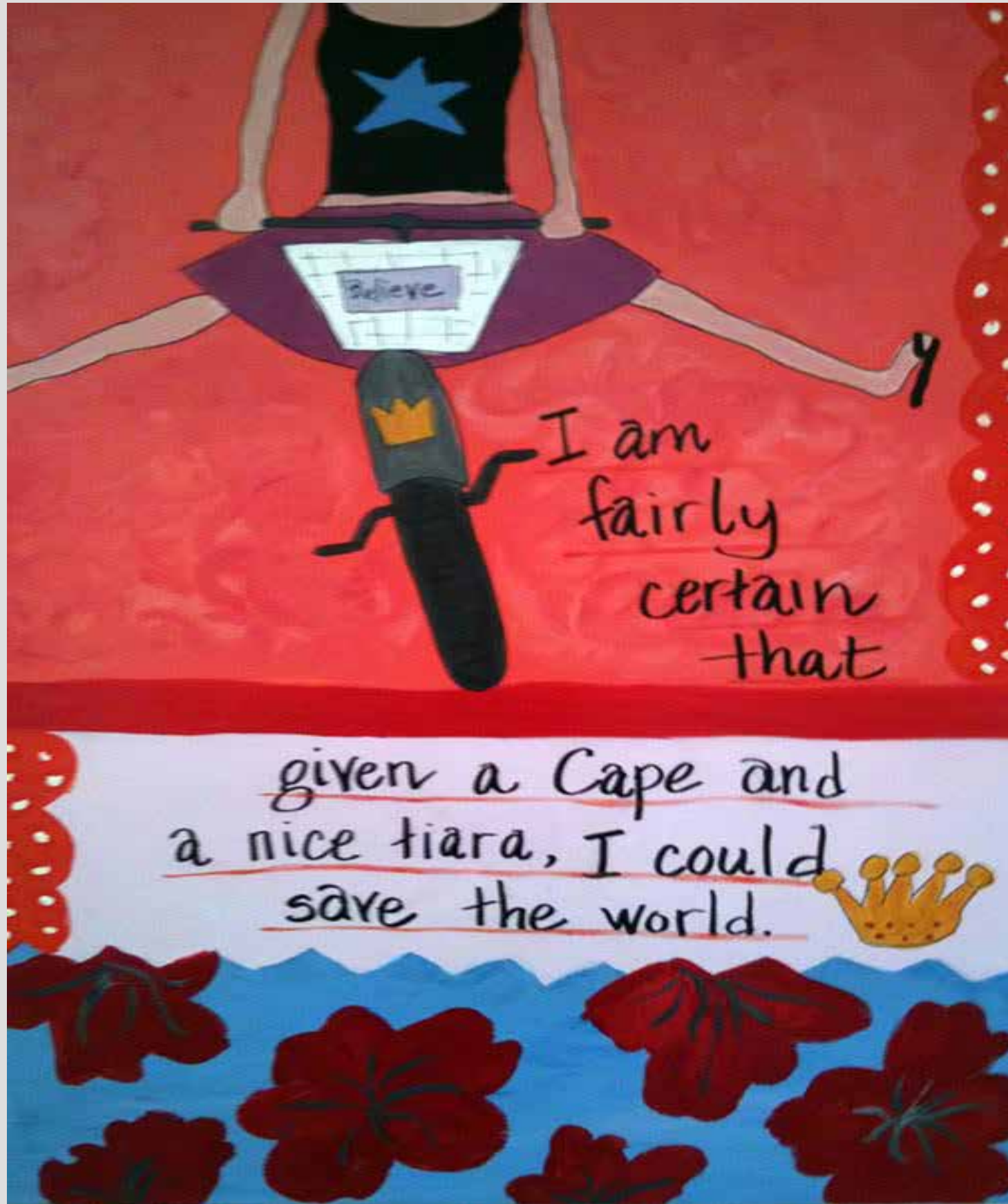
**it takes
a village**

16 - 17.

**becoming
real**

18 - 19.

bibliography / photo credits 20 - 21.



one of my first paintings copied from a greeting card i received and absolutely loved.

03. photo credit: helene hadfield 2016

about me **helene gale.**

We often believe what we are told. Yet art is creating what you believe.

When I was in grade school my art teachers told me that I couldn't draw, and I believed them. I felt, like many people do, that being an artist, being a painter, or being able to draw was something that you either 'had' or you didn't. But like most artistically inclined people my talents came out in different ways. If I 'couldn't draw' I could definitely do all the other crafts out there: I knit, sewed, decorated, welded, did stained glass, quilted, rug hooked, and even went to chef school later working as a pastry chef. What I didn't do was draw because "I couldn't". And it took me until my 40's to realize that the teachers were wrong! It isn't a purely inborn talent. It can be taught - a simple but vital revelation.

I did workshops and classes and practiced, though I still didn't think of myself as an artist, and besides, I was busy business building and living my life. And then ... I had a succession of heart attacks. It radically rocked my whole world. When all of your preconceived ideas about your own mortality turn suddenly on its head you make a few changes. I re-evaluated everything, and when all the dust settled, I had decided that I wanted to take my art to the next level. I chose to immerse myself in the experience by heading back to school. And there was no better school for me to pursue my love of learning and artistic variety than the Sheridan College Craft and Design program. Being able to take courses in furniture, textiles, glass, and industrial design along with my major in ceramics was such a gift. For four years I was able to explore my own creativity while being surrounded by the most amazing, wonderful, original people flexing their own artistic muscles. What a gift and opportunity for growth. I've loved every second - so much, in fact, that I'm off to grad school in the fall. I can't wait to continue this journey.

My work reflects my love of nature, growth, colour, and joy in life and living. I create to celebrate the good things, the hopeful things, and invariably infuse a little bit of that in my work. My intent, always, is to have someone look at my work and want to know more about the story, see something they didn't see at first glance, be curious, and, ultimately, come away happy.

And I don't just draw now. I am on my way to becoming the artist that that grade school student always dreamed of being.



walking the southwest coast path in Cornwall, 2017. a trip of over 1,000kms over 28 days.

04. photo credit: helene hadfield 2017

my heart belongs to cornwall **artist statement.**

I've been reflecting recently on the ideas of permanence, genetic memories, common threads, and nature. As the doom and gloom bells toll a fine line is created between optimism for our and our planet's future and a sinking feeling that things have truly gone to hell in a handbasket.

My work represents that teetering path; sometimes rocky; sometimes bleak but always with an inner resolve that things will be 'Okay'.

The current collection – My Travels on the Southwest Coast Path – share my remembrances of my walk following the Cornwall coast in England and my thoughts along the way.

In 2016 I suffered a series of health issues that forced me to re-evaluate everything in my life and my thoughts about my mortality. I had signed up for the 1000km + walk months before I ended up in the hospital fighting for my life. Despite fear that the walk would literally kill me, I decided to take the challenge. Over 30 days I walked, sometimes very, very slowly, up steep hills and down cliff-faces. It was a journey of self-discovery, reflection, and ultimately triumph. While artistically rather than physically, this collection represents a similar journey.

2022 - 2023.

the big artistic
breakthrough year

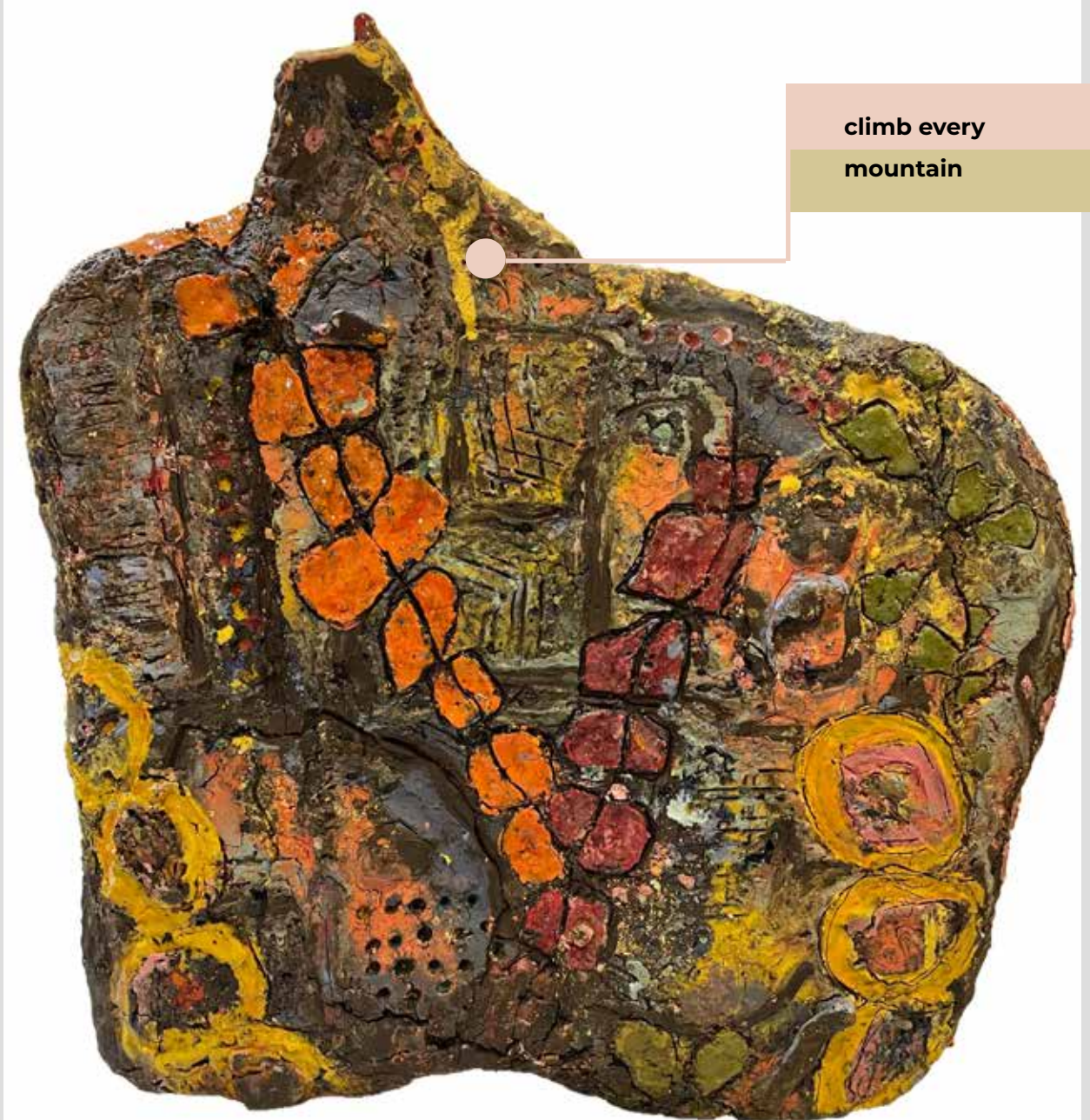
- Whenever I am creatively, I say to myself that I just need to get into the studio and make without judgement. This year, when I did this, there was such a feeling of freedom. The work was so different than my 'normal' work, and I just loved it.
- The best advice that I received from my mentors was "And now you have to decide who you want to be as an artist." Basically, 'you do you'.
- Climb Every Mountain represents the beauty of the quest and the overcoming of challenges. The heavy, craggy, and inclusion-filled artwork reminds us that beauty can be found in the traditionally "unbeautiful," and it's all about having a zest for life and a song to sing.



even the underpass has a story
to tell

05. photo credit: helene hadfield 2022

2023.



climb every
mountain

06. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023

- I loved making this piece because I felt that I was starting to get a handle on how to paint on the clay in 'my way'.
- I started to use inclusions and openings to deepen the narrative.
- The 'orange' represents the path / one's path.



07. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023



08. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023

i see you in my dreams

Using a softer palette to create a more dreamlike atmosphere, my journey is imagined in a jumble of remembered impressions and feeling.

2023.



it's a real **stitch** **up.**

I love textiles and textile design. It translates so beautifully to working with clay. I wanted to play with creating a piece using stitchery mark making and collage evoking the feeling of textile art. The muted palette represents naturally dyed fabric created in my sustainable practices' textiles class. I love the barren feel of the landscape.

09. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023

2023.

down by the river to play 2023.

There is a little bit of feelings of nostalgia with this piece. When I look at this piece I can't help thinking about the ubiquitous tea towel folded over the oven handle in my granddaddy's house. These wonderful British tea towels always have a certain look and feel. And, what is now, a 'retro' palette.

One thing that you might have noticed about my work is that I love colour. As part of my explorations into colour and colour theory I have been playing with various coloured slips, underglazes and glazes to try to gain modicum of control over my results. I feel that this piece, with it's rougher texture and black clay underpinning, is a particularly successful experiment.

When I was designing this piece I was thinking about timelessness, the landscape, and honesty of the villages and the people. It is my small nod to how things were and how they always will be.



11. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023

10. photo credit: helene hadfield 2023

it takes a village

This piece represents a village every tiny village in Cornwall past and present. The haunting beauty of a Cornwall village is that it feels like it's always been the same and always will be and yet has a lonely, haunting atmosphere. The abandoned, ghost-like nature of villages is the basis for the piece. It is every person, every child that has been born or ever been born and lived in any village. It IS the village.



2023.

12. photo credits: helene hadfield 2023





'Becoming Real' was born from my interest in the brain / art opening powers of psychedelics and my love of the story "The Velveteen Rabbit". I was in a theatre company and performed this story almost 50 years ago.

The question that the stuffed rabbit asks is about what it takes to be 'real' and how to become real are poignant and relevant to me especially at this stage in my life. I am constantly struck by the fact that my life has a crazy and surreal quality about it.

As I come to the end of my Craft and Design journey, it is such a time of anticipation, of joy, of fear of the next unknown, and about how much fun you can have on your way to 'becoming real'.

2023.



14. photo credits: helene hadfield 2023

bibliography & photo credits.

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02. hadfield, helene, 2019, 'helene in front of cottage studio'.
03. hadfield, helene, 2016, 'i would save the world'.
04. hadfield, helene, 2017, 'helene walking the swcp'.
05. hadfield, helene, 2022, 'even the underpass has a story to tell'.
06. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'climb every mountain'.
07. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'i see you in my dreams - side a'.
08. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'i see you in my dreams - side b'.
09. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'it's a real stitch up'.
10. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'down by the river to play - side a'.
11. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'down by the river to play - side b'.
12. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'it takes a village' - three photos.
13. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'becoming real - side a'.
14. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'becoming real - side b'.
15. hadfield, helene, 2023, 'it takes a village'.
16. hadfield, helene, 2021, 'oopsy rabbit'.



15. photo credits: helene hadfield 2023



i hope that you are enjoying your own journey.
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16. photo credits: helene hadfield 2023