

China Mark's latest works further her formal concerns with escaping the flat. These paintings with needle and thread render her idiosyncratic figuration in re-articulated pieces of found fabric. She takes immense delight in butchering the fey illustrations and patterns common to remnant material, designed to comfort, placate and reaffirm Middle America. Snipping out small patches of checked cloth, swathes of landscape, cutesy animals, food, flowers and characters, she reconfigures them in scenarios that are as exuberant as they are grotesque. Her satirical corruption offers a bleak counter-narrative of contemporary American culture, where the teddy bears' picnic has been invaded by savagely tailored cyborgs whose mission is strangely unreadable.

Marks takes the proffered story of America and twists it into something from the Brothers Grimm. These lacerated, tortured but nonetheless surviving figures bloom with flowers from their mouths and pluckily head for more trouble. This is gothic meets manga. If you look closely at their textured grounds, you find little absences where Marks' vision includes excision as much as insertion. Tight threads pull the patchwork forms into relief. The obsessive cross-stitching speaks of the need to keep repairing, an urgent darning of what is given in order to make it better, to make it last.

Dense, powerful, fractured, multiple, these complex needle drawings collage images of our material world with those of our subconscious fears and desires with a clever, witty passion.

Cherry Smyth