



Keith Roberts

Tallyman

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28 February - 8 April 2018

Keith Roberts studied fine art in Newcastle and then at the Royal College of Art in London. He was awarded a place at the Delfina Studio Trust and in 2005 an Abbey Fellowship to study at the British School at Rome, an intensely rewarding experience that continues to inform his work. It was during this period that he first cut into the surface of the paintings literally opening new possibilities for the work. In 2010 Keith took a course in stone carving at the Portland Stone and Quarry Trust in order to experiment with different ways of making and refresh his practice. In 2012 for the first time a piece of sculpture became the central element in the show *Regeneration Bell and Kindred Works*. In 2015 a public commission administered by Oriel Wreccsam presented the opportunity to further develop the use of a bell as powerful symbol. This led to a prize winning installation at St Nicholas' Church as part of the Deptford X festival in 2015. The Estorick Collection in 2017 commissioned three new ambitious works for their exhibition 'War in the Sunshine, The British in Italy 1917-1918', their first exhibition after a major refurbishment. Two more shows followed in 2017 both of which were part of the First World War Centenary commemorations, giving opportunity to further develop the themes of silenced voices and mute witness that informs much of his work.

keithrobertsartist.com



Abacus (2018), Oil on canvas and collage, 150 x 100 cm

TALLYMAN. A solo exhibition of paintings, drawings and sculpture. In this exhibition Keith Roberts encourages a contemplation of silenced voices and mute witness.

Many of the works in the exhibition are informed by the geography, both political and physical, of the Middle East often described as The Crucible of History. A crucible millennia old that continues to boil and spit. As fearful populations seeking any kind of safety are pushed from one horizon to another this exhibition reflects on the upheaval and chaos that is caused and to tally the absences and silence that ensues.

At the centre of the exhibition is the Tallyman Machine. Part abacus, part musical instrument this wooden structure is strung with bells that are used as counters to tally the movement of peoples around the world in this troubled age. The bells superficially the same but actually unique are a metaphor for the voices of people. Pierced through by the rods upon which they are strung they have become silenced, mute witness to the mechanics of calculation.

The first work encountered in the exhibition is a floor piece called Caporetto (2017). A series of large bells each unique and made of plaster but painted to resemble lead, are laid upon their sides along the length of a low wooden platform. The bells represent the voices of those killed in conflict, voices that once rang out but are now stilled, have fallen silent.

From the ceiling hangs the Calmington Road Airship (2017). A work developed from research into the last Zeppelin raid on London in 1917. Made from paper and string it is at once both elegant and absurd. The construction works with the idea of harm being carried by technology however simple from over the horizon, from another place, to which it returns.

On the walls of the exhibition space are paintings and constructions. The paintings are landscapes made in the most direct of ways. A surface on the face of a sheet of paper split with a line into upper and lower sections. The rigidity of the rectangular format and horizon line is challenged by the painted surface that runs and spills across the page giving the impression of a surface of lead or torrents of water playing with chaos and accident.

The wall based constructions use the simple materials of board and wood, paint and paper. Here are crudely framed invocations of past and present where the lines between time and geography blur to insignificance. Paper cut outs of papyrus plants and maize weave across the surface. Place names and clay horizons peep through or are obscured.



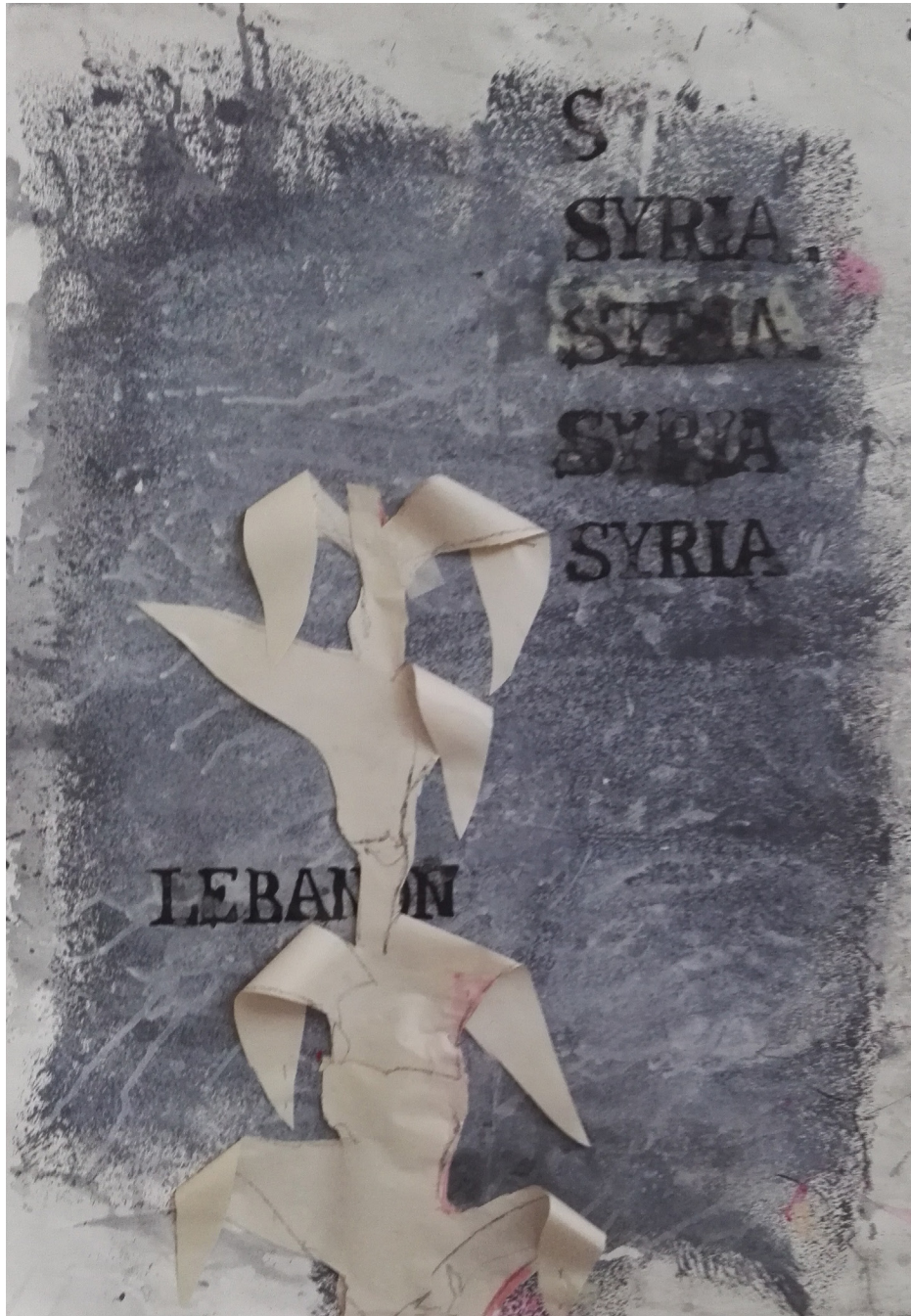
Study for Tallyman (2018), Paint and collage on paper, 59 x 83 cm



Wheat (2017), Acrylic on canvas, 50.5 x 40.5 cm



Rice (2017), Acrylic on canvas, 50.5 x 40.5 cm



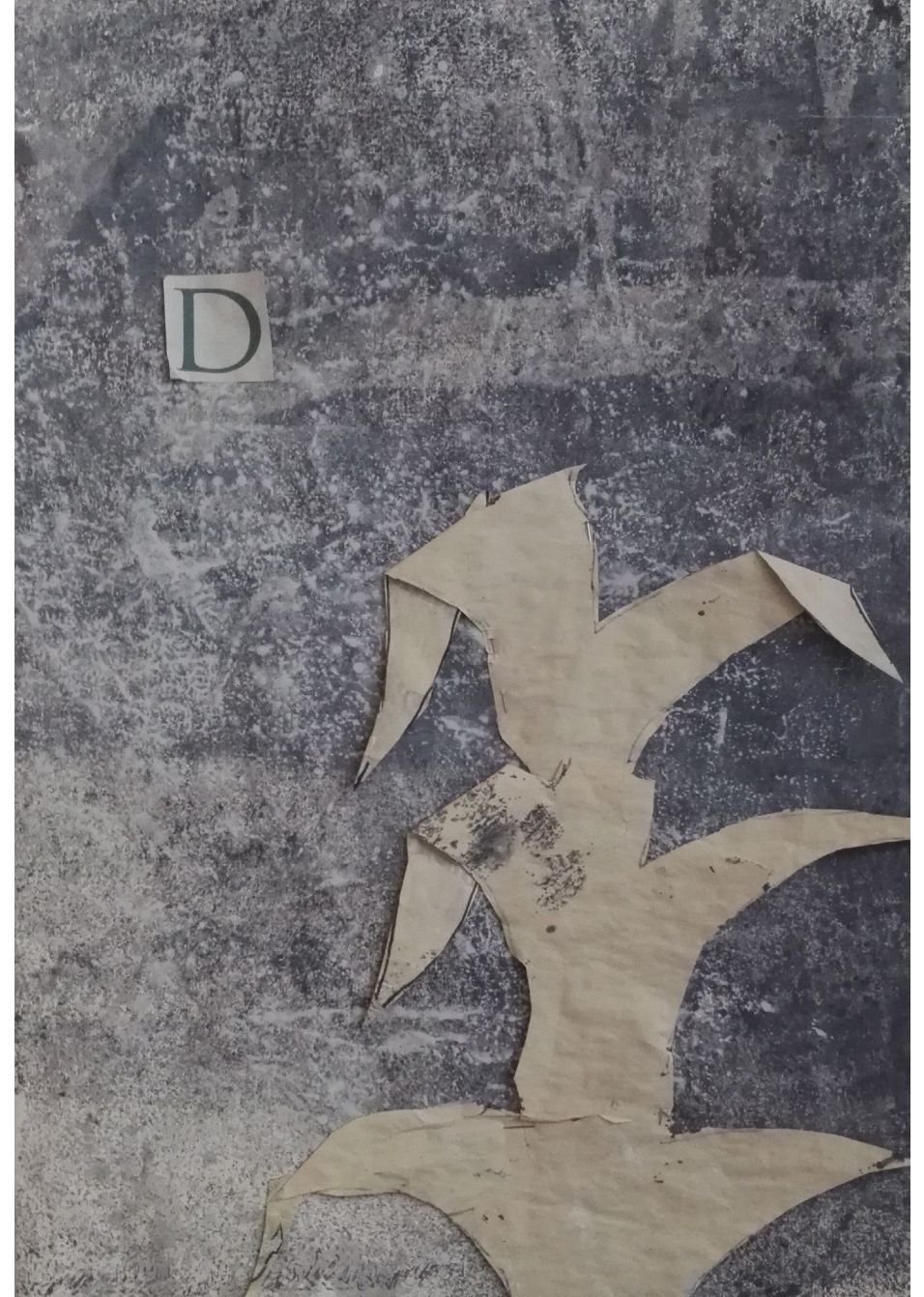
Syria Lebanon (2018), Acrylic and collage on paper, 83.5 x 59 cm



Famine (2018), Acrylic and collage on paper, 59 x 35.5 cm



Papyrus study (2018), Paint and collage on board, 76.5 x 44.5 cm



Death (2018), Paint and collage on paper, 54 x 32 cm



Holy Land (2018), Clay, plaster and wood, 61 x 53 x 6 cm



The Expulsion after Masaccio (2018), Clay and wood, 57.5 x 47 x 10 cm



Study for Fertile Crescent (2018), Clay and wood, 57.5 x 41 x 6.5 cm



Untitled (2018), Clay, wood and paint, 63 x 66 x 4.5 cm



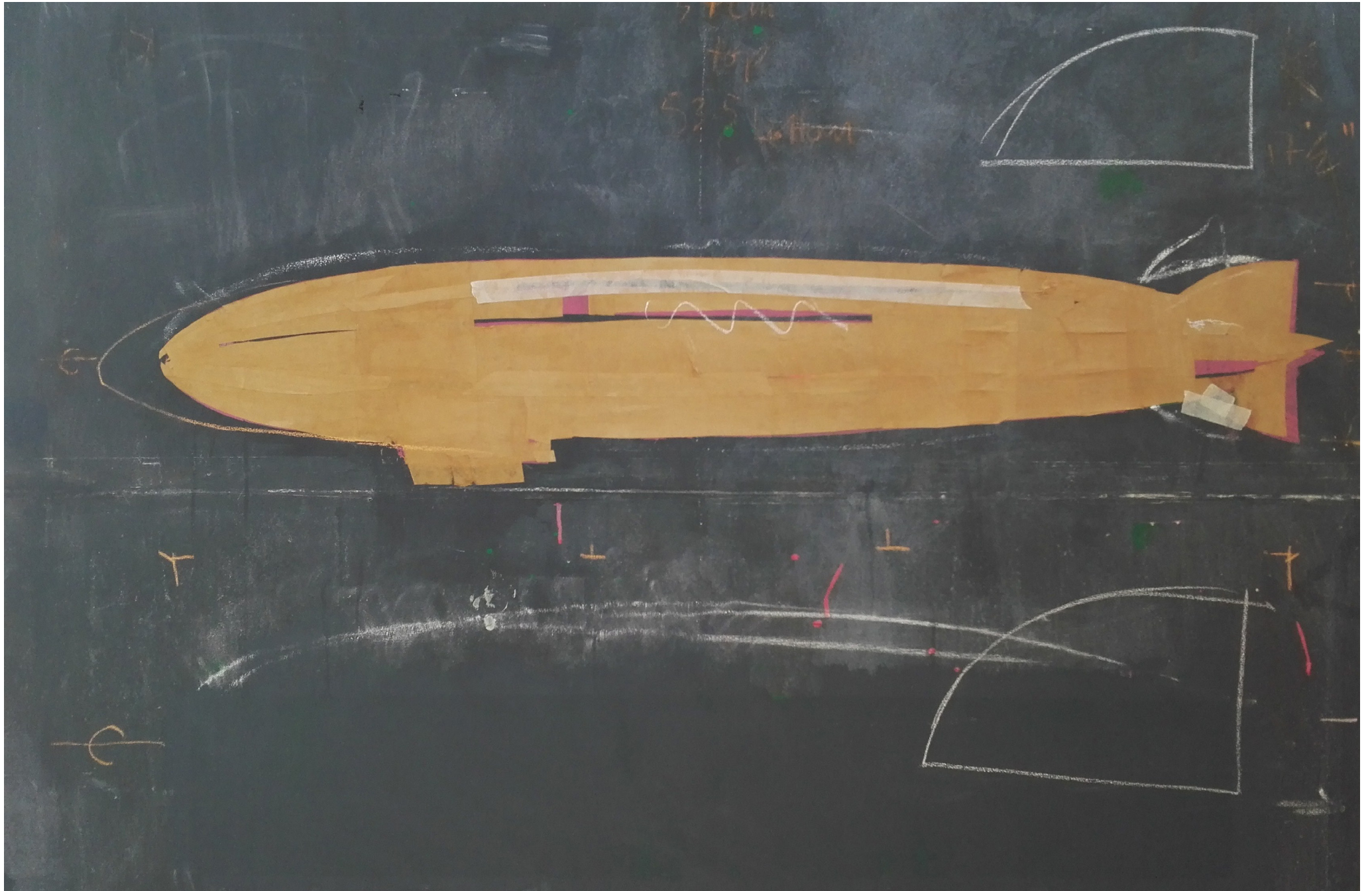
Study for Fertile Crescent (2018), Acrylic on paper, 83.5 x 59 cm



Study for Fertile Crescent 3 (2018), Acrylic on paper, 83.5 x 59 cm



Caporetto (2017), Wood, plaster and acrylic, 110 x 438 x 133 cm



Study for Ghost (2017), Paint, chalk and collage on canvas, 112 x 152.5 cm



Wash Horizon 3 (2014), Acrylic on paper, 83.5 x 59 cm



Untitled 2 (2014), Ink on paper, 29.5 x 21 cm

.... What are your plans for the future of the planet my Lord Hamlet,
what are your plans?
.... Ham and Jam
.... What are your plans for the future of the planet my Lord Hamlet
what are your plans?
.... Branches
brandishing
branches
at other
branches
brandishing
branches
against other
branches
brandishing
branches
for the sake of
brandishing
branches
against certain
branches

From one – act – verse play HAM AND JAM
by Childe Roland

Published by Hafan Books Swansea, 2010



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