



## **Superglue Interview, 2021**

Link: <https://supergluecollective.com/?p=2325>

The works on show by Maddie Rose Hills were born out of the lack of materials that was brought about by the lockdowns of 2020. Without any oil paints or big canvases, Maddie had to adapt. She had noticed the surplus newspapers building up around her house, forming stalagmites of news and material. She drew from these, and began to build forms into her work of layered newspaper, before painting them white, covering up the charged material and taking away its primary quality. What she has created is majestic pieces that depict fossils of a bygone era in the shapes of layered newspaper. The newspaper echoes this chronological, fossil idea because it quite literally is timestamped every day, before being made redundant the moment that day ceases.

**SuperGlue: Could you tell me how you got into art, your general feelings about where you are now and give a short introduction into your yourself as an artist?**

Maddie Rose Hills: I think I started because my mum is a painter. She makes oil paintings, which are quite figurative, but with a lot of interiors inspiration. She kind of imagines rooms and will take bits of wallpaper and chairs and put them all together and create these imagined spaces. When we were growing up she would often encourage us to paint and like provide bowls of fruit and just give us a paintbrush. If we were bored, we'd sit down and paint, so I think going forward from that just all the way through school, that was just kind of like what I did. Art was always the subject that I enjoyed the most, or even the only subject that I enjoyed. I went on and on from there and then went and did a foundation at Bournemouth, followed by a bachelor's degree at Bristol. I then took a five year period of time to paint in London, not really working to commissions, but just creating a body of work, getting an exhibition, showing that body of work, selling it and living off that a little bit. Then, last year, I decided to do a masters, which I'm on at the moment.

**SG: How do you think your art has developed since doing a BA? For instance, how do you feel your art has changed aesthetically and in theory?**

MRH: Yeah, I think it's definitely something that's continually changing for me. I'm kind of worried to be too definite about where I'm at right now because it is a real moment of flux for me, in terms of being on a masters that is incredibly open. My BA was all about experimenting within the bounds of painting. It was a very open BA and I stuck to painting, but I was sort of working with the landscape and exploring texture and scale, but very abstract. Then, since the MA, I think it's really opened up, because they encourage us to base our work on a specific material and really think about what that material is like. Philosophically, politically, everything, and I think that's massively opened up my work again.

**SG: Yeah, yeah for sure. I mean just from hearing that, it makes me react to these paintings and this process. I wonder if you could talk about the process of building your works up? I can see there is like paper coming through it, so I wonder if you could kind of is that like an introspective look into like your materials that you found that you're building on.**

MRH: Yeah, I think that I really see these as very experimental works; I don't really entirely understand them. I think I need a lot of hindsight in order to go back and look at what they mean to me, and where they sit within my practice. Materially speaking, it is quite interesting because they were born out of a period of not having any materials to work with. In lockdown, I didn't really have oil paints or any big canvases around, so I started just layering bits of newspaper. I was stacking up newspapers that were just surplus, lying around the house. Gradually, I noticed that forms would begin to grow out of the newspaper and I decided to paint the newspaper white. This decision was so that I could see the shapes and I could not be distracted by newspaper, which is such a significant material in itself. Newspapers are very charged materials, so painting it white was kind of removing that. Yeah, there's, there's so much that can be said about it as a material, but formally I think these were about trapping these very subtle creases that prominent in paper. There's this real materiality to paper. I believe you can tell underneath the surface of the paint that there's paper underneath. I was kind of just seeing them as these fossils. These forms were beginning to take the shapes of fossils; they were sort of forming underneath, slowly over time. The newspaper kind of echoed this idea of time as well, because it's time stamped. It's literally got the date on it. It's got the news on it and then the second that day is over, that newspaper is immediately redundant. It means

it's got no value anymore. So, it's painting it, while removing its value as newspaper, but giving it a new value as a surface.

**SG: How did this past year really affect your artistic practice? Did you find it creatively difficult? Did you find it actually quite nice?**

MRH: I feel like there were so many different phases of good and bad. Initially, when lockdown first started, I had a lot of creativity that just came from a feeling of stopping and pause. I think when you're making art, the moments where you can reflect are so, so, so valuable. I was very lucky, I got to come home and stay with my family and there was studio space, because my mum makes art and so I didn't have that panic because I felt very safe and and secure. So I did have this real outpour of no distractions making, but then that probably only lasted a couple of months or so before it started to get a bit scary and a bit of a weird. I'm studying as well, so being in lockdown had its own challenges because obviously your autonomy is kind of taken away, like when the university has to close your studio, that means they are putting the brakes on; you're not allowed to go in and make work anymore. And yeah, I'm I kind of stopped again and had this panic and went back to reading and learning. I started making like music and started making film and just adapting really. I said to myself, I've got my sofa and I've got my laptop and I'm just going to make what I can with that and I think that's a really interesting place to be. I feel like to have things taken away from you can lead you into quite different directions.

**SG: So with regards to SuperGlue, which champions collaboration, I wonder how you see collaboration within art? Especially given that SuperGlue21 is a group show; what do you think the merits of collaboration and group showing are?**

MRH: I'm a big fan of collaboration. I think it's the most important thing that you can do. I think it's always interesting doing a group show because it's a really good opportunity to meet other artists who are in your city and also to have conversations literally and visually with people, but also seeing your work alongside other people, especially if the curators chosen a theme for that. It allows you to see your work in a different light, so you might notice that your work is talking to another artist, work through texture or colour or shape, and that conversation can lead you to seeing something different or noticing something different. But also, just to chat and like have a good time with artists. It's a very different relationship between artists, you just get down to the subject of the art quite quickly I think. I've created a few group

shows as well, and I see it more and more now as an artwork in itself, It's actually part of an art practice. It's just like a different way of expressing yourself creatively.

**SG: I saw you you've had like residencies away from England, am I right in thinking that you're working in France, as well as having done a residency in Iceland? I wonder if you could tell us a bit about those experiences, and how they affected your practice.**

MRH: I'm going to be teaching art classes out in France and that is very much to be discussed with the hotel who invited me out to do art classes. In 2015, straight after leaving university, I took part in an artist residency in Iceland, which was called the Wild Fjords Residency, based in the Westfjords in the middle of nowhere in Iceland. There is really nobody there and it's this amazing landscape where no trees grow. It literally looks like you're on another planet. It's the closest I've ever been to being on another planet. It was amazing and like nobody, no people, just the odd sheep. The whole purpose of that residency was really unique because they took ten creatives, like a painter, a dancer, a sculptor, a musician, a poet, which meant a really diverse range of creatives. But, you all had to be linked by this interest in the landscape and in walking. So, each day, we set off with our rucksacks, tents, and all of our food and drink and it was literally a walking residency. So, every day we would walk basically like over one of these fjords, we would literally go around the fjord over the mountain, around the fjord, over the mountain and one little chunk of that every single day and then put up a tent at the end of the day. The whole purpose of it was to walk, chat and to discuss ideas, which was where the collaboration thing is interesting again. They provided reading material before, so we had read a lot of stuff about the Icelandic landscape and what it meant to walk in a landscape and what it means to make art responding to a landscape. I think that method of having time in a place, in an environment with nothing but that space and being deprived of any art making materials, means that when you come back, you have this outpour again and in a way that is kind of what the lockdown experience was. Lockdown was nothing all of a sudden and you just have to make with what is going on inside your head basically. That had a huge impact on my work I'm very open to that way of working; taking away the paintbrushes for a period of time and just letting the experience of being manifest and letting the process kind of work its way.

**SG: I think that actually shows your work as well, especially in the new pieces. We are coming towards the end now, so I'll you what's in the future for you, what have you got planned?**

MRH: I'm going to move to Amsterdam in October and I don't know what I'm gonna do out there. I'm not sure what's in the future, but for now, the near future is going I

am going to to finish off the Masters and focus everything on that, my brain is very much there and finishing that off and writing a dissertation.

**SG: How do you relate to glue?**

MRH: I literally am covered in glue. Right now, I am covered in PVA glue all over my hands. I find it fabulous and also quite annoying. It's certainly sticky.