

STARTING FROM THE WRONG PLACE

Languages are an untidy business; full of their own internal consistencies, rules and exceptions that defy logic. They form gradually, through necessity; through a desire to push through confusion to a state of recognition. Even when a particular language evades our understanding, we can often still identify it through its unique characteristics, enjoying its tone, tempo, timbre, texture.

Driven to experimentation, Kate Tucker ventures into new territory with each body of work, with these developments plotting a trajectory within the internal language of her practice. Materials and images morph and migrate. Clay cradles canvas and infiltrates wall hangings. Textiles are transformed into digital images, and then back again. Plaited canvas frames encircle paintings like an infinite loop, refusing to enclose or contain.

These transitions and evolutions take place due to a kind of intentional adversity, set up through material constraints. The parameters Tucker sets for herself push the artist to find a way through, from a place of discomfort to a resolution - intuitively working until a final object speaks with its own voice. When embarking on a new work, these guidelines (whether quantity, shape, or shade) are intentionally chosen by the artist to challenge herself to find her way to a new state of recognition. A clay sphere can be willed to be structurally sound. A discordant colour invites unexpected pigments into the mix. Figuration demands to be sliced into abstraction. Layers obscure, brushstrokes diffuse, and pixels confuse. Two- and three-dimensional forms find common ground, grasp each other, fold together, and break away.

The resulting works, while being hard-won, express a time-worn softness and gentleness, through their organic edges, fleshy, dusty palette, and hand-shaped bodies wearing worn patinated coats. They draw the viewer in, Tucker's time and labour demanding our attention in exchange.

We find ourselves in a moment littered with digital prompts - prompts which come from a place of certainty, designed to immediately generate the desired outcome. No surprises, no layers, no offcuts. Only clean-cut results, instantly finalised, flattened for use. Tucker's practice exists in defiance of this. Starting with intention from the wrong place, Tucker hand-builds a language of layers and traces, calling the viewer into a state of recognition beyond definition.

Chloé Wolifson, September 2026