***The Arborealists***

***ACE Arts, Somerton, 18 November – 23 December 2023***

***Artists’ texts***

**Jane Eaton**

Reference was made to the depiction of trees in Indian miniature landscapes. Trees played a prominent role in this form of art, often painted using bright colour pigments with fine detailed patterns that represented elements significant to a particular tree.

Painted using acrylic and oil in high key colours my work is on a much larger scale. The indigenous British trees are painted with repeat seed ‘patterns’ with the work being presented in a very bright neon pink frame.

It is a very colourful celebration that highlights the importance of tree seeds and natural seed regeneration, nature's tool to combat the effects of climate change.

**Tom Genders**

The subject is Grafton wood in Worcestershire, I have been using this location as inspiration for the past five years. It is a coppiced woodland maintained by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust to mimic a medieval management style, and home to a number of rare butterflies. The wood is beautiful and shows what can be achieved with a little investment in nature, in stands in stark contrast to a typical woodland in the Midlands, home of pheasant pens and dear damage. The coppice - protected from deer in its first years of regeneration - springs up in great density after being cut back periodically. It exists beneath great old and gnarled oak trees. I once saw 9 woodcocks during one evening walk through Grafton. I regularly visit to paint or sketch in the woodland, this painting is from one such sketch done on a crystal-clear morning in early March when the wood was ringing with bird song.

**Gary Cook**

A bend in the Evenlode River, a tributary to the Thames, in the Cotswolds as it

passes through Daylesford. Silhouettes and names of some of the wildlife I saw as I sketched on the riverbank are hidden in the background of the painting.

**Ann Blockley**

Last winter the storms felled several trees in our woodland garden. To emphasise the theme of breakage, I assembled scraps of watercolour paper into a new, irregular shape which I collaged and covered with gesso. Paint was slashed on in rich earthy trails, but the fallen tree was left bleached and pale like a ghostly premonition for the ones still standing. It was my tiny tribute to the trees and Earth to make full use of the paper that it provides by recycling it into new artwork.

The painting is featured in ‘Poetic Woods’ by Ann Blockley published by Batsford 2023

**Stephanie Fawbert**

Stephanie Fawbert’s paintings reflect on human courage, survival and vulnerability within natural landscapes. In this painting, we see a small figure walking through a plantation, dwarfed by the soaring trees. Fawbert’s work reminds us of the unpredictability of existence, of everyday adventure and the thrill of stepping into the unknown.

**Annabel Cullen**

Coming across this remnant of a once majestic oak tree, hidden in a

copse of younger trees and bushes, heroic in its dead grandeur, I was

moved to depict its monumental, gnarly severed trunks. It is one of the

few remaining relicts of The Oaks, an eighteenth-century Surrey estate,

now Oaks Park, Carshalton.

**Natasha Dien**

**Robert Brooks**

A view seen from the Half Moon Inn, Black Down Hill. A well-orchestrated composition. From the foreground trees to the small into the back ground. The sweeping slope of the hill moves everything together. The colour changes and movements of the trees create the drama so your attention looking at this view is fixed.

**Andrew Carnie**

At the heart of life, and in fact, entering and leaving our physical heart and indeed every organ of our bodies is a number of tree-like structures, dendritic forms, nerves, arteries, and veins that fundamentally make our bodies work. As in nature, in trees, these, systems supply, transmit, and remove all the matter that are responsible for life. We are intimately linked to these dendritic forms,

share form with them, share life on this planet with them. I am fascinated by how this all operates, and my work tries to explore these ideas.

**Howard Phipps**

Lewesdon Hill is one of a line of ancient hill forts, in West Dorset, it is situated centrally between Pilsdon Pen, and Eggardon. These are largely treeless hills, whereas Lewesdon’s ramparts are largely obscured by ancient beech trees.

In recent years I have had a particular interest in such timeless places, where earlier generations have left their mark. In this instance I was drawn to the distinctive shapes of a pair of beech trees on the bank above the ancient drove from Pilsdon Pen, as it nears Lewesdon Hill. Beeches are a favourite tree, and I enjoy the fall of light across their smooth forms, and the cast shadows across adjacent track.

I made an initial watercolour on location of this subject. The engraving has been made on an end grain boxwood block, on completion the relief surface is inked using a roller, and impressions are taken on paper using an Albion hand Press dated 1862.

**Blaze Cyan**

This is on of a pair of etchings from one of the most beautiful and ancient Sweet Chestnuts at Croft Castle in Herefordshire, are two views of the same incredible tree.

At around 400-500 years old it’s a veteran of the parklands there, reputed to have been planted from acorns from the Spanish Armada ships.

**Stella Carr**

My work involves the symbiotic relationship we have with the natural world. For me, this boundary-less connection with ecology takes its form from a sensed space that we all cohabit.

This space is inhabited by the specific ecology of a place, from woodland floor to top canopy, one may feel this connection. To make works in this context is to be challenged by scale, i.e. how to depict macro and micro networks, the reality of an ecosystem that has no beginning and end, microscopic organisms having as valued influence as enormous mature trees. There are blurred edges in the ecosystems of woodland; multitudes of species, each growing with individual characteristics, whilst existing as one linked system.

**Fiona McIntyre**

I painted this after walking through a snowstorm in Ampney Crucis, Gloucestershire. The snow had piled up to several feet creating an incredible blanket of calmness over the landscape. The trees in this glade were transformed into simplified shapes and patterns where the snow had fallen on branches and created a pristine white carpet in the woodland understory.

**Kevin Tole**

This is a large charcoal drawing of a tree in my local woods. The tree is a Lucombe Oak, a hybrid between Cork and a Turkey oak first developed by a Devon horticulturalist, William Lucombe. This tree, in Widey Woods in Plymouth is as large as the Lucombe Oak in Kew Gardens and most be a very early specimen of Mr Lucombe’s . It is probably my favourite tree in my locale and I have produced many works around it.

**Abi Kremer**

Remembering Wistmans Wood was made following an Arborealist visit to

Dartmoor, taking in and making studies of the area.

The magical atmosphere of this woodland, with extraordinary tree forms and

boulders led to this piece, in which the arabesque shapes appear to animate

and dance. My practice involves working with contemporary dance companies, which will have influenced this, along with the surrealist artist Eileen Agar and colourist Bridget Riley.

**David Wiseman**

This painting is a celebratory, poetic interpretation of Perivale Wood Nature Reserve known locally as ‘Bluebell Woods’. This is one of our favourite places, frequently visited over many years and is close to where we live. I aim to create a feeling of change and movement in the landscape balanced between the pure love of paint and mark making and the depiction of a special place.

**Paul Newman**

This piece depicts a Yew Grove about a mile from home. It became a regular point to walk to during Lockdown, a place to converse in and with, the spirit lurking somewhere between the subject and the viewer.

**Celia de Serra**

This drawing is based on the Elan Valley, Wales.

The Elan Valley Trust has a project to replace conifer woodland on the estate with native broadleaf species. I came across a woodland track that had just the right feel of light about it - with young broadleaf trees competing alongside self-seeded conifers. It’s called ‘Fast Light’ because that’s how the light disappears quickly over the mountains on a late autumn afternoon.

**Nick Schlee**

I wanted to capture the bright contrast of the yellowing leaves with the clear Autumn blue sky. Working at speed ensures a vigorous brushwork which transmits the trees' restless energy.

**Philippa Beale**

The Hog’s back or the A31, is a hilly ridge part of the North Downs in Surrey, it runs between Farnham and Guilford and this view, when I used to pass it several times a week always appeared to be far away. Sometimes what is far away is more interesting and articulates a profound essence of what appears to be sacred. The Hog’s Back is sacred to me because I had literally broken the journey to get home to my beloved dying mother by the time I had got onto the A31.

Trees are of significance to humans, this has created, throughout history the desire to reach these sacred places, whether they be at the top of a hill or across water. These views exists continually in our imagination as a place of escape. This is an ink mono print made as part of a series of views that are one reason or another sacred to me.

**Richard Bavin**

This painting, based on outdoor sketches, is ancient woodland owned and cared for by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. I love the transformative quality of the low winter light and the fallen tree left to provide food and shelter for hundreds of creatures.

**Tim Craven**

East Water Valley is on the Southern edge of the magnificent Horner Wood on Exmoor. I was looking down from above into the dense undergrowth and was captivated by the sparkling sunlight dissolving the foliage and tree form patterns into an optical abstraction that dances in the eyes.

**Jacqui Wedlake-Hatton**

My interest in this particular tree was captured by the apparent symbiosis of the tree and the extensive presence of lichens. These, together with the water that had pooled at the base of the tree, were animated by a skittering wind that intensified the drama of this wild moorland.