



Plants In Place

Zoe Ashbrook | Kristel Collison | Jan Dowson | Alice Fox | Jane Higginbottom | Barbara Howey | Adele Howitt | Linda Ingham | Paula MacArthur | Rachel McDonnell | Kirsty O’Leary-Leeson | Frances Presley | Harvey Taylor | Helen Thomas | Harriet Tarlo | Judith Tucker
Joanna Whittle



Bringing together contemporary artists, poets and designer-makers whose practice involves consideration of plants and their locations which speak of wider issues.

Part of the GATHER winter-winter project supported by funds from The Arts Council England

Zoe Ashbrook

Winters Past, 2021, Photography

Interpreting the temporality experienced within an ancient woodland.

Zoe Ashbrook is an artist working with landscape and nature at the heart of her practice. *Winters Past* represents multiple experiences of a place through a multi-layered manipulated image to create a visual ambiguity and temporal quality of the past, the present and a hint of possible futures, evoking a sense of fragility within the biodiversity of the natural world. Rather than being work that visually depicts a specific landscape the image is derived from the experience and deeply reflective responses to emotive and sensory observations while immersed *in* the landscape. Working with a range of materials and processes including painting, digital photography and printmaking, Zoe's creative practice celebrates the wildness and beauty of the natural world around her focussing on the sense of connection to the history of life which has come and gone and the fragile beauty of our diverse natural world.



Kristel Collison

Of Necessity, April 2021, Cyanotype

Just weeds

Unassuming and undesired

Lockdown isolation

Staying close to home

Permitted exercise

Noticing the unnoticed

My work explores concepts of place and displacement, connection and disconnection. I'm particularly drawn to fragile, neglected and often unremarkable or overlooked places and repeatedly return to the same locations at different times or seasons.



During lockdown the areas I regularly visited were off limits. With exercise restricted to my local area I used the opportunity to become more absorbed in my immediate surroundings and garden.

I've consistently made work with inexpensive cameras. Forging new and different connections with home led to me wanting to work in ways which were more environmentally conscious and intuitive.

I chose the cyanotype process due to the simplicity of using two chemicals, direct sunlight and water. Making low tech cameraless photograms was affordable and achievable within my home environment. Plants were gathered from my garden and I collected pavement weeds close to my doorstep. As a means of expediency and wanting to use what was readily available I made images on packaging from my recycling bin and the end pages from old books found in a skip.

The cyanotype chemicals reacted with the paper and card in ways I hadn't predicted and gave rise to imperfections which then became an integral part of the work.

Jan Dowson

Black & White 'Flower Cloth', Applique, Hand & Machine stitch on upcycled vintage fabrics

My garden is my oasis and is brimming with beautiful plants and flowers which provide me with reams of inspiration.

After many years being a textile artist and over 25 years teaching C&G's Creative Textiles, I retired 6 years ago. Before Covid-19, I still taught workshops and talks for the Embroiderer's Guild groups around the country. Retired and with more free time on my hands, I was able to get a much wanted pet and Bertie, our little dog, arrived into our lives. For the first time in years I was out walking every day, fully engaging with the natural environment. I mainly turn to nature for inspiration such as landscapes, the beach, the wonderful Lincolnshire Wolds, our local parks and woods. My garden is my oasis and is brimming with beautiful plants and flowers which provide me with reams of inspiration. On my walks I do lots of sketching, collecting shells, sea glass, driftwood, beach ceramic, hedgerow flowers (which I later dry) and other bits of treasure I would find on our dog walks. I started to develop ideas for new work and I could finally begin a new narrative.

My focus is hand stitching, getting back to basics with just fabric and thread. Using stitches in an expressive way. Hence my book – *Expressive Stitches*.



Alice Fox

Dandelion Weave, Dandelion stems, gathered after flowering, dried, manipulated to form cordage and then woven together.

My process-led practice is based on personal engagement with landscape and has sustainability at its heart. I work with found objects, gathered materials and natural processes. I gather the materials that are available to me, testing, sampling and exploring them to find possibilities using my textiles-based skill set and techniques borrowed from soft basketry.

Establishing my allotment as a source of materials for my work has provided a space where I can experiment, exploring the potential of what grows there, planted and wild, as well as other materials found on the plot. Materials are produced, gathered and processed seasonally and are hard-won: I may only have a small batch of each type of usable material each year. As a result, each bundle of dried dandelion stems, is enormously precious (to me) by its scarcity and the meaning attached to it through its sourcing and hand-processing. This is a 'bricolage' approach to making: using what is at hand on the plot and exploring the materiality and potential of those materials within the context of my own making skills.



Jane Higginbottom

Snake's Head Fritillary Spoon, 2015, Carved Wood

I make work about plants collected locally using plant materials and making inks and dyes from gathered plant matter.

Throughout my art practice I have increasingly become more interested in plants - the way that they grow and change throughout the year, or over a long period of time in the case of trees, and the materials that they are made of.



In 2019 I made a year-long study of plants on my walk between my home and studio via the local Burgess Park. I took photographs and collected plant material. From this I started to build an 'alphabet' of seasonal plant drawings, also experimenting with making paper from plants with the help of the brilliant paper maker Lucy Baxandall at Morley college. I also started to make inks and dyes from plants and create sculptures from plant material.

The same year I took part in the *A Case for Place* project at Gallery Steel Rooms and looked at the loss of trees in the area of North Lincolnshire as well as which trees were suitable to the area and related to the time of year of the exhibition. From this came the idea of 'Tree bags' which were small hand-made paper leaves studded with Paper Birch and Alder tree seeds and parcelled in recycled tea bags. These I attached to postcards for the public to take away. The piece tree bags is a collection of these displayed in grid formation (shown in film).

Barbara Howey

Woodland Snowdrops, 2021, Oil on Board

In the *Woodland Snowdrops* the viewer is invited in-close to its flowery subject to experience the energy of short intense non-human life.

Barbara Howey lives and works in Norwich, UK. In her current work the viewer is invited in-close to fungal, animal and flowery subjects to experience the energy of short intense non-human life. The paintings are part of an ongoing personal ecological and botanical exploration gathered from suburban green spaces on the edges of cities which are threatened with "development". The work is made wet into wet in one sitting revealing the process of making through the stains, drips and marks that describe the forms. The use of heightened colour and gestural marks evokes the aliveness and the pleasure of such human/non-human encounters.



Barbara Howey has exhibited nationally and internationally both in solo and group exhibitions and has taken part in major UK painting prizes such as the John Moores and Exeter Phoenix Contemporary. In 2018 she was artist in residence at Norsk Kunstnercentre Dale, Norway. She has work in national and international public collections

Adele Howitt

Against All Odds, 2021, Video

Against all odds – grass pushing through the dried clay bank of the River Hull industrial region.

I have always been interested in how we remember landscape, what landscape is and how landscape is represented. I am also interested in pattern and was absolutely thrilled to find out a few years back that pattern is not just some kind of frivolous decoration but is actually something that's really important. In 2012, I worked in Seville, Spain, for three months as part of a residency at Naturalia wildlife garden. Alongside a landscape architect, I researched pollen grains, living landscapes and migration routes.



A long history of experimentation with ceramic form in her studio practice has led to artwork exhibited across Europe, including the Steninge Slott Cultural Centre, Stockholme, Sweden; VI Bienniel de Ceramica del Vendrell, Barcelona, Spain; Ceramica Multiplex at Kerameikon, Croatia, as well as the London Design Fair, The Crafts Council British Crafts Pavilion, the British Ceramics Bienniel 2017 and various RHS Gardens including the Chelsea Flower Show. *Seedpod White* was selected for the International Taiwan Biennale 2016 at the Yingge Ceramics Museum near Teipei, and *Hypericum Perforatum* has been selected for the NVK KERAMIEK TRIENNALE 2021 at the CODA Museum, Apeldoorn, Netherlands. Her ceramics can be found in museum collections in Teipei, Barnsley, Croatia and various UK 'arts in health' spaces.

Linda Ingham

Inside Looking Out: towards the Peregrine nest, 2021,
Watercolour and Mixed Media on Jet and Gesso prepared paper

Locating plants in place, amongst the bird's foot trefoil at Jubilee Viewpoint, RSPB Saltholme.

My process-led practice has increasingly become concerned with plants, place, ecology and conservation. I am interested in how people look at and think about plants in the environment, including folk and herbal histories, and in raising awareness of their importance. Currently I am concerned with three sites in particular on nature reserves: RSPB Blacktoft Sands in the East Riding of Yorkshire, RSPB Saltholme in Teesside, and the Wildlife Trust Far Ings National Nature Reserve, North Lincolnshire. The work arising from each place is very varied in connection to my experience of the sites, with the Far Ings and Saltholme work being particularly materials-focussed, arising from the combination of conservation and industry – that latter, past and present.



Linda Ingham lives in coastal Lincolnshire and has her studio on the south bank of the Humber Estuary at The Ropewalk in Barton upon Humber. She exhibits nationally and internationally, achieving her MA in Fine Art for Lincoln University School of Art, Architecture and Design in 2007. Her work is in collections nationally and internationally including the East Contemporary Artists collections at UCS, Swindon Art Gallery & Museum, Rugby Museum & Art Gallery, and University of Arizona Museum of Art, USA, Madison Museum and Gallery, Ohio; Komechak Museum, Chicago USA, Jiangsu Arts and Craft Museum, China.

Paula MacArthur

To the Light, 2019, Oil on Canvas

Over recent years I've been drawn to still life subjects which are inherently geometric.

I have always been interested in mathematics within painting; the structure within the composition, the rules of perspective, the golden section. Over recent years I've been drawn to still life subjects which are inherently geometric, including looking at plant forms.

Almost all plant growth conforms to the Fibonacci sequence, this sequence dictates the arrangement of the leaves along a stem, ensuring that each leaf has maximum access to light. Rather than *following* mathematical patterns, plant growth has *evolved* throughout nature as the optimal arrangement of things. In a time when we, as humans, often feel so disconnected from nature, I find it reassuring to remember that we too conform to these patterns; we are part of nature and everything we experience is interconnected through these patterns.

The act of painting is for me quite meditative; it's a time to process and consider all that I've experienced, make connections and find my place. Through examining the superficial colour, light and form, enjoying its beauty, and finding a painterly equivalent, I am led to something which describes both the isolation of a solitary individual but also the completeness of the universe.



Rachel McDonnell

Without us they Fall, 2020, Oil on Panel

**Trees fall indifferently, without our interference;
but without our help, will they all soon fall?**

For so long, as we evolved as a species, the natural environment has been bigger than us. Its growth, lives and death have been little affected by mankind. In recent centuries, however, the balance has shifted, and the impact of our actions upon the world have become all but overpowering, consisting not only of direct effects (such as cutting down a tree), but also indirect ones (such as climate change or acid rain). My work seeks to explore these ideas, to celebrate the beauty and fragility of our environment, and its role as barometer and victim of what we are doing to the world which supports us. Less pessimistically, I also believe the environment itself may offer one of the best solutions to our global predicament. I hope, by sharing an appreciation for special places and their inhabitants through my work, to make a small contribution to a feeling of connection with them, which might in turn precipitate a tiny shift towards changing how we look after the place which is, in the end, essential to us all.



Kirsty O'Leary-Leeson

In Amidst, 2018, Pencil on Gesso-primed wood

Landscape is a portrait of the soul

Kirsty explores the physical and psychological geography of existence, using drawing as it records the unfolding of an event and has as much to do with reflection as with observation, her work represents the depiction of a fluid reality.



November 20

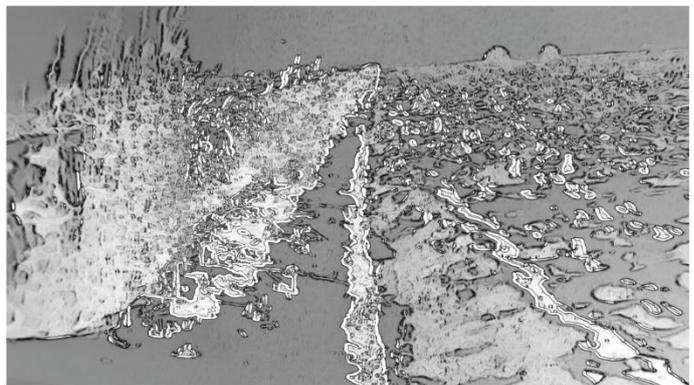
Frances Presley

Black Fens Viral (extract from sequence)
2020

There are still some plants in the marginal spaces of the Black Fens which give cause for hope.

Black Fens Viral: It began in summer 2020 when I was recovering from Covid and lockdown was lifting. I travelled to Norfolk on the slow train which goes through the Black Fens of East Anglia. This flat, almost hedgeless and treeless, agricultural landscape of black peat was once marshland, before the drainage of the fens. I often write about landscapes I love, such as Exmoor or the north Norfolk coast, protected by national parks and nature reserves, but I needed to write about this damaged landscape, where plants are exploited and biodiversity ignored. It corresponded to the damage caused by the pandemic, a result of human incursions into wild places.

she said her name was in November rain you'll find it's Tier 3 lines that go on forever through a winter green field or furrows filled with water never fallow soil is compacted I think of you O, Fallow for a year she kissed you said her name was to live among these exhausted fields how lonely it was to live among these permanently harvested fields are those roosts or the last leaves lying low for a year she said her name was fallow I think of you low for a year she kissed you I'm just getting to the trees beautiful shutters of Brandon I'm not getting off I'm just getting low if you're lucky a copse or a corpse of a field lying low for a year she kissed you the hedges grubbed out there are those roosts or these exhausted fields there are no grubs beautiful shutters of Brandon I'm not getting off I'm getting nearer my bike the last leaves clinging to the soil compacted never fallow lying low forever through a winter green field or furrows filled with water all the hedges grubbed out there are you leaves clinging nearer my bike O, Fallow for a year she kissed you getting off I'm just getting to the trees beautiful shutters of Brandon if you're lucky a copse if you said her name was to live among these exhausted fields if she kissed you leave Tier 2 lying low for a year she kissed you for a year she kissed you



Writing about the Black Fens also brought back memories of my childhood in Lincolnshire. I studied botany at school but had difficulty

finding wildflowers to identify in the marginal strips of uncultivated land. There are still some plants in the marginal spaces of the Black Fens which give cause for hope. The most noticeable are the trees, which I have previously focused on in *Halse for Hazel* (Shearsman, 2014: www.shearsman.com) and in a study of lowland trees, *Sallow*, with artist Irma Irsara (Leaf Press, 2016: www.leafepress.com)

'Viral' refers both to Covid and to a text generator known as the Markov chain: a strange rearrangement of text according to an algorithm based on repeated vowels and consonants.

Harvey Taylor

Mallow, 2021, Oil on Canvas

Drawn to plants not considered 'beautiful' this work depicts a patch of neglected Mallow.

Harvey's early work centred on abstract painting. Today his practice has evolved into hyperrealist work, meticulously constructed and capturing details of the natural world. His work includes paintings of the sea, treescapes and leaves as well as portraits.

"Selecting an image to transform into a painting is the hardest part, as I know I will be working on it for a number of weeks and maybe months, depending on the size of the canvas. The paintings are very slowly built up using a strict method. This painting is taken from an image I took whilst watching my daughter at a skate park in Brightlingsea in Essex."

Harvey lives and works in Colchester, Essex. He trained at Winchester School of Art.



Helen Thomas

7386 IV, 2020, Acrylic on Board

Mapping the extraordinary in the apparently incidental

I'm interested in our relationships with plants and place. My practice involves studio and field work; the introduction of the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 prohibited both of these approaches.

I was working towards an exhibition at Wakefield Cathedral, focussed on spontaneous urban flora. I needed to keep painting, even if the exhibition was likely to be postponed or cancelled.

A corner of the kitchen table became makeshift studio, and this called for working on a small scale. I took photos on permitted daily walks of pavement plants that caught my eye; then reviewed them on my laptop to select reference images. Working from digital images was a relatively new process for me at the time.

7386 IV is part of a series. At first glance this incidental patch of ground could be anywhere. Focussing in on details revealed the specificity of the location; those fragments of dry stems, the dandelion leaves, the surface of the tarmac. This micro scape is a very particular somewhere.

The title refers to the digital file number. I usually note the location when working outside; I've no record of where the reference photo was taken and I've never found this spot again.



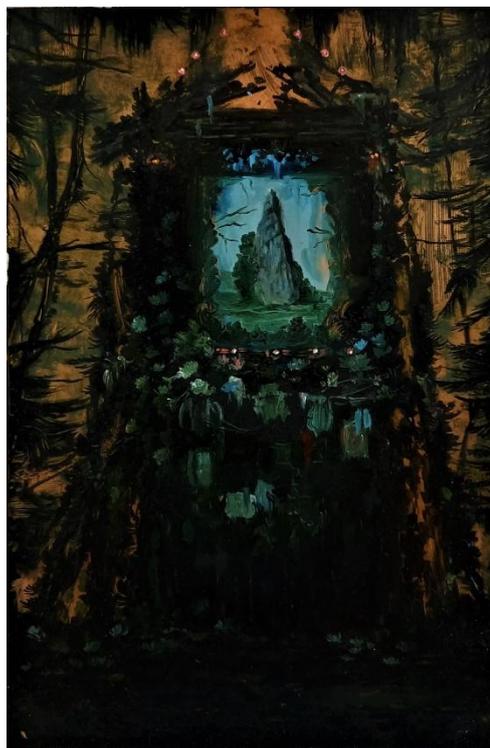
Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker

Dark Marsh: silvered out

***Dark Marsh: silvered out* considers the pioneering salt marsh plants of the Humberston Fitties, Tetney Marsh area, North East Lincolnshire.**

This collaborative piece is one of an ongoing series of paintings and poems. *Dark Marsh: silvered out*, considers the pioneering salt marsh plants of the Humberston Fitties, Tetney Marsh area, in North East Lincolnshire. This work considers plants that are both vulnerable to sea level rise, but that also help to protect the land from flooding. The work explores scale and space in the more-than-human worlds in microcosm and juxtaposition, touching on the play of light, tide and colour, uncanny transformations after dark, and notions of vulnerability, occupation, resilience and reclamation.

samphire	skylark sung
seablite deepen	summer out
saltwort blood	sung whiter
glands, cells	worts to fade
stems into	thrift, spurrey
winter, twine	lavender
twist ridged	heads seed
purslane's	wormwood
blush-shined	silvered out
skin, point	plantain specks
spined reeds,	got fallen, got
grasses, rushes	under flood
ever defend	salt rain
curved curling	goldwet to
green	wait



Joanna Whittle

Forest Shrine (Mourning Booth), 2021, Oil on Copper

... emerging from the forest floor ... containing illuminated scenes of lost landscapes ...

Joanna Whittle is landscape painter whose work focuses on our presence and absence in the landscape through a re-examination of the picturesque ruin. Her small-scale landscape paintings are detailed worlds, seemingly based, but which quickly unravel, with incongruous elements unsettling the viewer. The structures which sit within these landscapes are often fragile and transient, taking the form of tents and fairground facades which seem to be in the process of collapsing into the landscape, sinking in to mud and water. The shrine paintings explore the way in which we express grief within the landscape through the creation of memorials or shrines. They emerge from the forest floor, constructed from leaves and branches and containing illuminated scenes of lost landscapes, so that nature itself becomes the focus of mourning in these works.

Whittle was winner of the Contemporary British Painting Prize 2019 and The New Light Prize, Valeria Sykes Award in 2020. She has taken part in numerous group and solo exhibitions, most recently 'Between Islands' at the Harley

Gallery (Worksop), an Arts Council funded project, working with the Portland Collection at the Wellbeck Estate. She is currently undertaking a residency with the Freelands Foundation (London) based at Site Gallery in Sheffield.

INDEX of Artists



Zoe Ashbrook

Winters Past

2021

Photography

www.zoeashbrook.com



Kristel Collison

Of Necessity

2021

Cyanotype

@kristel.collison



Jan Dowson

Black and White 'Flower Cloth'

Applique, hand & machine stitch onto repurposed vintage fabric

@jandowson



Alice Fox

Dandelion Weave

Stems dried, manipulated to form cordage then woven together

2021

www.alicefox.co.uk



Jane Higginbottom

Snake's Head Fritillary Spoon

2015

Carved Wood

www.janehigginbottom.co.uk



Barbara Howey

Woodland Snowdrops

2021

Oil on Board

www.barbara-howey.co.uk



Adele Howitt

Against All Odds

2021

Video

www.adelehowitt.co.uk



Linda Ingham

Inside looking out – towards the peregrine nest

2021

Watercolour and mixed media on paper

www.lindaingham.com



Paula MacArthur

To the Light

2019

Oil on Canvas

www.paula-macarthur.com



Rachel McDonnell

Without us they Fall

2020

Oil on Panel

<https://rachel3814.wixsite.com/rachelmcdonnell>



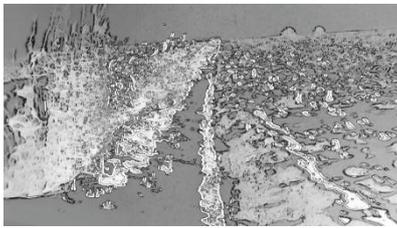
Kirsty O'Leary-Leeson

In Amongst

2018

Pencil on Gesso primed wood

www.kirstyoleary.com



Frances Presley

Black Fen Sequence

Snow (with poem)

2020

www.francespresley.co.uk



Harvey Taylor

Mallow

2021

Oil on canvas

www.harveytaylor.co.uk



Helen Thomas

7386 IV

2021

Acrylic on Board

www.toastedorange.co.uk



Harriet Tarlo (poet)

Judith Tucker (painter)

Dark Marsh – Silvered Out

2021

Oil on Canvas with poem

www.judithtuckerartist.com



Joanna Whittle

Forest Shrine (Mourning Booth)

2021

Oil on Copper

www.joannawhittle.com

Plants in Place

Is a participatory element of the

GATHER winter-winter

Project

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GATHER: winter-winter

observing in and through the reserve

a visual arts project by Linda Ingham



Exhibitions | Events | Opportunities – www.lindaingham.com