

# ART SHape

Art Without Barriers



Art Bridge  
**Emergents**

## The critical connection between Humans and Trees

At Westonbirt Arboretum



Forestry England



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



## Art Bridge **Emergents**

Despite the challenges of 2020, Art Shape are thrilled to bring you this diverse and glorious exhibition of painting, mixed media, drawing and installation created by artists on the Art Bridge Emergents programme, artist in residence Deb Hoy and commissioned artists.

Our partnership with Westonbirt Arboretum has proved a solace and inspiration for our artists who have presented different perspectives on the critical connection between humans and trees. The work demonstrates a deep engagement and connection with the Arboretum.

The exhibition has also been recorded and audio transcribed for you to watch from the comfort of your home.

**[Click here to watch online](#)**

# Exhibiting Artists

Sophie Wardle . Flora Keays . Edwina Cross . Viva O'Flynn . Maddi Smith-  
Nelson . Tracy Edwards . Max Frances . Jennie Burge .  
Madame Melting Pot of Macabre .  
Sue Trickey . Clancy Ward . Jackie Drinkwater . Tom Griffiths .  
Robert Hack . Gwilym Roberts . Alisdair Shepherd .  
Julie Green . Anna Ryan . Judy Reynolds . Jamie Eden .  
Lisa Matysiak . Kathy Glendenning . Amy Freeman . Adam White .  
Carolyn Gemson . David Seed . Deb Hoy

# Artist in Residence: **Deb Hoy**



Deb Hoy  
Artist in Residence

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“As Artist in Residence I am focusing on an installation titled ‘Lungs of the Earth’ which explores the relationship between trees and humans through the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and create oxygen, which is essential for humans to breathe.

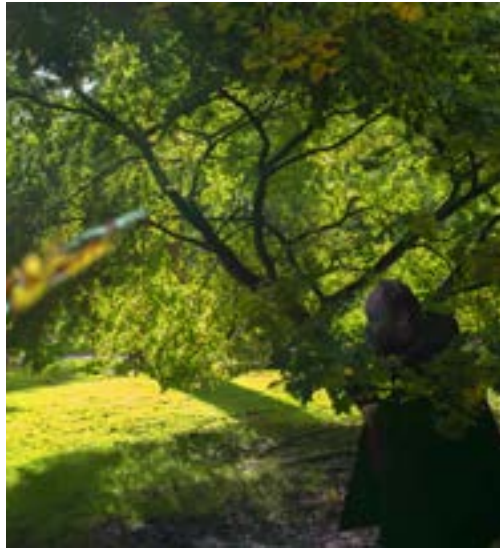
Throughout the residency I’ve been working with the Art Bridge Emergents to research and respond to the ‘Disappearing tree trail’ at Westonbirt, learning more about the threats to common tree species and what’s being done to conserve them. I am working alongside Emergents artists to create a geodesic dome that draws these themes together.”



# Foreword from **Westonbirt**



Susanna Bayliss  
Interpretation Officer



“Westonbirt is thrilled to have been part of Art Shape’s Art Bridge Emergents programme. With restrictions providing a challenging backdrop for arts and culture across the world, we feel privileged that this project has been able to continue.

We have always believed in the power of nature for our health and wellbeing, and so it is even more pertinent this year that we have been able to provide a space for artists to be inspired by the tree collection.

**- Susanna Bayliss,**

**Interpretation Officer  
Westonbirt, The National Arboretum**

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# Adam White

I'm a fine artist and 'neo-petrifactionist' currently anchored to Stroud Valleys Artspace. Archaeology, history and politics also inform my work as does life. I've been decisively blessed by soul-cleaving illness since I was a boy and have faced extinction more than one might politely expect before breakfast.

Fashioned from a diseased walnut tree in Stratford park, together with tree resin casts made from garnet and beryl crystals. I spent 4 months cutting this gem down into thinkable size. The fire like glow of the crystals was achieved through the rapid boiling of liquid incendiary tree resin. The title refers the fugue (meaning flight in latin ) in music an interplay between melody(subject) counterpoint and imitation, the notes intersect as if in echoed mute communication of each other. The intersection of the tree ring(head) and tree trunk(body) allude to this.

The ambered fugue also address's the diseased state of the psychogenic fugue ,-where people lose their old identity and take flight from everything in their past, yet seeming to be fine on the outside to we casual un-observers.

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# Alisdair Shepherd

I live and work in Stroud, Gloucestershire, and studied painting and the Winchester School of Art. My recent series of work explores our relationship with nature, time and solitude, through abstracted montages made from paper and acrylic paint. A narrative which invites the viewer to explore imagined landscapes, that through the use of torn up and pasted blocks of colour are not precise, allowing a sense of time and atmosphere to flow through the experience.



# Anna Ryan

Textiles are often seen as utilitarian and functional; people immediately think of bedding and clothing. My work aims to contribute to the growing discussion of textiles as a fine art form.

Using water soluble fabric, thread, wire and mixed media I construct three dimensional pieces that explore the structure of flora that are often overlooked and found in urban settings. I'm interested in the interaction between humans and the natural world, in particular the effect we have on flora around the world. My work causes people to stop and take a second look closer to explore the structure of the pieces. They spark discussions around how textiles and thread can be used to create unique pieces of art.

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# Carolyn Gemson

I have always loved living immersed in my very own creative mess. I know that I am very privileged to live in such a beautiful world that offers me so many opportunities so I plan to use whatever time I have to celebrate that through my creative endeavours.

This project has given me a chance to see the familiar anew. I have been around trees all my life-planting them, watching them grow, enjoying the harvests they bear and relishing their shade on hot summer days.

Over the last few months I have developed a deeper understanding of the bigger picture in our relationships with trees. As I have come to appreciate the fragility of our interdependence, I have attempted to show this through my work.

I have chosen to explore this correlation through a variety of media because then whenever I start a new piece of work I am given the freedom to meditate on the relationship and to feel awe and wonder at our amazing world.



# Madame Melting Pot Of Macabre

I am the macabre, the visceral, raw and more importantly authentically creative self. This declaration empowers me both as an artist and as a human being. I use mixed mediums - pencils, pens, ink, paint and other objects - to conceive and create art that is redolent of beauty, is true to me and represents me in my connection with the specific subject matter I have chosen to explore.

Making art has helped me in the best of and worst of times, improving my well-being and my mental health. Working with whatever is in front of me - the line of a pencil or the swipe of a brush - opens me up to social connections and a rich and diverse emotional experience.

My piece for Westonbirt Arboretum speculates on how trees are physically affected in today's world. In this work, the tree is also a metaphor for how the planet is impacted by environmental changes.



# Clancy Ward

I have enjoyed drawing since I can remember and, over the years, I have learned new skills and now love to paint, print and draw a variety of subjects. I like to draw from life, but I also like to create art based on fantasy and ancient beliefs.

I like to create works of art that are accessible and some of my pieces are durable and tactile ("Danse Macabre" in this instance).

I have overcome my own health barriers, to fulfill my need to create and share. I am lucky enough to live in the Forest of Dean, so Westonbirt Arboretum feels like a home from home. It has been a wonderful, educational experience coming to the arboretum and very grounding for me to gain a little insight into the plight of some rare and endangered trees.



# Edwina Cross

At the age of 46 I decided to return to higher education and attended "The London College Of Furniture" to study a four year course in Creative Crafts and Interior Design.

I then decided to do a teaching course which led me into very many happy years teaching this subject to students with Physical Disabilities in two different Centres. When I retired I continued studying at "Blackheath Conservatoire" where I started a "Beginners Art" course with the most inspiring tutor Ken Bright.

This was the beginning of a very wonderful and fulfilling time. I work mainly in oils and paint things that I think are special. I have a very busy mind, always full of ideas of how to do things, but I never stick to one thing so my paintings are varied!



# Flora Keays

My art is influenced by landscape and animals. I love sketching amongst the trees at Westonbirt and Symonds Yat and watching the birds at Slimbridge. I use ink and watercolour pencils when sketching out of doors and acrylics when I want strong colours.

I have visited Westonbirt regularly since childhood and believes trees are vital to our health and well-being. My paintings are influenced by the variety of shape and form, and vivid colours of the arboretum.

### What I see from a tree that means something to me.

A tree, to me, is like that of a person: we both start out from seeds.

Both seeds are planted. It slowly begins to take root and starts to nourish and grow.

Both tree and humans start life as a baby, and through time we both mature with age the further we grow.

Both blossom. Limbs begin to grow. Growing taller with nourishment. And sprouting leaves and/or hair.

Both can provide by thy giving of gifts. Gifts of life - and of our life.

An apple here, a pear there, simple but magnificent offerings to sustain a host of life. Creating a world where creatures depend on the rich offerings a tree has to offer: lives that are only sustainable by those offerings.

A fallen fruit does not despair. Because from that fallen fruit, even though it decays and rots away, the seed still has something to offer. For it can find its way back into the ground, and begin a whole new lifestyle, as a resurrection of sorts.

What is so important to trees that is also important to Human-Beings and other animals both great and small, is of that of water.

Without water everything would wither away, die, and not ever grow.

So blessed are days of rain. For rain nurtures, helps us grow and flourish, to heal and to help provide the

offerings of rich pickings. To live without rain would be for all to perish.

Trees whisper amongst each other. They move with the wind and the earth. They whisper of great days and sadly that of doom.

"The humans come to chop us down," one tree whispers to another.

"Why'd they do that?" asks the other.

"Because they don't really understand how important we are to them. You see, for humans to continue living, they need us. We sustain all life on land like our distant cousins that dwell under the deepest parts of the seas and oceans do. Our distant cousins sustain life for the creatures both great and small that live within their watery world. We have enemies both from animals and fire. But we continue to thrive because we are all survivors. So like all human beings and other animals both great and small, we are not all that different from them at all."

Author:

Gwilyn Roberts.

# Gwil Roberts

As a writer, I enjoy using my creative imagination to open limitless doors of the impossible made possible. The universe is my oyster when it comes to creativity by writing stories: a universe of ideas to explore, develop, and share.

My dream is to become a published author, to see my work in print and share my creativity with the world. I had begun reading and writing from a very young age. I had quickly grown fascinated with words both by putting them together and learning what they'd meant. I do find I'm more better at communicating through my writing than I am through verbal dialogue. I believe writing gives me confidence and can be very therapeutic.

I enjoy sharing my talent. I also enjoy drawing, especially that of my own cartoon characters. Writing is my forte, though, I believe. I do feel more at home with my writing.



# Jackie Drinkwater

Art has been an escape route for much of my life.

From a traumatic childhood, where I lost my father at an early age; and my parents mental health problems; it came along with me as an avenue towards greater things.

I did Graphic Design at college, gaining a Master of Arts degree.

The three works I am showing here were, completed during the Artbridge Emergents course in relation to the Westonbirt project, show some of the range of my interests, printing, painting and photography.



# Jennie Burge

I am a Mixed media artist who loves to use found 'treasures', reinventing them in unusual ways. Combining traditional artist mediums with stitching, fabric, organic and inorganic materials.

Inspired by the world around me, my faith, nature, especially the sea and trees. My response to the world and man's intervention creates layers, building texture and depth. This response means my work can be abstract or realistic.

I believe everyone should be considerate in their use of our limited resources, hate waste and the throwaway society we've become leading to repurposing found 'treasure'.

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# Judy Reynolds

I create artworks in a variety of media. Drawing, painting from life and imagination, or maybe playing with some wire and found materials to create abstract forms with a sense of character. Even apparently inanimate objects can have a 'soul', or some kind of story attached to them.

I am fascinated by the mathematical patterns in sacred geometry, particularly natural spirals; ongoing, and always evolving.

We are all unique as individuals, and also part of the wider universe, on a deeper level. I am an advocate for therapeutic arts. I believe that everyone has their own 'inner artist, whether they are aware of it, or not.

My work for this exhibition is exploring the spiritual connection between humanity and nature, in the form of 'Dryads' or tree spirits/deities; arising from the physical, in terms of trees providing us with warmth, shelter, nourishment, and oxygen to breathe.



# Jamie Eden

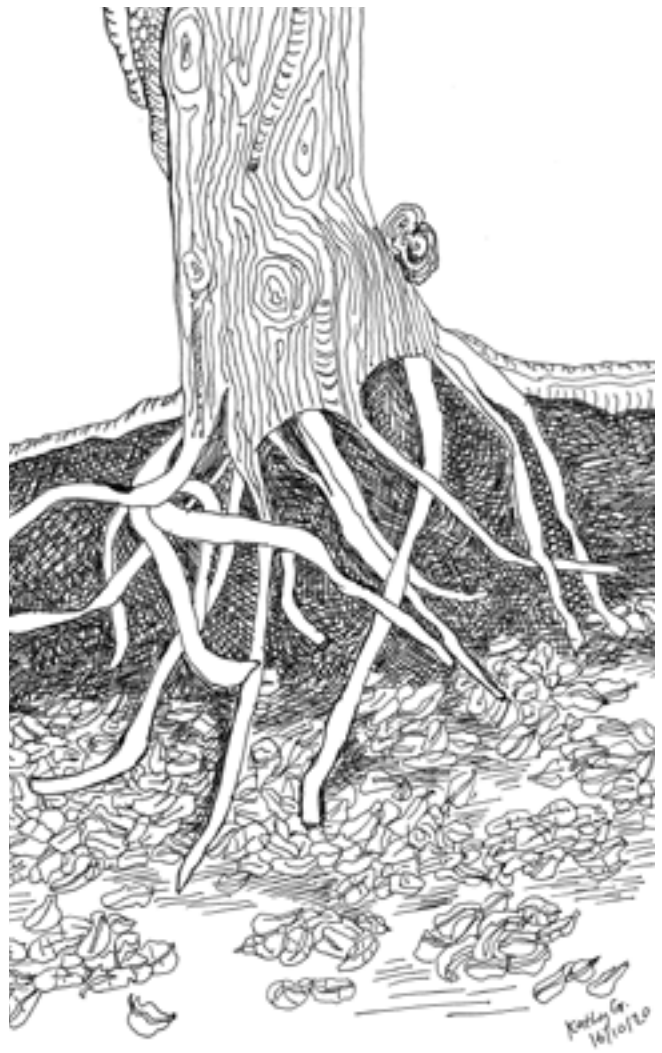
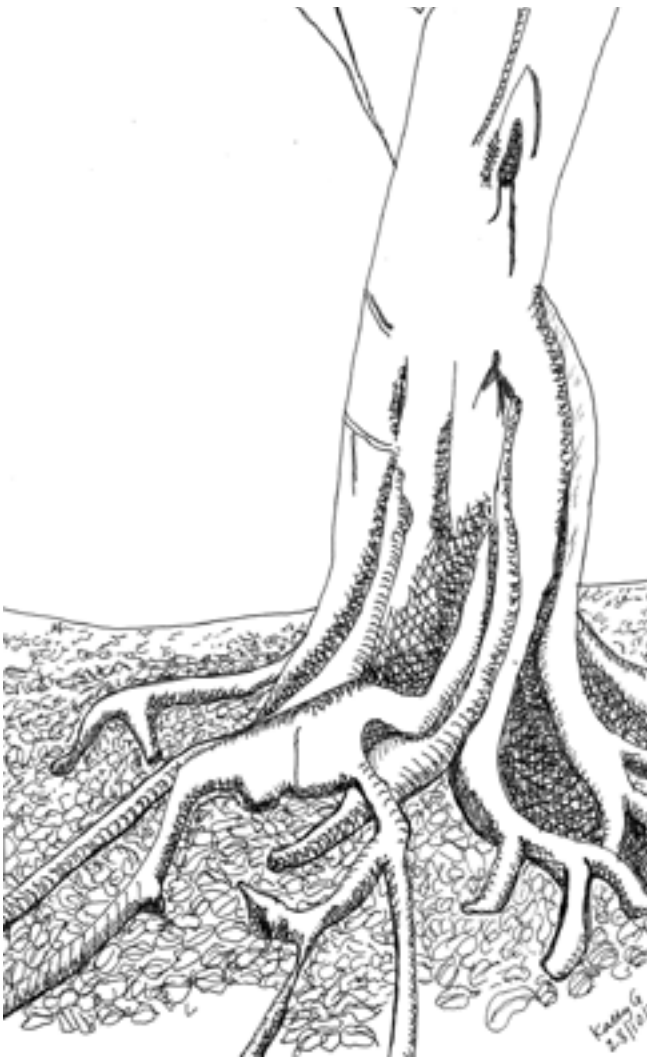
My name is Jamie Eden, I have an avid interest in wildlife and like to create pictures of wild creatures and nature, using my pointillist skills which I have developed and experimented with over the past 5 years. I also like gothic imagery and like to create pictures of the darker aspects in life. I love to visit parks in the Cotswolds where I care for the wildlife and learn more about them. These visits inspire me to improve my skills and interest.



# Julie Green

I use mixed media but I'm passionate about using pen and ink to create imaginary characters and environments. They incorporate everyday life in 'quirky' and unique representations. The process channels my creative endeavours and takes me away from everyday reality.

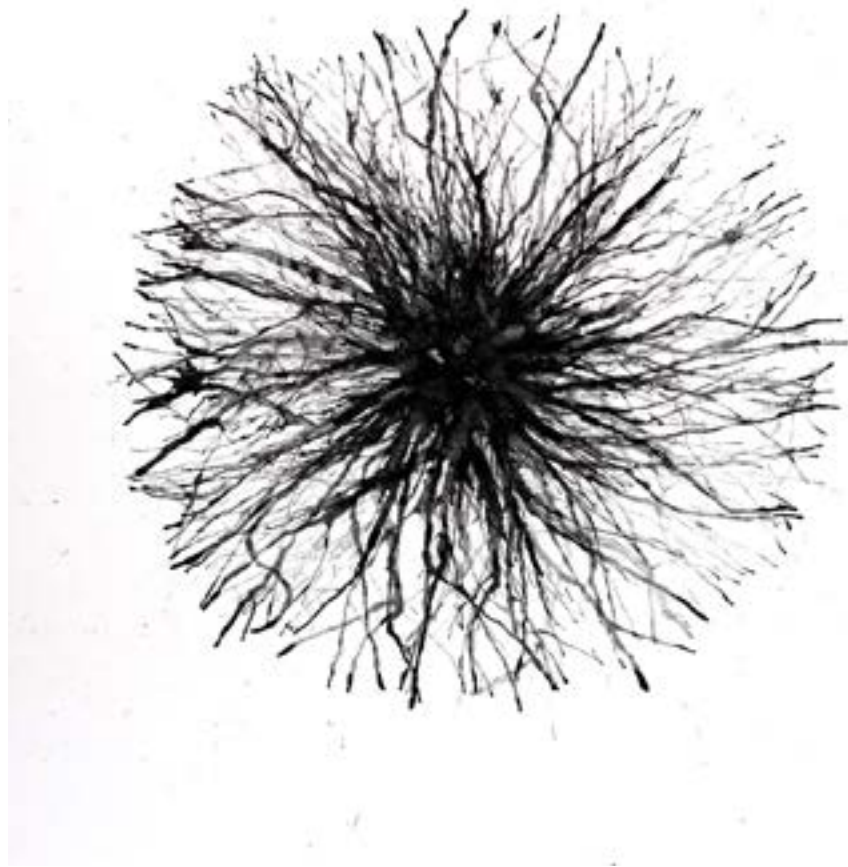
I work between illustrative commissions and personal creations.



# Kathy Glendenning

I have been interested in art since I was a girl, I was lucky enough to go to college when I was older. I love painting mostly with oil paints, I find it a challenge to get down on paper what I have in my head.

I used to do big life-sized paintings but now mainly do small pictures. I enjoy drawing because it gets me to concentrate and I find it therapeutic. Sometimes I like to have music on in the background when I draw. I find it really mindful and it makes me use my imagination. Most of my sketches are based on animals and people and recently abstract patterns and trees. I try to put across emotion too, I will always be interested in art.



# Lisa Matysiak

I am a visual artist based by the coast in Dorset, working in a variety of media, I make paintings, drawings, prints and textile pieces. Seeking out structures; my work, often process driven is an exploration of contrasts, spaces and atmospheres.

My breath is given to me by the trees as they expire the oxygen which I breathe in and then out as carbon dioxide which they then absorb. The cyclical nature of this process has inspired me to create a mandala type image using my breath.

The circle symbolises the idea that life is never ending and everything is connected. With the image created being a lasting impression of the transference of gases, made using charcoal which is the carbon that is eventually released back into the environment once the tree dies.

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# Maddi Smith-Nelson

My name is Maddi Smith-Nelson and I am a poet from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

I have a Creative writing degree, B.A. Hons and I draw my inspiration from my experiences of a challenging mental health condition and nature, spirituality and astrology of which I have just completed a professional diploma.

I recently published a book of my poetry called 'The Voice Under My Skin' and am compiling my second book.



# Max Frances

Art is alchemy: the transmutation of lead into gold is a metaphor for the refinement of the inner being. Artists turn ordinary things in to items of beauty and interest; and this artist has learnt, grown and begun to heal in the process

Art reflects the cosmos from the point of view of the individual, and changes both, however minutely. Images conjure the past, the timeless, and consider the future; they create joy, fear, and in the best cases thought, reflection and perhaps some new understanding. In my work I hope to draw attention to the almost unending diversity of worth and beauty, and our collective responsibility as a species to care for it. There is magnificence in the soaring flight of vultures, yet they are at risk of extinction.

As I create art, so I discover, define and develop myself, explore what it is to be autistic, mentally ill and human. Creativity is life, it is joy, it is hope.

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# Robert Hack

Nature and especially flora inspires me; I collect orchids, cacti and rubber plants. I often look at my plants late at night because of how the quality of light affects their colour. Fauna also interest me: the beauty, colour and form of birds such as the Great Crested Grebe, Hawks, Eaglets, Kingfishers, Tree creepers and Dabchicks informs my imagery as a painter. I like to use squiggles, dots and lines to make shapes when I'm creating paintings.

The process relaxes me and the wonder of what I might do to the work excites me. Imagining what things such as plants and birds look like is a crucial part of my practice. I like to use acrylic because of the way it naturally flows, and sometimes I mix in unusual materials such as glitter, gems, and the tops of cans and bottles to produce surprising juxtapositions with the paint.





# Sophie Wardle

Do you have a tree that you feel you have a special relationship with? You might see it everyday from your bedroom window when you wake, you might have sat underneath its shade every Summer with your growing children, you may have been trying to get you neighbours to cut it down!

Trees have been totems for personal reflection and emotional release for 1000's of years. From the mythical tree spirits of Ancient Greece to modern day suburban martyrs, we imbue them with personalities, feeling and even moral compasses. This project seeks to recognise this important but often hidden part that trees play in humanity's existence in the 21st century. We will capture the audience's immediate feelings and stories around the tree they instinctively 'go to' in times of need.

I was recently awarded my MA in Fine Art. A member of Art Bridge's Emergents' programme and an alumni of their previous programme.

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# Sue Trickey

“It is true for me that art can speak where words often fail”

I am a self-taught mixed media artist living in Gloucestershire, UK. I have always loved art but it is only since my children have grown up that I now find I have the time to really develop and follow my passion. I love to create imaginative, original artwork designs on different themes. Most of my works are completed from my small garden studio. My inspirations are nature, wildlife, history, faith, hope, emotions, love, poetry and music. I am also a singer-songwriter and write poetry.

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# Tom Griffiths

I do not work with any medium. What interests me with this type is that any medium would make a show of a type. I work with no media because it not only demonstrates the way art process itself, but I can use my conscience to know myself.

I was understanding myself in art and had made 11 works between 2014- 2017. A while later after my 10th work, I had discovered that I had reached a dead end, things kept popping up, but they were not real things, they felt suitable for me but could not exist, the viewer would never understand.



# Tracy Edwards

I am a textile and mixed media artist living in the beautiful Cotswolds, where the undulating rolling hills and valleys, which along with the trees and hedges, form the rich patchwork of colour and texture that is the inspiration for my work, as well as providing comfort and healing at a devastatingly tragic time.

I am passionate about nature, wildlife and the natural world around me, which also inspires me. I am particularly obsessed with trees, especially the bark which it has formed into fascinating gnarly textures, shapes and hollows, as well as the visible root structure above ground. During my lockdown walks in the local woods, these spoke to me of fairies.

I work in mixed media, often using collage to build up layers, thereby adding texture and colour variations, which I then accentuate.



# Viva O'Flynn

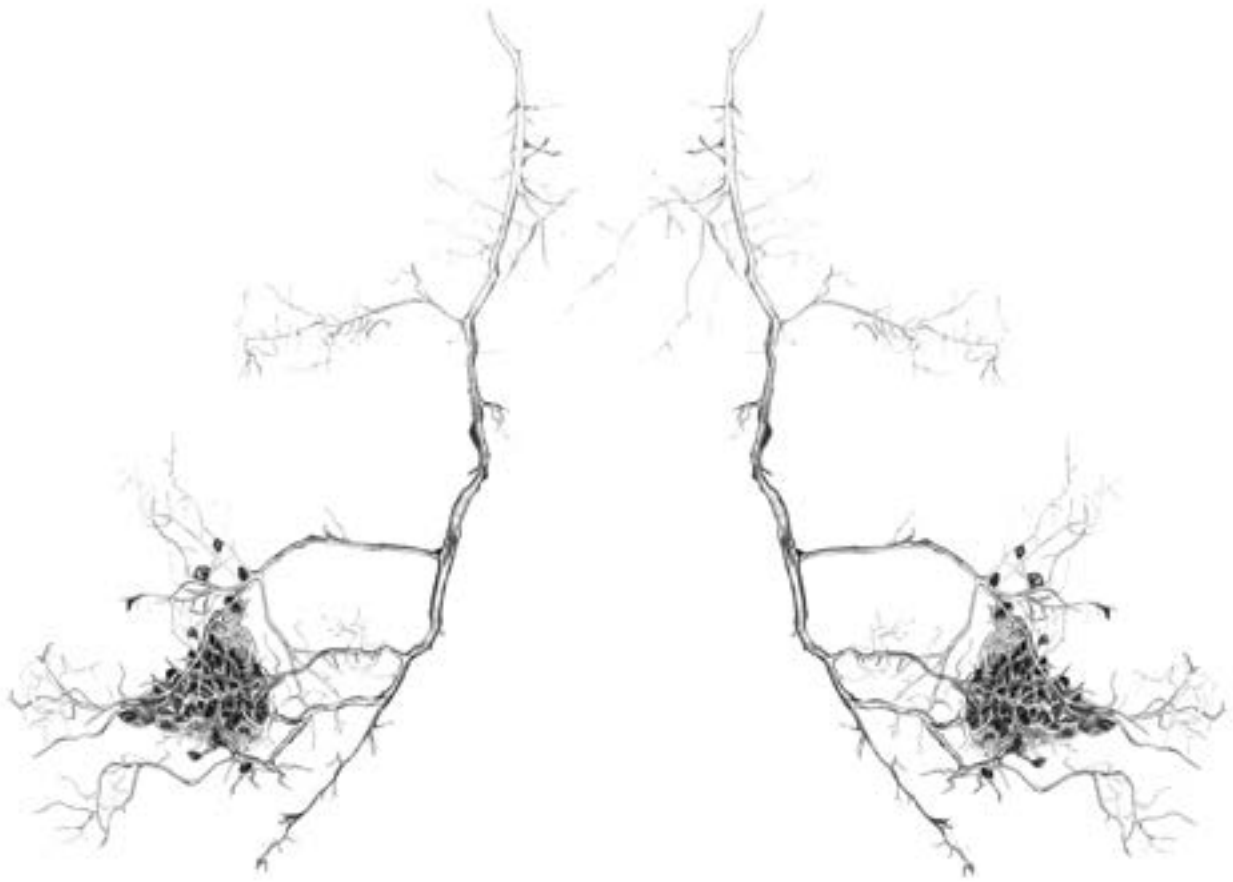
I delight in living an active lifestyle. Always on the go, I juggle tasks as a writer, artist, event specialist, host, and entrepreneur. Originally from the Philippines, I am living in the U.K. for four years now. Happily married to my husband John, I create special moments with Love Viva Cakes and Crafts. To me, life is an art. I enjoy exploring my creativity with mixed media. My creation "We are Trees" is inspired by human's symbiotic relationship with nature.

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# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



# Deb Hoy

Drawing is a way for me to get to know a subject, by looking at it intently and repeatedly to understand it's form. The fine lines of a detailed pencil drawing have shaped my ideas for large outdoors sculpture, hoping to translate the delicate lace-like patterns of roots, branches, veins, capillaries into a scale that we can literally get inside.

This drawing links branching root patterns to the anatomy of human lungs, and connects to the outdoor installation Lungs of The Earth, which can be found by roaming through the Arboretum.

I first developed my ideas for Lungs of The Earth by watching a group of Corvids coming into roost on the bare branches of a Copper Beech tree near my home during lockdown. I filmed the cacophony and on watching it back, was struck by how the branches against a colourless evening sky resembled the lungs. Trees often grow in mirror-images their roots and branches echoing each other, epitomising the phrase 'As above, so below'. With this drawing I want to make a further connection between all those who breathe oxygen, and the trees that provide this life-sustaining breath, by absorbing carbon dioxide and giving us oxygen to fill our lungs.

Extending the practice of drawing into a sculptural realm, you can find similar branches and capillaries within the Lungs of the Earth installation, however in that artwork the 'drawings' have been made from rope and cord.

## COMMISSIONED ARTISTS

# Amy Freeman

The older I get the more I worry about the legacy my generation has left on this planet and how I would look my grandchildren in the eye. Have we failed as custodians of this planet in the attempts we have made to protect our vulnerable species?

When I visited Westonbirt to form my ideas for the work I sought out the trees in danger, I tried to imagine what would happen to them without the red list categorisation to highlight their vulnerability and places like Westonbirt to nurture and protect them.

Maybe my Great Grandchildren would be seeing them in Museums as exhibits? This evoked childhood memories inside me, back to the Natural History Museum of the 1970's. Viewing long lost items in cases, through glass, in unnatural environments, elevated to importance through their extinction, lovingly presented through their demise with care. If only that care was there to protect them from extinction in the first place!

By crocheting around these fragile species with love, patience and gentle attention. Presenting them as if they were extinct, I hope that I have created a scene that can remain in this work and my imagination and not turn into reality, a sad prediction of the future for these beautiful trees.



'Amy Freeman Artstuff' is a name I devised to describe what I do, but I guess multi-media artist would do equally well.

I Studied Fine Art Sculpture at the University of Gloucestershire (2004) and after an expansion of my interest in the conceptual side of my work, Social Sculpture and Connective Practice at Oxford Brookes (2018).

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## COMMISSIONED ARTISTS

# David Seed

### **The Critical Connection between Humans and Trees:**

Critical – adj:

- essential

- expressing adverse or disapproving comments or judgements, at a point of crisis, extremely ill and at risk of death, having a decisive importance in the success or failure of something, relating to or denoting a point of transition from one point to another

- see also “critical mass”, “going critical”.

My initial ideas for this commission were based on images with overprinted text listing and detailing the benefits that trees confer, but in the end I chose a simpler piece - those details are available elsewhere in the Arboretum for anyone who cares to look for them and I wanted to convey a simpler message. The metaphor of trees as lungs has been used before. It occurred to me however, that particularly in a period where we are experiencing a global pandemic which kills by attacking the lungs, that this might be used to highlight the fragility of the environment. Without a conscious effort to cherish and protect this huge natural resource that gives us so much, we will lose it and everything else along with it.



I am an artist/craftsman living and working in Gloucester. I initially trained as a potter and artist blacksmith (BA Contemporary Crafts, Crewe and Alsager 84-87) but then made a career in health and social care. Eight years ago, I resigned from my post in social services and went self-employed.

I now work part time as a carpenter spending the rest of my time on more creative work.

Since then I have regularly exhibited paintings and drawings. I have been involved in a number of community arts projects in Gloucestershire.

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# Art Shape

Art Shape runs a countywide programme of arts courses and projects with a specific focus on disability issues and social inclusion.

We target our activities at providing opportunities for adults and children facing disabling barriers; particularly learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health, victims of domestic abuse and older people.

Established in 1993, we are a small band of dedicated workers, passionate about supporting and enabling people facing disabling barriers to realise their creative potential. We do this in various ways; working closely with communities and their leaders, and responding to need. We strive to aid community cohesion, bringing diverse groups together on projects and getting involved in community events.

Art Shape's distinct skill in socially inclusive practice is developing tailor made provision to meet specific needs of individuals, communities and organisations and directly engaging people through arts on their own terms.

For more information, visit us at: <https://artshape.co.uk/>

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