

**FOREST: WAKE THIS GROUND | 9 JULY TO 2 OCTOBER 2022**

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**ARTISTS' BIO AND FEATURED WORKS:  
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**DAVID NASH:**

David Nash (born 1945, Esher, Surrey, UK) has gained an international reputation in a career spanning nearly fifty years. After studying at Kingston College of Art he moved to Blaenau Ffestiniog, north Wales in 1967, where he spent many family childhood holidays, returning briefly to London for postgraduate study at Chelsea College of Art. Since his first exhibition in York in 1973 there have been numerous large-scale solo exhibitions all over the world, many with site-specific projects. Although known primarily for his sculptures in wood, drawing has remained a cornerstone of his practice. Throughout his career he has maintained a studio in Blaenau Ffestiniog, working with the seasons and elements.

***Family Tree*, 1967-2019, pastel and charcoal on paper**

Making sculpture in the 1970s a fresh idea would spawn two or three new versions and each of those would do the same, like a family group. Then a very different idea would emerge and a new family would evolve. They would often cross-fertilise and yet another fresh idea was born. Each idea is like a branch on an overall evolving body of work very much like the trunk of a tree that thickens and strengthens from the energy provided by each branch. The first three panels of this *Family Tree* were made in 1994, more generations were added in 2000, 2008, and 2019.

## **RODRIGO ARTEAGA**

Rodrigo Arteaga, born in 1988, lives and works in Valparaíso, Chile. His practice moves between installation, sculpture, drawing and sound. His work deals with the complex relationship between nature, culture and representation. His interest in working across different areas of thought has led him to collaborate with specialists in fields such as Microbiology, Bio-Fabrication, Mycology, Natural History, Botany, and Architecture. His work often deals with the complexities between human and non-human relations, unearthing the coded enigmas of our relationship with the environment.

### ***Poloptico Monocultivo, 2020, burnt paper x 80***

This work presents the silhouettes of leaves, branches and seeds of the two main species of tree used in the forest industry in Chile: *Pinus radiata* and *Eucalyptus globulus*. They are drawn by burning paper manually. The work presents them as absence, or as an attempt to fill something with a void. Their obsessive repetition and order suggest the idea of a monoculture. Their process of making replicates the forest fires and their scale places the viewer within a landscape.

## **JOHN NEWLING**

Internationally acclaimed John Newling is a pioneer of public art with a social purpose. Based in Nottingham, UK, his works explore the natural world and the social and economic systems of society – such as money or religion. To this end Newling has innovated the possibilities and benefits for art in a renewed social and conceptual framework.

He belongs to a generation of artists whose work evolved from Conceptual Art, Land Art and Arte Povera – art movements occurring during the 1960s that placed emphasis on the concept, process and site of the work, alongside material and aesthetic properties.

Newling has generated many works over decades, both gallery based and site specific, which feature in numerous public and private collections.

***The Night Books, burning forests, 2020-2022, text, coal dust, pigment and crushed charcoal***

A reflection on the months of lock downs, *The Night Books*, made of text, coal dust, charcoal and pigment, are books of carbon that may be seen as a human-induced layer of our geology.

***Ground; language from the cores, 2020-2022, mixture: soil, grass, texts etc***

Beginning with core samples collected from his garden, the work was constructed over a period of nearly two years becoming a sculptural text reflecting a space of collaborative translations.

## **EVA JOSPIN**

Eva Jospin was born in 1975 in Paris, where she lives and works. She graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and was a resident at the Villa Medici in Rome in 2015. She has exhibited at the Manufacture des Gobelins, the Palais de Tokyo, the Cour Carrée du Louvre, and recently at the Hayward Gallery in London. In 2021, in partnership with Dior, she created a 115-meter-long embroidery, presented at the Musée Rodin. Permanent public installations of her work can be seen at the Beaupassage in Paris, in Nantes and at the Domaine de Chaumont sur Loire.

### ***Forêt Palatine* 2019 – 2020, wood and cardboard installation**

The artist appreciates the humility, the cheapness, of this economical, easily available material. Jospin chooses to affirm its presence using its texture, without modifying its colour, as tree bark, vines, stone or brick. To create her undergrowth, the artist assembles the silhouettes of trees and plants one by one, like a gigantic herbarium.

## ALMA HEIKKILÄ

Alma Heikkilä (born 1984) is based in Helsinki, Finland. She graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 2009. Artworks made by Alma Heikkilä are often attempts to depict things that cannot be experienced through the human body and its senses. These things include microbial life forms that are too small to be consciously encountered in everyday life; the forest ecosystems where important processes are located underground and inside plants; and many large-scale phenomena that happen at such speeds and scales that they are beyond our comprehension.

*' , ' / ~` flashing decaying wood, / / / ~ . \* \ | \* \_\_ . . \* 2018, plaster, common alder, flower ink, polyester, benzoic acid, pine wood, aluminium, iron, polythene*

A plaster sculpture placed on a pool of ink (made of common alder cones). During the exhibition the ink gets sucked into the plaster and the sculpture might change its colour. The plaster sculpture resembles the shape of a decaying tree trunk that can be found on the forest floor. Small parts that it's made of resemble various shapes of fungi, bacteria, pollen etc. Rotting trees are the most important habitats in the forest ecosystem and a hotspot for many different species. The line between soil life and life above is blurred. Most microorganisms have not been discovered by humans.

## **BEN RIVERS**

Ben Rivers is a multi-award-winning filmmaker. Recent solo shows include *Urthworks*, Hestercombe Gallery, Somerset; *Phantoms*, Triennale, Milan; *Urth*, The Renaissance Society, Chicago; *Islands*, Kunstverein of Hamburg; *Earth Needs More Magicians*, Camden Arts Centre, London; *The Two Eyes Are Not Brothers*, Artangel, London and Whitworth Museum, Manchester.

### *Look Then Below*, 2019, super 16mm film

The film conjures up futuristic beings from an eerie smoke filled landscape and the depths of the earth. *Look Then Below* was shot in the vast, dark passages of Wookey Hole Caves, under the Mendips in Somerset. The netherworld of chambers, carved out over deep time, once held remnants of lost civilisations, now foretell a future subterranean world, occupied by a species evolved from our environmentally challenged world. Part three of a trilogy of speculative films with text written by Mark von Schlegell.

## **ZAKIYA MCKENZIE**

Zakiya McKenzie was born in South London, raised in Kingston, Jamaica and moved back to the UK in 2014. She now lives in Bristol where she got her start as a volunteer at Ujima 98FM in 2015 with a radio programme called Grio Sound. In 2017 she was a Black and Green Ambassador and in 2019 she was Writer in Residence for Forestry England. Zakiya is a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter with the Caribbean Literary Heritage project, researching Black British journalism in the post-war period. Her debut pamphlet, *Testimonies on the History of Jamaica Volume 1* was published by Rough Trade Books in 2021.

### ***Soil Unsoiled 2021 and Primordial Mother Speaks for Herself 2020***

Language and soil lie at the heart of Bristol-based Zakiya McKenzie's poetry. Represented by the texts *Soil Unsoiled* (originally commissioned by the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust in collaboration with Khady Gueye) and *Primordial Mother Speaks for Herself*, (commissioned by Activate Performing Arts for Inside Out Dorset), McKenzie examines whose bodies belong to the forest, tracing her own ancestral threads to shine a light on racial inequality in rural spaces, bringing new timbre to the forests' many narratives.

## **HILDEGARD WESTERKAMP**

Composer Hildegard Westerkamp focuses on listening, environmental sound and acoustic ecology. She has conducted soundscape workshops, given concerts and lectures, and has coordinated and led soundwalks locally and internationally. She is a founding and board member of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology and was long-time editor of its journal *Soundscape*. For some years now she has mentored a variety of younger composers, sound designers, soundwalk leaders and people pursuing careers in soundscape studies and acoustic ecology.

### ***Beneath the Forest Floor, 1992, two-channel audio***

Dr. Alice Eldridge, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK:

‘Westerkamp’s pioneering musical works and writing at the intersections of environmentalism, acoustic communication, radio arts, listening practices and soundwalking activate an awareness that sound is a decisive dimension of the world, an idea that underpins contemporary thinking across social, political, artistic and scientific practices of environmental respect and concern.’



## **MARIA NEPOMUCENO**

Maria Nepomuceno was born in 1976 in Rio de Janeiro, where she continues to live and work. Her work has been exhibited at notable institutions worldwide. Using traditional methods of rope weaving and straw braiding as well as techniques of her own design Maria Nepomuceno has, since the early 2000s, developed a process of sewing coils of coloured rope in spirals. She explores the potentially endless permutations of this adaptable form in sculptures and installations that incorporate beads, playful ceramic forms and found objects of varying sizes. Often realised in carnival-bright colours, these works are chromatically, culturally and metaphorically rich, suggesting animals, plants, the human body and landscape ranging from the microscopic to the macrocosmic.

### **Untitled works, 2013-2016, beads, ropes, ceramic, resine**

Weaving together her own ancestral threads are Brazilian artist Maria Nepomuceno's complex woven sculptures. Reminiscent of plant and organic structures they utilise traditional craft and basketry techniques, made through collaboration to intertwine the stories of others.

Nepomuceno will also be creating a new commission for the exhibition, which will evolve through creative workshops with community groups in Bristol.

## **AI WEIWEI**

Ai Weiwei was born in 1957 in Beijing and now lives and works in Berlin. He has had major solo exhibitions at a myriad of galleries and museums around the world. He has received numerous awards and honours, for both his human rights work, as well as his art practice being made an Honorary Academician at the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2011.

A global citizen, artist and thinker, Ai Weiwei now measures our existence in relation to economic, political, natural and social forces, uniting craftsmanship with conceptual creativity. Universal symbols of humanity and community, such as bicycles, flowers and trees, as well as the perennial problems of borders and conflicts are given renewed potency through installations, sculptures, films and photographs, while Ai continues to speak out publicly on issues he believes important. He is one of the leading cultural figures of his generation and serves as an example for free expression both in China and internationally.

### ***Palace, 2019, Ai Weiwei, Roots series, 2019, Cast iron sculptures***

Ai Weiwei worked with local artisans and communities across Brazil, visiting Trancoso in the east to locate roots and trunks from the endangered Pequi Vinagreiro tree, typically found in the Bahian rainforest. Elements of these rare tree roots, some of which could be over a thousand years old, were painstakingly moulded, conjoined and then cast to create striking compositions and bold forms that reflect their Brazilian heritage.

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## **AI WEIWEI**

### *Palace, 2019, Ai Weiwei, Roots series, 2019, Cast iron sculptures*

The material employed in making the *Roots* series – cast iron covered in a patina of orange rust – responds to ancient cultures and man’s first tools for tree felling and woodworking, rather than to the recent, more polite art history of bronze or steel sculpture. Although originally contorted by their surrounding landscapes, these roots were not born of nature but made and crafted by human hands, using the ancient techniques of ‘lost wax’ moulding and then iron casting. These methods represent a traditional, largely bygone way of life that has been usurped and upended by industrialisation and relentless modernisation, illustrating how progress can often come at the expense of cultural and societal well-being.

## **JUMANA MANNA**

Jumana Manna (born 1987) is a visual artist working primarily with film and sculpture. Her work explores how power is articulated through relationships, often focusing on the body and materiality in relation to narratives of nationalism, and histories of place. She is the winner of numerous awards and has participated in various film festivals and exhibitions. Manna was raised in Jerusalem and is currently based in Berlin.

### ***Wild Relatives, 2018***

Deep in the earth beneath the Arctic permafrost, seeds from all over the world are stored in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault to provide a back-up should disaster strike. *Wild Relatives* starts in 2012 when an international agricultural research centre was forced to relocate from Aleppo to Lebanon due to the Syrian Revolution turned war, and began a laborious process of planting their seed collection from the Svalbard back-ups.

Following the path of this transaction of seeds between the Arctic and Lebanon, a series of encounters unfold a matrix of human and non-human lives between these two distant spots of the earth. It captures the articulation between this large-scale international initiative and its local implementation in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, carried out primarily by young migrant women. The meditative pace patiently teases out tensions between state and individual, industrial and organic approaches to seed saving, climate change and biodiversity, witnessed through the journey of these seeds.

## **MARK GARRY**

Mark Garry is an artist, curator, writer, educator and occasional musician. His practice is research driven and each body of work engages with a new form of conceptual criteria with each exhibition opportunity. Mark's practice is multifaceted and incorporates a variety of media, mechanisms and material interests. In many instances a number of these elements are combined in a singular exhibition situation to form installations. Mark has held exhibitions at museums and art venues in Europe, North America, Australia, East Asia and he represented Ireland at the 2005 Venice Biennale.

### ***An Lucht Siúil (The Walking People), 2020***

This film explores the relationship between Irish Travellers and Modernism, specifically the relationship between Irish Travellers and the Irish state as it is played out between the traveller and settled communities in the middle part of the last century. The film is narrated in five song sections, written by the artist, which act as a poetic response to Ireland's complex relationship to land and land ownership, and the relationship between the peoples who share this land.

## **ROSA NGUYEN**

Rosa Nguyen works primarily in the field of ceramics and glass, making sculptural objects, vessels, drawings and installations in the form of compositional tableaux. Taking inspiration from the natural world, Nguyen's practice is characterized by the incorporation of living and dead botanical form and vegetal matter into her pieces. Assembled and manipulated through casting and preserving in both fired and clay gesso, given new life through dipping in liquid porcelain and sacrificial firing, her glazes in turn fuse the combusted vegetal matter into outwardly wild forms.

### **Titles of work to be confirmed.**

Rosa Nguyen's fragile ceramic and glass sculptures are drawn together in a new installation which explores the 'above and below' of the natural world, incorporating handmade porcelain soil and hand sized roots.