in the midst of wonders

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UCF MA ART & ENVIRONMENT INTERIM SHOW 2011
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The Poly, Falmouth, Cornwall 13 - 18 December 2011
in association with RANE (Research in Art, Nature & Environment)
in the midst of wonders

Over the past year students from the MA ART & ENVIRONMENT group have stretched and flexed their perceptions and skills towards understanding a new art - an art based not in the hedonistic endeavours of modernism, but in the pursuit of an art representing more than just itself... An art that reaches into the very fabric of the abundant universe for its inspiration and gifts, and in its making seeks to share such profound discoveries with all who hear its call. This is an art of animals and flowers, rocks and stars, weather and water, of walking, of gathering, of making and mending. It speaks a language not of intellect but in a voice borne of the very earth from which it has been formed, in action, in protest and in love.

We hope you enjoy this simple offering and that the questions it presents may be answered both in the empirical qualifications of contemporary science and the animate stillness of your dreams.

"Some speak of a return to nature; I wonder where they could have been?"
Frederick Somner

"I will act as if what I do makes a difference."
William James
"To the natural philosopher there is no natural object unimportant or trifling... a soap bubble... an apple... a pebble... A mind that has once imbibed a taste for scientific enquiry has within itself an inexhaustible source of pure and exciting contemplations. Where the uninformed and unenquiring eye perceived neither novelty nor beauty, he walks in the midst of wonders." John Herschel, A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy, 1831.

Sue Bamford

My practice involves an engagement with material culture through practical making and recycling by acting as a positive example of joyful creativity with limited resources.

Through making inspiring objects from discarded materials I offer an alternative to the passivity of consumer culture, and help others do the same. This is enacted visibly, by being seen to make things - knitting and sewing in public encourages engagement and questioning of the meaning of making.

Cloth is our second skin and becomes invested with memory of people, places, and significant events. Repurposing these objects preserves their emotional value within an ongoing life through the pleasure of making in opposition to our disposable culture of purchased identity.

sbumford@edenproject.com
Daniela Coray

With a parallel life as a garden designer, my art practice sits across many lines, all woven and stitched together, converging in moments defined equally by their interconnectedness as in their deviations. I like to think of the convergences as nodes, each one offering an opportunity for ideas to branch out or intersect.

Of late, my art practice has delved deeper into a previous garden project, pulling at the strings of the individual concepts within the design, unthreading the garden into its component parts. The simultaneously simple and expansive comprehension of the roles of plants in our lives has drawn particular focus. As food, fiber, colour, medicine, inspiration: the possibilities are endless.

www.danielacoray.com

John Fanshawe

Birds animate my working days, provide a means of exploring our wider relationships with landscape, through making pictures, recording song, and inspiring reflection, collaboration, and conversations with others.

In his celebrated meditation on wild nature, The Peregrine, JA Baker wrote: ‘Pictures are woven works beside the passionate mobility of the living bird.’

In an evolving practice, I am trying to capture these fleeting moments when birds – from the very corner of an eye – tap some subliminal connection, events that surprise, and delight us, that inspire an informed concern, and a determined and effective environmental activism.

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Katy Lodge

Inspired by environment and
the 'smaller things' in the world
that have shaped life and still
allow for its existence. I am
drawn to help people build
relationships with the place
which they inhabit and its living
communities.

In our busy lives it is easy to
forget the things hidden from
the eye that we rely on. I am
searching for ways of seeing the
things we miss, and
understanding their place in our
lives.

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Bernie Moore

"We had a dim pronouncement
that power-mad gangsters
would one day use art itself as a
way of deadening men's
minds."

Hans/Jean Arp, "DadaLand",
1938

"There's something happening
here.

What it is isn't exactly clear.

There's a man with a gun over
there.

Telling me I got to beware

I think it's time we stop... children,

what's that sound

Everybody look... what's going
down?

Buffalo Springfield: "For What
It's Worth" 1967 Epic USA.

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Jan Nowell

The natural world is my place,
I went to be out in it,
I particularly like remote places
and make journeys to be in
them. Since moving to
Falmouth with a 'wild watery
space' on its doorstep, I have
been walking coastal paths,
spending time on beaches,
photographing, and
picking things up...

A chapter in the book 'The Art
of Possibility' by Rosamund
Stone Zander and Benjamin
Zander starts with a story of a
woman on a beach:

The beach is covered with
stranded starfish. The woman
picks them up, one at a time,
and throws them back into
the sea. A passerby sees her
and shouts out '...What
difference can saving a few of
them possibly make? But the
woman
throws another one out to sea
and says '...makes a
difference to this one'...'

jan@nowell.org.uk

Saffron Orrell

Dreaming of a world without
supermarket frenzy, shopping
trolley rage, credit card cripples.

Dreaming of world without
petrol worry lines, hedonistic
blank spots and overflowing
waste bins.

Dreaming of a world where
trees stand free from price
tags and nature has a chance to tell
her tale.

I aim to relate global concerns
to the everyday, often working
with the edible to bring the
wider implications of what we
eat to the foreground. Using a
range of mediums from
photography and parties to
stories and film.

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Francesca Owen

from time immemorial artists have tried to make sense of the world through visual language. It is my mission to continue to build upon this, creating a language, which portrays the essential qualities and beauties of the natural world.

My intention is to bring to the foreground the plants I work with. Enabling them to make their memory on cloth using ecologically sustainable dyes. With consideration of traditional techniques for mark making on fabric. I find ways for the plants to print themselves onto cloth.

This work is a collaboration of sorts between the artist and the plants. Understanding their historical, cultural and present uses is crucial to building a working relationship with them.

I am currently undertaking an artist residency at Trebah Gardens, Mawnan Smith, Cornwall, researching plants and exploring collaborative processes with them.

www.dancingwithdyes.blogspot.com

Arabella Pio

My interest lies in disclosing and exploring new ways to look at our environment and how we relate to it as individuals and community.

My work develops from the hidden mechanisms that regulate our private and public daily life, which are often kept out of sight, or disregarded.

My attempt is to bring them to light in order to search for alternative possibilities to relate with the world and ourselves as an active part of it.

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Bryony Stokes

Having spent the last 12 months trying not to buy anything new I will start to reflect what this has meant. A year of recycling furniture, foraging food, making products and fixing clothes this initial work will look at an event on Buy Nothing Day that tries to engage others in what I have been doing.

By not putting my money where my mouth is, I’ve had a frugal year and a lot of fun on the way. I use film and photography to bring art and activism together.

‘Bryony Stokes uses the power film has to speak to all groups within and across societies. She aims to use her technical and story-telling skills to inspire positive change in people’s lives’ Humanity productions.tv

www.bryonystokes.com

Clare Thomas

I am besotted by the sea. It fills my senses. I swim in it, feel its bite against my skin.

The oceans are full of plastic and other debris that we in our carless lives have thrown away. The sea throws it back on the beach. I pick it up.

I pick it up:
plastic bottles
fishing line
crisp packets
nylon rope
netting
polystyrene
lighters
shopping bags
plastic nappies

See the plastic, feel it. Imagine it next to your skin.

cleaningbeaches.wordpress.com
James Towillis

The root of our problems on the planet right now is perhaps our self-engineered sense of separation - from the planet and each other.

The deepest level of truth uncovered by science and philosophy is the fundamental truth of unity. At the deepest sub-nuclear level of our reality, you and I are literally one.

This understanding is at the core of my work in garden and landscape design but I am always happy to promote it through the use of whatever material or circumstance that presents itself. I am interested in employing amongst others - sound, elemental forces, natural materials, the written word, walking and movement, drawing, photography and conversation to encourage contemplation of our true nature. Employing elements of fun, mischief and mystery are also key aspects to my work.

I am aware that as I endeavour to change myself so too does the world around me.

www.jametowillis.com

Megan Treasure

I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and also lived in England and New Zealand as a child and have traveled extensively throughout my life, being blessed to experience an array of cultures. I practice many styles of expression and am methodical in my observations of the vast connections between necessities, nature, sustenance, growth, home, and global environment.

I am currently working with natural and found materials, and exploring storytelling and minimalism in art and lifestyle. I continue to study anatomy, movement, anthropology, botany, ceramics, and wild crafting.

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Peter Ward

gathering sticks 2011

As I gather and collect, sort and arrange, quantify and select, discriminate for one purpose or another I have come to appreciate and evaluate, to reflect upon our primary habitation, our initial evolutionary circumstance. I hunt and gather, I touch, I see and I form.

This essence is somehow missing from our contemporary existence, cast aside as superfluous and 'dirty', mental and degrading. But as we have become disconnected from our source, from our animate belonging, so we have become sick: bereft of meaning and purpose and ultimate knowledge and relations.

As I gather sticks I acknowledge my ancestors, their ingenuity and resourcefulness, our power to survive, to adapt and to joyfully participate in this brilliantly energetic existence...

www.peterwardearth.
carbonmade.com

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