

For immediate release – 02 February 2011

COLLYER BRISTOW GALLERY PRESENTS

Restless Nature

Private View: Wednesday 09 February 2011, between 6 – 8.15pm

Exhibition continues on weekdays until 18 May 2011

Collyer Bristow, 4 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4TF

G L Brierley, Sam Douglas, Katayoun Dowlatshahi, Edwina Fitzpatrick, Reece Jones, Rob Kessler, Chinwook Kim, Alastair Mackie, Mark Wright

“We enjoy being out in nature so much because it has no opinion about us.”

‘Thus spoke’ Nietzsche; the idea that nature is neutral and non-judgmental rubs against our constant need to anthropomorphise the world around us - talking to trees, the spooky presence of a forest, the woods in a child’s fairy tale. Nature is at once a playground of innocence, a place of unapologetic life and death, and also, as witnessed in a recent flux of international tragedies, a place beyond human control.

The artists selected for this exhibition use nature as their source material to describe the actual or imagined world around them. The psychological impact of nature upon them as individuals or their exploration of a more general Man and Nature, is realised through a range of media and content: from the scientific to the sublime.

Alastair Mackie’s extraordinary work, *Untitled (sphere)*, 2009 (pictured below), is made from mouse skulls found in regurgitated owl pellets and then formed into a hollow sphere, whilst *A is to B as B is to C*, 2010, is made from wasp nests and re-pulped and pressed into A4 sheets of paper. With a clear historical line to the Vanitas* works of art produced in Northern Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Mackie creates work that is at once stunning, fascinating and macabre, collecting and constructing with masterful skill and precision.



Alastair Mackie, *Untitled (sphere)*, 2010. *Photo by Tessa Angus courtesy of All Visual Arts*

G L Brierley's paintings also hark back to the Still Lives of the 17th Century whilst their ambition is firmly placed in the 21st. Wonderfully ambiguous, the work exists in the cusp between imagined nature and abstraction. Brierley's use of paint is both experimental and controlled, creating suggestive, almost visceral works which are sensual, antagonistic, intriguing. **Sam Douglas** subverts the traditional through imagery and use of materials. A landscape with similarities to Constable and the lyrical work of Samuel Palmer may reveal, on further inspection, architectural or natural elements out of kilter with the surrounding scene.

Both **Rob Kessler** and **Edwina Fitzpatrick** collaborate with professionals studying botanical or scientific elements of nature. Over the past decade Kessler has explored our obsession with natural imagery, working extensively with botanical scientists at Kew Gardens to explore the creative potential of microscopic plant material. The resulting images are re-mastered to enhance their forms with astonishing clarity. Visually, the works have a seductive, luscious feel whilst the subject seems at once alien and incredibly familiar. Fitzpatrick works in both the public and private sphere exploring the ideas of "mutability and change". Her practice considers our obsession with controlling nature even as we attempt to reverse the damage of past intervention.

Fantastical, imagined nightscapes take us into the world of the unknown in **Mark Wright's** painted canvasses. With a dream-like quality and lit by moonlight, the trees seem to emanate from other worlds. With their sci-fi edge they reference the 1950's and 60's, as the threat of world destruction became ever more real. **Reece Jones'** drawings also allude to the super-natural with large, unique drawings streaked with piercing shafts of white. These beams seem altogether unnatural, made from headlights, fireworks or some other force.

Katayoun Dowlatshahi's hauntingly beautiful work, a combination of photographed and drawn imagery, is subliminally rooted in the landscape and architecture of Iran. Light is a key and significant player in her practice, evident in particular in the Tracing Light works on show for Restless Nature. Using a unique photographic process called carbon photography, an extraordinary pigment transfer technique dating from 1855; these artworks have been produced onto paper and onto glass to create fleeting, evocative images.

Extraordinary imagined worlds collide with reality in **Chinwook Kim's** large scale drawings. A recent graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art, Kim's Korean heritage is evidenced in his wonderfully graphic depictions of nature. Occasionally we glimpse figures within the composition, caught and bound in tangled vines and branches. The image twists and turns, striving to break free from the confines of the canvas, but is kept in check by the Kim's considerable draughtsmanship.

Notes to editors:

* 'Vanitas' describes the "meaninglessness of earthly life and the transient nature of vanity"

G L Brierley and Sam Douglas courtesy Madder 139
Alastair Mackie and Reece Jones courtesy All Visual Arts

Rob Kessler is currently working on a fellowship with molecular biologists at the Gulbenkian Science Institute in Portugal. A recent publication *Rob Kessler: Up Close*, January 2010, includes a preface by Jenni Lomax, Director of Camden Arts Centre, London.

Edwina Fitzpatrick is currently undertaking an AHRC funded collaborative practice based PhD. Studying part time, she is working with Glasgow School of Art and the Forestry Commission at Grizedale in the Lake District.

Mark Wright's work is in public and private collections including: British Airways, David Roberts Collection, Deutsche Bank, Merrill Lynch, Nick Mason, Pfizers Collection, Royal College of Art, Robert and Susan K. Summer, NY, Sony International, Wellcome Trust

The **Collyer Bristow Gallery** is a bespoke gallery space with a dynamic exhibition programme. Collyer Bristow LLP is a UK law firm with offices in London and Geneva. The firm provides business and personal legal advice to a wide range of clients both in the UK and internationally. Within the legal world Collyer Bristow has been championing emerging talent in contemporary art for the past fifteen years.

Curators: Day+Gluckman

Lucy Day and Eliza Gluckman have worked as a curatorial partnership since 2006. For more information about their previous projects and exhibition please visit www.dayandgluckman.co.uk

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Viewing is by appointment, Monday to Friday, during office hours.

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