



Encounters

Spring 2025



Open College of the Arts

We are very pleased to launch issue **14** of edge zine - **Encounters!**

For those unfamiliar with edge zine, it is a non-profit, student-led, art publication showcasing various artistic approaches. It was founded in 2016. It supports cross-disciplinary works of an international collective of students and alumni of the Open College of the Arts.

We consider edge zine as an evolving and developing publication and a platform for creative approaches.

Encounter

/ɪnˈkʌʊntə, ɛnˈkʌʊntə/

verb

3rd person present: encounters

1. unexpectedly be faced with or experience (something hostile or difficult).

1. meet (someone) unexpectedly.

noun

an unexpected or casual meeting with someone or something.

An **Encounter** is a multi-layered concept going beyond the definition above. It is a moment of dynamic interplay that sparks something new, shifts perspective, or deepens understanding within the creative process itself.

It might be an **encounter** with a specific landscape, a person, an object, or even a fleeting moment in time. It might be an **encounter** with a philosophical concept, a social issue, a scientific discovery, or a personal memory. Sometimes, the most interesting and important **encounters** in the creative process are unplanned - the happy accidents!

Encounters are moments of connection, friction, or exchange that prompt innovation, deepen meaning, and shape the artistic journey and its outcome.

Thank you to everyone who submitted their work for this edition of edge. We love the variety of responses to the theme and the range of work submitted; from painting, drawing, photography, video, illustration, music and creative writing. Our gratitude also extends to our selection team of student volunteers - **Jenn Wightman, Melanie Hutchinson and Sarah Pillage**.

To best experience the zine we've collated clusters of work together and they are followed by their accompanying text and statements from our contributors. Look at the work and read the information that follows a little further on in order 1 to 4.

Congratulations to everyone featured! Your comments and suggestions are very welcome, as well as your contributions for one of our next editions – stay tuned.

Your edge zine support team,

Joanne & Hollie
OCA

Contributors

Agata Rauhut – BA Hons Photography
Alice Healy – BA Hons Drawing
Allie George – BA Hons Fine Art
Andy Jones – BA Hons Photography
Anna Pike – BA Hons Painting
Brindusa – BA Hons Creative Arts
Clive Watkins – Short Course
David Bell – BA Hons Fine Art
Debbie New – MA Fine Art
Dhama Thanigasapapathy – BA Hons Painting
Diane Goring – BA Hons Fine Art
E.A Tofte – BA Hons Fine Art
Emily Everard – BA Hons Graphic Design
Evie Godfrey – BA Hons Visual Communications
Felicity Talman – BA Hons Fine Art
Gillian Alborough – BA Hons Drawing
Heidi Stangeland – Foundations Drawing From the Past
Julie Gayle Balliu – BA Hons Fine Art
Karen Hendrix – Short Course
Leah Bowie – BA Hons Creative Arts
Martin Hoare – BA Hons Drawing
Nina Cruse-Vallard – Short Course
Phoebe
Ruth Sills – BA Hons Drawing
Sarah Pillage – BA Hons Photography
Shelley Lafferty – MA Fine Art
Stephanie Langton – Foundations Textiles
Stephen Hampshire – BA Hons Music
Steve Meyfroidt – BA Hons Drawing
Vee Lee-Williams – BA Hons Painting
Viv King – BA Hons Fine Art

Nina Cruse-Vallard Union

Freshly shaven in a crisp white shirt
I saw you out of the corner of my eye
As I dashed to the bar and ordered a double something
To ease my nervousness

You sat attentively listening to our mutual friend
Minutes later they introduced us
As they slouched, slightly tipsy, on the hotel sofa
Chuckling at the absurdity of a throwaway comment

As the drinks flowed, we spoke
Amusingly comparing our Windows phones
I suddenly noticed your tweed blazer,
Your haircut, your cologne, your gaze

In my head I imagined
Inviting you to my room
I knew I knew I knew I just knew
You would be amazing at eating pu-

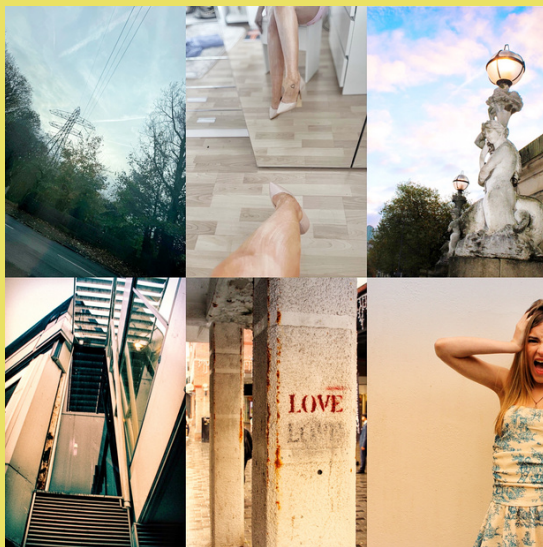
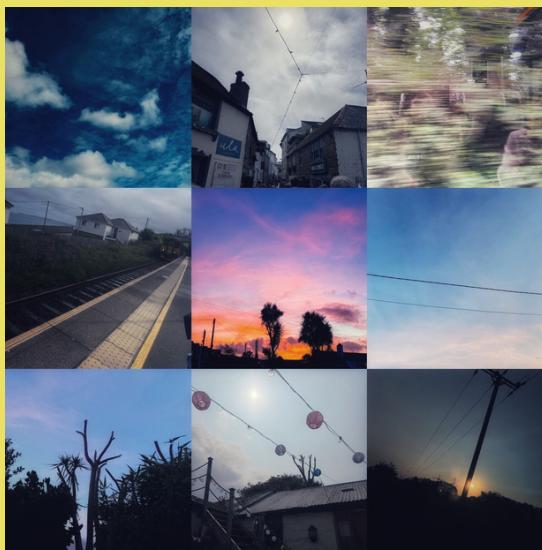
I hastily packed these fantasies away
Sure they would stay
Until years later we reconnected
Outside Jubilee Café

We swapped numbers
And you kissed me on the cheek
But I noticed your eyes lingered
On the rest of me

I gulped
Unsure of my unsteady heartbeat
Shuffling my feet, my head bowed
Unable to meet your gaze

My train arrived and so did my excuse
I had to depart, and you did too
Commuting back to Kent in a daze
We arranged our first date for the very next day

Sarah Pillage
Untitled encounters



Karen Hendrix
Encounter with the Genius Loci



Instagram - @karendhendrix

Clive Watkins Reflective Encounter



Pages 1 - 4

1 - I often use free writing, in my practice, as a way to share my thoughts unfiltered. Although this may be seen as unpolished by some, I find free writing a cathartic way to process my ideas. When I think of encounters I cannot help but recall the meeting that changed my life; it set off a chain reaction that led me to where I am now. Similar to my writing style this event was incredibly chaotic... but I went with it. At one point I thought I should make this poem more structured and sophisticated, like the great romance poems. But I am neither of those things. So the poem stayed uncertain, cautious and uncouth. Like I was at the time.

2- I feel these 'untitled encounters' invite the viewer into a dialogue between the fleeting and the permanent, the natural and the human-made, and the external world and inner emotions.

3 - I have recently completed the Investigating Place: Journeys with Psychogeography where I researched and formed a deeper relationship with a particular urban environment that I pass through every day. Through my investigations I considered where mystery and magic exist in an urban space and is this where my connection to place might happen? My response to considering this place consisted of a written fairy tale and of photographs of myself in the place as the main character of the story who is the Genius Loci; the spirit of the place. I encountered the Genius Loci through connection and imagination and realised that I encountered an alter ego at the same time.

4- This photograph was taken in the Hunterian in Glasgow. The man looking at the picture bares more than a passing resemblance of the The Patriot (1977, David Pugh Evans). Capturing the image, including the reflection in the display cabinet, plays with ideas of juxtaposition and abstracts a visual encounter in the viewer's mind, as well as perhaps in the mind of the subject himself. I am thinking of building on this concept for an ongoing photographic project where gallery visitors are captured encountering facsimiles of themselves in works of art.

Debbie New
Encounters with the Cosmos



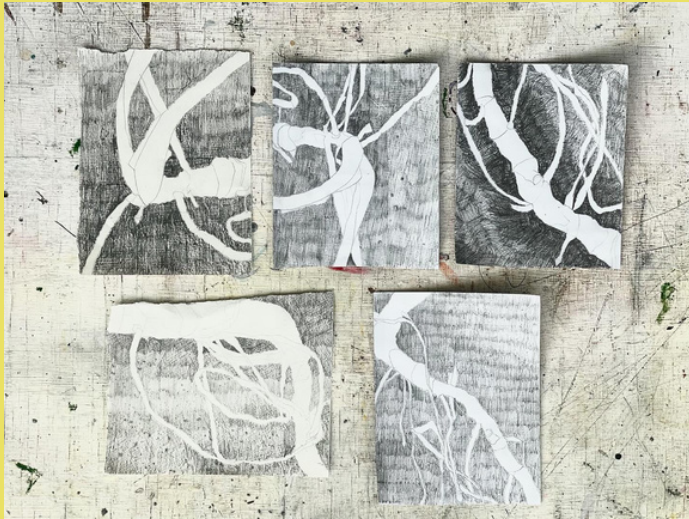
David Bell
Vulcan Greets Elon's Baby



Heidi Stangeland
Ghostly Encounters



Ruth Sills
Drawn Encounters with the Natural World



Instagram - @ruthsills_drawing

Pages 5-8

5 - We come from stardust – the atoms inside our bodies are the same primordial ingredients found in the cosmos. These atoms are also found in stars, planets, moons and other celestial bodies, as well as in other earthly species, plants, soil, oceans, atmosphere. We are all connected because we're all made from the same stuff. I am therefore melding meditative journeying into the cosmos with working directly with stardust ingredients (gold, cadmium, magnesium, etc.) to observe what happens when we have these encounters with the cosmos.

6 - I'm David Bell, a fine art painter working in Sanremo, Italy, who merges history, mythology, and contemporary technology to create thought-provoking narratives. My work combines traditional acrylic and mixed media, while in some work I also embed digital elements to add new dimensions of meaning. Through my art, I aim to challenge perceptions of time and reality, reimagining the role of painting in a digital age and inviting viewers to reflect on humanity's complexities.

7 - In twilight's hush, where ancient trees preside, Their ghostly forms, in shadows, glide. The church's spire, a beacon in the night, Invites the wanderer, to take flight. A ghostly figure, in a white gown, Appears beneath the trees, renowned. Her eyes, like lanterns, shining bright, Guide the lost, through the dark of night. The wind whispers secrets, of the past, As ghostly forms, in silence, cast. Their presence, a comfort, to the soul, In this sacred place, their stories unfold.

8 - I like to draw organic forms repeatedly until they becomes strange and unknown. This may take the form of a series of drawings or the drawing of the same object turned over in the palm multiple times. During these encounters the unexpected emerges – the work is based on the figurative but moves towards abstraction, the initial subject becoming ambiguous. I enjoy the notion that the viewer's encounter with my work opens up the possibility of multiple readings. These works also investigate mark-making being drawn using a range of materials and techniques – these examples include the use of graphite pencil, frottage, oil pastel, scratching and mono-print transfer.

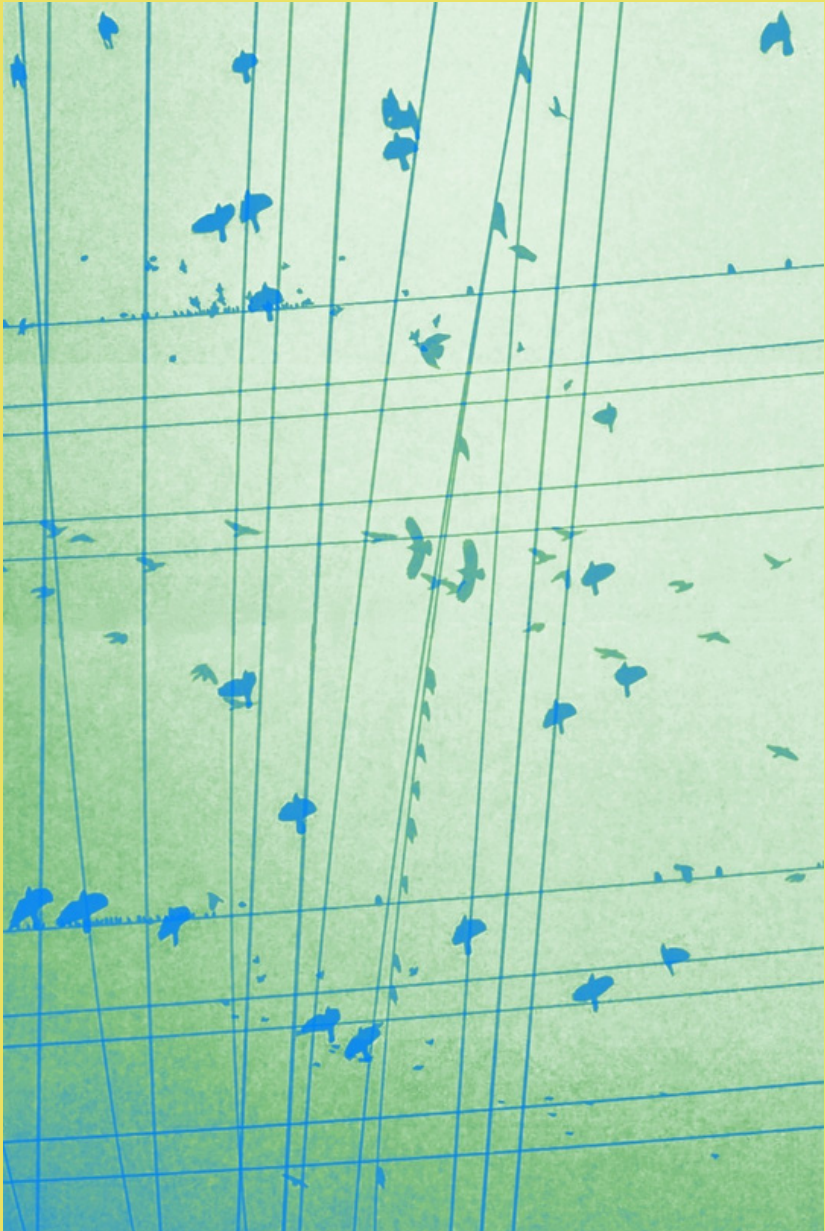
Agata Rauhut
Little Creatures



Allie George
Three Woven Objects



Leah Bowie
Sky Encounters



Instagram - @leah_muriel_bowie

Pages 9-12

9- I am deeply fascinated by all the 'little ones' that surround us. Wildlife is often overlooked, especially in big cities where we replaced green areas with concrete. When I moved from one of Poland's metropolis to middle-of-nowhere in Scotland, I discovered how beautiful rural areas can be. I fell in love with photographing animals on my walks and over time it became an addiction. I stop and observe all kinds of living creatures when I see them: birds, mice, moles, squirrels, frogs, bees, rabbits, foxes and so on. These encounters make me feel included and privileged as I am too part of nature. It gives me a sense of belonging, being home, a sort of tranquillity and peace that I've never felt before. Of course, it's at times a difficult task to capture these moments but I do my best and I am still learning. Moving subjects are not the easiest to photograph but I love a challenge and I always find something new on my adventures.

10- An unravelled charity shop scarf meets a bent Victorian floor-nail. I have a small loom and wove the yarn to incorporate the nails. I wanted to see if leaving the objects outside to the mercy of the elements would cause any changes. Not much happened, until I gave the objects a sprinkling of salt which sped up the corrosion process causing the seepage of rust into the yarn. I love the alchemy of these unwanted things coming together; I have many more nails and natural yarns and work on a larger scale is currently rattling around in my subconscious, waiting for my hands to get on with making it! I am interested in the way materials change: the way encounters with natural processes such as weather, interment or rusting can alter the way we view objects.

11- This piece is a photo collage created from film footage I have collected to create a visual score for sound and music. I spent many days visiting and observing a high voltage line near my house and was fascinated with how all kinds of birds used these lines as a meeting place.

12 -This piece is part of a collection in which I explore the liminal space, the space of encounter between "presence" and "absence." "Presence" is being aware of what is happening right now, noticing experiences, sensations in us and around us. "Absence" is understanding that nothing really exists all by itself; everything is connected in some way. Here I look at ancestry as a way of connecting the individual self with the wider universe. "I am all those that came before me and I am me" I a phrase I scrape into material as a visual meditation on the interconnectedness of all existence. My abstract and symbolic work is characterized by a muted color palette alongside soft contrasting tones of grays, purples, golds and black, and feature textural, smoky backgrounds that lend it atmospheric depth. To create them, I start by laying deep bold black ink lines, then build layers of material that I can later scrape into. The impression of three-dimensionality that I create with charcoal, paint or oil pastels adds further depth, as a reflection on dissolving boundaries. My process is a balance between intention and intuition, combining printing with drawing techniques, which allows me to enjoy both control of the mark-making and randomness of the ink flow. I mostly work at relatively large scale, which creates the sense of being enveloped by the work and feeling its vibration. Quite often, words inspired by poems or my reflections make their way into the work.

Dhama Thanigasapapathy
Under The Red Sky I & Under The Red Sky II



Phoebe Sunshine

Sunshine

A recipe for positivity.

Apple trees,
Blossom,
Citrus,
Daffodil,
Evergreen,
Forest,
Gardens,
Hope,
Inhale,
Jasmine,
Kindness,
Love,
Mornings,
New,
Outing,
Positive,
Quiet,
Radiates,

Sunshine...

Shelley Lafferty
Entering

[Click Here to view Entering by Shelley Lafferty.](#)



Viv King

The order and chaos of living in a flood zone.



Instagram - @viv_king_art

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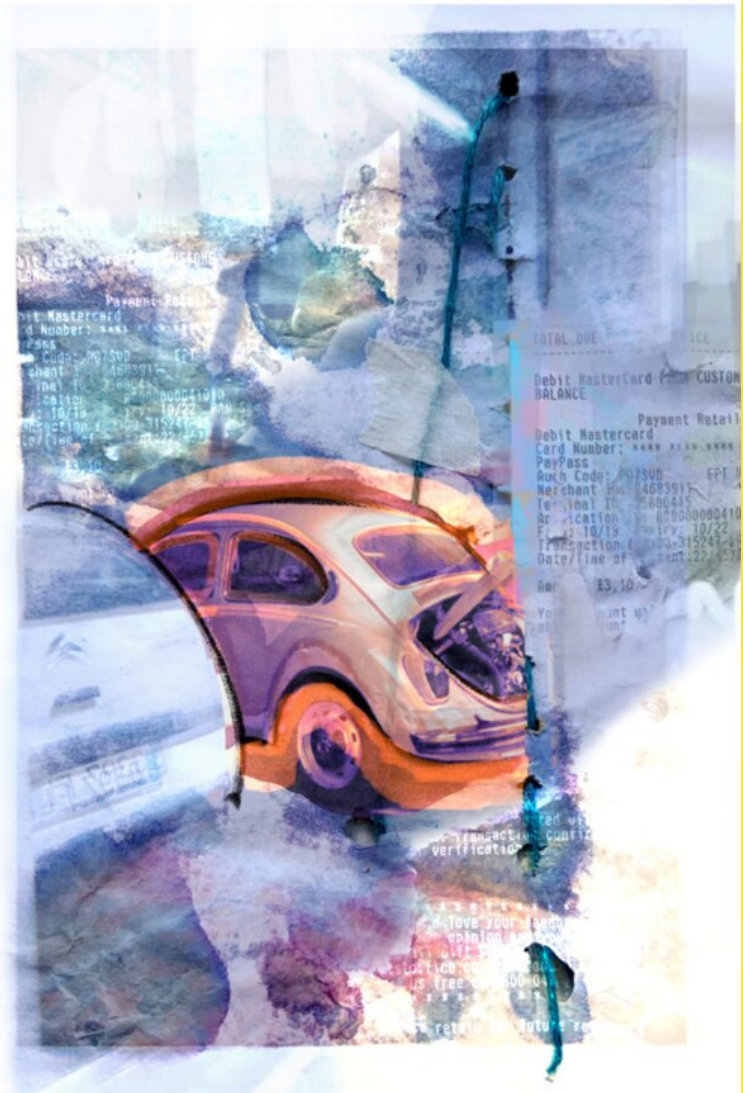
13- During a cold afternoon in December 2021, I ventured down to a part of the Thames close to my house, near Syon Park in Brentford. It had been an extremely disruptive two years due to all the events surrounding the pandemic and I was in an emotionally exhausted state. The riverside was extremely quiet in the warm orange-pink dusk light with an almost apocalyptic atmosphere. I truly felt as if I had encountered a future world where human life had completely disappeared from London. At the time I took many photographs and created sketches exploring this landscape and considering how it had changed over millions of years. In 2024, I ventured down to the riverside and reconnected with these emotions as I considered how climate change may shape our future environment. Using my research, I created two paintings, *Under The Red Sky I* and *Under The Red Sky II*. They show a highly invented narrative where the banks of the River Thames have been transformed into a sublime otherworldly place by extreme heat, cold, flooding and red dust from the Sahara Desert.

14- Sunshine and positive weather is a motivator for me. I feel more creative and expressive in sunnier brighter weather. Encountering this weather in the UK can be a rarity. Some February sun motivated and inspired the creation of this short piece. A recipe for positivity highlights some of the things I associate with the sun, better weather, summer and spring. I guess the purpose is to give insight into why I feel positive in sunny weather.

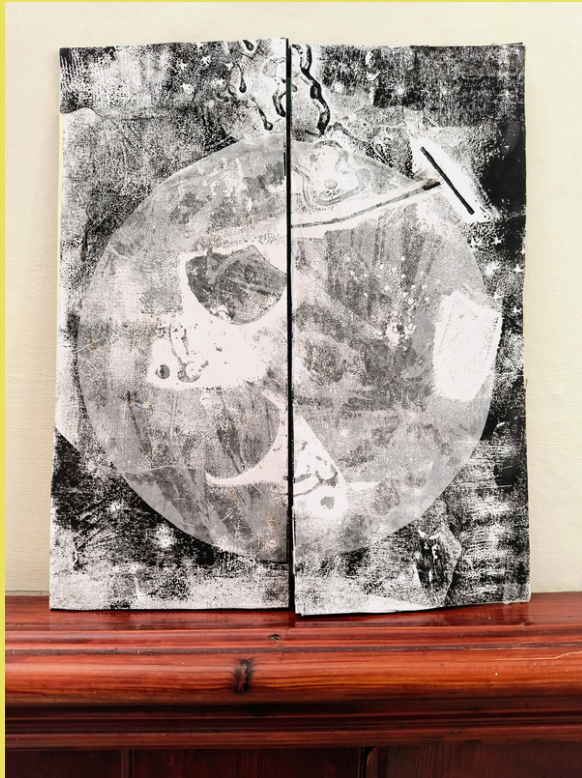
15- An animation of an experience, of entering alone, an unknown space with an unknown exit. An encounter with an unknown environment to navigate without guidance and instruction. Mirrors are positioned to the right-hand side of the enclosed space to create disorientation, with reflections changing as the sliding walls move. the endless appearing mirrored wall providing obscured sightlines. a moment of reflection the participant would only see themselves within this unknown path. the unknown ending is the lure to complete. There is tension created from not knowing the end and being alone within it, added to, by a flashing countdown clock to the lefthand side.

16 -Using both the physical elements to draw, print and paint from, as well as mark marking with found objects from the river banks, this enables me to make informed connections with the environment around me. Collaborating with fragments of nature and being passionate about what I want to achieve, and the message I am trying to communicate with the viewer, I hope comes through in my practice and research as environmental artist. The two pieces attached are collagraphs made from found objects by the river bed. The darker one is representative of the winter and the lighter, yellow piece representative of warmer times.

Emily Everard VW Beetle Spotted



Gillian Alborough
Unfolding Alien World



[#boroughartist](#)

Anna Pike
Close Encounters of the Natural Kind



Diane Goring
My exhibition titled Silent Voices



Pages 17–20

17- This image was taken whilst solo travelling in Barcelona - I spotted an old VW beetle in a workshop and manipulated the image. Where I had rubbed away from the front of the photograph it had bled through to the paper at the back, leaving only the important shapes and no unnecessary details. This is kind of like my memory from the brief encounter with the car. Both the car and the memory are deteriorating over time. The stitching feels like someone trying to piece together and hold together their memory from a brief meeting and tie them safely so that they don't forget it. Like they are holding on tight to the memory of the car but it is gradually fading away.

18- My collage represents encounters with alien shapes in an otherworldly landscape in the form of a triptych. When closed it displays an alien moon on a monochromatic background, but when opened a colourful alien landscape is revealed, contrasting the starkness of space with the vibrancy of this alien world. I created the collage material using monoprints. For this work, I was inspired by the installations of Luke Jerram, particularly in the way they invite the viewer to engage with the artwork.

19- Throughout my work there is a sense of a deep, intimate connection with the natural environment and its never-ending cycle of life, death and rebirth. I paint dead things and present them to the living, examining the thin line between the two and inviting conversations around such material transformations. The intimate views and fragile nature of my subjects create contemplative works instigating mediation between presence and absence; between the known and the unknown; between beauty and aversion. My choice of subjects reflects my desire to challenge our disconnect with the physical natural world and to show life as it really is: decay, entropy and chaos are quotidian but there is a hidden beauty, revealed to those prepared to stop and look. However, in painting these close encounters I reveal something of my own vulnerability, an uncomfortableness of being in my own skin, and yet, I continue to do it anyway.

20- Encounters is such an appropriate theme for my work. How would the public encounter, visualise and engage with the work? I needed to ensure that there was a warning about the content and that it could trigger some difficult emotions or past experiences. Support was on hand should this happen. I did not want to offend or upset anyone but held a strong belief that my findings needed to be shared. My drawings reflected personal memories, the vulnerability of children, and a strong narrative about why they were dying. Research revealed that well over 1000 children had died since the first known and reported child death in 1945. The exhibition included portraits of children that had died. It was important that they had a presence and a voice. They were let down by all the different agencies that should have protected them better. The project meant I read a lot of difficult material and there were ethical considerations. I liaised with OCA Ethics Committee. My emotional support came from personal friends and ex colleagues. They spurred me on as did the children. As their portraits came to life it was like they were also telling me to get a move on! Internet images of each of them in a happy time, most with a smile. Charcoal was my main medium. Its malleable use and spontaneity helps my drawing practice to improve. The curator and gallery owner Alison Cosserat at the Brickworks was just brilliant. I hope that the exhibition might tour in Universities with a supporting video that also helps raise awareness of pertinent issues and that could serve as a training tool for Health and Social Care personnel.

Vee Lee-Williams
The Ascendent



Julie Gayle Balliu
Friendships



Steve Meyfroidt
Performance Fingerprints



Sarah Pillage
Birthday Flowers



Pages 21-24

21- It may be seen as a sequence or as individual pieces, reflecting my personal journey on time and memory: I've been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and have a noticeable tremor to my right hand. This artwork demonstrates the encounter of being hit by both the physical and mental challenges I now face and not allowing these to define me. 'The Ascendent,' series evolved in direct response to the tremor through intaglio etching, chine colle and drawing, using movement from the tremor to create uncontrolled marks, where dense carvings into the zinc plate document its' unrelenting, repetitive force, unpredictability and speed. The mark making has more fluidity with pencil and coloured pencil onto A2 paper prior to printing the A5 zinc plate. I discovered a lightness and sense of freedom, through the familiarity of drawing-I added the torn paper chine colle for a greater optimistic feel. Paradoxically, appearing through all the dark intensity of the intaglio engravings, you can make out a vague suggestion of a right hand reaching upwards, representative of my resilience and hope.

22- My husband is Albanian and we have been married for 25 years. My first visit to the country was in 2002, and although the essence of the country was visible, it was clear that the revolution had ripped it apart. Over the years, I watched the people reclaiming their lands from the government (in Communism it was confiscated), businesses start up, infrastructure put in place and the slow road to tourism. Unfortunately, after many years, the opposite has happened, half the population has emigrated, the elderly have passed away taking traditions and skills with them. There is little interest in working the land and most families are moving to countries for economic progress and education. As I walked through the town of Burrell, the nearest town for supplies to my husband's rural cillage, this photographic opportunity appealed to me. Young boys from the town, sat together on a Saturday afternoon talking, precariously perched on the kerbway underneath political graffiti. Were they to stay and force the country's future or were they going to leave looking for a better life further away and leave their country in the hands of organisations who want to rip it apart for the wealth of natural resources?

23- My submission is the start of a body of work, which is a collaboration between myself and a concert musician, Ioana Lyness, from Northern Ireland. Ioana recently completed her Drawing Foundation course with the OCA, and we connected a few years ago over an audio-responsive drawing machine that I'd created for a course exercise. We recently started a collaboration that saw me visit Belfast for us to work together in a studio space: Ioana and her circle providing music and choreography, which my computational drawing responds to, as they respond to it. We're interested in exploring what happens when musicians and a visual mark-making process share a language that allows agency on both sides. What happens when the music is improvised in response to the drawing, which is responding to the music? My visual works originate in custom software that I've written, which responds in realtime to a performance, presenting an animated drawing on screen. I take "snapshots" from this process, which are then made as physical works: so far I have made some as collaged ink on paper (drawn using a robot), and also as photographic prints mounted as triptychs on board.

24- This photo set, titled Birthday Flowers, explores the delicate and fleeting nature of life. The imagery reflects the vulnerability of the human form, highlighting the contrast between beauty and impermanence of ourselves, relationships and the geographic elements of our lives. The idea that like the flowers we will decompose as will our place on the map. Flowers weave through the composition, not only as symbols of youth and aesthetic ideals but also as representations of the unseen wounds left by mental health struggles. The soft, ethereal tones aim to enhance themes of perception—how we view ourselves and each other—while capturing a quiet introspection on the fragility of existence

Felicity Talman
Vegetal Encounters

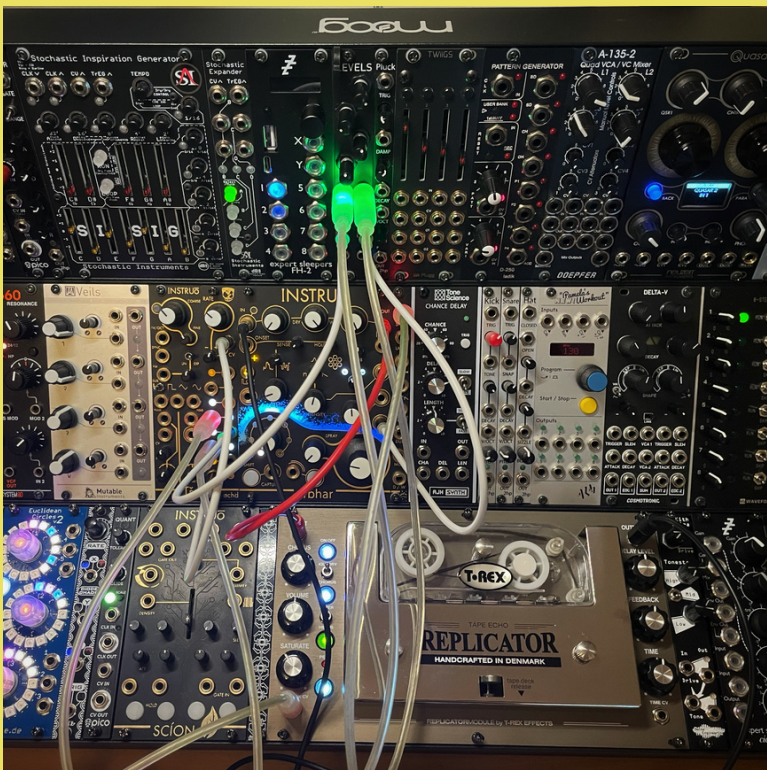


Andy Jones
Walking



Stephen Hampshire
#7?

[Click here to listen to #7? by Stephen Hampshire](#)



Martin Hoare
Wood Green



Pages 25–28

25– My current practice explores vegetal subjects, primarily found within my home or garden. I often come across my subjects unexpectedly, rather than actively searching for them. I might suddenly notice interesting shapes formed by wilting roses outside my kitchen window, or the dynamic shadows cast by houseplants on my bathroom shelf. It is in these moments that I encounter the subjects anew, and I feel compelled to capture them through drawing. “Vivid Remains” was inspired by an Indian Shot plant which I observed during a visit to Killarney House and Garden with my children. I instantly felt drawn to the vibrancy and interesting forms created by this plant which was just starting to show subtle signs of deterioration. I began drawing the plant on my return home a couple of weeks later. This was the first vegetal subject that was not sourced from my own garden. I realised that having a personal connection or encounter with each subject was more significant, each drawing reflecting a small fragment of my personal life.

26– Sharing space isn’t always comfortable.

27– This is an “encounter” between the old and the new. A simple chord played on renaissance lute is processed through a modular synthesiser (mainly a granular processor and a tape delay). The chord is the notes B and F#, so you could see this as a performance of La Monte Young’s Compositions 1960 #7, with the modular synth creating the ability to hold the notes “for a long time” that the lute on its own lacks.

28– My practice is an investigation in the landscape, people and visual language of my local area of Wood Green, in north London. This drawing brings together several elements that I’ve been working with painting and drawing; urban landscape, people and elements of text. It looks at the daily encounters with the people we pass daily on the street. It speaks of the bustle and transience of the street. It’s the rumbling of traffic, a street sweeper going past, the noise of a bus, a busker, somebody shouting, a dog barking and someone singing in the background. It’s all of these things overlapping.

Alice Healy
Discarded Nature



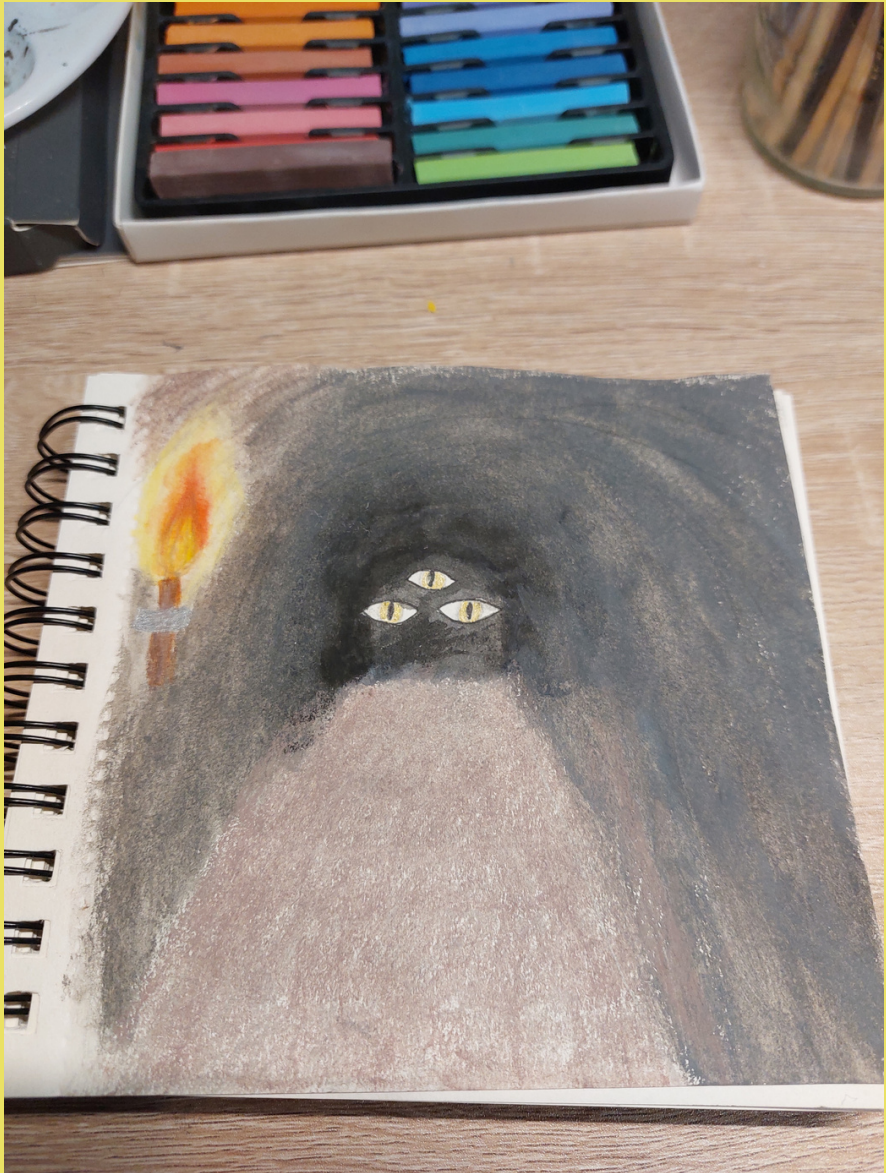
E.A Tofte
Empathy



Evie Godfrey
Vertigo



Stephanie Langton
Eyes in the dark



Pages 29–32

29– When I reflect on the word ‘Encounters,’ I see it as a powerful lens through which we can engage with the world around us, particularly the often-overlooked aspects of nature. My work is deeply rooted in this concept, focusing on the act of noticing—the small, quiet moments that typically pass us by unnoticed. By creating work that invites viewers to slow down and immerse themselves in the natural world, my goal is to foster a heightened awareness of these encounters, encouraging people to truly observe their surroundings. In this particular work, I aim to draw attention to the unnoticed. To create this piece, my process becomes an experience in itself—one that is meditative and mindful. It is more than just the physical act of making; it is an intentional practice of walking, searching, collecting, and sorting, as each seed is carefully placed to form an intricate pattern. Through this practice, I invite the viewer to join in the act of encountering the natural world with a deeper sense of connection and mindfulness. In essence, my work aims to bring attention to the quiet encounters that happen when we truly observe, fostering a deeper appreciation for the intricate beauty of nature that often goes unnoticed.

30– Empathy is the First Chapter of my series Are We Disposable, a narrative, projecting personal loss and trauma but also inviting the viewers in, creating a collective space for reflection and transformation. Sharing something ancient and something deeply rooted within us— a sense of belonging, a survival instinct – and an emotional connection in between. Partially felled trees, standing seven meters high, in an irregular circle, in the middle of a deep forestland, wrapped in a white cloth, passed through the circle of seasons. Projecting on past experiences and the impermanence of life. Calm and almost sacred like space. Carefully gathered bed sheets around delicate bodies, creating wonder but also uncertainty. The mystery that lies beneath, the fragility of life and “every” living thing.

31– I was inspired by the theme of encounters and started thinking about unexpected experiences. For me, this relates to a health issue that began suddenly and causes dizziness and a lack of balance. I wanted to portray this through the distortion of the landscape and vertical symmetry of objects, as well as the bendiness of the characters who feel to be falling. This theme also got me thinking about unexpected meetings/ events and being faced with challenges along our paths of life. I liked playing with the idea of balance and symmetry, which to me feel safer, to almost negate the unexpected nature of the theme.

32– Imagine you are a warrior on a quest. You have been sent to investigate the local caves as people have been reported missing, and the mayor of the nearby town wants to soothe people’s fears. The tunnel you are walking down is very dark, a torch on the wall only barely lights your way. Suddenly, ahead of you, you see three golden eyes open, and they fix on you.