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Design Crafts

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The Sound of the Trees



I aim to create an exhibition 20 minutes outside Swansea city center, easily accessible for all, in the peaceful countryside fields of Gower, with site-specific artists creating artworks and displaying them in their natural environment. An exhibition full of biophilia.

The location of the exhibition will be at Swn Y Coed, Fairwood, Swansea. A beautiful area of which I call home. "Swn Y Coed" is Welsh, translated as "the sound of the trees" a perfectly fitting name for the exhibition. The three artists chosen for the exhibition are invited to create new site-specific artworks, art that will be inspired by the location, for the location. The images shown in this essay are just examples of their works, what they create on the land of Swn-Y-Coed may be similar or completely different. Each artist has a completely different style and approach to art, but they all share the aspect of being site-specific artists, who make work for its environment. The overarching theme of the exhibition is to reconnect humanity with nature and to be a cohesive whole again.

"Wherever he plants his foot, the harmonies of nature are turned to discords." (Marsh, G.P. 1864). This illustrates the destructiveness of man on nature and how it damages our connection to the world. This connects with the biophilia hypothesis, an "idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life." (Rogers, K. 2019). The rapid urbanisation of Earth may be a part of civilizations potential downfall, biophilia reminds us to seek out a connection with nature. To focus on life and lifelike processes might be a biologically based need as the "Absence of greenery is sensed...as a stress factor." (Grinde, B. and Patil, G. 2009) It has been suggested that "biophilic art may be an appropriate substitute for actual biophilia in interior design" (Lutrin, A. Et Al 2022) and therefore help with our connection to the world while away from nature, reducing stress levels. However, being fully immersed in nature is going to be far more beneficial than just seeing parts of nature.

Swn Y Coed is a location bursting with a variety of flora, fauna and beautiful landscapes. With a chorus at dawn from the early rising birds to the badgers and owls at night, a location full of inspiration. Where any person's biophilia would flourish.

Chosen artists for the exhibition are, Andy Goldsworthy, Athena Tacha and Jepp Ringsted. With the encouragement of visitors to not just view the site-specific artwork but also to create their own, to be inspired, to be one with nature. By inviting Andy Goldsworthy, Athena Tacha, and Jepp Ringsted to create new site-specific artworks at Swn Y Coed, the exhibition aims to highlight the beauty and importance of our natural environment. Goldsworthy, known for his eco-conscious and ephemeral works, Tacha, who integrates natural rhythms and forms, and Ringsted, who employs the ancient Suminagashi technique with a modern twist, will each contribute to a diverse and enriching experience. There will be no gallery floorplan as the exhibition is an open environment and the artists will have full creative control over their work and how they want it to be situated in the landscape.



Split Oak Wood – Andy Goldsworthy – (Goldsworthy, A. 2023)

Goldsworthy is noted as a twentieth century eco art pioneer acclaimed by art lovers “Goldsworthy opens our eyes and all of our senses to the beauty and the multiple enchantments of the natural world that we so often take for granted.” (Weintraub, L. 2012). Goldsworthy's work provokes a connection to biophilia, whether that be in person or through the photography of his sculptures. Artwork that is drawn directly from the products of nature. His sculptures are not merely objects placed within the landscape but are integrated into it, drawing from the earth's materials to create forms that resonate with their surroundings.

In the example illustrated above Goldsworthy has created 'Split Oak Wood' an acorn shape out of stacked wood, between a fallen tree split into two halves. acorns from the nearby area were buried under the stack of wood so that as it rots and decays a new oak tree will emerge in its place. Made in 2023, the artwork is representative of its time as it is eco-conscious, eco-centric and made with sustainable practices using only natural materials. A site-specific artwork that uses nature as its canvas. An ephemeral piece that will live on in photography. The acorn-shaped stack of wood is a prime example, blending art with ecological principles to create a piece that is as thought-provoking as it is visually striking. By allowing his works to be ephemeral, Goldsworthy emphasizes the continuous cycle of growth, decay, and regeneration that defines the natural world, inviting viewers to reflect on their relationship with the environment.



'Green Acres' - Athena Tacha - The Cultural Landscape Foundation (n.d.)

Tacha also explores biophilic aspects within her work, using areas of greenery and imagery in her piece 'Green Acres'. Tacha's creative process is guided by "All things flow" (Tacha, A. 1978) a philosophical theory by Heraclitus (Long, A. A. 1999). Heraclitus believed "Everything is always flowing in *some* respects," (Graham, D.W. 2019) more specifically in flux, he compared this to the state of a river, ever flowing and changing. Tacha has managed to transform the harshness of concrete, by using her inspiration, into a flowing transition between nature and form, adding a rhythm to the structure. 'Architecture depends not only on three and two-dimensional forms but also on the rhythmic effects' (Tacha, A. 1978) creating a cohesive piece for the mind and soul to travel through. A site-specific structure that flows in its setting. 'Green Acres' is a biomorphic sculpture, that invites participation from its viewers. The act of interacting with a biomorphic structure could be seen as biophilic.

Made in 1986 it is not a typical artwork of its time, with other artists using a neo-geo approach. Tacha's work is inspired by a mixture of philosophy, minimalism and environment. The center of the structure contains an array of varying hues of blue and green, enhancing the aesthetic appeal. The tiles are sandblasted with illustrations of endangered flora and fauna. This draws attention to environmental concerns, making the artwork both visually captivating and thought-provoking Tacha's technique of sandblasting was a new process at the time, which gave the artwork an exciting flare. It also showcased Tacha's willingness to experiment and push the boundaries of traditional art forms. 'Green Acres' exemplifies her unique approach to art, blending philosophical concepts with innovative techniques and a deep respect for nature.



Jeppe Ringsted – Instagram @jepperingsted

In contrast, Ringsted uses Suminagashi, an ancient Japanese process dated back to the 12th century practiced by Shinto priests, of which ink is applied on top of the water, and gently blown to create movement, giving the ink a new delicate swirled form. Next, the paper is placed on top of the ink, the pattern then transfers onto the paper. (suminagashi.com. 2012).

However, Ringsted is a site-specific artist, using puddles he finds along his travels as the basis for his work. Site-specific artwork creates an interrelation between location and work. Ringsted marks the artwork produced with bold, red co-ordinates of where it was made. This practice underscores the importance of place in his art and invites viewers to consider the geographical and environmental context of each piece. The coordinates serve as a marker of authenticity and a connection to the specific moment and place of creation, reinforcing the site-specific nature of his art. By using different bodies of water, Ringsted's work contains diversity between each piece this is due to the varying factors such as wind, water quality and location. Ringsted is a new emerging artist, using modern technology to his advantage by creating Instagram reels (short videos) to create a spectacle of his work, demonstrating the process of each artwork so that the viewer feels involved in the process of creation. Ringsted not only preserves an ancient technique but also reinterprets it through the lens of modernity, site-specificity, and digital engagement.

Ringsted's work is not an obvious form of biophilic art. It is Biophilic through context rather than sight, once the outdoor creative process is understood it becomes recognisable. His artwork is biomorphic, with the swirling patterns and free forms appearing abstractly and uncontrollably. In the exhibition planned the work will also be displayed outdoors, in its original environment, where it belongs.

In conclusion, the exhibition will be situated on the land of Swn Y Coed, featuring the artists Andy Goldsworthy, Athena Tacha, Jeppe Ringsted and the work they create on-site. It will also facilitate opportunities for visitors to create their own site-specific, biophilic work, fitting with the overarching theme of the exhibition. Encouraging people to spend more time in and around nature.

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