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BA Surface Pattern and Textiles – Interiors

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Julia, Apologies for the formatting of this essay, I have had massive issues with the conversion from a word document to a PDF. My images are stacking and overlapping, and the text is all over the place. I have added page breaks to try and combat this, but I am not happy with the way the essay is presented. It all looked great on word, but the second I saved as a PDF it was all over the place.

‘Grounding’ is an immersive exhibition, featuring five pieces, by three different artists from my chosen discipline of surface pattern and textiles, celebrating a connection with nature and its benefits to wellbeing and mental health. Considering the concept of “sensory design’ which ‘activates touch, sound, smell, taste and the wisdom of the body” (Lupton and Lipps, 2018 p.9), this is an open-air outdoor exhibition. The oversized weatherproof reproduction pieces are exhibited at various points in Penllergare Valley Woods, framed by nature itself and enveloped by the sounds, scents and tangible elements portrayed in the pieces. Interactive activities are recommended with the artworks, allowing the viewer to participate in a more immersive experience. Through curation, I selected works to follow a journey from creation, proceeding through the seasons.

Fig 1: The start of the exhibition route. The path meanders through a beautiful garden full of colour, flora, fauna, and wildlife.



For the location of this exhibition, I have challenged the stereotypical gallery space in favour of the outdoors. As William C. Seitz “removed frames” and “the gallery itself became the framing mechanism” (Obrist, 2014, p.29) for a show he curated at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The trees and natural spaces frame the pieces of art. The exhibition takes place during late spring

and early summer to take advantage of the seasonal environment and support the immersive experience.

The premise behind this exhibition, ‘Grounding’, is the “therapeutic technique that involves doing activities that ‘ground’ or electronically reconnect you to earth” (Lockett, 2023). By viewing the pieces within this space, whilst listening to the sounds of nature, the breeze through the trees, smelling the sweet scent of flowers or even feeling rainfall on your face, the viewer will obtain a deeper connection with the work and feel more grounded to nature itself.

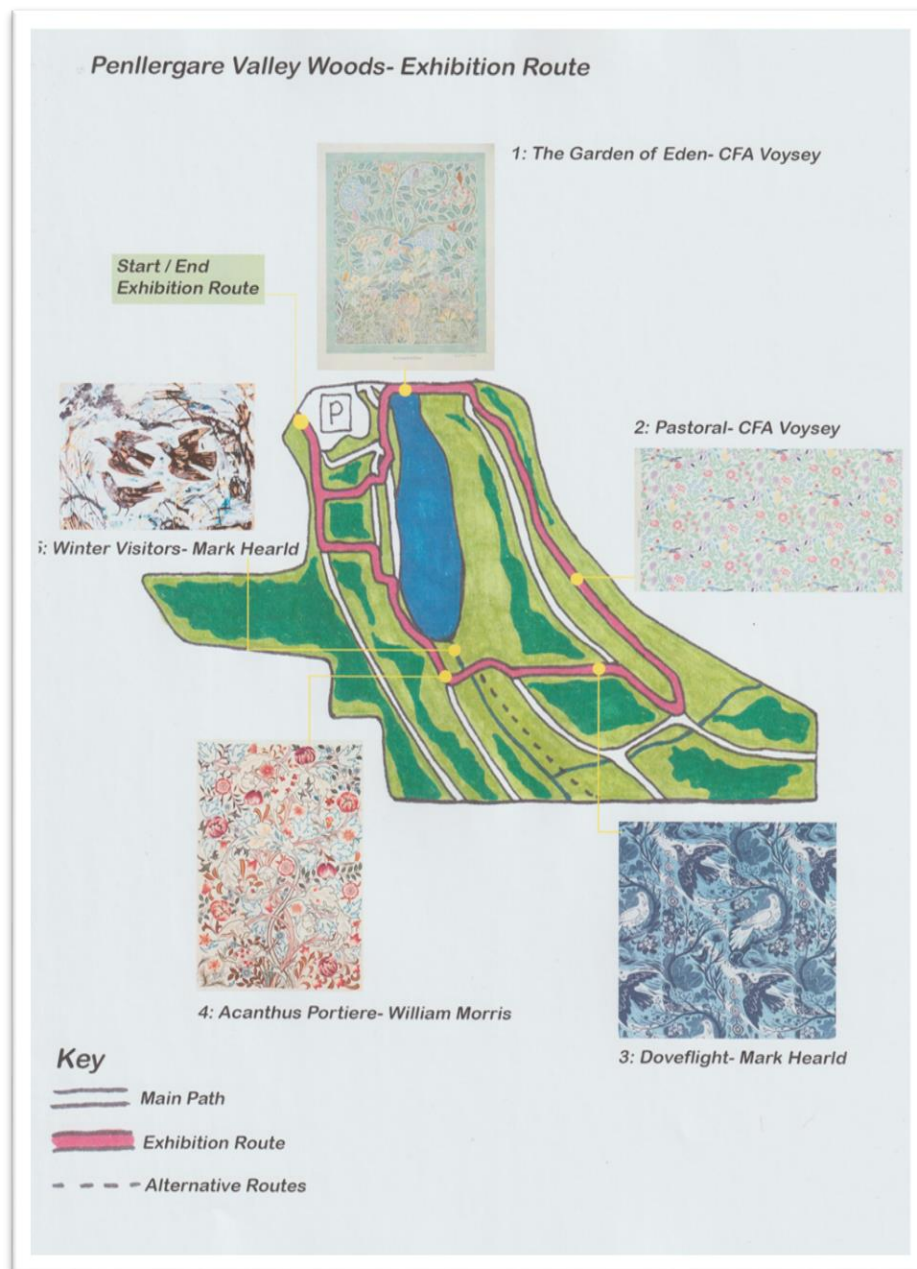
This exhibition also promotes benefits to mental health, as “spending time in green space or bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit your mental and physical wellbeing” (Mind,

2024). In a report from The Mental Health Foundation in 2021, their research on “How connecting with nature benefits our mental health” found from their poll, which asked, “how people benefitted from different activities in nature”, “44% of people said that being close to nature makes them less worried or anxious.” In addition to that it also stated that, “70% of UK adults agreed that being close to nature improves their mood” (Mental Health Foundation, 2021). Exhibiting in this way will not only expose the viewer to beautiful artworks in an innovative setting but will also benefit one's well-being thus allowing one to be more grounded in themselves.

‘Grounding’ is a curation of artists from the world of surface pattern where all artworks portray the natural world. Pieces by William Morris, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey and Mark Hearld are displayed in the exhibition, please see Appendix 1 for more information on the artists and why I chose to exhibit their pieces.

The map below (see Fig 2) illustrates the exhibition route (highlighted in pink). The route is an all-terrain walk consisting of uneven, slippery, and steep walkways. The highlighted walk is approximately 2.6 km and takes around 90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours) to complete, (based on a family with young children, stopping to appreciate surroundings along the way).

Fig 2: Map of Penllergare Valley Wood showing highlighted exhibition route



The Exhibition journey begins, at ‘the beginning’ with ‘The Garden of Eden’ by CFA Voysey, a textile design made in 1923. The image is reproduced on a large-scale wooden canvas to make it durable for the location.

Fig 3: The Garden of Eden: CFA Voysey



This piece is a fitting starting point, given its symbolic value, the artwork is in a prominent domineering location, overlooking the lake and woods (see Fig: 5). Considering Roland Barthes theory of “the tri-dimensional pattern- the signifier, the signified and the myth” (Barthes, 1985, p.114), the predisposed notion of ‘The garden of Eden,’ “constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it” (Barthes, 1985, p.114), will evoke the ideology of a bliss utopia. The ‘signifier,’ The Garden of Eden, depicts a naked Adam and Eve, therefore without sin, standing together zenith in awe of the paradise surrounding them, with creation, beginnings and hope being the ‘signified’. Therefore, I am optimistic that this artwork through its principal

placement and content, will communicate the starting point of the seasonal life cycle of the exhibition.

Fig 4: Location for 'The Garden of Eden' - behind the bench, framed the trees



Fig 5: The view from 'The Garden of Eden' will overlook the upper lake and woods.



Fig 6: Pastoral: CFA Voysey

‘Pastoral’ by CFA Voysey is positioned amongst the bluebells and trees (see Fig: 7). Designed in the 1920’s as a furnishing fabric, this piece is reproduced on weatherproof canvas which weaves in and out of the trees, allowing it to meld with its surroundings.

Voysey’s eye-catching, colourful signature style of florals and birds emanates the feeling of spring, allowing us to continue on our seasonal journey.



Fig 7: Bluebell wood: the location for ‘Pastoral’.



Whilst viewing this piece, the observer is encouraged to inhale the “scentscape,” where “participants identify and record aromas, called ‘smellnotes’” (Lupton & Lipps, 2018, p.111). The intention behind this is to create an immersive experience where one can smell the flora, fauna and surroundings depicted within the piece. This relaxing process encourages the participants to take time to engage with nature and to experience how “smell can be vividly precise and move us profoundly” (Lupton & Lipps, 2018, p.110).

Fig 8: A seated area directly opposite the location for 'Pastoral', visitors will be encouraged to sit, absorb their surroundings, and become 'grounded' with nature.



Fig 9: Doveflight: Mark Hearld

The third piece along the route is 'Doveflight' by Mark Hearld. Hearld's Doveflight was born in 2006 from collaboration with St Jude's design company. Based on an original linocut this two colour screen print was Hearld's first fabric design. This installation consists of several large, weighted fabric pieces suspended from branches amongst the trees. These tactile hangings allow a degree of movement enabling a harmonious relationship with the location (see Fig: 10)



Fig 10: The start of the 'Doveflight' walkway.



Fig 11: The 'Doveflight' pieces will hang from the branches, guiding the visitor through the exhibition route

This piece represents 'summer', as the doves depicted in the piece only visit the UK from April to September. Hopefully, the audience will be able to look amongst the branches and view these turtle doves in their natural habitat, unfortunately this spectacle cannot be guaranteed. The viewer is encouraged to engage with the setting, to take the time to listen to the bird song and surrounding sounds. "Taking some quiet time to reflect in natural surroundings, using all your senses can be a real boost to your mental health" (Mental Health Foundation, 2021), supporting the concept behind the 'Grounding' exhibition.

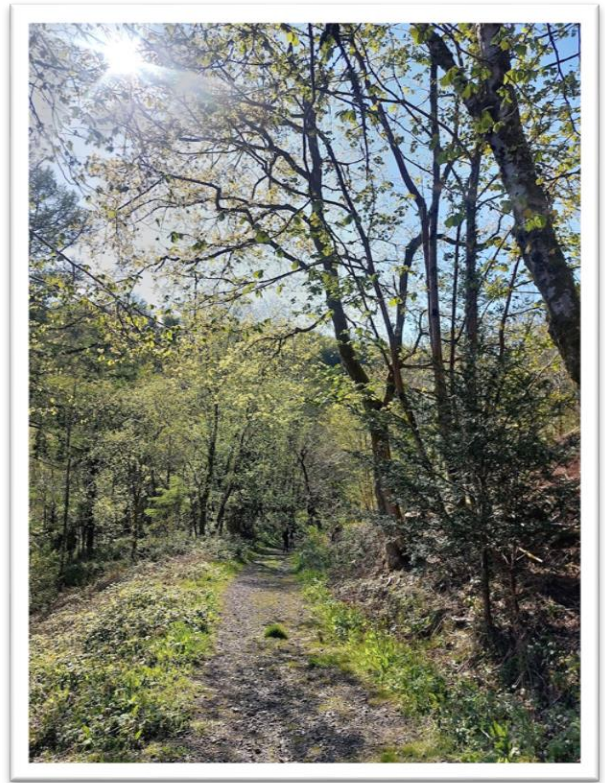


Fig 12: *Acanthus Portière*: William Morris



The penultimate piece, representing Autumn is William Morris's, 'Acanthus Portière' a textile piece designed in 1890. The intricate intertwining floral pattern is indicative of Morris's quintessential style. Following the exhibition route, the viewer will walk from 'summer' over an old stone bridge and step into 'autumn' (see Fig: 13). The artwork now in contrast to the greenery that frames it, is a wooden carved tactile piece. This reproduction of Morris's 'Acanthus Portière' remains true to the original but takes the form of a sculpture. Continuing with the notion of an immersive sensory experience, this piece encourages the participant to touch and feel the natural qualities and tangible differences between the floral

carvings. Each flower and leaf have a different tactile quality, enabling one to differentiate between flora and fauna without using sight. "Intellectually, one can pick apart the ingredients that make up how something feels, but the embodied brain swirls those elements together into a unified perpetual Gestalt" (Luton, Lipps, 2018, p.39). This exhibition promotes one to take advantage of using touch and other senses to develop a deeper connection with nature.

Fig 13: Walking across the stone bridge, moving from 'summer' into 'autumn'



Fig 14: The location for the 'Acanthus Portière' sculpture. In front of the oak tree in a clearing next to the bridge.



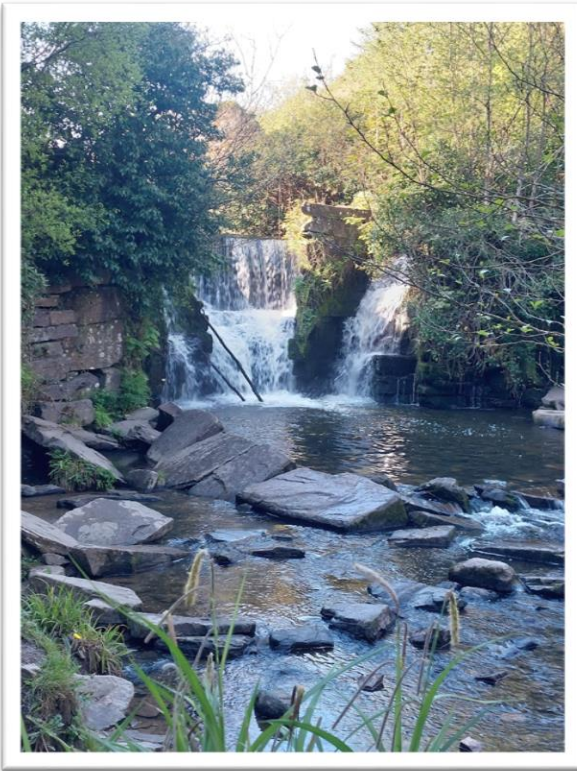
Fig 15: Winter Visitors: Mark Hearld



The finale piece unsurprisingly portrays 'winter' and signifies the end of the exhibition. 'Winter Visitors' is a mixed media collage artwork by Mark Hearld. This piece is a stark antithesis to the seasonal time of the exhibition, however, displays a welcoming warmth to a winter's scene. This

finale is a semitransparent reproduction on toughened glass. 'Winter visitors' stands before the most iconic feature of Penllergare Valley Woods, the waterfall, with its turbulent white water echoing the snowy backdrop of Hearld's piece (see Fig: 16).

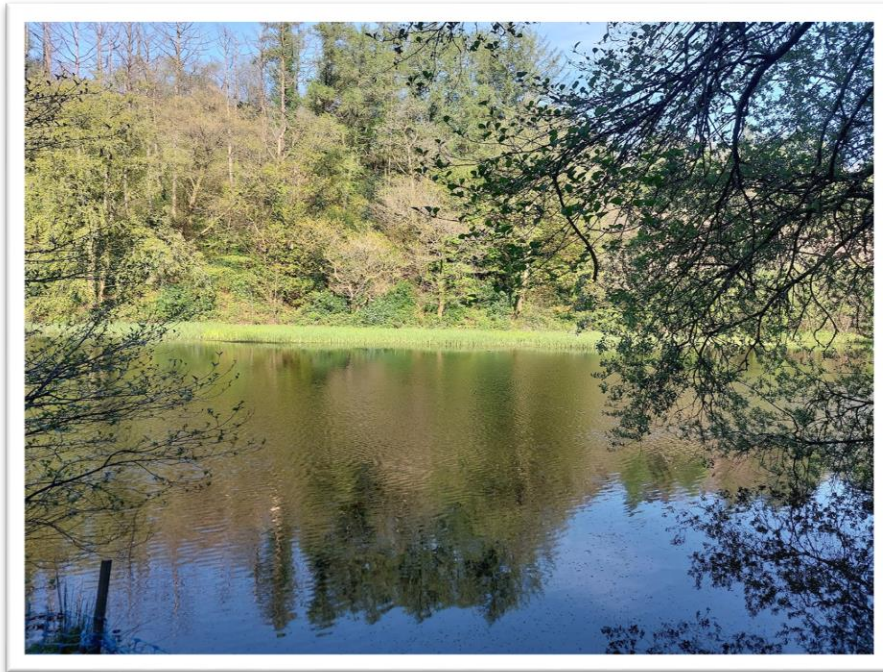
Fig 16: Penllergare Waterfall, the backdrop for Mark Hearld's 'Winter visitors' glass art piece.



and wellbeing.

For this concluding element of the exhibition, whilst listening to the soothing sound of water, visitors can sit and contemplate their journey through the exhibition. To establish their own connectedness with nature, “connectedness goes beyond simply having contact with nature; the concept of connectedness encompasses how we feel, think and experience our relationship with the natural environment” (Mental Health Foundation, 2021), hopefully enabling the viewer to become more grounded, thus improving health

Fig 17: The view of the lake as the visitor walks back towards the visitor centre.



In our busy world it can be difficult to slow down and appreciate the natural world around you. This exhibition is deliberately void of technology to compel the viewer to connect with nature and reconnect with the

Earth. “An essential reason for making exhibitions is to make spaces where the audience can see works of art and have an art experience” (Jacob, 2006, p.134), through the carefully curated pieces and suggested activities throughout this exhibition, the participant will have a mindful, ‘grounding’ experience.

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Figures

Figure 1: The start of the exhibition route. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 2: Map of Penllergare Valley Woods showing the highlighted exhibition route.
(*Personal illustration viewed 05/05/24*)

Figure 3: The Garden of Eden: CFA Voysey

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O559635/the-garden-of-eden-textile-design-c-f-a/>
(*Accessed 20/04/24*)

Figure 4: Location for ‘The Garden of Eden’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 5: The view from in front of ‘The Garden of Eden’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 6: Pastoral: CFA Voysey

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O262230/pastoral-furnishing-fabric-c-f-a/>
(*Accessed 20/04/24*)

Figure 7: Bluebell wood: the location for ‘Pastoral’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 8: A seated area directly opposite the location for ‘Pastoral’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 9: Doveflight: Mark Hearld (2006)

<https://www.stjudesprints.co.uk/collections/mark-hearld/products/doveflight>
(*Accessed 20/04/24*)

Figure 10: The start of the ‘Doveflight’ walkway. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 11: The ‘Doveflight’ pieces will hang from the branches, guiding the visitor through the exhibition route. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 12: Acanthus Portière: William Morris

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Morris %26 COMPANY, London -
Acanthus porti%C3%A8re - Google Art Project.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Morris_%26_COMPANY,_London_-_Acanthus_porti%C3%A8re_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

(*Accessed 20/04/24*)

Figure 13: Walking across the stone bridge, moving from ‘summer’ into ‘autumn’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 14: The location for the ‘Acanthus Portière’. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 15: Winter Visitors: Mark Hearld

[https://www.theblankcardcompany.co.uk/acatalog/-Winter-Visitors--by-Mark-Hearld--
18757.html](https://www.theblankcardcompany.co.uk/acatalog/-Winter-Visitors--by-Mark-Hearld--18757.html)

(*Accessed 20/04/24*)

Figure 16: Penllergare Waterfall. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Figure 17: The view of the lake as the visitor walks back towards the visitor centre. (*Personal collection viewed 28/04/24*)

Appendix 1.

William Morris (1834-1896), an English textile designer, artist, and writer who “is best known as the 19th Century’s most celebrated designer” (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2024). Heavily influenced by the British countryside Morris’s timeless designs have adorned homes for over 120 years. Driven by his love of design, Morris also strived to “improve the general standards of decorative design and the conditions of manufacture” (Parry, 1996, p.3). As a result, he established his own workshops, Morris and Co, which designed and produced a wide range of home products including tiles, furniture, stained glass, textiles, tapestries, and wallpaper. Morris favoured more traditional manufacturing methods such as natural plant and animal dyes and block printing. With this knowledge and his “rare talent for creating patterns” (Parry, 1996, p.4) he produced a vast successful repertoire. Morris developed his designs through his observations, love of nature and the world around him, particularly British flora, fauna, and wildlife. Moving away from the popular brightly coloured exotic florals that decorated homes, Morris chose to stay true to his roots and used his own surroundings to inspire his works. Morris’s iconic designs, use of colour and pattern formation are an invaluable source of inspiration.

Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941), an English architect and textile designer who was an influential figure of the Arts and Crafts movement; his unique and bold motifs are instantly recognisable. Inspired by Morris, “Voysey drew his inspiration from a direct study of nature, yet he remained uniquely individual – an inventor” (Livingstone, 2020, p.6). Voysey’s bright and imaginative portrayal of birds, flowers and fauna are captivating and beautiful, I have been influenced by his designs within my own work.

Mark Hearld, born in 1974 in York. Hearld is an artist who works across an array of mediums. His pieces may be “linocuts or lithographs, collaged from scraps of paper, drawn or painted, printed on textiles or reproduced on a dust jacket” (Hearld & Martin, 2012, p.6). Hearld’s individuality, versatility, and creativity are evident in his pieces and have led to success in areas such as prints, ceramics, set design, wallpapers and fabrics. Like his predecessors, Morris and Voysey, Hearld’s designs are inspired by British nature. Hearld’s art “encourages us to look with fresh eyes at the nature that surrounds us” (Hearld & Martin, 2012, p.6). As well as observing flora and fauna, Hearld “celebrates what we often take for granted, pigeons on rooftops, gulls on the seashore and squirrels in a park” (Hearld & Martin, 2012, p.6). His colourful, visual pieces

are a feast for the eyes and his deep-rooted love to honour the world around him exemplify the concept behind the 'Grounding' exhibition.