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Exhibition Ttile: Nature – A race against Time

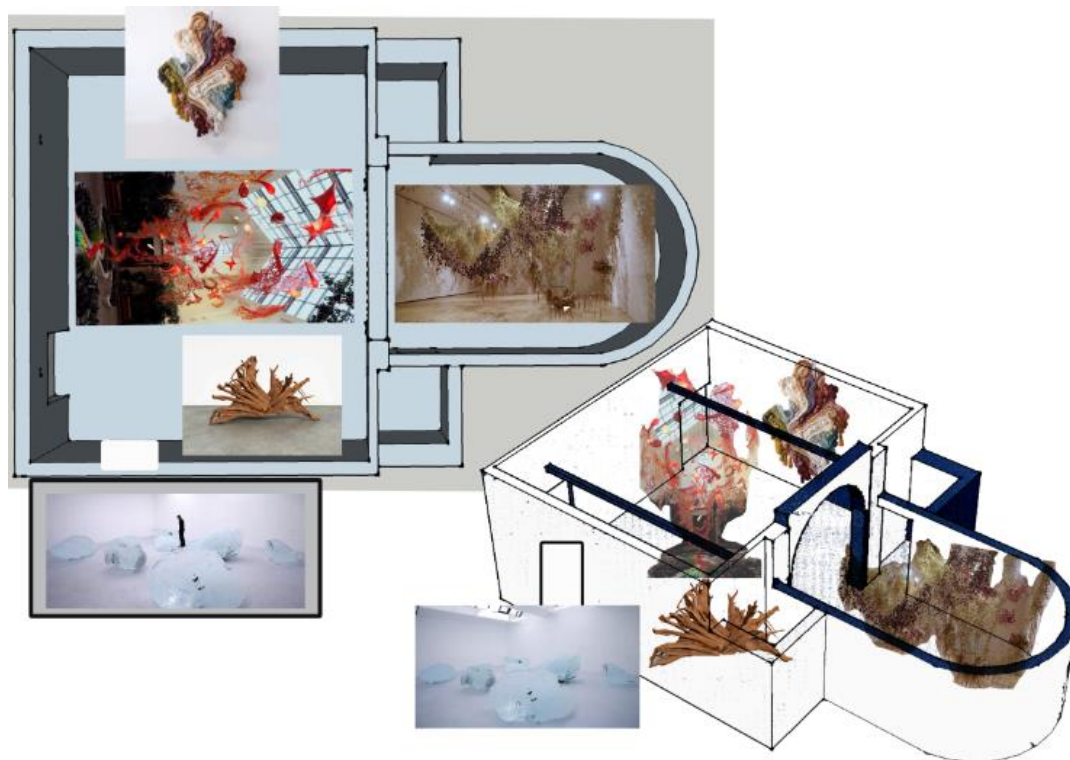


Fig 1, Exhibition Map.



Fig 2, Kew Gardens.

Entitled '**Nature – A race against time**', my curated exhibition invites spectators to explore and question the consequential effects inflicted on nature caused by industrialisation, over consumption and modern day society. The exhibition features five artifacts created by a range of artists who use their creativity to emphasise the importance of sustainability in a society that is quickly evolving whilst becoming less aware of their impact towards surrounding environments, 'Artists are among the many environmentalists who are scrutinizing humanity's epic expedition on the earth' (Weintraub, 2012, p.22) which shows that art is used as visual awareness to expose and emphasize the uprise in environmental crisis. In relation to the theme of nature and sustainability seen throughout the exhibition I intend to exhibit my chosen artifacts at the Royal Botanical Garden, Kew in London which is home to 'over 50,000 living plants' (Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew). I have chosen this venue because annually it has over '2.1 million visitors' (Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew), this will allow the message of my exhibition to reach a wider international audience and have greater exposure. With Kew Gardens as my designated venue I have used the Mission gallery as inspiration for gallery space due to its minimalistic architecture, and white walls which will enhance the artifacts whilst contrasting the wild gardens that will surround the building.

As stated in the Oxford Dictionary, sustainability is 'the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment' (oxfordlearnersdictionary.com). To convey this as my theme, I have chosen purposeful artists who bring together a cohesive message of the earth's ecosystem and the deeper meaning of art through a variation of installations and sculptural work. This includes three dimensional work from Aurora Robson, Vanessa Barragao, Olifur Eliasson, Rebecca Louise Law and Ai Weiwei. I have chosen artifacts by each artist made from a range of processes and mediums with significant meaning such as recycled plastic and fabric fibres, alongside materials derived from nature which includes ice fallen from glaciers and preserved flowers. The selected artifacts are intended to create a realisation for spectators of the uprising in crisis that the environment endures as they walk through the gallery space, whilst encouraging action against further environmental impact produced as individuals, 'the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action' (Lefebvre, 1974, p.26).



Fig 3, *Arise*, Aurora Robson, 2018.

In the centre of the gallery I have chosen to place 'Arise' by multimedia artist Aurora Robson suspended from the ceiling to enable spectators to view the artifact from all angles whilst walking around and underneath it, creating a feeling of immersion. As informed in Aurora Robson's portfolio (2018), the 45' tall installation, made in 2018 consists of orange plastic debris scavanged from decomissioned high way drums that are usually discarded in local waters or landfills, contributing towards pollution. The installation is also made from recycled polycrylic, bottlecaps, LED's and hardwire that illuminate in the dark whilst the design stems from a koi fish pond. The large, organic, fish-like sculptures intertwined with hanging netting addresses the on-going crisis of waterpollution causing disturbance in water ecosystems, 'Disturbance is a change in environmental conditions that cause a pronounced change in the eco system' (Tsing, 2015, pg.160) which shows that we as a society are responsible for these disturbances. 'Arise' also addresses the importance of recycling as spectators are encouraged to contribute towards the installation by placing old bottlecaps in the koi fish pond to be re-used in future artefacts.



Fig 4, *Coral Garden VI*, Vanessa Barragao, 2022

Exhibited to the immediate left of the gallery is 'Coral Garden VI' by Portuguese fibre artist Vanessa Barragao. Created in 2022, 'Coral Garden VI' is a 170x240cm tapestry made from handcrafted processes such as the latch hook and croche techniques to prevent excessive carbon emission produced by industrial machinery. Highly conscious of the textiles industries large contribution towards climate change and polution,'25 percent of chemicals produced worldwide are used for textiles and 20 percent of global industrial water pollution is caused by textile dying' (Fletcher, 2019, p.17) Vanessa Barragao creates tapestries using sustainable materials, therefore relating to my chosen theme. 'Coral garden VI' is made from recycled dead-stock yarns of wool and leftover fibres from local textile factories. The tapestry addresses coral bleaching, a severe side affect of global warming 'The leading cause of coral bleaching is climate change. A warming planet means a warming ocean, and a change in water temperature – as little as 2 degrees farenheit - can cause coral to drive out algae' (WorldWildlife). Barragao translates coral bleaching through her use of colour, using

white wool to represent the skeletons left from coral bleaching with surrounding multicoloured wool to suggest living organisms. I have placed 'Coral Gardens VI' in close proximity with 'Arise' by Aurora Robson to clearly show spectators their correlation as both address the welfare of sea life, "sea life can become close to extinction which will ultimately affect us and many other living species" (Ji, 2020).



Fig 5, *Your waste of time*, Olafur Eliasson, 2006.

Situated to the right of the gallery I have built a refrigerated room powered by solar panels which will contain Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson's 'Your waste of time' sculptures, created in 2006. Using solar energy has great importance as it harnesses the natural light and heat from the sun without emitting harmful greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere, continuing my focus on sustainability. 'Your waste of time' consists of several ice blocks that have naturally fallen from Iceland's largest glacier, called Vatnajökull, as a result of global warming. The ice blocks are transported in crates from Iceland to the United Kingdom. Spectators are invited to interact with the sculptures through touch, in order to feel and witness society's physical contribution towards climate change as the ice sculptures slowly melt, 'when we touch these blocks of ice with our hands, we are not just struck by the chill; We are struck by the world itself. We take time from the glacier by touching it' (Eliasson, 2006).



Fig 6, *Seasons*, Rebecca Louise Law, 2021.

Located in a separate space connected through an archway is 'Seasons' by Rebecca Louise Law which is suspended from an arched ceiling. The curvature of the ceiling is used to echo the installations organic form and is supported by pure white walls. I have used the Hans Ulchis Obrists white cube method to enhance the installations intricate details and value of each flower whilst intensifying it's floral scent, 'space were reduced to a minimum, resulting in a clean, spare gallery space that we know as the white cube' (Obrist, 2014, p.29). Created in 2021, 'Seasons' is an installation made from 250,000 preserved flowers foraged from local gardens, Compton Verney, to communicate the significance of localism, an important aspect of sustainability, 'It sits in confrontation with forces of globalisation and indiscriminately sourced raw materials' (Fletcher, 2019, p.49). The handmade installation includes a blend of woven fresh and re-used dried flowers such as pine cones, daffodils and oak branches. 'Seasons' is used to express plants found throughout Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter whilst addressing mankind's contribution to the drastic changes in climate, consequently affecting the plant kingdom. 'Seasons' use of fresh flowers enables spectators to witness natural preservation as they dry overtime within the gallery space.

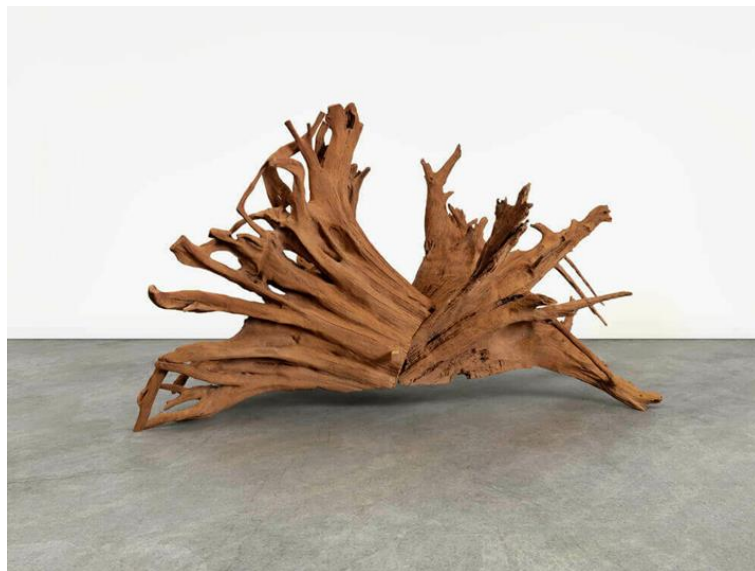


Fig 7, *Martin – Roots*, Ai WeiWei, 2019

Made in 2019, I have placed 'Martin-roots' by contemporary visual artist Ai Weiwei to the immediate right of the archway leading towards 'Seasons' by Rebecca Louise Law. The two artifacts are in close proximity to one another as they both depict imagery of species from the plant kingdom. 'Martin – roots' is a 230.5 x 352 x 238cm sculpture made from using two ancient techniques of lost wax moulding and iron casting. The Lisson Gallery (2019) notes that the iron sculpture is covered in a patina of orange rust and showcases the roots of endangered Pequi Vinagreiro Trees, sourced from the Bahian rainforest in Brazil through casting techniques. The large conjoined tree roots address deforestation of indigenous land which is caused by modernisation and ever-growing industrialisation that often sacrifice the well-being of culture and nature, therefore also affecting local communities. Although the sculpture is not made from sustainable resources it stresses the importance of preventing unnecessary deforestation, 'while we gain plastic gyres and parking lots, we lose rainforests' (Tsing et al, 2017, p.4).

My chosen artists are very different in their visualisations yet also extremely connected with the strong messages they are relaying to the viewer and the seriousness of the concerns for Earth in the present day and future. The variety in the exhibition would hopefully engage a wide audience of viewers by engaging their senses through use of colour, movement, texture and temperature.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Exhibition map.

Figure 2: Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. 'Great boarder walks'. Available at: <https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-in-the-gardens/great-broad-walk-borders>. (Accessed: 19th April 2022)

Figure 3: Robson, A. (2018) *Arise* (installation), Available at:
<https://www.aurorarobson.com/arise> (Accessed: 12th April 2022)

Figure 4: Barragao, V. (2022) *Coral Garden VI* (tapestry). Available at:
<https://vanessabarragao.com/> and
https://www.instagram.com/vanessabarragao_work/?hl=en (Accessed: 10th April 2022)

Figure 5: Eliasson, O. (2006) *Your waste of time* (sculpture). Available at:
<https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK100564/your-waste-of-time#slideshow>
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Figure 6: Law, R.L. (2021) *Seasons* (installation). Available at:
<https://www.rebeccalouiselaw.com/seasons> (Accessed: 13th April 2022)

Figure 7: WeiWei, A. (2019) *Martin-roots* (sculpture). Available at:
<https://www.lissongallery.com/exhibitions/ai-weiwei-roots> (Accessed: 16th April 2022)