

Press Release: June 2022

FOREST: WAKE THIS GROUND

9 July to 2 October 2022



Cross Pollination, 2018. Wild Relatives, 2018 Jumana Manna
Photo Marte Vold. Courtesy the artist

This Summer Arnolfini welcome visitors to celebrate what lies above and below the forest floor with *Forest: Wake this Ground*, a major group exhibition including artists, writers, filmmakers, and composers from across the globe: Rodrigo Arteaga, Mark Garry, Alma Heikkilä, Eva Jospin, Jumana Manna, Zakiya Mckenzie, David Nash, Maria Nepomuceno, John Newling, Rose Nguyen, Ben Rivers, Ai Weiwei, and Hildegard Westerkamp.

Building on our renewed understanding of the restorative power of nature, the exhibition draws upon the richly woven layers of the forest habitat. Exploring the accompanying stories, myths, and folktales, passed down between humans over centuries, Arnolfini will invite visitors to share and create their own 'forest tales'

responding to just some of the multiple languages, materials, and processes used by artists in the show.

At the heart of many of the artists' practice – spanning a range of ages and nationalities – are acts of exchange, collaboration and connection. Works recycle, reuse and repurpose resources, reflecting the process of decomposition and regeneration that characterises the forest floor. Through this discovery of the forests' ancient rhythms, audiences will be gently encouraged to look at the impact of both fellow-man and the changing climate upon nature and the world around us.

As connections between artworks are untangled – including cast iron sculptures, film, sound, poetry, drawing and installations made from soil, cardboard and charcoal – there will be opportunities with which to dig deeper into the exhibition's rich themes, such as language, ancestry and stories of decay and renewal.

Forest: Wake this Ground's wider public programme will encompass live performance, film, family events and creative workshops held throughout the exhibition, culminating with ***Salvage Rhythms*** during the final weekend. An ongoing work which uses live performance, sound, film, text and collage, ***Salvage Rhythms*** explores what humans can learn about how the other critters, organisms and intelligences we share this planet with come together in hidden, surprising and dynamic ways. Arnolfini will be home to the longest iteration of the performance yet – a total of three hours - with audiences free to come and go throughout.

Further information about artworks included in the exhibition can be found below:

Chilean artist **Rodrigo Arteaga** deals with topical issues around absence and presence in his vast burned drawing series *Monocultures*, documenting the radical change in the forest floor, resulting from a major, government backed planting of the Monterey pine tree, now threatening many indigenous species. A new commission by Arteaga will also be made in response to local woodland on residency in the UK.

Irish artist and composer **Mark Garry's** film *An Lucht Siúil (The Walking People)* looks at the relationships between land, movement and ownership through richly intertwined songs sung in both English and Shelta (the language of Irish travellers). A work first shown in his solo show *Songs and the Soil*.

Finnish artist **Alma Heikkilä**, whose work *Flashing Decaying Wood*, is made in part from pine wood, mycelium and alder flower ink, recreates the microscopic world beneath our feet, physically decomposing on the gallery floor.

French artist **Eva Jospin's** towering and immersive sculpture *Forêt Palatine*, made from recycled cardboard, reflects the multiple material lives that have sprung from the rich resources of the forest. Its fantastical almost mythic depiction also hauntingly forewarns us of the possibility of their disappearance.

In her 2018 documentary, *Wild Relatives*, Palestinian artist **Jumana Manna** explores the tensions between human need and natural resources. Through the journey of seeds and the migrant women responsible for their replanting, the

film tells the story of the Arctic's Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

Language and soil lie at the heart of Bristol-based **Zakiya McKenzie's** poetry, including *Soil Unsoiled* (originally commissioned by the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust in collaboration with Khady Gueye) and *Primordial Mother Speaks for Herself*. McKenzie examines whose bodies belong to the forest, tracing her own ancestral threads to shine a light on racial inequality in rural spaces, bringing new timbre to the forests' many narratives.

The ideas behind British artist **David Nash's** ever-growing charcoal drawing *The Family Tree 1967 to 2019*, evolve like the trunk of a tree, that thickens and strengthens from the energy provided by each branch, providing a catalogue of decades of practice working with wood in multiple forms.

Intertwining her own ancestral threads, Brazilian artist **Maria Nepomuceno's** complex woven sculptures utilise traditional craft and basketry techniques, reminiscent of plant and organic structures. A new woven-straw installation has also been commissioned which will be completed on site through ceramics made by Arnolfini's community partners.

John Newling extracts soil from the ground to reveal the history of his own leaf-strewn back garden in *Ground; language from the cores* and a newly commissioned work, *The Night Books burning forests*, made from pulped texts, coal dust and crushed charcoal. The work physically released carbon through the process of making, re-enacting the exchange that lies at the heart of the forest floor's survival.

Rosa Nguyen's fragile ceramic and glass sculptures incorporate both living and dead botanical forms. Drawn together in a new installation the artist explores the 'above and below' of nature through hand-made porcelain, soil and hand-sized ceramic roots.

Ben Rivers' film *Look Then Below* looks to the future, journeying into a subterranean world. Shot beneath the Mendip hills and ancient woodland in Somerset, the film reimagines a future in which the full impact of environmental damage inflicted by man is felt.

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's monumental upended 'roots', cast from the ancient and endangered Pequi Vinagreiro tree (found in the Bahian rainforest), reflect both the uprootedness of arboreal species and the displacement of people.

Canadian composer and sound ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp's *Beneath the Forest Floor* was recorded in the old-growth forests of Canada's Carmanah Valley in 1992. This creaking sound work transports the stillness and peace of these ancient forests to Arnolfini, asking us to consider if these trees still stand today.

Forest: Wake this Ground also marks the start of Arnolfini's renewed approach to sustainable practice that will see an increased focus across all activities and the implementation of a new sustainable action plan.

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For further information please contact Sara Blair | sara.blair@arnolfini.org.uk

Additional images are available [here](#)

[@ArnolfiniArts](#) Twitter / Facebook / Instagram / www.arnolfini.org.uk

LISTING:

Forest: Wake this Ground | 9 July to 2 October 2022

Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA 0117 917 2300

arnolfini.org.uk @ArnolfiniArts

Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 6pm, bookable in advance. Free.

Arnolfini invites audiences to celebrate what lies above and below the forest floor with *Forest: 'Wake this Ground'*; a major group exhibition including artists, writers, filmmakers and composers, from across the globe. Works in this exhibition recycle, reuse and repurpose the forest's resources, reminding us of their ancient past and their fragile future.

#ForestWakeThisGround #Arnolfini

Images here: <https://bit.ly/ForestWakeThisGroundArnolfini>

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is an international centre of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious, diverse programme of visual art, performance, dance, film, and music, designed to appeal to a broad audience.

Housed in a prominent Grade II listed, accessible building on the city's harbourside, Arnolfini is a pioneering, inspiring public space for arts and learning, offering an innovative, inclusive, and engaging experience for all.

A world-renowned institution, throughout its history Arnolfini's programme has welcomed artists from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, supporting and developing their work, investigating their influences and aspirations.

Arnolfini nurtures long-standing relationships with a wide range of community and creative partners, while continuing to explore and develop new opportunities across the city and beyond.

Through sharing a 60-year archive of exhibition slides, publications, and an extensive artist book collection Arnolfini celebrate the heritage and wide-reaching impact the organisation has had throughout its history.

Since 2019, Director Gary Topp and team have sought to honour Arnolfini's founder Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself'; welcoming everyone into the space, and inviting engagement with the wide-ranging programme, in any number of ways.

Arnolfini is an independent charity (CIO) and part of the University of the West of England, Bristol, supported by Arts Council England and the Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust. www.arnolfini.org.uk

About UWE Bristol

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) has a global and inclusive outlook, with approximately 30,000 students and strong industry networks and connections with over 1,000 employers. Research at UWE Bristol focuses on real world problems and the University plays a pivotal role in the regional economy. With over £300 million invested in infrastructure, buildings and facilities across all Campuses, UWE Bristol is creating a place for learning that is innovative, ambitious, connected, enabling and inclusive. UWE Bristol is ranked 28th in the Guardian university league table, as well as 11th in the UK for student satisfaction, and has recently been awarded the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 2018, achieving GOLD Standard. www.uwe.ac.uk

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. By 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

About Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust

Arnolfini Gallery is supported by a linked charity, the Ashley Clinton Barker Mills Trust (ACBMT). Arnolfini founders Jeremy and Annabel Rees were first introduced to the artists and benefactors Peter and Caroline Barker-Mill in 1963, by the London gallerist Lesley Waddington. It was a fortuitous meeting that was the catalyst in allowing Arnolfini to develop from a small volunteer-run private gallery into a major international arts centre. The Trust's principle object is to 'support' Arnolfini and it does this primarily by making annual grants from the income earned on its investments to make quarterly payments. It has also been able to make small fund one-off capital grants to help the Arnolfini transition to its current financial model. www.arnolfini.org.uk/about/ashley-clinton-barker-mills-trust

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