

ALDE VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 2020

On a Turning Wing : A Celebration of Birds, Flight & Migration

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE : JENNIFER HALL

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It is wonderful to be able to welcome Jennifer Hall's work back to the farm for this year's Alde Valley Spring Festival Exhibition. Over the past few years we have offered a series of year-long residencies to selected guest artists. These have included Kabir Hussain (*Field TM 2815*) and Alice-Andrea Ewing (*The Pomarius Residency*). In 2017, the Festival offered a twelve month *Woodland Residency* to Jennifer to explore three small patches of woodland at White House Farm : *The Nutgrove* (a post-medieval nuttury with a pond, 49 hazel stools and two oak trees); *Rookyard Belt* (a four acre belt of veteran sweet chestnuts and oak trees that stands on a sandy ridge overlooking the farmhouse); and *Back House Pond Covert* (a very biodiverse area of self-sown ash trees and willow, mixed with standard oak trees and a hazel understorey).

The residency led to an extraordinary collection of work : field sketches of trees and woodland; studio drawings; the creation of oak gall ink and ink drawings on paper and wood; bronze casts of branches and leaves; three remarkable bronze heads, fashioned from burnt-out twigs and foliage; and a unique burn-out cast of an abandoned bird's nest. Some of the bronze oak leaves became a form of currency for the Writing Residencies at the farm. At present one resides in Wales and another is in Ireland, awaiting return to Suffolk. Others were gifted to the Resurgence Eco-Poetry Competition as prizes for winning poets.

The nest was something else : it felt like a relic or an archaeological find. And it was heavy, weighing in at several kilos. Its weight suggested it might have its own intrinsic value as metal and could perhaps be traded somehow, like an ingot. But what form of ingot would have enfolded within its structure materials with such deeply-rooted ecological origins ?

There was also the poignancy - and alchemy - of something so delicate and ephemeral as a bird's nest becoming so heavy and permanent. It provided a focus - an anchor - for thoughts about how the presence of birds in our surroundings is often so fleeting. They come and go. Yet their presence is so important to our happiness. The seasonal arrival and departures of spring and winter migrants - their movements and their songs - are deeply woven into our own cultural heritage : our understanding of love and fidelity; our expressions of joy and attraction; our building of homes; our awareness of travel and exotic shores. For some perhaps all of us - they are a source of creative inspiration, be it through poetry or music or painting or sculpture - or simply bird watching. For others they are also quarry, a source of food, either wild or domesticated. But we sacrifice the abundance of wild birds and the fullness of their presence in the countryside at our peril.

An extraordinary collection of bronze nests started to arrive for the Festival Exhibition in February 2020 - all made from originals that had been found (and thoroughly abandoned) in hedgerows, trees and buildings. These have now been joined by a series of beautiful collagraphs that depict the perilous migrations of swallows and reed warblers across continents; and the more local movements of robins and the sedate, booming bittern. I trust that they will find many new homes to go to - but taken together as a whole for the time being, it is a fascinating and profoundly engaging body of work.

For all sales, larger images and more details : enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk

BRONZE NESTS



1. *Blackbird's Nest (Sweffling, Hedgerow)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H85mm L165mm W85mm
£850



2. *Blackbird's Nest (Ufford, Garden)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H90mm L170mm W165mm
£1,650



3. *Blackbird's Nest (Butley, Barn)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H95mm L185mm W165mm
£1,650



4. *Blackbird's Nest (Ufford, Garden)*. 2020.
Unique Bronze.
H95mm L150mm W130mm
£850

BRONZE NESTS [continued]



ABOVE LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT

5. *Robin's Nest (Alderton, Garage)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H80mm L420mm W260mm.
£2,450



LEFT

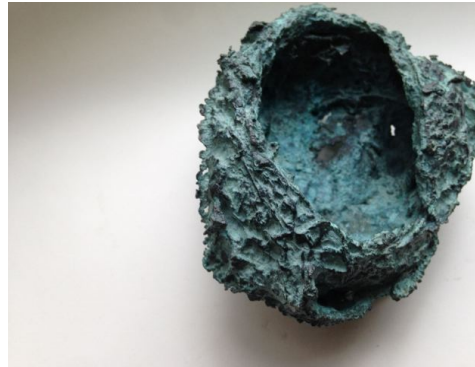
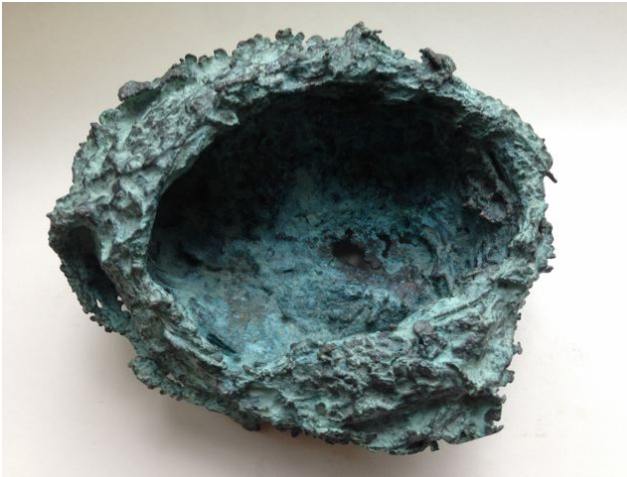
6. *Wren's Nest (Debenham, Garden)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H80mm L170mm W115mm.
£850



LEFT

7. *Small Nest I (Dark brown, Green Patination)*. 2020.
Unique bronze.
H50mm L85mm W95mm.
£395

BRONZE NESTS [continued]



ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT

8. *Small Nest (Green)*. 2019.
Unique bronze.]
H50mm L100mm W90mm.
£395



LEFT

9. *Small nest (Dark Brown)*. 2019.
Unique bronze.
H55mm L90mm W75mm.
£325



LEFT

10, 11 and 12 (L-R) *Swiftlet Nests (Borneo, Caves)*.

Unique bronzes.
Each approx
H40mm L75mm W40mm.

To be fixed to small oak stands.
£325 (inc oak stand]

NOTE : nests donated by George Nawan, from caves on the River Baram, Sarawak, East Malaysia.

COLLAGRAPHS : BIRDS - HABITAT & MIGRATION



ABOVE

13. *Robin's Nest I*, 2020.

One of six unique collagraph prints.

Hand finished with watercolour.

H365mm W355mm

£440 (framed)

Robin's Nest II – VI available unframed.

£395 each.

LEFT

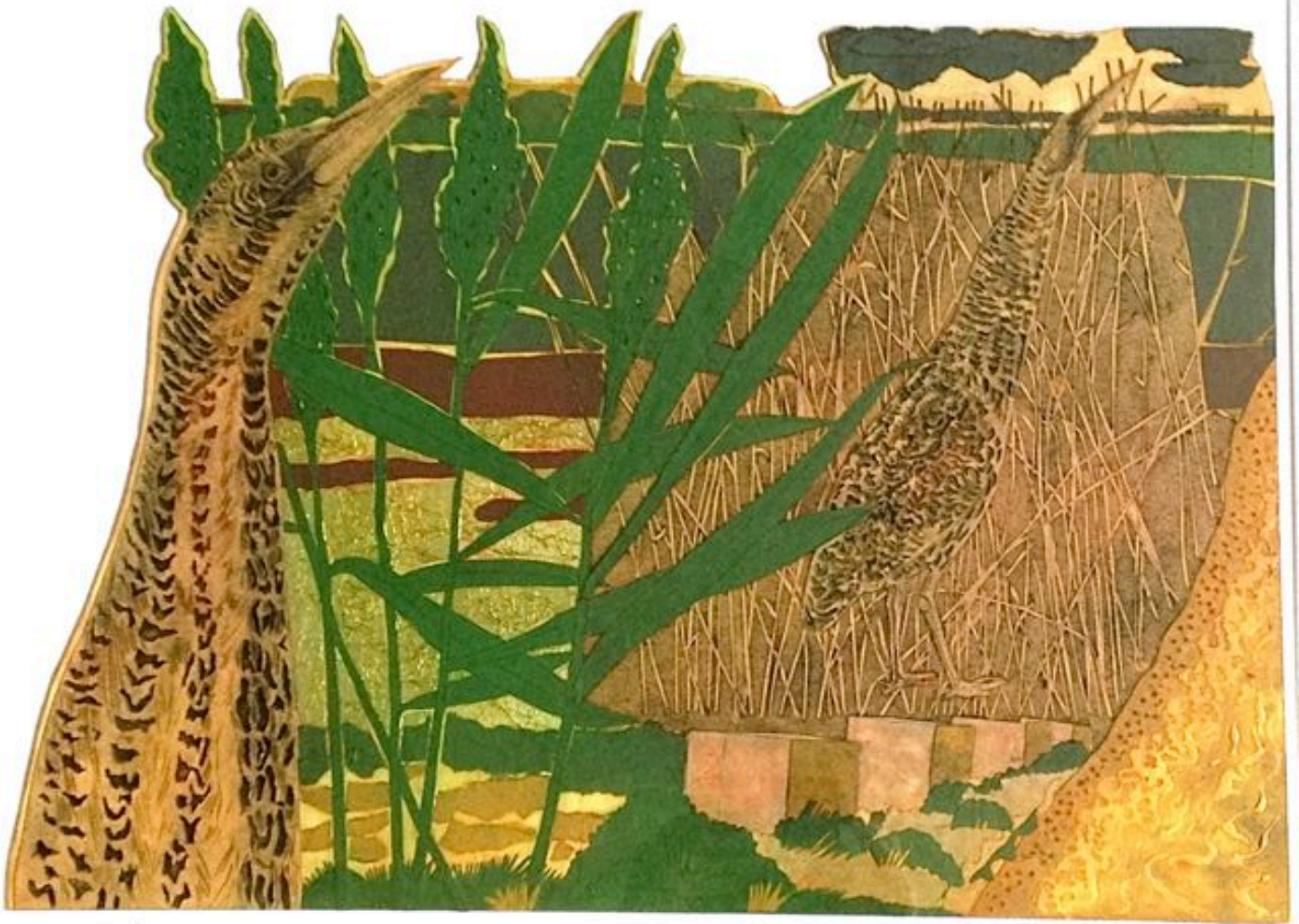
14. *Robin's Nest : Collagraph Plate*, 2020.

Unique; card, paper, inks.

H365mm W355mm

£880 (framed)





ABOVE

15. *Bittern, Minsmere, 2020.*

Collagraph Plate. Unique.

H235mm W725mm

£2,115 (framed)

NOTE ON COLLAGRAPHS

The process of creating a collagraph plate is an elaborate and delicate one. It involves the layering of different materials to form a three dimensional surface. Materials are chosen for their texture and absorbency. They are used to create a collage-like image which is then used as the plate and inked with selected colours. The first print is heavily pigmented. Subsequent impressions become lighter and are sometimes referred to as ghost prints.

During meetings for *On a Turning Wing* in February 2020, Jennifer explained that she was interested in using collagraphs to explore migration as another aspect of birdlife in Suffolk - alongside her remarkable collection of bronze bird nests. One reason was the opportunity it provided to represent physical details of the birds' habitats and migration routes both in the plates themselves and in the prints. She has limited the latter to small number of sets of unique prints from each plate. All the plates and a selection of the prints have been framed for the Exhibition and are for sale. The remaining prints are available unframed.



16. *Bittern, Minsmere, 2020.*
Collagraph print; unique.
Heavily inked.
H235mm W725mm
£1,135 (framed)



17. *Bittern, Minsmere, 2020.*
Collagraph print; unique.
Medium ink *Ghost Print I*
H235mm W725mm
£1,135 (framed)



18. *Bittern, Minsmere, 2020.*
Collagraph print; unique.
Lightly inked – *Ghost Print II*
H235mm W725mm
£1,135 (framed)

NOTE : a second set of three unique *Bittern* prints are available unframed (£1,015 each). Please ask for images / more information.



LEFT

19. *Reed Warbler's Nest, 2020.*
Collagraph Plate. Unique.
H615mm W545mm
£1,850 (framed)

NOTE

Three sets of two unique prints were made. The plate was inked once for each set. The first print of each set is heavily inked. The second Ghost print is paler. Four unframed prints are available at £870 each.

BELOW LEFT

20. *Reed Warbler's Nest, 2020.*
Collagraph print; unique.
Heavily inked.
H615mm W545mm
£975 (framed)

BELOW RIGHT

21. *Reed Warbler's Nest, 2020.*
Collagraph print; unique.
Ghost Print I. Unique.
H615mm W545mm
£975 (framed)





22. *Swallow, Migration. 2020.*
Collagraph Plate. Unique.
H860mm W615mm
£2,115 (framed)

NOTE

Three sets of two unique prints were made. The plate was inked once for each set. The first print of each set is heavily inked. The second Ghost print is paler. Four unframed prints are available £1,015 each. Please ask for images / more information.

BELOW LEFT

23. *Swallow, Migration. 2020.*
Collagraph print. Unique.
Heavily inked.
H860mm W615mm
£1,135 (framed)

BELOW RIGHT

24. *Swallow, Migration. 2020.*
Collagraph print. Unique.
H860mm W615mm
£1,135 (framed)



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

On a Turning Wing : A Celebration of Birds, Flight & Migration

Habitat and migration hold a particularly strong resonance for me, given the influences of a childhood in Uganda and Botswana, and a Father who loved bird watching. The Robin, Bittern, Reed Warbler and Swallow are all birds that migrate in some form or other.

I have learnt our Robins could be migrants from Scandinavia, and the Bittern usually stays in one place, but its offspring move away once grown. The Reed Warbler and Swallow migrate here all the way from Africa to breed (the former from the Sahel area of West Africa and the latter from South Africa), often returning to the place they were born.

What a feat for such small birds; they battle with bad weather and shortage of food, fly across huge distances and hostile terrain and sadly, countries that traditionally kill migrating birds for sport ! Once they arrive at their destination they set to and produce nests that are stunningly beautiful and incredibly intricate, by using the tools of two feet and a beak. No hands in sight quite amazing.

The Swiftlet's beak and saliva are both the tool and the material for making their delicate nests. The original nests, now transformed into bronze, came from George Nawan and his Swiftlet caves on the River Baram in Sarawak, East Malaysia. They are the main ingredient to Bird's Nest Soup.

There is a challenge to turning a nest into bronze, 'burning out' answers that route. It allows the nest to be literally burnt away in the kiln within a specially prepared mold, leaving the image of itself imprinted inside. The molten bronze is poured into that space to recreate the nest in bronze a fiery red-hot transformation which reincarnates the nest in a new form. The final object is completely changed yet still the same.

The collagraphs have been a new venture for me. A mixture of cutting and pasting, wood engraving, intaglio and relief printing, the plates are like little reliefs with the colour a standout element in the final embossed prints. Inking the plates took on average about an hour and a half, including wiping the excess ink off, an important part of the process as you can wipe one colour into another and gain a third colour. Magic.

The actual printing, using the etching press, takes just a few minutes for each print. It is especially exciting to lift the paper off the plate to see what all your preparation has resulted in. Each print is unique, with the Ghost prints taken from the plate whilst it is still on the press and using up the remaining ink. The resulting image is paler hence it being named a Ghost print.

Jennifer Hall. April 2020.

End of Catalogue

For all sales or for more information about any works

Please contact : enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk

Website : www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk **Instagram :** @aldevalleyfestival