

# ALDE VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 2020

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

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE : ISABELLE SARGINSON ALLEN

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Saint Bede described life as but a sparrow's flight through a mede hall – the implication being that it is during our time on this planet that we have the chance to fully experience the extraordinary intricacies of being alive, amid a profusion of biology, before departing. Several centuries later Saint Francis gave his sermon to the birds in the Spoleto Valley :

*“My little sisters, the birds, much bounden are ye unto God, your Creator, and always in every place ought ye to praise Him, for that He hath given you liberty to fly about everywhere, and hath also given you double and triple raiment ..”*

The presence of birds in Renaissance paintings and manuscripts is rich with symbolism. One senses that at this time the land, too, was more full with birds : replete with their feathered forms and song. Much of the symbolism of this period had its roots in earlier religions and beliefs, when the birds themselves were considered divine. Evidence of there earlier divinity is clear in carvings, monuments and objects from early civilizations and tribal groups from all around the globe – from the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia and South East Asian and beyond. In Europe, the Enlightenment undermined much of this reverence. There was a thirst for a much greater technical understanding of the world: a desire to dismantle it into its component parts: and in doing so, to name things.

The scientific study of birds has created great treasurehouses of collections and understanding. These are without doubt essential resources. But they have come at some cost (perhaps a great cost) to the objects of study – the populations of wild birds that supplied the world's great collections. One realm in which delicate traces of the old symbolisms and deeper cultural connections to birds survives is Folk Art. Woven, carved, etched, drawn and painted - the patterns and designs of Folk Art seem to include many forms that have their roots in pre-history. Maybe they hold within them the memories and faint echoes of more recent times when we listened to and spoke more freely with birds – seeking to understand their habits and movements in ways that might help our own survival.

Isabelle Sarginson Allen has taken part in the Workshop Residency programmes at White House Farm for the past two years, during which time her practice as an artist and designer has expanded into many new areas within fine art, decorative arts and folk art. In preparing for this year's Festival Exhibition and its theme *“On a Turning Wing”*, it felt important to acknowledge the effect of birds on human culture – on the visual arts, music, song, literature and, more deeply, on our spiritual lives too. Designs within Folk Art traditions seem to encapsulate this connection and it is a great pleasure to be able to present a sample of Isabelle's most recent work – the *Season Weavers*. They are an essential element within the 2020 Spring Festival Exhibition. Four works are presented for sale - others will be on show in Open Studios.

**For all sales or for more information about any works**

**Please contact : [enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk)**

**Commissions also undertake. Please enquire.**



1. *Season Weavers - Nature's Continuity, 2020*

**Dimensions:** Height H305mm W256mm.

**Medium:** Acrylic and Gouache on Paper.

**Price:** £165 (framed).



2. *Season Weavers - Seasons Shift*, 2020

Dimensions: H 400mm W 256mm.

Medium: Acrylic and Gouache on Paper.

Price: £195 (framed).



3. *Season Weavers - Seasons Bloom, 2020*

Dimensions: H 400mm W 256mm.

Medium: Acrylic and Gouache on Paper.

Price: **SOLD**



*4. Season Weavers - Family Trees, 2020*

**Dimensions:** H740mm W 320mm.

**Medium:** Acrylic and Watercolour on Paper.

**Price:** **SOLD**

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Painting, for me, is a meditation as well as a medium. My reflections, that find form on paper, revolve around the conversation between the changing internal self and the balanced, cyclical rhythms of the external world.

There is an element of Folk Art in the way I combine wildlife as an observation with natural forms as metaphor for expansion, change and innate wisdom. Ornamenting the page with flora, fauna and inherent symbolism, my aim with each piece is to share the sense of space, fluency and playfulness that nature impresses on me.

*'Season Weavers'* is the most recent development of the conversation I am exploring.

Created for the Alde Valley Spring Festival, *'Season Weavers'* explores the constant presences of birds, as they accompany us through the shifting seasons and change that occurs through these natural cycles. Incorporating birds into the intricacies of patterns and weaving plants, I paint them as I see them : essential threads in the tapestry of our environment; and reminders of a harmonious way of living.

Isabelle Sarginson Allen. April, 2020.

## End of Catalogue

**For all sales or for more information about any works**

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**Website :** [www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](http://www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk) **Instagram :** @aldevalleyfestival