

# Dartmoor: A Radical Landscape

*Dartmoor: A Radical Landscape* brings together photographic artwork from the late 1960s to the present day, inspired by this unique and evocative landscape. With its open spaces, ancient woodland and layered traces of human activity, Dartmoor has long attracted artists, often depicting the landscape as a picturesque rural idyll. During the later 20th century, artists began to explore radical new approaches, using Dartmoor as a space for experimentation: both a place for making and a source of creativity. Dartmoor is now home to a thriving artistic community, whose work is recognised internationally.

RAMM's location means it has, over time, become the custodian of a range of objects found, made and inspired by Dartmoor. The exhibition premieres commissions by Alex Hartley and Ashish Ghadiali whose research into the museum's collections of historic photography and archaeological artefacts have prompted artistic explorations of Dartmoor's deep time and ecology.

Dartmoor exists in the cultural imagination as a place of freedom and wilderness, but it is also a contested landscape and a microcosm of urgent issues facing Britain today. Concerns about the interconnected ecological crisis and climate breakdown, as well as who has access to the land, are explored by artists through collaborations with climate scientists, protestors and other experts. This range of visually stunning and emotionally charged artworks offers new ways of appreciating and understanding Dartmoor's special landscape and considering its future.

*Thank you to the Dartmoor Preservation Association, our lead exhibition partner, who, for over 140 years has campaigned to keep Dartmoor wild and free by preventing inappropriate development, defending public access and acquiring under-threat pieces of land to protect archaeology and biodiversity for all.*

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## **David Spero (born 1963)**

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*Eden 6, 2004*

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# Land Art

In the late 1960s, artists in the UK and US left the studio to go into the landscape, creating radical new forms of art that came to be known as 'Land Art'. This approach to making included a range of practices, including sculpture and performance, nearly always recorded and shared through photography. Artists designated walks and ephemeral objects placed in the landscape as art. Landscape became subject, studio and inspiration.

This exhibition begins with important conceptual artworks from the late 1960s and early 1970s that place Dartmoor at the heart of international developments in Land Art. Innovative American artist Nancy Holt; influential British artist, Richard Long, and experimental feminist artist Marie Yates all shared an attitude to making art. They used photography as both a means of documentation and as a trace of their journey through the landscape.

Richard Long's early Dartmoor walks are emblematic of this new art. The same year that Robert Smithson, with Nancy Holt, hired earthmovers to create *Spiral Jetty* on the salt flats of Utah, Long was walking 'as art' across Dartmoor. Despite his resistance to any artistic categorisation, Long has been described as a Land Artist ever since and has risen to international prominence, making work on Dartmoor throughout his long and prestigious career.

By engaging inventively with Dartmoor, these artists drew attention to this landscape as a vital site for experimental approaches to making art. Together, they provide an extraordinary inheritance for future imaginative thinking which continues to inspire creativity.

## Marie Yates (born 1940)

Marie Yates has been exhibiting conceptual art since the early 1970s when she rejected what she saw as the 'purely visual American Modernist aesthetic ideals'. Instead she embraced the Italian *Arte Povera* movement which explored the context of creating art and its relationship to life by placing the viewer central to experience and meaning.

Critically acclaimed for work that explored ideas of feminist discourses through photographic image and text, Yates had major exhibitions throughout the UK, Europe and USA during the 1980s. A recent Tate Britain Spotlight display focused on her 'feminist art project'. Having taught at many art colleges in London including Chelsea, Goldsmiths and the RCA, she retired to Greece in the early 1990s where she continues to explore psychoanalysis, politics and media through her practice. Her work is held in many UK public collections including Arts Council, British Council, and Tate.

*'My Dartmoor works were very temporary disturbances, hardly there at all, and were attempts to question the uses of landscape in art and the media and the covering over and obliteration of the historical remnants of centuries of human struggle. To me, landscape is a huge memory to be read and valued, and I treasured the finding of small pockets which resonated with shadows of the past.'*

Marie Yates, 2016



**Marie Yates (born 1940)**

***Field Working Paper 1, 30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1971, Dean Wood, Dartmoor***

Six colour and black and white inkjet prints, re-printed 2024

This is the first of a number of works by Marie Yates that document walks on and around Dartmoor in the early 1970s, when she made ephemeral sculptures, film and sound recordings and written observations. Part of a wider series based on journeys in the south west, they explore ideas of context and site that were central to developments in conceptual art at the time. Yates describes the intention to document an event ‘that did not happen as it were – ephiphanously: we went there, we arrived, we left, the place remained the same, as if we had never been there’.

In *Dean Wood*, the trees and wind ‘activate’ the sculpture, in what she highlights as a living landscape, describing it as ‘a huge memory to be read and valued’.

©Marie Yates, Courtesy of the artist

## Nancy Holt (1938-2014)

Nancy Holt first studied Biology at Tufts University, Massachusetts, exploring connections between science and art. From 1960 onwards she lived in New York, where her friends included some of the best-known artists of the time such as Carl Andre, Eva Hesse, Sol Le Witt, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson who she married. Her art practice included concrete poetry, audio, film and video, drawings, and earthworks as well as photography. As an important contributor to Land and Conceptual Art, Holt was a vital female voice in an American art world dominated by men.

In 1969 Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson visited the UK because Smithson was showing work in the exhibition *When Attitudes become Form* at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) in London. This ground-breaking exhibition also featured Richard Long. While they were here, they visited sites in Wales and the south of England, including Devon, that resonated with their practice.

*'I made my film Pine Barrens [in] 1975, which I filmed in a wilderness area in New Jersey called the Pine Barrens, which also has stunted trees. There is uncanniness there too, and local tales of a Jersey Devil lurking in the woods. Looking back, I feel that the Pine Barrens film may have been seeded in our visit to Wistman's Wood. Walking on that Dartmoor trail was a pivotal experience. Not long before our visit there, we had seen Stonehenge, Avebury and Silbury Hill. It all works on the psyche.'*

Nancy Holt in conversation with Simon Grant, 2012, *Tate Etc.*

**Nancy Holt (1938-2014)**  
***Wistman's Wood*, 1969**

From the *Buried Poems*, 1969-71  
Inkjet prints from original slides, printed 2012

For this personal series, Nancy Holt wrote poems which she stored in a vacuum flask and buried at a location only revealed through a booklet of maps, directions, and list of equipment she sent to the recipient. The first, for Robert Smithson, was buried in Wistman's Wood, Dartmoor, where, as she says, 'language was made to be dependent not on music and books, but on place.'

Recalling the day in an interview in 2012 with Simon Grant, she said, 'I remember that the ground was strewn with large rocks covered with many different types of mosses and lichens, out of which arose these strange, twisted trees. We were stunned by this place. ... A site evokes a person ... To me, Wistman's Wood conjured up Bob's persona in a striking way...'

© Holt/Smithson Foundation, Licensed by VAGA at Artist Rights Society, New York. Courtesy Sprüth Magers

**Nancy Holt (1938-2014)**  
***Trail Markers*, 1969**

Inkjet prints on archival rag paper from original slides, printed 2012

In an interview with Simon Grant for *Tate Etc.* magazine in 2012, Nancy Holt said, 'I followed the orange circles painted on rocks or fence posts guiding you along the walking route and took photographs. I hadn't seen markers like these before. I didn't know if they were unique to this place or not ... We had never been to any place like these moors before. As a matter of fact, we felt that the whole trail – the moors, rocks and the sheep – was otherworldly'.

© Holt/Smithson Foundation, Licensed by VAGA at Artist Rights Society, New York. Courtesy Sprüth Magers

## Richard Long (born 1945)

Richard Long is one of the UK's most significant artists. He has been at the forefront of contemporary art for over 40 years, pioneering new art forms through an exploration of landscape as both the medium and subject of his work. Long has stated that it was his intention 'to make a new way of walking: walking as art.' He manifests the walks as art in three ways: in maps, as photographs, or as text works.

Long won the UK's most prestigious art award, the Turner Prize, in 1989. He lives and works in Bristol, the city in which he was born. Internationally renowned and critically acclaimed worldwide, his work has featured in numerous exhibitions since the 1960s and is in many UK and international public collections.

*'Nature has always been recorded by artists, from prehistoric cave paintings to twentieth-century landscape photography. I too wanted to make nature the subject of my work, but in new ways. I started working outside using natural materials like grass and water, and this evolved into the idea of making a sculpture by walking. My first work made by walking, in 1967, was a straight line in a grass field, which was also my own path, going 'nowhere'. In the subsequent early map works, recording very simple but precise walks on Exmoor and Dartmoor, my intention was to make a new art which was also a new way of walking: walking as art.'*

Richard Long, 2000

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***A Dartmoor Walk – Eight Days, England, 1987***

Pencil and lettering on paper

Richard Long spent his school holidays on Dartmoor staying with his grandparents who lived there. He has made more work on Dartmoor than anywhere else, recently stating, 'Dartmoor is my studio'. In conversations with RAMM's contemporary art curator, in 2023, he described how he has been 'obsessed' with walking on Dartmoor throughout his long and successful career.

In Long's art, walking is the most direct, immediate and practical way of interacting with nature. In this work, he walked for eight days on Dartmoor ensuring distance and location is linked. The walk has a structure which the line map makes evident and which the viewer can then experience imaginatively. 'Walking is embedded in the whole of human history – people walked out of Africa on foot to colonise the world,' he says. 'I'm just putting something new on all the other traditions of walking that have happened before.'

On loan from the Dartmoor National Park Authority

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Two Walks, 1972***

Map, text, and photograph on paper

Walking can be a way of interacting with the world to gain a new awareness of our surroundings. The difference between the direct experience of the landscape, with its sights and sounds, and the two-dimensional map is emphasised by the straight lines signifying the walks and the photograph of Bennet's Cross. In recent correspondence with RAMM about this early work, Richard Long

has written, 'The idea was to walk two lines of the same length, and to record the different walking time of each, to reflect the particular differences of terrain in each line. (And they crossed at a classic Dartmoor cross).'

The artist has become the marker, tracing a line on the Dartmoor landscape making the walks behave like temporary drawings in the landscape. Long freed sculpture from the constraints of the gallery by walking, to explore what he describes as, 'relationships between time, distance, geography and measurement'.

On loan from Museum and Art Swindon

**Richard Long (born 1945)**  
***Dartmoor Walks, 1971-2***

Screenprint and lithograph on paper

The image records all the walks Long had made on Dartmoor in one year. It doesn't show or describe the different types of artworks he made on these walks but instead records their locations. The lines correspond to the location of each walk as seen on a 1 inch : 1 mile Ordnance Survey map.

Richard Long rarely makes prints; this one was made for sale to Friends of a museum in Mönchengladbach, Germany.

Private collection

**Richard Long (born 1945)**  
***A Dartmoor Walk - Eight Days, 1987, in Old World New World***

Published by Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1988

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Dartmoor***

Published by Walther Koenig, 2006

'It's important that I find the places I make my sculptures in by walking. I'm embedded in the landscape by walking through it. They're stopping places on the journey, and the journey is by walking. I don't foresee the places where I'm going to make sculptures. I come across them by chance.' Richard Long

Private collection

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Two sheepdogs cross in and out of the passing shadows: the clouds drift over the hill with a storm, 1971***

Richard Long/Lisson Publications

Victoria and Albert Museum

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Stones on a Cairn, 1992***

Photograph and text

Although Richard Long's work has become emblematic of Conceptual and Land Art, an element of ritual and pilgrimage is evident in his regular, repeated Dartmoor walks and the placing of stones as part of his art.

This photograph documents both a temporary sculpture in the Dartmoor landscape, and when paired with Long's text is its own distinct artwork.

Of his many, varied sculptures in the landscape Long says, 'Over the years these sculptures have explored ideas of transience, permanence, visibility and recognition. ... On a mountain walk a sculpture could be made above the clouds, perhaps in a remote region, bringing an imaginative freedom about how, or where, art can be made in the world'.

© Richard Long; courtesy of Lisson Gallery

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Dartmoor Time, 1996***

Exhibition pamphlet, paper

Published by Spacex Gallery, Exeter, 1996

From the 1960s onwards, artists began to explore the relationship between landscape and the printed page, none more so than Richard Long, who made his first artist's book (*Two Sheepdogs*) in 1971. Exhibition catalogues and printed material, previously just ephemeral, took on the role of works of art in their own right. This pamphlet was printed by Spacex, a publicly funded contemporary art space located in Preston Street in Exeter from 1974 to 2017.

It was produced in conjunction with an exhibition devoted to Richard Long's work and was curated by Alex Farquharson, Director of Spacex Gallery in Exeter from 1994 to 1999, now Director of Tate Britain. The pamphlet includes an essay by Farquharson to accompany the text work by Richard Long.

Private collection

**Richard Long (born 1945)**

***Five Ways (Diptych) Dartmoor, England, 2006***

Colour photographs with text



This work is made in response to five specific walks and Long's physical presence in that Dartmoor landscape. The overlaid text tells the story of the walks using a personal and generalised geography that, as Long puts it, 'feed the imagination'.

He says, 'My work really is just about being a human being living on this planet and using nature as its source, I enjoy the simple pleasures of ... eating, dreaming, happenstance, of passing through the land and sometimes leaving (memorable) traces along the way, of finding a new campsite each night. And then moving on.'

© Richard Long; courtesy of Lisson Gallery

**Richard Long (born 1945)**  
***Life Death, 2011***

Text work

Text has consistently featured in Richard Long's art as part of a preoccupation with the physical engagement of his body in the landscape. He describes working in text as 'narratives of walks and narratives of sculpture'. In *Life, Death* the selection of particular observations from this four-day walk on Dartmoor with attention given to the words' meanings, their juxtaposition, and the leap from the specific such as 'bleached bones' to the universal 'air' share formal qualities with concrete poetry.

By describing the text works as conveying a 'sort of story', Long's observations in this Dartmoor landscape, 'function as resolutely reflexive indexes of being-in-the-world' prompting images in the viewer's mind.

© Richard Long; courtesy of Lisson Gallery

## **Alex Hartley (born 1963)**

Alex Hartley is based in East Devon and climbs on Dartmoor. His artwork explores ways of physically experiencing and thinking about our built and natural environments. Internationally renowned and critically acclaimed, his work has featured in exhibitions across the UK, Europe, USA and Japan, with his most recent solo exhibition part of the Architecture Venice Biennial in 2023. His practice often engages with the dual ecological and climate emergencies such as in the groundbreaking work *Nowhereisland* in 2015 which followed his discovery of a new island uncovered by a retreating glacier. Declaring it the world's newest nation, he invited the public to become citizens and towed the island from the High Arctic to the south west coast.

*'Neolithic stones have been here for 3000, 4000 years and they're still visible. You can reach back through time and touch the very thing that these people touched. It's so rare to find those places. And there's something very specific about Dartmoor, about how iconic the rocky outcrops are. I can see it when I'm away from here and there's not many places that I feel that way about, where they really follow me around and they are in me.'*

Alex Hartley, 2024

**Alex Hartley (born 1963)**  
***The Summoning Stones, 2024***

Recycled solar photo-voltaic panels, hand-dyed inkjet prints, paint,  
resin, powder-coated steel framework  
Granite boulders, solar thermal tubes

This new work has been realised through Alex Hartley's research at the museum and in its stores where he searched for what he describes as 'a resonant magic object'. He found that RAMM's Kingsteignton figure, a 2000-year-old wooden human figure on display on the ground floor, contained the same 'vibrant energy' that he detected in Dartmoor's stone circles. He invites you to stand at the centre of this installation, 'to basically be plugged into the main frame' saying, 'I want the energy of these rocks to transfer into the viewer. It's almost certainly unachievable, but I really have that as the goal for it'.

Commissioned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery,  
Exeter City Council, 2024

## James Ravilious (1939-1999)

James Ravilious is closely associated with North Devon, where for seventeen years he made a unique photographic record of rural life for the Beaford Archive, having moved to Dolton in 1972.

Although the majority of his photographs are of the 'land of the two rivers' between the Torridge and the Taw, Dartmoor frequently appears, often framing views towards the south west, from where North Devon gets much of its weather, and the Taw rises. Ravilious also made photographs on Dartmoor, where he seems to have enjoyed the freedom to focus on landscape.

The son of artists Eric Ravilious (1903-42) and Tirzah Garwood (1908-51), Ravilious trained as a painter and taught painting and drawing in London in the 1960s. He was inspired to take up photography after visiting the exhibition of Henri Cartier-Bresson's photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1969.

*'I never set up photographs, preferring to take life as it comes. For pleasure and support I look at paintings more than photographs, though I particularly admire the work of Henry Cartier-Bresson, and the marvellous books of Olive Cook and Edwin Smith. Another inspiration is the work of the wood-engraver Thomas Bewick, undoubtedly the best record of English country life ever made.'*

James Ravilious, 1995

**James Ravilious (1939-1999)**

***Moorland scene with fox tracks in the snow, Dartmoor,***  
**(January) 1986**

Gelatin silver print

Ravilious loved photographing snow, with its opportunities for thinking in black and white and working with light and texture.

This photograph was taken on Gidleigh Common when out with Chris Chapman. While the fresh animal prints suggest recent activity, the landscape also reveals evidence of centuries of human intervention: what appears to be a path or river is in fact a streaming channel created when the waters of the North Teign River were redirected for tin production.

Copyright Beaford Arts. Courtesy The James Ravilious Estate

**James Ravilious (1939-1999)**

***Near Oke Camp, (April) 1978***

Gelatin silver print, printed 2024

‘What inspires me most,’ wrote Ravilious, ‘is “ordinary“ life – which of course is never ordinary.’ His photographs combine an exacting eye for composition with a concern for authenticity. He never set up or cropped his images and experimented with photographic equipment to convey the qualities of light he saw in the Devon landscape.

This photograph was taken near the army base at Okehampton, and shows Yes Tor and West Mill Tor in the distance.

Copyright Beaford Arts. Courtesy The James Ravilious Estate

**James Ravilious (1939-1999)**  
***Wistman's Wood*, (May) 1984**

Gelatin silver print

James Ravilious is better known for his photographs of North Devon, where he made an extensive photographic record of rural life for the Beaford Archive. He also made photographs on Dartmoor, often on family excursions or with his friend Chris Chapman.

Wistman's Wood was a favourite destination, where – according to Chapman and Ravilious's wife and biographer Robin – he was captivated by the light rippling through the trees, creating a sense of being underwater.

Courtesy The James Ravilious Estate

## **Chris Chapman (born 1952)**

Chris Chapman took his first photos of Dartmoor in 1972 while studying at Torquay School of Art, before joining the new Documentary Photography course at Newport College run by *Magnum* photographer David Hurn.

In the summer of 1974, Chapman embarked on a photographic walking journey over Dartmoor, with a donkey to carry his equipment. He moved to Dartmoor the following year, documenting rural life and customs in photography and film. He never intended to stay but writes that 'Dartmoor always drew me home.' His photographs have been published and exhibited extensively and are in public collections including Arts Council and International Center for Photography, New York. A permanent exhibition of Chapman's *Dartmoor Photographs* is now installed at the Providence Methodist Church in Throwleigh.

*'I look at the sale ring at Chagford pony sale and wonder at the four hats. They're all different [...], and they all slightly belong to different eras. You've got Colin Northmore with the bowler hat, the flat cap on another farmer and the flowerpot hat on Mr Andrews, who was a dealer. I love that.'*

Chris Chapman, 2022

**Chris Chapman (born 1952)**

***'A Man of the Cloth!' James Ravilious photographing in  
Wistman's Wood, 1997***

Silver gelatin print

In this affectionately titled portrait, James Ravilious is partially hidden under the hood of a large format camera that previously belonged to the photographer Edwin Smith (1912-1971).

Chapman and Ravilious both moved to Devon in the early 1970s and became friends. They would often compare notes on techniques, help each other with printing and set out on joint photographic expeditions. The tree that frames Ravilious here is the same one he photographed in the adjacent picture.

Image courtesy of [www.chrischapmanphotography.co.uk](http://www.chrischapmanphotography.co.uk)

**Chris Chapman (born 1952)**

***Middlecott Farm, Chagford, 1982***

Gelatin silver print

Having grown up amongst a farming family in Lancashire, Chapman has been particularly committed to recording life on Dartmoor's ancient farms.

There is evidence of a settlement at Middlecott since the 11th century. The farmhouse shown here was probably originally built in the 16th century as an open hall shared by both humans and animals. As Chapman comments, 'the farmhouse looks as if it has just grown out of the landscape.'

Victoria and Albert Museum



**Chris Chapman (born 1952)**

***Joe White and his 'teddie' pit, Batworthy Farm, Chagford, 1982***

Gelatin silver print

Joe White lived with his brother and sister at Batworthy, a small mixed farm near Chagford that was self-sufficient in vegetables, eggs, meat and dairy. Chapman made many photographs there, recording traditional rural skills and ways of life that persisted into the 1970s and 80s.

Mr White is placing potatoes in a pit lined and covered with straw and soil, a traditional way to store them for the winter. 'Tiddy' is West Country dialect for potato.

Victoria and Albert Museum

**Chris Chapman (born 1952)**

***Chagford Pony Sale, 1977***

Gelatin silver print

Chris Chapman took his first photographs of Dartmoor as a student, before moving to Throwleigh in 1975. He has now spent over 50 years documenting Dartmoor life and landscape.

Chapman's black and white photographs record continuity and change in these rural communities, sometimes, as here, seeming to capture both past and present in the same image. In 2023 he was awarded a 'Special Recognition Award' by West Devon Council for his work documenting the lives of local people through photography and film.

Victoria and Albert Museum

## Resource Area:

*'As a Latinist, I can't help but be aware of the Latin roots to the word "radical" - that it literally means roots ...we often use radical now as something that means more progressive or even transgressive.'*

Katharine Earnshaw, 2024

### Artist interviews

Watch some of the artists talking about their work in this exhibition.

View this video online: <https://ramm.uk/DartmoorFilm>

Alex Hartley

Garry Fabian Miller

Ashish Ghadiali

Jo Bradford

Susan Derges

Robert Darch

Laura Hopes

Katharine Earnshaw

Siân Davey

Fern Leigh Albert

### Map of Dartmoor

Use this interactive map to find locations on Dartmoor associated with the artworks in this exhibition.

- Press on the blue location markers to see which artwork is located there.
- To read the full information and see the image of the artwork pull up the tab from the bottom of the page.

## **Timeline booklet**

A timeline that places the artworks on display within a selection of relevant exhibitions, publications and events. It provides a wider context for the artists and their practice beyond this exhibition. It can be found [here](#).

## Acknowledgements

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Lead exhibition partner:



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Ben Tufnell  
Vardaxoglou Gallery, London  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
Nicholas J R White  
Marie Yates

# **Dartmoor Preservation Association**

## **Lead exhibition partner**

‘Since 1883, the Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA) has been the leading independent membership organisation protecting Dartmoor. We undertake practical conservation work; object to inappropriate development; advocate for public access and work in partnership with other organisations on projects that conserve and restore landscape, heritage and wildlife. We have a particular interest in public access and invest in programmes to get young people onto Dartmoor.

Over our 140 years we have acquired several unique pieces of land in the National Park to prevent them from being damaged, these are managed for biodiversity and the protection of archaeology. We are lucky to have a team of knowledgeable and dedicated conservation volunteers who work year-round to protect habitats and manage biodiversity loss, offering training and support to anybody who wants to join the team.

We maintain a strong and close relationship with the Dartmoor National Park Authority and act as their “critical friend”. Through our relationships with the Authority, and partnerships with other organisations, we influence the formulation of policy to manage Dartmoor and conserve its special qualities.

Recently the DPA have defended the right to backpack camp on Dartmoor, relaunched our ‘Moor Boots’ programme supporting disadvantaged young people to get onto Dartmoor, and worked with our Youth Ranger on programmes facilitating access such as ‘Girls Do Dartmoor’. Looking ahead, we are campaigning on issues like the Plymouth Freeport and disfiguring telecoms masts. We are busy formulating our response on our own land to the climate emergency and we recognise the centrality of this issue to all National Parks’.

Tom Usher, Director of DPA

## **Siân Davey (born 1964)**

Inspired by seeing a Louise Bourgeois exhibition at Tate Modern, Siân Davey gave up working as a psychotherapist to launch a career in photography in 2014. She creates photographic works that explore her experience as a mother and what she describes as 'psychological landscapes' close to where she lives on the Dartington Estate. Exhibited widely, most recently at The Photographer's Gallery outdoor Soho Quarter display in London until November 2024, Davey has won widespread international critical acclaim for her most recent series *The Garden*. Her work is in many public collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris.

*'I pray to the river spirits, you know, and I think about Dartmoor and I think about how ancient this land is. ... The big issue at the moment is pollution. If we treat the Earth like we want to be treated ourselves then we can live in harmony.'*

Siân Davey, 2024

**Siân Davey (born 1964)**

***Untitled, 2021***

***Untitled, 2016***

***Untitled, 2014***

From *The River*, 2013 ongoing

C-type prints

*The River* is Siân Davey's first photographic series. It focuses on the relationship between the river Dart and family and friends along a short stretch close to her home which she visits daily, often swimming in the early morning. The river runs south through Dartmoor, bringing with it the brown-peaty water visible in her photographs. Describing the process of making this work, she says, 'It was just extraordinary being down here. Just transcending the ordinary into other worlds: being here and really deeply noticing and attuning myself to how people inhabit space. I'm still making this work. It's a forever series.'

Courtesy of the artist



## David Spero (born 1963)

David Spero is particularly interested in the ways that buildings and other human traces in the landscape reflect and embody beliefs and values. Using a large format field camera, he works in series, allowing ideas to emerge over time, creating images that reflect patient and contemplative enquiry. He has exhibited internationally since the mid 1990s and was recipient of the inaugural Photoworks Fellowship at the British School at Rome in 2009.

*Settlements* has been widely exhibited, including at The Photographers Gallery, London, 2005; Tate Britain, 2007, in *How we are: Photographing Britain*, and most recently at Kestle Barton, Cornwall, 2019.

Spero's work is in major collections, including the National Science and Media Museum, British Council, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome.

*'To build and live in a low impact settlement transforms the act of protest into a more holistic form, to a living demonstration of what is possible – pushing boundaries, stretching and challenging the imagination. It creates spaces where alternatives can be traced out and given room to evolve and grow.'*

David Spero, 2015

**David Spero (born 1963)**  
***Settlements***

***Steward Community Woodland***

Steward Community Woodland, situated on the edge of Dartmoor near Mortonhampstead, is one of several communities exploring sustainable living documented in David Spero's series *Settlements*. Practicing permaculture, this community grew food, generated electricity from nearby streams and solar panels, and built dwellings from locally sourced and recycled materials. Spero's photographs chart its evolution up to 2019, when permanent planning permission was refused, and the seven resident households were forced to dismantle all non-agricultural buildings and leave the woods. His book containing the full series, along with information about the communities and their negotiations and battles with local planning authorities, is available in the resource area.

**David Spero (born 1963)**  
***'The Longhouse' communal space and workshop (view from old kitchen path), June 2004***

*Canvas-covered structure, part hazel pole bender and part roundwood timber frame, with reused materials. Initial construction 2000*

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing  
C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

**David Spero (born 1963)**

***'The Longhouse', communal space and new kitchen, November 2004***

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing  
C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

**David Spero (born 1963)**

***Community portrait, November 2004***

*Without Merlin*

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing  
C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

**David Spero (born 1963)**

***Communal kitchen, June 2004***

*Canvas-covered part roundwood timber frame and part hazel pole bender with reused materials. Prior to kitchen area being moved to the longhouse late 2004. Initial construction 2000, dismantled 2008 after serving as the communal workshop*

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing  
C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

**David Spero (born 1963)**

***John, Sonia, Daisy, Marley and Asha's, June 2008***

*Canvas-covered roundwood timber-frame house built with reused materials*

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing

C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

**David Spero (born 1963)**

***Community portrait, April 2010***

*10<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

From the series *Settlements*, 2004-ongoing

C-type print

Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchase funded by the Photographs Acquisition Group

# Our environment

Scientists agree that the UK is now the most nature depleted area of Europe. Our insect, bird and wild mammal populations have fallen dramatically since the 1970s, with many now on the verge of extinction. The rapid decline in biodiversity means that not all life can thrive. This has led to debates about how land is managed and who has access to it.

Against the backdrop of this crisis, the museum commissioned ecologically conscious contemporary artists Ashish Ghadiali and Alex Hartley to make work for this exhibition. Their concern for the earth and our interconnected relationship with the natural world guides their thinking. The new installations displayed here have been informed by working with climate scientists and an engagement with deep time, recognising that we are now living in a new geologic epoch called the Anthropocene.

The implications of the enclosure and extraction of land resources – such as tin, peat and forests – on Dartmoor’s environment, ecosystems and biodiversity today also inform critically engaged art. Tanoa Sasraku’s foraging for earth pigments and re-use of materials point to her ‘call for conservation’ which, like Ghadiali and Hartley, she explores through otherworldly, even magical connections to nature and our entanglement with it. Whilst David Spero has, since 2004, questioned how we might live sustainably by recording communities who are exploring low impact ways of living. His photographic series shows a way of life that challenges the mainstream, suggesting different narratives for our future.

With growing awareness about the toxicity of photographic chemistry and the medium’s reliance on extractive processes, artists are now exploring more sustainable photographic practices and ecosystems.

Jo Bradford has developed a plant-based seal for her prints that incorporates locally produced beeswax and is nurturing willow trees to manage waste from her Dartmoor studio sustainably.

## Tanoa Sasraku (born 1995)

Tanoa Sasraku grew up in Plymouth, not far from Dartmoor, where the moors provided freedom from the suburbs. A tutor at the Royal Academy Schools in London commented on her unique technique which involves submerging work in river or sea water as being similar to photographic exposure. Instead of revealing an image, the water binds the materials together to create what Sasraku has termed 'terra-type', describing it as the 'geological sum of my life'. Sasraku rubs earth pigments into sheets of blank newsprint, which are sewn, soaked and ripped, revealing past layers of pigment and pattern to create a unique way of engaging with the Dartmoor landscape.

Despite only recently completing her postgraduate studies, Sasraku has already exhibited widely including in the Tate Liverpool exhibition *Radical Landscapes: Art, Identity and Activism*, and in solo shows at Spike Island in Bristol, and Peer Art Gallery, London. Her work is in UK public collections including the Arts Council Collection and the Government Art Collection.

*'...foraging is a way to engage ecologically with landscapes that are important to me...my work is almost a call for conservation because I would love for these areas to remain undeveloped and undisturbed. ... I've also been reading a lot of literature rooted in and around Dartmoor, and gradually I've realised that these books themselves are often calls for conservation, ... but it's done by imbuing them with magic ...'*

Tanoa Sasraku, 2022

**Tanoa Sasraku (born 1995)**

***Mire Horse, 2022***

From *Terratypes*, 2022 ongoing

Newsprint, thread, toner, foraged Bideford Black pigment, foraged Yarner Wood orange pigment, fixative spray, Dartmoor Bog matter

The *Mire Horse* works refer to both the fictional Dartmoor pony in *Hound of the Baskervilles* which Dr Watson witnesses being sucked into the bog, and a memory that was triggered for Sasraku when listening to this famous Sherlock Holmes mystery, saying 'during my first Ten Tors training across Dartmoor, a thick mist descended and we lost our bearings on the map. Because I couldn't see anything, I took a false step into this bog and fell in. And then, as I'm struggling to back away, through the mist this horse's head emerged – it must have slipped in and died weeks before – and its brain was exposed. That was my first reminder that Dartmoor is profoundly full of death.'

**Tanoa Sasraku (born 1995)**

***Mire Horse, 2022***

From *Terratypes*, 2022 ongoing

Newsprint, thread, toner, foraged Bideford Black pigment, foraged Yarner Wood orange pigment, fixative spray, Dartmoor Bog matter

Private Collection of M. Fischer, London. Courtesy Vardaxoglou Gallery, London

**Tanoa Sasraku (born 1995)**

***Mire Horse, 2022***

From *Terratypes*, 2022 ongoing

Newsprint, thread, toner, foraged Bideford Black pigment, foraged Yarner Wood orange pigment, fixative spray, Dartmoor Bog matter

Private Collection of Ben Hunter. Courtesy Vardaxoglou Gallery, London



## **Robert Darch (born 1979)**

Robert Darch is based in west Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor. His artistic practice encompasses both documentary and fictional accounts of rural Britain. Despite growing up in the Midlands, Dartmoor holds special significance for him, citing the 'eerie, creepy moor' of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as an influence as well as how people interact with the moor. Critically acclaimed and exhibited widely with work featured in the national press, he recently found recognition in Europe through the touring exhibition *Facing Britain: British Documentary Photography since the 1960s*.

*'Dartmoor is a space where I feel like there's a sense of freedom. It's the largest area of tranquillity in the south of this country. When you're in the middle of the moor, you really feel like there's space to roam. ... And Dartmoor has a really unique atmosphere. It's unlike anywhere else I've been. I'd almost say that the landscape has a presence. Dartmoor has a presence which, for me, is really emotive.'*

Robert Darch, 2024

**Robert Darch (born 1979)**

***Beardown Tor, 2018***

***Devil's Tor, 2019***

***Doe Tor, 2019***

***Whiteworks, 2019***

***Roos Tor, 2018***

From *The Ten Tors*, 2017-2020

Inkjet prints

For four years Robert Darch joined students from South Dartmoor College training for the Ten Tors Challenge on Dartmoor. Since the 1960s, this popular walk of 35, 45 or 55 miles for teams of young people aged from 14 to 19 years old has been managed by the British Army. Secondary schools in Exeter and across Devon train teams of pupils throughout the winter to compete in the challenge in May. Selected from Darch's larger *Ten Tors* series, these photographs document a small group navigating extreme weather conditions and exhaustion. The images show, as Darch says, 'those kinds of quiet moments when they're out by themselves as a team on the moor, rather than the big spectacle in May'.

Courtesy of the artist

**Robert Darch (born 1979)**

***The Moor, 2018***

Limited edition photo book, published by Another Place Press

The images in this publication are of both a recognisable Dartmoor but also one that is uncanny and eerie. It includes dark forests and open moorland alongside emotionally intense portraits of people whose lit faces seem to stare into an uncertain and dystopian future.

'Robert Darch's pictures evoke the still quiet peace of *The Moor* in a way the viewer can almost touch, smell and feel the atmosphere. As with all his work the photographs create a sense of the here and now coupled with a distinct nostalgia for the past - Thomas Hardy's Wessex emanating from within each image'. Tracy Marshall-Grant, Photography Curator.

The book is also available to look at in the resource area.

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council

## **Robin Friend (born 1983)**

Robin Friend was born in England. He spent most of his childhood in Australia before moving back to Sussex when he was 14 years old. 'It had a big impact on how I interacted with the landscape,' he says. 'Surfing, going to the bush, looking for wildlife. When I came back I was still looking at the British landscape with an Australian filter.' Friend's work has been exhibited widely and internationally including at Aperture Gallery in New York, and at the National Gallery, Somerset House and the Royal Academy of Arts in London. His work is in many collections including the Martin Parr Foundation.

### **Robin Friend (born 1983)** ***Bastard Countryside, 2018***

Limited edition photo book, published by Loose Joints

Robin Friend produced photographs for this book, unknowingly at first, for 15 years since studying photography at the University of Plymouth. Like other artists in this exhibition, such as Robert Darch and Nicholas White, he was taught by Professor Jem Southam, the internationally renowned photographer based in Exeter, who helped select the commissions for this exhibition. The image on the front shows a quarry in Chudleigh. Describing his inspiration, Friend says, 'I ran with this idea of city and countryside splattering into each other, creating this hybrid nature'.

'Bastard countryside' is a phrase coined by Victor Hugo in his novel *Les Miserables*, in which he describes Paris as an 'amphibian' that stretches out into the countryside devouring everything in its path. Friend was introduced to the phrase during his MA at the Royal College of Art by the writer Robert Macfarlane who has contributed an essay to this book.

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council

## **Jo Bradford (born 1972)**

Jo Bradford lives and works on Dartmoor from her off-grid home studio. As Director of the Sustainable Darkroom, a charitable trust, Bradford has been developing sustainable ways of managing darkroom chemicals via a specially planted willow wood in her garden. She is passionate about photography as a tool for creativity and mental health and has, for many years, led groups on Dartmoor. Bradford directed RAMM's *Dartmoor Frame of Mind* project with young people which is displayed in the café. As well as leading the marine and natural history photography degree at Falmouth University, she also writes popular photography books. For more than 20 years, Bradford's work has been exhibited internationally and in 2011 was even shown on the International Space Station.

*'Dartmoor is not technically a wilderness because it's a managed landscape, but it is a special place where I have the freedom to walk out of my door on a daily basis and walk for miles without seeing another human being, and be part of a community that isn't just people, but it's the animals and the nature that exist around.'*

Jo Bradford, 2024

**Jo Bradford (born 1972)**  
***Cloud Forest*, 2011- ongoing**

Inkjet, pigment prints on Japanese Kozo paper

Jo Bradford's home studio is situated near a fragment of Atlantic temperate rainforest. The selection of images displayed here documents the artist's walks beginning at the entrance to this 'lost rainforest', before taking in ash, oak and hazel trees that have been able to flourish undisturbed by livestock.

Bradford explores a variety of ways with which to make her photography more sustainable. In this series she dips the prints in local beeswax rather than using glass to protect them. She describes her practice as aiming to, 'make something that's more about being connected to the moments and the sense of place where I exist'.

Courtesy of the artist

## Ashish Ghadiali (born 1979)

Ashish Ghadiali is a multidisciplinary artist with a practice that spans filmmaking, writing, curation and activism. He is the founding director of the climate justice agency Radical Ecology and is currently working on a new publication *Dart River* for Hutchinson Heinemann, a psychogeography of empire set across the landscapes of the Dart Valley in South Devon. His recent exhibitions include the five-screen film installation, *Planetary Imagination* at The Box and *Against Apartheid* (as Curator) at KARST, both in Plymouth.

RAMM invited Ghadiali to create a new moving image work specifically for this exhibition inspired by its collections of Dartmoor materials on display in the museum and in its stores. Following conversations with RAMM's specialist curators of archaeology and natural science, Ghadiali chose to work with RAMM's extensive collection of 19th-century lantern slides depicting stone rows, circles and standing stones on Dartmoor.

*'There's a 10th-century Kashmiri Shaivite scripture called 'The Doctrine of Recognition' that I've been thinking about. It talks about the life stages of all living things - manifestation, preservation and dissolution - but also that after dissolution comes the moment of recognition or self-realisation, something that in the hyper-materialism of our 21st-century lives we don't always acknowledge. We tend to believe that what's gone is gone. But maybe it's only when something's gone that it's truth can really be revealed'.*

Ashish Ghadiali, 2024

**Ashish Ghadiali (born 1979)**

***Can you tell the time of a running river?, 2024***

From *Cinematics of Gaia and Magic*, 2023 - ongoing  
2 channel video, 19 mins

Inspired by a conversation with the Gaia theorist James Lovelock in the final year of his life, Ghadiali's installation explores how we might find what he refers to as, 'new ways of living on the earth, through the recognition of "different temporalities": here, the time of a river and the time of a human body'.

The film's soundtrack begins with Ashish's daughter reading from a reworking of the 10th-century Shaivite sutra, *The Doctrine of Recognition*, that turns into a question for an AI chatbot. This dialogue punctuates the artist's interview with Professor Tim Lenton, an eminent climate scientist based at the University of Exeter. During the film Ghadiali repeats the title of the work to an improvised melody as he enters the cold waters of a fast, flowing pool on the river Dart three times.

On a separate screen, in dialogue with the river and bather, the artist's selection of lantern slides from RAMM's collection is projected. In conversation with RAMM's contemporary art curator, Ghadiali said he found the research in the museum stores, 'emotional, and clarifying something about the way we seek connection with the life of the planet'.

Commissioned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery,  
Exeter City Council, 2024



## **Magic lantern slides**

RAMM has nearly 5,000 magic lantern slides, with the majority of these originally being used to illustrate museum lecture programmes. These slides were designed to be seen projected rather than held in the hand. They have their origins in painted slides that go back to the 1650s.

There is an archive of material from 1899 to the 1920s relating to TA (Thomas Adolphus) Falcon's photographs of Dartmoor and the surrounding area. These include notes, contact prints and text about Dartmoor archaeology. Most of it was published as the book *Dartmoor Illustrated* in 1900.

It is likely that RAMM's Dartmoor slides were used to illustrate a virtual walk around Dartmoor, exploring some of the best-known ancient monuments and landscape features.

[Find images of the RAMM lantern slides that feature in the artwork here.](#)

## **Laura Hopes (born 1978) and Katharine Earnshaw (born 1980)**

Laura Hopes's artistic practice focuses on the relationship between land and people. Describing herself as a 'vulnerable practitioner', she works in collaboration with experts of different disciplines to create artwork in a range of media. She is co-director of the collective Still Moving whose work often draws attention to the climate emergency and is an Associate Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of Plymouth.

Katharine Earnshaw is Associate Professor in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter who works predominantly on environmental ethics. She is particularly interested in agricultural landscapes and in environmental approaches to literature. Previous major projects have also involved working with farmers and artists in Devon.

*'.. the artwork is about how the ethics of friendship might help us into thinking about the environmental crisis or our relationship with the land. In the ancient world, Aristotle and Cicero both talk about the fact that friends are one soul or one mind in two bodies, and we explore that idea in relation to Dartmoor and landscape...'*

Katharine Earnshaw and Laura Hopes, 2024

**Laura Hopes (born 1978) and Katharine Earnshaw (born 1980)**  
***Not a (field)guide to the Future, 2024***

Collage

Described by Earnshaw and Hopes as a 'collaged book', and 'a memoir of our friendship, but also a kind of biography of a landscape' this work is part of an ongoing collaboration between the artist-writer-academics that began in 2017, exploring human relations with land. Dartmoor became their studio for thinking, discussing and making a book that employs the field as a way of engaging with a past that is made visible in the present through climate change.

Neither of them grew-up or currently live on Dartmoor, but both have found a place of meaning, a space where they feel 'at home' saying, 'people can form important connections in communities with landscapes without the necessity of having to live there'.

Courtesy of Laura Hopes and Katharine Earnshaw

## **John Curno (1949-2020)**

John Curno was born in Plymouth and became interested in photography through books and illustrated magazines such as *Time*, *Life* and *Picture Post*. Self-taught, he got his first camera in the late 1960s and joined a local camera club. In 1977 he moved to York, where he became involved with the recently established Impressions Gallery, one of the first public galleries dedicated to photography in Britain.

He returned to Devon in 1994 and moved to Drewsteignton, on Dartmoor. Walking frequently on the moor, he made extensive photographic projects, including studies of abandoned quarries, and published portraits of parish communities.

## **John Curno (1949-2020)**

***Tree Ivy*, about 2020**

***Rock*, about 2010**

***Foggintor Quarry*, 2013**

Photographic prints

Curno referred to the 'harsh beauty' of Dartmoor, which he sought to capture in black and white, exploring digital techniques in later years. Of his photographs he wrote:

*.. this is Dartmoor in a different light and spirit, blending rocks, moor, fields and trees together in an abstract form, letting people see it as I often do. The altered landscapes of Dartmoor, the decay, death and rebirth of the moors interest me.'*

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council  
Donated by the artist

# Photography

'Photography' means 'drawing with light' and describes an image made by the action of light on photosensitive material. The artists showing in the exhibition have each created unique bodies of work that are distinct and specific to their own experience of Dartmoor. However, these are also linked by their adoption of photographic media, across a range of techniques and approaches.

Exploring conceptual approaches to art, Richard Long, Nancy Holt and Marie Yates used photography to record an event or artwork that took place on Dartmoor. New, more affordable, and lighter cameras enabled them to take photographs while walking. Nancy Holt, for example, used a newly developed handheld Instamatic camera to take the Dartmoor photographs on display here.

Others have worked within the documentary photography tradition to tell stories about life on Dartmoor. Chris Chapman and James Ravilious's photographs record changing customs; while Fern Leigh Albert is documenting protests during the ongoing campaign to retain wild camping rights.

Not all photography requires a camera. Garry Fabian Miller and Susan Derges have both experimented with camera-less techniques, extending the creative possibilities of the medium as a means to express their engagement with the landscape. Derges has often worked outside, using the Dartmoor landscape at night as both studio and darkroom, while Fabian Miller developed darkroom techniques to create semi-abstract images that express his experience of living and walking on the moor.

## **Susan Derges (born 1955)**

Susan Derges moved to Dartmoor in 1992 where she continues to use camera-less photography and, more recently, digital image making to capture the ever-changing complexity of water and associated life forms. Creating photograms and translucent images where nature, as she says, 'can speak directly to the viewer' the work explores the idea that natural patterns signify invisible affinities. For Derges, water, 'can offer a visual and metaphorical means of articulating the inner qualities of mind, psyche or soul that exist in relation to our experience of the outside world'.

Critically acclaimed, Derges has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally most recently in a solo show at Hestercombe Gallery, Somerset, in 2023. Her work is in collections worldwide including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Arts Council Collection, London; UK Government Art Collection, and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

*'These are very important pieces to me because they feel like the conclusion of many years of working with this river in various locations and my aspiration was to find a way to give form to the incredible energy and complexity of one small part of Dartmoor's torrent rivers that would speak for the elemental qualities of them all'.*

Susan Derges, 2024

**Susan Derges (born 1955)**

***Eden, 2004***

Dye destruction prints (photograms)

These works were made along a short section of the river Taw at Skaigh valley on one night. They form part of a wider series of images that focuses on the hydrological cycle that was commissioned by the Eden Project in Cornwall. Describing the title of the series, Derges says it, 'also represents to me an ideal - of belonging and participating within the natural functioning of the world, rather than looking on from the perspective of an exceptional or privileged position outside of it'.

The process of creating these photograms was complex and dependant on both the moon's cycle and weather events that affected the river's flow. They were created by submerging photographic paper beneath the surface of the river water and exposing it for a micro-second to flashlight in the night's darkness. This is the first time the series has been exhibited together. RAMM's aim for its successful fundraising campaign to purchase *Eden 6* was to acquire one of these extraordinary works to complement the museum's extensive collections of art and archaeology related to Dartmoor.

**Susan Derges (born 1955)**

***Eden 4 and Eden 5, 2004***

Dye destruction prints (photograms)

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the artist.

**Susan Derges (born 1955)**

***Eden 6, 2004***

Dye destruction print (photogram)

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council

Purchased with assistance from Arts Council England / V&A

Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of RAMM, and private donors



## **Garry Fabian Miller (born 1957)**

Garry Fabian Miller's experience of the darkroom began as a young teenager, when he spent summers assisting in the family's Bristol-based photography business. Around this time, he also saw the work of Marie Yates and Richard Long in exhibitions at the nearby Arnolfini gallery.

Exhibitions at RAMM in the 1980s brought him to Devon where for the past 36 years he has worked from a home-studio based on Dartmoor. Describing himself as a 'free spirit' whose daily walks re-trace an 8-mile radius from his home, he says, 'if I stay within a circle or around my home, ... I know it will give all that I need'. His radiant, colour-filled abstractions demonstrate light's power to transform, and in doing so capture the essence or spirit of his Dartmoor.

Critically acclaimed, Miller's work has been shown internationally, his most recent solo show was at the Arnolfini, Bristol, in 2023. His work is held in many public collections worldwide, including in Japan, the USA and the UK.

*'My experience of walking on the moor is about entering an ancient place. ... It's like being with something that happened and holds millions of years of time. I was heavily influenced by James Lovelock, a prophetic figure in addressing the destruction of the earth through human activity. Through 2004 my dominant thought was how can I come to terms with the fact we are going to destroy ourselves, how to deal with this enormity?'*

Garry Fabian Miller, 2008

*'I totally understand why Dartmoor is a place which gathers people to it. People want to spend time here because it creates the opportunity for them to discover things about themselves, to develop a relationship with the landscape, which is quite ancient, which has a sense of a peopled history that have had a relationship to this place, which is powerful and intense.'*

Garry Fabian Miller, 2024

**Garry Fabian Miller (born 1957)**

***Breathing in the Beech Wood, Homeland, Dartmoor, Twenty-Four Days of Sunlight, 2004***

Dye destruction prints

Striving for a more direct, less mediated relationship with light, Fabian Miller explores how the colour cycle of a leaf can stand in place of photo negatives to create pictures about the photosynthesis of trees. For this work he gathered beech leaves from the wood in his garden over 24 days in May 2004. In his recent interview with RAMM, he explained that 'the leaves would begin to change colour from the palest green through to the darkest green. ... In the dark room I would print from the leaf gathered at that moment of its photosynthesis cycle ... showing the greening of the tree'.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the artist.

**Garry Fabian Miller (born 1957)**

***Year One: Ogronios, 2005-6***

***Year One: Cutios, 2005-6***

***Year One: Giamonios, 2005-6***

***Year One: Simivisionios, 2005-6***

***Year One: Elembiuos, 2005-6***

Dye destruction prints (luminograms)

Realising that the photographic materials he had used since the mid-1970s were reaching the end of their production cycle, Fabian Miller began working to, 'compress time in some way. ... and *Year One* was the first attempt'. This process involves shining light through coloured glass, liquids, and cut paper forms on to direct

positive colour paper in the darkroom with long exposures lasting anywhere between one and 20 hours.

For this series, Fabian Miller created luminograms every day for a year, with each print developing aspects of the previous day which he now views as a form of intense field work. This selection represents months from the ancient Celtic 'Coligny' calendar, which combines both lunar and solar cycles to determine important events.

Victoria and Albert Museum

**Garry Fabian Miller (born 1957)**  
***The Darkroom's Fading Presence, 2020***

C-type print from dye destruction print (luminogram)

Fabian Miller describes the photographic darkroom as a place of 'pure thought, and of truth and visions'. This particularly poignant work is one of the final prints he made in a space where he had spent 50 years creating art in 'an intimate, physical relationship'.

Working with unpredictable, decaying materials, Fabian Miller relinquished control in the making of this print. He says, 'I look at this late exposure existing in a state of flux and auto-destruction. It creates both intense beauty and wonder, while seeming to also destroy itself.'

This major artwork is displayed here for the first time following the recent successful campaign to purchase it.

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council  
Purchased with assistance from Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, Dartmoor Preservation Association, RAMM Development Trust, Friends of RAMM, RAMM Patrons, and private donors.

## **Nicholas J.R. White (born 1989)**

Having lived on Dartmoor for almost three decades, photographer Nicholas J.R. White relocated his home and studio to the Inner Hebrides last year. His work focuses on how we interact with the natural world through both landscape and portrait photography. He is the recipient of many photography awards including, most recently, the British Journal of Photography 'Portrait of Humanity'; he has exhibited widely across the UK & Europe, and his work has featured in the national press and specialist photography journals.

*'My photography grew from a fascination with the outdoors. I spent my childhood walking the heathland around my family home and later, the UK's national parks. My interest in photography grew from a desire to document these 'adventures'. I've spent a long time really considering my relationship with the 'land' and how that impacts me and my work. Nowadays my practice almost entirely focuses on that relationship, but on a less personal and more universal level, dealing with themes of nature restoration, temporality and dwelling'.*

Nicholas J.R. White, 2024

**Nicholas J.R. White (born 1989)**

***Winter Sun, Fog Clearing, 2021***

***East Bovey Head, 2021***

***Gorse in Heather, Hameldown, 2020***

From *Crucible*, 2020 – 2023

C-type prints

Nicholas J. R. White and Garry Fabian Miller began to collaborate on *Crucible* in 2020. This is the name Fabian Miller gives to the small circle of Dartmoor that has been the site of his seen and imagined pictures for the last 30 years. White's photographs recorded his walks in this landscape of ancient barrows and burial cairns throughout the seasons at different times of the day. As White identifies, the series 'shares an intimate place through the artists' observed and imagined experiences'. Work from this shared project was shown at the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, in 2023 as part of Fabian Miller's exhibition *Adore*. This small selection is taken from a larger series of photographs made in the final two years of White's time living on Dartmoor.

Courtesy of the artist

**Nicholas J.R. White (born 1989)**

***Watchet Hill Danger Flag, 2013***

***Observation Post no.6, 2013***

***Bullet Casings, 2013***

From *The Militarisation of Dartmoor*, 2012-13

Inkjet prints

*The Militarisation of Dartmoor* investigates what White describes as 'Dartmoor National Park's long and complex relationship with the military, which has existed for thousands of years long before the area's official designation as a National Park in 1951'. This photographic series identifies militarisation as part of Dartmoor's cultural heritage whilst also acknowledging the damage caused to the local environment.

White began working on the project in early 2012 at the start of a renewed 21-year license from the Duchy of Cornwall, who lease the land to the Ministry of Defence. The shape and appearance of the Dartmoor Training Area continues to be manipulated to accommodate the needs of a contemporary fighting force.

Courtesy of the artist

# Home

For artists with such international influence and reach, it is surprising that many of them spend most of their time on Dartmoor. Garry Fabian Miller rarely leaves the eight-mile radius from his home, an area he calls 'Crucible', the place where he finds inspiration.

These artists have a deep and continuing connection to what this rural place keeps giving, creatively. Approaches to making and subject matter convey an openness, even within the specifics of the place, giving the work wide appeal. Works stand in for universal themes: Robert Darch's images of the Ten Tors Challenge describe a rite of passage for young people, while Sian Davey's photographs focus on her local stretch of the river Dart drawing attention to communities of nurture and an almost spiritual connection with waterways.

Fern Leigh Albert's commitment to engaging with and documenting the wild camping protests have made visible both the campaign and aspects of Dartmoor's cultural life right across the world through international news outlets. Other artists who grew up on Dartmoor, such as Nicholas J.R. White, carry the place with them, imaginatively, as they explore new landscapes.

Home is, as the old adage rightly identifies, 'where the heart is' and this seems never more so than when people find a connection with the stone rows and wide, open spaces of Dartmoor. You do not need to live on Dartmoor to feel 'at home' there. As Katharine Earnshaw and Laura Hopes point out, 'there are ways of knowing and getting to the place through poetry, art, language, thinking and conversation'.



## **Fern Leigh Albert (born 1986)**

Fern Leigh Albert is an artist and photographer living on Dartmoor since 2013. Her photographic practice concentrates on land use and low impact living. She was a member of Steward Community Woodland photographed by David Spero in his series displayed nearby. Her own project *Wild Wood* which documents living off-grid in this community was exhibited widely and enabled her to, as she says; 'make significant connections to the local landscape.' Albert's photographs on display have been published in the national press, including the *Financial Times* and on the BBC and Sky News.

Thank you to Riverford Organics for giving permission to exhibit photographs originally commissioned by their magazine 'Wicked Leeks'.

*'When a landowner contested in court the right to wild camp on Dartmoor 'The Stars Are For Everyone' campaign was born. Documenting the actions of protestors, these photographs were used as a form of activism to spread awareness about the campaign. Dartmoor is currently the only place in England where you can legally wild camp, which makes it extremely special. People travel to the moor from all over the country to spend a night out under the stars. The campaign quickly gained national interest and since then has gathered huge momentum and reopened the debate on access to land across the UK.'*

Fern Leigh Albert, 2024

**Fern Leigh Albert (born 1986)**

Top row (left to right):

***Ryan Camping Out, Hayne Down***

***Wild Camper, Hayne Down***

***Merry Sings, Haytor***

Middle row:

***The Stars Are For Everyone***

***Right to Roam***

***On the way to Stall Moor***

***Save Dartmoor***

***Embracing Old Crockern, Haytor***

***Guy Shrubsole Outside the High Court***

***Mayday Morris Dance Outside the High Court***

***Victory at Haytor Protest***

Bottom row:

***Wild Campers Protest, Hayne Down***

***Circle of Protest, Haytor***

***Protesters Gather at Haytor***

From *Wild Campers*, 2023 – ongoing  
Inkjet prints

Fern Leigh Albert has been documenting the wild camping campaign on Dartmoor since it began in January 2023. She says, 'The campaign has brought a new community of people together, reignited the land rights movement within the UK and helped to win a high court case. In particular, the use of arts, music, poetry, storytelling and theatre that has organically emerged has been extraordinary and a real accolade to the place we live and the

creative culture we have in Devon'. In October 2024 the Dartmoor National Park Authority will be at the Supreme Court to again defend the right to wild camp on Dartmoor.

Courtesy of the artist