

# **PRESS RELEASE**



MORGAN-DAVIES ART | LAFONTAINE CONTEMPORARY ART

## **4WALLS, a new contemporary art collaboration announces its inaugural exhibition **EARTH** opening in London, 13 November 2018**

**London, September 2018:** Established art dealers, MORGAN-DAVIES ART and LAFONTAINE CONTEMPORARY ART are delighted to announce their first partnership as 4WALLS, a new contemporary art collaboration which focuses on uniting established international artists through specially curated pop-up exhibitions.

4WALLS believes in a fresh approach to presenting art and does not keep a permanent space, instead, using pop-ups, it is able to maintain a nimble yet significant presence in London during key times of the art world calendar whilst offering an engaging visual dialogue to new audiences around the city.

**EARTH** unites four international artists, presented together to create a powerful dialogue for Earth's future existence. A rich tapestry of commentary is conveyed with visceral sensitivity through the artists' individual styles, treatments, colour and texture. All four artists make deep references to nature, its beauty and its vulnerability and hold a mirror up to human greed. Living with these images reminds the viewer of Earth's fragile beauty, and our potential to preserve and protect.

For centuries, artists have used their art and exhibitions as a platform to campaign or comment on politics, war, or humanity. That dialogue has now shifted towards a climate revolution, a crusade of positive activism to save the planet, a war on plastic, the mass consumption challenge and a battle to stop climate change.

Who better to present this stark reality at the forefront of cultural conversations than artists, galleries, museums and institutions. These chosen artists have the power to make environmentalism a priority for all, not just the few. The artists' aim is to motivate people from passive thinking to active doing, connecting us through shared perspectives, a united experience, stimulating our senses. They believe art has the power to change the world and how we view it.

The works created for this exhibition are rare and beautiful with a critical message. They remind us of the vulnerability of our planet and to preserve it for future generations.

- **ENDS** -

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

### **4WALLS**

Patricia Lafontaine Director of LAFONTAINE CONTEMPORARY ART and Natalie Morgan-Davies Director of MORGAN-DAVIES ART bring their knowledge and combined expertise of 35 years in the art world, having previously worked together in renowned Mayfair galleries and now unite to curate this extraordinary show under their collective gallery brand, 4WALLS.

### **EARTH**

This is the first collaboration for the artists; Elizabeth Waggett, Kirk Mechar, Rakerman and Steve Miller and their first exhibition in London's Mayfair. Artist statements below.

Exhibition dates: 13-18 November 2018  
Opening hours: 11am – 8pm (Tues-Fri) 11am - 6pm (Sat) 11am -4pm (Sun)  
Address: 93 Piccadilly, Mayfair, London W1J 7NQ  
Nearest Tube: Green Park tube  
Entry: Free entry

### **For further press enquiries and images, please contact**

**Niki Gifford: niki@nikigifford.london or 07826 161919**

Gallery enquiries: info@4walls.london  
Patricia Lafontaine: +44 7811 202693  
Natalie Morgan-Davies: +44 7773 593122

[www.4walls.london](http://www.4walls.london)

Join the conversation with 4WALLS on #4WALLS

### **ARTIST STATEMENTS**

#### **ELIZABETH WAGGETT**

New York based British artist Elizabeth Waggett strives to highlight the symmetry & beauty in the natural world and how man can destroy this.

The artist uses evocative imagery to represent the things we should be valuing, in particular the environment and our place in it. Depicting animal, human skulls and personal artefacts, Waggett exposes the responsibility of the individual in owning the effects of their decisions. Her imagery highlights the emphasis we place on material wealth, mass consumerism and the negative effect this has on the Earth's invaluable natural resources.

Using time honoured skills in a contemporary way Waggett brings a modern twist to traditional forms through her work. The artist adorns each work of art with gold leaf and precious metal contrasting with monochrome palette, as a visual representation of the struggle of the inner self to balance greed and purpose.

Elizabeth Waggett's highly sought-after work is exhibited globally. She has been commissioned by HRH The Prince of Wales, in collaboration with the Prince's Trust 50th anniversary and has been featured in campaigns alongside Fendi and Valentino.

## **KIRK MECHAR**

Kirk Mechar was born in Canada in 1967. Kirk lives and works in Lunenburg, NS, Canada and Nevis, West Indies. Widely recognized for largescale "flower" paintings created using textured oil paint, Mechar works in a variety of materials alone and in combination, including, wood, marble dust, glass and clay. Mechar's work is defined by a continuing interest in patterns, particularly as reflected in both abstract and figurative pieces.

The "Flower Paintings" came to life more than 15 years ago in a small garden cottage on the Island of Nevis when he first moved there. As for his connection with nature - it all changed when he moved to Nevis. He would start his day every morning running trails around the island, hiking through tropical rain forests and running across dry "desert" like plains made him appreciate the beauty of our earth. Along the ocean at sunrise - this is where he started to explore colour and pattern and where the flowers started to emerge ... it emerged from the beauty that he saw around him.

In these most recent paintings, a "Mosaic" series completed in the last 12-18 months, all of the central elements of the early floral cascades recur in one form or another. They are informed by local colours, powerful sunlight, and by an apparent struggle to survive and bloom amid nature's inevitable decay.

The theme of decay and rebirth is captured against a backdrop of "bricks" or "mosaic tiles" cut individually from paintings that were discarded from a previous collection and recycled for this purpose. The Mosaic Series draws from a physical past and; one that is discovered in unfinished canvases carefully cut into "tiles" and set aside for another time. These paintings can be seen as a rebirth of old canvases with new colour which emerge from the rich earth that we live on.

These paintings are also about the future, the future of our earth which is why the element of re-using old canvases is linked to our humanity and our need to recycle everything in life. A deliberate reuse of earlier work becomes the path for creating powerful, textured surfaces that result from a labour-intensive assembly of individual elements. The inevitable tension that lies between what is and what might become arises from deep inside the canvas, leaving a welcome balance that is clear while being, at once, fresh but worn. It is about the past and the future.

## **RAKERMAN**

From 45 formative years of travel, revised opinions, and volte-faces, British artist Rakerman has collected a representative selection of art-making. Focusing on the discarded and overlooked, his techniques involve the physical recovery and regeneration of found materials. Rakerman uses a form of 'contact relief' or *frottage*, giving the viewer the sense of feeling, of being in touch with the Earth's inimitable surfaces. In creating art from actual 'found' surfaces, Rakerman makes visible what may be invisible to us, or that we take for granted.

Rakerman allows the surface to make the drawing, highlighting the sung and unsung textures found on earth, emphasising his admiration for the natural but also the recyclable. Appreciation of the Earth's natural surfaces dominate his work, yet his adaptation of the man-made and personal interpretation of the recyclable is his message to sustainability.

He views recycling and retrieval as a re-generative act, that when filtered through the artist's eye and hand visually and physically becomes a genuine 'transformation'. When his images reach unarguable autobiographic recognition, he can then believe in them as art.

## STEVE MILLER

The project, Health of the Planet, started with the seed of a thought on a tropical island. In 2005, I travelled to Brazil and was overwhelmed by the natural environment. It began on Ilha Grande, a magnificent island with untouched beaches at the edge of the Atlantic Rain Forest in the area of Angra dos Reis. This astounding encounter with the exotic natural land included looking up into a tree and seeing an unusual fruit, the size of a football, with spikes all over the surface. It was my first sighting of the Jack fruit, called Jaca in Portuguese. Eventually, I found a Jaca with two fruits occupying one stem that looked like a giant pair of lungs. Curious about this new discovery, I decided that an x-ray could answer some questions.

This strange Jaca tree made me think that if the Amazon are called the "lungs" of our planet, I could x-ray the flora and fauna of the rain forests to give the world a metaphorical check-up. It seemed obvious to want know what's inside our global breasts and within our ribs. So, I took my Jaca lungs to a hospital.

The use of x-rays in my art practice started in 1992 after another antiquated conversation that painting was dead. However, using medical technology, it became possible to re-invent the notion of a portrait by looking beyond the surface, and beneath the flesh. I continued this exploration with CT scans, MRIs, sonograms, echocardiograms, electron microscopes and with x-ray photography taking photos of other mysteries including women's shoes and musical instruments. This same lens of technology that could be used to understand the human body could also be used to gain insight into the natural world.

In Brazil, the greatest accumulation of animals was in Belem, Para, the northern most state of the Amazon. Flying over the Amazon in a small plane at 2000 feet and finding no relief from the vast green was astonishing as well as riding the river in a small boat viewing an uninhabited relentless shore line. The Atlantic rainforest in Bahia revealed the danger of stroll as the sun is setting. Panic arrives from losing the trail that doesn't look familiar. Walking where there is no horizon and no direction as the light source dips below the tree line induced an adrenaline rush of fear. I read a statistic that we could not last a day without going crazy from the bugs and predators.

In Belem, I was automatically interested in x-raying the Sloth. These critically endangered species are being stressed by the deforestation and burning of the rain forest. They live in the canopy of the forest and can move in any direction above the forest floor for their safety and survival. With the land clearing, their lungs are susceptible to smoke and pollution as they become trapped in islands of trees, when an island no longer supports their survival, they must escape and make their way across a clearing and this journey makes them an easy slow-moving target for predators. Sloth Pieta is the canary in the coal mine.

When looking at the shapes and designs of Amazon land clearing from a satellite, one distinctive pattern that appears is called a fish bone. A long spine emerges with ribs. In the rivers below, swim piranhas. As seen by the miracle of radiology, one can see their tight, efficient design from tooth to tail. In predatory packs, they clean the river and serve their function in the energy exchange that defines a dynamic fluid system.

Observing this conversation between resources and need, no human is exempt. Telephone and electrical lines (called cat whiskers) in the favela make exquisite communal drawings in the sky about the chaotic need for resources in contrast to the aerial geometry of deforestation.

The Amazon flora and fauna are resources in dwindling supply. No need to capture the swimming alligator, stuff it and mount it on your wall for ego and vanity. The surfboard is the new connection to water. This trophy that can be found in a favela or in a home of the famous. Mount an x-ray of a live alligator onto a surfboard to create the eco trophy. Lay a python on a skateboard and make the same shape with your moving feet to Samba with Science.

Steve Miller's book 'Radiographic' focuses on the health of the planet and will be available during the exhibition.