

Artist: Louise Fowler-Smith **Exhibition:** Arboreal Narratives



Dragon Tree 1 or 2, Illuminated time exposure photography on Canson photographique paper, 95 x74xm, 2019

Information from Louise Fowler-Smith

“How we perceive and contemplate the land affects how we treat the land. If we see the land as separate from ourselves we are less likely to honour and respect it.”

Studying

Louise Fowler-Smith is the Founder of the Tree Veneration Society, a group of environmentally concerned artists and scientists who honour the beauty, power and importance of trees and believe they are the most vital elements of the natural world. Her photographs of solitary trees illuminated from darkness highlight their individual aesthetic qualities and for the past 20 years she has made many field trips overseas including the India states where trees are sacred symbols and nature worship is heightened through decoration. The spiritual relationship with trees and worship of trees helps to protect them from logging. Fowler-Smith believes we must look beyond the environmental and economic value of trees to their aesthetic value and the cross-cultural celebration of nature will generate new ways of perceiving the land in the 21st century.

- The natural environment is threatened by desertification, bush fires, deforestation, farming, agriculture, pollution, war and the expansion of cities. How can artists challenge audiences to join them in acting to protect critically endangered natural environments? Research the Tree Veneration Society <https://treevenerationsociety.com> how its members increase awareness of the important role trees play in the survival of planetary ecosystems.
- Trees are powerful symbols. Sacred trees can be found in many ancient communal and cultural traditions including Egyptian, Hindu, Shamanic, Toltec, Sumerian, Mayan, Celtic, Norse, and Christian. Trees can symbolise wisdom, power, renewal and fertility. What does your favourite tree symbolise? Apple, Ash, Beech, Olive, Wisteria, Oak, Palm, Cherry, Birch, Elm, Redwood, Maple, Cedar, Fir, Holly, Pine and Willow.

Making

- Create your own arboreal artwork. Ask your family and friends to think about their favourite trees from childhood or important stories and events that involved trees.
- Photograph a tree at night using a camera flash or torch to illuminate the natural form and highlight its unique aesthetic quality.