

# Forested

23 January to 20 February 2021

A suite of new works by Sydney based artists  
**Jan Handel, Melinda Marshman and Lisa Woolfe**

in response to the practice of *Shinrin-yoku* or Forest Bathing,  
of being in nature and connecting with it through all our senses

## JAN HANDEL

How does it *feel* to be in a forest? Bathed in dappled green light, surrounded by trees. Listening to the rustle of leaves in a gentle breeze.

*Future Forest* is an immersive installation interpreting the experience of walking amongst tall forest trees using the visual language of abstraction, with colour, light and sound.

But here there is pretence. These trees are made of plastic, their trunks are painted steel, the sound is a recording. No natural elements are to be found in this place.

*Future Forest* hopes that it will never become reality. It hopes that we will never need artificial forests to remind us of what used to be.

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### ***Future Forest***

2020, steel pipes, aluminium rods, PVC pipes, concrete discs, polycarbonate sheeting, paint, sound. Five cells – each 260 x 260 x 47 cm, installation dimensions variable.

## MELINDA MARSHMAN

*'If I were to choose a philosophy that underpins my art practice, it would be that of Forest Bathing. The process of looking, drawing and making studies en plein air are akin to the meditative principles behind Forest Bathing. Both require an immersion in nature and focused connection through the senses'.*

In response to the gallery space and the exhibition title 'Forested', I have created a multi-panelled, large scale painting. The scale aims to bring the forest to life and envelop the viewer in a joyous celebration of Spring. A path invites the viewer into landscapes of their own imagination and memories of forest walks and time spent in nature.

When really looking at a landscape with a mindful presence, its essential qualities, the elusive 'something' of it may be understood. In my practice and particularly with *Spring Opus*, I've attempted to represent my own emotive response to the subject by distilling details down to their barest elements of colour and form and the relationships between them. The colours were chosen to evoke a positive feeling and the detail kept spare to create a sense of stillness, peace and simplicity, echoing the aims of meditation.

The scale of the work is a gentle reminder not to ignore Mother Nature and in doing so, our own true natures. For she accommodates and nourishes us, inspires and grounds us, restoring our very life force.

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### ***Spring Opus***

2020, charcoal and oil on polyester, 235 x 326 (four panels, each 117.5 x 163 cm)

### ***Green, Gold, Forest (study for Spring Opus)***

2020, oil on polyester, 117.5 x 163 cm

### ***Forest Way***

2020, oil on polyester, 41 x 41 cm

## LISA WOOLFE

Forest Bathing came to my attention several years ago around the time I read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods* and saw the 2016 documentary *Call of the Forest: The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees* by Canadian scientist and author, Diana Beresford-Kroeger. After researching Forest Bathing, I became intrigued and slightly disturbed at the plethora of 'how to' guides and the discovery that one could attend a 'forest bathing workshop' where participants are guided in how to slow down, switch off and connect to the natural world. This tapped into my ongoing interest in our complex relationship with the natural world: our desire to protect it on the one hand contrasts with our tendency to keep the natural world at a distance, see it as separate from us, and at the worst, attempt to dominate it.

*Coppice 6.0* is constructed from both man made and natural structural materials, some of which are employed to keep nature out. The format asks the viewer to pause reality for a moment, leave our human centred view of the forest behind, engage with our animal senses and imagine taking a 'bird's eye' view of travelling amongst and above the tree-tops and its messy tangle of wildness.

*'Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness – to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. ... We can never have enough of nature.'*

– Henry David Thoreau, *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*

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***Coppice 6.0***, 2021 Wall based panels – hand engraved plywood panels finished with Indian ink, natural oil and beeswax, each 120 x 39.6 cm

***Coppice 6.0***, 2021 Floor based arrangements – hand engraved plywood panels finished with Indian ink, natural oil and beeswax, gutter guard, builder's strap, reed, aluminium poles, reclaimed fence posts, cable ties, copper end caps, bolts, paint. Installation dimensions vary.