

PRESS RELEASE

Zuleika Gallery Presents Oxfordshire Artists at Blenheim Palace, launching with 'Expressions of Nature' Exhibition from 17 May – 12 September 2021



Illustrated works from left: Rachel Gracey R.E., Peter Care, Rod Craig, Rosannagh Scarlet Esson. Full captions in notes to editors.

Artists:

Rachel Gracey R.E. | Rod Craig | Rosannagh Scarlet Esson | Peter Care

Zuleika Gallery is delighted to present a new programme of art exhibitions for the Gardens Gallery Café at Blenheim Palace launching from 17th May – 12th September 2021. The exhibitions will showcase the work of regional emerging and mid-career contemporary artists, on show for visitors to the Palace to enjoy in its newly refurbished Gardens Gallery Café. Celebrating the re-opening of Blenheim Palace after months of lockdown, visitors to Blenheim Palace will be able to enjoy visits to the new Gardens Gallery Café, the new access to the Formal Gardens, whilst surrounded by uplifting works of art depicting scenes from nature and parklands.

Expressions of Nature includes work by four Oxfordshire artists: Rachel Gracey RE, Rod Craig, Rosannagh Scarlet Esson, and Peter Care, whose work is inspired by landscapes and the natural environment, with two of the exhibiting artists focusing on Oxford University Parks, and Blenheim Palace parklands. Studied by artists for centuries, this exhibition celebrates the boundless inspiration of nature and the importance of connecting to the natural world and our outdoor spaces in these extraordinary times of lockdown following the global Covid pandemic.

About the Artists:

Oxford-based Rachel Gracey (b. 1968) is an artist thrilled by the power of nature. A contemporary printmaker, at the core of her practice we find the created world in all its undulating forms. In 2016 Rachel made a series of works inspired by Oxford's University Parks. After studying fine art at Bristol, Gracey specialised in printmaking. She gained an MA in Printmaking at Wimbledon School of Art, where her lithographs were awarded the Michael Putnam Prize. Her work is in Collections at the British Museum, The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, the Ashmolean Oxford, Guanlan Printmaking Museum and the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen.

Rachel Gracey comments: *"The pandemic has shown how important local landscapes are to us. I am thrilled to be invited to exhibit my lithographs based at the University Parks in a setting such as Blenheim where the changing shape of nature is similarly fostered and admired."*

Woodstock-based artist, Rod Craig (b. 1952) switched to being a full-time artist in 2010 after a long career in design. Motivated by the contrast between city life and the Oxfordshire countryside, Rod has made many studies of the Blenheim Parklands. Rod has work in collections in UK, Germany and New York and exhibits

regularly. Inspiration for his work comes from Rod's passion for architecture, landscape and the elements:

Rod Craig comments: *'I am absolutely thrilled to have been asked by Zuleika Gallery to be a part of this exhibition. Over the last year I've painted in and around Blenheim Park a great deal. It's truly inspiring and right on my doorstep! I'm very happy to be working with them and to have the opportunity to show some of my latest work at the Palace.'*

Based at her studio in Charlbury, Oxfordshire, Rosannagh Scarlett Esson (b. 1989) explores the alchemy of painting by abstracting colour and form through exposure to elemental forces. Symbolic and unconventional materials are mixed in experimental ways that work with, rather than against, the transformative effects of fire, rain, ice, time or gravity to reflect the untameable nature of the elements, and the duality of creation and destruction. Themes explored include wildness, rewilding, ecological succession and alchemical symbolism. Since graduating from Oxford Brookes in 2016 with First Class Honours in Fine Art and was awarded the Fine Art Dissertation Prize for the best critical submission in the year. Rosannagh has exhibited in the UK and Europe, and has work in several private collections across the UK.

Rosannagh Scarlet Esson comments: *"I am delighted to be exhibiting at Blenheim. Not only is it a beautiful and inspiring environment for artists, but their pioneering sustainability programme makes it the perfect setting for an exhibition focused on nature."*

Oxfordshire based Peter Care (b. 1952) graduated in 1973 from Medway College of Art (now part of the University of the Creative Arts) Care's work explores the intense relationship between the viewer and the work of art and raises questions about subject. The real subject for Care is the internal narrative between the artist and his practice. In Care's *'Reflection and Refraction'* paintings, a love of nature informs his work, but he resists literal representation. Care's work controls paint to carefully reveal and expose forms until he is satisfied with the aesthetic result. For Care, the subject reveals itself during the process of painting which then becomes the basis for a whole body of work. The subject in this sense is hidden until it is revealed to the maker.

Peter Care comments: *"Where subject matter is often used as a starting point in painting, for me it is often found at the end of the painting process. In other words, the process of making the painting produces the image."*

Contemporary art exhibitions presented in the Blenheim Palace Gardens Gallery Café will be curated by Hannah Payne, Senior Director, and Lizzie Collins, Founder/Director of Zuleika Gallery, and will form an integral part of Zuleika Gallery's exhibition programme. The works presented will be for sale through Zuleika Gallery, who are also members of the Own Art Scheme, a government funded payment scheme which makes buying art accessible through interest-free instalments. Zuleika Gallery is also presenting *Brave New World* a solo exhibition by Stuart Hartley in its Woodstock Gallery from 19 May – 15 June.

Hannah Payne, Senior Director, Zuleika Gallery, comments: *"It's wonderful to celebrate and support artistic talent living and working in the county, and also to promote wellbeing through the enjoyment of art and creativity. As we emerge out of lockdown, this inaugural exhibition reminds us of the value of connecting to nature and its ability to lift the spirits when we need it most. With our gallery located close by in Woodstock and our connections to the Oxfordshire arts community, we're delighted to curate exhibitions in the beautiful new Gardens Gallery Café at Blenheim Palace"*.

www.zuleikagallery.com

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Images: Courtesy of The Artist and Zuleika Gallery.

Rachel Gracey R.E. (b. 1968)
A Walk in the Parks 7, 2016
Lithograph, 91.4 x 68.6 cm, Edition of 5
£1,300 inc VAT (unframed)

Peter Care (b. 1952)
Reflection and Refraction 06.07.12.06, 2006
oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm
£6,000 inc VAT

Rod Craig, (b. 1952)
One of these days, 2020
watercolour
52 x 36 cm
£810 inc VAT

Rosannagh Scarlet Esson (b. 1989)
Vernal, 2021
mixed media with liquid gold, pollen, salt, moss and rainwater on canvas
100 x 150 cm
£2,850 inc VAT

For more information about Blenheim Palace visit www.blenheimpalace.com

Zuleika Gallery will present a series of changing exhibitions showcasing the work of emerging and mid-career contemporary artists, presented for periods of 4-months at Blenheim Palace. Zuleika Gallery has its permanent space located in Woodstock where exhibitions will be signposted for visitors and local residents. Contemporary art exhibitions presented in the Blenheim Palace Gardens Gallery Cafe will form part of Zuleika Gallery's exhibition programme and will be for sale, through Zuleika Gallery. Zuleika Gallery is also presenting *Brave New World* a solo exhibition by Stuart Hartley in its Woodstock Gallery from 19 May – 15 June (see separate release).

About Zuleika Gallery

Zuleika Gallery was founded in Oxford in 2015 by Lizzie Collins and focuses on Contemporary and Modern British Art. Artists represented by the gallery include Trevor Sutton, Manijeh Yadegar, Andy Barker, Rachel Gracey, Claudia Clare and Frances Aviva Blane. Lizzie Collins is a History of Art graduate of UCL, and a postgraduate of the Courtauld Institute in London. Lizzie was a director and auctioneer at Bonhams, and a specialist at Christie's in 20th Century British Art, before founding Zuleika Gallery. In 2016 Lizzie set up the art programme for Saïd Business School, University of Oxford where she has curated exhibitions by Nigel Hall RA, Nicola Green and Alice Kettle. Hannah Payne joined Zuleika Gallery as Senior Director in 2020 following a career background of 20 years at leading institutions and art businesses including Blenheim Palace, Royal Academy of Arts, and Olympia International Art & Antiques Fairs. Hannah has directed art programmes at leading art sector businesses in London developing exhibitions with emerging and mid-career artists, as well as consulting for contemporary art galleries. Hannah is on the Advisory Board of University of the Arts London's *Made in Arts London*, a non-profit organisation supporting graduating artists.

For further information, price list, or images please contact info@zuleikagallery.com or visit www.zuleikagallery.com

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ZULEIKA GALLERY

Zuleika Gallery open times:

Woodstock: Mondays (closed Tuesdays), Wednesday - Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Sunday 11 pm – 4 pm

London: By Appointment.

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