

Branching Out: Creative Collaborations with Trees

one-week short course

4-8 April 2016



Branching Out is curated by artists Camilla Nelson (Reading & Writing with a Tree) and Alex Metcalf (Tree-Listening). The guest artist is artist Tim Knowles.

How do trees affect us? How do we relate to the world through trees? In this course re-orient your sense of environmental relation through a creative-critical rethinking of your relationships with trees. Whether as paper, pencils, chairs, boats, beds, books, desks, pianos, doors, floors, bedside tables, houses or chests of drawers our intra-actions with trees shape our experience of the world in which we live, both indoors and out (in gardens, forests, hedgerows, orchards, avenues, parks and roadside planting or guerrilla growth). By working with artists whose practices have emerged in relation to trees, we will together explore and develop our understandings of how trees shape humans and humans shape trees.

Tree-Form is an invitation to reform your understanding of trees through exploring alternative 'tree' takes on sculpture, writing, performance, installation and audio-creative investigation.

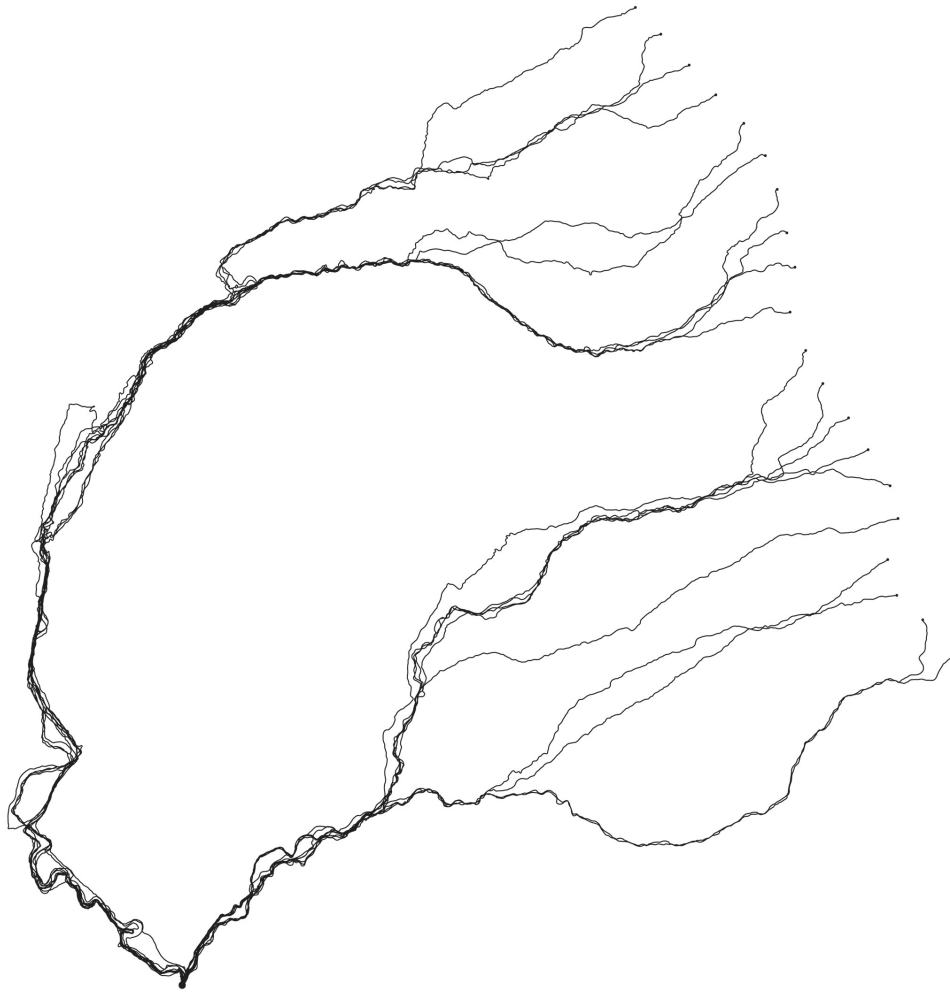
Leaders

Camilla Nelson is a poet, text-artist, researcher and collaborator across a range of disciplines. Her collaboration with Rhys Trimble, 'Tidal Voices', was short-listed for the Tidal Bay Swansea Lagoon World-First Art Commission (Cape Farewell) and her first full collection Apples & Other Languages (forthcoming with Knives Forks and Spoons) was long-listed for the 2015 Melita Hume Poetry Prize. She is poetry editor for The Goose and founding editor of Singing Apple Press. Her poetry reviews and criticism have been published and documented in national and international magazines, journals, newspapers, books and anthologies, in print and online. She performs and exhibits her text-work and research at conferences and festivals across the UK and abroad. Beyond her preoccupation with avant-garde poetics her research circles around intermedia and alternative approaches to knowledge formation.

Alex Metcalf is an installation artist with a long history of working intimately with trees. His work has been commissioned and exhibited across Europe and in the US, and he is perhaps best known for his work with 'tree listening' which allows us to listen to the inner life of the tree as sap rises and falls throughout the day, and the vibrations of the surrounding environment are absorbed into the tree's body. Exhibitions include art venues such as MoMa (NY), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Fermynwoods Contemporary Arts, Tate Britain, and CCANW. Much of his work is shown in non-art venues however. These include the John Innes Centre, the Natural History Museum (Los Angeles), Woburn Abbey, WWF Nature Reserves, Alnwick Castle, Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, and RHS Harlow. His work has featured widely in print and media, including BBC1 Look North, BBC2 Autumnwatch, BBC Radio 2, 4, and World Service, and in The Observer, The Irish Times, The Times, and The Guardian newspapers.

Guest Artist

Tim Knowles is best known for making visible what is, by nature or by design, unseen. Working in a range of media from photography and video to drawing and light installation, Knowles creates process-oriented works that rely on chance and environmental elements. Known for incorporating nature into his projects, in 2009 Knowles mounted a kite-like weathervane onto a helmet and followed the wind's momentum wherever it led, recording the experience with a series of long-exposure photographs entitled "Wanderlust." Knowles' foray into a more man-made process resulted in "Recorded Delivery" (2011). To create this collection of video and still images, Knowles attached a camera and GPS



Tim Knowles: Path of Least Resistance

device to a package and recorded over 20 hours of the object's journey through the U.K.'s postal system.

The Guardian says:

While land artist Richard Long has tramped the earth in an attempt to understand its mass, Tim Knowles walks to comprehend its power. His art is beholden to the vagaries of the British weather, and in particular the wind, which he follows doggedly across the countryside wearing a Heath Robinson-style device that indicates its direction and the path he should follow. These journeys have ranged from a perilous two-day excursion across Dartmoor to wandering through the lamp-lit streets of London at midnight. Each of these endeavours is captured on film. When Knowles returns to the studio, he refers to the GPS and redraws the route, creating a finely wrought image that charts his meandering walk across the countryside.

These expeditions were inspired by a hot-air balloon accident in which Knowles broke his leg. Far from scaring him off adventure for life, the frustrating period of recuperation proved the spur for a series of arduous challenges. Perhaps the riskiest was an ongoing project he calls *Nightwalks*, a series of excursions across the countryside conducted during new moons last year. The artist sets up a large-format camera on a long exposure, then scales treacherous ridges and inches along precipices for an hour while carrying three flashlights. The resulting images reveal thin streaks of amber light, shuddering across the pitch black.