

# News release



4 February 2016

## **Kurt Jackson exhibition showcases new work celebrating the importance and diversity of bees**

*Bees (and the odd wasp) in my bonnet*

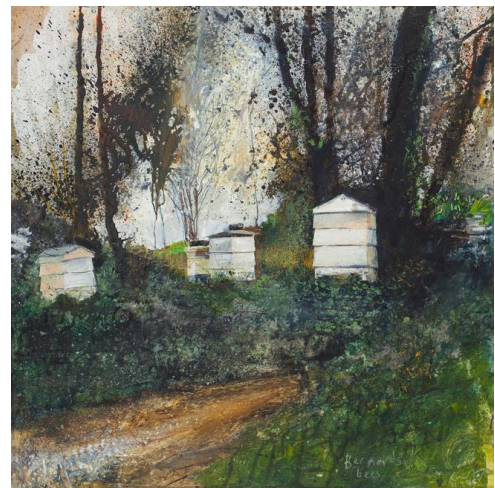
Oxford University Museum of Natural History

18 March – 29 September 2016

A unique presentation of contemporary art and science opens at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History this spring with Kurt Jackson's brand new show *Bees (and the odd wasp) in my bonnet*. Featuring work never previously displayed, the exhibition explores and celebrates the diversity, role, importance and current plight of bees and other pollinators.

Acknowledging the dangers faced by British bees, Kurt Jackson has spent the past few years exploring the world of pollinators, producing a collection of pieces that are also informed by his grounding in the sciences and his experience as a beekeeper in Cornwall.

*Bees (and the odd wasp) in my bonnet* brings this body of work together for the first time and includes both plein air and studio pieces, embracing an extensive range of materials and techniques including mixed media, large canvases, print making and sculpture.



In collaboration with the Museum of Natural History, the show presents Jackson's artworks alongside specimens from the collections, including a display of all British bee species, numbering approximately 270 in total, and archival material from the Museum's library and archives. Along with the latest scientific research into the hazards facing bees, such as neonicotinoid pesticides and habitat losses, the exhibition offers a reflective and empirical view of British bees and wasps.

“My interests in the natural history of bees and wasps goes back to my youth,” says Kurt Jackson. “As a student reading Zoology at Oxford University I joined an expedition to the Venezuelan Amazon and brought back half a dozen wasp specimens with drawings and information about their nests. They were thought to be new species and the Museum of Natural History in Oxford took the specimens and related material. So it seems entirely logical that I should now return to Oxford to show this new body of work at the Museum.”

Professor Paul Smith, director of the Museum of Natural History, says: “This is a wonderful opportunity to view the excellent work of a contemporary artist whose art is concerned with the natural environment. Combining Kurt Jackson’s pieces with current science chimes with our ambitions to reflect different approaches to natural history in a building that was conceived at the interface of art, science and nature.”

The exhibition forms part of the Museum of Natural History’s [Visions of Nature](#) year during 2016.

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**For further information and images:**

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**Notes to editors**

**About Kurt Jackson**

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Kurt Jackson MA (Oxon) DLitt (Hon) RWA was born in 1961 in Blandford, Dorset, and graduated from St Peter's College, Oxford with a degree in Zoology in 1983. While there, he spent most of his time painting and attending courses at Ruskin College of Art, Oxford. On gaining his degree he travelled extensively and independently, painting wherever he went. He travelled to the Arctic alone and hitched across Africa with his wife, Caroline. They moved to Cornwall in 1984 where they still live and work.

A dedication to and celebration of the environment is intrinsic to both his politics and his art, and a holistic involvement with his subjects provides the springboard for his formal innovations. Over the past thirty years Jackson has had numerous art publications released to accompany his exhibitions. Three monographs have been published by Lund Humphries depicting his career so far; *A New Genre of Landscape painting* (2010), *Sketchbooks* (2012) and *A Kurt Jackson Bestiary* (2015). A collection of his poetry *And* was produced in 2011. Jackson regularly contributes to radio and television and presents environmentally informed art documentaries for the BBC.

[www.kurtjackson.com](http://www.kurtjackson.com)

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## **About the Museum of Natural History**

Founded in 1860 as the centre for scientific study at the University of Oxford, the Museum of Natural History now holds the University's internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens. Housed in a stunning Pre-Raphaelite-inspired example of neo-Gothic architecture, the Museum's growing collections underpin a broad programme of natural environment research, teaching and public engagement.

[www.oum.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk)

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