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HAUSER & WIRTH
SOMERSET

Press Release

Wilder than Wildness itself

Make Hauser & Wirth Somerset
27 November 2021 – 29 January 2022
Opening Reception: Friday 26 November, 6 – 8 pm

Featuring Marcin Rusak, Alice Walton, Sophie Rowley, Rosa Nguyen, Jochen Holz



‘For me, garden design isn’t just about plants, it is about emotion, atmosphere, a sense of contemplation. You try to move people with what you do. You look at this, and it goes deeper than what you see. It reminds you of something in the genes—nature, or the longing for nature.’—Piet Oudolf

Five acclaimed artist-makers have originated new multidisciplinary works in response to Oudolf Field, a 1.5-acre perennial meadow designed by Piet Oudolf at Hauser & Wirth Somerset. A living canvas, the garden passes from the vigour of the growing season to the poignancy of decay. In summer Oudolf Field embraces movement and energy, each plant, grass and flowerhead alive with their own gravity and tension. In winter texture and tone form abstract compositions. The works presented evoke the immersive experience of the garden, drawing upon Oudolf’s philosophy that rather than copying nature, the intention is to create a feeling, deepening our connection with its seasons and cycles. ‘Wilder than Wildness itself’ explores the duality of the ephemeral and the permanent. Deeply personal works in resin, glass, textile and clay reflect a unique visual aesthetic, the progression of time, the passage of life and perceptions of beauty.

About the Makers

Marcin Rusak

Marcin Rusak is an artist and multidisciplinary designer whose experimental practice explores notions of ephemerality and beauty. As the son and grandson of flower growers Rusak has long been fascinated by natural sources of inspiration. He has developed unique processes using plant flora as decorative elements within his work, preserving flowers and organic materials in resin encased within exquisite vessels and artworks.

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Reflecting on our human life cycle and the relationship to the evolution within Oudolf Field, Rusak explores the tension between beauty, ugliness, decay and rebirth. The flowers sunken in the circular shape of the two Flora Lenses wall pieces, have been directly inspired by Oudolf Field. Here the fragility of the ephemeral plant is preserved in both of its final stages - blossom and decay. The two contrasting compositions represent different seasons - white for autumn and winter – black for spring and summer. The idea of preservation continues to manifest itself in three vase forms. Their intricate ornaments have been formed from plants grown in Oudolf Field. Some hand sewn onto steel and jute structure; others trapped within resin. Although formally different, each of the objects is an ongoing investigation into the visual representation of decay.

Marcin Rusak studied at the Royal College of Art, London, UK and The Design Academy Eindhoven, Netherlands. Awards include: The Mazda Design Award, the Architectural Digest Design Award, the Wallpaper Design Award, and the Perrier-Jouet Arts Salon Prize. Solo and group exhibitions include: Flora Contemporaria, Twenty First Gallery, Design Miami, Miami, USA, 2021; Unnatural Practice, Ordet, Milan, Italy, 2021; Protoplasmic Nature: Encoded Symbols, Carwan Gallery, Athens, Greece, 2021; Young Poland, William Morris Gallery, London, UK, 2021; Westbund Shanghai, CoBrA Gallery, Shanghai, China, 2021; Kleureyck. Van Eyck's Colours in Design, Gent, Belgium, 2021.

Alice Walton

Ceramicist, Alice Walton creates highly complex, multi-layered labyrinthine forms infused with a rich tonal blending technique. Comprised of individual clay components, Walton's abstract scenes emerge through a technique of repetitive and ritualistic mark-making, highlighting the tension between the meditative coloured clays and kinetic surface furnish. This new body of work reflects both the calming and embracing nature of Oudolf Field, alongside the intricate and careful planning, contrasting with the wildness and unpredictability of the natural world. The linear and the chaotic, the regular and irregular. Walton refers to the undulations, structures and forms of the huge variety of grasses and flowers found in the garden, capturing the full spectrum of colour witnessed in Oudolf Field across the seasons. Walton seeks to reflect the contradiction of order and planning needed to create a garden or sculpture, opposed to the intuitive and natural progression of plants growing, reflected by the instinctive, serpentine patterns flowing on the surface of the pieces.

Alice Walton graduated with a BA (Hons) in Wood, Metal, Ceramics and Plastics from the University of Brighton, followed by an MA in Ceramics from the Royal College of Art in 2018. Walton has been an artist in residence with the European Ceramic Context in Denmark, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK and Cove Park, Scotland, UK. In 2017, she was awarded the Sir Eduardo Paolozzi Travel Scholarship and in 2018 was the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust. She has exhibited worldwide including with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Officine Saffi, Milan, Italy and the Collect Fair, London, UK. She was awarded the Wedgewood Prize at the British Ceramics Biennial, in 2019.

Sophie Rowley

Sophie Rowley experiments with the development of manual techniques to create detailed, fragile and meditative textile artwork. Rowley's pictures evoke an almost sculptural quality through her methodical and calculated processes that add a physical dimension to the works. In the pieces developed for the exhibition, she explores the tactility of Oudolf Field. Both works are based on an abstraction of forms found in the intricate graphic layout of Oudolf's drafted garden plans, seen from an aerial view. Rowley zooms into sections of the planting groups using their cellular shapes as an outline for her fabric manipulations. She removes thousands of fine threads from these selected areas and joins the multiple weaves to create artworks, which reveal three-dimensional and lively textures. It is Oudolf's balance of harmony and wildness that Rowley aspires to reflect, together with his methodology of 'controlling' nature whilst leaving it unrestrained to grow wild and dynamically.

Sophie Rowley received an MA in Material Futures from Central Saint Martins, London, UK in 2014, after working in the textile industry for several years. Rowley's work has been exhibited internationally, including: Loewe Foundation Craft Prize 2019, the Isamu Noguchi Stone Heaven in Tokyo, Japan, 2019; 'Common Thread' Roche Court New Art Centre, Salisbury, UK, 2020; 'Re-New', Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK, 2019; 'Van

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Eyck's colors in design', The Design Museum, Gent, Belgium, 2020-21. Rowley's works are represented in the collections of the Design Museum Gent, Belgium, The Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Israel and the Georgetown University Art Galleries, Washington, USA.

Rosa Nguyen

Rosa Nguyen works primarily in the field of ceramics and glass, making sculptural objects, vessels, drawings and installations in the form of compositional tableaux. Taking inspiration from the natural world, Nguyen's practice is characterized by the incorporation of living and dead botanical form and vegetal matter into her pieces. Assembled and manipulated through casting and preserving in both fired and clay gesso, given new life through dipping in liquid porcelain and sacrificial firing, her glazes in turn fuse the combusted vegetal matter into outwardly wild forms. For the exhibition, Nguyen will present a group of 'Lost Flowers' porcelain sculptures alongside a body of work which encapsulates the ashes and auras of plants from Oudolf Field and her own garden. These include assemblages of cast plants, small organic vessel forms, cyanotype and clay drawings. The work draws inspiration and reflects her appreciation of the poetic beauty inherent in dead plants, her last visit to Oudolf Field before the winter season and the Buddhist notion of 'Bardo' - the liminal stage between life, death and re-birth.

Rosa Nguyen graduated with an MA in Ceramics from the Royal College of Art, London, UK. Recent exhibitions include, 'In Praise of Kiku' White Conduit project space, London, UK, 2019; 'London Art Fair' White-Conduit Project Space, London, UK, 2019; 'Crafting a difference' SoShiro, London, UK, 2021; 'Orlando', Collect art fair, Somerset House, London, UK, 2021; Public Collections include: Touchstones Museum and Gallery, Rochdale, UK; The Anthony Shaw collection at COCA York Museum, UK; Wison contemporary art museum, Shanghai, China; Maison Patrimoine de Barthete, France; Shigaraki ceramic museum, Japan; Aberystwyth arts centre, Wales, UK; Crafts Council Collection, London, UK.

Jochen Holz

Glass artist, Jochen Holz, produces vibrant, organically shaped glassware with a spontaneous energy. Holz specialises in lampworking, a technique that transforms prefabricated borosilicate glass tubes by melting with a torch. He is one of few makers practising the method in Britain, with each one-off piece of molten glass given shape and texture using bespoke tools. Holz' approach to working with hot glass is always improvised and free formed, evoking animal and plant like shapes. For the exhibition, he is seeking to capture the wildness and movement of Oudolf Field combining fluid forms with a distinct colour play in the creation of vessels, wall vases and neon lights.

Jochen Holz trained in Germany before studying glass at Edinburgh College of Art and The Royal College of Art, London, UK. He was awarded the RSA Award in 2000 and the Centre Prize at the RCA in 2003. Recent exhibitions include: 'Design House', 14 Cavendish Square for London Design Festival, London, UK, 2021; 'Lucid Dreams', Shophouse Gallery, Hong Kong, 2021; Frieze New York with Libby Sellers (virtual), 2021; 'Blue jeans and brown Clay', Kate MacGarry Gallery, London, UK, 2021

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Make opening hours:

Wednesday – Sunday
10 am – 1 pm & 2 pm – 4 pm
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