

OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Press Release

For immediate release

New Exhibition:

## BIODIVERSITY: KURT JACKSON

3 February – 15 May 2022

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Hogweed visitors, 2021

Oxford University Museum of Natural History presents a new exhibition by renowned artist and environmentalist, Kurt Jackson. *Biodiversity* includes 40 artworks, shown alongside specimens from the Museum's incredible collections, and with reflections from environmental and zoological researchers at the University of Oxford. The exhibition showcases the extraordinary diversity of British landscapes and native species, and the complex and fragile connections on which our natural world is built.

Kurt Jackson says: 'In this new body of work I've been focusing on the vital interdependence of the lifeforms and landscapes which make up our environment: that incredible variety of animals and plants in all their complexity, beauty and fragility that inhabit this country. I'm trying to raise awareness of the intricate, beautiful, but vulnerable ecosystems that exist all around us. By being aware of the life we share this planet with, we can appreciate and hopefully conserve it.'

The exhibition features paintings, sculptures and mixed-media works that take visitors on a tour of British forests, waterways and coastline, to the increasingly developed urban spaces where most of us now live. Jackson's new work ranges over landscapes as different as the fields of Somerset, the saltmarshes of Norfolk, and the dramatic coastline of Cornwall as well as to locales around Oxford. These contrasting environments provide a habitat for species that interact and depend on each other for their survival.

In *Grasses of Wolvercote Green, Oxford (2021)*, Jackson has painted a field in Wolvercote Village, just outside Oxford where the grass teems with birds, insects, and myriad small lifeforms. **Dr Sara Lil Middleton, Researcher in Plant Ecology, explains:** 'This artwork brings grasses to the forefront

when their ecological, economic and cultural importance is so often overlooked. It serves as a reminder of how many meadows similar to Wolvercote Green are no longer part of the British landscape.' Another highlight is *Taxonomy of a Cornish Foreshore (2018)* where the artist has completed a literal taxonomy with written labels for the dozens of lifeforms that inhabit the beach.

Originally from Dorset, Kurt Jackson studied Zoology at the University of Oxford. He established his mixed-media studio in Cornwall in 1984. Throughout his career, his practice has engaged with landscape and the environment, focusing on the complexity, fragility and diversity of our natural world. He has been artist-in-residence on the Greenpeace ship, *Esperanza*, at Cornwall's Eden Project, and, for the past 20 years, at the world-famous Glastonbury Festival. *Biodiversity* is Jackson's second exhibition at Oxford's Museum of Natural History, following his 2016 show, *Bees (and the odd wasp) in my Bonnet*. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Exeter and is an Honorary Fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford.

Visitors to the exhibition can purchase some of the original Kurt Jackson works on display. The *Biodiversity* catalogue and a range of products inspired by the exhibition are also available from the Museum shop. A series of events will be running alongside the exhibition, including the chance to attend an in-person talk about the exhibition with Kurt Jackson on 28 March. To book or for more information visit: <https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/events>

– ENDS –

**For further information and interviews, contact:**

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**Images:** © Kurt Jackson Images can be downloaded at:

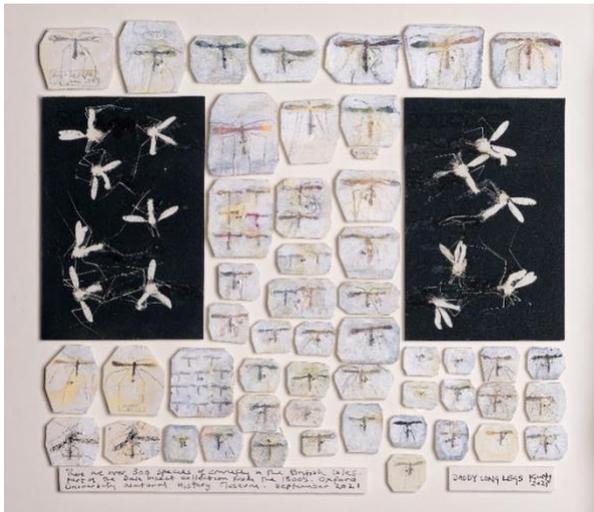
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Hogweed visitors, 2021



Grasses of Wolvercote Green, Oxford, 2021



Daddy long legs, 2021



Taxonomy of a Cornish foreshore, 2018

### **About Oxford University 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. In 2015, the Museum was a **Finalist in the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year**. In 2016, it won the top accolade, Best of the Best, in the **Museums + Heritage Awards**.

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

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### **About Kurt Jackson**

Kurt Jackson's artistic practice ranges from his trademark visceral plein-air sessions to studio work and embraces an extensive range of materials and techniques including mixed media, large canvases, print-making, the written word and sculpture.

The son of artists, Jackson was born in Blandford, Dorset in 1961. While studying Zoology at Oxford University he spent most of his time painting and attending courses at Ruskin College of Art.

A dedication to and celebration of the environment is intrinsic to both his politics and his art; a holistic involvement with his subject informs his formal innovations. Jackson's focus on the complexity, diversity and fragility of the natural world has led to artist-in-residencies on the Greenpeace ship Esperanza, the Eden Project and for nearly 20 years the Glastonbury Festival, which has become a staple of his annual working calendar.

Jackson has an Honorary Doctorate (DLitt) from Exeter University and is an Honorary Fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford University. He is an ambassador for Survival International and frequently works with Greenpeace, WaterAid, Oxfam and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. He is a patron of human rights charity Prisoners of Conscience.

For further information: [www.kurtjackson.com](http://www.kurtjackson.com)