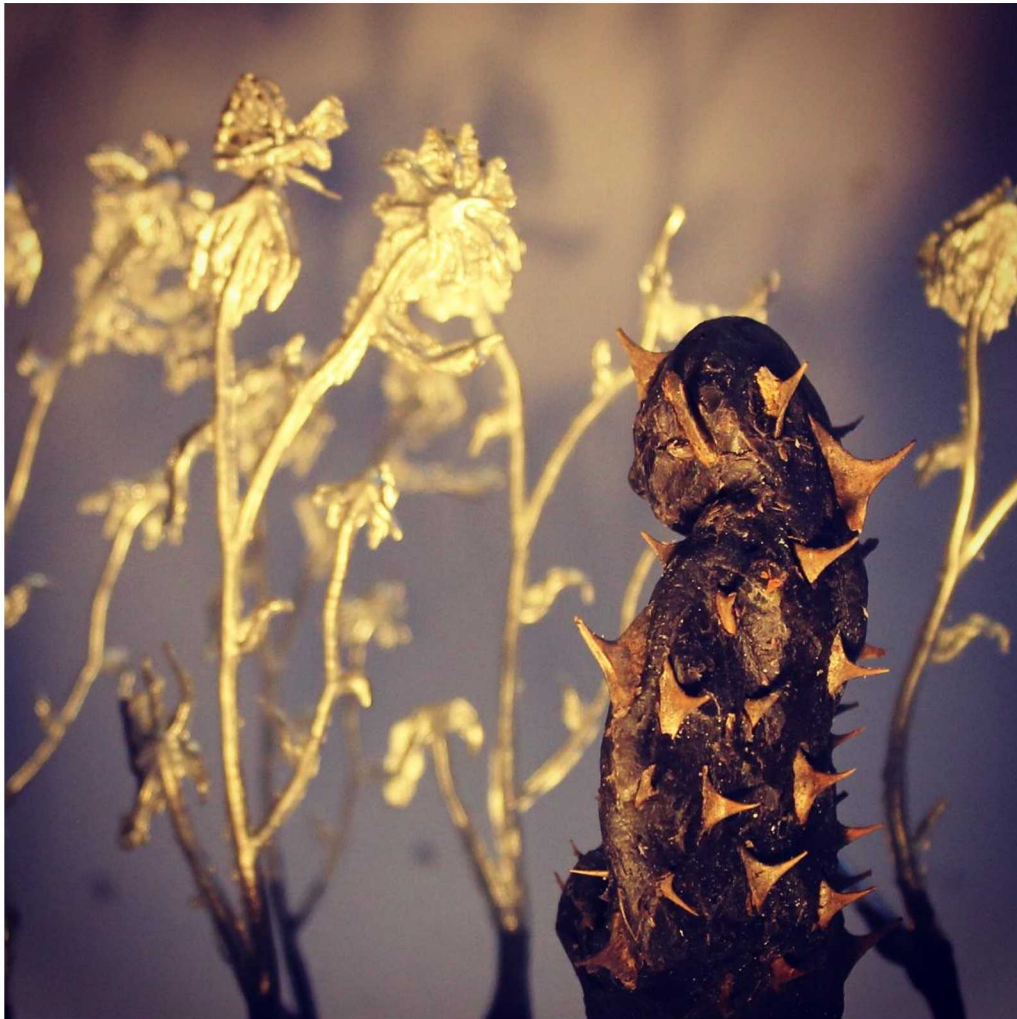


WHITE BOX

Otherworld | Victoria Rance

Exhibition conjures up the lost creatures, spirits and fairies of Blackheath



1-10 March, The White Box Gallery, 5 Hare and Billet Road Blackheath London SE3 0RB

In 1859 the Greenwich Natural History Society made a record of fauna on Blackheath. The animal species recorded included Natterjack toads, hares, common lizards, bats, quail, ring ouzel and nightingales. Today the bats are the only regular inhabitants on that list.

'Otherworld' an exhibition by award-winning London artist Victoria Rance brings these long-lost creatures back to the heath for a mystical sculpture exhibition that combines folklore, fairies, animal spirits and environmental history. The works look at the connections between humans, animals and nature through tiny detailed pewter characters set in tableaux scenes.

Responding to the location and the time of the mad March hare, Rance is also showing a new series of talismanic sculptures based on The Three Hares, an ancient archetypal symbol. She sees the

motif as a way of honouring our precious declining wildlife, as well as being a helpful counter to current world conflict. She writes: "*For Otherworld I have discovered (in my dreams and imagination) some creatures whose job it is to haunt and protect the Heath through fear or favour.*"

Notes to Editors

Fairies, Hobgoblins and Elves

Last year before a visit to The Outer Hebrides Victoria read 'Magical Folk: British and Irish Fairies 500 AD to the Present' by Simon Young and Ceri Houlbrook. It is a scholarly history of fairy sightings, which amazingly enough do continue in the UK. There is still a remnant of belief in these hobgoblins, elves, dryads and fairies of the old stories which screamed when trees were cut down, punished when sacred places were violated or caused mayhem when certain animals were killed without due care and respect. Victoria believes that if everyone still had these superstitions (respect for which were written into the Icelandic statutes in 1990) perhaps the destruction of natural habitats would be far less prevalent, climate change not such a threat, and there would still be brown hares running around on Blackheath.

Blackheath

Otherworld, is held on Hare and Billet Road opposite the Hare and Billet Pond which has the most natural wildlife of the three ponds on Blackheath. There are many residents and local experts who work hard to protect the wildlife that are left on Blackheath which is in both the boroughs of Lewisham (which has a designated Ecology Officer) and Greenwich (which does not). It is acid grassland, a site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation with an impressive number of bees, wasps and ants species recorded, the most recent study is by David Notton of The Natural History Museum. At over 200 acres it is one of the largest areas of common land in Greater London. The Blackheath Joint Working Party, Greenwich Wildlife Action Group and The Blackheath Society are among local amenity groups which help protect it and educate residents and councillors about it.

Victoria Rance

Victoria Rance graduated with a BA Honours in Fine Art from Newcastle University (1983) and an MA from Kingston University (2009). She was the 2003/4 winner of The Mark Tanner Award for Sculpture. She completed a residency in a forest in Yokohama, Japan in 2003. Her work has been shown at The Economist Plaza, Pricewaterhousecoopers, Wycombe Abbey, London Zoo, the Wigmore Hall, St John's Waterloo and BBK Kunst-Quartier, Osnabrück, Germany and at the Chalabi Gallery Istanbul.

"Rance's Work as a whole both reveals and acknowledges the disturbing things that are going on around us before offering us an alternative or means of protection; uniting the knowing and the not-knowing, the visible and the invisible, the supernatural and the rational, the loving and the terrible."
Anna McNay, Assistant Editor, Art Quarterly

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The White Box Gallery, 5 Hare and Billet Road Blackheath SE3 0RB

Open Day Friday March 1st 11-8pm with Performance by 'psychosonographic' sound-makers Blanc Sceol at 7pm and refreshments.

Open 1-10 March Friday to Sunday 11-6pm and by appointment:

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