



Watch
out for



Fishing Bear, by Nat Morley



Green Woodpecker, by Nat Morley

The wild world of Nat Morley

Gloucestershire artist Nat Morley's woodcut prints and oil paintings are as distinctive as the artist herself

Inhabited by bold, characterful creatures, Nat Morley's work can be seen on book covers, fine art prints, wrapping paper, soft furnishings and more... and she can even lay claim to being the artist behind Amnesty International's best-selling Christmas card. Having spent time with and fighting for the causes of the Aborigine people in Western Australia, her work continues to convey a strong human – and other animal – rights message, but with her trademark playful twist.

With a new solo show coming up at Tetbury's Goods Shed, we met up with Nat in her Chalford studio and gallery to find out more...

The natural world is very much at the heart of your work, Nat...

Yes, my obsession with wildlife started very young. As a young ornithologist, I learned all the birds in the British Bird Book, aged seven. My granddad was a big influence, teaching me to draw, and he too was very

into birdwatching. My heroes were David Attenborough, Jacques Cousteau and Gerald Durrell, so I probably should have studied biology, but it was the era of Live Aid and I wanted to work for one of the big charities. I ended up studying Geography at St John's College in Oxford, and did my dissertation on Aboriginal land rights.

Tell us about the time you spent living with an Aboriginal community...

I lived with the Nanda for a few months at Kalbarri National Park on the Barrel Well reserve in Western Australia, aged 19. I returned there twice to visit, and I still keep in touch with some of them. Many people comment that my work has an Aboriginal feel; it's not something I'm conscious of and it's certainly not intentional, but maybe the influence does come through when I'm working.

The geography degree also fed into my latest range of polar animal cards which I've brought out in time for Christmas. On

CUT TO THE CHASE

Nat Morley's exhibition, Cut to the Chase, runs October 2-November 3 at The Goods Shed, Old Station Yard, Tetbury, GL8 8EY, tel: 01666 505496, shed-arts.co.uk
Visit Nat at the Barking Dog Gallery, Hallidays Mill, Chalford, GL6 8NR.



Albert Einstein, by Nat Morley

the back of each one there's information about the loss of Antarctic ice, Arctic sea ice, and melting permafrost which I've been keeping abreast of all these years. The increase in CO² and its impact on the environment was a big geographical topic when I did my degree – way back in the late 80s and early 90s!

Your passion for environmental issues is very much in evidence in your current work in progress...

Yes, my latest woodcut is called '6th Mass Extinction', and it's a protest piece depicting the Tree of Life and showing the wildlife affected by man's intervention to the eco-systems.

How did you get into printmaking, and why is this your preferred method for creating your art?

I was introduced to my style of working by artist and lecturer Simon Packard. I carve into MDF, and he taught me a technique of transferring the ink to paper using the back of a spoon... it's very time-consuming, but I haven't found anything that does the job better.

How would you describe your style?

I like bold, vibrant pieces, with lots of movement or plenty of character. I enjoy the contrast in techniques between woodcut (tight design work with lots of processes) and oil painting, which is more free and expressive.

You're a member of the Cotswold Craftsmen, Nat. Tell us more...

I've been a member of the group for 10

years, and I'm now the treasurer. We exhibit at lots of big shows throughout the year, including the Malvern RHS shows, Three Choirs Festival, Westonbirt Arboretum, Blenheim Flower Show, and plenty of others.

We have a gallery on Market Street in Nailsworth that we run on a rota basis, and where my work is permanently on display.

How did the Barking Dog Gallery come about?

I've been here for three years now, and share the space with Hazel Morris, a silversmith and jeweller... we've shared studio space for over 20 years now! It's a great 'buzzy' location – opposite Lavender Bakehouse, next door to Wet Paint Gallery, and surrounded by artists' studios. The canal path passes my door, along with the River Frome, so there are some really pretty walks right on my doorstep.

Where else can we see and buy your artwork?

I also have work on display at Artysan in Moreton-in-Marsh, and you can buy cushions, mugs, stationery and other items featuring my artwork on redbubble.com

What can we expect to see at the Goods Shed exhibition?

The exhibition is on for a whole month, and I'll be exhibiting a good range of my works, from large-scale oil paintings to smaller woodcuts. I'm at Malvern Autumn Show the weekend before, so what's on display is dependent on what sells there!

natmorley.co.uk

Eavesdropper

Overheard during the last month...

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'intro pullquote'
story text
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'intro pullquote'
story text
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Nat Morley in her Chalford studio