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Forest of Imagination: meet the artists



Meet five artists who are part of Bath's pop-up contemporary arts event [Forest of Imagination](#), taking place 20-24 June 2019.

Find out the music that most moves Heaven 17's Martyn Ware; the favourite artworks of renowned paper-cutter Jessica Palmer; and where Tate-exhibitor Bob and Roberta Smith feels happiest. Get to know Bath based artists Clare Day and Perry Harris, and why Forest of Imagination draws them back, year after year.

[Martyn Ware](#)

A founding member of both The Human League and Heaven 17, Martyn is a London based musician, composer, arranger, record producer, and music programmer. In 2001 he co-founded Illustrious Company to exploit the creative possibilities of three-dimensional sound technology.

Where do you get your inspiration for new soundscapes?

The piece I'm creating for Forest 2019 stems from my fascination with reminiscence and memory. I'm exploring the bond that the very young and the very old have with one another. These people are at the opposite ends of their life but share so many insights about life. I thought I'd reveal this affinity by putting the words of the old in the mouths of the young and vice-versa.

What pieces of music most move you?

There's no end to beauty in music. Symphony No. 9 by Gustav Mahler makes me want to cry. Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for String' (the theme music to 'Platoon'), is another powerful piece. John William's score for 'Close Encounters of a Third Kind' is masterful. More recently, the soundtrack to the film 'Arrival' composed by Johann Johannsson is deeply evocative.

Where do you feel most happy?

I lived in Venice for 27 years and love the city, particularly Giudecca. It's tight network of streets and alleys means there are few bicycles let alone cars. The fastest you can move is walking pace, even on boats. Every alley has its own sonic signature, a combination of the sound of water and people.

What were your favourite games or activities as a child?

I grew up in Sheffield with little access to cultural stuff. I played football, tennis and a bit of chess. Most of my time was spent outdoors being social.

What animal would you want to be if you weren't human?

A jaguar living in the rain forests of Peru.

What do you most enjoy about Forest of Imagination?

Music is undervalued as something that can help make the world a better place and take the stress out of city living. Forest is a chance to show how music can beautify the world.

Bob and Roberta Smith

Bob and Roberta is a contemporary artist, writer, author, musician, art education advocate and keynote speaker. Known for his 'slogan' art, Bob and Roberta is an associate professor at Sir John Cass Department of Art at London Metropolitan University.

Where do you get your inspiration for new artworks?

News, the radio, and from making work. Making is the most fruitful place to find ideas. Ideas flow when I am working.

Which pieces of art move you?

Henri Matisse's 'Escargot' (The Snail). It's a playful work made by someone at the end of their life - it gives hope and puzzlement to the viewer.

'The Slave Ship' (Zong) by JMW Turner. It's a horrible painting depicting slaves being thrown from a ship because they were unfit for sale. It tells us Turner, like many artists today, thought his art could speak to people about injustice. He was a great man in ways that are surprising, and I think sometimes suppressed, by history's gate keepers.

Lubaina Himid's Turner Prize show. I just think this country has produced three great artists for the 21st century - Lubaina Himid, Chris Ofili and Frank Bowling. Frank was not born in the UK, but, like Francis Bacon, the best British artists are migrants to the UK. Himid's work is melancholic, joyous, political and colourful!

Where do you feel most happy?

Inside - The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 2019! The light in the Royal Academy Galleries is just amazing. I curated a room this year and I wanted people to look up because when you look up at a painting it's almost a religious experience.

Outside - Gordale Scar in North Yorkshire. It's a magnificent place, it looks how an Elgar cello concerto sounds!

What were your favourite games as a child?

I loved riding my bike and cycling for miles in Wensleydale where I spent a lot of my childhood. I also loved, and still love, model trains. I was a solitary kid so not a big board games person.

What animal would you want to be if you weren't human?

My favourite animal is the slow worm. I not sure being one would be much fun, but they have iridescent skin and were a magical find on long walks.

What do you most enjoy about Forest?

I love paths through forests. Near where I lived as a child was a large wood called Freeholders Wood. We had rights to coppice hazel trees. It sounds mad, because I am a Londoner now, but a lot of my childhood was spent collecting kindling, and dragging it back to our house in Carperby, North Yorkshire.

Jessica Palmer

Jessica Palmer is a UK-based artist and author whose work spans collage, paper sculpture, paper cutting, digital drawing and painting. Her clients include Disney Pixar, English Heritage and New York publisher Skira Rizzoli.

Where do you get your inspiration?

From a lichen to a rainforest and all points between.

Which pieces of art move you?

'Time Waits for No One' by The Rolling Stones. 'Flora Botanica' by Mary Delany. The Tudor garden of the National Trust's Lytes Carey Manor.

Where do you feel most happy?

Woodlands. Meadows. Sitting with my family sharing a drink and gazing out to sea

What were your favourite games as a child?

Drawing. Hospitals with dolls and teddies. Mucking about in the garden collecting insects.

What animal would you want to be if you weren't human?

A giraffe. I've always wanted to be tall. And they get to nibble the tastiest leaves. Plus, they've few predators.

What do you most enjoy about Forest?

Not just thinking, but also making, outside all the usual conventions and boxes.

Perry Harris

Perry is an artist/illustrator who has worked as caretaker at Bath's Royal High School for over 20 years. Perry has supported Forest of Imagination with his unique artworks since the event launched in 2013.

Where do you get your inspiration for new artworks?

From continually looking and observing.

What pieces of art move you?

I'm moved by the creativity of outsider art (the work of untrained artists), the wonder of the Cast Collection at the V&A Museum, and by the sound of The Pearl by Harold Budd/Brian Eno.

Where do you feel most happy?

I'm at my happiest while walking through a wood.

What were your favourite games as a child?

Seemed to spend a lot of time digging holes.

What animal would you want to be if you weren't human?

Quite envious of a cat's sleepy lifestyle.

What do you most enjoy about Forest?

I like to see how a different location is used each year, and it's great to have an event that is free.

Clare Day

Clare works in clay, making works of a handheld scale, often displayed together in multiples. She also makes prints by printing from a block of clay. Clare is also a parent, an artist-educator, and works part-time at Bath Spa University.

Where do you get your inspiration?

My work is about a sense of place, often using imprints from found objects that represent places, memories and people that have meaning for me.

Which pieces of art move you?

I am always moved by art or writing that is about truth; truth to materials or a personal truth. This is why children's art is always moving to me.

Where do you feel most happy?

By the sea, in a wood, outside, in my studio, or anywhere else where my loved ones are.

What were your favourite games as a child?

I grew up in an artist's house in a wood. Everything we loved to do was about drawing, making, being outside on bikes or up a tree.

What do you most enjoy about Forest?

Children thinking of things I could never have expected.





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