

HEATHLAND ARTWORKS

Background

Heathland Artworks is a partnership project that grew out of RSPB's desire to attract new audiences through art, the University for the Creative Arts' (UCA) need to provide their students with real live projects and Surrey Hills Arts' interest in allowing artists to respond specifically to a site.

The aims of the project were:

- To provide UCA Craft students with the guidance to develop a proposal
- To guide UCA Craft students through development to installation of the artworks
- To attract a new audience to the RSPB Farnham Heath site.
- To give visitors a new way of experiencing Farnham Heath
- To build and strengthen new partnerships



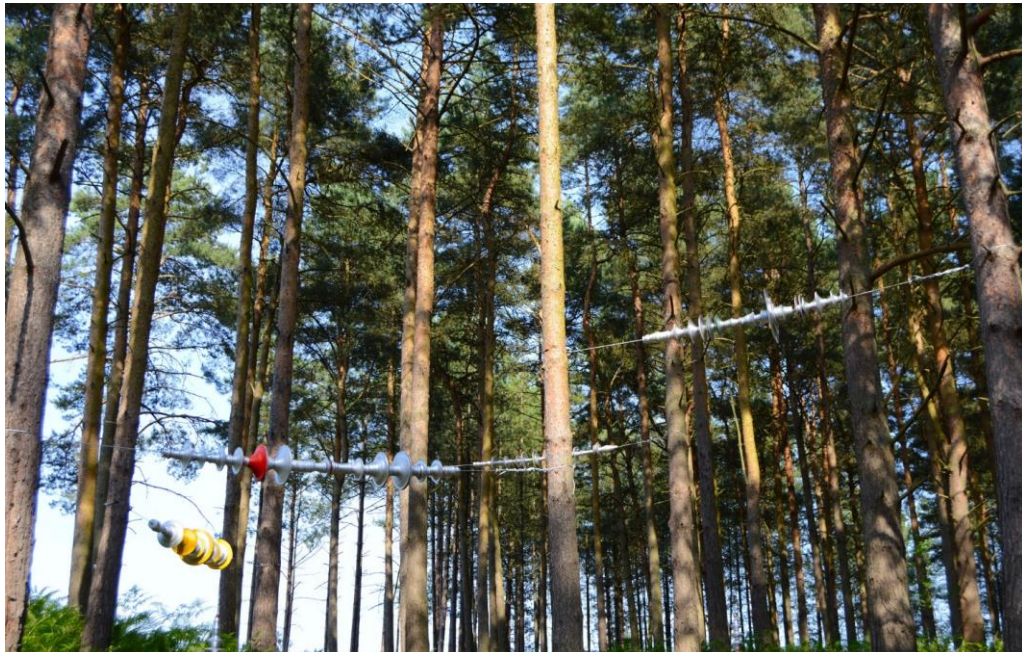
Here Today, Gone Tomorrow1 – Ann Downey, MA Glass

The Project

Heathland Artworks began with a lecture to UCA Craft, Textile and Product design students in December 2016. This focused on the art of putting together an expression of interest and a proposal. Students learned about outdoor art, where to find opportunities and the application process from the commissioner's point of view. Following this, the students received a guided site visit to Farnham Heath where they learned about the wildlife and the conservation work of RSPB.

From January 2017, the students received guidance on preparing a proposal. They received individual tutorials in March where they showed designs and maquettes. In April, they presented their work before a selection panel and those who were selected, received guidance in creating their final pieces working in the studios at UCA.

The final artworks were installed in May. The private view took place in June with speeches from Mike Goodman, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Michael Hodge, Mayor of Farnham. Guests were given a guided tour around the artworks by RSPB Manager, Mike Coates. Visitors were able to enjoy the trail of artworks throughout June, July and August.



Marketing

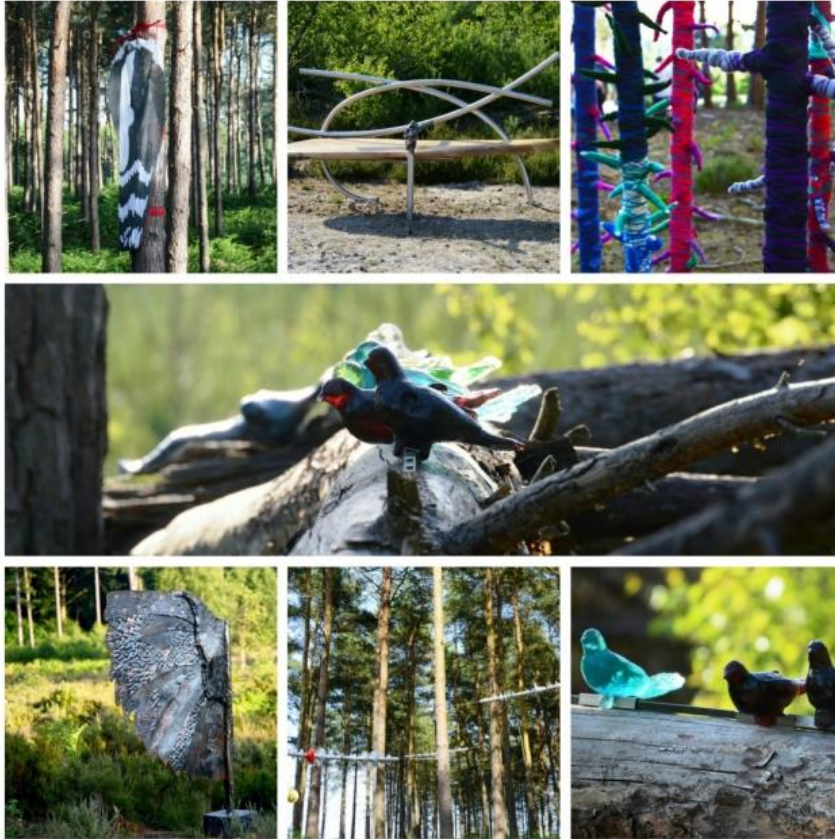
All the partners Surrey Hills, RSPB and UCA undertook marketing of the event. It features on the Surrey Hills website and regular social media posts by Surrey Hills, Surrey Arts and UCA. Leaflets were designed by one of the participating students and distributed in Farnham and at the site. Farnham Herald sent a photographer to the launch and Surrey Life covered the event online. *Heathland Artworks* was listed on the Farnham Town Council and Waverley Borough Council websites.



SURREY LIFE

Surrey Hills Arts transforms Farnham Heath into natural art gallery

PUBLISHED: 18:38 27 June 2017



Surrey Hills Arts transforms Farnham Heath into natural art gallery
If you take a stroll down to Farnham Heath National Nature Reserve this summer you'll discover some unusual and exciting artworks . . .

Feedback

Process of the project was captured from students through evaluation questionnaires and from partners through an evaluation meeting. Feedback was captured from visitors through a Comments Booklet on site.

Student Feedback:

Students expressed that they appreciated the opportunity to *'work to a live brief, produce a large-scale artwork, work alongside professionals, have a challenge and do something they've never done before, produce work for a public, outdoor setting'*.

'The opportunity to broaden my experience by participating in a live project was valuable. It has provided knowledge and helped me understand the obstacles and pitfalls that can present themselves in the process. My future projects will benefit from this experience.'

- Carl Irving, MA Metalwork 2nd Year

The students appreciated the process – lecture, site visit, tutorial, studio support, installation support but a couple suggested an earlier start. Asked what they would do differently, most students commented that they would give more time to planning, and to be realistic with ideas. All were happy with their final artworks, pleased with the publicity and feedback they received at the opening.

'I enjoyed the challenge and found that I enjoy working to a brief. It also creates an opportunity to push materials within a different environment.'

-Steven Edwards, MA Ceramics 1st Year

'The students and staff at UCA would like to thank Alison for such a great opportunity, not just the organisation and enthusiasm, but the great starting point of allowing us to host the 'Inspiring Views' Talks at UCA during Farnham Craft Month, where we had a lecture theatre full of an external and internal audience. And we would like to thank Mike for the support of using the Heathland and allowing us to understand a lot about what doesn't matter in relation to concerns and what does in terms of land, wildlife and organisations that look after our wonderful landscapes.'

-Rebecca Skeels, Course Leader for MA Crafts, UCA

Visitor Feedback

Surrey Hills Arts organised a guided walk for Creative Response where they gained an insight into each artwork and spent time sketching from Carl Irving's Heathlands Artworks bench.



'We loved the metal wing, the texture, as part of the landscape, with weather rusting like a star shape from the bottom, the heather purple and pale and beautiful surreal cattle, silence enjoyed, no litter, feel very calm, slowed down left all stresses at home, switched off, switched on to different things, not being in a cacophony of noise.'

-Liz, Creative Response participant

'The walk through 'Heathland Artworks' was so positive, as participants would not have visited on their own. We experienced the natural flora and fauna, and some wonderfully sited art. We gained a real insight into the development of these artworks, and the complexities of art practice. To have quiet time to draw in the fresh air was wonderful, and enjoyed by all.

We look forward to future collaborations and meetings!

-Bex Burchill, Arts Worker, Creative Response

Comments from the Visitor Comments Booklet on the site notice board which included comments from visitors from Colombia and Canada:

'What a treat! Lovely to see such loveliness in an already lovely backdrop!'

'Fantastic to walk through the trees in search of the sculptures. They really compliment the landscape and should be a permanent feature.'

'What a lovely walk with our two small children who both enjoyed the hunt for art! Our favourite was 'Spine Trees'! Well done all!'

'Congratulations to all the artists. All three generations of our family have enjoyed searching for and looking at the exhibits. Thankyou.'

Letter from the Farnham Townswomen's Guild Amblers:

Two weeks ago we found works of art displayed on the reserve. At each one we stopped to appreciate and discuss them. Opinions differed on them of course but added a lot of interest to the morning. As a bonus while trying to find the hidden ceramic nightjars and tree pipits? We saw a deer in amongst the bracken, she came very close to us and we realised why when she collected her baby hidden in the heather. They both trotted off towards the trees. A great experience which we would not have seen but for pausing at the art.

The Future

All partners are keen to run *Heathlands Artworks* in 2018. Following discussion, we will introduce the following improvements:

- Earlier tutorial and selection dates
- Attempt to source sponsorship or funding to assist the students with project costs
- Improved marketing – more leaflets delivered more widely, increased press
- Include a couple of past students in the lecture stage to share their experience
- Plan community engagement early on in partnership with the Rural Life Centre

Surrey Hills Arts is a partnership between Surrey Arts, Surrey County Council and Surrey Hills AONB.

www.surreyhillsarts.org