

***Natural Inclusions***

**Paintings Combining the Art and Science of Life**

**By Alan Rayner**

**Vol. 2, 2000-2018**

## Preview

'Natural Inclusion' is to my mind a fundamental principle of Nature. This principle provides us with a navigational aid, *using our cavity at heart as compass*, which helps us to recognise and avoid the problems and falsehoods that arise from abstract perceptions that estrange Nature from human nature. Moreover, by recognising our bodily existence as an expression of, not an exception from natural energy flow, it enables us to discover ways in which we can live wiser, more loving, creative, sustainable and fulfilling lives. It is the evolutionary source of all the diversity of material form that emerges in Nature through the receptive-responsive relationship between space and flux – void stillness and energetic movement.

To understand this principle requires a shift from the abstract perception of space, time and material boundaries as sources of definitive separation between independent *objects*, to recognising them instead as mutually inclusive sources of natural continuity and dynamic distinction between *flow-forms*. In effect this represents a shift from rigidly static to fluidly dynamic framings of reality: from abstract 'freeze-framed geometry' to natural 'flow geometry'. Although I did not initially realise this, all my paintings made since 1969 illustrate this shift in perception. They all depict imaginary scenes, based on real experience and study of natural form, which often come into my mind 'out of the blue' rather than deliberate intent. They are sometimes accompanied by a poem. My role as artist is to allow these scenes to form in my mind and then to portray them to the best of my self-taught ability.





**"PTEAR DROPS"****Oil on Board, 2000**

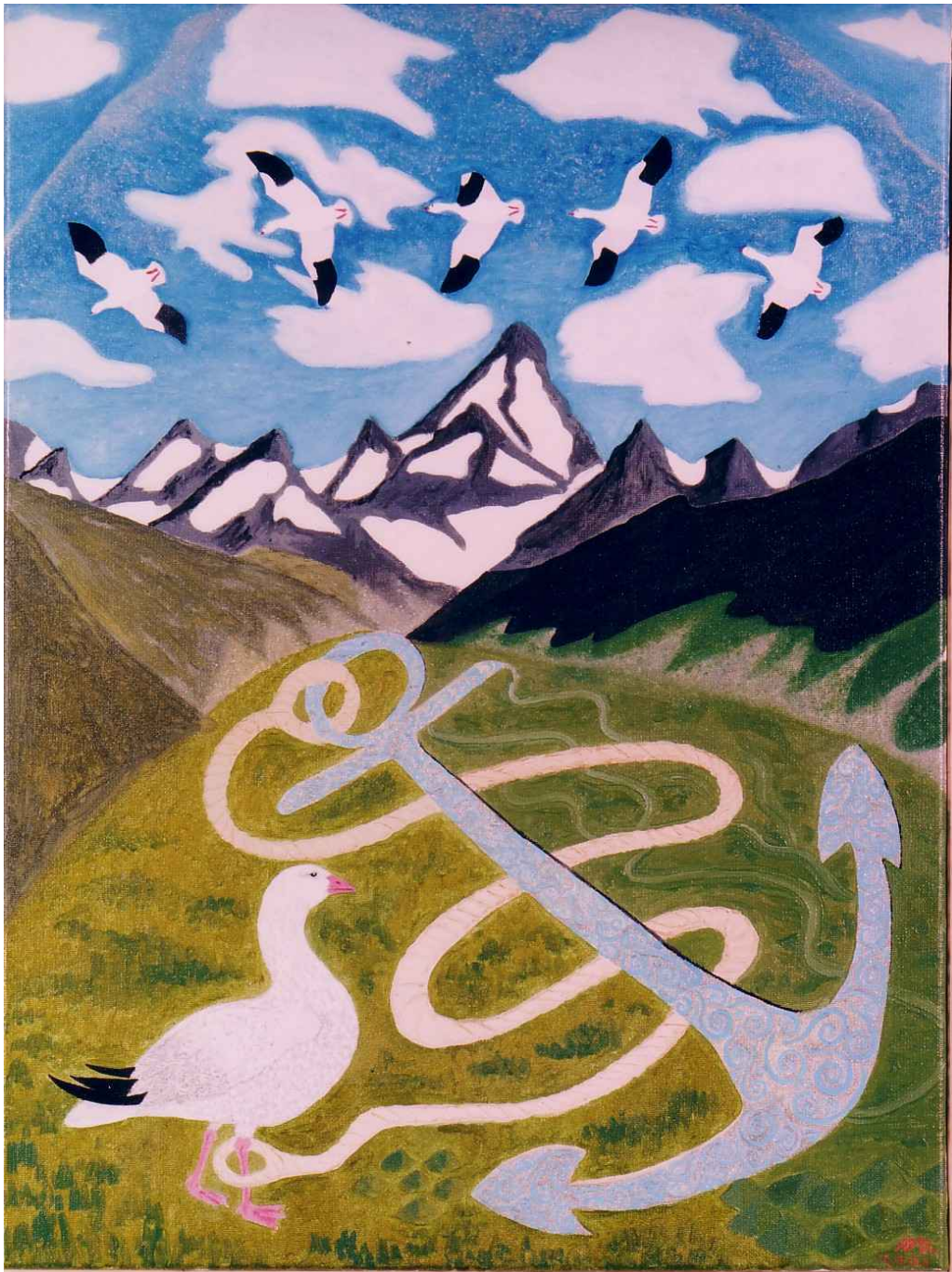
The boundaries of a conscious, bright-eyed awareness of pear blossom and fruit dissolve into a deeper world of pools, riven by disjunction where cascades descend, splash and refocus, caught in a frozen moment. Based on a trance-like experience overlooking Pulteney Weir, Bath





**"VIEW FROM ANCHORAGE"****Oil on Canvas, 2001**

The clear perspective of explicit landscape features grounded within a fixed reference frame, is dwarfed by the implicit view taken in from encircling flights of Snow Goose imagination, where cloud-dappled sky becomes summitless, snow-patched mountainside, far beyond the peaks and troughs, light and shadow, of rational consciousness.





## "THE HOLE IN THE MOLE"

Oil on Canvas, 2001

I **AM** the hole; That **lives** in a mole; That **induces** the mole; To **dig** the hole; That **moves** the mole; Through the **earth**; That **forms** a **hill**; That **becomes** a **mountain**; That **reaches** to **sky**; That **pools** in **stars**; And **brings** the **rain**; That the **mountain collects**; Into **streams** and **rivers**; That **moisten** the **earth**; That **grows** the **grass**; That **freshens** the **air**; That **condenses** to **rain**; That **carries** the **water**; That **brings** the mole; To **Life**



## "RECALCITRANCE"

### Oil on Canvas, 2001

A 'Star Thistle' (*Centaurea calcitrapa*), replete with enormous involucral spines, is included within the vacuole membrane ('tonoplast') of a plant cell, seen in cross-section, which it distorts but does not puncture. The cell is intra-connected to six neighbouring cells through 'plasmodesmata' in its cell wall, which appears as a golden cage. Two of the neighbouring cells are blackened and sealed off, their internal membranes having been ruptured by six-pointed star-shaped crystals of ice that have formed within their boundaries.





**"ON BEING A HERMIT CRAB"****Oil on Board, 2001**

Oh, What Hell; To Be In a Shell!; It's So Unkind; To Be So Confined;  
With No Room To Move; Or Get Into The Groove; This Inner Space;  
Is Such a DisGrace; I Gotta Get Outta This Place!

I'll Squeeze Through The Gap; Out Into The Light; Oh, But It's Much  
Too Bright!; And My Body's Pap!; It's Not So Cool; To Be In This  
Pool

There's a Hole New World Out Here; And It Makes Me Feel Queer!;  
Perhaps It Might Be As Well; To Be In a Shell; Where I Won't Feel  
Bare; Look! There's One Over There!; So, What the Hell; I'll Be Me  
In a Shell!



**"ENGAGEMENT"****Oil on Canvas, 2001**

Beyond a curtain of fire and containing wall of earthy bricks is a vista through air and across water to a bejewelled eternity, a curved, inductive, inner space within a ring, a loving Zero. The ring is shared between swans, male and female reflections brought together, each at One with the Other. Imagining beyond confrontation. Rejoining polarities. Denying Neither. Embodying Both.



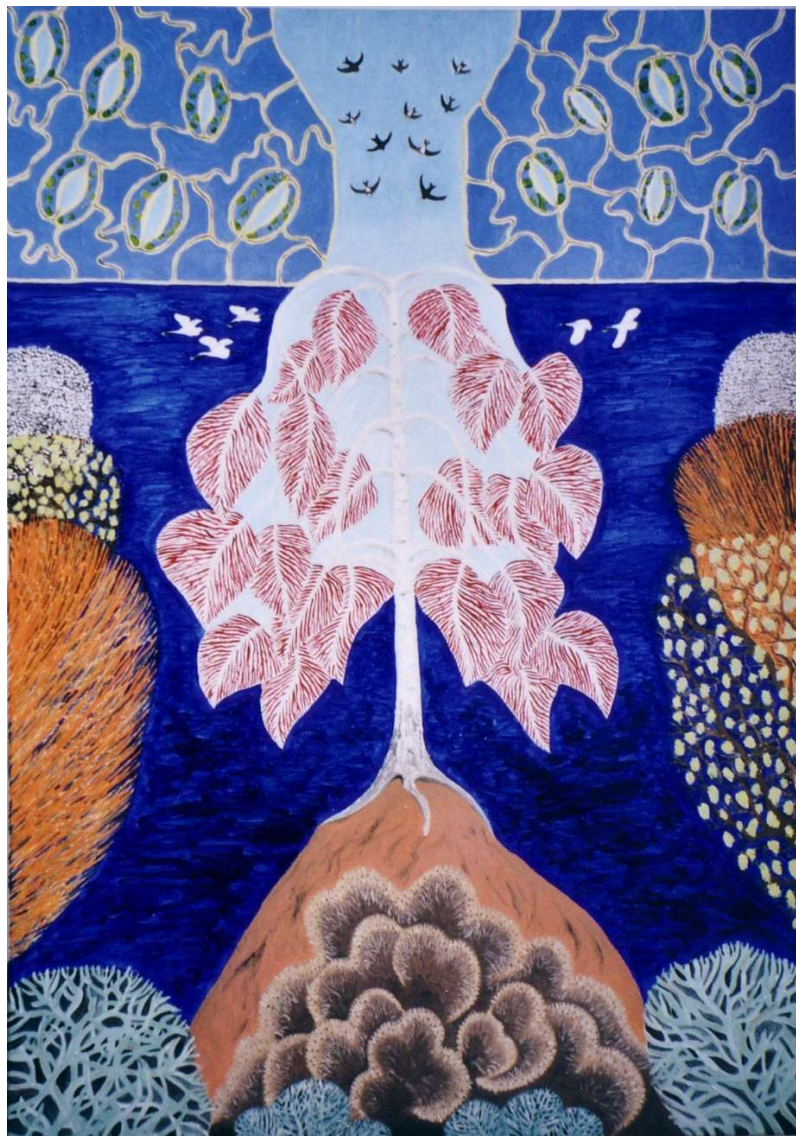


## **"BREATHING SPACE"**

**Oil on Canvas, 2002**

Painted in response to thoughts and images received during visits to Karlstad, Sweden and the Somerset Levels at the end of March, 2002.

Spring IS Inspiring. New leaves open stomatal windows to sky. Sand Martins swirl down from migration towards water. Egrets flutter past. A white-ribbed Silver Birch, rooted to rocky diaphragm, transforms crimson lung-branches into leaves. Coral bark fires imagination. Pussy Willow erupts into incandescent catkins. Blackthorn snow-storms. Lichens pulsate with their own slow rhythm. Space moves within and without the embodied water flows of life. In, out, together, to gather. Implicit Human Being. In Formational Lining. Attuned.





**"SPHAGNUM MOSS"****Oil on Canvas, 2003**

A labyrinthine network; Of Life; In a matrix of death

A close interdependence; Of One with the Other; Fills Like a  
Sponge; With Water; Or Blood

Cushioning; Soothing; Healing; Filtering

Raising Ground out of Water; For others to root in; Building on the  
Backs; Of past endeavours

Death Feeds Life; In a succession; Of amplifying Diversity

But a distanced humanity; Walled Into Itself; Feeds Death With Life





## "SHARING CIRCLE"

**Oil on Canvas, 2003**

The painting is centred around a candelabra of honeysuckle blooms. Each bloom is unique in its own sweet way and at a different stage of development - some unopened, some freshly bursting, others yellowing. The blooms face outwards in a representation of combined receptivity and transmissivity towards an inward facing fringe of other *flowers*, interleaved with grasses: white rockrose; red campion; orange hawkweed; yellow-wort; green hellebore; bluebell; a mystery plant (actually an artistically licensed version of woad, original source of indigotine); violet. The stalk of the honeysuckle winds spirally outwards and then back inwards and downwards to its self origin, creating a pool of reflection, black in the middle and transforming through shades of blue to silver around its outside. When nothing comes between, then nothing pools together a diversity of inner self with outer self-domains, waving correspondence through complementary relationship of one with another, embodying light with shadow across the spectrum of possibilities in common space.



**STARLINGS -REVELATIONS OF INVISIBILITY****Oil on Canvas, 2003**

Smoke Rises; In Bird Form; Lining Pockets of Air  
Horizontal Aspirations; To Vertex; From Vortex; Reflected in  
Currents; Between Waves; Rippling Fenestration; Mercurial  
Shimmering  
In Forming Invisible Space; Reminding of a Presence Of Absence  
Mimicking Human Machine Code; Along Telegraph Wires; In Subtle  
Mockery; Of Abstract Logic  
Forever Finding Holes; In the Solid Geometry; Of Artificial Edifice  
Black Iridescence; Penetrating the Riddles; Of Brick Walls; With  
Natural Fluidity





**RECREATIONS (OF A PLAYFUL UNIVERSE)****Oil on Canvas, 2004**

A playfully spinning wheel of black and white human figures relates in turn with erupting volcano riven with red gold lava streams, floodlit enchanted wood and lily pond cascading into pale reflective sea.



**(THE ATTRACTIONS OF BECOMING A) HOST****Oil on Canvas, 2004**

A mysterious wooded vale between two hills invites Wheatear in Spring to replace Fieldfare departing from Winter, under a day-night sky drawn together by a sun-moon and with Cuckoo and Vampire bat aloft. An ultramarine pool wells out of or into darkness, teeming with streaming parasitic forms but fringed by a crowd of rejoicing daffodils.





## "THE WAR OF THE POTS AND KETTLES"

### Oil on Canvas, 2004

Black You ARE AND Black you BE What ever ELSE YOU cannot be ME  
Whiter than white And purer than pure I KNOW what's RIGHT That's  
my ALLURE

But, How can YOU BE So very SURE About what you perceive as  
YOUR allure?

So CONFIDENT In the RULE of LAW That you can flout it Whenever  
your bent Is to BE without it

YOU think you're so BRAVE To call ME DEPRAVED As you parade  
your virtue Symbolized by your STATUE Of LIBERTY

An OxyMoron A Freedom you lost Because of its cost

You think Economics

IS Ergonomics But YOUR Economics Is Egonomics

A self-righteous assertion That leads to Desertion Of your human  
nature In which we so long To Belong

So, let's bury the hatchet There's no THING to match it A

celebration of DIFFERENCE And no indifference

No grayness No blameness But a splash of colour Of every hue Not  
black and blue

That's me and you





## **"LANDED, STRANDED"**

### **Oil on Canvas, 2004**

A reflection upon the evolutionary inversion from aquatic to terrestrial life

I used to be Within the Sea; An identity Of You and Me; Submerged In Commonality Of Sounding; Between Airy Heights And Bottom Depths; Waving Correspondence; Through Inseparable Togetherness Of Content with Context .

But, Now, Dry; Abstracted Space comes between Us; A separating distance; An unbecoming Outside; Alienating Forms As Fixtures; Stranded in Isolation; Entities; Non-identities; Conflicting; Oblivious of Our Belonging Together.

Oxygen;

Now, moving Fast; Not Languidly; Tans our Hides; Protecting Our Inner Spaces Against its own Consuming Presence; Supporting Combustion; Burning Us Out.

But all this sealing; Removes Our Feeling; Setting Our Content At Odds with Our Context; So that we push Against the Pull; With Backs to Front; Itching to Relieve Unbearable Friction.

And So Now Just Let's Go And, with Loving Fear Dive into the Clear And Swim Where it's Cool To be In With the Pool Together





**"HOLDING OPENNESS"****Oil on Canvas, 2005**

Light as a dynamic natural inclusion of darkness continually brings  
an endless diversity of flow-form to life





## "DIGITALIS"

### Oil on Canvas, 2006

Oh, that iron fist that hides In a velvet glove; Intoxicating the heart;  
 Whilst ordering its erratic wanderings; Into the hard-edged metronomic beatings;  
 Of a loveless marriage to mechanical objects; So clearly defined; To beguile the seeker of certainty  
 Could not that purple velvet; That flatters to deceive; Yet restore our child's play?

An antidotal, anecdotal softening; Of hard manipulations; That exclude the darkness from the day  
 Light touching lightly upon the fringes; Of etchings into clay; Where the bodies' soft life-linings;  
 Can frolic in the summer hay



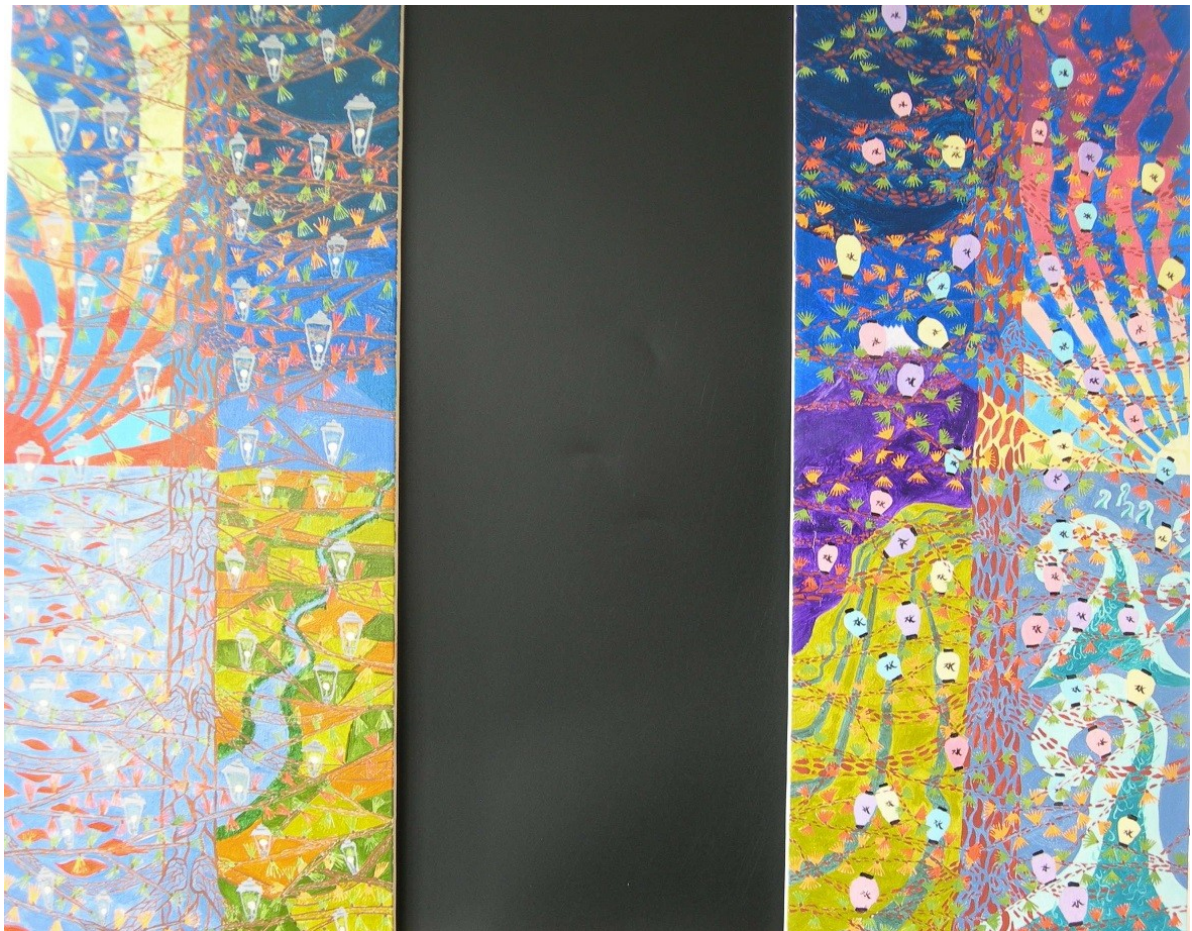
## **"THE HOLEYNESS OF THE WOOD – WEST & EAST"**

**Oil on Canvas, 2007**

Two, world's apart; Whose place is together; In common  
circumference; Of World spinning Story;  
One, the proud Standard-Bearer; Of light within darkness; An  
illumination; Of rectangularity; Held stiffly erect; With All in Order;  
The Other, a haphazard glimmering; Of darkness in light; A chaotic  
turbulence; Of fluid movement; Of Order in All  
Wherein can be found meaning; Of vital significance; A Communion  
of holes; Each seeking relief; Obscured by the clutter; Of everyday  
Strife

Can we feel those holes; At the heart of souls; Or, must we make  
Shutters; To freeze the moment; Of objective vision?

Based on reciprocal views of European and Japanese Larch trees  
and their geographical distribution.



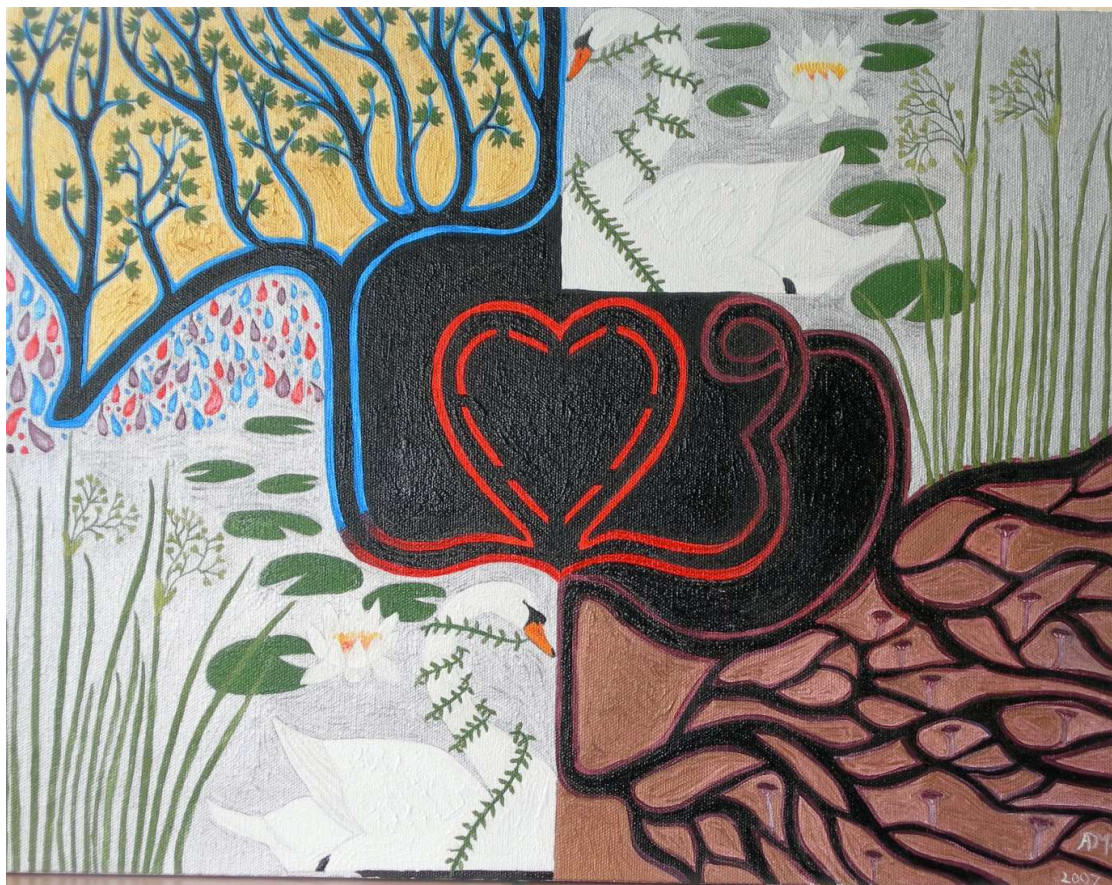


## **"CHANNEL NO. 5"**

**Oil on Canvas, 2007**

Come on you Two; Won't you fuse with us Three; So that we no longer have to be Rivals?  
 In an Olympic Golden Sovereignty; Of One on either side of offence;  
 That makes you over Into binary opposition  
 An oddly singular couple; Of thrust and counter-thrust; In action and reaction;  
 That denies the even handedness; Of your giving and taking; To and from each receptive and responsive influence;  
 A tidal flow that empties; As it fills and fills; As it empties; In a chord with circumstantial need;  
 To keep a breast  
 In tune with Mother; Who can give; No more than she can provide;  
 If she is to sustain her sustaining; Identity of one in All and all in One;  
 A world with out end; In which none can begin; Without being taken in; Amend

Inspired by the traditional song, 'Green Grow the Rushes, O', and by the 'transfigural mathematics' of Nigerian mathematician, Lere Shakunle



## **"FLOW AND COUNTERFLOW"**

**Oil on Canvas, 2007**

Inspired by Lere Shakunle's transfigural mathematics, this painting illustrates the continuous 'superchannel' formed by the reciprocal flow of overlapping circulations into and out from one another in a 'multiple Mandorla'.





**"TUMBLEDOWN"****Oil on Canvas, 2008**

Painted following a visit to the geologically unstable landscape on the Dorset coast around Lyme Regis and Seaton and its revelations of prehistoric life on Earth.



## **"COMPASSION FRUIT"**

**Oil on Canvas, 2008**

The confluence of classical elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water via a zero-point at their vertical-horizontal intersection, enables the emergence of a Passiflora vine, symbolizing the natural inclusion of Love in Life.



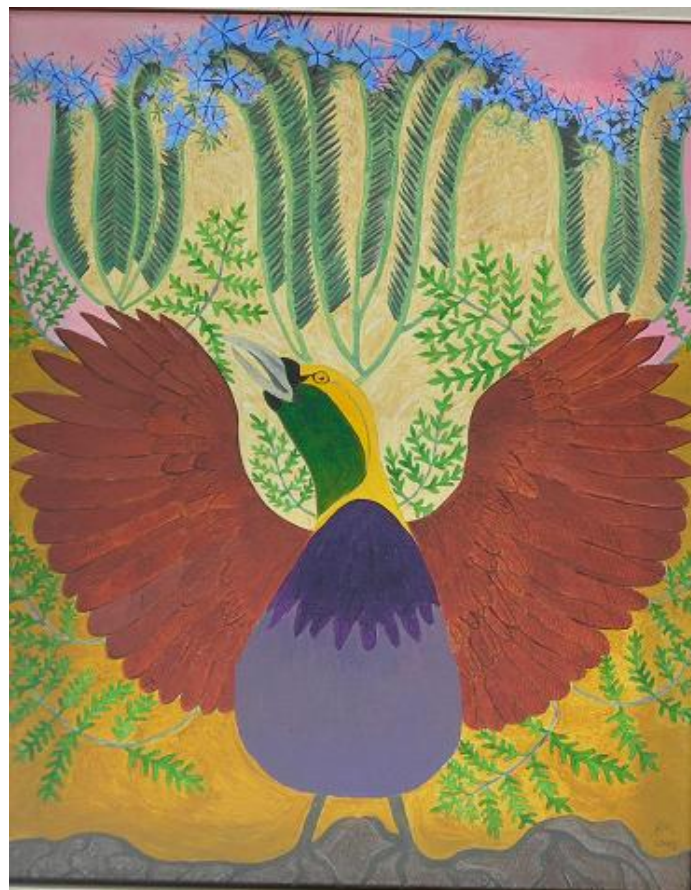


## "STING IN THE TALE?"

### Oil on Canvas, 2008

We hoped to find; Some Sign of Greater Earthly Paradise;  
 Advertising its hoarding; Of radiant energy; By lightning up the  
 darkness; In extravagant plumage; Spread in superior posture.  
 Crowning crowning glory; Above the call of humility; Unaware of  
 what brings it here; Without foundation for its sovereignty; But  
 eager nonetheless; To stake its claim; With no trace of shame; For  
 what it's hard done by; In peerless condescension  
 But here; What lesser claim is this?; Rooted in the waste ground;  
 Spraying ferny foliage; In misty dressing. Cascading sight unsound;  
 Arching its backbones; In loopy skeins; Of sky blue flowering;  
 Ravelling and unravelling;  
 What brought this presence here; Across the pond?; Stealing  
 through darkest space; In unseen conduits; To come to rest in  
 restless scenes; Of set aside disturbance; Receptive to weedy  
 aliens. Anthers proudly at the ready; Outreaching antennae;  
 Keeping their powder dry; To coat the trails of bees; Attracted to  
 the basins; Of floral satellite dishes; Receptive to Sky. What lesser  
 claim to fame can be; What brings back down to Earth; Recalling  
 more illustrious past; Into resonant cavities; Opening and closing in  
 flowing relay; Of life through death to seed; All in the unbecoming  
 name; **Of scorpion weed**

[A commentary on Grandeur and Humility, inspired by Scorpion  
 Weed and Greater Bird of Paradise]



## **"BOWLED OVER"**

### **Oil on Board, 2008**

High up at the bottom of a bowl; Rimmed with ridges and cusps;  
 Seeped through by blue rippling; Descending from ice-cap; A vast,  
 steep-sided arena; Roaring with waterfalls; And fast-flowing river;  
 Laced with low woodland; Filled with flowers; And rocky outcrops.  
 I've never seen such a scene; Except in dreams; And imaginings of  
 Lothlorien. A trail of enchantment; Moist, mossy and silvered with  
 birch; Calling to continue; From rapture to rapture. Until a howl of  
 foreboding; From a wolf; That turns out to be dog; Standing  
 sentinel; But tethered beside the path; Warns to turn around; Before  
 the ice is reached; Falling short; By a hundred or two metres; But  
 never mind. The return seems longer than the coming; Even  
 walking at the double; To carry clear of unknown trouble; Where  
 wilderness strains at the leash; To make itself felt; Beyond the din;  
 That begrudges mortal sin; For venturing so boldly; To invade its  
 privacy. [Inspired by a visit to a Norwegian glacier]





## "TESTING EXPERIENCE"

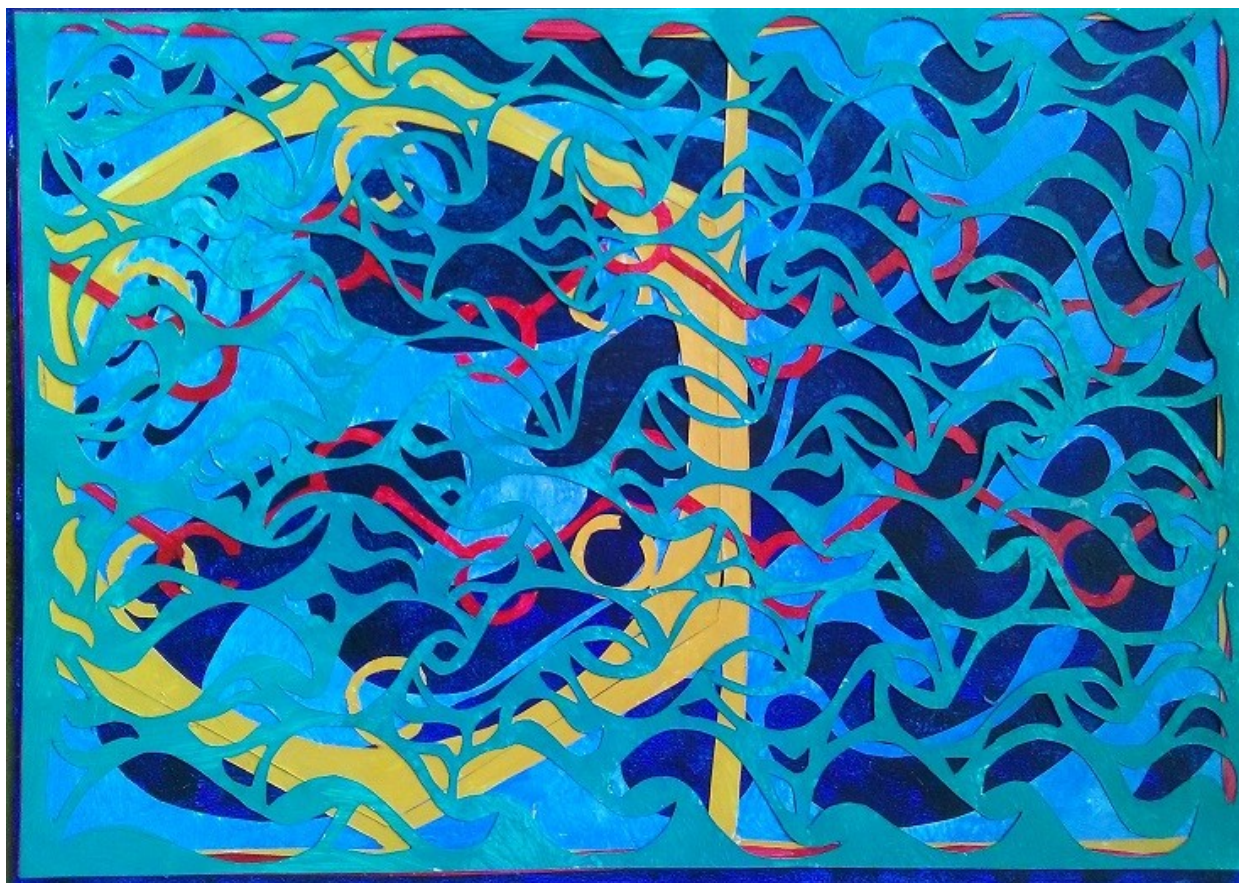
### Pen and Ink on Card, 2009

Painted following a walk along the 'Test Way', along the course of a disused railway track beside the River Test, famous for the crystal clarity of its water and abundant trout. After a picnic in a glade filled with colourful plants and butterflies, we climbed to the summit of a local hill, where we were exposed to a local squall, with heavy rain, thunder and lightning. Later, in more tranquil weather, we came upon a river crossing thick with reeds and a curious thatched building on a platform above the river, with a line of tubular meshes, which I learned later were a fisherman's hut and set of eel traps.



**"FLOW CHEMISTRY"****Acrylic on Paper-cut, 2010**

A depiction of linear and cyclic configurations of tetravalent carbon atoms in aliphatic and aromatic organic compounds as an expression of the fluid geometry of receptive spatial stillness and responsive energetic flux in mutually inclusive relationship.





## "MAGPIE NETWORK"

**Pen and Ink on Paper, 2011**

A depiction of the flow-network of the mycelium of the Magpie Inkcap (*Coprinopsis picacea*) as the behind-the-scenes production team, ramifying amongst leaf litter and grassy outcrops, underlying the autumnal emergence onto the woodland stage-set of the characteristic black and white fruit bodies at various stages of maturation.

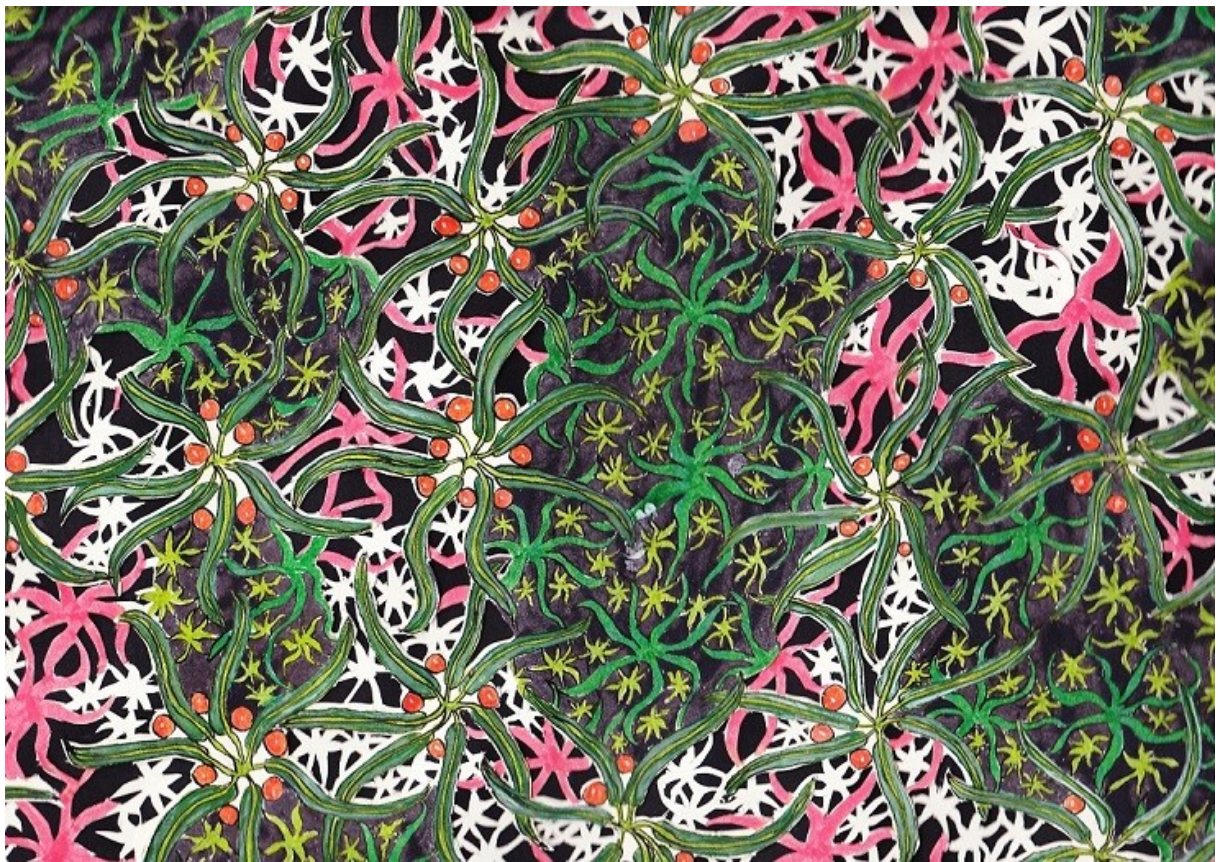




## **"BUCKSTARS"**

### **Watercolour and Ink on Paper-cut on Black Paper, 2011**

Based on the starry outward forms of shoots of Sea Buckthorn, Bog-moss and Golden Head Moss, observed while on holiday during summer 2011. It might be thought to represent the contrast between the natural communion of luminous living form in the limitless pool of receptive darkness and the exploitative consumerism symbolized by 'Starbucks'.



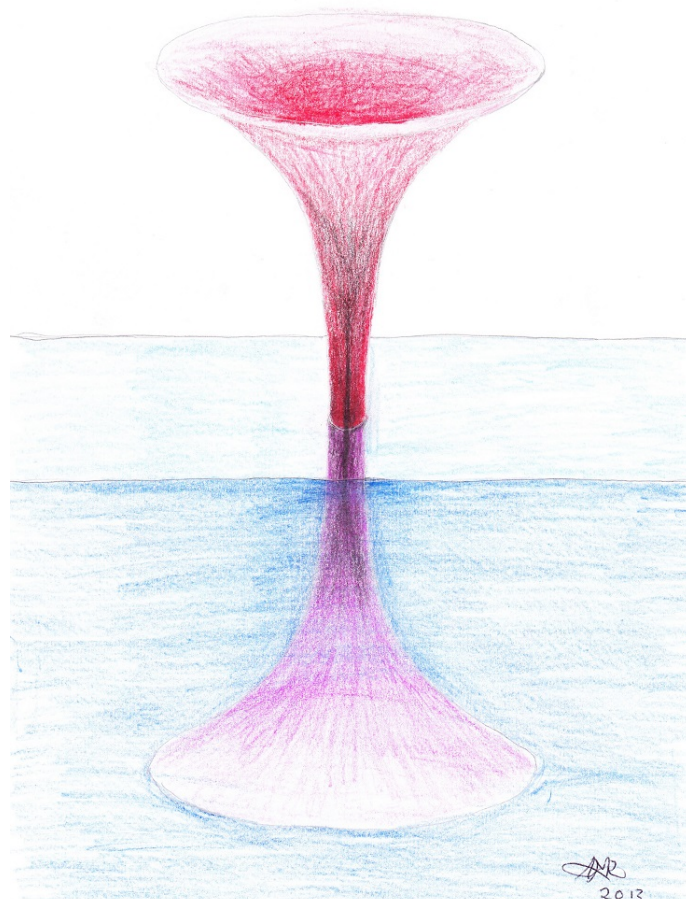


## "INFUNDIBULAR"

### Coloured Pencil on Paper, 2013

You could think of this drawing in terms of a red, singular, tornado-like figure, set in opposition to its white background, diving through the surface of a blue sea of receptivity, and transforming therein to a purple (red in blue/blue in red) inclusion of each in the otherness (figure/energy in space and space in figure/energy). You could also think of it in terms of the relationship between tangible and intangible presence, and between conscious and unconscious awareness.

You may notice that in the midst of this form is a *channel or cavity of space* that energy can circulate around, like winds around a tornado, but in which it cannot linger. This relates to a point that I sometimes make about the paradoxical conflation of '1' and '0' and opposition of 'plus' (+) and minus (-) in the foundations of conventional mathematical logic. Such conflation and opposition arise from the unnatural imposition of definitive singularity onto form as a material abstraction from its spatial context. This imposition leads us to focus on both numerical and geometric figures in isolation from or as complete enclosures of space, instead of dynamic inclusions of space.



## "MYCELIAL MOOD"

**Pen, Ink and Watercolour on Paper, 2013**

Based on a dream of kneeling on the ground beside a Scottish loch where some strange, deliquescing fungal fruit bodies have emerged from a lacy, feathery mass of mycelium.

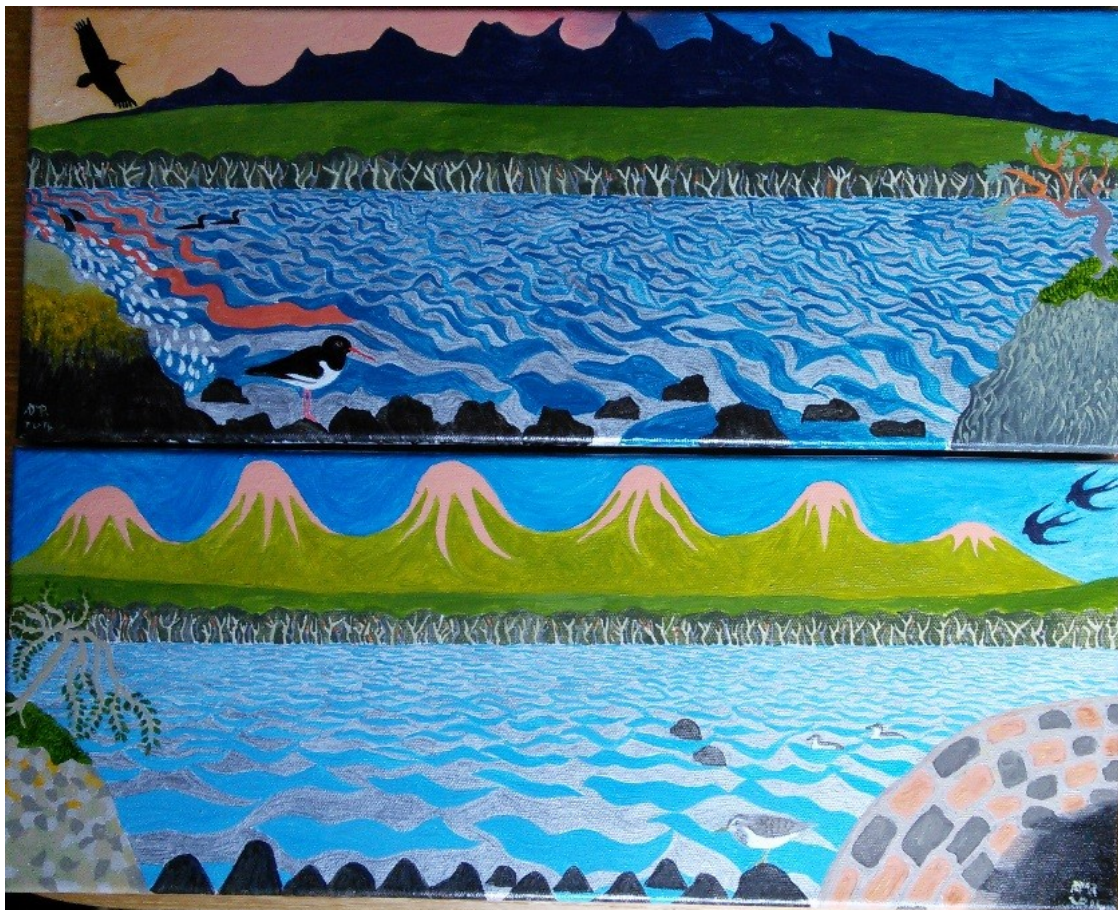




## "THE ROUGH AND THE SMOOTH"

**Oil on Canvas, 2014**

Side by side; Straddling the midriff; Between fore and aft; Of land that's slipped its anchor; Into liquid crystal; Silvery blue; Or bluish silver; Depending on mood. One inviting, fleshy, serene; Parabolic and hyperbolic; Moulded like upturned cup-cakes; With pink icing Streaming down their sides. The other forbidding, craggy, violent; Jagged and ragged; Strewn onto the plate; With dark abandon; Gathered into jutting peaks. Yet each with its different kind of beauty; That on its own; Might seem dull or gaunt; Flabby or skeletal; A different breed of sterility; But in the company of the other; Breeds fertility in the valleys; Exuberant with life; That takes the rough & the smooth; Within its stride; **Where no smile can live without wrinkles.** [recalling a scene seen and poetic description made on the Isle of Skye, looking towards the Black and Red Cuillin Mountains, while on holiday there in summer 2011]



## **"REAPING THE WHIRLWIND"**

**Pen, Ink and Watercolour on Paper, 2017**

A moody reflection on the vicious spiral of needless conflict caused by the abstract estrangment of Nature from human nature.





**"REAL LIFE EMERGENCE"****Oil on Board, 2018**

Two mirror-image paintings representing the reciprocal relationship between receptive darkness and responsive light, female and male, unconscious and conscious, intangible and tangible in the fluid emergence of living form.

Night

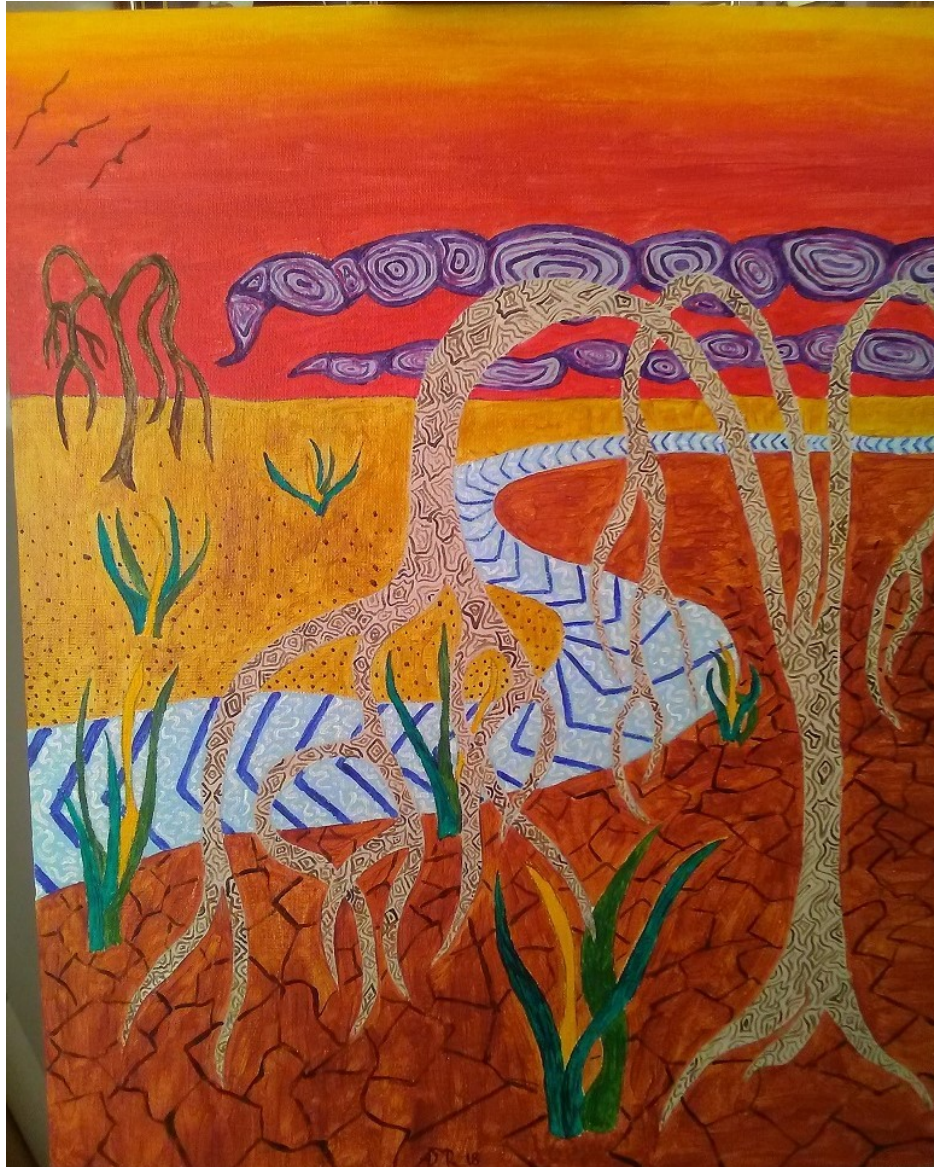


Day



**"RIVER SNAKE"****Acrylic on Board, 2018**

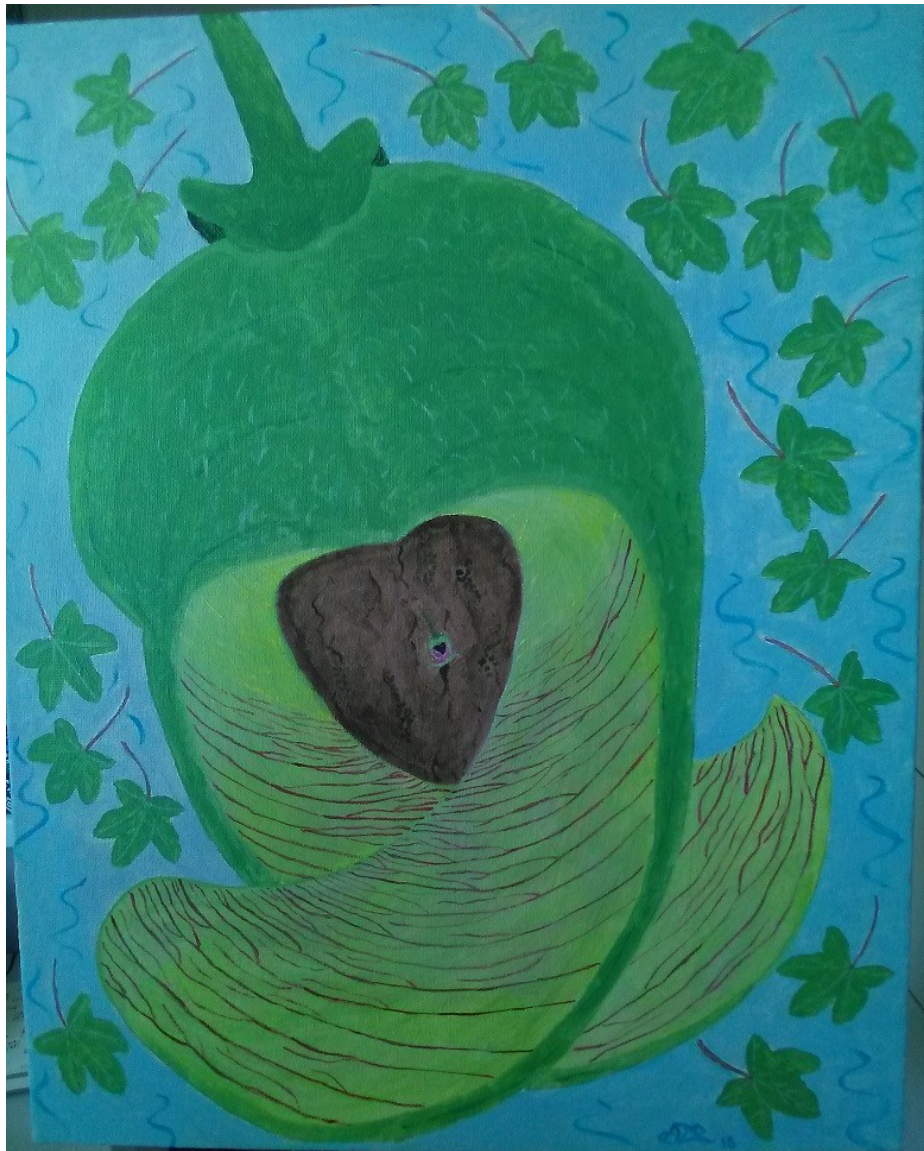
A painting recalling my childhood experience of colour, life and pattern during the dry season in Kenya.





**"PREPARING FOR TAKE-OFF"****Acrylic on Board, 2018**

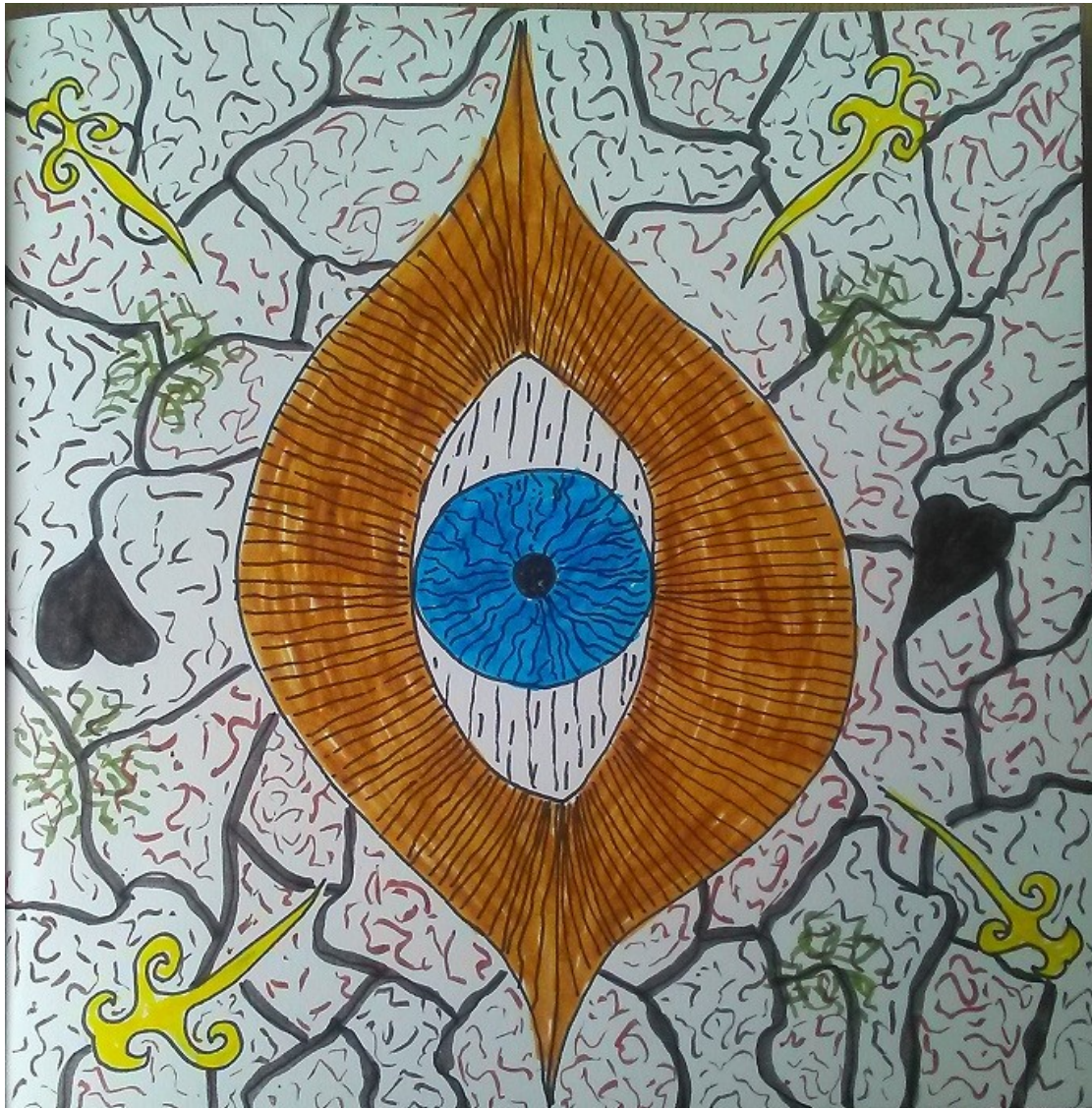
On an unseasonably windy day in June in Pembrokeshire, I found the ground beneath a sycamore tree strewn with prematurely shed samara pairs. I felt inspired by the shape these formed, with a 'cavity at heart', to paint this image.



## **"HEALING AND REVEALING/WOUNDED WARRIOR"**

**Pen, Ink and Watercolour on Paper, 2018**

I have long been fascinated by the way wounds in tree bark heal over through the production of callus. The relationship between vulnerability and recovery is of pivotal significance in our emotional lives.





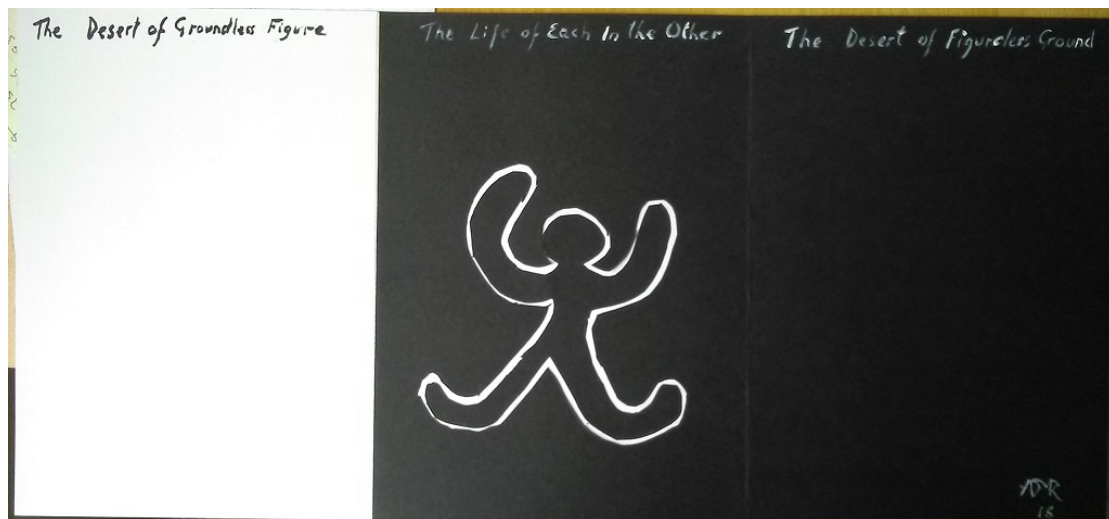
**"JOINERY: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN"****Pen, Ink and Watercolour on Paper, 2018**

A hermaphrodite flower symbolizes the natural inclusion of darkness in light as the keyhole to the flow of life at the interface between liquidity and solidity.



**"LIFE & DESERT"****Acrylic and Paper-cut in Black over White Paper, 2018**

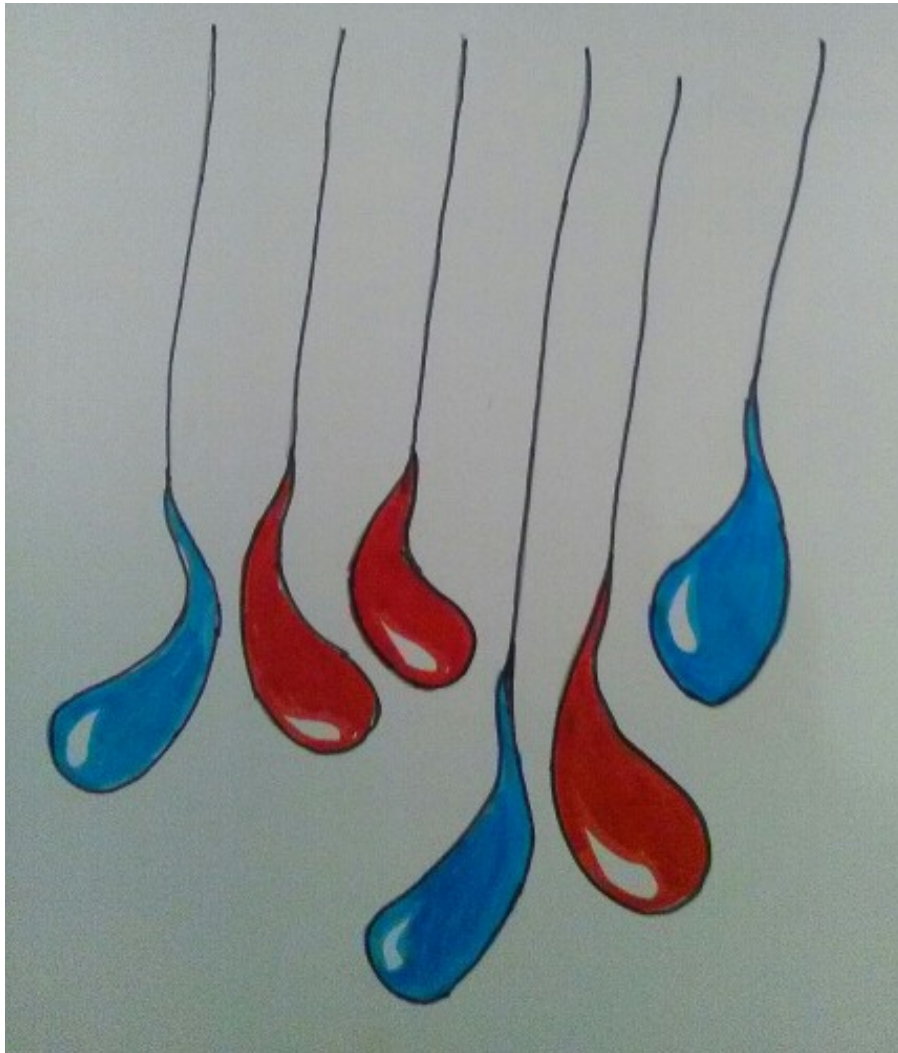
An illustration of the vitality of darkness in light in the emergence of Life.





**"SIX OF ONE, HALF A DOZEN OF THE OTHER"****Pen, Ink and Watercolour on Paper, 2018**

An ironic commentary on adversarial politics and its consequences



**"Y DO U TURN AWAY?"****Pen, Ink and Watercolour, 2018**

A commentary on the aversion of frozen from fluid geometry.

