

People and Pinewoods



A'lorg gual-fiodha / Searching for charcoal

Casting workshop 8th Sept 2024



Cast Past Present

A collaborative project by artists *Ali Berardelli* and *Richard Bracken*





Archaeology is popularly seen more as the retrieval of “museum-quality” objects than as scrutiny of place and history, yet it is also another way of reading a place: it is all about layers and sifting through the strata of time, looking for evidence of social, cultural, and ecological change, and pondering its significance for the present and future.

Lure of the Local by Art Writer, Lucy Lippard

In our project we have invited others to help us explore the Arkaig Pinewoods, the charcoal platforms of this forest as a starting point. Uncovering something of place, of what went before, some remains, some evidence, some notion of ecological and environmental change. Members of our community, spend the afternoon with us to create artworks based on natural and found objects located on four platforms within the woodland, now managed by the Woodland Trust and the local community.





The process of casting in plaster, begins with making clay moulds then by pressing into this to reveal the textures and form of the chosen items. Each one reveals more about the relationship the individual has with place, decisions become important, conscious choices regarding what to make, and how to make it.



The plaster is mixed, the quantity of powder to water important, the feeling should be of thick cream. This is poured into the mould on top of the clay. Waiting for around fifteen minutes is an opportunity to have a cup of tea and talk, and to learn and find connection to place and to each other.

The result is a collection of small square and circular sculptures, the only elements of form that Richard and I have controlled . The participants have done the rest, working towards a collective response to place, making one, then more than one, two, three, four.

Their initials mark their pieces, they generously offer them to us for our project. They will be returned to the maker in the end.



About the project

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The charcoal platforms of Arkaig Pine Forest leave a legacy across the hillside of Loch Arkaig. They are the starting point for this project exploring themes of heritage, productivity, biodiversity, culture and language. Community members, individuals and family groups, are invited to explore these themes through different creative afternoon workshops as research and contributions to a final outcome of a limited edition publication and a work in progress display at the Native Pinewood Conference in Fort William (October 2024)

Enquires to mail@aliberardelli.co.uk

hello@richardbracken.co.uk