

Daisy Dodd-Noble

Truth of the forest

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MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique is delighted to present *Truth of the forest* by British artist Daisy Dodd-Noble. Depicting trees from life with a lively surrealism, Dodd-Noble builds up layers of paints creating multiple depths of field in her expansive landscapes. In *Truth of the forest* Dodd-Noble depicts species of Costa Rican Rainforest, exploring an area of great biodiversity. Dodd-Noble studies the symbiotic relationship between plants, how they relate to their surrounding environment and the modes of connection and communication that exist between them and how this resonates through human experience of being in nature and in biodiverse forests.

At first glance we can often pick out distinct species in Dodd-Noble's paintings; standing alone it is obvious to us the similarities and differences that individual plants have to those that surround them. But as we look beyond the foreground, farther into the painting these differences fade away, as the plants merge and connect to become one hazy mass, a forest. Previously Dodd-Noble has posed questions relating to this through her painting, such as the fragmentation of ecosystems as plants are removed from their native homes and planted elsewhere, which, at one level, grows the biodiversity of an area as a whole, but on another, causes problems between individual plants. The artist often refers to the mycorrhizal network, in which trees are connected to each other by an underground fungal network through which they can collaborate and communicate, sharing resources to support the rest of their system. Dodd-Noble's paintings encourage us to ask how this mirrors human relationships and communities and what we can learn from these methods of communication, division and acceptance.

In *Truth of the forest* Dodd-Noble paints vistas of Rainforest in Costa Rica as seen from one viewing platform. Each of the three paintings focuses on a different area of the same view, replicating the artist's visual experience of the forest in our mode of viewing the exhibition; how the eye naturally fluctuates and moves, focusing in and out as we notice different details and our attention peaks and

wanes. The question of attention is pertinent to *Truth of the forest*. The philosopher Ian McGilchrist outlines an idea that we create our own reality by that which we choose to pay attention to. In today's world our attention is demanded on all fronts, the visual and literal noise of the city, a device calling to us every few minutes, technology companies that learn what grabs our attention and shows us more of it. What if we were to choose to shut this out, what can we learn by placing our attention in the natural world? Reflecting on recent discoveries in nature Dodd-Noble has realised that '*the more time I spend in nature, the closer I feel to a universal truth of the interconnectedness of all life that transcends separation. I am interested in our connection to nature as the antidote to the technological fatigue, overstimulation, division and general corruption of the mind*'.

And what is it that, once we turn our attention to it, nature can teach us, what wisdom does it hold? This is a question that has preoccupied artists, scientific researchers, writers, philosophers, and all manner of members of societies and communities over history. Certainly, there are literal truths, plants and fungi can hold the cures to diseases, and for many indigenous cultures the forest imparts wisdom through plant medicine. As climate and environmental issues loom heavier in all our lives and the acknowledgement that changes and alternative lifestyles may become inevitable, interest in what wisdom nature can impart to us has been ever-increasing. 'Ecotherapy' has started entering the mainstream. The winner of this year's Chelsea Flower Show was a garden based on the principles of the Japanese practice of 'shinrin-yoku' ('forest bathing') a preventative therapy begun in the 1980s that encouraged the multi-sensory experience of immersing oneself in nature as a way to improve physical and mental wellbeing.

However, there is a more ambiguous truth held by the forest, a sensation or energy which Dodd-Noble explores: '*there is something more intangible that we experience when looking at a tree or a flower in real life, or a piece of artwork-- it is that experience which is most interesting to me as I think it transcends*

cultural boundaries. Truth, unlike fact, is not time specific, it is communicated not only by horizontal connection but vertically through and across time and histories. For the artist: *'I have noticed lately with painting trees from life, that untouched landscapes, particularly ancient woodland and forests are more inspiring for me to draw as they feel more alive.'* This feeling harks to a school of thought led by French philosopher Henri Bergson and his concept of 'Creative Evolution', governed by the *élan vital* (vital impulse). *Élan vital* is an original common impulse born from nature, an energy that ceaselessly grows through all living things transcending boundaries through an everlasting 'simultaneity of flows' to be passed onto humans through acts of creation.

As we gaze upon the hazy canopies of the rainforest in Dodd-Noble's *Truth of the forest*, the artist impresses on us her own experience of the forest, what she learnt from it and felt within it. This does not have to be a singular auratic experience, the knowledge and sensation has been transported beyond the surrounds of the rainforest and instilled into the heart of her paintings. Dodd-Noble encourages us to reflect on the power and truth that the forest holds and to carry it with us, learning from it, resonating within us, even from the streets of Paris.

About the artist

Daisy Dodd-Noble was born in 1989 in London, UK. She lives and works in London, UK. Depicting landscapes from life with a lively surrealism, Dodd-Noble paints caricatures of the natural world: trees, plants, sunsets, hills. Exploring the larger topics of environmentalism, consciousness and our relationship to nature, her expansive scenes give way to an alternate, yet familiar, reality.

Since graduating from her MFA at the New York Academy of Arts in 2016 Dodd-Noble has featured in gallery exhibitions internationally. Recent exhibitions include: *I look at the moon like a fellow traveller*, Lamb Gallery London (2024); *Origins*, L21 Barcelona, L'Hospitalet – Barcelona, Spain (2022); *Two Sisters*, Roman Road Gallery, London, UK (2022); *When Life Doesn't Give You Lemons*, Tchotchke Gallery, New

York, US (2020); *Idle Thoughts*, Soho Revue, London, UK (2020).

Truth of the Forest at MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique will be the painter's first solo exhibition in France.

Artworks

Daisy Dodd-Noble
Costa Rica Rainforest, 2024
Oil on linen
125 × 150 cm / 49 × 59 inches

Daisy Dodd-Noble
Costa Rica Rainforest with pink sky, 2024
Oil on linen
90 × 120 cm / 35 1/2 × 47 1/4 inches

Daisy Dodd-Noble
Costa Rica Rainforest study, 2024
Oil on linen
38 × 50 cm / 14 × 50 1/8 inches