

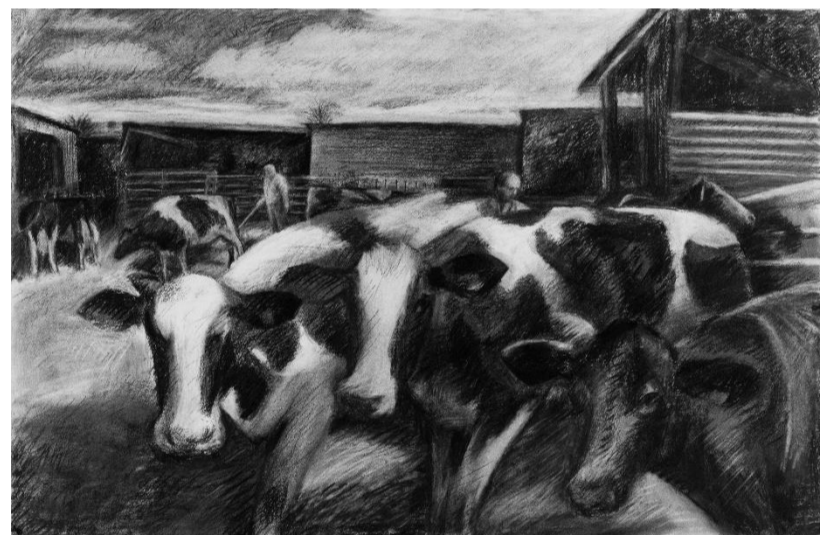
ART FOR LIFE Exhibitions

Levels Spirit

21st April 2021 – 20th July 2021

The Somerset Levels are a significant and central feature of the county's landscape. We walk and drive across them, around them, take the train through them, and paddle their waterways. Their propensity to flood is well known, as are the willow crops that are gathered there. They provide important agricultural land as well as being essential feeding grounds for resident and migratory birds. The purpose of this exhibition is to provide glimpses into this world, to show something of those who live on and from the Levels as found in the work of artists who live there, whose art is inspired by what they see around them.

Inasmuch that attempting to reflect the life on the Somerset Levels in full and comprehensive way is a challenge (due sheer enormity of the subject and the limitation of space), the scope of the artists' approaches - in painting, print, photography, use of local materials - does provide insights into a region which is not only beautiful but which has a rich history. This latter point is underlined by **Pauline Rook's** photographs which focus on well-established traditions - stripping willow (using a hand brake), salmon fishing on the River Parrett (using traps), while also revealing one of the last mobile milking bails used on the Levels. Farms and farming practice are topics also for **Kate Lynch, Joanna Briar** and **Anne Farmer**.



In the Barn, Glastonbury by Kate Lynch

The Levels landscape is eye-catching throughout the seasons, well caught in the photographs of **Don Bishop** and the paintings of **Jenny Graham, Sarah Chalmers** and **Lucy Willis**. Each artist captures the breadth and spirit of the landscape. The Levels' colours and light that infuses their images also inspire **Pennie Elfick's** paintings which, in a more pared down manner, distil the essence of her experience.

The Somerset Levels is well known for being plentiful with wildlife, especially birds which are the subject of **Sue Allen's** paintings and **Jackie Curtis's** prints. **Kate Lynch** captures the spectacular murmurations in her Westhay drawings.

In addition to the painters and printmakers, the exhibition includes glass and ceramic makers who also take inspiration from the Levels - **Will Shakspeare** and **Mary Kemberley** - while sculptor **Angela Morley** creates mystical object using (among other materials) leaves and vine tendrils. Crossing artistic boundaries is the textile artist **Pam Martin** whose finely stitched images reflect her passion for the colours and forms of this natural world.