

Creative collaboration

An exhibition combining sculpture, film and music with poetry, visual arts, dance and soundscape comes to Ilkley next week. **Yvette Huddleston** reports.

Described by its creators as an experiment in creative collaboration, the multi-layered exhibition *Dovetailing Responses*, which opens at Ilkley Manor House next week, is the second stage in a thoughtful and ambitious project.

Filmmaker Clare Dearnaley and sculptor Juliet Gutch worked with composer Sally Beamish to create *Dovetailing*, an installation that combines film, mobile sculptures, and musical composition. Exploring the connections between nature, instrument making, music and, finally, the listener, it considers how notes are 'drawn out of silence', starting with a tree.

Dovetailing was exhibited in June this year at Farfield, the 17th century Quaker Meeting House near Bolton Abbey built in 1689, the year of the Act of Toleration which granted freedom of worship to non-conformists. As a building created for quiet contemplation, it was in many ways the perfect setting for such a reflective piece.

The film – which features trees, forests, birdsong, the sound of wind, Beamish's music, close-up imagery of luthiers, as well as Gutch, working with wood, and musicians playing – was projected onto the back wall, with the mobile sculptures hanging in front. "It was only when we installed it in Farfield that we discovered that extra layer of what happens when the audience goes in," says Dearnaley. "You could see the shadows and the way the mobiles moved as people walked through. The whole project seems to be gathering momentum with the contribution of other artists."

The show in Ilkley incorporates the creative responses to the original exhibition and includes visual arts, poetry, dance, live music and interactive soundscape.



ARTWORK: One of Juliet Gutch's mobile sculptures in *Dovetailing*.

"The idea is that this is an artwork that is constantly evolving and not static," says Gutch. "It evolves and becomes different at every point. We really wanted to develop a sense of community and that goes back to the idea of a forest and how trees nurture each other and take care of each other. That is what we are trying to give a sense of." Coinciding with the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, the show also aims to highlight how careful, meaningful interactions with nature – and with each other – can bring hope for a better future. Gutch and Dearnaley have also been working with Refugee Action and with Leeds-based poet Ian Duhig. He has written a series of poems in response and will be leading a poetry workshop as part of the exhibition programme.

Like many creative projects which began life in early 2020, *Dovetailing* paused for a while as the UK went into lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic – Gutch and Dearnaley were on their way up to Glasgow to film Beamish playing her composition when they got a call to turn back – but as creative people they found a way of adapting to the new circumstances. Both are now keen to encourage more artists to respond to *Dovetailing* and add further layers to the project.

"It's about having enough of a plan so that people know what they are doing but leaving it open enough that unexpected collaborations can happen," says Gutch. "I like the idea that it can be spontaneous," adds Dearnaley. "It is about taking a risk – and that can sometimes produce something magical."

■ **Dovetailing Responses, Ilkley Manor House, November 4-7. Entry is free. For programme details visit dovetailing.co.uk**



INSTALLATION: *Dovetailing* at Farfield over the summer; filmmaker Clare Dearnaley, left and sculptor Juliet Gutch; a detail of one of Gutch's mobile sculptures.