

The Apple Tree – by Robin Duttson

There is a great deal of background information relating to The Apple Tree, and all three parties involved – Robin Duttson, TAG Fine Arts and The Curwen Studio – believe that this history is crucial to the work itself.

TAG Fine Arts first approached Robin about the project in 2010. The apple tree has a significant attachment for Robin; it was a tree that he grew up with in the garden of his parent's farm in Devon. He spent many years following its full cycle, and when his parents moved recently, Robin felt it was an important feature of his childhood that needed to be recorded. Not only has he created this amazing four-sectioned print of the tree branch (working with The Curwen Press through TAG Fine Arts); he also plans to create a full-sized sculpture of the entire tree, to the same minute level of detail.

To make up the plates from which these prints have been made, Robin hand drew 48 different separations. The stamens and pistils alone contain four different colours. Occasionally, he brought pieces of the original tree into the studio while he worked, in order to improve the accuracy of his drawings. To achieve such a high level of detail, Robin wore a head magnifying glass, and used an additional hand held glass to work on exceptionally intricate areas. For days after drawing he would be unable to drive until his eyes had readjusted. These methods allowed him to faithfully reproduce (at almost life size) the tree that harbours so many memories.

The collaborative relationship between Robin and Michael Papworth (our printer) has grown in strength over months of work. Robin spent ten days in the studio, and it took 17 full days in total to proof all four sections. Robin and Michael often stayed late, taking full advantage of their time together to figure out exactly where certain colours needed to be drawn, because of the intricacy of the colours in the leaves and flowers and particularly where the sky shows through. Mixing the inks has been a joint venture, with Robin giving precise guidance to Michael as he mixed the unique colours, before fine-tuning them with Michael's expertise, until he was completely happy with the way the colours interacted.

The Apple Tree is an edition of 45, with 15 to be sold as complete sets, and the remainder to be sold individually or in pairs.

An extraordinary amount of work has gone into this project, and its success is due to the commitment of everyone involved. It is an amazing work of dedication by all three parties to see this project through to the end, realising the potential and value of Robin's art.

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