



REBECCA JEWELL

In 2011, while working at the Sir John Cass School of Art, Rebecca Jewell had a eureka moment that changed her life. She had always been fascinated with feathers, and had spent many hours learning how to paint them faithfully. However, on this particular day, Rebecca was struck by a thought: what if, instead of painting feathers, I printed images onto them?

The insight changed everything. Rebecca developed a unique printing technique (based on paper litho transfer) that helped her create work like nothing seen before. She worked out how to reproduce the natural patterns of exotic bird feathers – and even portraits of the birds themselves - directly on to plain white feathers.

Rebecca began to make delicate and beautiful collages, artefacts and charms – all based around her enduring love for wildlife. The new approach propelled her career. She gathered many devoted new collectors, and raised her profile in the gallery world.

Although the unique feather collages have come to define her style in recent years, Rebecca has enjoyed a distinguished career as an artist for over a decade. After studying for a degree and masters in Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge University, she worked at the British Museum as a curator. But her desire to paint prompted a career change. In 1998, she left to study art full time. By 2004, she had achieved a PhD in Natural History Illustration from the Royal College of Art.

Success as an artist followed. Rebecca had work selected for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, the ING Discerning Eye, the National Open Art Competition, the National Print Biennale and the National Original Print Exhibition. Then, in a nicely circular development, she returned to the British Museum, this time as Artist in Residence.

In fact, her association with the London museum world goes back to her childhood. Her mother worked in the mammal section of the Natural History Museum for 30 years. Her father was also a zoologist. As a child Rebecca lived for a time in Nigeria, and as an adult in Papua New Guinea. She says these events gave her a lifelong fascination for wildlife.

And working in museums has given Rebecca direct access to

historical artefacts that she reimagines in her own work. She says: "I've worked with museum collections and studied social anthropology, and I wanted to combine those interests in my art. So the work I'm doing now is very much inspired by artefacts and by 18th and 19th century bird artists."

In her new show for Catto Gallery, the full range of these inspirations is on display. Wise Parliament, Gamekeeper's Mandala and Lost Meadow are 'headdress' pieces in which individual features become miniature bird portraits. The colours are exquisite. Meanwhile Forest of Birds is a fine example of a collage, and Label Aviary presents Rebecca's thoughtful twist on the idea of the bird as an exhibit behind glass.

Perhaps the most poignant piece in the show is Cape of No Hope. This magnificent cloak is ringed by feathers that display the names of extinct avian species. Indeed, the plight of bird populations is a subject that underpins all of Rebecca's work. Working with museum collections for so many years has given her a unique insight into this regrettable phenomenon. In 2012, Rebecca travelled to Malta to monitor the illegal hunting of migratory birds. As a result, she created the 'Mist Net' installations, in which she sewed printed feathers onto the same fine nets the hunters use.

Her work is now held in some important national collections including the British Museum, Natural History Museum and the National Maritime Museum.

Unsurprisingly bird lovers adore Rebecca's work and her evident commitment to conservation. They include Jonathan Franzen, author of *The Corrections*. He said: "We are in an age when bird life is dwindling. But Jewell's work points toward a happier outcome, a reconnection with the primal wonder of birds, and a recognition of how poor our world would be without the feathered Other."

About the feathers

All the feathers in these works are ethically sourced. Most of them are moulted white feathers from Rebecca's own doves. Some come from domestic goose and duck, and are sourced from UK suppliers to the millinery trade. Some of the turkey feathers come from an organic turkey farm in East Sussex. The feathers used have been cleaned and pre-frozen.



Lost Meadow, 70 x 90cm
Hand-printed feathers on archival mountboard

Rebecca Jewell 2019

CATTO GALLERY

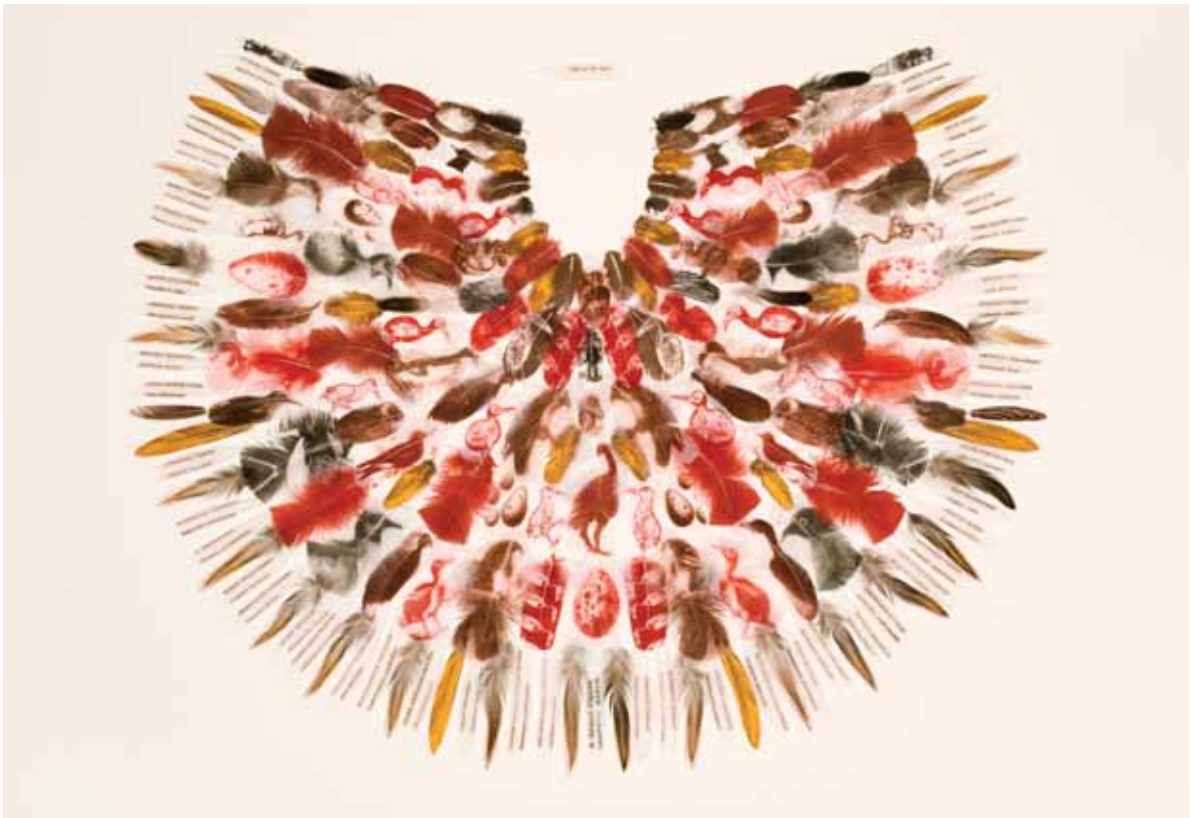
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Cloak of Many Birds, 103 x 84cm
Hand-printed feathers and gold pigment on archival mountboard



Ocean Spray, 84 x 104cm
Hand-printed feathers on archival mountboard



Cape of No Hope, 85 x 110cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Wall of Feathers, 70 x 50cm

Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



After Durer, 84 x 96cm

Hand-printed feathers on archival mountboard



Golden Eagle Wing, Right, 79 x 64.5cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard



Golden Eagle Wing, Left, 79 x 64.5cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard



Navigational Headdress, 55 x 92cm
Hand-printed feathers on archival mountboard



Label Aviary, 62 x 34cm

Antique glass dome, copper and steel tree, hand-printed labels
and hand-printed feathers, gold leaf and palladium leaf



A Charm of Hummingbirds, 61 x 70cm

Hand-printed and gilded labels and hand-printed feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Save our Songbirds, 76 x 97cm

Hand-printed and coloured feathers with hand-printed tissue on archival mountboard



Red in Beak and Claw 1, 80 x 100cm

Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Hunters, 20 x 20cm

Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard



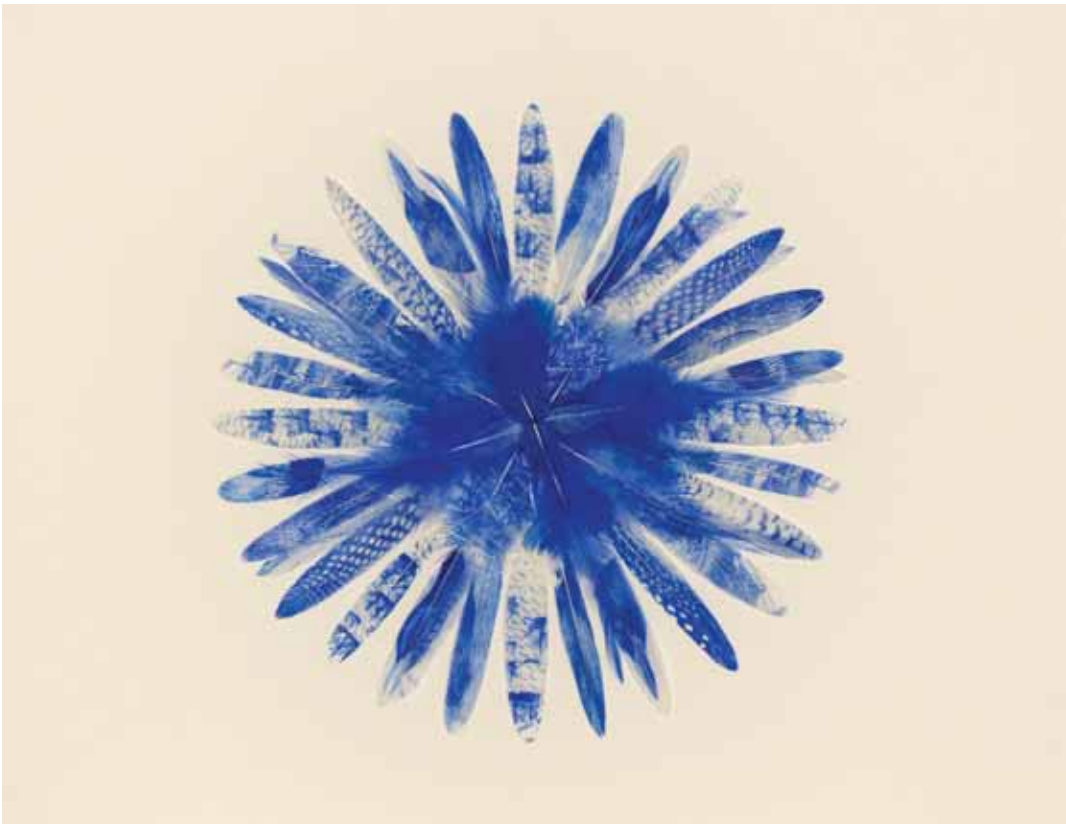
A Wise Parliament, 78 x 85cm

Hand-printed mixed feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Brown Snowy Owl, 20 x 20cm

Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Blue Mandala, 46 x 46cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard



Green Mandala, 46 x 46cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Songbird Mandala, 84 x 84cm
Hand-printed feathers on archival mountboard



Red Mandala, 46 x 46cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Bird-Catcher's Headdress, 49 x 71cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers with gold pigment on archival mountboard



Multi-Coloured Songbirds, 85 x 90cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers with hand-printed tissue on archival mountboard



Blue Songbirds, 88 x 94cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard



Seafarers, 59 x 74cm
Hand-printed and coloured feathers on archival mountboard

Back Cover: Gamekeeper's Mandala, 82.5 x 82cm, hand-printed mixed feathers and gold pigment on archival mountboard



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Opening times: 10am - 6pm Mon - Sat • 12.30pm - 6pm Sunday • and by appointment

Exhibition dates: 7th - 26th February 2019