

Press & news

Quantock Hills Arts Project - In the steps of the Romantic Poets

Date: **3rd Aug 2007**

Regions: **South West**

As an outcome of celebrations of its 50th anniversary and within the context of the work of the Arts Council England South West and the South West Protected Landscapes Forum, The Quantock Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) has received funding from Arts Council England South West, to develop a unique pilot rural arts project.

Creative practitioners will walk and experience the Quantock landscape in the steps of the Romantic Poets and at the same time engage with people both locally and regionally to help them understand and explore the Quantock Hills AONB through the arts. The aim is to help make connections between people, their environment and the heritage of this unique area.

The project organisers were delighted to receive 50 applications for this project. Four artists have been appointed and will start working on two collaborative arts project on the Quantock Hills experiencing the four seasons between September 2007 and July 2008. The project will culminate in a showcase event in the Quantock Hills AONB during August 2008.

The two collaborative arts projects are as follows:

1/ Somerset based, '4 Reel Films' run by film makers and artists Tim Fogg and Chad Williams. They intend to create a striking new piece of artistic film that will draw its inspiration from the sumptuous verse of the Romantic Poets and the vivid drama of the Quantocks Landscape. There will be a specially commissioned soundtrack and they will also incorporate dance, movement and verse - all inspired by the locations. Tim and Chad have carried out similar work for the National Trust, Dorset AONB and have also worked with a range of socially excluded social groups in the region..

2/ Artists Antony Lyons and Ralph Hoyte will collaborate on a project called 'Quantock Dreaming – Secret Mappings and Mapping Secrets in the Quantock Hills'. They will produce a body of work based on map and mapping techniques which incorporates text , poetry and sound recordings.

Antony Lyons was born in Cork and is now mainly based in Bristol. He spent most of the 1990s working as an environmental scientist for the Environment Agency in Bridgwater and the Quantock Hills were part of his remit . He is now a visual artist, designer and environmental scientist. He an impressive record of land art projects, exhibits and installations, including lead artist for NOVA's 2005/6/7 'Brunel 200' commissions for Bristol Harbour.

Ralph Hoyte brings the skills of poet, performer, wordsmith and considerable experience of innovative media projects. Also Bristol based, Ralph has international standing, and his poetry projects include working in the Mendips, Peaks National Park and Japan where he followed in the footsteps of 17thC Haiku Master, Matsuo Basho.

Your Postcard Maps: In this project there will be an underlying theme of secret and treasured places and pathways and the public will have an opportunity to participate early on in the project by sending in their own secret maps and routes of the area on postcards. These maps will influence and inspire Antony and Ralph in their own work.

Iain Porter, Development Officer for the Quantock Hills AONB says:

‘The Quantock Hills AONB was the first to be established in England in 1956. We have come a very long way since then. We are embracing this very exciting Arts in the Protected Landscape project as we hope it will considerably raise the profile of this unique area of Somerset and help people to understand and respect its fragility and beauty through the arts and be a part of our work in future.’

There will lots of things happening throughout the project and regular news updates will be issued. If you would like to find out more or get involved please email Iain Porter at quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk or call 01278 733642.

For more information about Arts in the Protected Landscape visit www.artinlandscapes.org.uk. and The Quantock Hills AONB visit www.quantockhills.com

The Quantock Hills Arts Project is funded by Arts Council England South West and managed supported by the Quantock Hills AONB. Also supported by Sedgmoor District Council and ARTlife, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council.

For further information about this news release or photo opportunities, please contact Catherine Beedell, Quantock Hills Arts Project Manager on: 01823 324506
email cbeedell@tiscali.co.uk.