

following the breath

Sam Winston

First edition of Following the
Breath with 6 unique ink
drawings and 5 artist prints.

I was commissioned by Barbican Centre London to create a work of participatory art and artist book around the theme of breathing. It uses drawing and breathing to explore the relationship between air quality, environmental issues and mindful creative practice.

I have spent several years exploring how and what London, its people and plants breathe, researching and illustrating how pollution affects our health. Using inks made from pigments collected from urban tunnels, polluted tree bark, discarded cigarette butts and other 'inhaling and exhaling materials', I created an art installation and book for the Barbican's Conservatory.

It was in collaboration with 125 school students and 47 visitors who took part in 10 workshops over a four-day residency. We had over 3,000 people see the work over the residency and 1,500 visited the exhibition afterwards. The 'drawing breath' exercise is at the start of the artist book.

The artist book was produced in an edition 18 copies with 5 artist proofs. The Essay text is by Ellen Mara De Wachter and the Ink drawings are on 230gsm Zerkall mould made printmaking paper. Each ink is made from some type or air particulates

A video about how the ink was made can be seen [here](#) (it's also available for exhibition if needed).

The artist prints are Glicee printed on 170gsm Awagami Bamboo organic paper. The original drawings were all made from foraged ink. Taking air particulates and turning them into pigment.

“Over the past decade, Winston has used the act of drawing to consider questions around foundational concepts such as time, space and distance, and to challenge some of the interpretive frameworks that humans have imposed on the world. Drawing is one aspect of a wider practice through which Winston turns his attention to topics including the structures and components of language; natural and artificial materials; human perception and physical responses; and individual and collective creativity. His aim is to unlock some of the potential latent in these vast subject areas and to foster unexpected outcomes, so often stifled by cultural reflexes or systemic imbalances. His approach might involve phases of observation or deprivation, such as when

he spends long periods of time drawing in the dark, or the attempt to repeat identical actions under different conditions. With Following the Breath, Winston invites you to breathe and draw, because he believes that

'drawing bypasses cognitive overload and lets intuition in. It teaches us how to deal with complexity without the need to control it.' ”

Text by Ellen Mara De Wachter