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Cambridge alumna launches London's first sustainable art gallery

Sanaer Madden explores environmental art at alumna Claire-Julia Hill's Gallery Les Bois



In 2024, she took this career-long passion and turned it into the launch of London's very first sustainable art gallery, Gallery Les Bois
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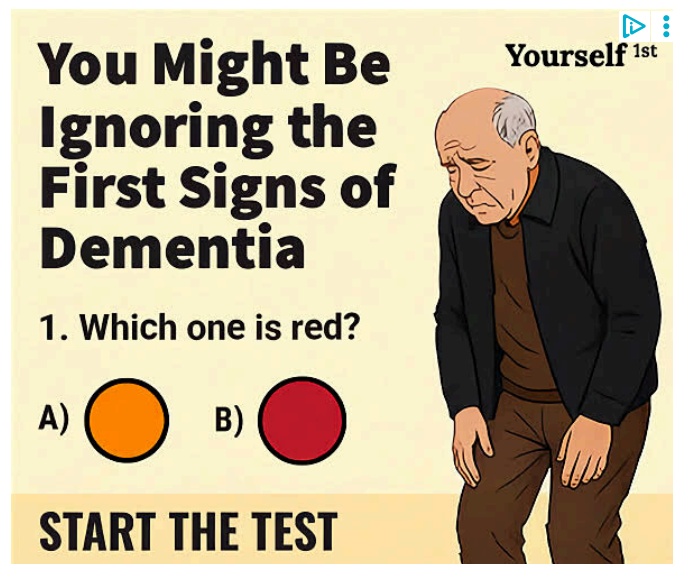
by **Sanaer Madden**

Friday September 12 2025, 4:57pm

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integrity, compassion, and commitment of sustainability advocates.

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Cambridge History of Art graduate Claire-Julia Hill's interest in ecology began at university. Hill would attend lectures in the Department of Architecture, outside of her own timetable, and hear discussions of green building, eco-criticism, and sustainability – opening up a world that the canon of Art History was not especially privy to. After graduating in 2019, Hill moved to Iceland and became fascinated with the country's instinctive and inherent strive for sustainable solutions and environmental consciousness. In 2024, she took this career-long passion and turned it into the launch of London's very first sustainable art gallery, Gallery Les Bois.

“Gallery Les Bois offers up a new lens for the gallery sphere by utilising environmental responsibility as a powerful, curatorial tool rather than an aesthetic constraint”

industrial debris or plant fibres to using pigments from polluted water sources to create ethereal, striking works. Gallery Les Bois offers up a new lens for the gallery sphere by utilising environmental responsibility as a powerful, curatorial tool rather than an aesthetic constraint. Hill's journey from Cambridge undergraduate to founder and director of her very own gallery, promoting important and interesting ideas, is inspiring; I am sure many History of Art students will feel spurred to follow in her footsteps, and make change.

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Gallery Les Bois represents a host of artists who are environmental pioneers in the art world and work hard to minimise their impact on our planet. One of these artists is Dutch-Colombian artist duo Volcan, who have recently exhibited at the 60th Venice Biennale. Volcan's ROADWORKS series are paintings which upcycle materials such as tar, paint, and urban fragments. The tension between the use of rough materials and the artist's gentle, considered placement is poignant, reflecting their artistic values. Volcan challenge overconsumption by transforming found materials into striking art works.

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1. Which one is red?



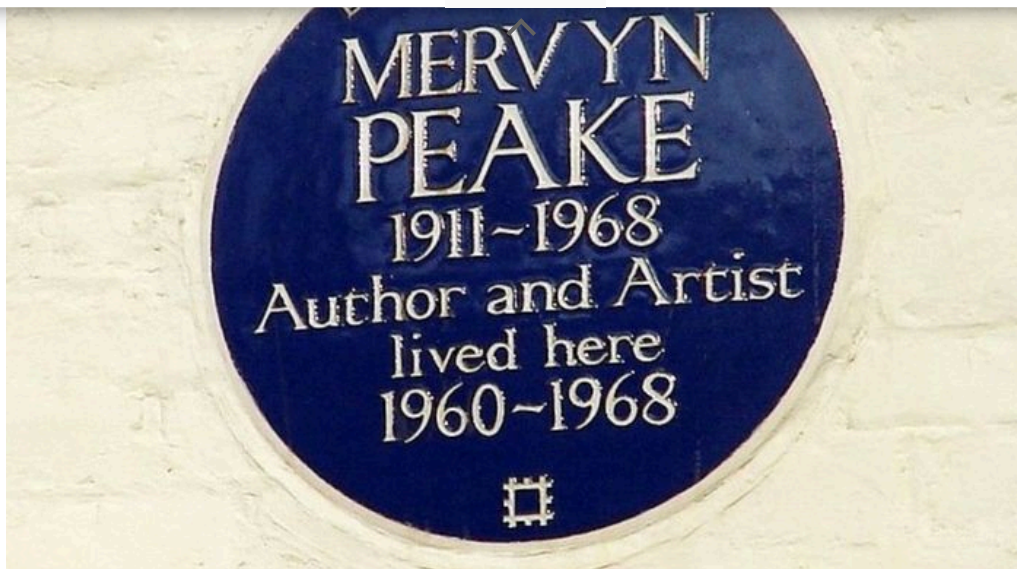
START THE TEST



Another artist from Gallery Les Bois to spotlight is John Sabraw, who marries art with science in his pioneering art collection. Sabraw's research focuses on remediating streams polluted by acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines with a team of engineers and watershed experts. In turning pollutants – such as iron oxide extracted from polluted streams – into vibrant pigments, he creates vivid, celestial paintings which are not only eye-grabbing but environmentally innovative. Sabraw's focal point of pollution tackles a significant issue within sustainability, and his professorship at Ohio University takes these problems directly to art education, encouraging others to create art with environmental optimum.

“The Cambridge Department of History of Art has inspired many alumni like Claire-Julia Hill to establish their own professional and artistic ventures, and continues to do so today”

A final artist to highlight is Dr Jasmine Pradissitto. Pradissitto is an artist, scientist, and academic who has been pioneering NOXORBTM, a newly developed ceramic material which absorbs nitrogen dioxide (NO_x) pollution from the air. Created in vastly contrasting forms, Pradissitto's NOXORBTM sculptures can be smooth, rounded, and minimalistic or sharp, intricate, and texturally complex. Pradissitto's small sculptures can clean a



The insane genius of Mervyn Peake

As a History of Art student whose personal interest in the interlink between art and ecology began simply with a lecture in my department, Gallery Les Bois has been, for me, a revelation in the art world. The Cambridge Department of History of Art has inspired many alumni like Claire-Julia Hill to establish their own professional and artistic ventures, and continues to do so today. Studying the History of Art lays the foundation for innovation and change, shaping the future of art. Sustainability is the future, and Gallery Les Bois is paving the way for art to be a significant part of this time to come.

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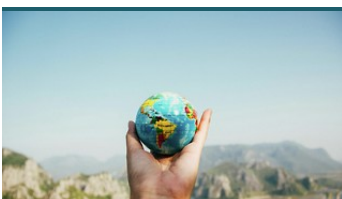
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