



An Artist's Garden

Exhibition



Artist Nabil Ali was born in the Southeast of England, of Irish, Egyptian and British-Indian descent. He was professionally trained in the Arts. In his practice, he uses methods described in medieval manuscripts and historical sources to develop experimental dyes, paints and inks. Ali's work focuses on the processes, exploring ways to produce colourants from organic materials which have been grown in his workshop garden; these he uses in a multitude of creative projects, including installations and object-art.

'An Artist's Garden' exhibition is a sample collection of images representing a handful of painters' and illuminators' recipes. Influenced by technical manuals and techniques from the past, and utilised by craftsmen and artisans down the centuries, they depict an artist's journey. It presents materials and

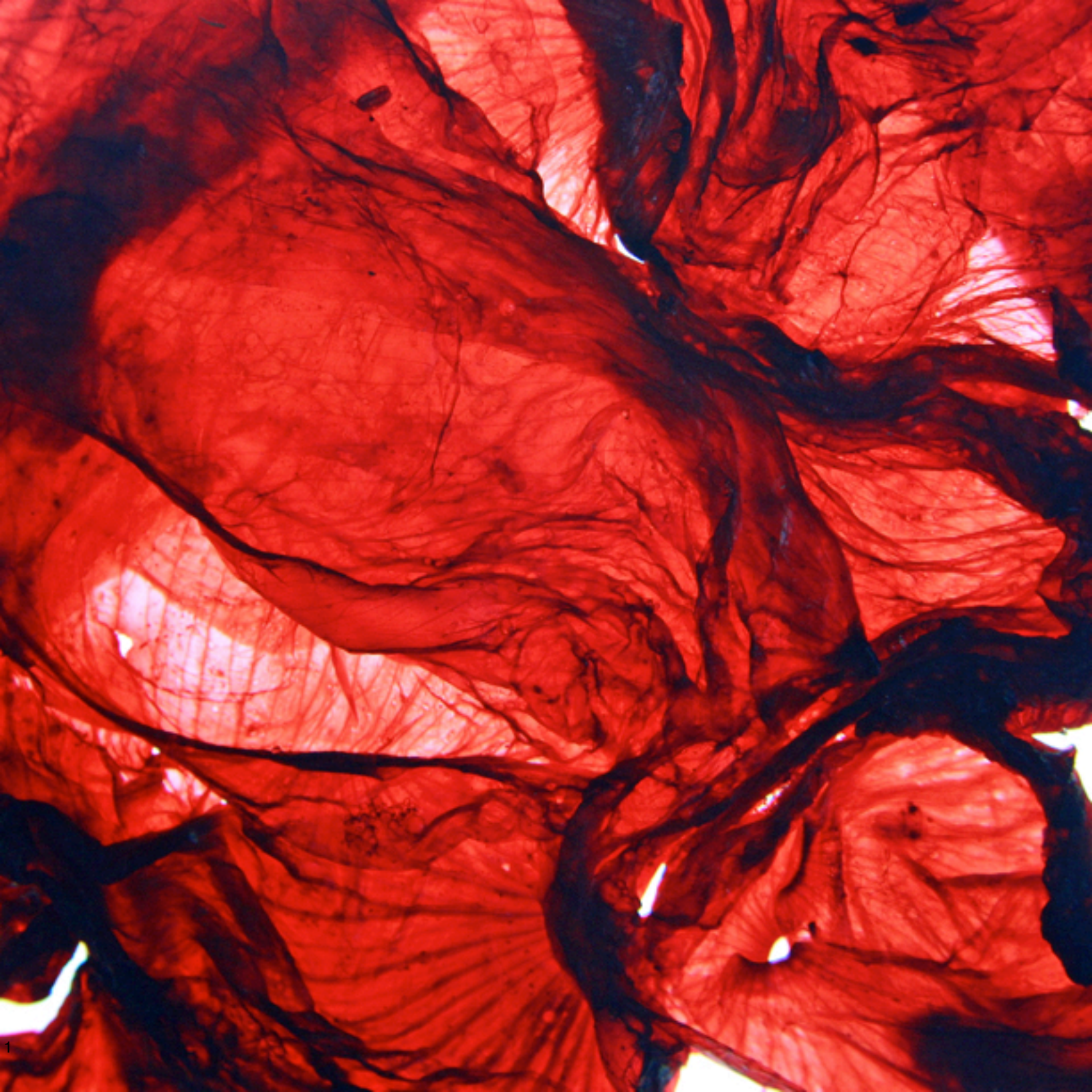
colours that have been, and continue today to be expressed in contemporary art and creativity. These images are but small glimpses of the artist's garden, moments of expressing stories of solitude and natural engagement by observing and working with the vegetation throughout the ever-changing seasons of Northern Europe.

▲ Image: *Acanthus 'V', Lisboa*

This sculpture was inspired by a 15th-century drawing of an Acanthus leaf depicted in the German Göttingen Model Book (Göttingen Musterbuch), Niedersächsische Staats und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Ms8°.Uff.51 Cim. Displaying in sculptural forms, the plant abundantly grows around the Artist's garden workshop,



▼ Image: Poppy Petals – *Papaver rhoeas*





'Blood' From The Poppy

'Blood' from the Poppy, commemorates people's ancestors across the world affected by the destructive force of the 1914–18 world conflict. It reflects the morals of war and how destructively long-lasting these actions are. The inkwell contains blood-red poppy ink made using a 14th-century ink recipe from the Latin Montpellier, University Library, Ms. H 277 and a recipe from the 15th-century German Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Ms. A.vi.19. The ink was placed inside an old inkwell and mounted on a WW1 ammunition case dated 1916.

Plant: *Papaver rhoeas*.



Buckthorn Yellow

Using unripe berries collected from the Artist's own buckthorn shrub, a yellow colourant was processed into a dye. This was mixed with chalk hand-collected from an English quarry to produce a paint.

Traditionally, the berries were made into a yellow dye (also named *Giallo Santo*), with 'azure' added to form a green dye as described in the 15th-century Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Latin 6741. ff.43-51, re-written by Jehan Le Begue; and in the Segreti per Colori, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. 2861.

Plant: *Rhamnus frangula*.



Crop of Irises

Purple dye was made using the dried iris flowers heated in alum water. When added to chalk, they form a green paint. This recipe was inspired by a 15th-century manuscript: Oxford, Pembroke College, Ms. 21, f.272r; the Latin De arte illuminandi; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II. Ms. latin XII.E.27; and the 12th-century craft treaties: De diversis artibus, London, British Library, Ms. Harley 3915, written by Theophilus.

Hundreds of irises flowers were grown in, and processes from, the Artist's workshop garden.

Plant: *Iris germanica*.



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Dyes in History and Archaeology 37th Meeting – October 2018.

An Artist residency exhibition held at Sala Estúdio, Biblioteca FCT, New University of Lisbon, Caparica, Portugal.

Photography and Artwork by Nabil Ali ©2018.

www.nabil-ali.wixsite.com/artist

▲ Image: *Weld dye – Reseda luteola*



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