

GALLOPER-SANDS

SUMMER EXHIBITIONS



Golden Sun - Standing, 2023. H610mm W450mm.

BECKY MUNTING

*The Wildfowl, Waterbird &
Wetland Residency*

GS

GALLOPER-SANDS

Fine Art & Artisan Crafts

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Introduction : *The Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency*

This new residency collaboration with Becky Munting builds upon a previous project with the artist at White House Farm called *The Rebirding Residency*. This ran for three years and recorded birdlife on the farm as we introduced a range of habitats, all of which were intended to support increased populations of wild birds in the farmed landscape.



Above : Saul Hunt Tree Surgery creating woodland glades for song birds at White House Farm in February 2020.

Interventions included : the creation of woodland clearings and wildflower-rich pastures; hedgerow restoration; the preservation of deadwood habitats in the form of standing and fallen trees; the installation of nest boxes in woodland areas and in the farmyards; the creation of grassland margins and fallow areas on arable land; and the creation of wetland scrapes and lakes in the floodplain of the Upper Alde Valley.

We use a Set of Sustainability Criteria for all management activities at White House. One of these requires continuous onsite ecological enrichment of the farmed landscape. The film producer and presenter Bruce Parry used a word for this process in the title of one of his films : '*Tawai*'. The word is borrowed from the Penan tribe in Sarawak and there is a very moving moment in the film when a Penan guide takes Parry into the jungle and explains what '*tawai*' means. It describes the forest when it is full : replete with biology and on song - truly alive and flourishing.



Above : Charlie and Jack Steed creating wildflower enriched farm parkland at White House Farm in Spring 2020.

I found this profoundly inspiring. It led to a vision or dream for White House Farm : to manage the land in such a way that the farm becomes '*tawai*' - as full as possible with biology, whilst still functioning as a home and place of work. The landscape interventions linked to the original *Rebirding Residency* have brought many positive changes. We now have flocks of goldfinches and swallows at the farm. Skylarks have returned and we have a full complement of owls. Green and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers are both common and

we also have resident raptors, including sparrow hawks, kestrels and buzzards. The farmyards, woods and hedgerows have also become home to a wonderful variety of songbirds. The soundscape of the farm has become richer and it does feel like this small patch of land in the Upper Alde Valley is becoming more *tawai*.

The eastern side of the farm lies in the floodplain of the River Alde. The meandering, slow-flowing river itself is the farm's boundary. Here, we have created a series of wetland scrapes and lakes in the floodplain in the hope of achieving two things : one is to mitigate falling levels of river water and ground water do to abstraction at Benhall Pumping Station; and the other is to create new habitats for wildfowl and waterbirds. This has worked in small ways : kingfishers already resident in the Upper Alde Valley now feed in the lakes; and we have visits from herons, common sandpipers and the occasional egret.



Above : David Rose creating wetland scrapes and new water retaining habitats in the floodplain of the River Alde.

With these initial phases of rebirding the farmed landscape at home completed, it felt both natural and important to look beyond the edges of White House Farm to much broader horizons. The patches of wetland habitat that we have created in the Upper Alde Valley are tiny compared to areas that lie downstream as the Alde is at first joined by the Fromus and the Ore, and then flows over the weir at Snape to become part of the broad estuary that runs past Aldeburgh and Orford to join the sea at Shingle Street.

Downstream of Snape, the landscape shifts from quiet inland river valleys full of pastures, ditches and aldercarr to vast areas of mudflats, saltmarshes, creeks and shingle banks that define the coastal landscape of East Suffolk and the Suffolk River Valleys. These rivers are part of a larger delta that extends southwards to include the Colne, Blackwater, Thames and Medway. Combined, they are a globally important environment for wildfowl and waterbirds. It is the birdlife in this landscape that the new *Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency* explores and celebrates, capturing birdlife on the Stour, Orwell, Deben, Alde & Ore, Blye and Waveney through Becky Munting's beautiful paintings.

Jason Gathorne-Hardy. White House Farm, Great Glemham, Suffolk. August 2023.

Artist's Statement : *The Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency*



Above : Becky Munting field trip to record birds on the banks and mudflats of Butley Creek in East Suffolk.

I am delighted to be working on *The Wildfowl, Waterbird and Wetland Residency*. As a keen walker and bird watcher, I am able to spend time in previously inaccessible areas, due to the generosity of local landowners along the River Alde and its tributaries.

Butley Creek is one of these places. It is a beautiful, tranquil location. At low tide, the river bed provides wide mud flats where a variety of birds feed, and rest. On my first visit a flock of 20 Spoonbills flew over. Oystercatchers, Cormorants, Herons, Egrets, Redshanks, Godwits, Sanderlings and a Marsh Harrier (who was ruthlessly mugged by Crows) were all feeding along with a variety of wildfowl.

To have an opportunity to highlight the beauty of these birds through my work is fantastic. But to also highlight the fragility of what is there, I feel is vitally important too.

Alarming numbers of our wading birds are now on the endangered species lists. This is due to a variety of reasons, but includes loss of habitat, changes in habitat (raising / lowering of water levels), intensification of agriculture, pollution, disease and human disturbance. The importance of undisturbed areas for ground nesting birds is vital. Areas need to be protected. For instance the Redshank population has declined by 49% from 1995 - 2020 according to the British Trust for Ornithology.

Throughout my Residency I hope to visit a number of locations along the Alde & Ore, as well as the Deben, the Stour, the Orwell, Blythe and Waveney, Snape, Shingle Street and Bawdsey. It will be interesting to see which species are present at the different habitats, and to see the migrants birds coming and going.

Becky Munting. August 2023.



Golden Sun - Herons, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H580mm W380mm

£795



Golden Sun - Standing, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H610mm W450mm

£725



Heron Study, 2023.

Oil on board
H180mm W340mm

£325



Oystercatcher, 2023.

Oil on board
H180mm W130mm

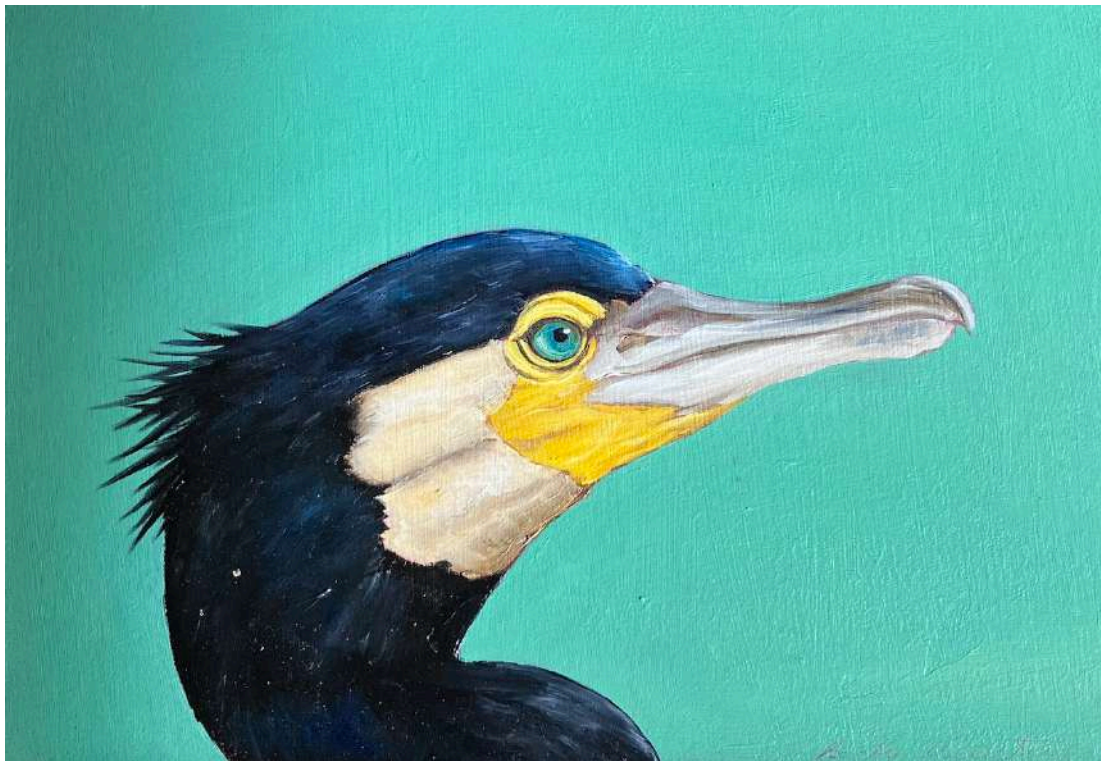
£215



Reflection : Oystercatcher, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H450mm W250mm

£645



Cormorant Study, 2023.

Oil on board

H130mm W1800mm

£195



Mallard Duckling I, 2023.

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£165

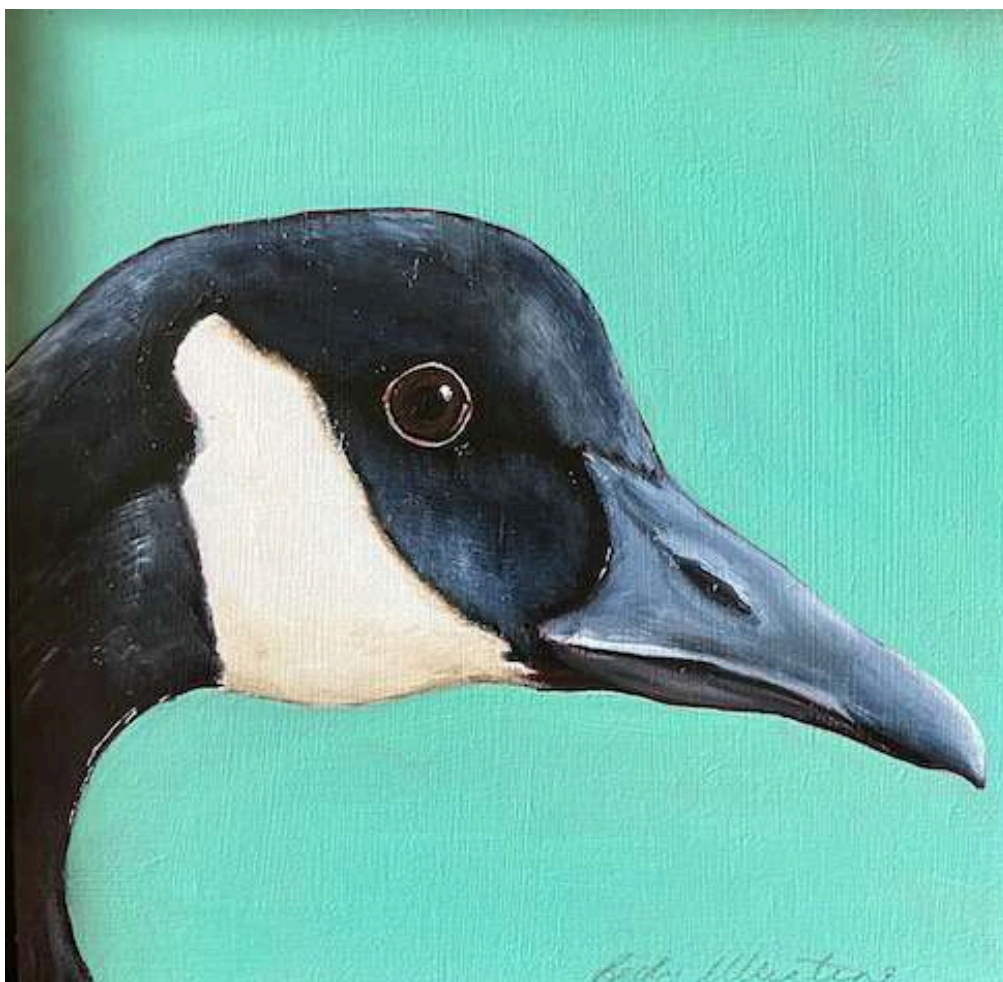


Mallard Duckling II, 2023.

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£165



Canada Goose Study, 2023.

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£165



Greylag Goose Study, 2023.

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£165



Reed Bunting, 2023.

Oil on board
H180mm W130mm

£215



Reed Bunting, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H180mm W130mm

£225



Stone Curlew Study, 2023.

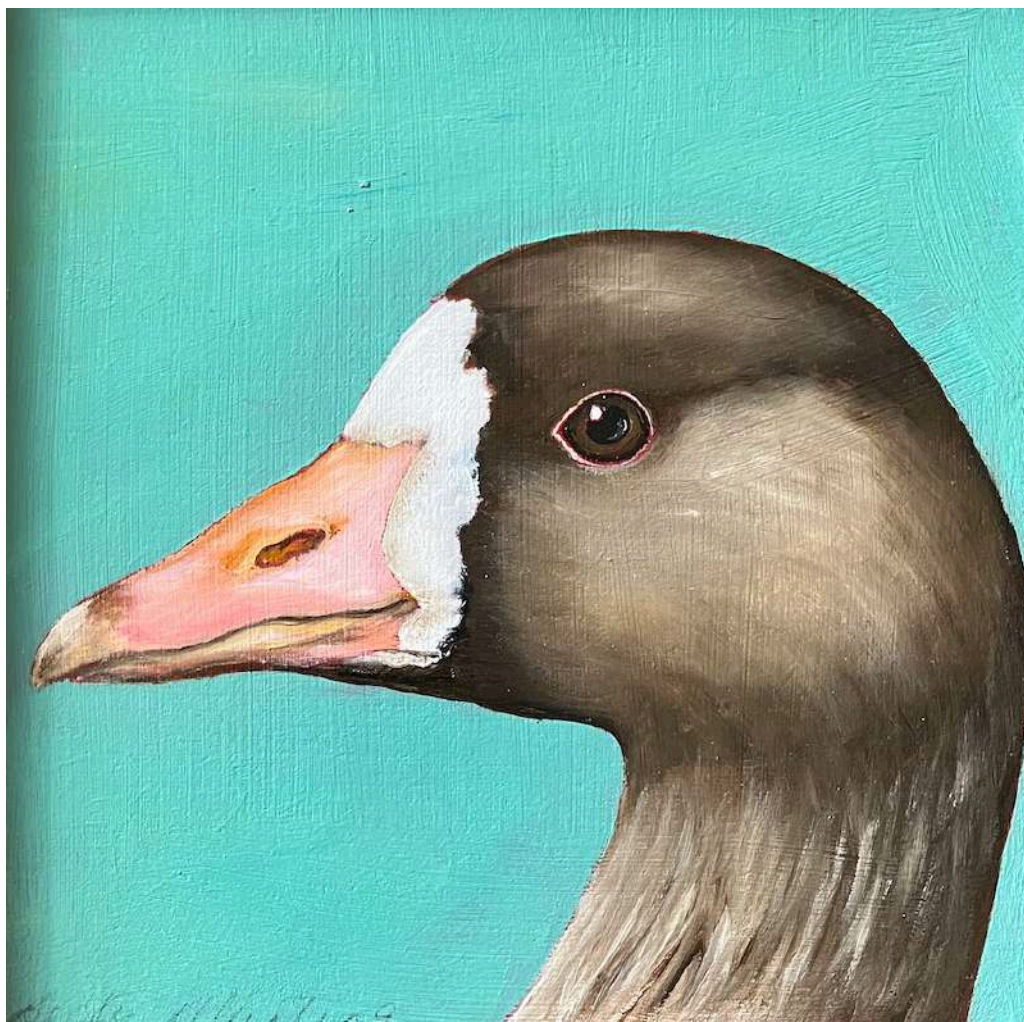
Oil on board
H120mm W120mm
£165



Barnacle Goose Study, 2023.

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£165



White Fronted Goose Study, 2023.

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm
£165



Kingfisher Study, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H180mm W130mm

£245



Curlew Study, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board
H130mm W180mm

£245



Sanderling, 2023.

Oil and gold leaf on board

H130mm W180mm

£245

Galloper-Sands is the online gallery for The Alde Valley Spring Festival Ltd

Company No 7592977 www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk

White House Farm, Great Glemham, Suffolk IP17 1LS

E enquiries@galloper-sands.co.uk T [00 44] 1728 663 531

www.galloper-sands.co.uk