

Louisa CRISPIN (1964 -)

Lichen on Hawthorn III, Sissinghurst
Graphite on Bristol paper.

185 x 285 mm. (7 1/4 x 11 1/4 in.) [image]

277 x 355 mm. (10 7/8 x 14 in.) [sheet]

Louisa Crispin notes that her interest in drawing tree branches dates from her early days as a student taking an art class at an adult education centre. As she recalls, one day her art teacher 'came in with a small branch, a twig, with lichen growing on it, and sort of almost flung it on the table and said "I think you'll like drawing this." Three hours later, I looked up, pretty well everyone else had gone home, I hadn't drunk my tea, I had just found myself absolutely absorbed in drawing that piece of wood, particularly with the lichen, and that's really what set me going. There's something about the textures, the minutiae of looking really closely at a twig, that the longer you stare at it the more you realize that there's all sorts of things going on, little dots and marks, and for me it's always about the mark-making, rarely about the colour, it's marks and tone and the intricacy of looking close in these things…I was lucky to find something that appealed to me and was the right thing for me to draw.'

Now part of the National Trust, Sissinghurst Castle Garden is one of the most famous 20th century gardens in England, with a renowned plant collection. The garden was created in the 1930s by the writer Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson at Sissinghurst Castle in the Weald of Kent.

Exhibitions
London, Society of Graphic Fine Art at the Menier Gallery, Draw 15, 2015.

Artist description:
Louisa Crispin is an artist who works almost entirely in monochrome, producing intricate and delicate studies from nature – of plants, insects and birds – drawn with very sharp pencils and graphite powder on Bristol board. As she noted in an online interview, published in 2015, 'I've always been drawn to shadows, fretwork, black and white photographs, etchings and graphite drawings so it has been lovely

to be able to produce my own. I live in the “Garden of England” and enjoy my surroundings, it seems only natural to work with nature. A chance encounter brought a small twig with tiny crab apples. I’m captivated by the way Lichen grows and enjoy searching for just the right stick, studying the detail before capturing it on beautiful smooth Strathmore Bristol Board using ultra sharp Staedtler pencils...I get totally lost in my own little world when I’m drawing, Radio 4 wittering in the background of my beautiful light and airy studio at the top of my garden.’

A winner of the PURE Arts Drawing Prize in 2013, Louisa Crispin has continued to win prizes in open exhibitions. She is a member of the United Society of Artists, Free Painters and Sculptors and the Society of Graphic Fine Art, as well as a Fellow of the Society of Botanical Artists. She was also a partner in the Artichoke Gallery in Ticehurst, Sussex, until its closure in 2019.