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# **Green Man Resurrected: An Examination of the Underlying Meanings and Messages of the Re-Emergence of the Ancient Image of the Green Man in Contemporary, Western, Visual Culture**

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***Green Man Resurrected: An Examination of the  
Underlying Meanings and Messages of the  
Re-Emergence of the Ancient Image of the Green Man  
in Contemporary, Western, Visual Culture***

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Creative Arts (MCA)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

University of the Sunshine Coast  
Maroochydore, DC, Qld, 4558 Australia

Submitted in November, 2006



## Statement of Candidate

(This declaration shall be considered with the requisite copies of the thesis submitted for examination to the Office of Learning, Teaching and Research at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Maroochydore, DC, Queensland, 4558).

I, Phyllis Araneo, being a Master of Creative Arts candidate within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of the Sunshine Coast, hereby confirm that the thesis I am submitting fully complies with Rule 8.1 of the Rules for Higher Degrees by Research, as outlined in the excerpt below:

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**Date signed:** 11 December 2006



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## Abstract

Many of us have imagined seeing the image of a face or figure in the bark of a tree, in the patterns made by the leaves and shadows, or in the form of its branches. The **Green Man** is the artistic and iconic representation of that image—a figure part human, part plant. History is filled with Green Man images, but very little has been written about the significance of the image. Whilst the figure of the Green Man has appeared, disappeared and reappeared throughout the centuries, there is evidence to show that his appearance is often linked to times of upheaval, change or environmental crisis. His emergence, however, often goes unnoticed by the population and is all too often taken for granted or simply overlooked.

The images that we interact with on a daily basis are a vehicle for the way we “see” or “view” our world and thus our perception of life. As the twenty-first century dawns, it is clear that the image of the Green Man is again reappearing in a wide range of artistic and cultural manifestations. This exegesis explores the driving force behind the current reappearance of the Green Man and examines what the figure represents to us in this age of environmental crisis. The study focuses in particular on the meanings and messages that the image conveys to contemporary Green Man artists and proposes some answers to the ancient mystery of what the Green Man tells us. In addition, the study also presents a body of creative work—a series of paintings that have been informed and inspired by the research and subsequent findings.

## Introduction: The Green Man Resurrected

The **Green Man** is an image created from a combination of elements from the vegetative realm—such as leaves or foliage—and the human form, typically the face.

The figure has appeared across many centuries and in many different cultures as an artistic and creative response to humanity's ever-changing relationship with the natural world. Although our relationship with nature is constantly changing, the ancient image has been used in varying, but recognisable forms for so long that the Green Man can clearly be identified as an archetype of our collective consciousness.

Historically, the image was carved most extensively in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, most often in cathedrals and chapels, where it was often hidden from plain sight high on pillars, arches and doorways. As a literary figure, the Green Man archetype has long been represented in our myths and stories in the guise of characters such as Robin Hood, Peter Pan, and Huckleberry Finn. In England, Green Man traditions have been preserved in the Morris Dance and numerous local fertility rites that date back to pre-Christian times. He appears in paintings and sculptures and in more recent times in films and on television. This study examines the historical occurrences of the image and looks into its popularity up to and including the present day.

As can be imagined, the Green Man delivers a very different message to our modern society than he did to the civilizations of the past. Contemporary appearances of the Green Man include the mythical *Ents*—the walking warrior trees from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*; the talking fruit and vegetable heads in the Australian Government's 2 + 5 *Healthy Eating* Campaign and the American *Jolly Green Giant* vegetable advertisements of the 1960s and 1970s (a similar character now promotes Rosemount Wines in Australia). Although different in appearance and presented in new ways and in different mediums, the image of the Green Man and the message he conveys is still as important as ever—but it is clearly very different.

To understand the contemporary meaning that the iconic image now presents requires that it be examined from within the context of several disciplines, including

environmental science, psychology, politics, religion and the visual arts. Given the nature of this study, it is natural that the major emphasis is on the work of artists, and for this reason the research includes interviews with contemporary Green Man image makers in order that common themes and patterns within their work might be identified. The study reveals that visual artists including painters, sculptors, and photographers, along with musicians, jewellers, environmental groups, historians, folklorists, theatre groups, advertising agencies, gardeners, writers, and even home-ware companies identify themselves with the image and/or the Green Man archetype and seek to proactively spread the environmental message. The image at present seems to be growing in popularity at an almost exponential rate and it is, it seems, representative of a shift in our culture's view of our relationship with the natural environment, as more and more people come to realise that western civilisation and its attendant lifestyle is rapidly becoming unsustainable.

The creative component of this research was four years in the making and represents a myriad of elements, knowledge and information gathered as a result of the research. Most importantly, the exhibition that came about at the end of the study came to reflect not only an intellectual study, but an underlying emotional response to our present day environmental crisis. Throughout the author's own work and the work of many of the artists interviewed, the Green Man image personifies the eradication of the man/nature dualism which many ecologists, scientists, artists, politicians and philosophers see as the root of our present day environmental, social and personal issues.

# Chapter 1

## 1.1. Green Man and the World Today

Many of us have imagined seeing the image of a face or figure in the bark of a tree, in the patterns made by the leaves and shadows, or in the form of its branches. The **Green Man** is the artistic and iconic representation of that image—a figure part human, part plant. As will be shown in this exegesis, the Green Man image has represented numerous things over the span of many centuries. Whilst the figure of the Green Man has appeared, disappeared and reappeared throughout the centuries, there is evidence to show that his appearance is often linked to times of upheaval, change or environmental crisis. As the twenty-first century dawns, it is clear that the image of the Green Man is beginning to reappear in a wide range of artistic and cultural manifestations. This exegesis will explore what is driving the current reappearance of Green Man and what the figure represents to us in this age of environmental crisis.

Green Man scholar, William Anderson (1990) defines the role of the Green Man in Western art and culture as:

The Green Man, as a composite of leaves and a man's head, symbolizes the union of humanity and the vegetable world. He knows and utters the secret laws of Nature. When an image of great power such as the Green Man returns as he does now in a new aspect after a long absence, the purpose of its return is not only to revive forgotten memories but to present fresh truths and emotions necessary to fulfilling the potentialities of the future. (Anderson, 1990: 14).

Anderson's assertion that the Green Man not only reminds us of our forgotten past and alerts us to the needs of the future and, that in so doing he alerts us to the laws of nature, suggests that the present re-emergence of the Green Man is very much in response to our changing relationship with nature and the natural environment.

## 1.2. Introducing the Green Man

Representations of the Green Man occur in a variety of art forms and in almost every medium. The Green Man is an easily identifiable image which can be carved in wood or stone and is found in architecture, furniture and other three dimensional objects. He is also portrayed in stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, paintings and similar two dimensional objects. He can be recognised as a face or head, part human and part plant, as shown in Figure 1.1. He is what the French refer to as *tete de feuilles* (head



**Figure 1.1. *The King of the Green Men*. Art by Brian Froud ©2006 Brian Froud, World of Froud® used by kind permission of the artist.**

of leaves) and what the Germans call *blattmaske* (leaf mask) or *blattgesicht* (<http://www.sussexcoast.co.uk/folk-lore/green-man.php> accessed 16/09/03). In Britain he was known as foliate head, grotesque or gargoyle, until the name “Green Man” was first used in 1939 by a leading British folklorist, Lady Raglan. Since then the term Green Man has become widely accepted (Wylie, 1996: 97). Raglan also drew a connection between the foliate heads in English churches and the Jack in the Green tales of English folklore (Windling, 2002). The Jack figure, like the Green Man, is associated with the new growth of spring and is a key part of traditional May Day celebrations. This theme will be explored further in section 1.3.4. The name Green

Man has been used more broadly since 1939 to not only identify the image but also to encompass a range of meanings surrounding both the imagery and the archetype.

The broader cultural significance of the Green Man image and its symbolic meaning remained largely unnoticed until the publication of Kathleen Basford's book, *The Green Man*, in 1978 (<http://boydell.co.uk/1582.HTM> accessed 16/09/03). Basford had pursued a successful career as a botanist and cytologist until the accidental sighting of a Green Man image changed the course of her life (Blacker, 1999). Although Basford identifies one characteristic common to most applications of the motif—namely his power of revival and regeneration—she also notes:

Images may pick up many different ideas during the course of time. They can evolve and diversify as they are exposed to different cultural climates and as they catch the imaginations of the particular individuals who use them. Visual images, no less than written documents can give valuable insights into the thoughts, ideas and even dreams of the people who made them. (Basford, 1978: 7).

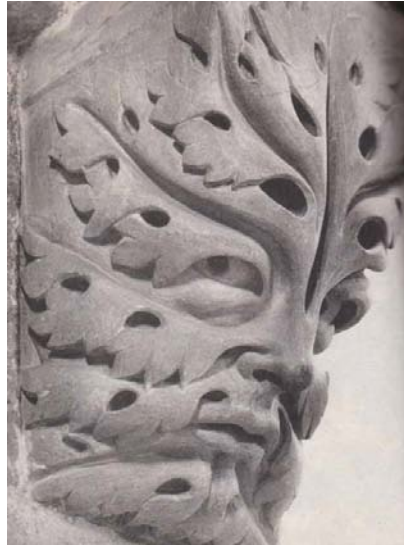
This theme of a common, underlying meaning behind the many manifestations of the Green Man will be explored in depth in both this exegesis and the accompanying creative work. In addition, other influential factors, such as the time and place of creation and the social, political and religious climates of the cultures where Green Man imagery has been predominant will be examined.

### **1.2.1. Three Forms of Green Man**

In general there are three forms of the Green Man image that can be identified in pre-Christian churches, pagan temples and graves and in the churches and cathedrals of the Renaissance period. All forms consist of at least the head of man and some form of foliage or organic material. In the first form, the foliage, leaves, vines, and other foliate representations actually form the head or hair as shown in Figure 1.2, *The Green Man of Bamberg*. This Green Man image can be found carved into a console which

supports the famous *Rider of Bamberg* sculpture in the Bamberg Cathedral, Germany (Anderson, 1990: 115). Basford (1978) considered the Bamberg mask to be the work of a master:

The magnificent...leaf mask—the most beautiful foliate head of the thirteenth century, and perhaps of all time...is a dark counterpart [to the Rider]. All the darkness and power and mystery of a vast forest seem concentrated in this majestic head of leaves. The Bamberg leaf mask is a Prince of Darkness. (Basford, 1978: 17).



**Figure 1.2. *The Green Man of Bamberg*, 1235-9. (Anderson, 1990: 114). An example of the first form of Green Man. Used by kind permission of the photographer, Clive Hicks, and HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. ©1990, Anderson & Hicks.**

In relation to this particular acanthus-leaf-masked Green Man, Anderson (1990) picks up where Basford left off, and acknowledges that the figure imparts a lasting feeling of terror on the viewer. Anderson refers to the unmasking of the Bamberg Green Man in this way:

The most you could hope for in any dealings with him is that he should be on your side...The ferocity of his expression is one of warning against neglect of Natural Law. (Anderson, 1990: 115).

Whilst Anderson's interpretation is subjective, there can be no doubt that the watchful eyes of this Green Man, and many others, carry a warning which will be investigated further in this exegesis. This research will seek to demonstrate that the theme of the Green Man as protector of the natural world is a recurrent one in the decoding of the

Green Man phenomenon. Furthermore, this exegesis will also seek to demonstrate that Green Man imagery emerges prominently in societies such as ours, when and where there is a strong change in that society's relationship with nature.

In the second form of Green Man, the leaves and branches are represented as coming out of the mouth, eyes, ears or nose of the head, as shown in Figure 1.3. The *Sutton Benger Green Man* is located in a small church in Wiltshire, England. Anderson (1990)



**Figure 1.3. *The Sutton Benger Green Man*, c. 1400. (Harding, 1998: 20). An example of the second form of Green Man. Used by kind permission of the photographer, Mike Harding and Aurum Press of London.**

argues that this carving is a perfect example of the second type of Green Man. This figure shows a thicket of Hawthorne growing out of the mouth. Symmetrical in design, this Green Man image is embellished with birds pecking at the berries in the thicket (Basford, 1978). Mike Harding, in his *A Little Book of The Green Man* (1998) publication, notes:

...the naturalism of the face [of the Sutton Benger Green Man] and the intricacy of the carving have prompted some scholars to doubt its antiquity. Yet there are many equally intricate carvings in contemporary cathedrals across Europe. (Harding, 1998: 21).

It is interesting to compare the modernity of the Sutton Benger face with that of the Bamberg carving as well as the expression on the faces. Once again, we are tempted to decode the message—this time from the Gothic period of architecture. In the Sutton



Benger example it is hard to see a warning, or a condemnation as was apparent in the Bamberg example. Anderson's view is that the Sutton Benger Green Man's message has a different meaning and intention:

...the greater the sophistication of his carving and the deeper the sense of individuality...points...to the new understanding of the relationship between man and Nature brought about by the architects and sculptors of the Gothic style. (Anderson, 1990: 121).

Given the very different ways in which the Green Man is portrayed in these two examples, it may be suggested that these images reflect differing ways that the societies felt in terms of their relationship with nature during the time of the creation of the work. The time period of the middle ages (approximately 1000AD through 1450AD), when over 9,000 parish churches, abbeys, monasteries and cathedrals were built in Europe grew out of a relief that the world had not ceased at the end of the first millennium (Cragoe, 1998). The Sutton Benger Green Man was created towards the end of this period (also known as the "disease of building") and expresses a confident and agreeable impression, reflecting a perception of society's control over nature.

The third form of the Green Man consists of at least the head of a man accompanied by fruit or flower vegetation, as shown in Figure 1.4. In this work, we see an allegorical portrait by 16th century painter, Guiseppe Arcimboldo of the artist's patron, Rudolf II, depicted as the Roman God of Metamorphoses in nature and life. The use of the fruit and flowers in the portrait symbolizes the balance between nature and harmony that the reign of Rudolf II apparently represented to the artist (Illuminations Media, 2003). Once again, we have the recurrent theme of man's relationship with nature reflected in the Green Man imagery. Many examples of this *trompe l'oeil* style can be found from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.



**Figure 1.4. *Vertumnus, Rudolf II*, by artist, Guiseppe Arcimboldo, c.1590. Oil on panel, 70.5cm x 57.5cm, Sweden. An example of the third form of Green Man. (<http://www.illumin.co.uk/svank/biog/arcio.com> accessed 01/12/03).**

### **1.2.2. A Brief History of Green Man Imagery and His Cross-Cultural Connections**

As early as 400 BC, the Green Man image can be readily identified in relation to a wide range of aesthetic, religious and social uses and activities. These include; adorning places of worship, as part of pagan customs and rituals, in reference to Egyptian Gods and as part of the May Day celebrations of the early British Isles. However, a significant flowering of Green Man imagery can be traced from the 11th Century, when carvings of the Green Man started to appear in churches and cathedrals, usually tucked away in high places, or hidden from obvious view. Hiding places such as the underside of a choir stall hinged seat (misericord) or on the back of a rood screen (a screen used to separate two parts of a church) were relatively common. (<http://www.sussexcoast.co.uk/folklore/green-man.php> accessed 16/09/03),

Anderson (1990) cites the finding of a leaf clad statue of Dionysius in Naples, Italy, dated to 420 BC, as one of the earliest ancestors of Green Man imagery. John

Matthews in his 2001 book, *The Quest for the Green Man*, agrees, finding connections between the Greed God Dionysus and the Roman God Bacchus:

In the culture of classical Greece the prime representative of the Green Man is Dionysus, a deity of nature and agriculture before his later association with wine and ecstasy. (Matthews, 2001: 32).

Both Matthews and Basford refer to a carving from a temple at Hatra, Mesopotamia, (the modern Al Hadr, Iraq) as one of the oldest surviving images of Green Man as shown in Figure 1.5. In the pagan tradition, Green Man imagery most likely



**Figure 1.5. One of the oldest examples of a Green Man carving, from a temple-palace in Al Hadr, Iraq. (Matthews 2001: 21).**

represented fertility, rebirth, renewal and rites of spring and procreation. As Christianity spread throughout Europe, there is evidence that several types of sculptural motifs and adornments were borrowed from the earlier nature religions—including the Green Man image (Basford, 1978). There is some suggestion amongst scholars that people continued to cling to beliefs founded in pagan traditions in a secretive manner, and this is why the Green Man imagery was hidden and tucked away from sight in the early places of worship (Basford, 1978; Anderson, 1990).

Matthews (2001) makes a case for the existence and importance of the Green Man archetype in virtually every culture's history. He argues that Green Man creations are a representation of each society's relationship with nature and can be found on virtually every continent in one form or another. Although Green Man imagery is less ubiquitous in the East than in Europe, his presence can be found in the Indian subcontinent as well as in Indonesia and Borneo, as illustrated in Figure 1.6.



**Figure 1.6. The face of a Green Man carved into a living banyan tree. (Matthews, 2001: 33).**

### **1.2.3. The Archetype of the Green Man**

The term “archetype” has been used extensively to describe the role of the Green Man in literature, ceremony, and in sculpture. Anderson (1990) notes that Jung’s definition of the Archetype is particularly relevant to the Green Man phenomenon:

An archetype can be thought of according to the older use of the term as one of the eternal ideas of Platonic and Neo-platonic philosophy and therefore as an ever living, vital and conscious force, or in the sense in which Jung made use of it as an image from the Collective Unconscious of humanity. According to both these theories an archetype such as the Green Man represents will recur at different places and times independently of traceable lines of transmission because it is part of the permanent possession of mankind. (Anderson, 1990: 25).

As outlined in the previous section, the Green Man phenomenon often recurs in different places and times with seemingly untraceable lines of transmission. This exegesis will argue that the Green Man phenomenon recurs in the way it does because the figure has always been (and continues to be) a major part of both our collective awareness and our deeper, unconscious mind. In addition, the inherent message conveyed by the Green Man phenomenon relates centrally to our current relationship with nature. In fact, it is Green Man's continued repetition as a theme in history that leads author, Tom Absher (1990) to claim:

The Green Man is an archetype for an androgynous, regenerative spirit connected with the earth and its vegetation about which relatively little has been written...This archetype appears again and again as a striking mandate of perfection, often utilizing the easy going laughter of regenerative naturalness...[the Green Man, also] underscores the tension between masculine and feminine ways of knowing and being - the former characterized by single-mindedness and rigid control, and the later by expansiveness and acceptance. (Absher, 1990: 6)

At this point, Absher (1990) serves well to bring gender issues to the fore in relation to the Green Man archetype. We will expand on the characterization of gender that the Green Man represents in Section 1.3, The Gender and the Sexuality of Green Man.

Absher identifies the character Enkidu, as the Green Man archetype in the ancient story *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Dating from roughly 3,000 B.C., the original story was recovered in Iraq sometime during the last century, written in cuneiform text on clay tablets. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is widely regarded as being one of the oldest works of Western Literature. The fact that archaeologists have been able to date this finding links the Green Man archetype to one of the earliest stories of the civilized world and places the Green Man phenomenon, as a part of human consciousness, from as far back as 3,000 B.C. Absher argues that the purpose of his book *Men and the Goddess: Archetypes of the Feminine in Ten Classics* is to bring to light the "waste and harm" male figures have experienced (and brought on themselves, others and the planet) by

devaluing and denying the feminine sides of their natures. He makes his case through the analysis of ten works of classical Western literature and finds.....

Throughout these great stories, we see the regenerative figure of the Green Man in one metaphoric form or another. (Absher, 1990: 5).

The Green Man figure in the stories studied can often be identified as an actual character, such as Huck Finn, in Mark Twain's 1885 classic, *the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. According to Absher, Huck and Jim (Huck's teacher) are examples of the Green Man archetype. These characters are immersed in nature and are involved in:

Recovering the lost language of intuition, feelings, and the signs of nature that are invisible to so many of us...Learning to read signs [in nature] is part of what feminine wisdom is about...Feminine wisdom is about learning to go beneath the surface of respectability and make contact with what is inside, with what is really felt deep in the heart. (Absher, 1990: 57).

Absher also analysis *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a medieval tale from the Arthurian cycle (circa 1370, author unknown). The Green Man character is here portrayed as the Green Knight, a magical, immortal figure representing life and death. He exhibits powers of regeneration and displays an allegiance to the feminine force in the story—the Goddess Morgan. The Green Knight reveals to Gawain, and to us, that being human means to be a force of nature, part of a cycle of growth, decay and regeneration. He shows us how to be human, by showing us how to learn from nature.

This exegesis will seek to take these concepts of what it means to be human and a force of nature (based on the Green Man archetype) and place this idea within the context of being an artist and individual in the twenty first century. Recognizing that Green Man is a part of our collective consciousness, the work will examine the role of the artist as creator of Green Man imagery and will attempt to identify the messages inherent in the imagery and determine to what extent they have been placed there

consciously or unconsciously. The work will do this in part by documenting how and if the message has changed throughout the course of history, based on the artist's culture and its relationship with nature. Finally, attention will be paid to the current proliferation of the Green Man phenomenon and its meanings to both the artist (as creator) and society (as spectator).

### **1.3. Gender and the Sexuality of Green Man**

Given the range of contexts in which representations of the Green Man can be found, it is clear that Green Man is an intriguing image indeed, with a history that spans many civilizations and cultures. John Matthews (2001) notes:

The story of the Green Man is one of the oldest in the world, though until the rise of civilization it had no written text, appearing instead in the forms of nature and in the many ways that human beings have found to celebrate him. (Matthews, 2001: 8).

Matthews refers to the rituals and ceremonies of the distant past that centred around an identifiable Green Man character, which was almost always male in gender. This man would be adorned with leaves, or greenery of some type would be attached to his body or head. He acted as the spirit of nature infusing his wild forest energy into the ordered everyday life of a secular city or town (Matthews, 2001). Throughout the Middle Ages, at the same time that Green Man imagery was being carved extensively in places of worship, Green Man customs sprang up as a celebration of the renewal of spring, with the Green Man acting as the personification of that procreative energy. Many variations of these rituals are still practiced today throughout Europe, under a range of names and identities, including such events as Robin Hood Games, May Day, Jack in the Green, or the King and Queen of May celebrations.

In these customs and rituals, as in the imagery previously discussed, the emphasis has been on the Green Man as a male archetypal figure, an archetype which exists in our

subconscious minds as surely as it exists in some of our most treasured architecture. The Green Man archetype is a phenomenon that stretches across geographical boundaries, time and, as this exegesis will show, gender. As with many archetypes, just when we think we understand them, they change. The Green Man morphs and changes constantly—confusing us like Peter Pan (also known as a personality of the Green Man)—flitting from here to there, amusing us with his presence, but almost always, it seems, appearing as a male figure.

Although, many explanations for this have been put forth, the main argument is based on the fact that most of the stonemasons and sculptors producing Green Man work until recent years were men, as were the architects and commissioners of the major architectural projects in which Green Man carvings, sculptures and imagery can be found (Cragoe, 1998). An examination of Appendix One of this exegesis shows a correlation between the rise in Green Man imagery and the development of patriarchal rule. With that said, there are several points that must be made pertaining to the gender and sexuality of the Green Man, before we can embark on identifying any significant patriarchal connection with his appearances. The first point is that on many occasions, the Green Man is depicted along with a female consort. This entity can be identified as a mermaid, *Sheela Na Gig* or *Gaia*. When she so appears, she has been recognized as an energy force equal to the Green Man himself.

### 1.3.1. Mermaids



**Figure 1.7. Children's book illustration designed after heraldic emblems of the Middle Ages. (Haley, 1980: IBC). Used by kind permission of the artist, Gail E. Haley.**



In heraldic emblems, the Green Man is often depicted as being accompanied by mermaids, as shown in Figure 1.7 (Haley, 1979). This pairing is a visual representation of the uniting of the earthbound Green Man archetype with the water based mermaid archetype. Importantly, the creators of the imagery often connect the male and female figures through the use of foliage, thus visually depicting the interconnectedness of the sexes. Taking this image a step further, the intertwining of a female and male figure in the emblem to depict the connectedness of earth and water, symbolises much of what ecology and science tells us about the interdependence of all living things.

### 1.3.2. Sheela-na-Gig



**Figure 1.8. An example of a Sheela-na-Gig (c. 1649) sculpted above a wall door, located in Moate, County Westmeath, Ireland. (Goode, 2000).**

Figure 1.8, *Sheela-na-Gig* is an example of a widely found female image which appeared in parallel with the rise in popularity of the Green Man, from about 1080 onwards (Anderson, 1990: 65). She is commonly depicted as a naked woman who displays her genitalia quite openly and is often represented as giving birth to a spray of vegetation. As with the female Yoni figures of India, it was considered good luck to lick ones fingers and rub them over Sheela-na-gig's vulva (Windling, 2002: 8). Whilst many of these figures still remain, many were destroyed during the rise of Christianity and later church renovations. The figure was also used to adorn secular buildings and

public spaces (mostly in Ireland) as a symbol of good fortune, as Theatana (1998) explains:

The reason for the adoption of Sheelas on secular buildings has been attributed to the Irish seeing them as a protective force, as noted by nineteenth-century researchers who were told by local Irish people that Sheelas were intended to ward off evil. The term “Sheela-na-Gig” is said to have been adopted by folklorists as simply the common Irish Gaelic expression for an immodest woman. The Australian slang usage of the term Sheila seems to also support this meaning, as their white population began as a British prison colony, perhaps the word was imported with Irish prisoners. (Theatana, 1998).

It is interesting to note that like the Green Man archetype, the Mermaid and Sheela-na-Gig archetypes also seem to stretch across the boundaries of place and time. As well, the Great Mother Earth archetype, *Gaia*, is presently receiving renewed interest in a range of contemporary cultural imagery.

### **1.3.3. Gaia**

Another popular female image found throughout history alongside the Green Man is Gaia, the Greek term for Mother Earth (Dossey, 2001). Author and physician Larry Dossey identifies Gaia as the giver of new life, rising from the earth. Anderson (1990) also notes that the Great Mother Earth Goddess has returned bearing the ancient name, Gaia. He cites James Lovelock’s 1960 Gaia hypothesis, introducing the concept of the Biosphere, the present day expansion of the study of ecology, and the work of many twentieth century artists as indicative of a re-emergence of the Great Mother/Green Man pattern.

There is a link between the Great Goddess and the Green Man...whenever she appears, he is likely to follow...He can be seen as the child of Gaia by the sun...he is the living face of the earth; and he has to utter. (Anderson, 1990: 156).

Green Man’s contemporary “utterances” can be heard loud and clear as we witness his many and varied re-emergences in our present society. Examples of this can be seen in paintings by contemporary visual artists, such as Alex Grey. In a painting entitled *Gaia*, (1989, oil on linen) Grey incorporates the Gaia character into a tree, combining

elements of the Green Man and Mother Earth together. The artist states that the image for the painting came to him in a vision:

Gaia was the tree of life or web of life with her root in the subatomic, atomic, molecular, and cellular levels of matter...Gaia's body was being ravaged and destroyed by man, reflecting the present crisis in the environment. (Grey, 1990: 84).

The work seems to reinforce the message associated with Green Man/Mother Earth in relation to the devastation of the natural world as a consequence of our industrial, technical, consumerist, and economic progression as a society. Interestingly, incorporated into the work, can also be found concepts presented in Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, according to which:

Earth's living matter, air, oceans, and land surface forming a complex system can be seen as a single organism and which has the capacity to keep our planet a fit place for life. (Anderson, 1990: 155).

Grey's work could be interpreted not only a personification of Gaia, but as a model of the complex system of the entire natural world, and the struggle for a healthy balance between humankind and the environment. In Grey's depiction, Gaia's face carries a very different expression to the warning or protective glare of the face on *the Green Man of Bamberg*, (Figure 1.2). Green Man/Gaia's face in Grey's work, seems to be pleading, hurting and/or crying out for help, understanding and harmony. Many of the regenerative qualities of the older Green Man imagery, specifically the healthy acanthus leaf and other foliate images that make up the mask, are absent from this contemporary work. Instead it appears that Gaia and the natural world are caught in a struggle between health and disease, or harmony and disaster.

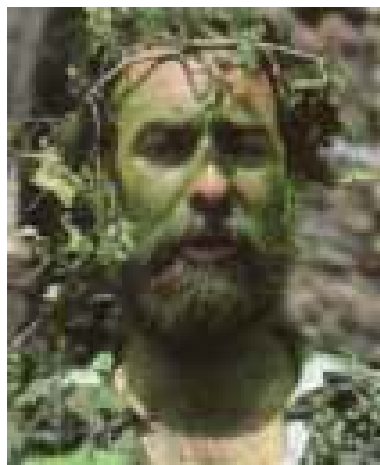
Another hypothesis that makes a connection between the Green Man and Gaia, comes from historian and folklorist Thomas Bracwell, who contends that the Green Man represents the male side of nature from whom come the seeds, whilst Gaia (Mother Earth/Mother Nature) is the female, who accepts or plants his seeds. (Bracwell,

2002). Furthering the argument of Anderson and author and physician Larry Dossey, Bracewell also notes that the Green Man/Gaia imagery often re-emerges during times of stress in societies, thereby acting as a warden of nature. This exegesis will show that the stressor responsible for the re-emergence of Green Man images and archetypes in contemporary society, is environmental. The Green Man is back and he certainly is uttering.

Greenman and Gaia act as a focus, a reminder for us to reinitiate our connection with the natural cycles of which we are part...[they] illustrate the irrepressible nature of life and show the unity that exists, or used to exist, between human-kind and the world of nature, the once secret governing laws of Nature, fertility, and the wild though uncategorisable symmetry that is inherent in Nature. (Bracewell, 2002).

#### **1.3.4. Consorts**

The next point pertaining to the Green Man's sex and gender is that in many rituals, customs and ceremonies surrounding the male Green Man character-personified, there is usually a strong female counterpart or consort present. For the purpose of this exegesis, these rituals, customs and ceremonies will be referred to as *Green Ceremonies*. This blanket term incorporates Robin Hood Games, May Day Celebrations, Jack in the Green, King and Queen of May celebrations and other rites of spring ceremonies, including present day Mummer rituals, as shown in Figure 1.9.



**Figure 1.9. Green Man personified by a modern Mummer at the Green Man festival held every year at Hastings, England. (Matthews, 2001: 66).**

Since the Middle Ages these Green Ceremonies have been held throughout Europe in many forms, guises and traditions. Matthews (2001) makes a connection between the artistic representations of Green Man and the cultural, changing interpretations of the tradition:

Just as the introduction of the foliate heads into the gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages represented the entrance into Christian architraves of the old pagan archetype of the Green Man as the spirit of nature, so these games represented the entrance of his wild forest energy into the ordered realm of the secular city. (Matthews, 2001: 68).

Matthews has further expanded his interpretation of the Green Man presence, and created a four-part seasonal (winter to summer) and directional (cardinal points) glyph, (Figure 1.10) that corresponds to four Green Man and Green Woman folkloric partnerships that have survived through the ages. Matthews describes the diagram in the following terms:

Each figure stands for an aspect of a particular season and direction, and each one presents a test or trial. (Matthews, 2001: 134).

These trials consist of lessons learned by the archetypal figures which have become part of the collective subconscious mind. For instance, East/Spring, names Robin Hood and Maid Marian as the Green Man and Green Woman. Robin, a wild man of the



**Figure 1.10. Matthews' directional glyph, illustrating partnership of the Green Man and the Green Woman. (Matthews, 2001: 137).**

wood, is a master at using the longbow, who must battle to win the hand of Marion. Robin's test is that of learning to aim the bow and arrow, metaphorically aiming his spiritual intent with discipline and insight. Matthews states:

Without this inner direction (intent coupled with discipline and insight) we can never proceed toward a proper understanding of our place in the greater scheme of things. (Matthews, 2001: 135).

Matthew's definition of Robin's inner direction being associated with discipline and insight contains a poignant message for today's artists who are concerned with creating art that is about our relationship with nature, as is the Green Man imagery and the Green Ceremonies. The idea of creating with intent and purpose will be dealt with in the analysis of the creative portion of this exegesis.

Maid Marion (also sometimes known as the May Queen to Robin Hood's King of the Wood) exudes gentleness, gaiety and fun. Concepts associated with her archetype include the ideal of true love and utter selflessness. Marion brings a powerful feminine energy that matches equally the energy of Robin (Matthews, 2001). It is important to note that according to what we understand to be original folklore, Marion's energy and presence absolutely matched Robin's and her lessons were equally important. It is unfortunate that during the course of patriarchal rule leading to our current civilization, the feminine half of these archetypal partnerships, have been neglected or completely omitted. In regards to where our civilization stands now environmentally, it will serve us well to ask ourselves; is this the fate of nature herself, if we as a society continue down the path we are on without the inclusion and consultation of our feminine nature in relation to our industrial and technological progress? Another way to put the question is because we as a society have been neglecting to consider nature and the consequences to her during our progression, will she be completely omitted or destroyed? It is this type of questioning that Dossey agrees, needs to be explored in

order to develop a *Green Consciousness* so that we may live in harmony with the earth. Dossey defines Green Consciousness as the fundamental psycho-spiritual connections we share with the plant world. (Dossey, 2001).

#### **1.3.4. Ceremonies**

The fact that so many Green Ceremonies have survived the passage of time since the Middle Ages through to the present indicates the fundamental importance of the message the archetypes of Green Man and Green Woman convey. They remind us that the fertility and renewal of man and earth are inseparable, and warn us of the disastrous consequences should our abuse and pollution of the earth continue unchecked. These are the same messages that our present day Green Parties and Greenpeace organizations are concerned with as well. For example, the Greenpeace International website defines the organization's ecological and social role as follows:

Greenpeace is the leading independent campaigning organization that uses non-violent direct action and creative communication to expose global environmental problems and to promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future. As a global organisation, Greenpeace focuses on the most crucial worldwide threats to our planet's biodiversity and environment. ([http://www.greenpeace.org/international\\_en/aboutus](http://www.greenpeace.org/international_en/aboutus) accessed 14 February 2004).

It is clear that in interpreting many Green Ceremonies we can identify a balance of gender as a key part of the ritual of honouring the balance of nature. This balance raises certain questions about the gender and sexuality of the Green Man that must be kept in mind when examining representations of the Green Man figure. When the Green Man is found alone and without a female partner, we need to remember that he, the male gendered, representative head, is surrounded, engulfed, or actually made of foliage. Foliage, greenery, vegetation and plant life in general are considered to be highly representational of nature. When considering our western language, we notice that nature is referred to in the feminine gender; eg. *Mother Nature*. Therefore, we can

assume that the Green Man image within itself, even when he is not accompanied by a consort, may represent aspects of our feminine nature, as well as representing the more obvious masculine attributes. The issue of gender and gender balance arises several times within the context of this exegesis and plays a key role in the outcomes of the work.

In concluding this section on the Gender and Sexuality of the Green Man, the author feels it is important for the reader, male or female, to acknowledge, recognise and understand the idea of a balance of gender within themselves. With this balance in mind, the Green Man can be thought to represent a Green Androgyny. Interestingly, the colour green could be considered androgenous as well, since it falls in the centre of the colour spectrum with red, representing extreme yang, and violet, representing extreme yin, at opposing ends (Kryder, 1994). Kryder's identification of the Eastern gender-based balancing forces of nature—yin and yang—alongside colour values places the colour green in a neutral, centre or as the analogy suggests, an androgenous position.

In this way, the Green Man encompasses both the male and the female sides of all of our individual natures. As the Green Man intertwines and transcends gender, he can be likened to a neutral spokesperson. Most importantly we see the shape of a head, so that he can have a mouth and in particular a voice. Through his voice we hear an ancient echo telling us of our oneness with her, nature (Anderson, 1990). We can view the masculine side as a messenger; whilst perceiving the feminine side as the message. The Green Man image today represents the conflict between human progress and the state of the natural world, and not a debate between genders. This exegesis examines the Green Man as a point of entry for an analysis of the thoughts and actions of a civilization as it ponder the wonders of nature and future of the world.



#### 1.4. The Green Man Returns

Green Man is with us here and now. Typing Green Man into a World Wide Web based search engine will generate over five million returns (Sept. 26th, 2003 using Google: <http://www.Google.com>). Figure 1.11 shows an example of the metamorphosis of the



**Figure 1.11.** A present day siting of a Green Man image used in a Rosemount Wine bus advertisement at Sunshine Coast Airport, Maroochydore, QLD. (photograph by author, 2002).

image to suit the needs of an advertising campaign. Here the Green Man is growing out of the grapes, whilst foliage and fruit adorn his head. Figure 1.12 illustrates how



**Figure 1.12.** A Botanics of California poster depicting a Green Woman. (US direct mail campaign, 1999. Author's collection).

women are frequently used in contemporary Green Man imagery to sell product. The copy on this poster reads; *Fine skin care products made from natural essences we grow ourselves*. Advertisers know consumers trust products made from natural ingredients.

Thinking back to their childhood, many readers from a North American background may remember the *Jolly Green Giant*, shown in Figure 1.13. Also a relatively contemporary reincarnation of the Green Man, the character extolled the virtues of eating vegetables. Again, we will note, the connection of things green with a healthy state of mind and body. The Green Man has also appeared in contemporary film. In the movie, *Lord of the Rings*, (2002) the Green Man has many incarnations, most notably as the long living tree men known as the *Tree Ents*, shown in Figure 1.14. It was the Green Man, having had enough of the destruction of the natural world, who impelled the trees to take action in the age old struggle of good over evil.



**Figure 1.13. *The Jolly Green Giant*, an advertising poster from the canned vegetable company Pillsbury, used in the late 20th century. (Matthews, 1990: 132). “GREEN GIANT is a registered trademark of General Mills and is used with permission.”**



**Figure 1.14.** Image of *Wrath of the Ents* based on the *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. By artist Ted Nasmith. (<http://www.tednasmith.com> accessed 07/04/2010). Used by kind permission of the artist.

In Figure 1.15 we see a mass-produced, contemporary garden ornament which borrows elements of Green Man imagery and places a child's face in the centre. In this sample of a modern day Green Man it's the face that draws us in. What could be more appealing to place in your garden than a cherub faced Green Man?



**Figure 1.15.** A garden ornament from a 1997 Lillian Vernon mail order catalogue. (Author's collection).

Research has been done that raises interest about Green Man imagery based on the recognition factor of the face. Academic and folklore expert, J. Harte observes:

We enjoy recognising faces. Because we [humans] uniquely, are able to modify our environment in order to make life more pleasant for us than it would be in nature, we have carved the columns and cloisters and pews and poppyheads of mediaeval cathedrals with little heads, half-hidden in greenery...So it seems that Green Man, the face recognised in the leaves, is not an arbitrary notion by mediaeval artists but corresponds instead to something fundamental in human nature. (Harte, 2001: 5).

Harte's observation is not unlike those of Anderson or Absher pertaining to the Green Man as an archetype, however he does describe the phenomenon in different terms. In particular, Harte's explanation deals with the concept of facial recognition. In *The Eye of the Beholder*, (2003) psychologists Bruce and Young identify the human fascination with face perception as an area of study in itself. This research will take the Green Man phenomenon further into the realm of facial cognition when analysis of Green Man imagery's visual conventions are dealt with more thoroughly in later chapters.

In a similar approach to that of Matthews, Harte sees the Green Man as an example of how similar archaeological findings appearing on separate continents may represent the same idea occurring in two separate cultures at the same time. Harte's findings enlist archaeologists into the growing list of observers of the phenomenon worldwide. We can also add psychologists to the list, as psychologist Kathleen Jenks (1998) states:

The Green Man is that spirit, energy, *presence*, inherent in every cell of the vegetative realm, and transmitted to the animal/human realms through the foods we eat, the flowers we smell, the trees we hug. He is Pan. He is what Dylan Thomas calls: "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower that drives my green age". (Jenks, 1998).

In addition to the foods we eat, the flowers we smell, and the trees we hug, isn't Green Man also the air we breathe? Trees and plant life in general are a source of the oxygen we need for our every breath. Therefore, it can be argued that the foliage entering and

exiting the mouth, eyes, ears and nose of Green Man is symbolic of the very air we breathe in and out every minute of every day on Earth. As well, are we also not listening to and learning from Green Man in our daily routines when we read a newspaper, pick up a book, or look at a photograph? After all, it is the tree that has laid down its life to provide us with a seemingly unending supply of paper to support our need to communicate with each other. To take the phenomenon a step further, and enter into the subconscious mind of modern humans, is not Green Man the seed that has culminated in our present day answer to the environmental crisis—in the form of such movements as GreenPeace and the Green Party?

Reid, in her paper *In Quest of Scotland's Green Man* (1998) sums up the present re-emergence of the Green Man in Western culture as follows:

Green Man is back! His long wait over. Here in response to our fears for the safety of our planet as we approach the third millennium, he's now being seen as a vital image for our time, and his recent adoption as the symbol for an Environmental Group may well be his most important mission ever. For who better that this ancient spirit of vegetation, who has watched over us for more than two thousand years, to remind us that the fertility and renewal of man and earth are inseparable, and warn of the disastrous consequences should our abuse and pollution of the earth continue unchecked. (Reid, 1998).

It is clear that Green Man Imagery has been and continues to be a visual response to our relationship to nature. In this exegesis, the author will probe the reasons behind why Green Man imagery is back today in such a noticeable way. This will be achieved through interviews with contemporary artists dealing specifically with the Green Man phenomenon and through the use of a pre-determined list of questions, the answers to which will be compiled and presented in Chapter Three.

The work will also show how new, postmodern genres of art have evolved to aid in Green Man's cause of highlighting the importance of our relationship with nature. These environmental and eco-art movements involve an engagement with nature that goes beyond representation to an active participation with the living cycles of nature.

These movements embody a broader concept of art in its relationship to nature, one which is informed but not limited by science, history and critical discourse.

### **1.5. The Creative Work**

The creative component of this dissertation will involve painting, the author's chosen art form for over thirty years. In particular, original Green Man imagery will be created beginning with a unique adaptation of the traditional artform of the mandala. A mandala, the Sanskrit word for circle, can be thought of as a visual representation of a mantra or sacred sound. For centuries, Buddhists have used mandalas as an aid to their meditations. Mandalas have also supported meditations, rituals and ceremonies in other cultures, such as the Navaho, an indigenous North American Indian culture. Given the inherently sacred nature of the Mandala as an image, their symmetrical appearance and their use of symbolic and repeating patterns, making the association with Green Man imagery (which also displays many of these visual conventions, in both sculpture and two dimensional form) seems entirely natural.

The author's imagery will expand in order to incorporate the Green Man's message and meaning as the research and development of the project unfolds. In choosing to begin with the structure of the ancient mandala, the author aims to combine the traditional messages about our relationship with nature, with the power of this visual meditation tool. Thus, it is hoped, the painted forms may serve as meditational supports for the inner mental process of assimilating the Green Man message. These works will be presented over a period of several weeks in a public exhibition and will be accompanied by explanatory didactic panels displayed alongside the paintings in the gallery space. Throughout the course of this exhibition feedback will be sought, through the use of written comments, in order to determine the extent that the work in fact assists the audience in understanding or assimilating the Green Man message. This feedback will, naturally, inform the conclusion of the exegesis and provide a focus

for further research and creative output.

Thus, through the visual journey of the painted forms, this exegesis will attempt to show the viewer how our inner direction can and has created our outer world. Just as Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis emphasizes that the macrocosm of all life reflects the microcosm of the smallest organism, the paintings will attempt to illustrate the interconnectedness of all life forms to our Mother Earth.

### **1.6. Aims, Objectives and Methodology**

As discussed previously, it is clear that the Green Man archetype is a part of our collective consciousness. Throughout the course of history he has appeared, disappeared and reappeared in one form or another, continually dancing around the periphery of human consciousness through expression in our visual and literary arts. It seems the current rise in the popularity of Green Man, as well as the eco-art movement and the presence of the multitudes of "green" groups, is directly related to Western Society's interpretation of our environmental crisis. Overall this exegesis aims to explore the message(s) inherent in the Green Man imagery being produced today, as well as the messages of the eco-art movement and green groups—and to present these messages in a body of creative work that will present the message in a contemporary way to Western Society—beginning with the ancient meditative mandala.

Specifically this research aims to:

- Identify the message that Eco-artists creating Green Man imagery (and possibly other groups) seek to convey at this time in our Western Civilization;
- Identify why these contemporary image-makers and groups feel this to be important at this time in terms of our relationship with the environment;
- Examine what methods these artists and activists are using to convey these

messages;

- Explore the traditional method of creating meditative mandalas and contemporary applications of the genre;
- Correlate and combine both message and method into a body of creative work that combines and pushes the boundaries of both painting and the message of Green Man imagery, Eco-artists, and Environmentalists;
- Present the creative work to the public and those members of society who are in a position to put into action the basic concepts of the message.

This involves:

- Researching the work of Green Man and Eco-artists and representatives from various Green Groups in order to identify their intentions;
- Documenting findings and identifying common themes;
- Interviewing contemporary Green Man artists and probing the psychological applications of their work in greater depth;
- Identifying visual conventions that have been used in Green Man imagery in the past and correlating to contemporary Green Man image making;
- Creating and exhibiting a series of Green Man themed works;
- Documenting the results of the exhibition based on viewers' interpretations.

### **1.7. Organization of the Exegesis**

Chapter One, the Literature Review, provides the reader with an overview of Green Man art throughout history and examines in depth the phenomenon of the current resurgence of interest in the Green Man. Appendix One, a fold-out timeline, provides a graphical interpretation of Green Man history, highlighting the key “appearances”, and should be viewed in conjunction with this Chapter. Chapter Two considers the meaning of the Green Man archetype as it relates to recent developments in the environmental sciences, psychology, religion, politics and contemporary visual art. Chapter Three explores the current re-emergence of interest in the Green Man from a creative



perspective and introduces the work and philosophies of various Eco-artists and environmental movements, along with the work of the Green Man artists that participated in this study. The interview questions and answers are presented in Chapter Three as well as a discussion and analysis of the artists' responses.

Chapter Four presents the author's creative work, her inspiration and process work. As well, Chapter Four analyses and explains the creative process and finished artwork on a work-by-work basis, following the sequence in which the work was presented in the exhibition. Chapter Five provides a summary of the research outcomes and suggests further directions for future research. Finally, the Appendices present the interview questionnaire, a transcript of the opening speech, Didactic panels and newspaper coverage associated with the exhibition.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1. Archetypal and Twenty First Century Green Man

In the previous Chapter, we have seen how the Green Man image can be perceived as a recurrent visual phenomenon in Western art practice, appearing and disappearing with consistent regularity across numerous time periods, cultures and geographic locations. In particular, it is argued there is strong evidence to suggest that the appearance of the Green Man in Western and European art is often associated with times of crisis or significant change, as can be seen in Appendix One, which illustrates some of the more significant recurrences of the Green Man phenomenon and places them within the broader historical context.

In this exegesis, the author contends that the Green Man image is so much a part of the collective consciousness of Western civilisation that the continual manifestation of the character can be viewed as being essentially the expression of a fundamental archetype. Kryder (1994) notes that the Green Man fully conforms to Jung's two part definition of an archetype—in that he is primarily an inherited mental image that has the effect of creating a deeply individual response throughout the course of a person's life and, that his continual resurgence in myths, legends and artworks throughout history is so regular and recognisable as to appear almost preordained. Indeed, the more one looks into the Green Man character and the more complex his persona appears superficially, the more recognisable it in fact becomes. As demonstrated in Chapter One, the Green Man's incarnation in such forms as *The Guardian*, (Figure 1.2.); *The Messenger*, (Figure 1.3.); *The God of Metamorphosis*, (Figure 1.4.); *The Trickster*, (for example J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*); *The God of Regeneration*, (Figure 1.13.) and *The Hero*, (Figure 1.14.) can all be readily identified as expressions of a common archetype.

As we attempt to examine the role and meaning Green Man brings to the modern world, it is important to develop an understanding of how an archetypal presence helps shape our existing reality. Kryder (1994) argues that an archetype carries empowering qualities for all individuals:

Archetypes are universal “first types”, primary patterns that reach across the boundaries of specific application. The invisible archetype is the source of the visible type. (Kryder, 1994: 14).

According to Kryder, identifying with mythological archetypes through the use of stories and associated art forms enables an individual to fulfil his or her destiny by allowing them to shape their lives using the archetypal character as a template for reality. She states:

The great mytholog[ies] and art of the world reconnect us to the source of the archetypal realm...the emanations that come into the everyday world through sacred art, rite, myth, music, poetry, dance, and architecture transmit the patterns and essences of the archetypal... As we respond to the sacred, either through epiphanies or through nature herself, we begin to awaken our own imaginal faculty. Nothing less than the awakening of the imaginal will redeem the de-sacralization of our world. (Kryder, 1994: 16).

Kryder argues here that our access to the transformative influence of the archetype, through a direct connection with nature itself, is indeed both a “sacred” process and a “sacred” outcome. Referring to this process as ‘the awakening of the imaginal’, she argues that the absence of, or loss of connection with, the subconscious is at the root of the de-sacralization of our connection to the world and, possibly one of the causes of our present environmental crisis. Kryder’s belief that a person’s holistic development requires specific identification with an archetype and/or a strong connection with nature, positions the Green Man image—an established archetype totally representative of our connection to nature—as a powerful element essential to both the physical and psychological well-being of contemporary society.

As noted in Chapter One, there is currently a widespread and highly visible resurgence of interest in the Green Man phenomenon occurring throughout the entire world—an

interest no longer confined mainly to the West—and no longer just amongst artists, writers and other creative types. Given that manifestations of the Green Man archetype take on such a diversity of forms and that the creation of Green Man imagery has long been (and continues to be) an instinctive expression of our relationship with nature, it is necessary to ask a number of questions if we are to explore the resurgence of the Green Man in greater depth and to place it within some meaningful context. For example, what are some of the guises in which the archetype is presently being represented? What message or messages does the image bring with it today? Where and how do representations of the Green Man fit into life in the new century and what gender (if any at all) may they be taking on? The following chapters of this exegesis and the creative work associated with the research all attempt to answer many of these questions and, hopefully, cast some new light on the ever-changing relationship between people, nature and the environment.

**2.2. Green Man’s Increasing Familiarity—the Conservator Emerges**

The rising interest in the Green Man phenomenon during the past few years is illustrated in Table 2.1, which summarises the number of results returned by the author’s preferred search engine (*Google*) during the period September 2003 to March 2006.

Date	Search Engine	Number of Results
September 2003	<i>Google</i>	5,000,000
August 24, 2004	<i>Google</i>	9,140,000
December 1, 2004	<i>Google</i>	18,200,000
May 17, 2005	<i>Google</i>	56,900,000
March 7, 2006	<i>Google</i>	141,000,000

**Table 2.1. Green Man returns through the *Google Search Engine*. (Author, 2006).**

Multiple factors, in particular the increased use of the Internet in general and the

increasing efficiency of search engines as time passes, may be responsible for the increase in numbers shown in Table 2.1, but even so, the rise in curiosity about the Green Man is highly apparent. Numerous individuals, groups and organizations are beginning to express interest in or embrace the Green Man image, as the archetype takes on its new role in the emerging century. What this role will be in the long term remains to be seen, although it is the author's contention that one of the key functions is a repeat of what has happened in the past—reminding humanity of its symbiotic connection with the earth and nature—and awakening society to the need of maintaining environmental equilibrium at a time of great crisis.

The search results reveal more than just the sheer number of queries about the Green Man that are being made. They tell us, for example, that visual artists (including painters, sculptors, photographers) as well as musicians, jewellers, environmental groups, historians, folklorists, theatre groups, advertising agencies, engravers, gardeners, conservation groups, writers and even home-ware and furnishing companies (to name just a few) all identify with or seek to identify themselves with the Green Man image and/or the Green Man archetype. The returns also suggest that there is an ever-growing number of individuals, groups, organizations and even commercial enterprises that are looking for greater meaning in our relationship with life and nature—meaning that goes well beyond the short-term exploitation of the planet for material gain. Whilst there is a significant amount of commercial and marketing hyperbole evident throughout the searches—as well as noticeable “new age” sentimentality, it is clear that the return of the archetype is a reflection of a deeper desire to regain a sense of balance and harmony. The increasing popularity of the Green Man image at the present moment is highly suggestive of a key shift in the ordinary person's view of the natural environment, especially since more and more people are coming to realise that many of the lifestyles encouraged by the modern, affluent economy are increasingly unsustainable. Figure 2.1 shows a sample of return on a typical search of the Green Man theme undertaken by the author in mid 2006. As

part of her research into how the Green Man is perceived amongst contemporary

### [At the Edge: The Green Man - Variations on a Theme](#)

Dr MacDermott's research follows **the Green Man** back from the previous ...  
'**The Green Man**', a name coined by Lady Raglan in 1939, is a mediaeval image ...

[www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/greenmen.htm](http://www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/greenmen.htm) - 18k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [The Mystery of the Green Man](#)

Mike Harding's quest for **the Green Man**, from the UK and Europe to India.  
Includes a bibliography.

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[Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [The Green Man - 01](#)

The Mystery of **the Green Man**. The Face in the Leaves ... He is **the Green Man**, Jack in the Green, the Old Man of the Woods, Green George and many other ...

[www.mikeharding.co.uk/greenman/green1.html](http://www.mikeharding.co.uk/greenman/green1.html) - 4k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)  
[ [More results from www.mikeharding.co.uk](#) ]

### [Myth\\*ing Links / Common Themes East & West: The Green Man](#)

[Added 22 October 2003]:This is "The Search for **the Green Man**," a lovely series of pages on England's Green Men in Canterbury, Kent, and Devon by Nigel ...

[www.mythinglinks.org/ct~greenmen.html](http://www.mythinglinks.org/ct~greenmen.html) - 35k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Who Is the Green Man? by Daniel C. Noel, Ph.D.](#)

Whatever he was called back then, starting as recently as 1939 he has been known by an evocative name: **The Green Man**. It was in 1939 that a noblewoman and ...

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**The Green Man Festival**.

[www.thegreenmanfestival.co.uk/](http://www.thegreenmanfestival.co.uk/) - 2k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [The Green Man](#)

**The Green Man** public house situated on the green in Horsted Keynes, Sussex, United Kingdom. Come and enjoy a warm and friendly atmosphere with good food and ...

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### [Green Man - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

"**The Green Man**" is also a popular name for British public houses and various ... **The Green Man** motif has many different faces and variations. ...

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_man) - 42k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Green Man Review](#)

This review of music and literature existed as a print-based newsletter for well over 25 years before...

[www.greenmanreview.com/](http://www.greenmanreview.com/) - 2k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [The Green Man Review](#)

We have the review indexes down as they need a major overhaul. Use the search engine to find what you want. (We moved servers a year ago. ...

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[ [More results from www.greenmanreview.com](#) ]

### [The Green Man](#)

Greenman- a traditional sculptural form, the foliate face.

[www.stonecarver.com/greenman.html](http://www.stonecarver.com/greenman.html) - 11k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Figure 2.1. A sample of returns from the *Google Search Engine* made by the Author in mid 2006. The returns illustrate the diversity of interest in the Green Man phenomenon.

artists and designers working with the theme as a key part of their creative practice, the author interviewed a cross section of people working in a full-time professional capacity both in Australia and overseas. On the basis of these interviews (outlined in greater detail in Chapter Three), it has become the contention of the author that the most predominant guise in which the Green Man has appeared in the past few years is that of the *Conservator* archetype—a persona through which we are warned of our increasing disconnection with *Gaia* (both in the sense of the ancient Greek concept of *Mother Earth* and in the Biospheric context proposed in the late 1970s by James Lovelock in the first edition of his book *Gaia, A New Look at Life on Earth*)—and thus of the dire consequences of that disconnection for both the individual (humanity) and for the whole (the planet). It is the Green Man's recent re-emergence from within the human subconscious in the role of Conservator that suggests to the author that the almost universal resurgence of interest in the Green Man archetype represents an urgent warning as to the probable outcome of our increasingly unsustainable lifestyle.

Interestingly, as well as referring to the more conventional understanding of the term Conservator as one who conserves and protects things of value—such as artworks or the natural environment—the term also has a specific legal definition in that it refers to a guardian or protector appointed by a court to manage the affairs of an individual incapable of managing his or her own affairs. On a more positive note however, it is the author's belief that the present personification of the archetype in the role of Conservator may be interpreted as a messenger of hope, a figure that urges responsible stewardship of the planet and the need to take responsibility for guiding all of humanity towards the creation of a holistic and sustainable environmental equilibrium.

### 2.3. *Gaia* and Whole Systems Thinking

Chapter One introduced an overview of the *Gaia* hypothesis as proposed by James Lovelock (2000), through which the actions of the micro (*i.e.*, a single life or single event) come to influence the status of the macro system (*i.e.*, planetary events or functions) and *vice versa*. As a logical outcome of this complex interconnectivity (sometimes referred to as the “web of life”) it is argued by Lovelock that every event occurring within the planetary environment will impact in some way on the system in its entirety. However, the *Gaia* hypothesis is neither new nor unique in analysing living or functioning systems in terms of the whole rather than in terms of the individual components. The Buddhist principle of Dependent Origination, *Pratitya-samutpada*, which describes the interdependent and complex web of cause and effect to which all living beings are subject can be traced back over two thousand years, whilst *Systems Thinking* as an analytical tool for investigating business and social systems became particularly popular in the mid to late 1980s, in part as a response to the classical reductionist view popularised by Descartes almost 400 years previously. As explained by Nicholas (2004), *Systems Thinking* can be described as a critical and analytical strategy that considers the functioning of any given system in any given situation in its entirety rather than through an analysis of its individual parts. This strategy provides users with the ability to take an apparently confused, chaotic situation and perceive a degree of order and interrelationship by focussing on the bigger picture, rather than on the details. (Nicholas, 2004: 51).

In considering Green Man in the role of Conservator, it is relatively easy to interpret the present day incarnation of the archetype as being that of custodian of the *Gaia* system, seeking to maintain the equilibrium of not only the environment, but of the individual as well. However, if we broaden our interpretation to consider the Green Man from the perspective of *Systems Thinking*, a system perhaps more familiar to those of a business or scientific bent, the Conservator archetype again informs us that if an



individual part is dysfunctional, then the whole system is potentially at risk. No matter which interpretation, the message remains the same. By empowering the individual to take on a proactive role in the bigger picture, it seems that once again the archetype has changed and adapted to suit the times—in particular to keep the message accessible to those divorced from the natural environment by their contemporary lifestyle. There is clearly a need for balance.

Even given the diversification of the Green Man's message reminding us of what Anderson (1990) calls "our oneness with the earth," Kryder (1994) seeks to remind us that it is our on-going and fundamental disconnection with nature and/or the archetypal realm that brings about an imbalance or state of dysfunction within the individual:

All addictions, phobias, and attachments can be seen as misdirected longings for the ecstasy attainable through the theophanic [visible manifestation of God or Divinity] vision of the archetypal realm. (Kryder, 1994: 16). [Author's insertion]

Arguing that many of the ills endemic in contemporary society are due to the loss of divinity within the individual, Kryder suggests that it is through the effective use of the creative process inherent in everyone that we can find an outcome conducive to reconnecting with the divine. Furthermore, it is the very process of mental creativity and its physical expression (in whatever form) which in itself brings about a state of equilibrium or balance. For example, consider the predicament of the artist, who, when faced with the dilemma of a "creative block" or lack of inspiration, resorts to unhealthy addictions or habits. Contemporary North American Green Man artist, Fred Tomaselli, suffered from such creative blocks and a lack of direction in his work:

His record collection was a plummet into addiction. He'd boarded a carousel of infinite un-satisfaction. (Lethem, 2004: 69).

For many years before becoming a successful artist, Tomaselli dabbled in drugs (Lethem, 2004: 73) and was an avid collector of everything from sea-shells to popular

music—describing his passion for collecting as not merely an addiction, but an insatiable compulsion. In recent years Tomaselli has redirected this compulsion into a more creative direction and now uses many of these collected items, along with photography, prescription drugs, natural objects and paint, in his highly individual collage-based style. For example, in Figure 2.1, Tomaselli uses the head of a man as the centre focal point of the piece, surrounded by streams of natural and manufactured items from his collection, to produce what can be seen as a modern day Green Man image. Through the production of complex works such as this, Tomaselli has established a personal degree of balance and fulfilment in his life that sustains him in a positive manner. In terms of the whole systems thinking strategy suggested by the Conservator, Tomaselli's work is refocussed—contributing to the solution, instead of being part of the original problem.



**Figure 2.2.** *Breathing Head*, 2002, by Fred Tomaselli. Leaves, photocollage, acrylic, gouache and resin on wood panel. 152.4cm x 152.4cm. (Letham, 2004).

## 2.4. A Profound Shift Towards a Green Consciousness

A similar approach to Kryder's theory—that self-healing may be achieved, or at least enhanced through interaction with nature—is propounded by a number of natural therapy groups, as well as established scientists and philosophers. An example of the alternative therapies approach is the *Natural Systems Thinking Process* (NSTP), an applied Eco-psychology philosophy and lifestyle option taught by the Institute of Global Education, based in Washington State, USA (Figure 2.3.).

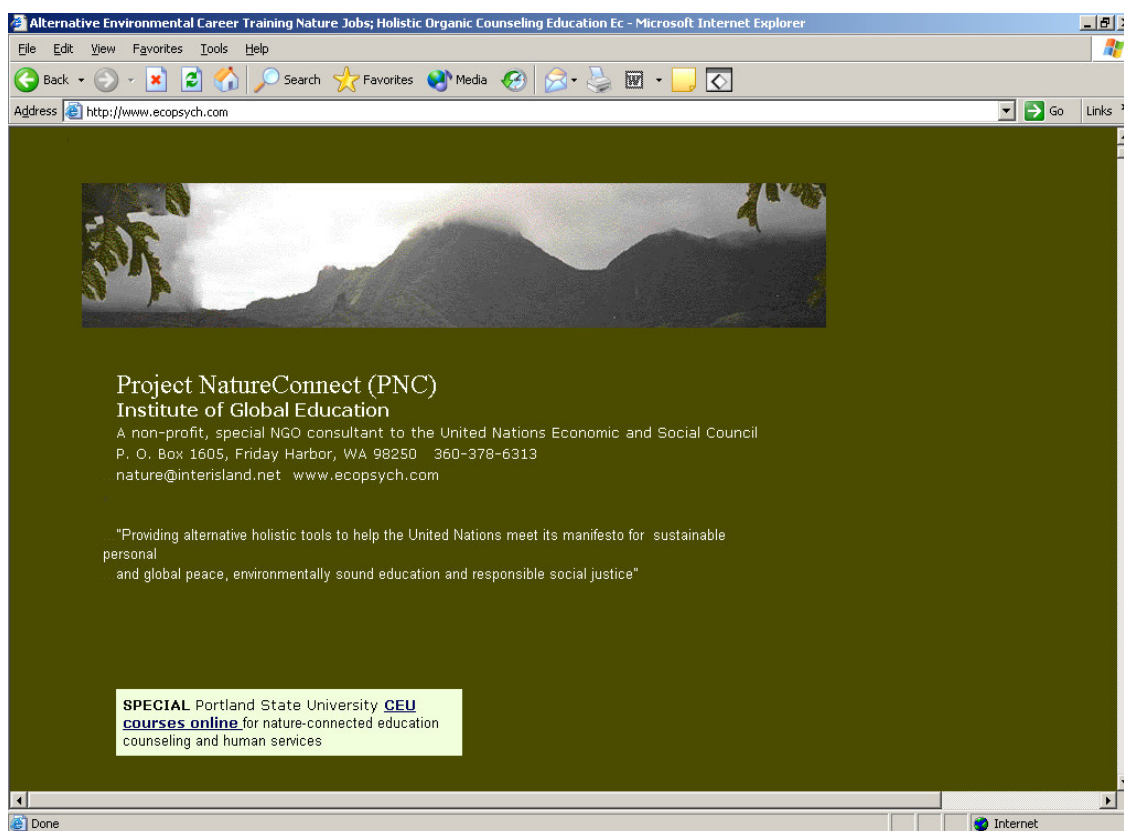


Figure 2.3. Home page image from the Institute of Global Education's website. (<http://www.ecopsych.com> accessed 04/11/04).

As with many other lifestyle philosophies, *Natural Systems Thinking* seeks to effect positive change in a person by healing on a deeper, more profound level through re-establishing a reconnection with nature. Michael J. Cohen, founder and lead faculty member of the institute explains:

The pain or frustration from our excessive severance from nature makes us want—and when we want there is never enough. This irritation underlies most of our discontents and

disorders. NSTP enables us to reverse this process by choosing to occasionally reconnect our thinking with nature. (Cohen, 2000a: 10).

A brief search of the Internet brings up dozens of private Institutes, Ashrams and Healing Centres offering courses associated with Nature Therapy and holistic, nature based healing processes, all of which advocate direct contact with nature as a key part of their philosophy. Given the widespread interest in using contact with nature as a part of the healing process within society at large and evidence that those who undertake such courses of therapy do, in fact, benefit, it is understandable that researchers from within the scientific and academic community are beginning to take an interest. In the past thirty years researchers, including health workers, scientists and philosophers, have begun to gradually move the so-called “Nature Therapies” from the “alternative” fringes of science and medicine into the mainstream of conventional practice—in much the same way that acupuncture has moved from alternative therapy into conventional medical practice.

#### **2.4.1. Eco-therapy and Biophilia**

A similar, but more academically focussed view of our interconnectedness with nature and natural systems is outlined in the emerging field of *Eco-therapy*. Eco-therapy is a therapeutic approach born out of the *Biophilia* hypothesis (Burl & Caan, 2005). The Biophilia theory was first proposed by Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson in 1984 and asserts that humans have an ‘evolutionarily crafted, aesthetic and spiritual affinity for nature’ (Levy, 2003). Literally meaning “love of life or living systems” Wilson’s Biophilia hypothesis suggests that our affiliation with nature is, in fact, rooted in our biology and, as a consequence, disruption to this connection will eventually lead to a disturbance in our overall psychological well-being. Eco-therapy, therefore, involves incorporating or re-establishing a connection with nature back into our lives and, in particular, our sense of bonding with the earth. Research deriving from the Biophilia theory is beginning to

make significant inroads into professions as diverse as contemporary medicine and city planning. Howard Frumkin (2001), writing in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* puts forward evidence that interaction with any of the four aspects of the natural environment (animals, plants, landscapes, and wilderness) can be positively shown to promote beneficial physical and mental health benefits on people and thus should be considered in all 'collaboration[s] among professionals in a range of disciplines from public health to landscape architecture to city planning.' (Frumkin 2001: 234). A significant outcome of this growing recognition of Eco-therapy and Biophilia theory, from the author's point of view, is that any recognition of the depth of our emotional attachment to nature must reinforce our motivation to refrain from destroying it, our own lives, and the lives of those around us—clearly a profound statement of the Green Man message.

Psychologist Rebecca Clay (2001) cites the work of Rachel and Stephen Kaplan into restorative environments, which they advocate as a means of addressing 'directed attention fatigue' and the 'impulsivity, distractibility and irritability that accompany it' (Kaplan, cited in Clay, 2001). Directed attention, such as is required by long periods of work in front of a computer—or any task requiring total concentration on a single purpose—can normally be sustained only for short intervals and can be detrimental to health if sustained over very long periods. Fascination, the alternative and more normal state which occurs when people are engaging with a natural environment is readily created when the attention of the individual is removed from focusing on an enforced, linear task and is allowed to engage with the randomness and spontaneity of the natural environment. This does not necessarily require a trip to the wilderness—a better view may be all it takes. Kaplan, for example, found that 'office workers with a view of nature liked their jobs more, enjoyed better health and reported greater life satisfaction' (Kaplan cited in Clay, 2001). As with Frumkin (2001), Clay goes on to note that there is sufficient evidence into the therapeutic effects of nature, natural views and

engagement with plants and other natural forms that there needs to come about a change in the way we design our health care systems, create our architecture and structure our education.

Bringing the Biophilia hypothesis closer to home (for the author) an honours research project undertaken at her own University, entitled *Influences of a Wilderness Experience on Individual Health and Wellbeing: A Case Study on Fraser Island*, was conducted in 2005 by Science honours candidate Belinda Warren. The project aimed to assess the influences of a wilderness experience on the health and well-being of tourists to Fraser Island, a major environmental reserve off the southern Queensland coast. In assessing the overall impressions of their experience of the island, respondents were asked to describe the most positive and most negative aspects of their visit. Warren found that few people consciously made a link between the natural environment, their emotions and their health. Yet when respondents were asked to state how specific constructs of the island made them feel, it was the 'natural' aspects of the island experience that made them feel the most positive. Warren observed:

[The findings were] consistent with the Attention Restoration Theory (Irvine & Warber, 2002; Kaplan, 1995) in that we feel most at ease when surrounded by natural elements—thereby enhancing our mental functioning. (Warren, 2006).

On an almost daily basis, we are presented with evidence that it is our profound and growing disconnection with nature that is at the core of humankind's many misfortunes—whether political, social or environmental. In an article entitled, *Materialophilia, Biophilia, and Sustainable Use of the Planet*, John Cairns (2003) calls for a much-needed shift to a new paradigm:

Excessive...consumerism [does] not preserve the integrity of the planet's ecological life support system, [and] must be replaced by an eco-centric point of view in which humans are a component of the interdependent web of life, rather than apart from it. (Cairns, 2003: 4).

Cairns believes that with the correct application of our current scientific and technical

knowledge and a paradigmatic shift in humanity's belief systems, ecological recovery and long-term sustainability is completely possible. He argues that human society must choose between Biophilia and Biophobia as expeditiously as possible and it is only through the transition towards Biophilia that humanity will be led towards a new vision of reality based on an ethical foundation.

Expanding on the Biophilia hypothesis is eco-therapy researcher and author Andrew Rothery who, in his 2004 paper *The Science of the Green Man*, explains that it is widely recognised that spending time amongst trees or having potted plants in indoor environments can have a positive effect on human mental health. Indeed, many people keep and display plants in their homes and offices and fresh flowers are often brought to patients in hospital or who are suffering illness or loss. He also notes that the human mind can influence the size and strength of plant auras as documented through the use of Kirlian photography (Rothery, 2004)—although it must be noted that there is significant debate as to the veracity of claims that Kirlian photography is in some way recording the “life energy” or “aura” of living things. Rothery explains that human communication with plants has increased the size and yield of crops in experiments undertaken in Scotland and that similar research is now being done with seeds. He attempts to define the causes behind this phenomenon as follows:

Such mental interaction between humans and plants may also play a part in the creation of our innate affinity with other forms of life known as “Biophilia”. This could explain why the cutting down of whole forests is such an emotive subject for so many people. (Rothery, 2004: 3).

Newspaper stories about people becoming extremely upset when trees are cut down in their neighbourhoods or in natural reserves and forests are extremely common. It would be difficult to find anyone who is in favour of the clearing of the Amazonian rainforests or clear felling in Tasmania who is not making a direct financial profit from it. Morrison (2006) points out that people often experience negative emotions because

they feel a profound connection with trees and plants that they can't explain logically, emotions which often, in fact, spill over into outrage and even violence (Morrison, 2006). Margaret Bates, a student of Social and Sacred Ecology at Monash University, wrote in her text *Sacred is a Tree*:

Whenever a tree is cut down near where I live I get upset. I have an immediate emotional reaction, bypassing my brain. (Bates, 2000: 5).

Bates goes on to ask why it is that we continue to treat the environment the way we do when we once had a great reverence for nature. In her quest for answers she also contends that the process began with the discrediting of older religions:

These beliefs were replaced with that of science in which humans are the rulers and catalysts. Science cannot fill the void left by love of the spiritual around us and in us. It cannot replace connection or reverence...In breaking the bond with nature it makes it that much easier for people to exploit it. (Bates, 2000: 9).

It is clear that a paradigmatic shift is occurring in our understanding of the complex relationship that exists between humanity, health and the environment. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century world-view, the existence of an intimate connection between the natural world and our own mental state would have been thought of as slightly preposterous if not entirely unscientific. However, today, there are increasing numbers of studies becoming available showing that psychological and environmental factors can (and do) affect physiological systems and overall health status (Waldholz, 2003). Rothery, like Dossey (2001), refers to this shift in thinking as a

*Green Consciousness or a Green Intelligence*:

The face or head element of the Green Man suggests a significant meaning for the archetype. The head is traditionally seen as the seat of consciousness by many cultures and in the West it is seen as the domain of our intellect or intelligence. Heads were also specifically revered by...the Celts, as the source of inspiration, foreknowledge and prophecy. The Green Man therefore points to a relationship between our mind or consciousness and the green world of plants and trees—a kind of “green intelligence” or “green consciousness”. (Rothery, 2004: 2).



As we can see, the increased popularity of the Green Man image is a reflection of the paradigmatic shift in thinking occurring throughout Western culture. However, the opening up of a broader understanding of our interconnectedness with the planet can only have real meaning if the concepts discovered (or more correctly *rediscovered*) bring about positive change in the thinking of the individual—change which ripples out into a healthier lifestyle, more fulfilling interpersonal relationships and, ultimately, into a more sustainable interaction with the natural environment. This brings us, naturally, to the work of the Deep Ecologists.

## 2.5. Deep Ecology and the Face in the Leaves

The *Deep Ecology* movement is based on the belief that profound changes in the way humans relate to the environment are needed in order to sustain viable and healthy life on the planet. According to the *Wikipedia* site:

*Deep Ecology* offers a philosophical basis for environmental advocacy [which] may, in turn, guide human activity against perceived self-destruction. Deep ecology and environmentalism hold that the science of ecology shows that ecosystems can absorb only limited change by humans or other external influences. Further, both hold that the actions of modern civilization threaten global ecological well-being. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep\\_ecology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_ecology) accessed 24/05/06).

Founded on work by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who outlined his ecologically based personal philosophy *Ecosophy T* in the late 1970s /early 1980s, *Deep Ecology* philosophy has set ‘a new pace for change with its systematic contrasting of both shallow and deep ecological views’ (Fox 1990: 37). (The philosophies of *Deep* and *Shallow Ecology*—and the ideas associated with them—are sometimes referred to in academic discussion as *Ecosophy*, a shortened variation of Ecological Philosophy). Fox outlines the division between the two approaches as follows—*Shallow Ecology* and its attendant environmental philosophies essentially involve developing strategies which exercise more efficient control and management over the natural environment, whereas *Deep Ecology* requires a much more profound

change in the perception of the role of human beings in the overall planetary ecosystem (Fox, 1990). Ecologists and environmentalists actively supporting the shallow approach can be seen as the *avant-garde* of the green movement—thus activists working with organizations such as *Greenpeace*, who for example, chain themselves to old growth forest in an effort to stop the clear cutting—are representative of this front-line approach. (Interestingly enough, Naess tied himself beside a waterfall in a Norwegian fjord in 1970 as a protest against the building of a dam—indirectly a homage to an earlier environmental activist Mahatma Ghandi, about whom he has written extensively). According to Naess, however, the philosophy of *Shallow Ecology* remains embedded in maintaining the interests of humanity over the larger interests of life and nature itself and, therefore, does not go far enough in addressing the fundamental problems being created by human interference with the greater system. Herein lies the key criticism of the Deep Ecology philosophy—that it is largely misanthropic and denies that the work of the majority of environmentalists has sufficient merit (*i.e.*, that it is, by definition, *shallow*).

Increasingly however, ecosophies and political philosophies are beginning to converge. There are few political parties or politicians in the world today that do not advocate or acknowledge some degree of support for environmental issues, no matter how superficially. The increasingly frequent addition of the prefix *eco* to the names of academic disciplines, social movements and even industries of all types highlights the fact that we are experiencing an increased awareness of how our actions are affecting the natural world and how our language reflects this. Thus, as the Green Man resurfaces to remind us of our connection with nature, our language is evolving to encompass the growing awareness that our actions have global consequences—new words, terms and concepts constantly remind us of our oneness with *Gaia*. Table 2.2 illustrates a few of the ways that recognition of our dependence on our relationship with the environment is creeping in to our daily language—just one more expression of the “green phenomenon”.

EXISTING PERSPECTIVE / PHILOSOPHY	ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE / PHILOSOPHY
Activism	<i>Eco-Warrior</i>
Anthropocentric	<i>Eco-centric</i>
Architecture	<i>Eco-Architecture</i>
Art	<i>Eco-art</i>
Feminism	<i>Eco-feminism</i>
Journalism	<i>Eco-journalism</i>
Philosophy	<i>Eco-philosophy</i>
Psychology	<i>Eco-psychology NSTP (Natural Systems Thinking Processes) Wilderness Therapy Educating via Nature</i>
Science	<i>Ecology Gaia &amp; Biophilia Hypothesis Whole Systems Approach (Ecoliteracy)</i>
Terrorism	<i>Eco-Terrorism</i>
Tourism	<i>Eco-Tourism</i>

**Table 2.2. Some of the ways contemporary language is evolving to accommodate shifting views. (Author, 2006).**

Regardless of the anthropocentricity debate, both shallow and deep ecologists agree that the cumulative outcomes of human activity change not only the planet and our physical world, they influence our individual health and our personal relationships at every level. Given our ever-growing understanding of humanity’s inextricable connection with the environment and the ways in which we both influence it and are influenced by it, the allocation of responsibility for both the individual and the collective well-being has shifted rapidly from the theological (fatalistic, pre-determined) to the ecological (self-directed, humanistic) in western philosophy, daily life and entertainment. For example, Steven Baxter, the Son of God (played by actor Christopher Eccleston) in the 2003 Granada Television telemovie *The Second Coming* sums up the shift in responsibility from God to humanity thus:

You lot are becoming Gods. There's a new master of creation, and it's you! [You've] unravelled DNA and at the same time you're cultivating bacteria strong enough to kill every living thing! Do you think you are ready for that much power? You lot? You lot? You cheeky bastards... (Shergold and Davies, 2003).

Even given the challenge of accepting total self-responsibility for our own existence, it is only through a paradigmatic shift in thinking that ultimately—according to Deep

Ecologists—the global environment (and with it the human race) will finally be saved.

## **2.6. Christianity, Religion and the Green Phenomenon**

Christian Europe had much to fear from the predicted apocalypse scheduled for the end of the first Millennium. That the apocalypse didn't happen led to an outburst of religious fervour and the construction of thousands of churches, cathedrals and other places of worship across Europe in order to give thanks to God for the sparing of humanity. Dubbed the “disease of building,” the impetus for construction lasted until the time of the Black Death in the mid 1300s and was the primary force driving technological advancement for over 300 years. Indeed, many of the architectural advances made during this period led to developments in engineering, mathematics and the physical sciences that were the technological equivalent of advances made during the Renaissance and the Space Race. Yet, it is from this very period that some of the most significant and famous Green Man sculptures date (see Appendix One). It seems that just as Christianity established its dominance in Europe once and for all and sought to banish paganism to the underground forever—it inadvertently shifted the Green Man and his associated art-forms onto left stage as a form of hidden protest and a constant reminder of the ancient beliefs. As the focus of religion shifted from the nature-worship of paganism to the humanism of Christianity, an anthropomorphic view of the world took root in western culture that would continue to grow in strength for the next seven centuries.

Warwick Fox (1990), Reader in Ethics at the University of Central Lancashire, argues that it is the Christian anthropomorphic belief system that is predominantly at the root of the West's present environmental crisis:

What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one...We shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason

for existence save to serve man...Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. We must rethink and re-feel our destiny. (Fox, 1990: 6).

Fox aligns himself with the Deep Ecologists in many ways, citing the need to address the ever-growing separation between humanity and nature as a central concern that must be addressed if the establishment of any form of environmental sustainability is to be achieved. As noted above, Fox argues that a fundamental change in our belief systems—tantamount to the establishment of a new religion—may be the only remedy. Indeed, even the most mainstream of churches have been forced to acknowledge the challenge, as Pope John Paul II noted in his New Year's Day address to a worldwide Catholic audience in 1990:

In our day, there is a growing awareness that [there is] a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life...We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations. (Pope John Paul II, 1990).

Through his recognition that a reconnection with nature (as a universal life-force) is essential if we are to re-establish our equilibrium with the planetary ecosystem and maintain the “well being of future generations”, it can be argued that Pope John Paul's comments are yet another reflection of the modern day Green Man message—however unintentional. Despite the fact that he was speaking entirely from within the context of a Christian and, consequently anthropocentric world-view, it can be argued that Pope John Paul II was clearly acknowledging the need to adopt a more ecocentric approach to life in general.

Recognition of the growing dissonance between our inherent spirituality (founded on our connection with the earth) and our continuing mistreatment of the environment is not solely the domain of the Catholic Faith. Anglican Priest and Director of Communication for the Diocese of Oxford in the United Kingdom, Richard Thomas,

argues that contemporary Christians and practicing pagans alike recognize this:

It is an elusive thing, an agreement of the soul, a recognition of something profoundly sacred that both the Christian and the Pagan can sense. It is calling us from a place that is deeper than our differences, and is stronger and sweeter than our fears. It speaks to us not through doctrine, but through the smell of rich earth after the rain, through the sharp cold of the frost, through the taste of good beer and the warmth of wood smoke and open fires. It is about sacredness itself—the recognition of deity in nature; of the sacredness of human living that we hold in common. It is the Green Man who surrounds us with the imagery of spirit within nature—the spirit that is common to both Christianity and Paganism, and which Jesus affirms by the title he chose for himself. (Thomas, 2004: 1).

Not only does Thomas argue for the presence of the Green Man message in today's Christianity, he goes as far as to declare that "Jesus is the Green Man of the Bible" (Thomas, 2004: 1). In an address delivered to the 2004 Pagan Federation International Conference, Thomas stated that the heart and spirit of all life-affirming religions transcends the metaphysical differences between them and that pagan, Christian and other beliefs find common ground in honouring the very sacredness of life. Thomas goes on to argue that it is this very connection between humanity and nature that is at the core of Christianity:

[Jesus] didn't use the title 'Son of God'—as so many Christians seem to think. The phrase he most often used to describe himself was 'Son of Man'. It may at first seem a small change of a word, but it makes a huge difference. In the four gospel accounts of his life, Jesus takes the title 'Son of Man' 75 times. But the phrase 'Son of God' occurs only 24 times, and most of those are when either the devil, or evil spirits, or other people refer to him. So Jesus clearly preferred the title Son of Man. In Hebrew, the title 'Son of Man' is 'ben Adam'—Son of Adam. And the Hebrew word 'Adam' is linked to the word for earth, Adamah. The words 'ben Adam' can be translated as 'the son of the one hewn from the earth'. In all of the three synoptic gospels, time and time again Jesus refers to himself as 'The Son of the one hewn from the earth'. He understands that his nature is both sacred and earthy—he refers most often not to his deity, but to his earthy-ness, to his oneness with nature. He was, and is, the archetypal Green Man, drawn from the earth, born of the union of spirit and matter, bringing life to those he meets. (Thomas, 2004: 4).

As we can see, Thomas makes a powerful argument in making not just a comparison between Jesus and the Green Man, but in asserting that they are in fact, one and the

same. As an academic and a free thinking philosopher unbounded by religious strictures, Fox (1990) is able to go a great deal further than Pope John Paul II or even Richard Thomas could ever do in thinking about the environmental crisis as a challenge to religious orthodoxy. Fox's choice of language, which he describes as being 'not more science and technology, not [a] rethink but a *re-feel* of our destiny' (Fox, 1990: 6—author's italics) suggests to the author that Fox is implying that the current Western religious, scientific and philosophical paradigm is unbalanced not only in its response to nature, but that it is also flawed in that it is patriarchally dominated:

...the continued application of technical solutions (to our environmental problems) while “we”—and especially wealthy, male humans in the financial capitals of the world—essentially carry on with “business as usual” is simply not good enough. (Fox, 1990: 23).

It is this type of rhetoric—proclaiming the consequences of continuing with the financially-driven, patriarchal world-view of the natural environment, along with the ever-growing understanding that there is a fundamental need to reconnect ourselves with the natural world—that influences a great deal of Green Man art making at the present moment. There is a tangible sense of urgency in much of the work, as artists manifest the “canary in the coalmine” syndrome into all aspects of their work. Artists naturally feel a responsibility to express the truths that they sense rustling through their world, whether they be painters, authors, musicians, philosophers, scientists or even politicians. All are driven consciously (or unconsciously) by the Green Man in his Conservator archetype. We will further explore the psychology behind the creation of some high profile contemporary Green Man Art in Chapter Four.

## **2.7. Gender Balance and a Green Harmony**

In arguing that a major change to our patriarchal and anthropomorphic world-view will bring about a much needed and positive change in our environmental and psychological well-being, Fox (1990) suggests that we should view the problem from a

more humanistic perspective—neither masculine nor feminine:

We deserve our increasing pollution because, according to our structure of values, so many other things have priority over achieving a viable ecology...until the man-nature dualism is eradicated, not only from our minds but also from our emotions, we shall doubtless be unable to make fundamental changes in our attitudes and actions affecting ecology. (Fox, 1990: 7).

Clearly, Fox is arguing that many of the negative aspects of our relationship with the planet can be attributed directly to our overtly masculine/patriarchal approach (*i.e.*, dealing with the natural world as a confrontational problem). However, given that in the West we have for centuries dealt with nature from the *confrontational* perspective, our relationship with the planet has also become a deeply established and highly *emotional* issue as well. The often cruel and capricious temperament of nature and our helplessness in the face of it cannot be denied and our desire to control and manage the environment to minimise human loss and suffering is understandable. Since emotion is supposedly the domain of the feminine, achieving balance requires effort from both a masculine and feminine perspective—we must not only stop seeing our relationship with nature as one of confrontation, we must also be willing to compromise with nature—and thereby return to a state of harmony and equilibrium.

Margaret Bates, author of *Sacred is a Tree* (2000) puts forward an interesting theory in relation to science and the environmental crisis. She argues that science (in the past, largely a masculine pursuit) has tried to fill a void left in us by the loss of love for, and connection with, the spiritual around us. We could conclude that Bates is referring to a lack of a connection with our natural environment and thus our feminine qualities. In the past, scientific methodologies and economic philosophies were about domination over nature and winning over the environment. In such a model there always has to be a loser—and in this case it was always the environment. Fortunately, in recent years the trend has begun to move from exploitation to sustainability, a model based on creating a win-win principle. The present reincarnation of the Green Man in the form of



the Conservator archetype also embraces the feminine win-win principle, focussing our attention on the need to maintain the health of the natural world, its forests, fisheries, habitats and biological diversity. In the new enlightenment, a modern lifestyle, lived in a healthy manner and shared by all, may yet be possible.

It would be inappropriate to consider the debate surrounding gender and the environment without acknowledging the role of Ecofeminism which, in many ways, has much in common with the Deep Ecology movement. Proponents of Ecofeminism argue that the 'social mentality that leads to the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the environmental abuse of Earth.' (<<http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecofeminism>> accessed 24/05/06.) Whilst not entirely anti-science or anti-technology (for example, the use of solar power is strongly advocated) the movement does argue that radical reform is necessary if significant change is to be brought about. The US based *Feminist Ecovillage Project* (<http://www.ic.org/eco/>) for example, is a collective of several villages and communities in the United States in which the ideas and philosophies of the movement are being put into direct practice in a variety of ways. As can be seen, a diversity of strategies is apparent and several significantly different approaches are being experimented with, ranging from women-only (*wimmin-only*) collectives such as *Spiral*, to the long established *Twin Oaks* community, which was founded during the late 1960s, long before Eco-feminism was a social issue or political issue. Whilst the author would contend that the Green Man, in the archetype of the Conservator, is more interested in the achievement of a balance between male and female energies than in any form of matriarchy or patriarchy, the fact that dedicated individuals are seeking to make radical change suggests that the message that something must be done soon is both powerful and highly motivational.

## 2.8. The Green Man—Neither Man or Wo-man

As discussed in Chapter One, gender issues have long played a key part in any discussions surrounding both ancient and modern interpretations of the Green Man. What seems to have been largely forgotten in the debate is what the Green Man actually is—an *archetype*—a representation not of a real person, but of a deep-rooted affiliation with our planet and the environment in which we live—an affiliation which possibly goes back even further than our own modern species, *Homo Sapiens*. That the Green Man has long taken the form of the masculine is irrelevant, since Jung argues that the balance between *anima* and *animus* is evident in all humans. If we were to consider the obviously female *Venus* archetype for example, it would be nonsensical to argue that since the figure of Venus is typically represented as a woman, the capacity for love and compassion is based only in the feminine.

Even given his classical representation in masculine form, the fact that the Green Man is typically represented as being enshrouded in foliage, points strongly to the fact that the archetype actively combines aspects of both the masculine and the feminine, since plants and foliage are seen to be key characteristics of Gaia, the mother Earth. That the Green Man archetypes often appear in the guise of the Trickster, the Guardian and the Regenerator—all of which encompass the feminine characteristics of passivity and acceptance—as opposed to the more masculine characteristic of rigid control suggested by the *Warrior* archetype—further suggests the inherent duality of the Green Man figure. Author and teacher Jesse Hardin, in his paper, *An Ecology of Maleness: Masculinity, Pan and the Green Man*, argues that Green Man archetypes of the past have always possessed feminine traits within the male figure, for example in the character of Peter Pan:

...men's groups have brought back the pan-cultural archetype of the Green Man...True, Pan is a male god, but he is associated with female values. Male empowerment

compliments and contributes to the expression of female empowerment. Male and female energies touch and mingle without losing either the artistic subtleties of contrast, or the kinesis fuelled by dissimilarity. The alchemy of Gaian evolution requires the distinct elements of both sexes in balanced measure... (Hardin, 2004: 2).

In the same vein, Andrew Rothery, in his paper *The Science of the Green Man*, also comments on the Gaia/Green Man connection and the importance of equality and harmony:

Archetypically, the relationship between the Green Man and Gaia is either likened to that of a child and its mother, two passionate lovers or fellow consorts ruling in harmony. This clearly shows that the male power exists in its alchemy with the feminine rather than in its control of her, as in the ancient oriental Yin-Yang symbol. (Rothery, 2004: 3).

As will be shown in Chapter Four, none of the artists interviewed for this exegesis considered the gender of the Green Man, or gender *per se* to be an issue in relation to their work with the Green Man image—the signifying factor behind any image created is always the same—the Earth and the environment is in crisis. Though the Green Man can be seen as a positive male influence in a world that needs as many healthy male role models as it can get, the environmental message is loud and clear, regardless of who is listening. Rothery (2004) puts it this way:

Like the Chinese principles of Yin and Yang or the Hindu concept of Shakti and Shiva, Gaia and the Green Man represent the Female and the Male energy of which the Universe is formed and together they form a whole. (Rothery, 2004: 5).

Rothery is clearly arguing that the Green Man should become recognised as a concept in Western thought in the same way that the Gaia hypothesis has been accepted. Whilst science has largely accepted the Gaia hypothesis in the last few decades, Rothery is drawing our attention to the fact that there still remains a fundamental imbalance in how we view the world and that harmony will not be achieved until both sides of the equation are balanced. Ed McGaa, a native American healer, author and tribal leader puts the argument another way:

Because the world does not get enough exposure to feminine principles such as acceptance, emotional expression, and peacefulness, we are contrary to Nature's plan... Societies that ignore the lesson of the lion and become rigidly patriarchal engender fear, wrath and punishment. They become aggressive, forcing themselves upon other nations, dominating the opposition and subduing movements toward peace and kindness. As they grow and spread, they bring horrible suffering to many of their citizens. (McGaa, 2004: 51).

When McGaa makes reference to the “lesson of the lion”, he is speaking of the cooperation that exists amongst a pride of lions, which is essentially matriarchal in its power structure. McGaa contends that when societies maintain a balance between male and female energy, they are typically more peaceful and survive much longer than those societies that favour one gender over the other. In his book, *Nature's Way* (2004), McGaa argues that the present Western social framework is based on the model of a “Dominant Society” and introduces the reader to the “Blue Man”—the antithesis of the Green Man—a male figure that symbolizes corruption, insensitivity, greed and ignorance—all of which threaten to engulf the planet if left unchecked.

It is clear that for far too long we have suppressed the feminine and taken advantage of our environment, in the guise of our need to dominate nature and establish our supremacy and security. The Green Man, in the role of the Conservator has returned to remind us that enough is enough. In concluding this chapter, the following quote from Jesse Wolf Hardin sums up the message of the Green Man and gives us an indication of the work that still needs to be done.

The problem is not with the nature of masculinity, but with mankind's separation from our natural maleness. The solution is to become more ourselves, not less so. As with any social/environmental disease, the cure lies in the reclamation of our wild being, not in the suppression of instinct, intuition and propensity. (Hardin, 2004: 7).

The following Chapter examines the ways in which the archetype of the Green Man is now reappearing in Western society—in areas such as Art, the Media, Philosophy and

Science—and outlines some of the ways in which this present re-emergence can be seen as both an example of a continuing tradition and a completely new re-invention of an ancient archetype.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1. The Green Man Reasserted

As shown in Chapters One and Two, the fundamental message represented by the Green Man archetype is now widespread in contemporary Western culture—to the extent that it is almost impossible *not* to see, hear or sense his presence—once one is attuned to his mission. From the annual Green Man Music Festival in the United Kingdom to Green Collectives, the Environmental Movement in its entirety, the emergence of Ecosophy, the recognition of our innate Biophilia and even the transformation of Mikhail Gorbachev (from Red Man to Green!) the message is loud and clear—the environment is in crisis and the time to act is now. No matter how you view the world, or what your political or religious bent might be, the Green Man's resurgence today is an immediate reflection of the sense of urgency (and sometimes helplessness) that most people feel when it comes to doing something about our destructive relationship with the environment and our mother, the Earth. It would be impossible to cover all of the ways in which the Green Man is reasserting his presence and, in this exegesis, we are able to focus on only one aspect—the artistic connection in the sense of his expression through the visual and creative arts. Even given this somewhat narrowed field, the task is considerable. This chapter attempts to outline some of the ways in which contemporary Australian and International visual artists and designers are expressing the Green Man message—although the author readily admits that given the immensity of even this task, many key artists will have been missed out. Nevertheless, artists across the world are calling forth the Green Man archetype both as inspiration and motivation. This is largely being done in one of two ways; firstly, through the use of the actual Green Man image in a recognisable guise and secondly, through the use of the archetypal message without using the image explicitly. Either way, the underlying message remains the same.

### 3.2. A Verdant Fever

The visually driven, verdant fever we are experiencing at this moment is neither a madness nor a melancholia—rather it is a reflection of our instinctive need to take action in a world where our current leaders are letting us down and war, greed and environmental destruction have become a global pandemic. Robert Kennedy, Jr., in his book *Crimes Against Nature* (2005), notes that in almost every culture it is considered unethical, immoral and, in fact, illegal to create pollution or take away that which is provided by the bounty of nature for all to share. As a case in point, Kennedy cites the Roman *Corpus Iuris Civilis* or “Code of Justinian” (completed in 529) which enshrined in law a guarantee that ‘the shared resources of the planet, including the air, flowing water, public lands, wandering animals, fisheries, wetlands, and aquifers should be considered as belonging to the commons or public trust’ (Kennedy, 2005). Justinian’s appeal to so-called *Natural Law* recognised that all humans, regardless of who they are or where they live, have certain inalienable rights: ‘The laws of nature, which all nations observe alike, being established by a divine providence, remain ever fixed and immutable’ (Fader, 2004). Kennedy points out that it is the attempt to transgress such laws that is the mark of tyranny:

Throughout Western history the first act of tyrants [often] included efforts to deliver the public trust assets into private hands...the legendary outlaw Robin Hood became a potent symbol of defiance against King John’s efforts to reserve England’s deer and wildlife for the privileged classes. (Kennedy, 2005: 20).

Robin Hood, as we have seen, is perhaps one of the most widely recognised incarnations of the Green Man archetype in English folklore.

In the same way as Robin Hood motivated and inspired resistance to tyranny, the modern day awakening of the Green Movement and the resurgence of interest in the creation of Green Man art points to the stirring of a new energy within both society and the individual. Our pulse quickens, our pupils dilate, we become primed and ready for

action when we hear of yet another crime against nature in the name of greed and so called progress. The Green Man, in his role as the Conservator realizes that this is not a time for passive reflection, but instead urges immediate action and the beginning of the healing, regenerative processes that the ancient figure embodies. In the end, the choice is clear—we must choose between a healthy, sustainable lifestyle and the maintenance of our natural environment—or we will suffer the consequences.

It is the belief of the author that it is in part our innate proclivity to seek out faces wherever we look that is behind the increasing popularity of the Green Man image today. Just as we instinctively search for the face in the leaves, we are now seriously searching for ways to sustain and protect life on the planet. The Green Man today has become the symbol of that searching—a deeply driven creative response to a seemingly intractable environmental crisis. Beginning as an archetypal acknowledgment of the mysteries of life and the universe, the image takes us back to our place of origin through a face that we recognize, but which is informed by the transmitted and accumulated knowledge of past civilizations. As University of the Sunshine Coast (Queensland, Australia) Gallery Director, Dawn Oelrich, observed at the opening of the exhibition associated with this research:

The Green Man comes back when he is needed—and he is keeping an eye on us. Once you see the exhibition you will be seeing the Green Man in everything. (Oelrich 2006: 12).

Oelrich's acknowledgement that her perception of the world around her was changed after viewing the exhibition, is just one example of the power of the Green Man image to affect the awareness of those who see him.

### **3.3. The Human Face and the Perception of the Green Man**

As humans, we instinctively seek out faces. We cannot help ourselves when we distinguish facial features in natural and random patterns such as cloud formations,



fire, smoke and (of course) trees and plants. Discovering a face in a situation like this causes us to stop and reflect on the meaning of the expression of the imagined face and, sometimes, to make a connection to our individual lives. We identify faces by integrating two principal sources of information: patterns of light and shade on the object we perceive as a face and the proportion or relationship between the different features. Our brains recognize faces as a mesh of shadows and shapes and, as a whole rather than as separate parts (Bates and Cleese, 2001: 58). The ability to recognise faces is with us from birth and is innate rather than learned:

American and British psychological studies have shown that nine minutes after being born, when we can barely focus our eyes, we prefer to gaze at faces more than any other object...We come into the world primed to connect with the faces around us. Our fascination with faces is inborn and continues all through life...[taking]...us from the faceless world of primordial origins to the spiritual realms of the gods. (Bates and Cleese, 2001: 8,10).

As noted earlier, seeing and depicting the face in the leaves has been an occupation of artists for centuries. Interestingly, although all people are asymmetrical in the shape of their bodies and features, recent research has shown that the closer to symmetrical a person's facial features are, the more attractive most people consider the face (Bates and Cleese, 2001). Significantly, many of today's top supermodels and many of our most popular movie stars have this particular facial characteristic.

In recent years feature films and television have almost entirely replaced ceremonies, rituals and story-telling traditions as our way of connecting with archetypal identities. Ancient civilizations relied on ritual and ceremony for both entertainment and the passing on of sacred or essential messages, exercising and reinforcing religious faith and building a sense of purpose and interconnectedness amongst the community. Our modern culture has largely given up the requirement that the audience and/or the community actively participate in ritual and now relies on highly paid (and symmetrically facial featured) actors and models to act out our myths and legends,

whilst the audience sits passively by and does nothing more than watch. In the past however, the face of the actor was nowhere near as important—masks were extensively used to create characters that were instantly recognisable to the audience—to the extent that today the iconic laughing/crying masks are a theatrical cliché.

At this point, it is worth recollecting that a common expression of the Green Man image is through the use of a mask or representation of a masked figure. Masks have played a role in human communication and religious ceremonies that can be traced back well before any form of recorded history and well into our earliest forms of religion and belief. During ancient shamanic rituals, wearing a mask helped participants connect to the spirit world by allowing the wearer to “become” the actual spirit in the mind of the audience—or to at least represent it in an extremely powerful way. In modern day Tibet, Buddhist priests still perform such rituals and ceremonies:

Spirit masks are a way of making tangible what we, in modern western society, leave unsaid, sometimes unrecognised, [and] often not understood: [they are] the hidden force of our lives. (Bates and Cleese, 2001: 207). [author's insertion].

Such rituals were an important part of the reality of our ancestors' lives. Bates notes that many Westerners no longer instinctively understand the Shamanic experience since they live in a more rational, pragmatic and analytical time (Bates and Cleese, 2001). Instead, we rely on others (film and television executives, production companies, actors, etc.) to imagine and dictate our stories to us instead of actively participating ourselves. Bates points out that:

...psychologists and psychiatrists are acutely aware of just how important the imagination is to our emotional well-being...If we had to live our lives locked totally in the rational, without access to fantasy or imagination, we would all go mad.” (Bates and Cleese, 2001: 208).

Yet there is one mask that has not gone away or lost its power over us. The familiar Shamanic gaze of the Green Man image evokes a deep response that we are innately

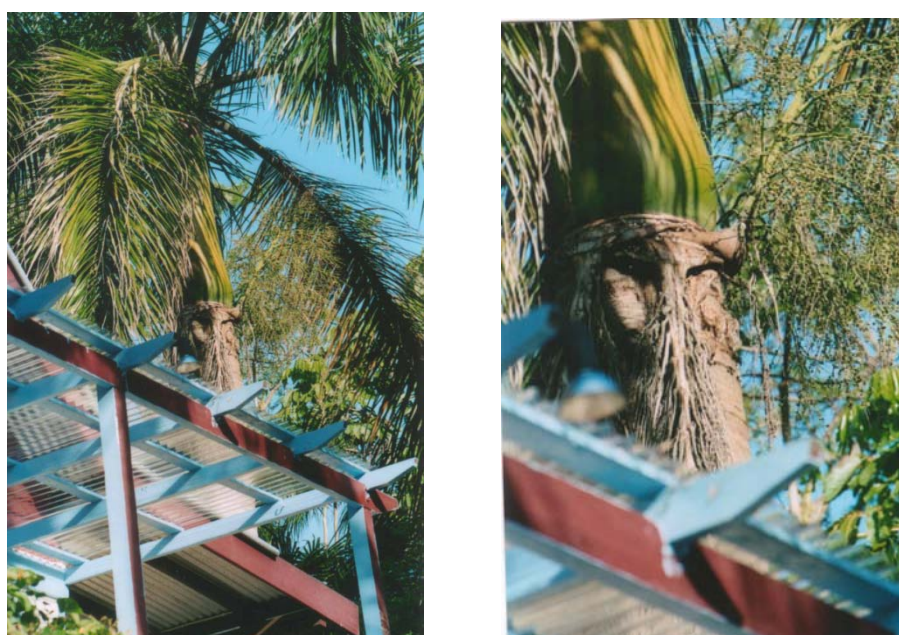
attracted to. Thus, the masked figure wearing (or made up of) foliate elements addresses us emotionally on several levels simultaneously—reminding us of our ancestral connection to the Mother Earth, whilst symbolically providing a direct connection to the spiritual realm. Although the Green Man's gaze generates within us a resonance that we may or may not always understand at the rational or intellectual level, it nevertheless personifies the emotional and spiritual connection we have to the natural world by giving it a face with which we can identify and, at a deeper level, intuitively understand. The face of Green Man the Conservator is desperate to help us here and now. The more we understand about why he has chosen to re-emerge at the present time, the more we will begin to understand ourselves and our role in the world today.

### **3.4. The New Look of an Old Face**

Before presenting contemporary artistic representations of the Green Man, it is worth taking a moment to reiterate that the Green Man image is first and foremost a natural image that already exists without any human intervention. The only participation needed in most cases is that the viewer discovers and/or recognises him. In most cases the experience of discovering a Green Man image can stop a person dead in their tracks. The photograph shown in Figure 3.1 shows a Green Man face which appeared above a second story veranda in the author's garden in 2003.

The image was indeed so powerful and inspirational that the author immediately set out to sketch the foliate form as a part of the creative component of this research project, a work that eventually became *Royal Palm Green Man* (reproduced in Chapter Four). Though the face is formed by the shadows and highlights at the top of the trunk, the image remained in place for several weeks, taking on differing aspects and moods as the light and shadows shifted during the day. Although the author has seen

hundreds, if not thousands of depictions of the Green Man during the past few years, the power the image projects when found in nature is astounding—seeing a face emerge from the seeming randomness of the natural environment evokes a *knowing* within the viewer that we are indeed at one with nature. Whilst it may be argued that we have an in-built inclination to ascribe anthropomorphic characteristics to certain arrangements of both manufactured and natural objects, the author's research (as discussed later in this chapter) has found that sighting or constructing a face directly in nature is in fact a significant source of inspiration for many of the contemporary artists working with the Green Man theme. Recording and perpetuating the image, so that it can be shared with other people over time is often the principal motivation for the creation of Green Man works.



**Figure 3.1. Unretouched photograph and enlargement of a Green Man image which appeared in the author's garden. (Author, 2003).**

### **3.5. Bridging the Gap—The Work of Paul Sivell**

Bridging the gap between a Green Man sighting in a natural context and the intentional creation of a Green Man artwork in a studio or developed location (such as a park or gallery) is English sculptor Paul Sivell, who is based on the Isle of Wight in the United

Kingdom. Sivell specializes in turning dead, damaged or fallen trees into Green Man tree carvings, taking care to 'never impose [his] design on the wood. The natural grain, colour and any flaws or imperfections in the timber are all used to enhance the final creation' (Sivell, 2006). Importantly, where carvings are created as a part of a living tree, only dead branches and wood, such as that which has been damaged by lightning or other natural causes are used in the work—as shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. The *Whitefield Green Man* (Figure 3.2) shows the familiar figure carved into a dead section of a living tree. In an interview conducted by the author, Sivell noted:

The first Green Man image I ever carved was on an old lightning struck oak in the middle of a wood. I saw the tree and immediately imagined the image. There was no forethought and no planning—I just contacted the owner and told him what I wanted to do and then went ahead and did it. (The surprising thing was that I actually got paid!). (Sivell, 2005).



**Figures 3.2, 3.3. Two works by sculptor Paul Sivell, The *Whitefield Green Man* (oak, 4m high) located on the Isle of Wight (left) and a work in progress located off the M27 motorway near Southampton in Hampshire. Used by kind permission of the artist. <<http://thecarvedtree.com/carvedtree/Greenmen.htm>>**

Sivell has also created works

for the recent Celf Caerleon Arts Festival and International Sculpture Symposium, which was held between June 28 and July 9, 2006 in Wales. Although the Symposium took as a central theme the Arthurian legend, (Caerleon is supposedly the site of the

original Camelot), the work created by Sivell brings together both the Arthurian theme and the Green Man image to produce a striking and intriguing juxtaposition of ideas. Given his deliberate strategy of doing no harm to the original tree and yet revealing the hidden form within, places Sivell amongst some of the most prominent, contemporary Green Man sculptors, in that creative technique is in line with the Green Man as Conservator's main message of finding harmony with nature. As we will see, throughout this chapter Sivell's work is one part of the literal explosion of interest in Green Man art that is happening across all sectors of our contemporary visual culture.

### 3.6. Arcimboldo's Green Man Revisited

Whilst Galileo may have disapproved of the work of Arcimboldo (he was particularly contemptuous of the fashion for creating such portraits) the technique of creating life-like figures based on natural objects has remained popular ever since, recurring regularly as a theme in Western Art and Graphic Design. For example, during the latter part of 2002, the Australian Government commissioned the West Australian advertising agency the *303 Group* to produce the *Go for 2&5* campaign (Figures 3.4, 3.5). In this campaign, produced for both print and television, we can see the Green Man image (in the style of Arcimboldo, Figure 1.4) recreated and animated by the placement of various fruits and vegetables to produce a dynamic and happy, smiling face—appealing to a target audience of both adults and children alike.



**Figure 3.4.** *Go for 2&5*. A print version of the Australian Government's 2002 Healthy Eating campaign. (<http://www.health.gov.au> accessed 28/10/05).





**Figure 3.5. Go for 2&5. Stills from the television commercial produced as part of the Australian Government's 2002 Healthy Eating campaign. (<http://www.health.gov.au> accessed 28/10/05).**

In this campaign, the *Veggie Man* (as a personification of the Green Man) becomes the central expression of the Department of Health's campaign to encourage more healthy eating habits—encouraging people to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables and less processed or “fast” or takeaway food. According to the *Go for 2&5* website ([www.gofor2and5.com.au/](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au/)), Australians are eating too little natural produce and have lost track of just how important fresh fruit and vegetables are in maintaining a healthy diet:

The Go for 2&5 campaign lets people know how much fruit and vegetables they should eat and gets them to think about how much they actually do eat. (Media statement, <http://www.gofor2and5.com.au> accessed 31/05/06).

The *Go for 2&5* adaptation of Arcimboldo's Green Man image is used to encourage awareness and improve perceptions about the benefits of the fruit and vegetables we should be eating in order to sustain our health and well being—again reflecting our intimate connection with nature and the earth itself—since, by breaking this bond and consuming increasing amounts of processed and artificial foods we are losing our connection with that which truly sustains us and brings about our natural good health and well-being.

It is important to note however, that whilst Arcimboldo painted Rudolf II as

*Vertumnus*—the Roman God of Ripened Fruit—his message was somewhat different to that of the Australian Government's Veggie Man. Whereas Archimboldo used his Green Man image to celebrate the peace, harmony and consequent abundance of food and crops that Rudolf brought to his kingdom, the contemporary 2&5 Veggie Man is being used to shape the thoughts of viewers in a significantly different direction—encouraging them to move away from the instant gratification afforded by fast food and a culture of plenty, in order to consider the merits of a healthy, but simple diet:

The aim is to support them [the target audience, main food buyers and meal preparers] to achieve a healthy lifestyle—offering them easy solutions to the problem. ... Increasing the average person's fruit and vegetable intake is a priority and may be the single most important dietary change needed to reduce the risk of major diseases. (<http://www.gofor2and5.com.au> accessed 31/05/06).

The Green Man, in the guise of the Conservator archetype, is being used to guide Australians away from the dangers and diseases brought about through affluence and towards a sustainable and healthy lifestyle—a move which requires little more than a return to enjoying the very produce of nature itself. This approach brings instantly to mind the philosophy of the Deep Ecologists, who argue that improving the world at the micro level (*i.e.*, that of the individual) will automatically bring about change at the macro level (*i.e.*, planetary, global).

An interesting sidenote to using the Green Man image as an advertising medium is the general use of the natural world in contemporary advertising. Images of nature are amongst the most common signifiers of utopia in commercial discourse today (Gunster; 2004) and unfortunately, the Green philosophy which extolls of the virtues of being out in nature has become the unlikely platform for sales of the sport utility vehicle, commonly referred to as its acronym, the SUV:

...the irony of using pristine images of a hyper-pure nature to motivate the use of a product that consumes excessive amounts of natural resources and emits high levels of pollutants lies at the core of the growing public backlash against the SUV. (Gunster, 2004).

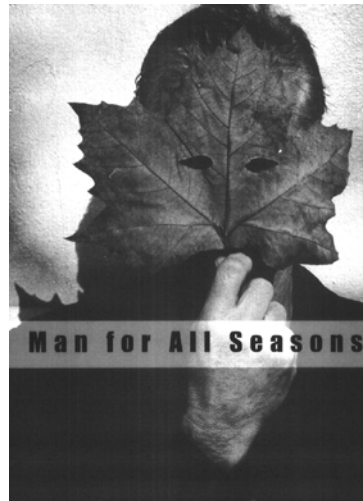


Gunther argues that we, as a thinking audience, need to think through the way in which nature is being appropriated and manipulated in order to construct the promotional focus of these vehicles—and that we need to analyse the sales message being presented in a more rigorous fashion than is often presently the case. Nevertheless, by intensifying our awareness of the contradictions that lie at the core of this style of advertising, the advertising and automotive industries have unwittingly raised public consciousness of the growing separation between industry and nature—causing at least some people to think twice before purchasing a SUV.

### **3.7. The Eco-Art Movement and Environmental Activism**

Perhaps the most diverse area of creative expression in which contemporary visual artists are expressing the Green Man message would be the genre broadly known as *Eco-Art*—a category that often embraces the environmental message without specific reference to our now familiar image. Eco-art, or environmental art (not to be confused with *site-specific* art which is sometime referred to as the latter) involves an engagement with nature that goes beyond representation and interpretation to an active participation in and with the living cycles of nature. Proponents of the Eco-Art movement argue for a broader interpretation of art in its relationship to nature, an interpretation informed but not limited by science, history and critical discourse.

Figure 3.6 shows one of the early founders of the environmental art movement, Argentinean artist and activist Nicolas Garcia Urriburu (born 1937) who has waged a courageous battle against deforestation and the pollution of rivers and waterways in his native South America for more than 40 years—with particular interest in bringing the destruction of the Amazon rainforests to the attention of the world. Urriburu's work also involves staging public events, painting on canvas and producing installations.



**Figure 3.6.** A living, breathing version of the Green Man, Nicolas Garcia Uriburu, the father of Eco-Art, is shown here peering through two small holes of a large Platano leaf. Photo by Aldo Sessa. (Bach, 2001). Used by kind permission of the artist.

Uriburu first drew significant international attention during the 1968 *Bienal de Arte Venecia*, during which he coloured the Grand Canal bright green (using biodegradable non-toxic dyes) in a symbolic protest against the pollution of the famous waterway. A series of similar events, entitled *Hidrocromia Intercontinental*, were performed in the years following the Venetian work in which he coloured the East River of New York, the Seine (Paris) and the Rio de la Plata (Buenos Aires) also using non-toxic dyes. Having first gained official permission and, having ensured that the project was entirely safe, Uriburu would alert the media and photograph and record each event to ensure maximum exposure of his message both during and after the performance. Although sounding somewhat simplistic today, his key message—“*Modern Culture is destroying the planet*”—was well in advance of its time outside of scientific, environmental and alternative lifestyle circles in the late 1960s (Bach, 2001). Figure 3.7 shows a younger Uriburu (dressed in his now-familiar trademark green) engaged in pouring dye at the Venetian Biennale.



**Figure 3.7. Argentinean artist Nicolas Uriburu pours fluorescent dye in the Grand Canal, Venice, 1968. (<http://cablemodem.fibertel.com.ar/sofros/> accessed 01/11/05).**

The extent to which Eco-Art has gained precedence during the three decades since Uriburu's groundbreaking work is illustrated in a recent edition of the prominent Australian Art Journal, *Artlink*. In the first quarter of 2006, *Artlink* devoted an entire issue to the Eco-Art movement (Volume 25, No 4; *Ecology: Everyone's Business*). Of particular interest to the author was the emergence of what the journal calls "Eco-warrior artists"—a growing number of local (Australian) and International artists who create art specifically to communicate the urgency of the need to bring about direct action on climate change—and who seek to 'communicat[e] the urgency of our unsustainable interaction with the natural world' through their work (Britton, 2006). It is the sheer urgency of the Ecological message that is one of the hallmarks that define the re-emergence of the Green Man today—and which distinguishes his current message from that brought by the Green Men of the past. In exactly the same way that fairy tales morph and shape-shift to reflect the ideologies of the different times and cultures they pass through, the Green Man image/message today has adapted itself to suit not only the times we live in but the technology we have created and the crisis we face. In the following sections, we shall consider how the current incarnation of the Green Man retains both his ancient and contemporary inspiration and how he is adapting to life in the new millennium.

### 3.8. Permeating Contemporary Culture

Present-day interpretations of the Green Man frequently assign to him the role of *Eco Warrior*, a position that invokes many of the ideals and values of *Chivalry*—in particular those of courage and strength, the desire for justice, wisdom, gentleness, compassion, understanding and, of course, a reverence for nature and the natural world. However, the power to respond to, and act upon, the message he brings is, as always, entirely up to the individual—be it in the role of artist or viewer. Many artists are aware that a sympathetic or emotional connection to an image can lead to action or response in the physical realm (after all, the word emotion is principally made up of the word *motion*, whilst a particularly persuasive work is said to be a *moving work*) and—as we have already noted—alerting people to the present ecological crisis and then motivating them to act is the primary intent of the Conservator archetype and the principal factor driving the present resurgence of the Green Man image. It is for this reason that the Green Man has chosen to engage primarily with the creative arts as the conduit for once again transferring his ancient wisdom from the archetypal to the physical realm—although, as we have seen, the definition of what constitutes the creative arts today is by necessity a very broad one indeed.

In retrospect, perhaps one of the most defining characteristics of Green Man imagery during recent centuries has been the move away from hiding it in the shadows of public buildings and monuments and its subsequent emergence into the light of everyday culture. Whilst this may well be a result of the increasing secularisation of daily life during the past few hundred years, it equally suggests that our innate connection with the natural world is so ingrained as to be indomitable. What may have been popular as an imitation of decorative art forms derived from classical, Byzantine and oriental originals just one hundred years ago, has undoubtedly taken on a significant momentum and meaning in recent years.

Today we find the Green Man image featured in almost every form of visual communication and advertising—from home-ware stores and garden centres, advertising campaigns, children’s books, painting, cosmetics and packaging of every form—to clothing, body art, masks and costumes, postcards, jewellery, stationery and, of course, film and television. In an effort to reach our consciousness, Green Man the Conservator has moved with the times—shifting from the hidden sanctity of cathedrals and places of worship into our everyday world of interior and exterior decoration, advertising, entertainment and mass consumption. He hides where he can best be seen—but then again, he’s always done that. The following figures (Figures 3.8—3.12) show just a few of the ways in which the Green Man image has reappeared and adapted himself to contemporary culture. A quick search of the Internet will reveal to the reader many thousands of similar examples.



**Figures 3.8, 3.9. Contemporary Examples of the Green Man in popular Culture. (Left) The Green Man, by artist Philip Malpass, used by *Growth Technology*, a UK company specialising in plant nutrients. ([www.growthtechnology.com](http://www.growthtechnology.com) accessed 09/11/05). The image is used on labels and packaging and on the company’s website and advertising. (Right) A Tee shirt design by artist Jim Neely ([www.ddraiggraphics.com](http://www.ddraiggraphics.com)), originally found on the website: [www.mercyground.com](http://www.mercyground.com), accessed 21/02/05. Used by kind permission of the artists.**



**Figures 3.10, 3.11. Body Art and Costume Examples. (Left) A full back body tattoo designed by Peter Pracownik. ([www.peterpracownik.com](http://www.peterpracownik.com) accessed 09/11/05). Used by kind permission of the artist. (Right) A costume/mask ensemble from the SpringKeeper website. ([www.springkeeper.org](http://www.springkeeper.org)).**



**Figure 3.12. Homeware / Garden Example. A Green Man wall fountain from the retail website [www.degriffioen.com](http://www.degriffioen.com), accessed 21/02/06.**

From the few randomly-selected selected examples shown above, it becomes immediately clear to even the casual observer that the Green Man image has metamorphosised in part to take on the role of popular motif—not only because we instinctively identify with it—but because we are both familiar and comfortable with it. As more and more people find themselves living in cramped, high-density urban

conditions, we instinctively reach out for the familiar comfort of our ancestral roots. On a more cynical note, it must be acknowledged that many people are also willing to pay for this comfort and there are those who are more than willing to provide it. Nevertheless, everyone who is a part of modern civilization cannot be anything but fully aware of the present environmental crisis—and the current rise in the popularity of the Green Man image is one of the ways we instinctively respond to this knowledge. Having a permanent reminder of our roots in nature in our homes and gardens—and even on our bodies—reminds us of our connection with Gaia, our Mother the Earth. Having the symbol within eyesight reminds us to act responsibly, with compassion, and understanding towards our natural world. We will now examine the work of eleven contemporary artists who are working with the Green Man Theme in a professional capacity.

### **3.9. Into the Belly of the Fire**

This section presents the results of the interviews conducted with artists working with the Green Man theme. Seventy-two interview sheets were sent to artists in Australia and abroad between October 2005 and April 2006. The interview questionnaire can be found in this exegesis as Appendix Two, whilst the individual answers are presented as Appendix Three. The criteria considered when deciding which artists would be asked to participate were relatively basic in that:

- participants are or have been creators of Green Man art in some form.
- participants must offer or have had offered their Green Man art for sale.

This was essentially done in order to ensure that all of the participants in the interviews were engaged in creating Green Man art in some form of professional, rather than amateur capacity and thus could be considered to be proactively engaged in spreading the image. Artists were contacted by email, telephone, and traditional mail. Unfortunately, of the seventy-two artists contacted, only eleven responded with



completed interviews. An additional eight artists responded, but with incomplete interviews, and for this reason their comments have not been included in this summary of responses. The artforms in which the eleven full respondents were engaged were as follows :

- one writer
- four painters
- two sculptors
- one garden designer
- one costume designer
- one computer-based art and design student
- and one musician/visual artist/jewellery designer.

The next section introduces the artists and gives a brief overview of their work and their philosophy.

### **3.9.1. The Participants/Artists**

**Andrew Rothery** is an essayist, a visionary and a writer with a particular interest in community building and men's wellbeing. He received a BSc. with Honors in Physiology from Kings College London and a MSc. in Environmental and Ecological Sciences from Lancaster University. Current projects include establishing a United Kingdom based men's wellbeing network and involvement in creating large land-based earth sculptures of the male form in *situ*. Rothery is the only writer in the sample and has been quoted extensively in Chapters One and Two of this project. Rothery's essays are often published in *Gatherings, the Journal of the International Community for Ecopsychology* ([http://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/ezone/green\\_man.html](http://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/ezone/green_man.html)). The most recent essay to appear in *Gatherings* is *Beyond Gaia? An Exploration of Earth Consciousness and Gender*, which was published in June 2005.

**Ruth Sanderson** graduated from the Paier College of Art in Hamden, Connecticut in 1974 and has illustrated books and novels for children of all ages, ranging from pre-reader picture books to young adult fiction, including such classics as *Heidi* and



Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*. Sanderson's original fairytale, *The Enchanted Wood*, received the Irma S. Black award for best picture book in 1992, and the Young Hoosier Award in 1995. Sanderson's paintings have been shown at the Norman Rockwell Museum and included in exhibitions held by the prestigious American Society of Illustrators. Examples of her work have appeared on greeting cards and fantasy book covers and have been used widely in editorial work and advertising. Sanderson began painting Green Man images at the turn of the millennium and plans on completing her twelve piece series of monthly Green Men in the near future. (<http://books.dreambook.com/goldenwood/main.html>)



Figures 3.13, 3.14, 3.15. Three examples of Ruth Sanderson's Green Man Art; *The October Green Man* (33cm x 39cm giclee on archival paper), *The Oak King* (33cm x 33cm giclee on archival paper) and *The November Green Man* (33cm x 39cm giclee on archival paper). All are available as prints from Sanderson's website. (<http://www.ruthsanderson.com/prints.html>). Used by kind permission of the artist.

**Marjorie Bussey** is an artist and art teacher from Maleny, Queensland. She graduated from RMIT University in 1958 when she began her career as an award-winning artist. She has won six arts festival awards, has had 15 solo exhibitions and has participated in over 50 group exhibitions. Bussey's work is in collections worldwide. Unfortunately Bussey could not supply a sample of her Green Man artwork.

**Monica Richards'** artistic career began in the early 1980's as front singer for the underground punk band *Hate From Ignorance*, based in Washington, DC. Richards' prolific art-making includes singing, composing, painting, illustrating, and writing—books, music, poetry and philosophy. Richards is a unique artist with a worldwide fan base and is described on her website as [the] “Original Riot Grrrl [sic] and the Fairytale Queen all rolled into one” (J. Tompkins: <http://www.monicarichards.com>). Richards' artwork combines classical and folk-art themes and styles, with pieces directing the viewer's gaze to a focal point that connects and merges the image with its surroundings, using patternwork, symmetrical compositions, shadow, light, and layered imagery in combination. A viewing of Richards' graphic pieces make it clear why the mystical image of the Green Man would appeal to her. From her website (<http://www.monicarichards.com>), fans can purchase various items printed with her distinctive, graphic-style Green Man art.



Figures 3.16, 3.17. Examples of Monica Richard's Green Man jewellery. ([http://www.mercyground.com/merch/tees\\_greenman.html](http://www.mercyground.com/merch/tees_greenman.html)) and Green Man tee-shirt design by Jim Neely ([www.ddraiggraphics.com](http://www.ddraiggraphics.com)). Updated 23/06/2010. Used by kind permission of the artists.

**Lawrence D. Adrian** is the Founder, CEO, Artistic Director and Costume Designer for the Oregon Coast Children's Theatre and Centre for the Arts. The not-for-profit centre is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year of providing a varied artistic program including festivals, exhibitions, lectures, workshops and travelling art programs to the children of the Pacific Northwest and the Western states of the United States. According to the website, "the mission of O.C.C.T. has always been to foster & encourage understanding and appreciation for the Fine and Performing Arts for our Children". (<http://www.oregoncoast-childrenstheatre.com/index.html>). The Green Man's archetypal role of the guardian of new life was extensively featured in the Centre's Educational Touring program *Carnival*, which was started in 2003 and was still in production in late 2005. (<http://www.oregoncoastchildrenstheatre.com/index.html>).



**Figure 3.18.** *The Green Man & Satyr*, characters from *Carnival*. A production put on by the Oregon Coast's Childrens Theatre. Costumes designed by Lawrence D. Adrian. (<http://www.oregoncoastchildrenstheatre.com/html/carnival.html>). Used by kind permission of the artist.



**Dorothy “Bunny” Bowen** is a painter who paints in a Batik style on silk with dyes resisted by molten wax—a traditional technique which has been in recorded use for over 2500 years. Bowen graduated with a BA in Art from Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, and holds a MA in Art History from the University of New Mexico. Bowen is a full-time professional studio artist and has been an active teacher for several decades. She is especially serious about her commitment to the planet—as she notes on her website (<http://www.db-bowen.com/>) —“I believe we should live lightly on this earth in absolute awe of its magnificence” (Bowen, 2006). The image of the Green Man helps her to communicate this message through her work. Further information on Bowen can be found at: [http://www.placitasarts.org/Visual\\_Arts/Bowen/Bunny/BunnyBowen.htm](http://www.placitasarts.org/Visual_Arts/Bowen/Bunny/BunnyBowen.htm).



Figures 3.19, 3.20, 3.21. Examples of Dorothy “Bunny” Bowen’s paintings on silk, *Green Man*, *Green Woman* and *When We Were Green* (Rozome on kimono silk, each 49cm x 40cm). (<http://www.db-bowen.com/recent/images/sale-images/pages/greenman.htm>). Used by kind permission of the artist.

**Jane Brideson’s** artwork is inspired by myth, ritual, nature and the seasons of Ireland, where she lives. She works mainly in gouache and coloured pencil on dark backgrounds, occasionally using acrylics and pastels. Brideson is a trained graphic artist/designer and has illustrated several books including *The Wheel of the Year—Myth and Magic through the Season* (which she also co-wrote with Teresa Moorey). She has exhibited extensively throughout Europe and her work has appeared on the

covers of several occult-related magazines including *Pagan Dawn*, *Pentacle* and *Withcraft & Wicca*. Brideson is a member of the *British Visionary Artists Group*, which has the “collective aim of gaining a stronger place in the world of art as visual representatives of the re-emergence of spirituality in contemporary society” (<http://www.bvag.co.uk/>). Her popular Green Man series of prints and cards is available for sale under the title *Gods* on her website (<http://www.darkmoondesigns.net>). These powerful Green Man images, along with additional pagan-themed cards, prints, and posters are also offered for sale worldwide through a network of Pagan, Women's, and Celtic themed businesses and distributors—and on several connected websites.



**Figures 3.22, 3.23, 3.24. Examples of Jane Brideson's Green Men: *Green Man*, *Winter*, and *Holly King* (all images are 30cm x 22cm and are prints on paper). (<http://www.darkmoondesigns.net>). Used by kind permission of the artist.**

**Paul Sivell** is a self-taught wood carver and sculptor living and working on the Isle of Wight in the United Kingdom. His career background is in forestry, arboriculture and countryside management. He started experimenting with sculpture in the late 1970's becoming a full-time sculptor in 2003. Sivell has carried out numerous public and private commissions and is well known for using dead, dying, damaged or fallen trees. His subject matter and working themes are inspired by nature, local traditions and mythology. Sivell's Green Man work is extensively documented earlier in this chapter.

His website, which documents both his work and his creative philosophy is *The Carved Tree*, and can be found at <http://thecarvedtree.com/carvedtree/default.htm>.



Figures 3.25, 3.26. Examples of Paul Sivell's Green Man tree sculptures: *Big Friendly Green Man* (Monterey cypress, 3m high) and *Robin Goodfellow* (Sweet Chestnut, 1.7m high). (<http://thecarvedtree.com>). Used by kind permission of the artist.

**David Eveleigh** is a garden designer living and working in the United Kingdom. He graduated from Bristol College of Art and Design with a Bachelor of Fine Art in 1974. Eveleigh's career has run a gamut of creative endeavours, including fine-art painting, touring as a professional clown, performing and directing fire theatre and designing and managing festival finales. His garden designs range from relaxed to formal and include historically themed gardens created with plants appropriate to the period. Through his work he attempts to encourage the natural pest/predator balance and thus supports non-chemical gardening methods. Eveleigh's finished gardens provide a sanctuary for retreat and contemplation, such as in his 1998 commission the Penpont Green Man Millennium Maze, located in Powys, Wales. It is the largest depiction of a Green Man image in the world. (<http://www.goffee.co.uk/labyrinths.htm>).





**Figure 3.27.** David Eveleigh's garden design. Left: the *Penpont Green Man Millennium Maze*, commissioned by Gavin and Davina Hogg of Penpont, Brecon, Powys, Wales (50m x 55m, 3,500 trees). Right: The exact plan for the project designed on a grid of sacred geometry. The position and alignment of the Greenman Maze was dowsed in order to be in harmony with the earth's natural energy lines or Lleys. The maze has become a place for meditation, reflection, harmony and renewal. (<http://www.goffee.co.uk>). Used by kind permission of the artist.

**M.J. Anderson** is a US based sculptor, educator and public art consultant. A studio artist for over 20 years, Anderson has won numerous awards and international accolades. Her artistic philosophy is described on her website as:

Instead of trying to carve figures and images—whether realistic or abstract, I try to carve what it feels like to be human—to convey the unspoken emotions of our being here, to create an image of the intangible. (Anderson, 2006).

Anderson was one of a dozen sculptors chosen from an International field to participate in the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens Sculpture Symposium, held in Maroochydore, Queensland, in 2005. Her work, produced for the symposium, is called *Green Man as Original Coastal Aboriginal Man of All Time from Whence the Bush and All of Nature Sprouts from his Fingers* and is shown below in Figure 3.28. (<http://www.mjandersonsculpture.com/>)



**Figure 3.28.** *Green Man as Original Coastal Aboriginal Man of All Time from Whence the Bush and All of Nature Sprouts from his Fingers*, marble sculpture by M.J. Anderson, 2005. (Photograph by the author, 2006). Used by kind permission of the artist.

**Alexandra Kersten** was a German exchange student studying Computer-based Art and Design at the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2004. Her interest in the Green Man / Woman theme was triggered by her Australian experience and her concern at the extensive clearing and exploitation of the natural environment in the Sunshine Coast region. Figure 3.29 shows an example Kersten's work, in which she depicts herself in the role of Green Woman.





**Figure 3.29. Alexandra Kersten. (2005). Computer generated image depicting the artist in the role of Green Woman.**

### **3.9.3. Summary of Artists' Responses**

This section summarises the feedback from the artists involved in the research on a question-by-question basis.

#### **Question 1. *When and how did you first discover the Green Man image?***

Three participants responded that they did not know or could not remember their first encounter. Two respondents discovered the Green Man through knowledge of existing myths, two through historical study, one through a friend, one through research, one through a sighting at a church and one through a direct contact experience in a natural setting.

#### **Question 2. *What did that Green Man image represent to you?***

Ten participants responded that the Green Man represents something associated with nature in general terms (one participant did not answer). Three of the ten noted specifically that the Green Man image has had the ability to represent different ideas about our relationship with the natural world at different periods throughout the course of history. Specifically, participants responded that the Green Man image represents:

- harmony with nature;
- the “soul” of the trees (synonymous with the Gaia philosophy);
- a consort to “Mother Nature”;
- a celebration of re-birth and of spring;
- humanity’s connection with nature;
- a personification of the *wildness* of nature;
- a link to the past through our connection with forests;
- the masculine aspects of nature and the procreative process;
- an anthropomorphic interpretation of human emotion within the scope of the natural world: and
- the life-force in general.

**Question 3. *Do you feel that the Green Man has a gender?***

Nine participants responded that the Green Man was definitively male. One respondent believed that the Green Man is representational of both genders and one said that the Green Man represented no gender specifically—but could be seen rather as a personification of nature *per se*.

**Question 4. *If so, what caused you to come to that decision?***

Seven participants came to perceive the Green Man as having a specific gender through consideration of the physical appearance and traditional depictions of the Green Man in distinctively male form and with obviously male characteristics. One artist noted that the name alone made the identification with the masculine form obvious, whilst one saw the Green Man as the “possessor of the seed” [of nature] and thus male by definition. One artist came to view the Green Man as male on the basis of long held traditional and mythological connections, whilst one saw the Green Man as a representation of human consciousness and emotion and thus inclusive of both. One participant did not answer.

**Question 5. *Do you feel Green Man in general has a message to convey, if so, what is that message?***

All of the participants concurred that the Green Man's message is focussed on reminding us of humanity's interconnection with the planet and our need to respect and take responsibility for the care of our environment. Whilst the ways in which this was expressed differed, several common themes emerged:

- we are all part of the living earth and ecosystem;
- the continuation of life is paramount;
- we all derive intuition from our intimate connection with nature;
- we cannot separate ourselves from our original animal nature;
- the celebration of new life is a positive experience;
- the Green Man personifies our one-ness with the universe;
- we have a responsibility to care for and respect nature;
- we need to be in harmony with nature and respect and celebrate this fact;
- to make the best of ourselves we must be at one with nature: and
- we must be constantly aware of the importance of nature in our lives.

**Question 6. *In your artwork what does the Green man represent?***

Five participants stated that in their art practice the Green Man typically represents humanity's need to be more aware of our natural environment and to think in terms of sustainability. Two responded that he represents—or is shown as—the guardian of renewed life. To one artist the Green Man represents our animal nature whilst to another he is simply the Green Man and, as such, needs no further interpretation on the part of the artist—since the interpretation should be based on whatever the viewer determines. Another participant was not aware of any conscious intent driving their representation of the Green Man within their work, whilst to one artist the image that came forth from the stone as they created their sculptural work suggested a possible link to an ancient Aboriginal Green Man archetype. To the author, this latter insight is interesting indeed, given the space and environment in which the image in question was created (see Figure 3.28).

**Question 7. *Is there a message that you want the viewer to pick up on?***

Seven participants indicated that they particularly wanted the viewer to become more aware of the need to live in harmony with nature. Four within this group went further and wanted the viewer to perceive that immediate and direct action is necessary. Four artists took a more conventional stance, stating that they were happy for their viewers to determine their own meaning from the work using the image / object as a vehicle for accessing their personal subconsciousness.

**Question 8. *Have you succeeded in conveying this message?***

Responses were as follows:

- Two; yes.
- Two; “hope so”.
- Two; “sometimes”.
- Two; not sure.
- Three; no answer given.

**Question 9. *If so, how do you know?***

Five participants stated they know they have gotten the environmental message across through direct feedback on their work and/or through critical acknowledgement. One artist determined their success through the amount of sales and one cryptically stated that she knew “through what inspired her” [?]. Three did not answer.

**Question 10. *Have you sold any of your Green Man art?***

Nine participants answered positively, two answered in the negative.

**Question 11. *If so, do you know what moved the sale?***

Six participants believed that customers bought their Green Man art-work because they identified with the image, three participants did not answer, and one answered no.

**Question 12. *Do you plan on continuing to create Green Man art?***

The participants answered as follows:

- Six; yes.
- Two; probably.

- One; possibly.
- One; not specifically.
- One; not sure.

### **3.10. Discussion of Artists' Responses**

There are several clear parallels evident in many of the artists' responses and some rather interesting surprises. For instance, contrary to the author's initial expectations and personal interpretation of the Green Man figure, nine out of the eleven artists noted that the Green Man image was specifically representational of a male character, possessing few or no feminine characteristics. Although many of the participants came to this conclusion based mainly on the Green Man's visual appearance and through traditional depictions of the figure, it is interesting to note that two of the artists saw the Green Man as neither male or female and indeed, to them, gender did not seem to be the key issue. Whilst one of these artists (Anderson) considered their interpretations of the Green Man to be representational of both genders to varying degrees, the other (Kersten) stated that the image personified nature *per se*. Perhaps the most common perception, agreed upon almost unanimously, was that the Green Man image fundamentally represents humanity's intimate and inextricable relationship with the natural world.

Speaking personally as an artist deeply engaged with the Green Man theme, I must say that I am in agreement with the majority of participants on this issue, in that I also (as an artist) interpret the Green Man as a male figure. This belief is based both on my personal study of the diverse range of artwork that has been produced throughout a long history of artistic engagement and response to the theme and the fact that, in the contemporary context, the image is still predominantly represented as showing many of the physical attributes typically associated with external statements of masculine gender. However, looking beneath the superficial appearance of the image and into

why the majority of artists acknowledge his gender as specifically male, I must agree with the comments made by several of the artists that participated in the study—in particular those of Rothery, Sanderson, Richards, and Brideson. These four artists in particular put forward the idea that the image is specifically representational of the male half of the universal life force—a force which, when wrapped in the feminine life-force that is nature (*i.e.*, Mother Earth, or Gaia) is the possessor of the seed from which she creates life. Together, they complete the balance that is necessary for universal harmony and the continuation of all life on the earth.

Moving beyond the (perhaps) more obvious interpretations of Green Man as the masculine counterpart to the feminine life force represented by Gaia, and into the deeper meaning hidden within the image, there still appears to be a common perception amongst the respondents that the Green Man exists specifically to remind those who encounter him of their intimate and inextricable relationship with the natural world. This basic common theme was again almost unanimous amongst the artists interviewed. Indeed, more than half of the group (as well as the author) indicated that they hoped that viewers of their work would become far more aware of their own personal and undeniable relationship with the natural environment as a result of seeing or experiencing their Green Man art. Some of this group went even further—stating that, as a result of seeing the creative work, it was hoped that the viewers would be moved towards taking some form of further (affirmative) action.

Speaking in my personal capacity as a practicing artist, it is my belief (and hope) that my individual work might convey the same urgency as a roadside warning. For example, if a sign says *Dangerous Curves Ahead* and the driver does not slow down, it is obvious to the more sensible amongst us that dire consequences may await. In the end, however, not all drivers will choose to obey the signs. Like any road sign, most contemporary Green Man art puts forward a warning for those (usually affluent)

societies that do not (or cannot) live in balance with nature—and, as with road signs, some will choose to ignore it. Like canaries in a coalmine, many artists working with the Green Man theme today feel a desperate need to spread the conservationist message. Specifically, they feel that there is a need to remind their audience that every living person is an intimate and functioning part of the larger planetary and cosmic network—and that we are all individually responsible for initiating the outcomes that might lead towards establishing the long-term sustainability of the planet and life as we know it.

In this light, many of the responses to the question as to whether the artists felt their message was getting through to their audience were quite promising. Half of the group (the author included, Appendix Eight, page 211) indicated that they have had positive feedback from viewers who report feeling a strong connection with the theme of the work. Others have based their perception of creative success almost entirely on the basis of the sales generated by their Green Man art.

Importantly, a few of the artists saw their Green Man art as providing a catalyst for positive “social and spiritual change” (in particular, Rothery and Bussey). In Rothery’s case, several meaningful dialogues were opened up on an international basis between quite diverse groups of people as a direct result of experiencing his written work and web presence. Similarly, one artist (Bowen) stated that due to the intrigue generated from her art, the opportunity was created for generating a series of environmentally based discussions—which in turn had led to a heightened awareness of our direct connection with the natural world amongst some of those who had viewed her work. In the same vein, another artist viewed nature itself as a vehicle for generating such contemplation—calling it a “meditative life force” (Bussey). According to Bussey, Green Man art represents our “desperate need to respect the life force of the planet and our own intuitive connection to nature” (Bussey).

The author cannot help but note the use of strong and impassioned words by many of the artists in answering the questions put forward. Words were used such as; desperate, ecstatically, primal, deep-rooted, respect, fecundity, gods, goddess, consciousness, soul, desire, mysteries, wildness, awareness, unrestrained, imagination, sacred geometry and inexpressible. It is this rapturous momentum of expression and emotion that have also captivated the author for the majority of the years associated with this project. Just as the Green Man beckons us to embrace our connectedness to the planet with dignity and compassion, as an artist I personally feel a connectedness to a whole that is much, much larger than that of my own individual experience.

We will examine more deeply my own creative response to the Green Man phenomena in the following Chapter, which presents my personal artistic engagement with the Green Man image and details in depth the creative component of this project.



## Chapter 4

### 4.1. The Creative Process—The Green Man Resurrected

The collection of artwork and artist's notes presented in this Chapter is the result of more than four years of research, reflection and creative response—all of which can be said to derive from the author's personal experiences following her chance encounter with the ancient image of the Green Man. As noted previously, many people find their initial encounter with the figure of the Green Man to be a profound, if not sublime experience. Few remain unchanged. In the author's case, the desire to learn more, to understand the phenomenon through research, to engage in critical, analytical and imaginative processing of the mass of visual, literal and philosophical information that the study uncovered began the long journey that the creative work shown here has only just begun to illustrate.

Many diverse elements were taken into consideration, at many different levels, in the production of the artworks created in conjunction with this study. The long and varied history of the Green Man and the many things that he has represented across the millennia is certainly significant, especially when we consider the numerous ways he has chosen to reveal himself today—what and how the image communicates to us right now is just as important and influential as the ways in which he has appeared in the past. From hiding in church doorways to riding down the highway emblazoned on a motorcycle jacket or talking to children in the guise of a “Veggie Man” on the television, the archetypal Green Man continues to remind humanity of our relationship with the natural environment and guide us, hopefully, in the right direction. With this in mind, the author's response to her encounter—to contribute to the cause in her own, albeit small and personal way through the application of her own creative skills—makes perfect sense. As a practicing artist, the author has long understood that an image can invoke

emotion, response and action within the viewer. With that in mind, the creative work proceeded, sometimes in parallel with her reading, sometimes moving instinctively in advance of her discoveries and sometimes in response to thoughtful reflection. As the research delved into the disciplines of art, history, philosophy, psychology, ecology, religion and contemporary culture—so the threads and connections began to become more apparent and increasingly more obvious. Compiling the data, deciding what to incorporate and what to leave out has not been easy, since almost all of the findings have been fascinating and in some way related to one another. As the correlation between the image of the Green Man and our everyday visual world continues to unfold and expand, new inspiration is continually being found.

The research led to the production of numerous sketches, drawings, poetry, letters and collages over the period of the project. From this process work, eleven paintings and one three-dimensional interactive piece were finally produced for the exhibition, which took place at the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery, opening in January 2006. A copy of the author/artist's opening night speech can be found in this exegesis as Appendix Four: Opening Speech on page 213.

Recognition of the assistance given in the production of some of the artworks must be given at this point. Traditionally trained Iranian designer, Amir Naderi assisted in designing and carving the decorative mouldings used in the work *Balance of Nature*. Thanks must also be given to two woodworkers, Graham Willett and Christine Stein, who assisted in producing the woodwork and case for *The House Challenge*. Without the help of these skilled craftspeople in interpreting and producing the author's designs the quality and finish of the pieces would have been much impoverished. All of the people who have helped in some way are named in the text associated with the individual work, as well as in the Opening Speech. To assist visitors to the exhibition, a journal of process work was made available for viewing during the period of the display,

along with a feedback book for guests to sign. Although space and time constraints made showing the entire process work impossible, several visitors noted that seeing behind the works on display was a valuable and informative experience and this is certainly something the author will attempt to include in further exhibitions. Some of this process work appears as figures in Section 4.2. Comments from the guest book and author's website are listed in Section 4.3.

## **4.2. The Creative Component**

### **Green Man Resurrected—The Exhibition**

The exhibition of the finished work was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery, Maroochydore, Queensland—opening on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2006 and closing on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 2006. The exhibition was a joint showing with fellow postgraduate student and colleague, Ms Debra Livingston. Both bodies of work explored the visual form in relation to the natural environment, with Debra's medium being primarily photography and design. Promotion of the exhibition was undertaken jointly, with valuable support coming from the Gallery Director, Dawn Oelrich and the University's Media and Marketing department. Newspaper and media coverage relating to the promotion of the exhibition and the opening night can be seen in Appendix Four.

Figure 4.1 shows a map of the gallery and the location of the images, so that the reader can gain an overall impression of how the works were positioned and how they related to each other. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 are photographs of the exhibition *in situ*. Following is the creative work in the order that it appeared to visitors when hung in the gallery. Wherever possible, directly under the description of each painting in the text can be found the title, medium, size and date produced. Below that information, is a reproduction of the text of the didactic panel (descriptive/interpretive text) that

appeared next to the piece during the period of the exhibition. Following that is documentation of the creative process for each individual piece, including working method, materials used and the author's inspirational sources. The original exhibition didactic panel, which briefly outlined the overall nature of the exhibition is included as Appendix Five.

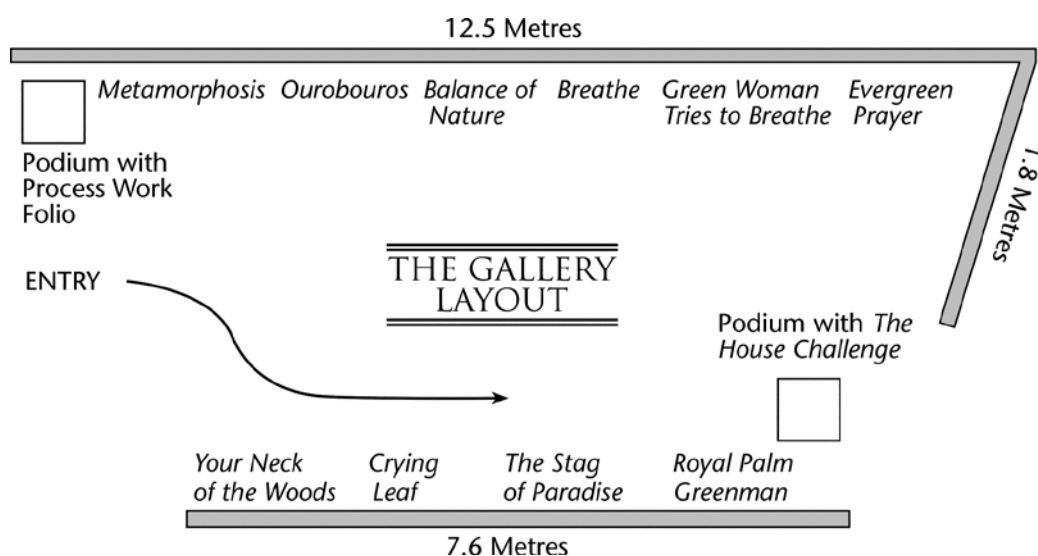


Figure 4.1. The floor plan of the exhibition.



Figure 4.2. The Exhibition in place at the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery.

To complement the exhibition, an additional section was added to the author's personal website [www.araneoart.com](http://www.araneoart.com) entitled "Green Man Series". This part of the website enabled Internet users to view the exhibit and exhibition informatics as they appeared in the gallery—and is still available online. Viewers were invited to email comments through the website if unable to visit the exhibition in person.

#### 4.2.1. Green Man Mandala: *Your Neck of the Woods*

Oil on Canvas, 76.2cm x 101.6cm. Figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3. *Your Neck of the Woods*. Oil on canvas, 76.2cm x 101.6cm. 2003.

#### Exhibition Didactic Panel.

The Tibetan *mandala* is a visual representation of a mantra or sacred sound. The painted forms are often used as meditative guides and supports, aiding in mental and spiritual transformation. Here the mandala houses six historic Green Man images from different cultures and time periods throughout history. It is interesting to note that Green Man art emerged on separate continents prior to any known interaction between those cultures. This *mandala* illustrates that the Green Man archetype is part of our deepest consciousness. Recognition of his many guises within ourselves gives us the power to protect, nurture and propagate his virtues, rather than senselessly destroy them without recognizing the dire or unknown consequences such actions may engender.

### **Creative Process: *Your Neck of the Woods***

Originally, it was intended that the creative component of this project would be based entirely on a series of paintings developed by adapting the structures underlying the composition of traditional Buddhist *mandalas*. In the early stages of this work, the *mandala* concept was highly appealing, since it afforded the opportunity to present the Green Man image and philosophical message using an already established platform, especially one which was based on an ancient yet familiar spiritual structure. As well, the repetitious patterning that many ancient Green Man sculptures in the West are based on lends itself beautifully to the particularly complex compositional structures of the *mandala*. Most importantly, traditional *mandalas* are purported to produce regenerative and curative effects on those who meditate upon them (Cornell, 1995)—an intriguing concept in relation to the many attributes ascribed to the Green Man archetype, and even more so in the light of recent work into the therapeutic benefits of nature based therapy.

However, even though use of the *mandala* theme seemed like a good idea in relation to the author's original objective of influencing the viewer at the subconscious level, her research and consequent findings eventually took her in a different direction. Very few members of modern Western society have either the time or the inclination to step aside from the pressures of contemporary life and contemplate the metaphysical. Indeed, for many, even the time to walk on the beach or admire their local park or garden is difficult to find amidst the daily rush of commuting and business. Since most of us cannot, do not and most likely will not, meditate, the decision was made against the idea. However, the discovery of deep environmentalism and the work of the eco-artists inspired the author to create Green Man imagery in a more contemporary, and hopefully more accessible fashion than that provided by the rigid structure of the *mandala*.

Nonetheless, the *mandala* format does work for the painting *Your Neck of the Woods*, since the circular format not only holds the six images of ancient Green Men together, it describes a physical structure that unifies them structurally and allows each of them to work together in a far more powerful way than would be achieved if each were to stand alone. The introduction of the common expression “*Your Neck of the Woods*” as the painting’s title provides a thought-provoking duality of meaning, as the chainsaw randomly beheads the familiar Green Man portraits. *Your Neck of the Woods* was the only painting in the collection to be framed. The author felt the carved, golden hardwood frame added dignity to the ancient imagery; therefore it has also been included in the photograph (Figure 4.3).

#### **4.2.2. *Crying Leaf***

**Oil on Linen, 39.6cm x 85.3cm. Figure 4.4.**



**Figure 4.4. *Crying Leaf*. Oil on linen, 39.6cm x 85.3 cm. 2004.**

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

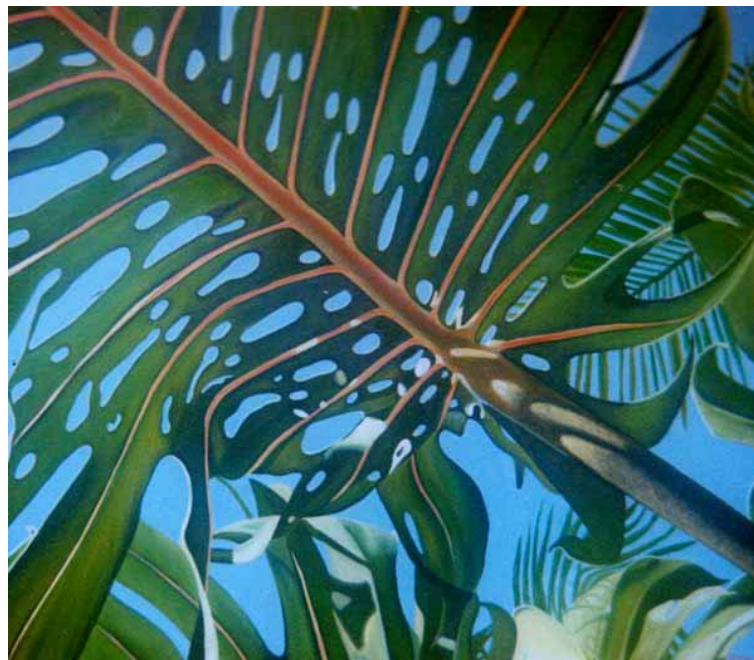
The face in the leaves is always present. Most of Green Man visual art is portrayed through the combination of foliage and the human head, giving the image the ability to



express emotion. We also may equate the Green Man image with the analogy Plato (circa 300bc) often used in his philosophy, whereby the mysteries of the forest are compared to the unknowns of the human mind.

### **Creative Process: *Crying Leaf***

It is interesting to note that the inspiration for, and the stylistic development that underpins this painting was actually in place some years before the Green Man Resurrected Project began. Around the year 2000, the author was extensively involved in painting large floral and plant based works based on the tropical environment of South-East Queensland, including an extensive series using a South American climbing plant popular in many Queensland gardens—*Monstera Deliciosa*. An example of one of this series of leaf paintings (which were sold in several galleries on the Queensland Sunshine Coast) can be seen in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4.5. *Breakthrough*. Oil on linen, 85.3cm x 86.2cm. 2000.**

The author came to Australia from New Jersey (in the northern United States) in the late 1990s and was, of course, totally unfamiliar with the abundant natural light and unique plant forms of the subtropical rain forest into which she suddenly found herself transplanted. As can be imagined, the sheer size and vitality of the types of leaves and



plants found in many Queensland gardens made a huge and lasting impression on the author. Importantly, the patterns of positive and negative space created by the perforated leaves of the *Monstera Deliciosa*, combined with the brightness of the Australian sun (which highlighted the natural hues of the plant and created striking contrasts between light and shadow) produced a challenge to her painting skills which could not go uncontested. The series of works, inspired specifically by leaf-forms and light, continued throughout the early years of the new Millennium until 2004 when the *Royal Palm Green Man* and the *Stag of Paradise* images were encountered and subsequently painted. *Crying Leaf*, based directly on this earlier series but given a unique twist, depicts the sad and drawn face of a tired Green Man, a face which is made evident with the simple addition of a few brush strokes to suggest tears and thus eyes. The painting falls neatly into the first category of Green Man imagery as discussed in Chapter One—that of leaf/mask and hidden face. Intentionally, and in deliberate Green Man style, the message inherent in the image points specifically to humanity's effect on the natural world and the response of the injured biosphere. As the second painting encountered by the viewer in the exhibition, *Crying Leaf* was intended to suggest the very human emotions of grief, sorrow and perhaps, remorse.

#### **4.2.3. *The Stag of Paradise***

**Oil on Canvas, 121.9cm x 91.4cm. Figure 4.6.**

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

Given the immediately recognizable nature of the *Royal Palm Green Man* image, it was felt that a Didactic panel was not needed for this painting.



Figure 4.6. *The Stag of Paradise*. Oil on canvas, 121.9cm x 91.4cm. 2004.

#### **Creative Process: *The Stag of Paradise***

*The Stag of Paradise* is a naturally inspired Green Man painting (*i.e.*, meaning a painting based directly on the author's own personal experience of encountering a face in the leaves). Given the massive width of this native Australian sub-tropical plant (*Platycerium bifurcatum*) a horizontal format was chosen for the piece, specifically to draw attention to facial features hidden within. In this instance, the Green Man takes on the role of *Stag*—a warrior whose stare is strongly reminiscent of that of the *Green Man of Bamberg* (Figure 1.2). Like the *Royal Palm Green Man*, *Stag* is a guardian of the vegetative realm. Proudly peering from behind his intricate mask, he shows little or no emotion, although it is clear that nothing gets by his watchful eye. The resplendent fullness of his foliage headwear brings to the author's mind the North American Indian head-dress typically associated with the Sioux nation—with its attendant symbolism of respect, bravery and status deriving from both within and outside of the tribal group.

As with the previous representational Green Man image painted, the colours used are based on the natural colours evident in the original plant and location, however some license was taken with the handling of the background colouring and treatment. Figure 4.7, is a digital photo of *Stag* as he appeared in his natural environment, whilst the background was strongly influenced by the painting style of A. Andrew Gonzalez, as seen in *The Love of Souls* (Figure 4.8).



**Figures 4.7. (Left) and 4.8. (Right). Left: Digital photograph of *The Stag of Paradise* as encountered by the author. Right: *The Love of Souls*, by A. Andrew Gonzalez (1993, [www.sublimatrix.com](http://www.sublimatrix.com)). Used by kind permission of the artist.**

Gonzalez's use of a monochromatic colour scheme, as well as the extension of the visual line from subject into background is what attracted the author to this particular piece in the first instance. Gonzalez connects the two figures with the background through the use of a seamless flow of line between figure and ground, giving the painting a strong sculptural feel. This compositional technique was used in *Stag* to express the oneness of *the Green Man* image with the natural world. The stylization of the background foliate elements intentionally balances the placement of the central figure on the two-dimensional plane and anchors him close to the surface in the visual centre of the painting, thereby reinforcing and drawing attention to the strength and vitality of his hidden presence. Based on the response and feedback the author received from her colleagues and visitors to the exhibition, *the Stag of Paradise* proved to be the most popular work in the exhibition. It was chosen as the image to appear on

the invitation to the exhibition (Figure 4.9.) and was the first painting to be sold on the opening night of exhibition.



**Figure 4.9.** The invitation to the opening of the joint exhibition: *Green Man Resurrected* and *Organic Simulcast*. Invitation designed by Dr Debra Livingston (2006). Used by kind permission of the artist.

#### **4.2.4. Royal Palm Green Man**

**Oil on Canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. Figure 4.10.**

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

Given the immediately recognizable nature of the *Royal Palm Green Man* image, it was felt that a Didactic panel was not needed for this painting.

#### **Creative Process: Royal Palm Green Man**

During the extensive research into contemporary Green Man art undertaken in association with this project, the author did not come across any specifically Australian themed Green Man images—although that is not to say they do not exist. Indeed, given Australia's early settlement by English migrants (willing or otherwise) and given that



many of them were from rural backgrounds, it would be strange if there were none to be found. In addition, given the limited scope of the study, the author has not been able to even begin to explore the rich vein of Indigenous art and myths that have been a part of Australian culture for over 40 thousand years. It is certain he is there, somewhere. However, although there are contemporary artists in Australia who work with the image, there are none who create them using the plants found in the Australian environment (although May Gibbs' big, bad *Banksia Man* does come to mind).



**Figure 4.10. *Royal Palm Green Man*. Oil on canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. 2004.**

Thus, with little more than the intention of sketching some of the plant life of her own garden in mind, the author set out for a morning's work and, inadvertently, to an encounter that would change her entire life. As is his nature, the Green Man appeared—without warning and without fanfare—unmistakable in form and leaving no room for doubt as to who or what he was (as can be seen in Figure 3.1). It was at this single, profound moment that the author came to understand the power of discovering

the Green Man image directly in nature. There was no need to imagine a face in the leaves; it was already there, just waiting to be seen.

A series of digital photographs was taken and several sketches were made during the course of the morning for use in guiding the final composition and painting process. Given the location in which he appeared, it seemed to the author that the *Royal Palm Green Man* was acting in a decidedly dual role, that of protector of both the author's home and the forest which presently surrounds it. His presence was high above the house and the surrounding land—from where he looked intently down, keeping watch over all vegetative, animal and human activity. For this reason, in the work the viewer's gaze is intentionally directed upward, as if that of a child looking up to the face of a protective parent—the sensation being further emphasized in the painting through the balanced arrangement of light, shade and shadow. The cropping at the top of the painting, suggestive of a hat or helmet, adds further to the mystique of the image. With his warrior's helmet, long beard and deep set, dark eyes, the painting of the *Royal Palm Green Man* deliberately suggests the shadowy, shape-shifting mystery typical of the church-bound, Gothic-era Green Men.

#### **4.2.5. *The House Challenge***

**Oil and Acrylic on Wood, Mirror, and Canvas, approximately 33.5cm x 45.7cm x 9.1cm. Figure 4.11.**

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

In Jungian psychology, the image of a house occurring in a dream is considered to represent the physical body, whilst the attic symbolises the mind and the subconscious or higher self. In this interactive piece, the viewer is invited to take part in a game of self-discovery. The puzzle as a whole is intended to be representational of life in general, whilst the coin allows us to “put our money where our mouth is”—so to speak.

The Green Man is our guiding archetype through this journey, whilst upstairs in the attic *Janus*, the two-faced Roman God of gates, doors, doorways, beginnings and endings can be found (our month of January is named after him). The unfortunate Gollum, or Smeagol, (<http://www.collecttolkien.com/images/ArtWrathoftheEnts>) a character from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, can be viewed as a present day version of the Janus archetype.



**Figure 4.11. *The House Challenge*. Oil and acrylic on wood, mirror, and canvas. Three dimensional, interactive piece, approximately 33.5cm x 45.7cm x 9.1cm. 2005. Woodworking by Graham Willett and Christine Stein.**

### **Creative Process: *The House Challenge***

Since a significant amount of historical Green Man art is essentially sculptural in form, it was clear to the author that there was a need to have at least one piece of three-dimensional work in the exhibition. Consequently, it was decided that an interactive puzzle piece, involving touch, sight and movement, would help reinforce the viewer's response to—and later re-transmission of—the ecological message inherent in the exhibition. By playing upon a fundamental precept utilised extensively by the deep ecologists (*i.e.*, that positive change occurs first in the individual and then, in turn, transfers itself to the wider society) it was considered that engaging gallery visitors at both a physical and mental level—through inviting them to solve a puzzle and then

asking them to physically manipulate the elements from which the work is made up—would effectively establish the environmental message permanently in the memory of the visitor. Although it must be acknowledged that this is quite a lot to ask from a simple interactive work, the idea became the basis for design and construction of *The House Challenge*. A hand painted poem prompts the participant through the steps needed to respond to the challenge.

*The House Challenge* consists of a two-story wooden house with hinged doors that open and close. The inside of the lower level of the house is mirrored, representing and reflecting the physical existence of the viewer—directly revealing and reminding them of their own physical embodiment. *House* also contains a simple, nine piece painted Green Man puzzle painted on small canvases which fit neatly over the mirror, along with a two-sided carved wooden coin representing the two faced god Janus, as shown in Figure 4.12.



**Figure 4.12. The individual elements of *The House Challenge*.**

*Challenge* begins with the first line of the poem, inviting the participant to open the large, bottom doors of the wooden house, as shown in Figure 4.13. The line(s), hand painted in an elaborate script typeface read:

***Open the doors, What do you see?***





**Figure 4.13. The beginning of the *House Challenge* poem.**

Inside the box the viewer is presented with their own, all too familiar, reflection in the mirror that makes up the rear wall. The poem, painted on the mirror (Figure 4.12—previous page) continues:

***The house of you, The house of me.***

On the inside of the open doors the poem prompts the participant to put the puzzle together, as shown in Figure 4.14:

***Solve the puzzle and discover, We and nature are each other.***



**Figure 4.14. Inside the outer doors of *The House Challenge* (detail).**

The nine-piece canvas puzzle is then assembled by the viewer in the space inside the house—and on top of the mirror—where it fits perfectly. On completion of this task the viewer is then urged to continue the challenge, as shown in Figure 4.15:

***We've pieced it all together now stable and safe...***

***Destiny lies upstairs, where the challenge is great.***

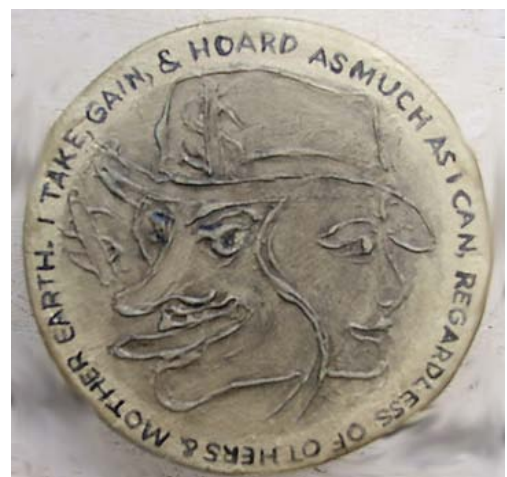


**Figure 4.15. The completed nine part Green Man puzzle.**

When the participant opens the attic doors they find a large gold coin, sculpted with the two faced Roman God, Janus. Painted on the inside of the attic doors, the poem continues the challenge:

***Flip the coin...The choice is yours.***

Finally, the participant is presented with the option to make a life-defining choice, since the two sides of the coin represent the two paths available to all those who have free will and the life-option to choose. Figures 4.16 shows both sides of the carved piece:



**Figure 4.16. The positive and negative sides of Janus—the two faced coin.**

The text reads:

***I live a balanced life in harmony with others and Mother Earth.***

On the obverse, the coin states:

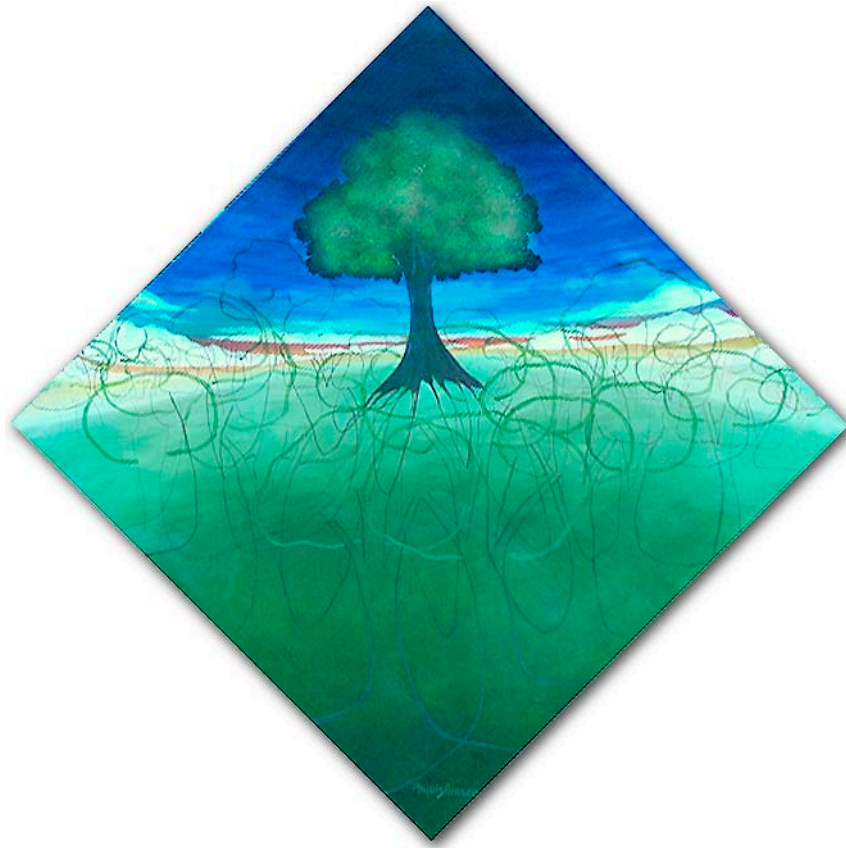
***I take, gain and hoard as much as I can, regardless of others and Mother Earth.***

Through the task of interacting with *The House Challenge*, the author was hopeful that the inherent message—that personal actions and choices do make a difference in the bigger picture—would become clearer to the viewer. As discussed later in this exegesis, one direct outcome of the exhibition (and this work in particular) was that the author was later offered a sessional teaching position within the Faculty of Science at the University of the Sunshine Coast, tutoring in a subject entitled *Environment, Technology and Sustainability*. The result of this teaching opportunity for the author has been both inspirational and enlightening, in that the critical importance placed on maintaining environmental sustainability in contemporary scientific research has become especially clear to the author after having taught in the course for past two semesters (at the time of writing) and has given her a renewed sense of new hope in realizing that environmental concerns have made a much deeper inroad into scientific thinking than she initially suspected.

As the state of our natural environment deteriorates and as the pace of global warming becomes daily more apparent, it is easy to sink into a sense of despair and hopelessness about the future of the planet, especially given the initial and overt cynicism of many of the students who enroll in *Environment, Technology and Sustainability*. However, it is through a broad based education, encompassing both the Sciences and the Humanities that individuals are empowered—and the author's role in bringing an artist's perspective into what is essentially a science-based subject illustrates the fact that new strategies and new ways of thinking are needed if we are to address the challenges of the new millennium. That each individual's actions have an effect on the equilibrium of the whole cannot be stressed enough—the Green Man moves in mysterious ways.

#### **4.2.6. *Can't See the Forest Because There's Only One Tree***

Oil on Canvas, 76.2cm x 76.2cm. Figure 4.17.



**Figure 4.17. *Can't See the Forest Because There's Only One Tree.***  
Acrylic on canvas, 72.6cm x 72.6cm, 2005.

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel**

Common comparisons between nature and humanity are bountiful in our language, as some of the titles in this series of paintings reflect. It is interesting to notice just how many of these common idioms are used in our day-to-day communication, as author Larry Dossey demonstrates:

We go out on a limb and get caught in a jungle of detail. We collect kernels of wisdom, follow decision trees and branch out in our activities. New ideas get planted in our minds, where they germinate, take root, and flower or wither. We leaf through books, and turn over new leaves. Surgeons perform implants and transplants and physicians do stem cell research. We weed out bad ideas, cultivate good will and reap what we sow. We raise seed money for new business and farm out projects to others. And, of course, we plot our family trees. (Dossey, 2001: 5).

### **Creative Process: Can't See the Forest Because There's Only One Tree**

The composition of *Can't See the Forest Because There's Only One Tree* is meant to emphasize the sense of starkness experienced when we see a lone tree standing in a barren landscape—a common sight in much of Australia where land clearing has been undertaken and the occasional tree has been left standing—either because it was originally too large to fell or because it provided some shelter for grazing animals against the blazing sun. The “ghosts” of the cleared trees are represented in the painting in the form of silhouettes and outlines, suggesting the form of the forest that once existed. A small part of the tree's remaining root system can also be seen underground, since the painting offers some degree of x-ray vision. The Green Man's message, reminding us of our interconnectedness with the world, forms the central theme of this work, as well as emphasising the obvious play on words made in the title.

Trees, like people, are significantly stronger and much more functional when connected to others—as in the common expression, *the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*. Created as a personal response to what I have seen happen over and over in my life—including what is happening right now on the Queensland Sunshine Coast—the work comments on the clear felling and bulldozing of forests to make way for industrial development and urban sprawl. The inspiration for the work came about several months after I moved to my hill-top forest home on the Sunshine Coast. One morning, whilst having breakfast on my verandah, I became aware of a large tract of forest in the valley below being illegally bulldozed. After repeated calls to the local government authority (the *Maroochy Shire Council*) and to the regional newspaper (*The Sunshine Coast Daily*) an investigation was finally undertaken by the council and an article was subsequently published in the newspaper (Figure 4.18). Although the owner of the land was fined for breaching zoning legislation, the damage was done and the cleared land became a commercial strawberry farm—as was the owner's original plan. Some months later, whilst buying strawberries from a stall operating as a part of a charitable

fund-raising project, I was enjoying a quick chat with the stall holder. During the brief conversation, I was shocked to learn that the berries had come from this exact land! As can be imagined, I subsequently lost my appetite for the tempting, red, harvest. Figure 4.19 shows a later, more informal response to the experience, the cheeky *Strawb-Man, Who Once Was a Forest*.

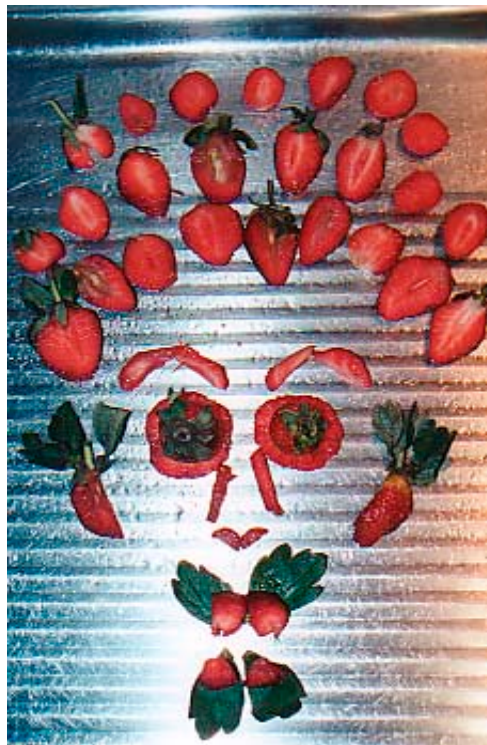


Figure 4.18. A newspaper article from *The Sunshine Coast Daily*, Saturday, February 12, 2000, page 9. (Collection of the Author).

Along a significant part of Australia's East coast, the resumption of fertile farmlands for housing development, the clear felling of forests and the clearing of mangroves and river estuaries to create marina developments and canal estates is happening on a larger scale every year. While much of this so-called "progress" is not technically *illegal*, it is definitely not what many people want to see happen. This dissatisfaction



can be seen almost daily in local and regional print media, with articles bearing titles such as *Loved to Death? Survey asks: is the Sunshine Coast losing its appeal?* (from *ECO, Sunshine Coast Eco News*, Issue #03 August-September, 2006) appearing on an increasingly regular basis. This article, for example, reports that the majority of the residents surveyed felt that the region had changed for the worse since they moved into the area and that most felt pessimistic about the future landscape and environment that constitute the region and its attendant lifestyle. Indeed, on the Queensland Sunshine Coast, one will no longer be able to see the forest—and we'll be lucky if there's even one tree remaining.



**Figure 4.19. *Strawb-Man, Who Once Was a Forest.***

#### **4.2.7. *Evergreen Prayer***

**Oil on Canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. Figure 4.20.**

#### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

Just as the mandala is a visual representation of a mantra or sacred sound, a repetitious pattern can be equated to a chant used to induce a clear or receptive state

of mind. *Evergreen Prayer* was inspired by the work of M.C. Escher, whose symmetrical, regular division of the plane gives visual expression to abstract concepts. Here we have the human form of the hand and the evergreen tree equally sharing a repeated space. In expressing the Green Man message—which is our oneness with nature—*Evergreen Prayer*, like a mantra, also tries to put forward a sense of hope for future harmony.



**Figure 4.20.** *Evergreen Prayer*. Acrylic on canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. 2005.

#### **Creative Process: *Evergreen Prayer***

The use of a hand and a tree is a direct variation on the traditional Green Man theme of face and foliage. My intent was to create an image that carried a similar message by using a part of the human body other than the face and to combine this with a distinctive and easily recognisable natural image. Design for the painting began with a series of exploratory sketches examining the possibilities of combining a hand shape with that of a leaf or other suitable plant form. The hand as a sign was chosen for both



its highly symbolic meaning and its expressive nature, in particular its inherent potential for action. Importantly, a hand also signifies connectedness (*i.e.*, holding hands) and the offering of help (a helping hand) two concepts that are extremely important in establishing the theme of this painting. Finally, of course, hands were chosen because they are commonly used by all religious faiths as a key component in the act of prayer. The leaf form was initially chosen for its integral part in the growth and respiration of the tree and since it is an essential appendage to the tree, just as a hand is to the human body although, through later iterations, the form developed to take on the overall structure of the greater body—that of the tree itself.

The author has long been attracted to the repetitious, tessellated forms made famous in the work of M. C. Escher—work which was, in turn, based on a detailed study of the Islamic tiling and complex patterns Escher had observed in the Alhambra mosque in Granada, Spain. As with the complex tiling of the Alhambra and the mathematically inspired work of Escher, the use of a regular, repeating pattern produces a calm, peaceful and composed style well suited to delivering the message of *Evergreen Prayer*—that conservation of the natural world by all humans is critical if there is to be any hope for the future. Like a tessellated pattern, the themes of conservation and hope are inextricably linked. It is interesting to observe at this point that the religious and meditative basis of the repetitious patterning used by the Moslems in the Alhambra have much in common with the sacred mandalas of eastern philosophy explored in my other work, *Your Neck of the Woods*.

Whilst such patterns may at first glance seem elegantly simple, developing a functional series of shapes that do not appear to be artificially distorted is actually quite difficult. Many hours were spent, and many sheets of graph and carbon paper were used in the process of creating the pattern for this painting. M. C. Escher's sketches exploring symmetrical patterning were studied and used as a guideline in the development of the

patterning for *Evergreen Prayer*. My own work began, much like Escher's, with a square space divided equally between two regular forms—in this case the image of the hand and a leaf. After many attempts, the leaf theme was abandoned since the negative spaces created by the repeated hand pattern increasingly appeared to look more like an evergreen (pine) tree. Once satisfied with the rough design as it appeared sketched on graph paper, several copies were made and experimentation was undertaken using the design principles of repetition, rotation, and reflection (Figure 4.21).



**Figure 4.21.** An example of the author's process work for *Evergreen Prayer*.

Eventually, the pattern was finalised, enlarged, and reproduced on the canvas. The natural dark green hues of evergreens and the variants of human skin tones initially dictated the colour themes used in the painting. To maintain a consistent colour harmony, mixes of the darker shades of each key colour were used to tone nearby elements, resulting in a colour scheme that is both harmonic and pleasant to look at. The placement of the hand elements utilising the four resulting flesh tones interweaves over the surface and intentionally reiterates the cross theme—creating a visual effect

evocative of the web that is human connectedness and reminding the viewer of the strength that is derived from such unity.

In equal proportion to the human element is the green of nature in the form of the iconic Evergreen Tree. A lighter, brighter, green can be identified as forming a cross, which symbolizes the author's wish that one of the messages conveyed in *Evergreen Prayer* should put forward the suggestion that engagement with nature is, of course, a form of religious experience. To emphasise the cruciate form and signify the archetypal, historic connection that the Green Man had with early Christianity, tree trunks and a gold centre were added to clarify both the centre of the cross and the outline of the trees. Finally, the repeating pattern and colour harmonies are intended to create a tranquilizing effect on the viewer as the eye first sees the form of the hand, then picks up the form of the tree as the subtle shape of the cross gradually emerges from the background. There is a sense of discovery in the process for the viewer as (hopefully) their own consciousness responds to the subtle forms.

#### **4.2.8. *Green Woman Tries to Breathe (Where I Come From)***

**Oil on Canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. Figure 4.22.**

##### **Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

Imagine living in a quiet, dead end street. Out the back door is a meadow that stretches for 2 km to a gentle beach. Across the 20 km bay is the Manhattan skyline. Clear days, blue skies, amazing childhood memories in the natural world until “development” came to town. First came the Sewerage Plant, then the *International Flavours & Fragrances Company* (IFF)—and later the cancers and respiratory diseases in the residents (mostly children) of the area. Today, New Jersey is the most populated state per square kilometre in the US and the entire population lives daily with the social and environmental problems that go with that somewhat dubious claim to fame. *Green Woman Tries to Breathe* warns us that the pollution and the associated damage to the

lives and lifestyles of those who are directly affected, is a physical manifestation of the greed that drives so much of so-called “progress”.



**Figure 4.22. *Green Woman Tries to Breathe (Where I Come From)*. Acrylic and oil on canvas, 91.4cm x 121.9cm. 2005.**

**Creative Process: *Green Woman Tries to Breathe (Where I Come From)***

One of art's functions is to create an experience for the viewer that may be divorced from their day-to-day reality. In *Green Woman Tries to Breathe* it was the author's intention to create a visual experience that is deliberately challenging to the observer and which, ideally, should leave them with a sense of unease. As an artist, I wanted the viewer to feel something of my own sense of the powerlessness and anger I felt as a child when “progress” took away what was natural and sacred to my nine year old heart—for it was at this time that my first sense of the “canary in the coal-mine” syndrome was experienced. My own childhood wonder-world was shattered forever the day when so-called “progress” began to take away the natural and wild places that were so important to those of us who lived and worked in the low-income suburbs of

New York City. Later squeezed between smokestacks and highways, we choked during the days and, without knowing, slept through the worst of the pollution as the IFF company spewed out even greater amounts of toxins after midnight—when no-one could see the extent of the toxic plumes. (Night venting is still a common practice in many industrial facilities across most of the industrialized world. At its most extreme, the night-time 1984 Bhopal disaster comes to mind, although it must be acknowledged that this was an extremely tragic industrial accident and not a deliberate act). In creating this work, it was my desire to engage and challenge the viewer by encouraging each individual to make a connection to a similar experience or emotion in his or her own memory, subconscious or experience—and thus instill a sense of empathy and understanding, rather than simply trigger the memory of an isolated incident.

I believe we have all experienced the desire to scream and tear at our hair at some time in our lives, and that no matter when the desire occurs, these are moments we rarely forget. In attempting to recreate a sense of the episodes of sheer outrage and blind frustration I have since experienced over the years when confronted with senseless environmental destruction, I have deliberately exaggerated some parts of my facial expression in order to recreate—or perhaps trigger—a reminder of similar experiences in the mind of the viewer. *Green Woman Tries to Breathe* was painted from a self-portrait sketched while looking in a mirror. In retrospect, I would have handled this piece differently, since this is a very personal painting and I now believe it would have been more effective if created as a smaller work placed at the end of a cylindrical box or tunnel. At one end would be a peep-hole, simulating a telescope. Viewers would be invited to look into the telescope, in effect towards “outer space” although in actuality they would be looking into my own personal or inner space. The addition of a vial containing some (harmless) chemical emitting an unpleasant odour reminiscent of some form of industrial process would remind viewers of the stench

millions of people are forced to live with on a daily (and nightly) basis. In retrospect, presenting the painting in this way would have created a more powerful initial encounter for viewers, whilst simultaneously providing a multi-sensory experience that would better remain in their conscious and subconscious mind for days to come.

#### 4.2.9. Breathe

Oil on Canvas, 76.2cm x 76.2cm. Figure 4.23.



Figure 4.23. *Breathe*. Acrylic on canvas, 76.2cm x 76.2cm. 2005.

#### Exhibition Didactic Panel.

The author felt that a didactic panel was not needed for this painting.

#### Creative Process: *Breathe*

The concept behind this painting is basically self-explanatory and is made clear in the painted text encircling the central figure, which states...*"The only thing between a person and a tree is a breath... we are each other's air"* which is based on a quote by

poet and Research Officer in Sustainable Buildings, Centre for Design, RMIT, Margaret Bates. (<http://www.ecopsychology.org/journal/gatherings7/SacredTrees.htm>).  
([http://www.cfd.rmit.edu.au/services/research\\_consulting/staff\\_margaret\\_bates](http://www.cfd.rmit.edu.au/services/research_consulting/staff_margaret_bates))

The image of an androgynous human form was intentionally developed during the initial creative process to ensure that gender issues did not cloud the message of this painting and to reduce the importance that the viewer may place on the figure as an entity in relation to the composition as a whole. In addition, the transparent nature of the human figure enables the viewer to see through the body to the trachea and lungs of the person, whilst simultaneously revealing the trunk and root system of a tree behind it. This “simultaneous viewing” experience was created to highlight the fact that trees emit oxygen and humans breathe out carbon dioxide—both gasses essential to the well-being of the other and which results in an inextricable, yet fundamental, symbiosis. As well, the painting exposes the similarities in appearance between the trunk of a tree and the human trachea and points out the parallels between tree roots and human veins and arteries.

As will be readily apparent to anyone familiar with the work of the contemporary, visionary artist, Alex Grey, his work *Praying* has provided a major inspiration for the design of this piece. Grey is widely known for his x-ray like, medical illustration style, which he combines with a spiritual style based on eastern influences. In *Praying*, which is one of twenty-one images comprising the *Sacred Mirrors* series, Grey presents and confronts us with the unseen. We can see what is below the surface of a person’s skin, as well as the energy field outside of the body presented in the form of a halo or a human aura. Just as Grey shows us what is, in fact, beneath our skin, he also invites us to traverse beyond our mental world and look into the depths of our subconscious. It is there, he suggests, that we may uncover universal truths about ourselves and the



world which many Western religious and Asian sacred works of art depict. The following is taken from the forward of Grey's book, *Sacred Mirrors*:

Sacred art objects are like repositories of transcendental energy that can “charge” the receptive, contemplative viewer. The artist's primary medium is consciousness—the animating force that directs or infuses all other media. (Grey, 1990: 31).

In keeping with the Green Man theme, it was my conscious intention in creating this work to highlight the life-sustaining and essential connection we have with the vegetative, natural world through our co-dependence on the oxygen / carbon dioxide cycle. In *Breathe*, the combination of the x-ray style human form and the image of the tree presents the viewer with a modern-day version of what we could describe as a complete *Green Person*—a person truly in balance and harmony with nature and the natural world. The head and brain of the figure portrayed in this painting becomes the branches and leaves of the tree, signifying that our thoughts (associated with the head and brain) can create or produce the fruit (via the branches) or the outcomes necessary for maintaining a balance in our lives. Through *Breathe* it is my intention to remind the viewer that a healthy life, lived in harmony with nature, can lead to a more productive existence. The square format of the painting was chosen because it neatly accommodates the central circle of text that, like a *mantra*, can be read or repeated endlessly and which, in so doing, thereby reinforces the idea of “the circle of life”. To further emphasise the “sacredness” of the text, the letters have been painted in metallic gold (which does not reproduce in the colour print above) in order to reinforce the importance and, (to some) almost religious meaning that the message conveys.



#### 4.2.10. *Balance of Nature*

Oil on Linen, 30.48cm x 152.4cm. Figures 4.24 and 4.25 (detail).



Figure 4.24. *Balance of Nature*. Oil on linen, 30.48cm x 152.4cm. 2005.

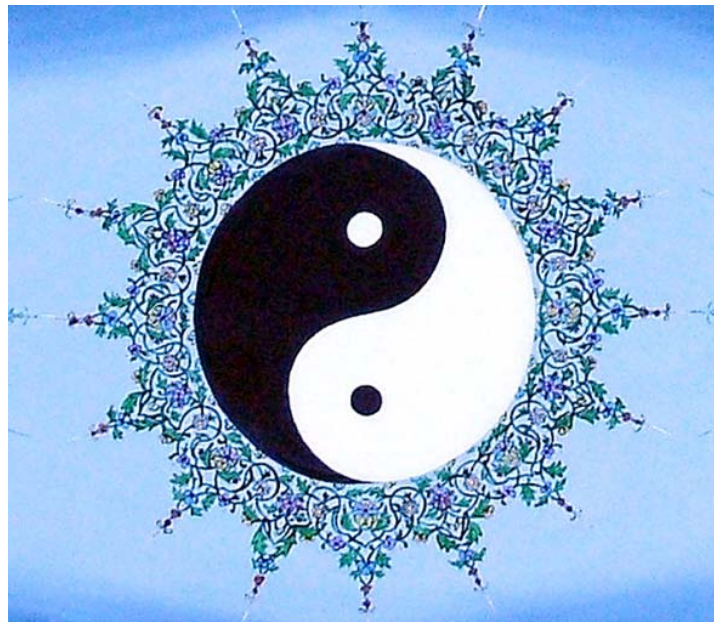


Figure 4.25. *Balance of Nature*, detail.

#### Exhibition Didactic Panel.

Many contemporary artists arbitrarily represent the Green Man as either male or female, a choice often determined by the artist's gender and the message they intend to convey. However, *historically* Green Man has been portrayed mostly as male, bringing up feelings of inequality. In fact, many argue that the strong patriarchal dominance in our current western paradigm is at the root of not only our environmental problems, but our interpersonal and intercultural problems as well. In this painting the Chinese symbol of the *yin-yang* is used to illustrate the concept of balance and the dual nature of all things. *Balance of Nature* shows that only in a 50/50 ratio does the full

spectrum of possibilities exist. Iranian sculptor, Amir Naderi was asked to design a traditional Iranian foliage motif, known as *The Arabesque*, for this painting.

### **Creative Process: *Balance of Nature***

In my discussion of the previous work, I noted that my creation of the figure used in *Breathe* was deliberately androgynous in order to avoid introducing issues suggestive of gender and which might divert attention from my central theme. However, it is not always possible—given the nature of the Green Man and associated Green Man art-forms, to avoid matters of gender completely—even though the issues of ecological sustainability and planetary survival transcend such trivial matters as masculinity, femininity or even species for that matter. Although most Green Man art typically represents the figure as masculine, there is a significant body of work that depicts the Green Man as either male or female and some that shows the figure as overtly female—the depiction in many cases being dependant on the artist's gender.

One result of my research into the perceived gender of the Green Man (see Chapter 2.4) was that it became increasingly clear to me that it would be necessary to include a painting in the study (and subsequent exhibition) that would put forward a simple, yet straightforward statement regarding my own interpretation of the issue. In my mind, the ubiquitous, yet universally familiar *Tai Chi Tu*—a symbol derived from traditional Chinese philosophy and better known in the west as the *Yin-Yang* character—was the perfect starting point for developing the core ideas behind *The Balance of Nature*. The figure represents the two fundamentally opposing, yet complementary forces found in all things that make up the universe—*Yin*, the darker, representative of the feminine, and *Yang*, the lighter, symbolic of the masculine. Universal harmony is ensured when each life force is in equal proportion to the other. In this painting, the middle element is fully in harmony, whilst the adjoining *Tai Chi Tu* become increasingly unbalanced as they move further away from the centre (the point of balance)—visually representing

the shifting equilibrium typically experienced whenever one force—such as power, gender, health or wealth becomes unequally and/or unfairly distributed. As outlined in both Chapters Two and Three of this exegesis, there are many today who argue that the escalating inequality in almost every aspect of human affairs is the most significant factor influencing the health and well-being of the planet and its ecosystem at this very moment.

At this point, it is worth recalling the lessons presented via the tales describing the adventures of the Green Man/Robin Hood archetype and those of his female consort, Maid Marion (see Chapter 1.3.4). Robin's expertise with bow and arrow, along with his masculine strength and exuberance (metaphorically representing spiritual intent) are ineffective without Marion's companionship, guidance, discipline and insight. Whilst sometimes thought of as gender specific traits, characteristics such as those attributed to Robin and Marion are in actuality personality traits inherent to differing degrees within each individual—and it is the balancing of them that creates the greater strength. Along with several of the Green Man artists interviewed in Chapter Three, the author believes that every individual houses both feminine and masculine energies (in differing degrees according to the individual) and it is through attaining a harmonious balance with one's partner (or within one's self) that lasting relationships develop and thrive. The attainment of this *Nirvana*-like state allows the individual to fully realize their individual, personal potential and is represented in the painting by the intertwined foliage surrounding the *Yin–Yang* symbols. As can be seen in Figure 4.32, the central symbol—which is the most balanced and thus the most harmonious—is surrounded by the most detailed, colourful and vibrant of the foliage designs. In traditional Iranian symbology, the complex foliage design of the *Arabesque* signifies the attainment of a balanced relationship between the individual and the outer world—a state in which one lives life in harmony with the world and is therefore best able to realise their individual potential to the maximum.

#### 4.2.11. *Ourobouros*

Oil on Canvas, three panels—two panels 30.48cm x 76.2cm, central panel 76.2cm x 76.2cm. Figure 4.26.



Figure 4.26. *Ourobouros*. Acrylic & oil on canvas, three panels. Two panels 30.48cm x 76.2cm, central panel 76.2cm x 76.2cm. 2005. Background colours are slightly over saturated and exhibit a greater amount of contrast due to camera flash.

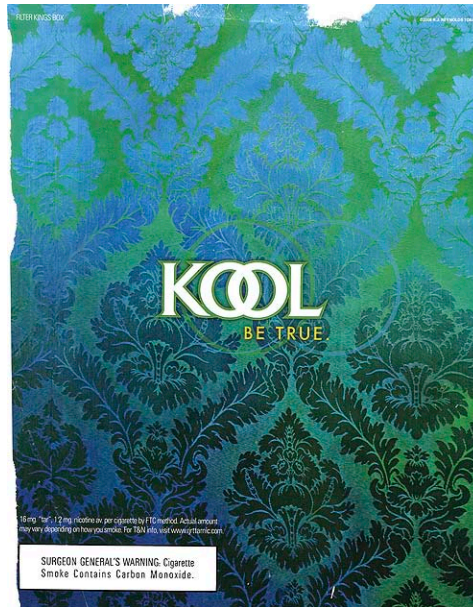
#### Exhibition Didactic Panel.

One of the characteristics of the Green Man archetype is its regenerative quality. Nature renews itself with the seasons and, as necessary, after a natural disaster. Here we have a Green Man image in the form of *Ourobouros*, an ancient symbol of the cyclical nature of all things. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung saw the *Ourobouros* as an archetype and as a basic mandala figure that reflects all forms of alchemy, noting that “the *Ourobouros* is a dramatic symbol for the integration and assimilation of the opposite—of the shadow” (Anderson, 1996: 47). Placement of the Yin-Yang symbol indicates acceptance and the perpetuation of equality as a central precept, with a repetitious pattern and the watchful gaze of the Green Man acting as a backdrop to events.

**Creative Process: *Ourobouros*.**

Continuing in the theme of reminding viewers of the need to live their lives in harmony and balance—and of the need to continually strive to perpetuate the regenerative qualities of nature itself—is the work I have called *Ourobouros*. In this triptych, I have deliberately attempted to adapt and meld the familiar Green Man figure into the *Ourobouros* archetype in order to emphasise the regenerative qualities of the Green Man image. The circular format reiterates the mandala-like structures that flow throughout this body of work. Again incorporating the yin-yang symbol (and thereby carrying forward the notion of balance instilled by paintings already encountered by visitors to the exhibition) the repetitious background patterning continues the visual rhythm of the exhibition and leads the viewer into the mind space of the final piece. Interestingly, the background pattern was borrowed from a contemporary (2005) American cigarette advertisement (*Kool*), as shown in Figure 4.27.

Print-based cigarette advertising is still common in the United States and, as can be imagined, struck me as being quite odd when I revisited my home state of New Jersey in 2005. Since one cannot help but search for Green Man faces everywhere after encountering the image for the first time, I was highly attuned to the image—but quite shocked to find him appearing over and over in a magazine advertisement for *Kool* cigarettes. Although it is difficult to say whether or not the placement of the figure was an intentional act of quiet subversion on the part of the graphic artist that originally created the advertisement, or simply a co-incidental interpretation of the design on the author's part—the figure is clearly there and fully recognizable to those who know him—just as he was when he hid in plain sight in the rafters of churches in medieval times. That he should appear in a cigarette advertisement (of all things) is classic Green Man in trickster mode.



**Figure 4.27.** The *KOOL* cigarette advertisement, taken from *Surface Magazine*, Issue #54, p. 129, 2005.

To bring forward the Green Man image, the background pattern from the *Kool* advertisement was manipulated slightly to make the figure less ambiguous and to produce several Green Man faces for use in the repeat pattern used as the background for the work. These were painstakingly transferred to the canvas for use as the backdrop for the central *Ourobouros* figure and for extension into the side panels. The sweep of colour forming the field behind the pattern works in opposition to the colour scheme of the pattern—*i.e.*, the background field begins at the top with light blue and moves to dark blue in the centre and again to light blue at the bottom, whilst the Green Men pattern begins at the bottom with contrasting green. The result is a somewhat luminous effect that also appears slightly three-dimensional due to the hard-edged colour-jarring that appears in certain areas where contrast is maximized. Even given the colour tensions that arise, this repeating pattern creates a mood of solace, something like the comforting, old-fashioned wallpaper from Grandmother's lounge room. The highly detailed brush work required during the painting process is quite apparent on closer inspection of the work and added significantly to the feeling of reminiscence and retrospection felt by the author during the process of creating the

painting. As in *Balance of Nature*, in this painting I hope that I have created a work that puts forward the contemplative mood of a *mandala*, but which combines both archetypal and historical references in a manner appropriate to a modern Green Man image.

**4.2.12. *Metamorphosis: The Nature of War, Hiding from Nature, Hiding from War, Hiding from Each Other, Hiding from Self.***

**Oil on Canvas, 4 Panels, each 30.8cm x 121.9cm. Figure 4.28.**

**Exhibition Didactic Panel.**

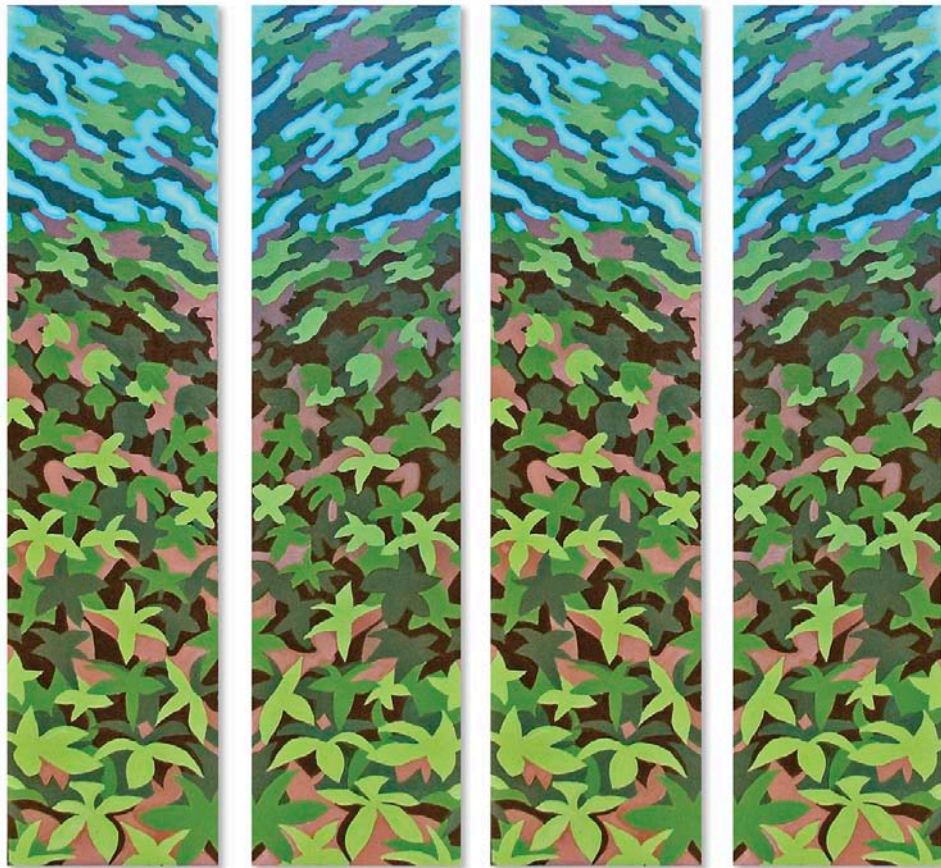
We walk around draped in camouflage patterns, thus becoming a living, breathing version of the Green Man. The leaf pattern, developed as a combat uniform for war imparts a poignant, memorable message here as it morphs out of the natural world and deconstructs into a blue sky.

**Creative Process: *Metamorphosis; The Nature of War, Hiding from Nature, Hiding from War, Hiding from Each Other, Hiding from Self***

In *Metamorphosis*, as in *Your Neck of the Woods*, *Evergreen Prayer*, and *Ourobouros*, the central visual theme is focused on a repeated visual pattern. The concept underpinning this work is to remind the audience of where the familiar military camouflage pattern originated and why it was developed—since to many of the younger generations camouflage patterning is often seen as little more than a fashion statement. That almost every army has its own unique patterns, often associated with the natural environments of the places in which it operates, reminds us that in some of the most desperate situations of all (*i.e.*, mortal combat) the ability to blend in to the background—to harmonise with nature—can be critical for survival. That we have taken on the superficial characteristics of the Green Man in what is perhaps our most



primal (and objectionable) of behaviors returns us directly to our roots and provides a fitting message for the last work seen in the exhibition. That we have subverted the ideals of the Green Man in perpetuating our war-like ways is, I believe, a tragic condemnation of all humanity.



**Figure 4.28. *Metamorphosis; The Nature of War, Hiding from Nature, Hiding from War, Hiding from Each Other, Hiding from Self.* Oil on canvas, 4 Panels; each 30.8cm x121.9cm. 2005.**

For those who did not get the message from viewing earlier works, the didactic panel explains the concept of the painting quite succinctly—but does not simplify the message. A quadtych format was used to reiterate and reinforce the message, allowing the pattern to reverse and mirror itself as it transforms across the canvas, producing an almost mechanical rhythm, reminiscent of an army's march and reminding the viewer of the repetitious historical cycle of war and peace.



Finally, it must be noted that a great deal of thought was put into planning the size of each work exhibited in the Green Man exhibition. Most canvases adhere to an approximately standard size and proportion in an attempt to harmonise the overall appearance of the showing. Thus *Metamorphosis* is the same height as *Green Woman Tries to Breathe*, *Evergreen Prayer*, and *Royal Palm Green Man*, whilst *Ourobouros*, *Breathe*, and *Can't See the Forest Because There's Only One Tree*, are all of the same dimensions.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5.1. The Wisdom of the Ancients**

Within the framework of this exegesis, it has been shown that expressions of the Green Man archetype in art and culture have always been deeply symbolic of humanity's intimate relationship with the natural world. The reappearance of the Green Man archetype in recent years—in a host of new and contemporary guises—is a reflection of the many innovative ways of thinking about our relationship with nature that have emerged in recent times and is, in particular, a mark of our increased understanding of our role in the context of planetary life. The new Green Man no longer tells of the mysteries of the deep uncharted forest as did the Green Man of the past; he no longer guards the cathedrals and the churches; he's not laughing because he can shape-shift and morph in and out of the corridors of time and nor is he as interested in celebrating the rites of spring as he used to be. Instead, he is communicating a warning relevant to us in the here and now and, as always, he does so through the means that speak most deeply to our inner consciousness—through our art and other means of creative expression. Even though the Green Man speaks to us in new ways and through the use of modern technologies, his message still carries with it the wisdom of the ancients. Like a tribal elder, he speaks his truth to those who take the time to listen carefully.

### **5.2. The Synthesis of a Repetitious Pattern**

As we have seen, the continual repetition of Green Man imagery throughout recorded history has produced an archetype that is now so deeply embedded in the psyche of Western culture and philosophy that it profoundly influences a myriad of contemporary ideas, ideals and values. Indeed, there is scarcely a single aspect of Western (or

Eastern, for that matter) culture that is untouched by our need for, or longing for, a healthy connection with the natural world. This section discusses some of the ideas and values discussed in the exegesis and briefly examines them through the use of the Hegelian dialectic (that is, through the interrogation of some of the more commonly held assumptions about ourselves and our connection with nature). In this way, we will seek to gain a new and higher level of understanding of the Green Man by combining and resolving the different implementations of both the image and the message.

As we have already discussed, and as can be seen in the timeline presented in Appendix One, Green Man imagery appears consistently throughout history, creating a recurring pattern that echoes up to us from the earliest of times. Although undoubtedly pre-dating recorded history (our earliest written evidence of the Green Man comes from around 3,000 BC and the ancient Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in which he takes on the role of *Humbaba*, guardian of the cedar forest) the Green Man story reappears in various manifestations through to the present day. It is this ever-present and constantly evolving presence that causes us to feel a familiarity and sense of comfort with the image. We know the Green Man intuitively and, whilst he is often wild and unkempt in appearance like *Humbaba*, we seldom fear him when we encounter his image, since he is now an integral part of our cultural heritage and of our deeper, collective subconscious.

Throughout history the Green Man has been with us, protecting us from danger in the role of the Guardian; delivering us warnings as the Messenger; encouraging us to grow and prosper as the God of Regeneration; joking and fooling with us as the Trickster and reminding us that change is inevitable in his role of the Guardian of the Seasons. For millennia, the Green Man has always been somewhere in the background, witnessing our trials, guiding our actions and celebrating our tribulations. However, underlying all of his personifications and appearances, the Green Man's main concern

has always been humanity's relationship with the mother planet—and the lessons that he presents inevitably concern our responsibilities and obligations as participants in the fragile cycle of nature. Thus, in whatever form taken, the archetype has always been a gauge that reflects our relationship with the natural environment. The Green Man's current incarnation—and the message that he brings to us in the role of the **Conservator** is quite clear—he is urging us to remember that we, as thinking beings with the power to change and control our own destinies, have serious moral and ethical obligations in fulfilling our role as the present (albeit temporary) custodians of nature. If Gaia really is the system that we believe it to be, we are fast taking on the role of her guardians, operators and custodians.

The Green Man's continually recurring presence can be likened to an Ostinato pattern in music, in that it is a theme repeated with minor but appropriate and recognisable variations throughout history—a theme which acts as a constant reminder pointing out our inseparable connection to the planet and the environment. Repetitive patterns often become highly influential guides in directing our thought processes, especially since they hint at the subtle energies that lie beneath them and thus consistently refocus our attention on the central theme. Thus, many of the physical manifestations of the Green Man throughout history would be familiar to a visitor from another time—the combination of human head with plant and foliage cannot go unrecognised. The Green Man, therefore, not only reminds us of the subtle, yet extremely powerful energies that permeate nature—energies described by Kryder (1994) as deriving directly from the sacred life-force itself—the image is, in fact, an actual manifestation of them. As Kryder notes:

Subtle energy, infused by Sacred Power, interfaces the natural web of stars, minerals, plants and animals with spiritual sources and the Light of Cosmic Intelligence. These phenomena and organisms circulate the subtle energy throughout their chemistry and bodies. They receive it from the transformers—the gods, elementals, divas and spirits linking the intangible and tangible realms. These step-down transformers can be seen as

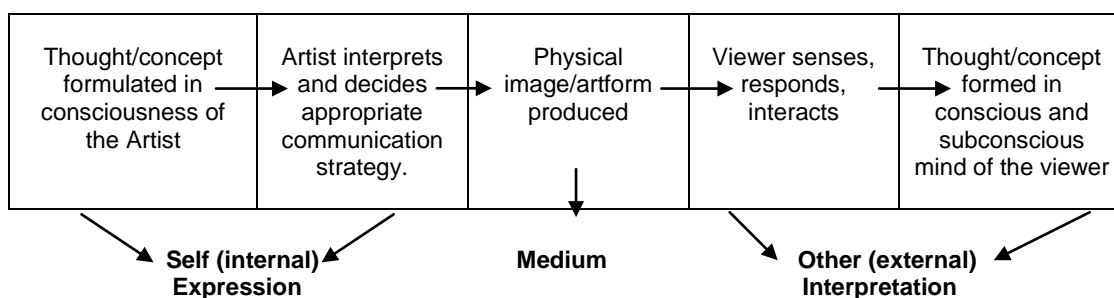
archetypal force fields, as formative patterns that guide subtle energy into manifestation. But above all, they are presences, knowable directly by the soul. They are beyond space-time, though they act through it. (Kryder, 1994: 14).

The concept that the entire universe is composed of subtle energy fields is becoming more widely accepted in science and academia. Our minds, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and creativity are products of this all-pervading energy, just as are our physical bodies, growth and development (Balfour, 2006). Ancient Vedic literature teaches us that the whole universe is an expression of pure consciousness and energy—vibration first encountered by humans as sound and then, ultimately, taking on physical form. This view of reality is consistent with the findings of modern day physics—that all matter is a form of vibration and energy and that all are inextricably connected (Chopra, Shrestha, 2000). Indeed, the nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer was well acquainted with this aspect of Hindu philosophy and is said to have recalled the words of the *Bhagavad Gita* upon witnessing the Trinity test—“If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the mighty one. Now, I am become Death, the shatterer of Worlds” (Hijiya, 2000: 124).

The recent expansion of the number of ways in which the Green Man archetype and image are being represented in our present culture constitutes a shift in the Ostinato pattern towards a progressive rhythm, of which constant repetition is a central tenet. Over the course of this exegesis the author has identified a steady increase not only in the frequency and the means of expression with which the image is being taken up by the artists of today, she has also pointed out a significant diversification of the channels by which it is being delivered. T-Shirts, garden ornaments, biker jackets and jewellery, the internet, television advertising and even movies are all new media for transmission of the Green Man message. Whilst not yet at crescendo pitch, the rapid increase of Green Man art in recent decades corresponds directly with the increase in stress that

humanity has begun to impose on Gaia herself. Like all progressive rhythms, its intention is to evoke movement and response—to infiltrate the subconscious with an irresistible rhythm and make one want to get up and move—in short, to act. As certain types of music and rhythm irresistibly inspire people to dance, the re-appearance of the Green Man and the constant repetition of his image is all about setting in motion a fundamental change in how the generations of the new millennium will come to view the world and the universe. The archetype we know so well has morphed yet again.

Given the diversity of means (channels) by which a message can be conveyed between the originator (*i.e.*, the artist) and the receiver (*i.e.*, the viewer) it may be helpful to consider Figure 5.1. The diagram illustrates in simplified form a typical semiosis (based, in this case, on the creation of a two-dimensional visual artwork) and shows how the transfer of intent or meaning is carried forward in the vehicle of the creative work—beginning with the artist’s original conceptual/creative inspiration (*i.e.*, from what Kryder (1994) calls “the artist as transformer”) through the artwork itself and ultimately to the viewer (and thus the formulation of a personal interpretation of the original message).



**Figure 5.1. Map of how a concept is communicated through an artwork. (Author, 2006)**

As we can see, a creative work carries forward the intent of the artist through the medium of the art form (sculpture, painted canvas, etc.) and delivers that message to the viewer as the basis on which they may formulate their personal interpretation. As is well understood, there are innumerable external factors that determine just how that

message may be changed, adapted, corrupted or misinterpreted along the way. Equally though, we need to remember that the power and influence of all forms of creative expression on the human psyche is far reaching and reaches far back into our most primitive memory and our earliest ancestral roots. Our innate sense of spirituality, along with our desire to satisfy a subconscious need for a realisation of our sense of the aesthetic, is a profound expression of the longings, reverence and beliefs we feel instinctively as individuals and as unique components of the greater web that is life as we know it. For these fundamental reasons, artistic representations of the Green Man have been constantly evolving throughout history in order to accurately reflect our changing relationship with the natural environment. Most importantly, it is the urgent need to rebuild our lost sense of connection with the planet and the environment, which today drives the constant repetition of the Green Man message in contemporary visual and creative culture. As with the Ostinato pattern, it is only through constant and varied repetition that the distractions and interference can be minimised and the central message reinforced.

Primitive humans saw their lives as being controlled by nature. Nature, as an unfathomable, elemental force, was viewed as an unfeeling power, an obstacle that had to be overcome in the name of human survival. The primordial forest and the outer world as a whole held within it frightening mysteries, great danger and possible death. It is thus perfectly understandable that the Green Man art of our more distant past (such as shown in Figure 5.2) was characterized by gloomy, grotesque and even malevolent imagery (Bridgewater, 1997). However, as the author has already argued, the state of humanity's changing relationship with nature is also reflected in its production of Green Man imagery and artwork. On a superficial level, contemporary Green Man art (including the author's own interpretation) is obviously going to be very different from that of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, even if we consider nothing more than the way in which it is created and the media used in its presentation and exhibition. The use of

acrylic paints, the integration of interactive elements within the author's exhibition—even the “hands on” philosophy behind some of the works—are all the result of profound changes in the way in which we now present, exhibit and consider contemporary art.



**Figure 5.2. Malevolent stares penetrate the private psychological space of the viewer, and give warning of the dark secrets of the unexplored forests—as seen here in two examples of the grotesque style of Green Man imagery from 15<sup>th</sup> Century Western Europe. (Harding, 1998: 17, 42).**

However, one thing that can be readily identified in much of today's Green Man art, and which is evident in the work of the artists interviewed by the author in Chapter Three, is a reduced fear of the elemental forces—a sense that although we cannot control the greater systems that pervade the natural world, we can at least control those that affect us on a day-to-day basis. For those who are fortunate, it is possible to be cool in summer and warm in winter and, at the same time, to be dry and safe when there is rain or thunderstorms about. Clearly, the televised character of the “5-a-day Veggie Man” is a far cry from the brooding menace suggested by the Bamberg Green Man, even though both remind us of our inseparable connection to the vegetative realm.

In the previous chapter, the author detailed the creative processes behind her own work for the *Green Man Resurrected* exhibition and illustrated the ways in which the focus of the paintings shifted and changed throughout the course of the project. As the research unfolded, the visual work naturally changed to accommodate the expanding



scope of her knowledge and her experience of the Green Man phenomenon—as would be expected. However, although some of the images may suggest a sense of urgency, concern and even personal distress, it is hoped the overall feeling conveyed in the exhibition was in general one of familiarity and comfort with both the Green Man and his message. Importantly, through the feedback provided by exhibition visitors, it was revealed that the author's artwork did, in fact, influence some of those who saw it in a positive way and it remains her hope that that influence may become a valuable, though hard to measure, outcome of this research. That the semiotic process outlined previously in Figure 5.1 was in part successful in communicating the Green message to some visitors and in inspiring them to act differently in the future, can be seen as evidence of the way in which the Green Man continually evolves to maintain the currency of his message and the success of his strategy. Thus, in returning to one of the original questions that inspired this study (*i.e.*, what is it that caused the Green Man theme to appear and disappear in European civilization over the last twenty centuries?) it is now the author's contention that it is our changing relationship with the natural world that constantly re-inspires artists to seek new ways in which to create Green Man art in order to better reflect the ever-changing *status quo*.

Given that the Green Man constantly evolves in terms of his manifestation and that he does so to most effectively communicate his message to the society of the day, it is at this point worthwhile returning to another of the original research questions and to ask ourselves in what ways does the present re-appearance of the Green Man reflect the social, aesthetic and religious state of contemporary Western culture? The next section explores this question in more detail.

### **5.3. The Conservator Takes Control**

In 1990, William Anderson argued that the Green Man is the archetype of our oneness

with the earth (Anderson, 1990). Whilst agreeing to a large extent with Anderson's claim, it is the author's contention that the present reappearance (incarnation) of the archetype goes much deeper and takes on an additional—and more profound role—that of the **Conservator** archetype. Given that the arguments put forward in earlier chapters connecting the Green Man's resurgence in recent years to the rapid increase in ecological destruction and planetary change (global warming in particular) hold true, it seems reasonable to conclude that the present day incarnation of the Green Man is fundamentally oriented towards reminding us of our intimate, yet fragile relationship with our mother planet and the need for us to engage proactively in caring for and maintaining that relationship. However, simply being reminded of our oneness with nature is no longer adequate or even sufficient—as was noted by several of the artists interviewed in Chapter Three. Direct and positive action must be taken in response to the ever-increasing number of warnings being made.

Having said this, it must be pointed out that in any relationship **reciprocity**—the establishment of an equitable balance between give and take—is always fundamental to the establishment of any form of long lasting harmony. Using Green Man art as a guide, we can see how our relationship with nature has gradually changed over the course of time but, more importantly, we can see how it has begun to change at a much more rapid pace in the last twenty-five years. In fact, the rate of change becomes more apparent when we realise that the patriarchally driven **I-It** relationship—which western culture has largely used as the principal model for dealing with the natural world until quite recently—is now recognised as no longer being able to serve either nature or humanity in any positive way. Since the beginning of the capitalist ascendancy following the all but total collapse of socialism and communism in the 1980s and early 1990s, it has become increasingly obvious that unbridled economic growth is no longer possible without the establishment of some form of ecological and social balance. In taking from Gaia without giving back anything of significance for the

past few millennia, it seems we have almost worn her out (so to speak) and, in so doing, we have also set in motion certain forces that may not only harm us in the immediate future, but which will do serious damage to the generations that will follow.

On a positive note, it is clear that a common thread is beginning to emerge in our way of thinking that addresses this issue. When asked if they felt the Green Man has a message to convey, all participating artists indicated that they believed that his re-emergence at the present moment is about reminding us of our complex, yet intimate connection to Gaia—and that there is an urgent need for us to respect and take more responsibility for her overall care. In his present role, the Green Man not only reminds us of our relationship with mother Earth, he provides new guidelines to direct our relationship with her. Since James Lovelock introduced his Gaia theory in 1979, our growing understanding of what life on Earth actually is has made it increasingly obvious that we must assume the role of Conservators and take direct responsibility for the care of the whole system—if life as we know it is to continue. Today, our emerging acceptance that we are a part of the planetary ecosystem rather than apart from it—increasingly influences thought in every avenue of creative, intellectual and financial endeavours. Indeed, following on from Lovelock, John Elkington's landmark text *Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business* (1999) introduced the idea that all business and financial ventures must take into account economic, social and environmental factors if an enterprise is to be sustainable and successful in the long term—although he first claims to have introduced the concept through the *SustainAbility* group as early as 1994 under the banner “*People, Planet, Profits*” (<http://www.sustainability.com/about/history.asp>). Elkington's idea seems to have taken on a life of its own in recent years, to the extent that the idea of a “triple bottom line” has become an integral part of almost every social, academic and economic discussion that considers how the future is to be managed. Rothery (2004) proposes that we take Green thinking even further, suggesting that the Green Man

concept should be given the tentative status of a scientific hypothesis, in order that it may be debated and refined in the same way Gaia theory was. Clearly, to any historian of the future, the widespread emergence of so-called “Green thinking” as a reflection of the powerful and fundamental changes occurring in Western culture and philosophy at the turn of the millennium will be self-evident.

Whilst Lovelock and Elkington may have written several key texts dealing with the need for environmental sustainability, the ideas they put forward had been widely seeded by the mid 1990s and, it could be argued, were an outcome of the change in values that followed the social turmoil and challenges to convention that were integral to the 1960s. The following example, written in 1994, illustrates this point. *Trees, Forestry, and the Responsiveness of Creation* proposed a new approach to forest management, one that required listening to and involvement with the natural world—in this case, specifically forests—rather than following a policy of mindless degradation and uncontrolled clearing:

Universally trees are saying, “View us as gift, tend us, and keep us healthy.” We [humanity] ignore their [the forests] impassioned cries at the risk not only of the sustainability of the ecosystem, but also at the risk of losing our own souls in the morass of *I-It* relationships. (Walsh, Karch and Ansell, 1994: 8).

The fundamental change in thinking outlined in the quote above—from mindless exploitation to straightforward empathy—perfectly demonstrates the ways in which people have come to respond to the urgings of the Green Man in his character of Conservator archetype. What we must realise, however, is that this personification is transient—the Green Man himself is not actually the Conservator, he is the role model and the guide.

Thus, as we respond to and gradually assume the role of Conservator, we must not only begin to reassess our relationship with nature, we must start to take responsibility

for being the intelligence that guides the system—for it appears that that is what we are becoming. It is no coincidence that most Green Man art is focused on portraying the human head. The head houses the brain and what we understand or perceive to be the individual mind. The Green Man tells us that, as (mind)ful Conservators, we are taking over responsibility for the stewardship of the natural world and that, as a consequence, we are also increasingly responsible for maintaining our own place in the entire system. With a glance he re(minds) us that as we reach maturity there comes (as an inevitable consequence) an increasing responsibility for the outcomes of all of our choices and decisions—just as Steven Baxter, the Son of God in the telemovie *The Second Coming*, (Shergold, 2003) pointed out—and all adolescents have learned the hard way since the dawn of humanity. However, it is this mind and consciousness theme that suggests that there may be another angle to be considered in questioning the reasons behind the re-emergence of the Green Man in recent years.

Futurist Peter Russell holds advanced degrees in theoretical physics, experimental psychology and computer science. In his 1983 book *The Global Brain*, which built extensively on Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, Russell explored the idea that humanity may be assuming the role of the brain and nervous system in the *super-organism* that is the planet's biosphere. Although his argument—that humans are information processors *par excellence* and that the sudden explosion of both the human population and communications technologies can be likened to the way in which the brain grows in the developing fetus—has many detractors, his contention presents some interesting ideas in terms of Gaia theory. That the most common representative form of the Green Man—that of a figure with vegetation connected to and flowing from the head and into the environment in the most intimate of ways, through the mouth, facial features or even covering the entire face—so effectively illustrates Russell's theory is almost uncanny. Russell notes:

[In the fetus] the number of brain cells grows exceedingly fast then, just before birth, it slows down and stops. The brain is, in a sense, fully grown. Then what happens is the nerve cells begin connecting up. The development of the mind, the intelligence, the creativity, and all of that is not because the brain grows more cells. It's because the cells start interconnecting....[We] are now going through this phase of beginning to connect up. It started off with things like the telephone, then radio and television, fiber optics and satellites and now the Internet, and who knows where it's going to lead. But we are beginning to connect in the same way that the cells in a brain connect. (Russell, interviewed in Brown 2005: 214).

However, Russell goes on to argue that, as a sentient species, our destructive behaviour towards the planet and the environment is irrational to the point of insanity and that, without some further evolutionary change in our consciousness and values we may well be in danger of extinction. Fortunately, throughout history there has always been some form of guidance or enlightenment for those who sought it, whether from those he calls the “enlightened ones,” the Green Man, or through philosophy and reason:

...we call them saints, yogis, the enlightened ones—who stepped out of this egocentric, materialistic take-what-I-can-get-for-myself mode of consciousness. There have been people who have moved that into a whole other way, a way that is full of compassion, understanding and love, that is not self-centred, that is not concerned with taking from the environment or with individual gain or profit. I think this is the direction in which we are headed. (Russell, interviewed in Brown 2005: 215).

We have seen previously that art, and Green Man art in particular, can act like a guiding light in a darkened room, focussing attention and illuminating the issue that the artist wishes to draw attention to. Once the attention of the viewer is captured, carefully constructed art has the ability to offer, or at least suggest, a solution as well. Whilst not alluding directly to the Green Man as one of the “enlightened ones”, Russell continues:

The image a society has of itself can play a crucial role in the shaping of its future. A positive vision is like the light at the end of the tunnel, which, even though dimly glimpsed, encourages us to step in that direction. (Russell, 2005).

From their responses, it is apparent that all of the artists who participated in the interviews for this study are aware of the environmental issues concerning us at present. Whether with conscious intent or not, it is clear that most creators of Green Man art infuse their imagery with this awareness and thus move into the realm of offering—if not a solution—then at least a coping mechanism. For example, referring specifically to art representing the Green Man, British author and BBC commentator Mike Harding observes:

If anything on this poisoned planet gives us hope of renewal it is this simple foliate head that has been there in one form or another since the beginning. (Harding, 2006).

Better still, the suggestion that there is, inherent in every viewer, the potential to take control and act in some way to address the ecological crisis—and that this can be a result of the creative process—instils a sense of optimism in many of the works that the viewer connects with. The act of creating itself, coupled with the subject matter of the Green Man, brings forth an awakening effect on the artist as well as the viewer. This awakening opens our minds to the possibility that if we desire something deeply enough we can, in fact, make it happen. As a part of the Global Brain, artists may well be the ones that carry forward the inspiration provided by the “enlightened ones.”

#### **5.4. The Conservator Makes an Impact on the Author**

That many artists have long understood the ability of art to communicate at a deeper, even subliminal level is widely accepted and—in fact, is almost a tenet of contemporary Western culture. The following quote, taken from an editorial written by Amy Lenzo, editor of *Gatherings*, an on-line journal, demonstrates this quite clearly:

In spite of everything we know, or think we know, the immense power and influence of art on the human psyche remains a mystery...[it] allows a synthesis of logic and illogic, and invites us to address profound contradictions within a unified structure. (Lenzo, 2001).

In a subsequent article in the same edition, Lenzo goes on to point out that she

believes the arts have a profound influence on the psyche and consequently our behaviour: “Art is the expression of a powerful and primal force, capable of creating a real effect in our psyches and within the world”. (Lenzo, 2001).

In the author’s own experience, it has become obvious to her that art does, in fact, have the power to convey an idea and seed an intention to act in those who view it. From the exhibition feedback and comments made by visitors, it was found that quite a few visitors made their own interpretations of the message embedded in the work and were inspired to begin some form of new journey. The following (unsigned) comments from the Gallery book illustrate how the author’s exhibition brought about the desire to respond in some physical or long-term way to at least two visitors:

*I feel I should write about Green Man. How very clever you are to be able to escape into mythology.*

*Thanks for opening my eyes and mind to the Green Man. I will make sure he is a strong influence in the rest of my life.*

Another, and more personal measure of the success of the creative work, was the interesting and unusual connection that the exhibition made between the Humanities and the Science Faculties at the University of the Sunshine Coast. On the basis of the ideas presented in the exhibition, the author was asked to work as a tutor in the Science Faculty’s Core course *Environment, Technology and Sustainability* (Core courses are common foundation subjects that must be completed by all first year students enrolled at the University). The author was approached because the course co-ordinator, Dr. Richard White, had recognised—whilst viewing the exhibition—that her passion for (and understanding of) the importance of maintaining a healthy natural world reflected a key learning outcome of the course and provided an alternative perspective in the delivery of the content. The recognition of the “triple bottom line” and the need for balance in all things scientific, cultural and economic is slowly starting to take effect and this, I believe, is a small example of it. The author is not alone in



experiencing positive outcomes through the creation, sale and exhibition of Green Man artwork. In terms of selling work (always important to self-supporting artists) six artists that participated in the study believe that sale of the work is based on customers identifying directly with the image and its inherent meaning.

British author James Allen (1864-1912) wrote *As a Man Thinketh* in 1902. His observations and poetry have special meaning to the author and convey well the sublime connection between the aesthetic world of the mind and the natural world of the body that are an essential outcome of any contact with the Green Man. They well summarise how the Conservator has influenced the author during the course of this study. More importantly, they are a reminder to her that the message of the Green Man has always been present:

We become spiritually rich, when we discover the adventure within; when we are conscious of the oneness of all life; when we know the power of meditation; when we experience kinship with nature. (Allen, 1902).

### **5.5. The Conservator Knows What Science is Still Learning**

The message of the Green Man has always been significantly ahead of the thinking of the day. More importantly, it has often been the task of those who have encountered his message to interpret it and pass it forward—whether they be artists, activists or artisans. As can be imagined, this is not always an easy task, given that some of the ideas may fly in the face of established conventions and ideas. The quote attributed to Galileo “*Eppur si muove*” (And yet it moves) which legend has it he muttered following his encounter with the Inquisition, illustrates just how difficult challenging the *status quo* can be—and the repercussions that can follow. At best, one may be regarded as an eccentric with an unusual idea, but at the other extreme imprisonment, banishment and even torture may result. Even today, proclaiming the conservation message—and openly supporting it in public—is tinged with the stigma of eccentricity. However, the

Green Man moves in mysterious ways.

In Chapter Two, the reader was introduced to the concept of *Systems Thinking*, an analytical strategy that considers the entire functioning of a system in relation to the environment in which it operates—rather than through the narrow observation of its component parts. Along with the triple bottom line, environmentally aware businesses (perhaps we should we call them **future-aware** businesses) have also recognised the need to adopt the idea of systems thinking into their business model. Working as advocates for this more holistic and environmentally sustainable approach, Australian John Seed and American colleagues Joanna Macy and Molly Brown, can be readily identified as being on the leading edge of the push for change. Seed, possibly one of Australia's most vocal ecologists, is the founder and director of the *Rainforest Information Centre* in Lismore and was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) by the Australian Government for services to conservation and the environment in 1995. Seed refers to himself as *an activist that speaks on behalf of the trees* (Seed, 2000). He maintains that:

If we have the experience of being part of the larger body of Earth, then defending Nature is no longer altruism, it is transformed into self defence. (Seed, 2000)

Seed's website reveals a campaigner working to raise awareness of the interconnectedness of all things—a message Green Man as the Conservator has continually put forward. His associates, Brown and Macy also work extensively within the *Whole System Thinking* paradigm (the word *whole* is added to the economic based model) teaching sustainability practices to those businesses who are enlightened enough to listen. However, given the complexity of whole systems thinking, a simplified set of guidelines was developed for the business community, based indirectly on the work of the deep ecologists. Within these guidelines, Macy argued that:

...a holistic shift is necessary for...survival. Since Earth's carrying capacity is limited...we must learn to think together in an integrated, synergistic fashion, rather than in

fragmented and competitive ways. (Macy, 1994).

Slightly more than a decade earlier, Fritjof Capra had introduced a variant of systems thinking to a wider audience through his book *The Turning Point* (1982), in which he argued that modern science needed to move away from the then dominant Newtonian, reductionist view if any future society is to become sustainable or develop any sense of meaningful purpose. However, in his 2002 book, *The Hidden Connections* he identifies a backlash against systems thinking and points out that one strategy of challenge has been to attempt to break down the connection between art and technology—and to displace the influence of art in the overall balance:

The meaning of “technology,” like that of “science,” has changed considerably over the centuries. The original Greek *Technologia*, derived from *techne* (“art”), meant a discourse on the arts. When the term was first used in English in the seventeenth century, it meant a systematic discussion of the “applied arts” or crafts...(Capra, 2002: 92).

Capra’s point, that the physical manifestation of technology—which once encompassed both art and craftsmanship—is now reduced to a nuts and bolts view that overwhelms any of its former diversity and richness, is illustrative of the level of resistance to change that established systems can build, even when confronted by the challenge of maintaining their own long-term sustainability.

That images of the Green Man represent our profound connection with nature is clear. That art and science were once much more intimately connected is often forgotten and, it is at this stage that we need to remind ourselves once again of the close connection to science that art once had. Australian artist and philosopher Robert Pope, (who, along with fellow Australian artist Robert Todonai, founded the *Science-Art Research Centre of Australia*) had this to say about the growing rift:

[I am] worried that, unless science begins to soul search and reconcile with the humanities, technology will continue “growing into a monster”. (Pope, in Miller 1995: 2).

Once again we hear an Ostinato-like reiteration of the message that we have heard

continually throughout this exegesis. In the author's view, it is no coincidence that the word science is part of the word *conscience*—yet it is a conscience that is specifically missing in our addiction to fast paced, unsustainable “progress” and “development”. In an echo of the Green Man's message, Pope (2005) warns us that unless we think about our actions now and instil those actions with an intention to conserve and consider the future, dire consequences await.

The Green Man, of course, is far too subtle and wise than to allow himself to be dismissed by the mere suggestion that technology alone can solve the problems of the world. The art-science-humanities link is far too strong and far too long established to be dismissed so easily—and it makes sense that he would use this time-honoured connection to renew the momentum that drives forward his environmental message. The recent popularity of the movie *The DaVinci Code* (2003), provides an excellent example of how the Green Man's message evolves and changes to face such challenges.

As we know, Leonardo DaVinci is probably the most famous (and over-exploited) example of the art/science connection discussed above. Judging by the popularity of best-selling author Dan Brown's recent book *The DaVinci Code* (2003), interest in ancient wonders, supernatural links and our connection with the mysteries of the natural world continues unabated amongst audiences around the world. A key scene in both the book and the film is played out at Rosslyn Chapel in Midlothian, Scotland, but it is not the machinations of Brown's mystery that are of interest here—it is that the Chapel is home to possibly one of the United Kingdom's most impressive and extensive Green Man installations.

Amidst the excitement caused by the filming of the *DaVinci Code* (2006), journalist Diane Maclean—writing for the newspaper *the Scotsman*—quoted new findings by

Arthurian researchers Mark Oxbrow and Ian Robertson (2005) that move the focus of interest away from the legends of the Holy Grail and the Knights Templar and on to the real masterpiece of the chapel—the Green Man series. Oxbrow and Robertson suggest that the carvings have not only been long unrecognised for their historical and artistic value, but that when the Green Man carvings are analysed in detail, the chapel reveals a highly detailed representation of the many life-stages of humankind:

To begin the journey you need to face the two east windows, which are designed to catch the morning light. Opposite these windows are carved musicians, welcoming in the dawn. Facing them is the nativity scene. The whole east section of the chapel is concerned with the beginning of day, the start of life and spring. The green men here are young boys with single vine leaves entwined round their immature faces.

Shifting south the scene moves on towards the middle of the day, summer and the middle years of life. The foliage depicts harvest time and there are fruits in abundance. Here the green men are in the prime of life, verdant and lush. The biblical lesson is about gaining wisdom, with depictions of the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues. Moving west and dusk falls. The scene is autumnal and the green men are ageing. The roof represents the canopy of the heavens with stars and moons. Finally, coming round to the north, the chapel hits winter, the end of the day and the end of life. The green men are skeletons; the biblical story is of the crucifixion. The north aisle is associated with death. It is no coincidence that the only two black slabs in the flooring are placed here. Beneath them a stone stairway leads to the crypt. (Oxbrow and Robertson, cited in Maclean 2005: 2).

Figure 5.3 shows the youthful and aged Green Men and a view of the eastern windows of the Rosslyn Chapel, as published in *the Scotsman* article. That this is a relatively new interpretation of the meaning of the carvings of Rosslyn Chapel and that this meaning has only been re-discovered in recent years (Maclean notes that Oxbrow and Robertson have spent over twenty years investigating the art of the Rosslyn chapel before publishing their findings) illustrates just one of the ways in which popular culture and its associated media have been manipulated to draw attention back to the ancient message. Although the Rosslyn Green Men remind us of our limited life span, as always they also serve to remind us of our inextricable connection to nature and all life on earth. Furthermore, they also present us with a question. Specifically, they

challenge the viewer to contemplate the meaning of life and the role we play in it, forcing us to confront the impact of our actions on each other and on the world as we know it.



**Figure 5.3. Oxbrow and Robertson's response to the *DaVinci Code*, Rosslyn Chapel and the Green Man series. Left: The youthful Green Man facing the eastern windows and the rising sun (centre). Right: the northern Green Man, reduced in old age to skeletal form and facing the crypt. (<http://heritage.scotsman.com/myths.cfm?id=2078442005>).**

That the biggest blockbuster movie of early 2006 should lead mass audiences back to the home of one of Scotland's most significant Green Man sites (even under the guise of a search for the Holy Grail) is typical of the adaptability and ingenuity of our protagonist. There has been a popular interest in DaVinci's work ever since his death, and there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of attempts to interpret and understand the meanings behind his art and his writings—as the work of the scientist and artist Bulent Atalay (2004) demonstrates. However, it is the ways in which the Green Man's message is being spread at the present time that is of particular interest at this point. Just a few examples of this diversification, and the increasing willingness of artists and politicians to spread the word, will serve to make this point. Undoubtedly, the reader will have little difficulty in thinking of dozens more.

A wonderful instance of how widespread and how powerful the environmental message is becoming occurred as this exegesis was being written. The *Earth Dialogues Festival 2006*, an international forum that brought together world leaders to discuss issues

pertaining to ethical resource management and sustainable development was held close to the author's Sunshine Coast home, in Brisbane, Australia in late July 2006. The forum, co-chaired by former president of the Soviet Union and now Chairman of Green Cross International, Mikhail Gorbachev [in a strange twist of fate Gorbachev—once known as a Red Man—is now better known as a Green Man!] and the Premier of Queensland Peter Beattie, brought together artists, educators, scientists, economists, politicians and students to discuss strategies for change and future progress. Importantly, the views of not only our present, but of our future leaders were sought and given as a part of the proceedings during Education Day, in which over 500 students participated. In his keynote address, Mikhail Gorbachev made this observation:

We desperately need to recognise that we are the guests, not the masters, of nature and adopt a new paradigm for development, based on the costs and benefits to all people, and bound by the limits of nature herself rather than the limits of technology and consumerism...(Gorbachev, 2006 <<http://education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/html/earthchallenge.html>>).

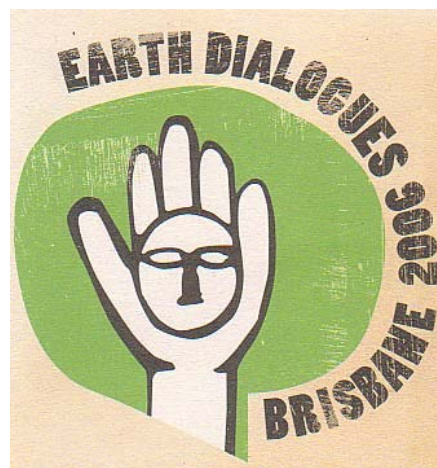
However, in a somewhat serendipitous connection, Lyndon Terracini, Artistic Director of the festival, drew attention to the art/science nexus and referred once again to the DaVinci connection:

Indeed, the process of re-connecting the humanities and the sciences is a vital and integral part of the philosophy of Brisbane Festival 2006. When one recalls the work of Leonardo DaVinci, the striking observation is that his work in art and science was viewed as one. Our recent societies have created artificial silos, which isolate and weaken the powerful conduit of art, culture and science. (Terracini, 2006: 5).

Coincidentally, the Brisbane Earth Dialogues Festival used as its logo an image that depicts a modern, graphic form of the Green Man, as shown in Figure 5.4. Here we see the shape of a tree in green, acting as a background for a hand—which in turn holds a human face. The image is slightly reminiscent of the authors' painting, *Evergreen Prayer*, in that a hand is used to symbolise the need for action.

In an effort to make some further sense of the issues we face globally, well-known author and journalist Bill Moyers produced a series of documentaries for North American Public Television in 2006 entitled *Faith and Reason*. In the course of the series, Moyers interviewed approximately a dozen of the worlds' most accomplished scholars and writers, in order to explore more deeply the dual themes of faith and reason. Well-known feminist author and journalist Jeanette Winterson was one of the writers involved. In a video clip from the series (available on the PBS website) she had this to say about the connection between traditional knowledge and science:

There are some fabulous things that we have known all along, we have been able to know intuitively, that science is only now discovering. (Winterson, 2006, video/audio stream <<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/index.html>>).



**Figure 5.4. The program cover for the Brisbane Earth Dialogues Festival 2006, showing a stylised version of a modern Green Man image. (Author's collection).**

Winterson, although famous for her antagonistic and confrontational personal style, was commenting on the power of myth and the need for us to regain a sense of the spiritual in all aspects of contemporary life. Although Winterson was raised in a strict Pentecostal household, her rejection of her religious upbringing was not, in her view, a rejection of a sense of the sacredness of life—and she acknowledges that a sense of the spiritual continues to inform her writing:

[It's] more than sex. More than money. You know, life is not endless is it? Cash, cars, cocaine and girls. It's more than that. And there is a spiritual dimension to people...we are



driven to want something more. (Winterson 2006. <[http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/portraits\\_winterson.html](http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/portraits_winterson.html)>).

The gradual shift in thinking away from the hard-nosed economic rationalism of last century, with its bottom line decree that material progress should occur at any cost—even the abandonment of our innate sense of wonder and our spiritual ideals—is becoming increasingly obvious. Bussey (2004) points out that, in an apparent contradiction, contemporary humanist theory frequently adds spirituality to its list of core values, creating what he calls a *Quadruple Bottom Line*. Whether it is a triple or a quadruple bottom line is not really important—that there is a bottom line and that the time to act is now is all too apparent. The Green Man has known this all along.

## **5.6. Green Man the Conservator and the Alpha Male**

In section 5.3 we discussed the idea that, in any relationship, a sense of reciprocity was fundamental to the maintenance of long lasting harmony and balance. The Green Man, it was argued, was pointing out the need for us to re-evaluate our connection with our mother the earth and the necessity of rethinking our use of natural resources. That our existing way of dealing with Gaia has been based on overtly patriarchal thinking and the long outdated *I-It* model is obvious and the Green Man, in his present role as Conservator, draws our attention to this point. In this section, I would like to argue that, in providing a role model for us in terms of our relationship with the earth, the Green Man is also setting an example for us to follow in terms of how we relate to each other at the gender level—for it is at this most fundamental level of inter-human relationships that we need to re-establish the natural harmony that once existed—especially if we are to confront the challenge of mending the most fundamental relationship of all.

The patriarchal systems that dominate contemporary thinking are perfectly illustrated

by the emergence in recent years of the aggressive and domineering personality known as the alpha male. Although the term is originally derived from the biological sciences where it is used to define the dominant male group leader (there are also alpha females and alpha pairs), in Western culture the term is now “sometimes pejorative and used to describe a man who is overly masculine and [who] should be generally feared.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha\\_male](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha_male)). Unlike the traditional hero figure, whose actions invariably reflect the needs of the greater good, the alpha male is only interested in himself and the propagation of his own interests. Unfortunately, in recent years this incredibly hubristic approach to life is no longer considered to be an entirely masculine trait and there is a growing trend amongst some younger females to adopt extreme “alpha” mannerisms. In her recent book, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, author Ariel Levy (2005) comments on the growing desire shown by some young women to match the extremes of behaviour exhibited by “alpha” men :

They wanted to be "one of the guys"; they hoped to be experienced "like a man." Going to strip clubs or talking about porn stars was a way of showing themselves and the men around them that they weren't "prissy little women" or "girly-girls." Besides, they told me, it was all in fun, all tongue-in-cheek and for me to regard this...as problematic would be old-school and uncool. (Levy, 2005: 4).

Levy notes that in an effort to “make it in a man’s world”, some of the women she interviewed sought to model themselves on the men they saw as having the most influence—changing the way they act and altering their own bodies in order to compete with each other in an effort to be better accepted by the men they emulated. (Levy, 2005). This replication of already unacceptable behavior places even more strain on Gaia herself, as both sexes jockey for power over each other and, as a consequence, the environment and the future.

Typical alpha males (and females) travel through life acknowledging little more than the late twentieth-century decree of money as the bottom line and the conviction that social status is only signaled by overt displays of affluence and obvious consumption. Such

people are only interested in taking the best of nature and life's offerings—and in doing so at any expense—their only regard being the satisfaction of their own personal desires. We know who they are, since we publish numerous magazines about them and their lives. They speak loudly on their cell phones as they drive their over-sized Hummers through suburban neighborhoods. Their air conditioners run full-time in their mansions—whilst they themselves are elsewhere acquiring a fake suntan. They are ultra-masculine and ultra-feminine and deny any connection with the struggles of the real world. Most importantly, they have long lost touch with the ecosystem that supports them and their lifestyles. Personal trainers and cosmetic surgery are valued more than fixing the scars we make on the planet—the Brazilian Wax imitates the stripping of the Brazilian rainforest.

In contrast, the Green Man presents us with a new male role model, one encompassing chivalry, fairness, acceptance and a love and recognition of—and an equality with—the feminine. He tells us of the *hero's* sensibilities, but also reminds us to beware the hero's failings. With this message ringing in our ears, we enter the twenty-first century knowing that addressing every aspect of the triple bottom line is the only way we can move forward. As the knowledge that comes to us through our increasing interest in the environmental and environmental science constantly grows, the gap between reality and myth and the past and present, is rapidly diminishing. However, as the influence of the Conservator gains momentum, he also reminds us that without due care and forethought—the classic downfall so common in Greek mythology—***death by female***, may well result:

Heroes get into trouble with girls, no doubt about it. Usually a woman is all or part of their destruction. The simple reading is strong man snared by weak female. The tougher reading is that whatever you have left out of the picture will be what you must eventually confront. Death by female is [highly] likely in the hyper-masculine worldview of the hero. (Winterson, 2006).

Ways of life that create imbalance, that perpetuate the exploitative *I-It* attitude, that see the world as nothing more than a resource, that repress the female and exaggerate the male will eventually hit critical mass. With the energy of a jack-in-the-box held down too long, Gaia will inevitably react. And, like any mother, in that reaction she will expel her repressors in order to ensure the survival of her offspring, even if it means shaking off the shackles of humanity forever.

### **5.7. Future Research.**

*Nature is the Art of God.* Dante Alighieri.

There are probably as many functions for art in a society as there are images. For example, road signs use graphical images and simple icons to control traffic movement and behaviour, tables and graphs are used to educate the student or reader, comics and cartoons seek to entertain, whilst a painting of a rose may serve to remind a collector of their favourite flower. Importantly though, another function of images lies in their ability to initiate change in those who view them and thus move the viewer towards action—thereby engendering what can sometimes be quite complex behaviours. Perhaps of greatest importance however, is the ability of images to assist in the healing process.

As we have seen throughout this study, many artists deliberately instil their Green Man art with a particular message—typically one of an ecological or environmental nature—and often with the aim of inspiring their audience towards taking some form of affirmative and immediate action. As my own work progressed during the course of this study, this approach became increasingly a part of my creative strategy—moving the audience’s interaction from passive viewing, to interactive engagement and finally towards proactive response. The interactive piece *House Challenge*, for example, aimed at engaging the viewer both physically and mentally, with the intention of

reinforcing the environmental message through multi-sensory interaction with the work. That the participant had a philosophical decision to make at the end of the puzzle demanded the use of deeper level reasoning (through the use of allegory) and thus deeper level learning—thereby ensuring that the intended message was more effectively embedded. The following quote illustrates this approach quite effectively:

A task without a vision is just a job.

A vision without a task is just a dream.

A vision with a task can change the world. (Anon).

Deborah Haynes, author of *the Vocation of the Artist*, argued that it is (amongst other things) the role of artists to “reclaim the future” (Haynes, 1977). Haynes maintains that artists look back into the past, survey it for insights about the present and incorporate their findings into their work for transmission into the future. It is interesting to note that five of the artists interviewed in this study stated that they had initially discovered the Green Man image through historical research or by following up familiar myth or legends and that in the course of their work they felt that they were acting as “transmitters” in passing on knowledge of the Green Man to present and future generations. It is through maintaining a continuous historical presence and a seldom-changing appearance that iconic and archetypal images (such as the Green Man) maintain their validity and authority. Artists engaged in creating work associated with the Green Man’s present revival may change his physical appearance in varying ways to suit the medium and message they are conveying, but it seems clear that the recognisability of the figure continues unchanged. It is the message it transmits, that remains the key to the continued existence of the Green Man archetype and Green Man Art.

Whether or not art actually does affect some individuals at the physiological level continues to be a source of widespread contention, even though there is significant evidence to suggest that the idea has considerable merit. Art Therapy, for example, is

widely accepted as providing a valuable healing strategy, yet it still remains firmly planted in the “alternative therapies” domain. Even though Art Therapy was used, with some degree of success, by the Australian Army after World War II to rehabilitate veterans returning from the battlefields of New Guinea and the horrors of the Japanese prison camps, it still maintains connotations of being somewhat “on the fringe”. The following quote from scientist and author Barbara Ann Brennan illustrates why this may be the case:

Art has an extraordinary effect on the auric field. This effect varies a great deal with each individual, but we can make some generalizations about its effect...The excellence in any work of art inspires us to do our best by bringing our own [auric] field into more coherency. (Brennan, 1993: 111).

Brennan, who holds an advanced degree in atmospheric physics and has worked as a research scientist at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre, is passionate in her belief that art has a greater influence on a person’s psyche than simply initiating a shallow like / dislike aesthetic response. However, her reference to “auric” effects, even coming from an established and recognised scientist, is immediately suggestive of “New Age” mysticism rather than scientific evidence. Until more formalised scientific research is done into the effect of art on the psychological and physical well being of patients, Art Therapy will continue to struggle on the edges of conventional medicine. It is in this area in particular that the author feels more research needs to be done if the potential healing properties of art are to be properly explored and applied. In the same way that a shaman often assumes the role of the sick person in order to show them the way to health, it is possible that art and the engagement in creative practice can also be a conduit to better health through the creation of a more harmonious balance between mind and body—as argued by Nuland, (2003). The resulting artworks may, in addition, also serve to facilitate healing in others.

It is somewhat unfair to conclude this study with more questions raised than answered

but that is what I feel has occurred. Regarding the Art/Science connection alone, there remains a plethora of unanswered questions and new paths to explore. As both Brennan (1993) and Kryder (1994) argue, the effect of art on the mind and body remains in fact, essentially unexplored—which is strange given that numerous cultures have long created Sacred Art which has been acknowledged to hold special healing properties when viewed under the appropriate circumstances—and that our own society has for some time now used art therapy with some success in the healing process. The study of the healing power that engagement with existing art, and the potential that individual creative expression holds as a channel to the subconscious mind, opens up a huge area for future research—even given the extensive work already being done in this field.

That colour has a psychological effect has long been known by advertisers and others involved in manipulating the moods and responses of their clientele. For example, the effects of colour on an individual's mood are relatively well known—some US prisons paint their rooms a hue known as *Baker Miller Pink* (R:255, G:145, B:175) in the belief that the colour calms the emotions of violent offenders, whilst advertisers and designers often use black to imbue their products with a certain level of sophistication or sex appeal (think little black cocktail dress). Unfortunately, there are thousands of books and websites dealing with colour and the meaning of colour, which makes it difficult for any serious student or researcher to gain access to conclusive results. Were such knowledge to be available and rigorously tested, it could be used in conjunction with carefully constructed visual compositions, to create artworks that deliberately influence the moods and emotions of those who study them—in the same way that sacred mandalas are used in Eastern cultures as guides in meditation.

Our future is increasingly reliant on our ability to adapt and change. There is little challenge to the idea that science will be the means by which humanity will achieve

this, but science alone cannot provide all of the answers, simply because there is more to the world and to life itself than the mechanistic, Newtonian model of last century. Economics alone cannot provide us with security and peace or even happiness. The notion of an all encompassing, paternalistic God guiding every aspect of our existence is rapidly fading as we come to terms with the fact that we are just as much a part of the natural ecosystem as are the trees and the air we breathe. Without a sense of responsibility, without a sense of our obligation and our inextricable connection to the biosphere in which we live and without a sense of beauty, belonging and compassion, we will be doomed to extinction. It is the arts and humanities, along with our sense of wonder and appreciation of the aesthetic that provides the balance to our cleverness, our economics and our technology. This is, I believe, a message I tried to convey in my work *Balance of Nature*.

As the Green Man tells us, our environment is—at this very minute—in a state of crisis. Something is clearly going wrong as global warming increases, cyclones and typhoons become more powerful, more frequent and travel much further afield. As Australia moves into yet another year of the longest drought known since white settlement, even the most insular amongst us cannot fail to notice the symptoms of the fever that is now gripping Gaia. In his role as Consort and Guide, the Green Man tells us that in order to create any form of sustainable equilibrium, the wealthy must engage with the poorer countries of the planet. We are all here together—and the suggestion that starving refugees fleeing drought and civil war are no more than queue jumping “economic migrants” can be seen as nothing more than the mean spirited sophistry of the rich and powerful. At present, it is the so-called “third-world” countries that not only suffer the worst of the environmental disasters thrown at them by nature but it is they that are most often exploited by greedy international corporations. Sadly, in order to merely survive, these countries are often forced to utilize their own forests and natural resources in unsustainable ways, thereby perpetuating the cycle of natural destruction



and environmental decline. We have seen throughout this exegesis that the Green Man, in passing on the baton and role of Conservator, takes no account of national boundaries. As the new stewards of the planet, it is critical that we fully understand this.

Even though the Green Man beckons us to embrace our connectedness to the planet, it does not mean that we are now totally alone. In the course of this work, I have personally come to feel a connectedness to a whole that is greater than myself. I no longer feel like the lone coalmine canary that escaped the polluted confines of New Jersey. Through my Green Man art, I now know I share a kinship with a group of concerned, like-minded artists that are also working with the theme. As I sit here now, writing up my findings, I specifically recall the rainy, cold winter's night when Paul Sivell returned his interview responses to me via email. As a transplanted American living thousands of kilometers away from my immediate family, I sometimes suffer a melancholia that is hard to dismiss. On this night, I felt deeply alone as I forged on with my painting into the small hours of the night, but my feelings were immediately dispelled as Paul's encouraging and optimistic email brought tears to my eyes. His words and the images of his amazing work comforted me in the same way that the pristine air and ecosystems of Australia did when I first arrived here over ten years ago.

It is through our art that we also connect to the viewers who see our work. It is through that work that we build our strength and hope as our common hero, Green Man the Conservator proudly shows the way. Once more, the iconic figure does what he has always done since long before you or I walked this world. The Green Man has always been here and he has always been busy, informing, enlightening and connecting all who acknowledge his presence.

With that said, I look forward to continuing to produce more Green Man paintings as they present themselves through the natural environment. I hope also to find new and

creative ways that better convey the need for creating environmentally sustainable communities and to spread the message of conservation. In the course of this project, I have come to understand the Green Man message in ways I could never have imagined just a few years ago and have been inspired to use my knowledge of visual language to communicate this knowledge in new and alternative ways. Through this work I have been asked to teach in courses that deal with the Environment and Sustainability and, in this way have been given the opportunity to spread the message to students of Business, Science, Education and the Humanities. This, to me, is just one step in the beginning of a long and wonderful journey.

*We must be the change we wish to see in the world.*

Mahatma Gandhi

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# Appendices

## Appendix One: The Green Man in History/A Timeline (*previous fold-out*)

## Appendix Two: Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questionnaire: For Artists creating artwork that incorporates an image of Green Man.

Please note: By filling in, signing and dating the following questionnaire, you are giving your permission for inclusion, possible quotation and citation of your answers and name in a research exegesis and possible publication. The completed exegesis will be available for public viewing from June 2006, in the University of the Sunshine Coast Library. If any commercial publication possibilities arise, you will be notified before hand for permission of inclusion.

When and how did you first discover the Green Man image?

What did that Green Man image represent to you?

Do you feel the Green Man has a gender?

If so, what has caused you to come to that decision?

Do you feel Green Man in general has a message to convey, if so, what is that message?

In **your** artwork what does the Green Man represent?

Is there a message that you want the viewer to pick up on?

Have you succeeded in conveying this message?

If so, how do you know?

Have you sold any of your Green Man art?

If so, do you know what it is about the art that moved the sale?

Do you plan on continuing to create Green Man art?

Please feel free to provide any additional information, or attach any pertinent imagery. Small file jpegs please.

Many thanks,

Phyllis Araneo

### Appendix Three: Interview Questions and Participant/Artist Responses

Presented below are the twelve questions presented to the artists in the order in which they appeared in the original questionnaire, followed immediately by the artists' individual responses. To make it easier to compare and summarise the responses from the eleven participants, the responses are grouped together under each question and the artists are listed in the same order throughout. To further clarify the text, every alternate response is italicised.

#### When and how did you first discover the Green Man image?

**Rothery:** *I think it was a gradual process of encountering him on postcards, covers of books, t-shirts etc. Then, as my interest and awareness grew, it was [through] seeking him in churches, on the internet and in books.*

**Sanderson:** I don't remember.

**Bussey:** *In 1975—when I first became interested in myth and the earth goddess and in her 'counterpart' the Green Man.*

**Richards:** I can't actually remember my first viewing of the Green Man. I've been wrapped up in mythology from a very young age, so this image has very deep roots within me, as it were.

**Adrian:** *The image of the Green Man is a common one in the study of history, cultures, and the Christian church. I'm not sure where I first saw the image but I have seen it many times.*

**Bowen:** Many years ago as a student of Art History at UNM [the University of New Mexico]; more recently I read a book which collected the history of the Green Man imagery.

**Brideson:** *I first glimpsed him [whilst] walking in woodlands and had the feeling that I wasn't alone! I think I first saw the Green Men images in Kathleen Basford's book and later in various churches in the UK. I then went on to research other images—traditional ones in churches and images produced by contemporary artists.*

**Sivell:** I don't know. I have been aware of the image for many years, but it is over the past 10 years since I have been working as a sculptor that I have come across the image more frequently.

**Eveleigh:** *His image has always been around carved on roof bosses, doorways and misericords of the many of the churches I was brought up with and have visited throughout my life. As you will know, the Welsh borders are particularly rich in his image.*

**Anderson:** Other artist friends employed the Green Man in their work as well as incorporating the image in their space of the forests of the Pacific Northwest.

**Kersten:** *During my research, some months ago [survey dated 11/07/05]. A student in my class asked if I knew the Green Man, when she saw it [my work].*

### **What did that Green Man image represent to you?**

**Rothery:** *The communication from the green, vegetative world to us in the human world—"live in harmony with nature," "respect the Earth and the natural cycles of life" and "play, celebrate and give thanks for being alive." Green Man is the song of life. He is active, catalytic. He wakes people up.*

**Sanderson:** No answer.

**Bussey:** *The Green Man was synonymous with Gaia, representing fecundity and nature. The 'greening' of the mythic image was evident in Hildegard of Bingen's greening of the world. The Green Man being the sap or soul of the trees.*

**Richards:** I've written about the Green Man often, actually. To me, he is a later, less aggressive version of the Horned God and can be found in different incarnations of hunter/gatherer cultures worldwide. He was originally responsible for keeping the balance of animal life, for he was the consummation of all animals' spirits. Any animal hunted could actually be a god or goddess incarnate, thus relevant gratitude was always given upon the close of each successful hunt. The Horned God's willingness to allow man to hunt was only present should the hunter give proper homage to the animal spirit that was killed—thus completing the life cycle decorously. His early image was most essential in the time when humans did not grow food, but instead migrated yearly to the areas where plants and animals were abundant. There are antlers kept from medieval times that are still used in present day British "antler dances" which are donned in celebration of May-Day, the Harvest and the Hunt.

His later image as consort came about in the Agricultural age, when humans settled into farmlands and raised animals at home. He is the male to the idea of "Mother Earth". Celebrations in his honour were done mainly at Harvest-time, though the origins of *Beltain* lie in the "mating" of the two deities to ensure a good crop. As people became more and more domesticated, the image of the Horned God was viewed as a wild creature; he was rumoured to be out in the darkness, hunting in the forests, a sexually charged and untamed entity.

This helped to persuade Medieval Christianity to define him as the Anti-Christ, and they brought their authoritative hysteria down upon anyone whom they considered had him lurking in their hearts.

**Adrian:** *We researched the Green Man in our creation of a show dealing with world "Carnival" celebrations, to search out the origins of man's use of this character. In our research we found that early man's nature celebrations celebrating the death of winter and the birth of spring the Green Man is most often the character represented. Not only is this very common in European traditions but a Scandinavian celebration called Festalavn also has a character dressed in greens, leaves, and flowers who does a battle (mock) with a character dressed in furs who represents winter. This celebration dates back to ancient times even before the Vikings. As a person of Scandinavian heritage these were some of the first images I saw in research for another show. I combined the images of Scandinavian celebration with the English traditions to create our design.*

**Bowen:** Long ago it was the muse of artists. Today I use it to symbolise how humanity is part of nature, of creation. If we harm any part of nature we harm ourselves and our children and our neighbours.

**Brideson:** *At first he represented the personification of the wildness of nature particularly felt in native forests, he is their guardian too. He felt dangerous and a bit threatening at first. The ones in churches had the same feel to them—particularly the Bamburg Green Man—my favourite. I later began to feel safer with him and to look at my own connections to nature and my ideas of 'maleness'.*

*I think my changing relationship with the Green Man can be seen in my paintings—at first the images are more distant and show his challenging side i.e., The Bamburg Green Man and The Green Man and Holly. Later, after I had approached him and was more comfortable, I painted the series of seasonal Green Men, including Autumn in which he is almost playful!*

**Sivell:** The image represents some link back to a past that might be real or imaginary. And it represents some kind of link with nature, particularly trees and forests.

**Eveleigh:** *The Green Man represents the male aspect in nature, especially the forest. He can be Pan, Herne the Hunter, Cernnunos the Wild man of the woods. He is one of many images of European paganism adopted by the early Christian church. He spews the rampant seed of nature out of his mouth.*

**Anderson:** He/she represents the anthropomorphic interpretation of human emotion within the scope of the natural world.

**Kersten:** *It represents life, which is found everywhere. The personalisation of nature. It makes nature sensible again, most of the people [have] lost this feeling, I think.*

### **Do you feel the Green Man has a gender?**

**Rothery:** Yes.

**Sanderson:** Male.

**Bussey:** Yes.

**Richards:** He is usually seen as male, even in the original matriarchal cultures. His horns are meant to represent his virility as well as his animal nature: his straight horns made a crescent shape, generating the idea of being a counterpart of the Lunar goddess. The ancient tribal shaman, who possessed the power to commune with the Horned God and interpret his messages, would place antlers on his head in order to bring upon his spirit. BUT, I have been toying with the idea of the Green Woman as of late, though.

**Adrian:** *Yes, the most common images are of men.*

**Bowen:** Traditionally male, yes; but I have done Green Women.

**Brideson:** Yes, male.

**Sivell:** Yes, male.

**Eveleigh:** Male.

**Anderson:** He/she both one.

**Kersten:** *No, it's just a way to personalise nature.*

**If so, what has caused you to come to that decision?**

**Rothery:** *The Green Man always appears as "a man's face". The vegetative world has strong links with the male solar energy. Green Man is almost always exuding vegetation from his mouth—conveying an active, expressive quality which is usually linked with maleness. However, I think that it is significant the Green Man usually appears as a head or face not as a whole body. This encourages one to see the Green Man as a male aspect of the living Earth—which is more commonly seen as female, i.e., the fertile body. Together, the singing face and the fertile body can be seen as a single, alchemically whole organism or spirit which transcends gender—the Living Earth, of which we are all a part.*

**Sanderson:** They all look masculine, bearded, etc. Also, as a symbol of the "life-force" behind all creation, it feels appropriate for this image to be masculine in a universal way, just as it feels right for the earth to be feminine, as the recipient of the "seed" of the creative force.

**Bussey:** *As inferred by the archetypal name but also as an interchangeable identity with the earth goddess—the bride and groom—as in Tom Bombadil (Tolkien).*

**Richards:** As consort and possessor of the seed of Spring for the land, it makes sense for him to be male.

**Adrian:** *Common usage, when I have seen female images used it is most often seen in modern art, along with the idea of the mother goddess.*

**Bowen:** It was the Roman god Sylvanus, male; the female counterpart was the goddess; names varied by cultures but there was a common thread of iconography.

**Brideson:** *I came to that decision through looking at images [and] paintings and more importantly going out into forests and spending time there. I also worked rituals in a forest near my old home (I am a Pagan) to get to understand him better. So he is male but also an aspect of nature—which I perceive as female.*

**Sivell:** Because the image is almost invariably portrayed as male.



**Eveleigh:** *You don't get Green Women. —OK, I do know of one and only one.*

**Anderson:** Human consciousness and emotion is inclusive of both.

**Kersten:** *No answer.*

**Do you feel Green Man in general has a message to convey, if so, what is that message?**

**Rothery:** *See previous.*

**Sanderson:** Life continues. Out of death comes new life.

**Bussey:** *That intuition, the unmeasurable element in the human being, is part of our strength; derived from nature. Environmentally speaking, without it the body of the earth and the human race is a damaged soul.*

**Richards:** Right now, I think he represents that original animal nature that is currently being stifled by the rise of fundamentalism in Western religions.

**Adrian:** *A celebration of new life, he is a guardian spirit that helps with the growth of plant life.*

**Bowen:** Green Man is simply a personification of our one-ness with the universe.

**Brideson:** *Part of the Green Man's message is about our responsibility in caring for the planet that we live on. He reminds us also to respect nature and that nature can be 'dangerous'—'red in tooth and claw'. He also can reflect our own wild natures that lie beneath the surface....*

**Sivell:** To me the image is more important than the message, but the message is to be in harmony with nature.

**Eveleigh:** *Respect and celebration.*

**Anderson:** The Green Man is *Puck* from Shakespeare, he is *Loki* from Nordic Mythology, he is you and me, he is the natural being representing the best of ourselves being one with nature.

**Kersten:** *It makes me more aware of the nature which is around us and may be forgotten sometimes. It shows me how important nature is for us.*

### **In your artwork what does the Green Man represent?**

**Rothery:** *A force, a message, a song, a catalyst for social and spiritual change.*

**Sanderson:** I started painting the Green Man right before the turn of the millennium. I was so caught up in the worry that civilization as we know it might collapse, that I needed reassurance. The Green Man pretty much grabbed me and would not let go until I had painted quite a few images. I started with October and then November, which was the actual time period when I was painting the first ones. I had planned to do one for each month, but ran out of time in my schedule.

Because my images are of fall and early winter, this sets them apart from the traditional green leaves you usually see. What I was trying to say, I think, was that even though in fall and winter it appears that everything is dead, there is still the promise of life returning. The eyes are alive. The spirit is there, waiting for the right time to call back the growing things. So, I was telling myself that even if it seemed that the world might end in 2000, really life would somehow go on.

**Bussey:** *The Green Man/Gaia represents the environmental and the desperate need to respect the life force of the planet and of our own intuitive connection to nature.*

**Richards:** My original animal nature. What we all are at our primal source.

**Adrian:** *As mentioned, he is a guardian of new life.*

**Bowen:** An awareness of the interconnectedness of all of creation and a reminder that humans must think in terms of sustainability in all that we do.

**Brideson:** *Hopefully all of above. [see answer to question 5]*

**Sivell:** It probably says something about me and my background and beliefs but it is not a conscious thing—often the image controls me rather than I control it. The first Green Man image I ever carved was on an old lightning struck oak in the middle of a wood. I saw the tree and immediately imagined the image. There was no forethought and no planning, I just contacted the owner and told him what I wanted to do and then went ahead and did it. (The surprising thing was that I got paid!).

**Eveleigh:** *The Green Man.*

**Anderson:** In my recent art-work at the Maroochy Botanical Gardens, I represent the Green Man as the original coastal Aboriginal Man of all time from whence the bush and all of nature sprouts from his fingers.

**Kersten:** *In my artwork, I actually represent the power and importance of nature. Green Man helped me to express my thoughts about nature. The images inspired me.*

**Is there a message that you want the viewer to pick up on?**

**Rothery:** *Living in tune with nature.*

**Sanderson:** No, I just painted them for myself. I'm pleased if people like them and they are free to read whatever they like from the images.

**Bussey:** *Nature is the vehicle for contemplation whereby we reassess ourselves, our society and our ideologies—it is a meditative life force. Hopefully, the viewers find a level of understanding pertinent to themselves.*

**Richards:** I think my fans know very well my research in worldwide mythology and female deities, so the message is quite obvious!

**Adrian:** *Yes, he also represents man's desire to understand the mysteries of life and the changing of seasons.*

**Bowen:** Yes, stated above. [see answer to question 6]

**Brideson:** *I suppose the message I want the viewer to pick up on is all of the above [see answer to question 5] plus I see him as challenging us to go out into the forests and experience his wildness in ourselves.*

**Sivell:** Not a conscious message.

**Eveleigh:** *No, it's up to them to find their own.*

**Anderson:** What you see is what you get.

**Kersten:** *We wouldn't exist without nature—nothing would actually. Women are the purest form of nature, because they give birth to new life (nature means: giving birth to new life; arise new life).*

### **Have you succeeded in conveying this message?**

**Rothery:** *Sometimes!*

**Sanderson:** No answer.

**Bussey:** Yes.

**Richards:** I hope so! I'm thought of as a big Pagan, but really, I'm more of a scholar.

**Adrian:** *Not sure.*

**Bowen:** Those who know the Green Man understand; others ask—and I have a chance to explain and enter into an environmental dialogue.

**Brideson:** *No answer.*

**Sivell:** My Green Man sculptures often create strong reactions from people, but the message delivered seems to be different to different people.

**Eveleigh:** *No answer.*

**Anderson:** Who knows?

**Kersten:** *I hope I did.*

### **If so, how do you know?**

**Rothery:** *Feedback from readers of my work.*

**Sanderson:** No answer.

**Bussey:** *By the amount of work bought by the viewers.*

**Richards:** No answer.

**Adrian:** *Many modern people do not study this subject, but we did create a documentary film on the subject of "Carnival" and this message is conveyed in the film.*

**Bowen:** See answer to question 8.

**Brideson:** *I have had some feedback from customers about my Green Man images.*

**Sivell:** People contact me, both those who have seen the actual pieces (which are all in England) and people from all over, including other countries, who have seen my website.

**Eveleigh:** *Garden writers have written ecstatically about my Millenium Green Man Maze.*

**Anderson:** No answer.

**Kersten:** *[By looking at] Work that inspired me: the French artist: Jean Rulier and the Greek artist: Christos Magganas.*

### **Have you sold any of your Green Man art?**

**Rothery:** No.

**Sanderson:** Yes.

**Bussey:** Yes.

**Richards:** Yes, I have a Folk Art [styled] Green Man that has sold as necklaces, prints, and cards.

**Adrian:** *No, but I also work in mosaic and have plans to create a garden art mosaic mural of the Green Man. I hope to build it in our community or for sale in the near future.*

**Bowen:** Yes.

**Brideson:** *I have sold a great many cards and prints of my Green Men, several have been used as book illustrations and covers. I still have the originals but have also reproduced a few—particularly the Bamburg Green Man as tattoos and as a painting on the back of a biker's leather jacket!*

**Sivell:** I have sold all my Green Man art.

**Eveleigh:** Yes!

**Anderson:** Only within this symposium commission. [Maroochy Botanical Gardens, Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia.]

**Kersten:** No.

**If so, do you know what it is about the art that moved the sale?**

**Rothery:** n/a.

**Sanderson:** No.

**Bussey:** *People buy works according to the meanings they perceive and what gives new meaning [to them] over a period of time.*

**Richards:** Much of my fan base enjoys the Pagan side very much, so selling many Green Man images is not surprising.

**Adrian:** n/a.

**Bowen:** Buyers share an environmental awareness.

**Brideson:** *I assume he speaks somehow to something within the customer. The Green Man on the leather jacket spoke to the person who commissioned him as connected to nature, wild, free, unrestrained .....and female customers who have bought Oak have found him attractive!*

**Sivell:** Most of the people that have commissioned me or have bought my Green Man sculptures have been aware of the image and it obviously meant something to them, but a few had no understanding or awareness and just liked the piece. One of my more recent pieces was commissioned by the parents of an eight-year-old boy, but their son—who had no previous knowledge of the Green Man—was really in charge of the commission and the resulting piece is one of my favourites.

**Eveleigh:** *Imagination, celebration of place, sacred geometry, dowsing, ley-lines and respect for Nature, the elements, the gods and probably people liked it.*

**Anderson:** No answer.

**Kersten:** n/a.

### **Do you plan on continuing to create Green Man art?**

**Rothery:** *Probably!*

**Sanderson:** Someday I hope to finish the twelve months.

**Richards:** *My new solo album will feature me as a Green Woman, as I am taking on various 'selves' for each song and I enjoy merging the genders into more of a single idea.*

**Adrian:** Not sure, I like to explore images from all cultures and am constantly doing research in new areas of world cultures.

**Bussey:** *Not specifically the Green Man as such, but works that give meaning to life, (with open ended meanings). I believe artworks should have various levels of meaning according to the viewers understanding and experiences. One can hint at the inexpressible and by so doing, the work takes on a 'greening' of the theme.*

**Bowen:** Yes.

**Brideson:** *Hopefully yes, though here in Ireland (I moved here 4 years ago and haven't painted a Green Man since) there isn't a tradition of Green Man in churches etc. Here we have Sheela-Na-Gigs which in part speak to me in a similar way. Here I also am inspired more by the old Goddesses and Gods of this land, as well as the Sidhe (the faerie folk)—perhaps he is one of them?*

**Sivell:** Yes. I have no choice.

**Eveleigh:** *Probably. Perhaps someone could commission some great maze or earthwork in Australia. The native Australians have their own images and, of course, dreams.*

**Anderson:** Possibly.

**Kersten:** *Yes, I would love to.*

## **Appendix Four: Opening Speech**

(<http://www.araneoart.com/GreenMan.htm>) viewed 21 May 2006.

### **Opening Night, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Sippy Downs, Queensland, Australia**

Thank you all for coming, it's such an honour that you came to see what we have been up to. First I would like to thank the University of the Sunshine Coast for providing the platform for such varied post graduate exploration.

When I decided to pursue my masters it took about year and a half to settle on a topic. Many thanks to Barb Bolt for her guidance in the early days to choose something that fascinated me and that I could research and work with for years. Green Man was actually the 3<sup>rd</sup> topic that I considered for this degree.

It's my pleasure to present this body of work that reflects the mythology, folklore, and stories, not just of Green Man past, but Green Man Resurrected as he moves through our current lives. The image is wildly popular today on virtually all continents. I found that the more I researched the more questions came up about the archetype. He shapeshifts and morphs his way through time and cultures. He once represented the mysteries of the forest, I think now, he represents the mysteries of the human mind, and challenges us to question our intentions before we act.

But I'll leave the fun of the discovery to you...I encourage you to enjoy the exhibition. I thank Debra (Livingston) for sharing her space with my project and they do so complement one another.

Thank you...Ian White, my supervisor and head of the department for his guidance and inspiration and for assuring...me when I was whirling out of control with information, discoveries and theories...that staying with the disciplined academic approach would deliver the ripest fruit.

Thanks to the student guild and my fellow post grads for their support.

Thank you Dawn (Oelrich, Gallery Director) for her guidance and expertise.

Thanks to my painting helpers. They are, in alphabetical order:



Jacqueline Ellul, Alex Hermecs-Tonis, Bertie Hutson, Jodie Mudgway, Mel Patella, and Christine Stein.

Thanks to all my friends, who are my family here in Australia, especially Christine Stein who helped paint, hang the show, and cooked me delicious butter chicken.

And most of all thank you to my sweet girl Wyomie for her never-ending patience, common sense and love.



**Long Live Things of Green!**

## Appendix Five: Newspaper/Media Coverage

# Two exhibitions of life at USC

TWO exhibitions in one place, looking at human/environment interaction, opened at the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery last week.

The duo of talented and passionate artists of nature, Debbie Livingston with photographic digital prints and projections in Organic Simulcast, and Phyllis Araneo with her paintings in Green Man Resurrected, found a sympathetic and appreciative audience of more than 100 people at the opening.

The exhibition was opened by Valerie Lewis, acting president of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council.

Valerie said she was recently aware of Phyllis's message of Green Man Resurrected at the Woodford Folk Festival with its Men of the Forests display.

Phyllis' work explores several disciplines including art, philosophy and environmentalism. In some of the paintings, she uncovers Australian faces in the leaves.

Debra's photographic works also struck a cord with Valerie.

With Valerie's involvement in the environment council, she knows that more and more people are becoming concerned about the changes in the environment.

Debra's exhibition aims to simulate a virtual experience for the viewer to evoke awareness about nature and

human encroachment.

On the night, guests were treated to the sounds of nature, overlaid with music, played by Brent Jeol on didgeridoo, Oleg Ditrich on keyboard and Alan Sheppard on flute.

Gallery curator Dawn Oelrich said the exhibition is much earlier in the year than usual and finishes on Saturday February 11.

More than 10,000 people passed through the doors of the University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery in 2005, making it the biggest year yet.

"Numbers were up almost 30 per cent on 2004 with 10,361 people visiting the Gallery throughout the exhibitions," Ms Oelrich said.

"We moved to the new gallery on campus in July 2004, built with funds from the community and Friends of the University, and each year we are attracting more and more people, artists and exhibitions to the Gallery.

"In 2005 most of the people through the doors were visitors, followed by school groups and university staff and students.

"A team of generous volunteers help run the Gallery, allowing it to open for free to the public."

The gallery is located at the university campus on Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs, and is open to the public from 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday from 1-4pm. The gallery is closed Sundays and public holidays.



Artists Phyllis Araneo and Debra Livingston with Valerie Lewis, centre, acting president of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council.

■ 8 January 19 2006 Buderim Chronicle

*People here & there*

**... at USC Gallery**



Phyllis Araneo's daughter Wyomie came with friends Emily and Jessica to the Green Man Revisited exhibition last week.

Sheridan Long, Jeff Livingston Debra's son, with Jan Jones, of Buderim, view the digital prints in Debra's exhibition entitled Organic Simulcast.

At the USC gallery for the opening of the nature exhibitions are Marina Denysiv and Andre LaPorte.

18 January 19 2006 Buderim Chronicle

## Environmental exhibitions

TWO exhibitions that look at the human/environment interaction will open at The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) Gallery on Thursday, January 12 from 6pm.

Organic Simulcast by Debbie Livingston and Green Man Resurrected by Phyllis Araneo will be officially opened by acting president of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, Dr Valerie Lewis.

The essay of photographic digital prints and projections presents the micro and macro world of nature and our built environment from a local perspective.

It uses interpretive methods of design, photography, film and sound to communicate an appreciation for our natural resources.

The exhibition runs until February 11 at the gallery, Sippy Downs, which is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and Saturday from 1pm to 4pm.

Sunshine Coast Daily, Saturday, January 7, 2006, p. 16.



# Discover organic simulcasts at USC

Double-header enviro-art exhibition on show at university

There's a new dual exhibition opening tomorrow (Thursday January 12) at the Gallery of the Sunshine Coast University that is a must to explore.

Organic Simulcast by Debra Livingston and Green Man Resurrected by Phyllis Araneo will be officially opened by Dr Valerie Lewis, Acting President of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council Inc.

Organic Simulcast is an essay of photographic digital prints and projections about the micro and macro world of nature and our built environment from a local perspective.

It uses interpretive methods of design, photography, film and sound to communicate an appreciation for our natural resources.

Phyllis Araneo's paintings in Green Man Resurrected explore her contention that the Green Man image emerges through popular



"The Stag of Paradise" by Phyllis Araneo will be hung at the new exhibition at the USC Gallery.

cultural art forms when there is a marked change in the relationship between nature and humanity. The exhibition looks at the power of the

image to affect people's belief systems in relation to nature

"The university is closed at the moment, so we have gone all out with the opening, inviting everyone to share champagne, hors d'oeuvres and a great art experience with us," Ms Araneo said.

**WHAT:** Organic Simulcast and Green Man Resurrected dual exhibition

**WHERE:** The University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery, at the USC campus on Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs

**WHEN:** Thursday January 12, 6pm to Saturday 11 February.

**OTHER:** The exhibition is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and Saturday from 1pm to 4pm. The Gallery is closed Sundays and public holidays.

The 2006 USC Gallery Exhibition Program is proudly supported by Coastline BMW.



Reeds, by Debra Livingston, part of the new exhibition at the USC Gallery

Photo: Contributed



## Exhibitions About Nature

University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery, Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs, 12 January to 11 February; 10am-4pm Monday to Friday; 1-4pm Saturday. Entry free. Phone 5459 4645.

Have your senses challenged and your creativity stimulated at this fabulous exhibition to launch the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery's 2006 exhibition program, supported by Coastline BMW. The gallery hosts a range of innovative exhibitions focusing on contemporary art and design practice.

**The Weekender, January 6-12, 2006, p. 6.**



**ON SHOW:** Dr Valerie Lewis, centre, opened artists Phyllis Araneo, left, and Debbie Livingstone's combined art exhibition on Thursday night.

### Socials

Sunday Life

## 'Green' exhibition launched in style

STOP and appreciate your green surroundings. That is the message two Sunshine Coast artists are conveying in their latest exhibition which looks at human interaction with the environment.

The combined exhibition of Debbie Livingstone's Organic Simulcast and Phyllis Araneo's Green Man Resurrected was officially launched on Thursday night at the University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery.

Debbie's display is an essay of digital prints and projections about the environment from a Coast perspective. Phyllis' traditional paintings explore the popular culture notion of the Green Man.

The exhibition is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and Saturday from 1pm to 4pm.



**CRITICAL EYE:** Jaya and Sam Matthews spent time together checking out the artwork on display.



**CELEBRATING:** Valerie Mifsud celebrated with other guests at the opening.



**ART CONNOISSEURS:** Sheridan Long and Jeff Livingstone attended the exhibition.



**NIGHT OUT:** Isabella and Elizabeth Henzell soaked up the atmosphere on opening night.

**Sunshine Coast Sunday, January 15, 2006, p. 32.**



## Green Man revealed at art exhibition

PHYLLIS Araneo's exhibition presents part of her Master of Creative Arts research into the ancient image of the Green Man (a term coined in 1939 by English folklorist, Lady Ragland) and its resurgence in today's popular contemporary culture.

Her work explores

the contention that this archetypal image emerges in the art forms of a culture when there is a marked change in the relationship between nature and humanity. She works mainly in oil on canvas, sometimes on linen, and in acrylic.

The image of Green Man can be seen clearly in 14th and 15th century

Europe during the time known as the "disease of building" - a time when representations of him were carved into buildings en masse.

The image is a combination of elements from the natural world blended with the human form.

Contemporary appearances of the

Green Man include the mythical Ents - the walking warrior trees in the Lord of the Rings movie; the talking fruit and vegetable heads in the Australian Government's 2-5 healthy eating campaign and the American Jolly Green Giant vegetable ads of the 1960s.

Historically, the image can be found in literature as Robin Hood, Peter Pan and Huckleberry Finn.

The creative work presented here, is founded on the information gathered from the research, which spans history, crosses cultures and traverses the depths

of many disciplines, including art, literature, history, philosophy and environmentalism.

The work illustrates not only the relationship between humans and nature, but reveals some surprising subconscious illuminations as well. In some of the paintings, Araneo uncovers diverse faces in commonly found Sunshine Coast plants, giving a contemporary, and very local, voice to the ancient message that we are one with the natural world.

Araneo, (pictured) originally from New Jersey, has been painting for more than 30 years and is



a part-time lecturer in Visual Design and Communication at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

She is a strong believer that the power

of the image in popular contemporary culture is widely underestimated in terms of its ability to effect emotions, shape thoughts, and ultimately invoke action in societies.

Through her work the Green Man personifies the eradication of the man-nature dualism which many ecologists, scientists, artists, politicians and people from all walks of life, see as the root of our present day environmental crisis.

*When an image of great power such as the Green Man returns ... after a long absence, the purpose of its return is not only to revive forgotten memories but to present fresh truths and emotions necessary to fulfilling the potentialities of the*



**Courier Mail**  
**Saturday 14/1/2006**  
**Page: 7**  
**Section: BAM**  
**Region: Brisbane Circulation: 326,393**  
**Type: Capital City Daily**  
**Size: 76.74 sq.cms.**  
**Published: MTWTFS-**

## Around the galleries

GALLERY doors are opening again after the New Year break. You have until February 5 to check out Judy Watson's retrospective at the Queensland University Art Museum. Watson's show features more than 60 drawings, prints and paintings, including recent work about her Brisbane childhood and an artist book dealing with the bureaucratic classification of indigenous people. The gallery opens 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Sunday.

THE Gallery of the University of the Sunshine Coast at Sippy Downs is showing the work of Phyllis Araneo, an American "seduced by the beauty and light" of the Queensland coast. Green Man Resurrected, the title of Araneo's show, is on with Debra Livingston's Organic Simulcast, until February 11, weekdays 10am-4pm, Saturday 1pm-4pm.

THE Box Factory, a collective of student artists from Gateway TAFE in Brisbane who say they are keen to reject passive consumerism, combines with Toogoolawah-based artist Francesca Roberts for a show opening at 6 this evening at Fox Galleries, 610 Ann St, Fortitude Valley. This afternoon at 3, Fox hosts Tasty Treats, a no-alcohol event showcasing emerging bands. Sounds like the enterprising Michael Fox is continuing his intention of putting on fine alternative parties in the Valley. And Laser Beak Man, the jaunty creation of 17-year-old autism sufferer Tim Sharp, last night invaded the cool and sophisticated space at Blacklab Gallery, in Fortitude Valley, giving Brisbanites another chance, following his sell-out show last March, to catch the superhero who is taking the world by storm. Open Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-5pm, until February 8.



## Culture Vulture

with Richard Lancaster  
vulture@qst.news1td.com.au

**SEVEN COURSES:** The ability of the U3A Redcliffe campus to attract new and interesting courses has become a feature of this seat of learning. In their latest newsletter, the campus is introducing seven new courses to their existing 60 or so existing subjects. Courses as varied as meteorology, advanced anthropology and the laughter clinic are just three of the new additions. The semester started on Monday, but you can still join the campus by phoning 3284 2687.

**TWO SHOWS:** Former Redcliffe Gallery curator, now Sunshine Coast University gallery curator Dawn Oelrich has had two environmentally based exhibitions open simultaneously. A week ago the gallery launched

Green Man Resurrected by Phyllis Araneo and Organic Simulcast by Debbie Livingston. Livingston's work is a series of photographic digital prints and projections of the world of

nature. Phyllis Araneo's paintings highlight the power of the image to affect people's belief systems in relation to nature. The twin exhibitions are open to February 11.

Redcliffe & Bayside Herald, January 25, 2006, p. 32.





**Buderim Chronicle**  
Thursday 12/1/2006  
Page: 6  
Section: General News  
Region: Buderim QLD Circulation: 13,638  
Type: Regional  
Size: 178.32 sq.cms.  
Published: Weekly



**Uni  
Update**

USC News & Views

## University of the Sunshine Coast

### WELCOME to Uni Update

Each fortnight the University of the Sunshine Coast will keep you up to date with campus happenings and community news.

### First round offers out

The first round of offers for university places in 2006 were released today.

Successful applicants should receive their offer packages in the mail in the next few days.

Anyone who has applied to study at the University, but does not receive an offer in the next week can contact the University on 5430 2890 for advice.

A second round of offers will be made in February.

### Still time to apply

The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) is accepting applications up until January 23.

Applications can be made direct to QTAC – information can be found on their website at [www.qtac.edu.au](http://www.qtac.edu.au).

Contact the University on 5430 2890 for information on what courses are on offer at USC in 2006.

### Scholarships

The University has more than A\$1 million in scholarships, bursaries and prizes available.

Hundreds of students starting at USC in 2006 will receive financial assistance through these programs to help them begin their university experience by easing the costs.

For further information email [scholarships@usc.edu.au](mailto:scholarships@usc.edu.au) or visit the Scholarships, Bursaries and Prizes section at [www.usc.edu.au](http://www.usc.edu.au) for application details and forms.

### 2006 Art Gallery program

#### Starts tonight

The University Art Gallery begins its 2006 program tonight with two exhibitions looking at the interaction between humans and the environment.

Organic Simulcast by Debbie Livingston and Green Man Resurrected by Phyllis Araneo will be officially opened by Dr Valerie Lewis, Acting President of the Sunshine Coast Environment Council Inc.

The exhibition runs until Saturday 11 February. The Gallery, located on the University campus at Sippy Downs, is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and Saturday from 1 to 4pm. Closed Sundays and public holidays. Entry is free.

# Organic Simulcast and Green Man Resurrected: The resurgence of the ancient image

Thursday 12 January – Saturday 11 February

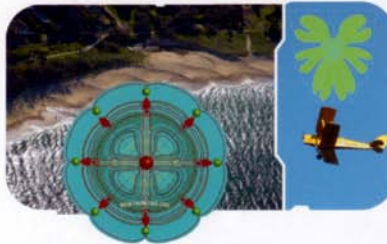
Debbie Livingston's *Organic Simulcast* is an essay of photographic digital prints and projections about the micro and macro world of nature and our built environment from a local perspective. The exhibition aims to simulate a virtual experience for the viewer to evoke awareness about nature and human encroachment. It uses interpretive methods of design, photography, film and sound to communicate an appreciation for our natural resources.

Phyllis Araneo's paintings in *Green Man Resurrected* explore her contention that the Green Man image emerges through popular cultural art forms when there is a marked change in the relationship between nature and humanity. The exhibit looks at the power of the image to affect people's belief systems in relation to their natural environments.



Phyllis Araneo, *Royal Palm Green Man*, oil on canvas, 2005.

Debbie Livingston,  
*View from the open cockpit*,  
digital image,  
2005.



Cover: Li Shuquin, *Spring Returns*, woodprint, 1962.



University of the Sunshine Coast's Gallery Exhibition Program, Jan-June 2006, p. 1.

## Appendix Six: Initial Exhibition Didactic Panel

Phyllis Araneo's exhibition presents part of her Master of Creative Arts research into the ancient image of the Green Man (a term coined in 1939 by English folklorist, Lady Ragland) and its resurgence in today's popular contemporary culture. Her work explores the contention that this archetypal image emerges in the art forms of a culture when there is a marked change in the relationship between nature and humanity. This can be seen clearly in 14th and 15th century Europe during the time known as the "disease of building"—a time when representations of the Green Man were carved into buildings en masse. The image is a combination of elements from the natural world blended with the human form. Contemporary appearances of the Green Man include the mythical Ents—the walking warrior trees seen in the Lord of the Rings movie; the talking fruit and vegetable heads in the Australian Government's 2 + 5 healthy eating campaign and the American Jolly Green Giant vegetable ads of the 1960s. Historically, the image can be found in literature as Robin Hood, Peter Pan and Huckleberry Finn. The creative work presented here, is founded on the information gathered from the research, which spans history, crosses cultures and traverses the depths of many disciplines, including art, literature, history, philosophy and environmentalism. The work illustrates not only the relationship between humans and nature, but reveals some surprising sub-conscious illuminations as well. In some of the paintings, Araneo uncovers diverse faces in commonly found Sunshine Coast plants, giving a contemporary—and very local—voice to the ancient message that we are one with the natural world.

Araneo, originally from New Jersey, has been painting for over 30 years and is a part-time lecturer in Visual Design and Communication at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She is a strong believer that the power of the image in popular contemporary culture is widely underestimated in terms of its ability to effect emotions, shape thoughts, and ultimately invoke action in societies.

Through her work, the Green Man personifies the eradication of the man-nature dualism which many ecologists, scientists, artists, politicians and people from all walks of life, see as the root of our present day environmental crisis.

*When an image of great power such as the Green Man returns...after a long absence, the purpose of its return is not only to revive forgotten memories but to present fresh truths and emotions necessary to fulfilling the potentialities of the future.*

William Anderson, 1990.

## Appendix Seven: Letter from Gallery Director



University of the  
Sunshine Coast

Telephone: + 61 7 5459 4633  
Facsimile: + 61 7 5459 4403  
Email: [doelrich@usc.edu.au](mailto:doelrich@usc.edu.au)

7 March 2006

Ms Phyllis Araneo  
191 Mons Road  
Buderim QLD 4556

Dear Phyllis:

**Re: Green Man Resurrected**  
University of the Sunshine Coast Gallery  
12 January to 11 February 2006

Thank you for exhibiting with the University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery. Your evocative and timely exhibition proved popular with University students and the general community attracting 705 visitors in 26 open days. Visitors commented and related stories of the Green Man and the overall response to your work was very positive. The exhibition also attracted much favourable media coverage (see attached copies) due in no small part to your own hard work and continued effort in contacting and following up with both print and electronic media.

Phyllis, it was terrific working with you and I wish you all the very best with the completion of your Masters Degree in Creative Arts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions regarding the University Art Gallery, the art collection or gallery programs.

Yours sincerely

**Dawn Oelrich**  
Curator  
Art Gallery

<http://www.usc.edu.au>

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Australia

Sippy Downs Drive  
Sippy Downs Qld 4556  
Australia

## Appendix Seven: Feedback

The following comments are reproduced from the feedback book that was displayed during the *Green Man Resurrected* exhibition and also from the **Green Man Series** section of [www.araneoart.com](http://www.araneoart.com).

*Congratulations on your success. Your paintings ROCK! My favourite is the Stag of Paradise.*

I just wanted to congratulate you on a fabulous gallery opening to your 'Green Man' exhibition. The research and creativity that have gone into your pieces is truly amazing and a testament to your hard work...You are an incredible person who has inspired me to relook at my creative side.

*Follow your 'heart' not your 'head' and your 'shining star' will unfold before you as never before. Blessings in all that you do and decide. Am looking forward to hanging your beautiful art!*

I will look at every leaf and every tree a different way now. So lovely to see skillfull art and love the theme. You are an inspiration.

*Your great paintings inspire me.*

I love your paintings.

*Great and fantastic.*

Great work. Even balance is negotiated and negotiations are seldom even.

*We really need a Green Man.*

Creative and awesome.

*Thank you for everything.*

Creation, imagination, and exploration....! Thank you.

*Awesome! I love it.*

Green Man in my home boy.

*Congratulations on a great exhibition. Thank you.*

This has been fantastic. A lot of hard work I know.

*Thank you. A lot of hard work. A tonic.*

Green Man Resurrected!!! Green Woman, too! Thank you for the chance to see your beautiful art. You've probably read enough for a life time, however if you get the chance check out Charles De Lint's writing on the Green Man Character. A Canadian author. Interesting stories. All the best, light and grace.

*Well done.*

Thank you for inviting me...beautiful thoughtful work. Green Man will live forever in

my home on my wall. Thank you for your gift of art.

*You're strong, sexy and fabulous. Love all your work. Go girl!!!*

Thanks for inviting us. Lots of work and an interesting revitalization of the theme.

*I feel I should write about Green Man. How very clever you are to be able to escape into mythology.*

Awesome exhibition. Love the work.

*Great stuff. It is really congratulations for you.*

It's all fantastic and you've hopefully passed on some of it to your students – they have been lucky enough to get your enthusiasm.

*Your work is so inspiring for a fellow Green (Wo)Man. Breathe is my personal favorite.*

Well done!! I enjoyed the work a lot, especially the meaning behind it.

*We love your Wild Heart.*

Thanks for opening my eyes and mind to the 'GreenMan'. I will make sure he is a strong influence in the rest of my life.

*Fabulous work, you clever girl.*

You never cease to amaze me. Congratulations – just love and appreciate your work.

*Love your art and your philosophy.*

*Stag of Paradise* is absolutely incredible!!! Well done.

*It is fabulous to see the fruit of your labours...the works are breathtaking. Keep up the awesome work.*

No question, you have completely blown my mind with your work. The concepts and the relationships that you have formed through your text and your physical work is amazing! Thank you so much for sharing the concept of the Green Man with us all!!

*Absolutely Brilliant. Truly inspiring.*

Awesome work!...trippy...but awesome!

*Hey, hey! Bloody marvellous!*

Very powerful stuff.

*An interesting idea; keep painting and good luck with your work.*

The images and explanations provided a strong reminder of what we do to this planet.

Your paintings give me the inspiration to draw something to show my respect!

*It's absolutely excellent.*

The paintings are great. The messages in your work are touching me.

*"the seed awaits in tranquillity and then bursts upon the world"...I'll never see a staghorn quite the same way again. Many blessings Green Woman for your outstanding creativity.*

Love your work and your message. Well done.

*Your art is inspirational to me. I think your art is beautiful and conveys a fantastic message. Thanks for inspiring me to paint again.*

Thank you for sharing your skill and talent with us all. I love your paintings in the way they reflect light and colour. They draw you in and are magnificent. You are truly gifted.

*Loved your tutorials, just had to see the exhibition.*

It's something special! Such creativity happening here on the Sunshine Coast – great! Well done.

*Great work. A real inspiration.*

Your artwork and talent are brilliant. You are an inspiration to any art student. I absolutely love everything I see here. Thank you for sharing your work!

*Your paintings are AMAZING! Just beautiful. I've never seen colours put together the way you have done. AMAZING!*

## **[Email]**

Just browsed your website and would like to tell you how brilliant your work is. I especially love the Green Man Series.

I'm sure you would know of Hildegard de Bingen, she too believed in the greening back in the 10th Century in Europe.

You are truly inspirational.

I hope we can get to view your work in the flesh some time.







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## **Green Man Resurrected: An Examination of the Underlying Meanings and Messages of the Re-Emergence of the Ancient Image of the Green Man in Contemporary, Western, Visual Culture**

Please cite this publication as: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4227/39/596566fcfaf95>

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