



**THE NEW UNIT GALLERY TO HOST A PORTRAIT OF THE TREE**  
**BY ADRIAN HOUSTON IN SEPTEMBER**

**Global influencers reveal the secrets behind their favourite tree**

They are the longest living organism on the planet and essential to life as we know it. But when did you last really look at a tree?

One person who has had a strong connection with trees for as long as he can remember is renowned photographer Adrian Houston. Five years ago, increasingly concerned that so many of our indigenous trees are being affected by disease and global warming, he decided to embark on an ambitious project that would give trees a voice. The result is an extraordinary collection of works, collectively entitled *A Portrait of the Tree*, that will run at The Unit Gallery's new Hanover Square site from 17<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September.

It was in October 2013 that Adrian first began questioning people about their favourite tree. The members of this group are as diverse as they are influential, from Richard Branson, actress Goldie Hawn and Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason to Tony Kirkham, Head of Arboretum at Kew Gardens, designer Jasper Conran and Chairman of Condé Nast Britain Nicholas Coleridge.

Along the way Adrian heard many fascinating stories. Lord Tollemache, former Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, told of the ancient oak in whose hollow trunk Queen Elizabeth II used to shelter during the annual shoot on his estate. Designer Jasper Conran talked about the beech tree outside his bedroom window; the first and last thing he sees each day. Perhaps most poignant of all is the Cedar of Lebanon, part of the proud history and landscape of the grounds of Le Manoir aux Quat Saison, owned by legendary chef Raymond Blanc. Sadly, this magnificent tree was diseased and had to be cut down. Adrian's art will now ensure it is captured for posterity.

Tales exchanged, Adrian then traveled throughout the UK, and further afield to Namibia, Madagascar, Ibiza, France and America, to photograph the trees in question.

These photographs, accompanied by their stories, will be displayed at the exhibition. Says Adrian, "I am very excited that we will be one of the first to exhibit at The Unit's new Hanover Square gallery. For the last few years, Unit London has championed the world's most exciting emerging artists and I was thrilled when co-founders Joe Kennedy and Jonny Burt offered to house this most personal of retrospectives."

It is planned that *A Portrait of the Tree* will be styled and dressed to make the entire experience immersive, interactive, joyful, educational and exciting. The doorway will lead visitors through an ancient oak into an immersive world of trees and woodland soundscapes.

A percentage of all sales will go to two leading charities: Future Trees Trust, a national charity dedicated to improving disease resilience, growth rate, form and adaptability to climate change of broadleaved trees, and Trees for Cities, responsible for planting over 700,000 urban trees in parks, streets, schools and housing estates across the world, revitalising these areas and improving the lives of the people who live in them.

Working with Trees for Cities, the exhibition will also run parallel with an educational programme aimed at raising social awareness about the importance of our trees, the environment and climate change. Children from over 25 London-wide primary and secondary schools will be invited to tour the exhibition. A photographic competition will also invite 8-16-year olds from these same schools to submit photographs of their own favourite trees. The best three images - and stories - will feature in *A Portrait of the Tree*.

Concludes Adrian, "*A Portrait of the Tree* was conceived as a way of illustrating how trees connect us all on a universal level. The stories behind the chosen subjects are as important as the images themselves. Together they offer a powerful tool to help educate people, from children through to adults, about the vital role that trees play in all of our lives. After all, if there were no trees on the planet, we wouldn't be here either."

[www.adrianhouston.co.uk](http://www.adrianhouston.co.uk)

**For further information, hi-res images and interviews with Adrian Houston and the people behind the trees, please contact:**

**Nicola or Leah @ Jori White Public Relations Ltd  
T: 0207 734 7001 E: [nicola@joriwhitepr.co.uk](mailto:nicola@joriwhitepr.co.uk)/[leah@joriwhitepr.co.uk](mailto:leah@joriwhitepr.co.uk)**

## Notes to Editors

A *Portrait of the Tree* will feature photographs and stories shared by over 30 people from a huge array of backgrounds, from the arts and sport through to philanthropy. Below are just some of those who were involved:

**Richard Branson (Grandidier's baobab, *Adansonia grandidieri*).** Sir Richard Charles Nicholas Branson is an English business magnate, investor and philanthropist. He founded the Virgin Group, which controls more than 400 companies.

**Tony Kirkham (Montezuma cypress, *Taxodium mucronatum*).** As Head Arboretum at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Tony is responsible for Kew's collection of 14,000 trees. He spent 2017 filming with Judi Dench for the BBC One programme *Judi Dench: My Passion for Trees*. In 2016 he was named one of the most influential Londoners in the Evening Standard's Progress 1000.

**Nicholas Coleridge, CBE (Holm oak, *Quercus ilex*).** Sir Nicholas is Chairman of Condé Nast Britain; Chairman of the Victoria and Albert Museum and Chairman of the Gilbert Trust for the Arts. He is also an Ambassador for the Landmark Trust and a Patron of the Elephant Family.

**Raymond Blanc, OBE (Cedar of Lebanon, *Cedrus libani*).** Acknowledged as one of the world's finest chefs, Raymond is the chef patron of the two Michelin-starred Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons and founder of Brasserie Blanc restaurants. A passionate champion and campaigner for sustainability and food ethics, he has been President of the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) since 2012. Heston Blumenthal, Michael Caines, Éric Chavot, Marco Pierre White and Ollie Dabbous are just some of his protégés.

**Lord Harry Dalmeny (Gladstone Lime, *Tilia x europaea*).** The Chairman of the British branch of Sotheby's, Lord Dalmeny is also the son and heir of the Earl of Rosebery. Regarded as being among the art world's most talented and exuberant auctioneers, having presided over many of Europe's highest-profile sales, he has also raised over £100 million at various charity auctions.

**Jasper Conran, OBE (Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*).** Jasper produced his first womenswear collection in 1978 and was a founding member of the London Designer Collections – subsequently renamed London Fashion Week – where he continues to show today. He has diversified from womenswear into menswear, fragrance, accessories, luggage, collections for the home, interiors and the performing arts. In 2016 he opened his first hotel, L'Hôtel Marrakech.

**Nick Mason (Magnolia, *Magnoliaceae*).** Co-founding member and drummer of Pink Floyd, Nick holds the record for being the only band member to be featured on every album and the only constant member of the group since its inception in 1965.

**Alice Temperley, MBE (Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*).** One of the UK's most successful fashion designers, Alice launched her label, Temperley London, in 2000. Wearers of Temperley designs have included The Duchess of Cambridge, Pippa Middleton, Penelope Cruz, Thandie Newton and Eva Mendes.

**Guy Laliberté (Olive, *Olea europaea*).** Guy is a Canadian businessman, investor, poker player and musician. Along with Gilles Ste-Croix, he is also the co-founder of Cirque du Soleil.

**Annabel Croft (Royal Oak, *Quercus robur*).** The former professional British No. 1 female tennis player, Annabel won the WTA Tour event Virginia Slims of San Diego and represented Great Britain in the Fed Cup and the Wightman Cup. She now works as a radio and television presenter.

**Sir Richard Carew Pole, 13th Baronet, OBE, DL (Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*).** The present holder of the Pole baronetcy, granted to his ancestor by King Charles I in 1628, Sir Richard lives at Antony House in Cornwall. Among other positions, he is a Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Cornwall and a Trustee of both the Tate Gallery and the Eden Project.

**Sir Harry Studholme (Oak, *Quercus robur*).** Sir Harry is Chairman of the Forestry Commission. He has owned and managed forests in South West England for over 20 years.

**Jim Gardiner (Mount Fuji Cherry, *Prunus shirotae*).** Jim is Executive Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society. Prior to his retirement, he was Director of Horticulture for the RHS and before that Wisley Garden Curator.