

FRUITS
OF
MY
WOMAN

CURATED BY CHANTAL POWELL
AT LOWER HEWOOD FARM

FRUITS OF MY WOMAN
Curated by Chantal Powell
in conversation with
Lower Hewood Farm Collection
23 May to 7 June 2026



Aimée Parrott, *Gaia's Kidney Study (ii)*,
2019, watercolour on paper, 35 × 24 cm

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Fruits of My Woman is an exhibition inspired by the short story *The Fruit of My Woman* by Han Kang in which a woman gradually transitions into plant life. The story uses vegetal transformation as a potent metaphor for resistance and the longing to move beyond the confines of domesticity and social expectation.

Taking this literary starting point, the exhibition explores transformation as an inner necessity: a quiet rebellion, a rewilding of the self, and a gradual opening towards other ways of being.

Han Kang's protagonist dreams of growing "as tall as a poplar", of pushing through walls, of exceeding the limits of her given form. These desires form a conceptual thread through the exhibition, offering a way to think about metamorphosis as a radical psychic act: a turning away from systems that constrict, and towards elemental forces that nourish.

The exhibition brings together artworks that move across thresholds between self and environment, tracing liminal and transformative states. Across painting, sculpture, drawing, collage and film, the boundaries between human and vegetal life become porous. Bodies, vessels,

plants and landscapes appear layered and in flux, suggesting ways of growing beyond inherited shapes and into other relations with the natural world. Some forms are assembled, spliced or recomposed. Change emerges not as a single image but as something slow, strange and unfolding.

Set within the landscape of Lower Hewood Farm, the exhibition is grounded in a place where land, care and ecology are already central. The farm's slow cycles, its attention to plant life and its sense of retreat and recalibration all echo the themes of the exhibition. Here, vegetal transformation is not metaphor alone but something felt in the damp soil, the changing light and the sense that growth happens whether witnessed or not.

The artworks move from the intimate interior of the farmhouse to the darker, more elemental atmosphere of the barn, echoing the story's shift from domestic constraint towards another mode of being. The surrounding landscape becomes a silent collaborator: a continual reminder of the quiet intelligence of plants, their resilience, and their capacity to grow in unexpected directions.



Jane Hayes Greenwood, *Fertile Ground*,
2022, watercolour on paper, 30 × 42 cm

ARTISTS:
SIMON BAYLISS
FRANCISCO BORES
JOHN CRAXTON
ADAM CVIJANOVIC
MARLENE DUMAS
NINA ROYLE
JANE HAYES GREENWOOD
HANNAH HUGHES
EVY JOKHOVA
GUNNER LA COUR
SHANA MOULTON
AIMÉE PARROTT
CHANTAL POWELL
LUCY STEIN
DAFNA TALMOR
MARIANNE WALKER
SHELAGH WAKELY

EVERYTHING HAS TO CHANGE TO STAY THE SAME

SIMON GRANT

Art and metamorphosis have been intertwined themes across centuries, reflecting humanity's fascination with change, identity, and transformation, an idea that underpins *Fruits of My Woman* and highlights the deep relations that we can have with a past rooted in the natural world.

In ancient mythology and classical art, metamorphosis often appeared as literal physical change, symbolising divine power and the fluid boundaries between forms. Unsurprisingly, artists have long been inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a 15-book Latin narrative poem chronicling mythological shapeshifting to explain the world's origins and nature. Focused on transformations, we find gods become animals, nymphs are transformed into trees, humans turn to stone, and stones become human. These early depictions emphasised transformation as both punishment and transcendence, highlighting a worldview in which change was imposed by higher forces.

Part of this notion of transformation has always been allied to a sense of fragmentation. In her 1994 book *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*, art historian Linda Nochlin argued that the representation of the fragmented body through art

history was a central metaphor for modernity, and a reflection of a profound nostalgia and poignant regret for, as Nochlin writes, a "lost totality, a vanished wholeness". Archetypal images such as Henry Fuseli's drawing *The Artist's Despair Before the Grandeur of Ancient Ruins* (1778), in which a figure weeps over the crumbling fragments of the monumental Colossus of Constantine statue, epitomised an historic Eurocentric, rationalised response to the self, yet fragmentation or bodily disruption has always been more persuasive when this change has potential to be cathartic.

Just as with many artists in *Fruits of My Woman*, artists in the 20th century similarly grappled with tumultuous times and experiences, powerfully rendering the idea of fundamental change by responding to nature directly. In the works of Alina Szapocznikow (1926-1973), the harrowing experience of not one, but three Nazi concentration camps thrust her into re-imagining her body, or bodies in general, as organic forms rooted in nature and hell bent on survival. Her series of table lamps were intentionally made to look as much like flowers as they were pieces of leg or arm. Most poignantly in her *Herbiers (Herbarium) Series* (1972) Szapocznikow made casts of body parts and flattened them, likening the sculptures to pressed flowers to be cherished.

In her painting *The Future of Freedom* (1946), the Czech Surrealist Toyen (1902-1980) depicts a figure (perhaps herself) obliterated by a cascade of pea plants. We see the pods, peas and stringy tendrils covering what might be part human and part plant. Has she hidden herself or has she taken on new form? Painted after her (different) experience of World War Two, the painting is a celebration of personal possibility.

Organic transformations can be as much defiance as personal re-configuration. The Italian-born artist Bona de Mandiargues (1926-2000) adopted the form



Adam Cvijanovic, *Imaginary Landscape With Volcano and Waterfall*,
1993, oil on canvas, 81 × 152 cm

of the snail as her central metaphor in her life. It was a full embrace of the organic that went beyond her gender. “Today I am a man and a woman in the same unit,” she wrote. “I am like two forces which complete one another. The snail realises this union. By embracing the shapes of the spiral, I’m embracing the very structure of the universe.”

Artists such as Lucy Stein, Chantal Powell, Aimée Parrott, and Shelagh Wakely similarly explore this terrain, where the body merges with landscape and myth. Their practices resonate with the thinking of Jacquetta Hawkes, who envisioned the earth as a self-organising system unfolding across geological time. It was no surprise that Hawkes would feature in her book *A Land* (1951), Henry Moore’s drawings of body forms that look like rock formations, including the poetically titled *His Lines Follow Life Back into The Stone*.

Within this vast temporal scale, our identity is part of a larger cycle of growth and decay, a continuum of consciousness. This quiet metamorphosis is then a restless ongoing process that reimagines the self not as a fixed entity, but as part of an interdependent, intermingling form that exists amid both visible and invisible worlds. Metamorphosis is not just a re-wilding of self but is bound to past beliefs and ideas —one that celebrates the reality that everything is connected, and by virtue of this, that everyone can be radically free.

Simon Grant is an art historian, curator, and co-editor of Picpus magazine. He is the co-curator of “Peggy Guggenheim in London: The Making of a Collector”, Peggy Guggenheim Collection Venice, touring to the Royal Academy, London and Guggenheim Museum, New York.



ON HAN KANG'S THE FRUIT OF MY WOMAN

*"Mother, I keep having the same dream.
I dream that I'm growing tall as a poplar."*

Han Kang's short story *The Fruit of My Woman* (1997) begins within a constrained domestic world, where estrangement and the pressures of conventional life close in around a woman. Narrated at first through the husband's impatient and emotionally limited perspective, the story opens into something strange and uncanny as he notices bruises appear and spread across her body. They darken, green, and gradually give way to a metamorphosis that is at once disturbing and strangely beautiful. Her transformation is a form of radical resistance and her vegetal becoming alters the possibilities of relation: as the woman changes, the husband begins belatedly to care for and tend to her in ways he had failed to before.

*"I bent forwards into the embrace of those
camellia-petal hands. 'Are you okay?' I asked.
Her eyes, a pair of well-ripened grapes; glim-
mering on their lacquered surfaces, the ghost
of a smile"*

As winter approaches, her new plant form withers, and the story ends with her disgorging tiny, seed-like fruits which her husband both ingests and plants in a dozen round plant pots filled with fertile soil.

In the context of Lower Hewood Farm, that movement into relational connection and tending has a particular resonance. Here, the story's imagery of growth and eventual fruiting is held close to the material presence of plant life, soil and seasonal change. The story suggests not only a breaking free from a constricted life, but also that plant life might offer another model of relation altogether: one grounded in care, permeability, interdependence and attention.

A translation of the story into English by Deborah Smith can be read on Granta: granta.com/the-fruit-of-my-woman/



John Craxton, *Study for "Hydra Landscape"*,
1960, pencil drawing on paper, 22 × 16cm

THE CURATOR

Chantal Powell is an artist based in West Dorset whose practice brings together making, research and the exploration of symbolic material through talks and curatorial projects. Informed by Jungian psychology and alchemical symbolism, she has a particular interest in archetypal imagery and the unconscious. Her recent work has increasingly focused on what she describes as vegetal alchemy, using vegetal life as a way of thinking about embodied transformation.

Chantal is also the founder of Hogchester Arts, a contemporary arts residency programme, and host of The Red Book Club, an international online book club and speaker programme focused on depth psychology, art and the imagination.

Invited to respond to Lower Hewood Farm in the context of the Survival Library, Chantal saw an opportunity to bring together literature, symbolic inquiry and the vegetal life of the land.

Han Kang's short story *The Fruit of My Woman* offered a starting point that connected her longstanding interest in transformation and psychic life with questions of embodiment, ecology and the imaginative force of books.

Website: chantalpowell.com – Instagram: [@chantalpowell](https://www.instagram.com/chantalpowell)

LOWER HEWOOD FARM

Lower Hewood is a small organic farm on the Dorset, Devon and Somerset borders where food growing, ecological practice, cultural activity and community life come together. Alongside its farming and market garden work, it hosts workshops, events and artistic projects, creating a setting in which land-based knowledge, creativity and shared inquiry can meet.

At the heart of the farm is the Survival Library, a reading room and research space developed around the relationship between creative practice and agroecology. Its collection includes artist books, exhibition catalogues, psychoanalytic texts, poetry, self-sufficiency manuals, environmental philosophy, local history publications and farming books, reflecting the farm's commitment to interdisciplinary thinking.

Owned by Alexa de Ferranti, Lower Hewood Farm is currently stewarded by Tim Williams and Claire Hannington-Williams, who oversee its regenerative farming and growing activities. Tim's work focuses on soil, plants and resilient farming systems, while Claire brings together growing, design and seasonal practice through an approach shaped by both ecology and aesthetics.

In response to the exhibition and the Korean origin of Han Kang's story Tim propagated indigenous micro-organisms based on natural farming methods from Korea mirroring the biological processes on the farm. Claire created the living plant elements in the library space using a technique inspired by *kokedama* in which plant roots are contained by hand-made balls of soil and moss.

Website: lowerhewood.org – Instagram: [@lowerhewood](https://www.instagram.com/lowerhewood)

EXHIBITION OPENING TIMES
23 May to 7 June 2026
Friday to Monday, 11am to 4pm
or by appointment info@lowerhewood.org

VENUE
Lower Hewood Farm, Chard, TA20 4NR

EVENT PROGRAMME
Sunday 24 May:
Welcome gathering

Saturday 30 May:
Farm tour and talk with Tim Williams
and Claire Hannington-Williams
Exhibition tour with curator Chantal Powell

Sunday 31 May:
Exhibition tour and curator's
talk with Chantal Powell
Tim Williams shares a farm-based
response to the exhibition

Saturday 6 June:
Farm feast

CONTACT
Events and farm: info@lowerhewood.org
Curator: art@chantalpowell.com

“HER ENTIRE BODY WAS
DARK GREEN. HER FORMERLY
SHADOWED FACE NOW
GLEAMED LIKE A GLOSSY
EVERGREEN LEAF. HER DRIED
RADISH-LEAF HAIR WAS AS
LUSTROUS AS THE STEMS OF
WILD HERBS.”

The Fruit of My Woman
Han Kang