



Process
Making
Interaction

Alice Spearman



STATEMENT

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a way of simultaneously collecting materials, and increasing the health and biodiversity of a woodland

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the journey from raw materials to intentional structures; a continual balance between intuition, play, and reflection

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Returning to the woodland:

using the structures as a tool to observe and integrate with the wildlife of a woodland

In this body of work, I am exploring traditional green-woodworking processes; leaning into the slowness of using hand-tools; and embracing this more contemplative way of working. Instead of quickly producing a quantity of products, I have focused on the refinement of what I am making – paring it down to become slender and spare.

Through this lens, I have been examining how the symbiotic relationships between humans and woodlands can be nurtured, addressing the disturbing issue of human disconnection to surrounding nature.

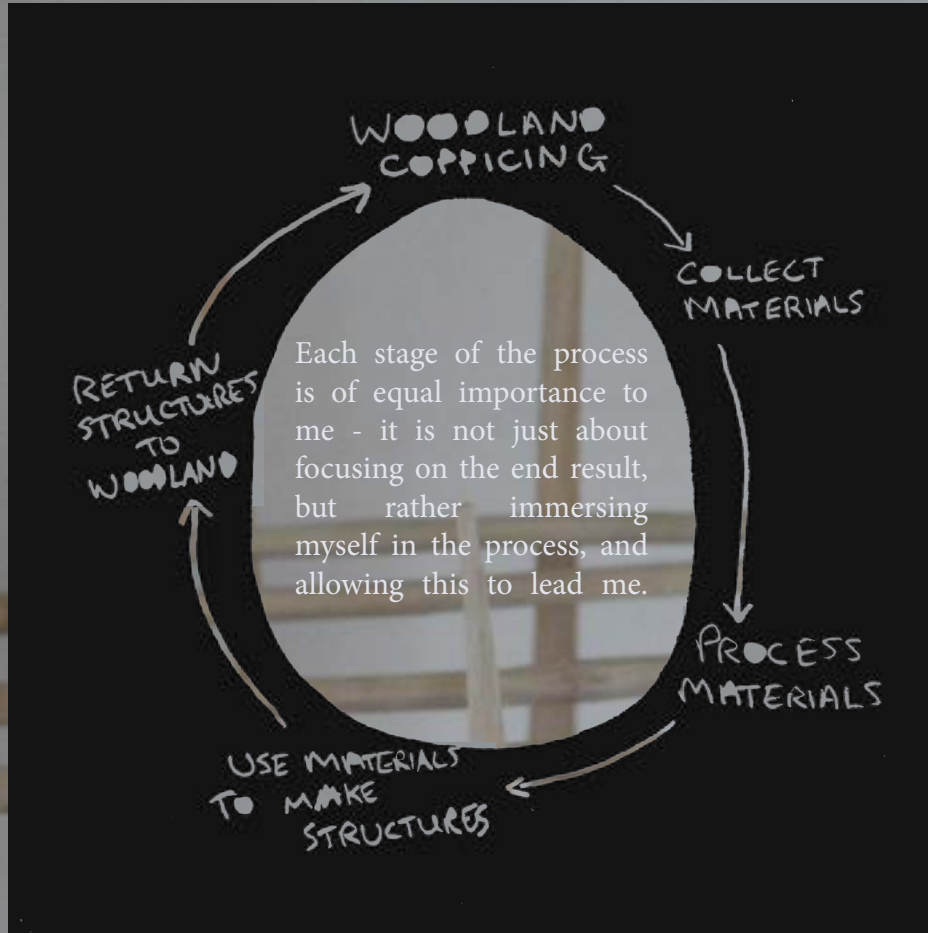
Using natural materials (predominantly coppiced wood), and traditional craft methods, I have made a series of structures that facilitate a connection between people, and the woodland. It is this cyclical relationship of nature ‘feeding’ humans, who in turn feed nature, that is at the core of my work.

In order to help inspire and promote this coming together, I have built a bird hide: something for people to sit in unseen, and observe the birds (and other wildlife) through the window spaces. Within the bird hide, I have made a ‘perch’ to sit on: a step-ladder-stool upon which the observer can either stand or rest, opening up different fields of vision. And finally, I have made a nesting box to encourage birds to nest near to the hide.

PART I

Woodland coppicing:

a way of simultaneously collecting materials, and increasing the health and biodiversity of a woodland



73. Tattling in a mill. *Not yet ready for use on the pulping table, and finished bundles stacked to season.*



70. Cleaving and pointing with the billhook.



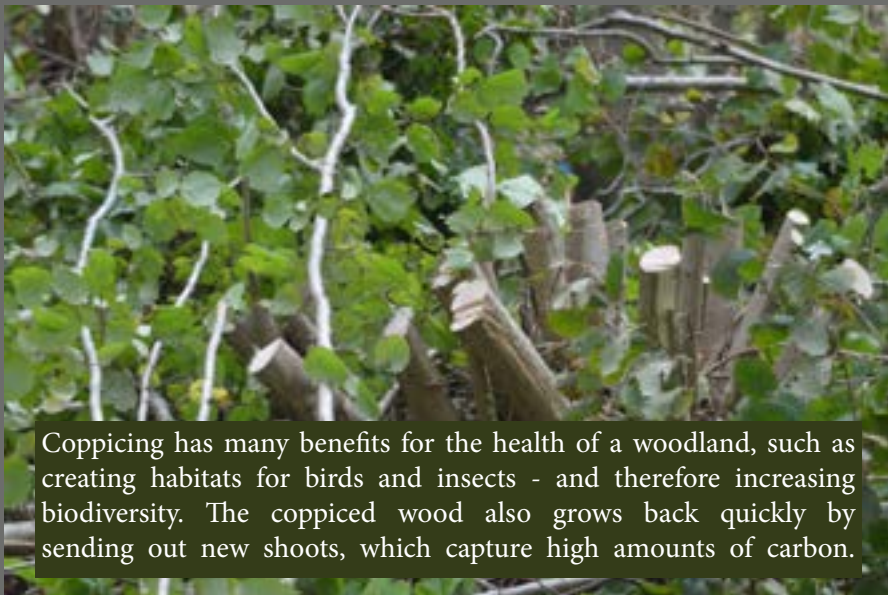
91. Driving the tree with a mallet to cleave triangular segments for girth bars.



86. Completing the clearing by hand.



86. Wearing a sheep feeding cage in Sussex.



Coppicing has many benefits for the health of a woodland, such as creating habitats for birds and insects - and therefore increasing biodiversity. The coppiced wood also grows back quickly by sending out new shoots, which capture high amounts of carbon.

Traditionally, all of the craft processes I have explored in my work would have taken place in the coppiced woodland. As I have not been able to do this, I have instead had to collect the materials and transport them to the workshop, where I have then carried out the making process. This has definitely affected the energy of the process, creating a sort of dislocation, whereby instead of being in the woods - surrounded by trees, birdsong, and fresh air - I have instead been in a noisy workshop full of machines. I have therefore had to be more mindful in the repetition of the slow processes, careful not to get sucked into a fast paced, disconnected way of making, thereby become frustrated.



It is also an incredibly useful crop, producing straight-grained, usable timber. I have used this to my advantage, and embraced the tall straight timber to make my structures.

PART II

Documenting the making process:
the journey from raw materials to
intentional structures; a continual balance
between intuition, play, and reflection

Tools used:

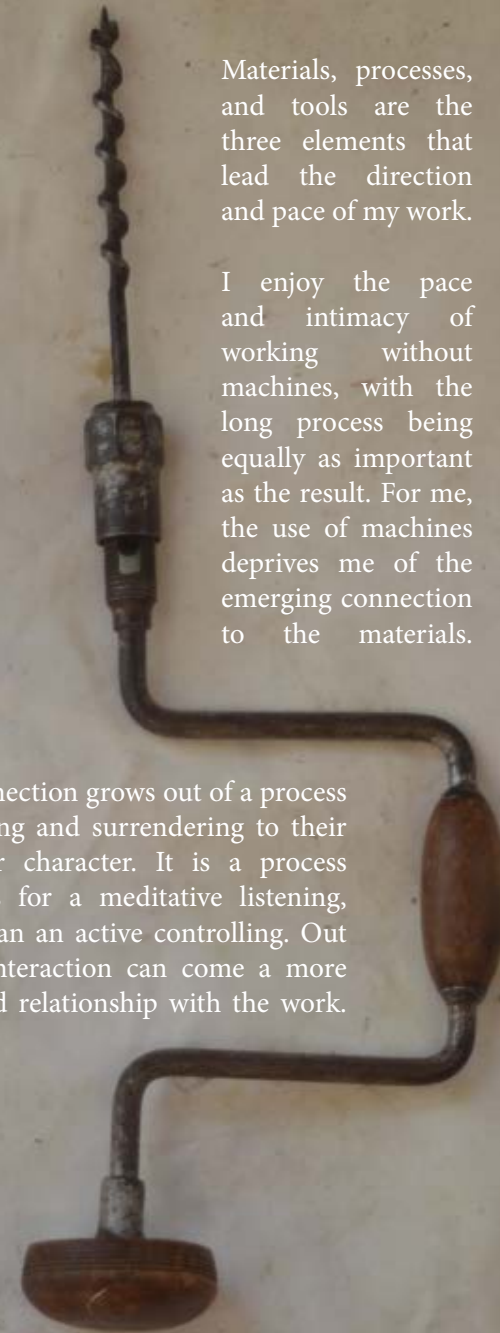
Axe	Splitting wedges	Drawknife
Saw	Sledge hammer	Spokeshave
Splitting froe	Mallet	Carving knife
Tap and die	Hammer	Hand brace (drill)
Rounding plane	Bill hook	Chisel

Processes used:

Sawing
Splitting/Cleaving/Riving
Axing
Whittling
Draw knifing
Spokeshaving
Chiselling
Drilling
Tenoning
Wedging
Hammering

Materials used:

Ash
Hazel
Wych elm bark



Materials, processes,
and tools are the
three elements that
lead the direction
and pace of my work.

I enjoy the pace
and intimacy of
working without
machines, with the
long process being
equally as important
as the result. For me,
the use of machines
deprives me of the
emerging connection
to the materials.

This connection grows out of a process
of listening and surrendering to their
particular character. It is a process
that asks for a meditative listening,
rather than an active controlling. Out
of this interaction can come a more
embodied relationship with the work.



SAW



CARVING KNIFE



DRAWKNIFE



BILLHOOK



ROTARY PLANE



TAP AND DIE



MALLET



CHISEL



SAW



HAND BRACE (DRILL)



DRILL BITS



SPLITTING WEDGES



SPLITTING FROE



SLEDGE HAMMER



SPOKE SHAVE



SET SQUARE



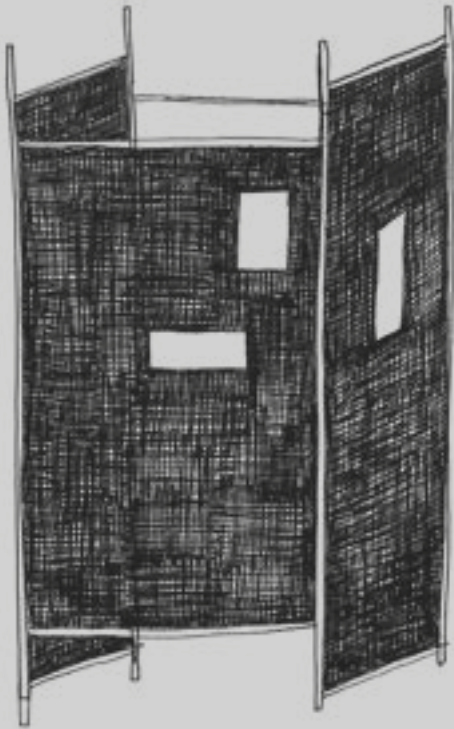
HAMMER



AXE

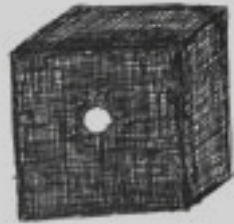
TRIO OF OUTCOMES

I



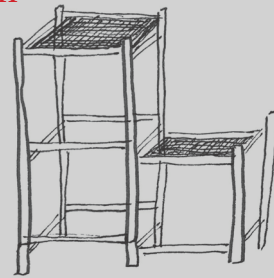
BIRD HIDE

II



BIRD BOX

III

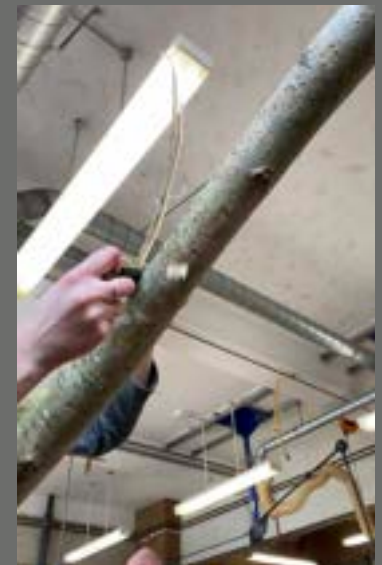


STEP-UP-STOOL

COLLECTING COPPICED MATERIALS



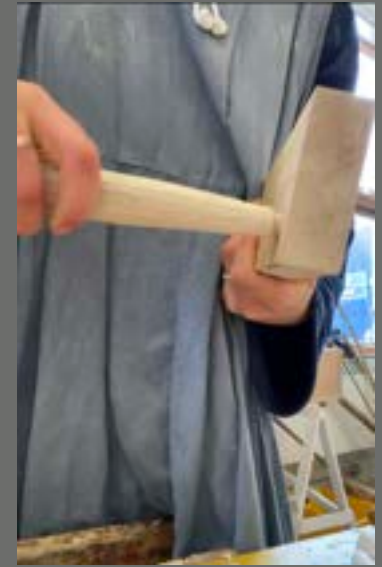
THE MAKING PROCESS:
BIRD HIDE - BIRD BOX - STEP-UP-STOOL













NUTS AND BOLTS:

SCREW AND BOLT,
MADE WITH TAP AND DIE,
TO FACILITATE EASY DECONSTRUCTION



PLAYFUL INTERACTION WITH
DEVELOPING BIRD HIDE STRUCTURE



SPLITTING HAZEL STICKS



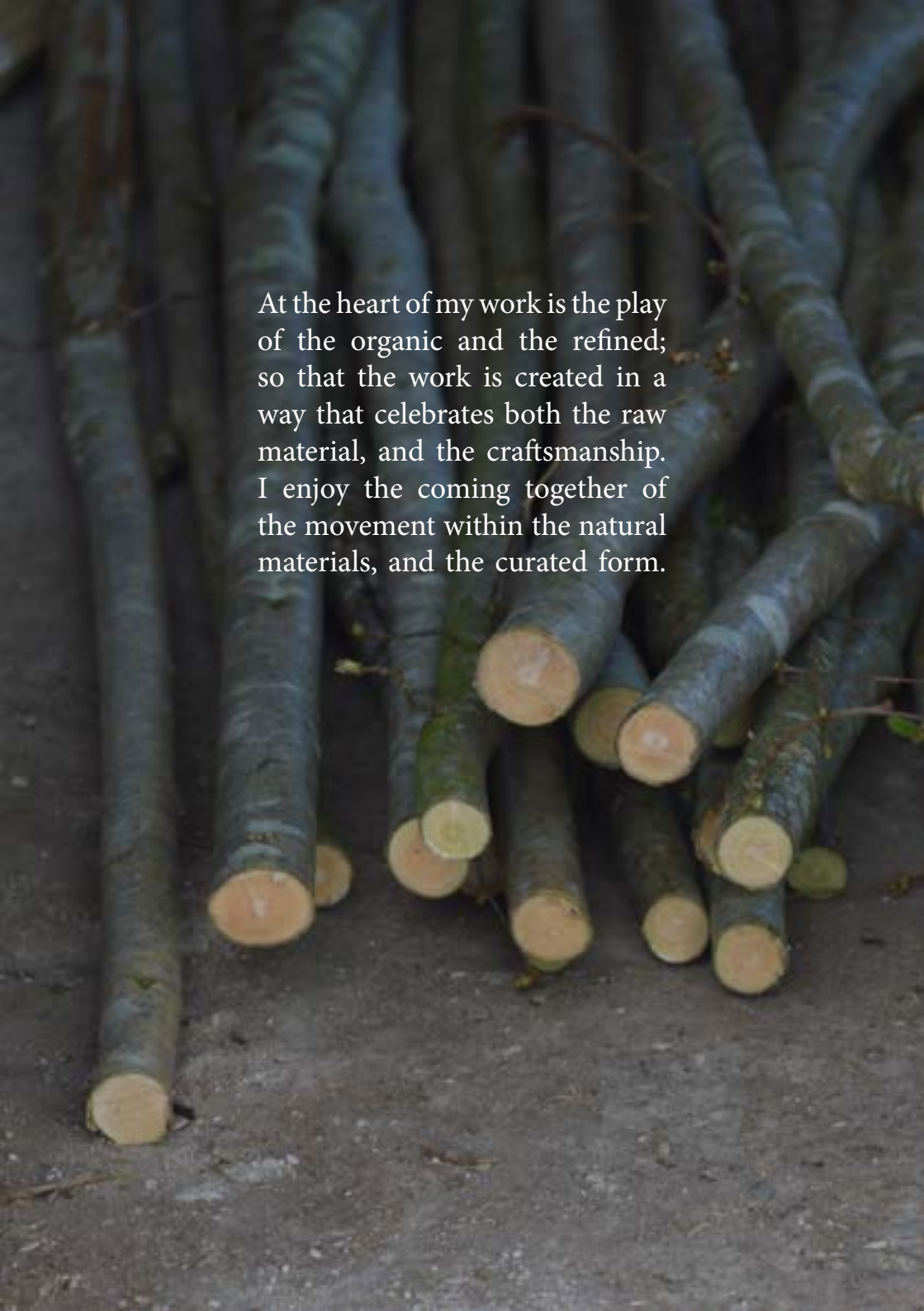
The process of splitting hazel requires closely listening and responding to the direction of the split, constantly adjusting and steering the line of split so that it runs centrally down the stick. This is achieved by using a billhook to lever the split open, placing pressure on the thickest side. If the split is not maintained centrally, it will break off, causing half of the stick to become useless for weaving.



150 x 1 metre sticks of hazel, split in half = 300 split metres ready for weaving:

from round to split,
from one to two



A photograph showing a pile of raw, cut logs on a concrete floor. The logs are of various lengths and diameters, with their natural bark and light-colored wood ends visible. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the wood and the rough surface of the floor.

At the heart of my work is the play of the organic and the refined; so that the work is created in a way that celebrates both the raw material, and the craftsmanship. I enjoy the coming together of the movement within the natural materials, and the curated form.





DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIRD BOX:
A PROCESS OF PARING DOWN



PLAYFUL INTERACTION WITH DEVELOPING BIRD BOX STRUCTURE



Intrinsic to the development of my making is a creative playfulness. This can enable me to discover new and unexpected ways of working and thinking, opening new horizons and leading me into unknown territories. For example, the woven nest within the bird box emerged after I had played with putting my head within the box structure (as seen in the final outcome of the birdbox).

Aesthetics are so important to me,
I find the visual deeply nourishing.
It is difficult to describe my visual language, with
its nature being inherently visual, but this booklet
describes something of what catches my eye.
It is difficult to articulate what decisions I have
made, and why, because most of them
are instinctual to me.
Often it is when something
just feels in its rightful place.





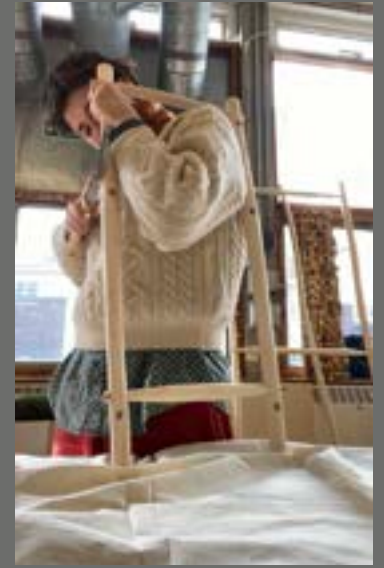
SLIGHT CHANGE OF DIRECTION
WITH THE BIRD BOX:

Instead of weaving all sides, leaving only a small hole for birds to enter through (as seen developing in previous photos), I have decided, after playing with placing the my head inside the framework, to make a nest out of willow, covering this in cob (a mix of clay and hay).

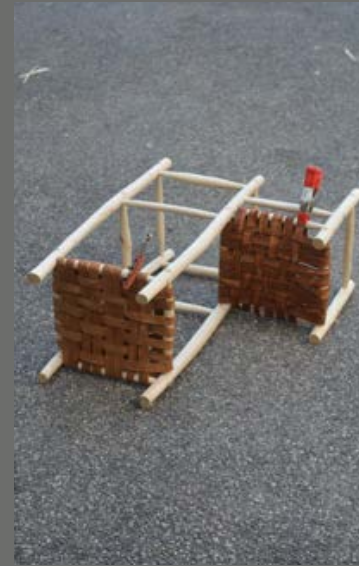


DEVELOPMENT OF
THE STEP-UP-STOOL





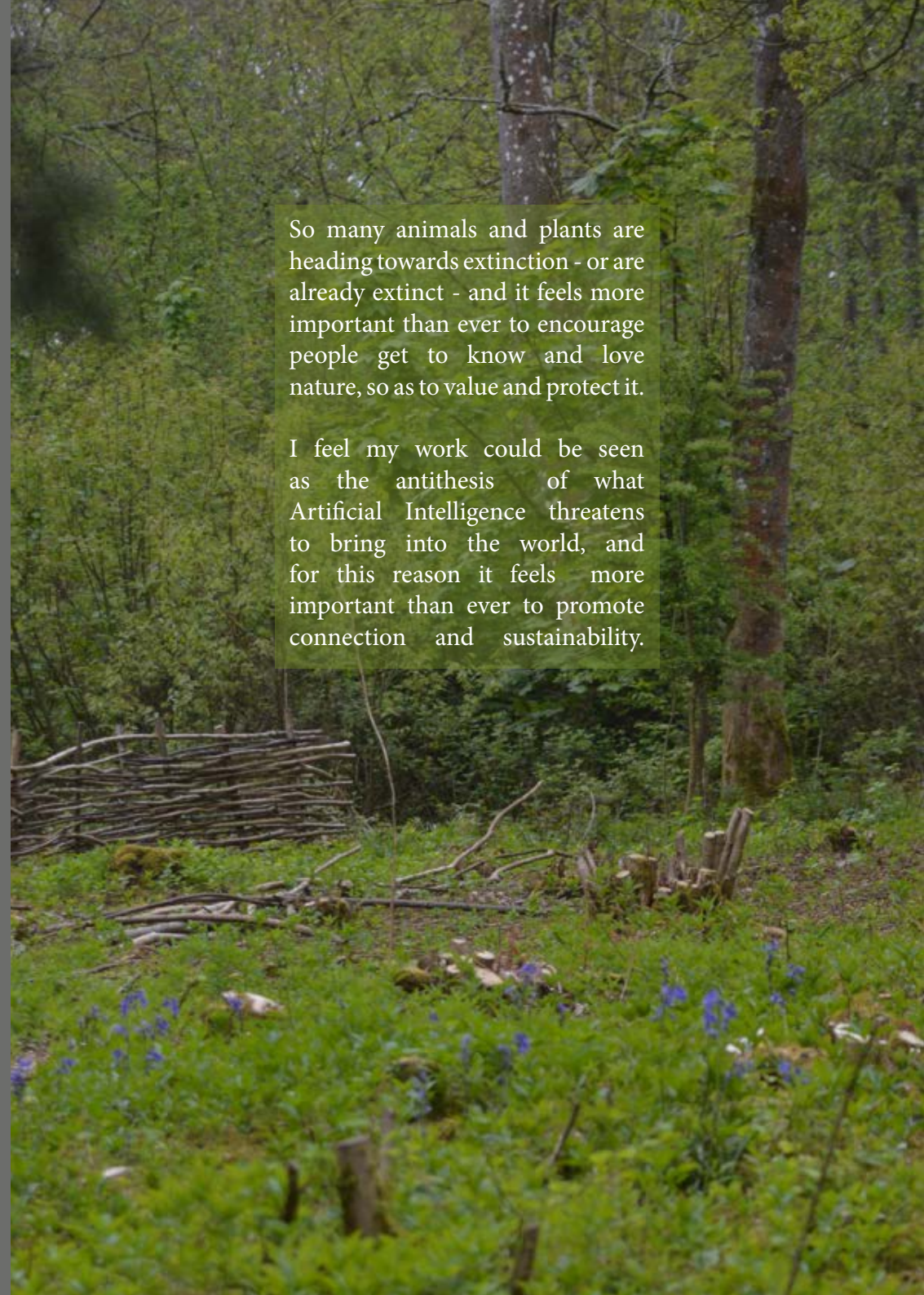
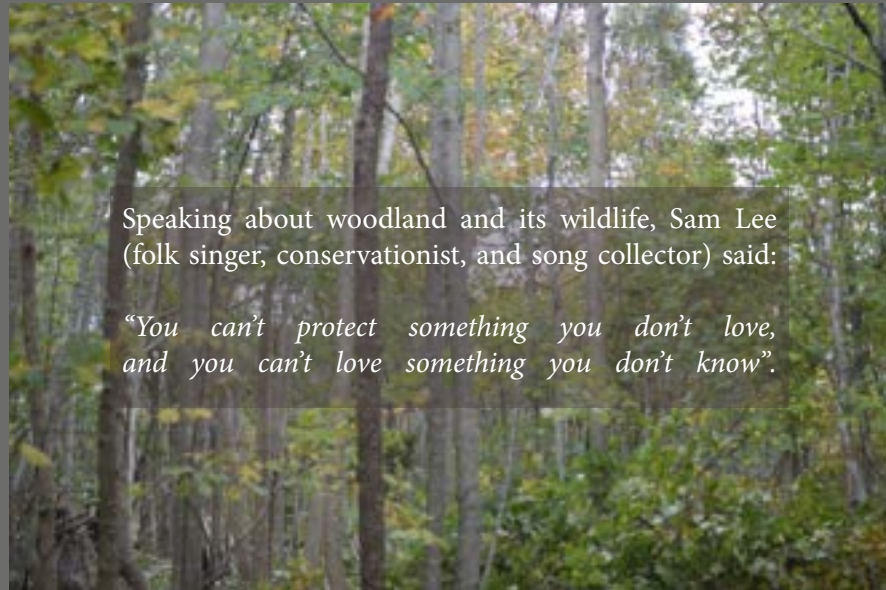
SEAT WOVEN WITH
WYCH ELM BARK





PART III

Returning to the woodland:
using the structures as a tool to observe and
integrate with the wildlife of a woodland



So many animals and plants are heading towards extinction - or are already extinct - and it feels more important than ever to encourage people get to know and love nature, so as to value and protect it.

I feel my work could be seen as the antithesis of what Artificial Intelligence threatens to bring into the world, and for this reason it feels more important than ever to promote connection and sustainability.



