



2023  
**forest**  
of IMAGINATION

# Creative Learning Invitation 2023

## Forest of Imagination 2023 **ASSEMBLE IN THE FOREST**

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH  
CREATIVE CO-ENQUIRY  
FINDING FASCINATIONS IN LOCAL AREAS  
IMMERSION WITHIN NATURE  
GLOBAL ISSUES & THE CLIMATE CRISIS

[forestofimagination.org.uk](https://forestofimagination.org.uk)



# Forest of Imagination 2023



## INTRODUCTION

### 'If you were a tree, what would you be?'

This first invitation focuses on exploration of this question from a global perspective. Linking to this year's Forest of Imagination, it provides the opportunity for children to link art and nature, and to respond to the themes of beauty, biodiversity, personal and community. It shines a light on the importance of forests across the world, what they mean to us in Bath and our own responses to the climate emergency.

The learning invitation is designed to support the co-enquiries of children and educators drawing upon Forest of Imagination partnerships with local organisations, experts in the field of climate change and biodiversity, and the inspirational work of the artists. It provides links to useful websites and organisations to support the research of the educators and children, to add to their knowledge and understanding of global rainforests, and provides a creative framework for co-enquiry that is sensory, imaginative, embraces children's many expressive languages, is accessible to all children and supports their meaning-making processes in a holistic way.





## The enquiry has 4 phases:

- Initial preparation for teachers
- Co-research with the children
- An immersive experience
- Creative responses to the question 'If you were a tree, what would you be?'

Each phase follows on from the previous.

Once the **preparations** are complete, the initial **co-research phase** with the children can be undertaken.

This leads into an **immersive experience** in the forest.

Following their initial research and an immersive experience, the children return to the question "**If you were a tree, what would you be?**", exploring it and expressing their ideas about it through different forms of creativity.

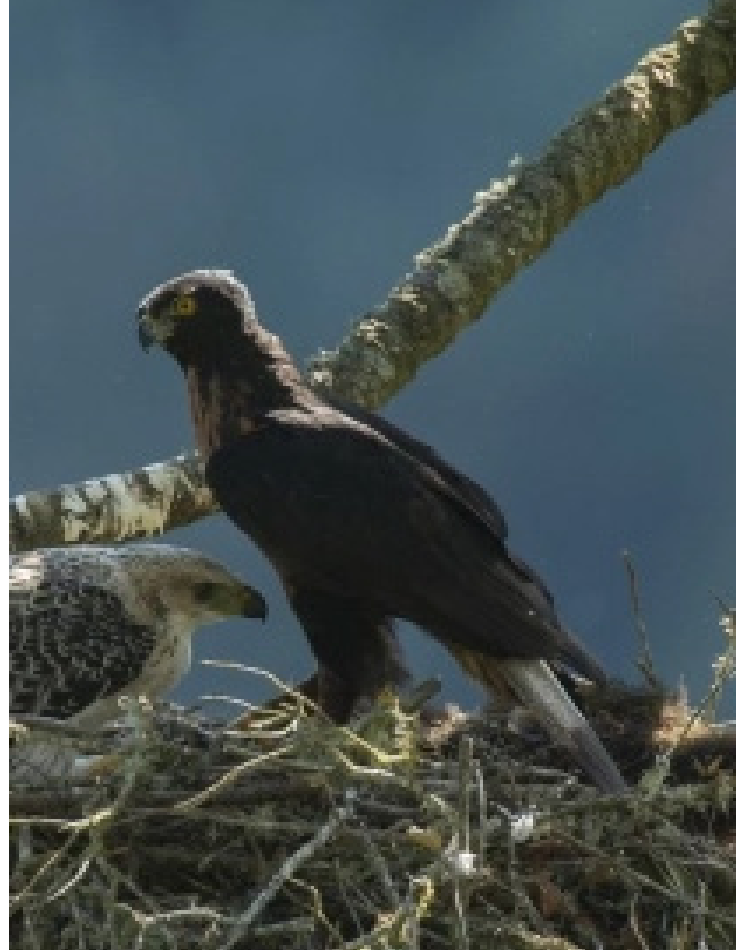


## INITIAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS

Follow the links in the sections below for your own research and to select suitable material to use with the children, including the Forest of Imagination [film](#) [provocation](#).

Collect any resources and materials you anticipate you will want for the enquiry [see Creative responses section for possibilities]. This might include:

- Sourcing sustainably grown houseplants that grow wild in forests globally: <https://down-to-earth.co.uk/travel/house-plants-from-the-rain-forest/>
- Research: how sustainable and ethical, from a climate crisis perspective, are the materials commonly found in the classroom for art work, such as glues and tapes?
- Gathering materials for art and making that are natural or made from natural materials.
- Following the links to local climate change organisations such as to [Rainforest Concern](#), [BNES Emergency Climate Group](#), [Family Climate Action Group](#) that you might like to work with.
- Source the resources, and plan how you would create a multi-sensory environment to provide an immersive experience. Test out projection possibilities into a large open space (such as a school hall).
- Additional climate information to explore: [UNICEF](#), the rights of the child and climate, [National Geographic](#) and [United Nations](#).



## CO-RESEARCH WITH THE CHILDREN: A FRAMEWORK OF POSSIBILITIES

These invite your and the children's creative enquiries; choices; ways of exploring and expressing and includes questions that could guide your co-enquiries.

### Introducing the idea to the children:

- Introduce children to the concept of [Forest of Imagination](#) and the themes for 2023 (See first page). What have they experienced? What are their memories of previous encounters?
- Group discussion, personal journaling and sharing of the children's initial thoughts on the question If you were a tree, what would you be and what it means to them.

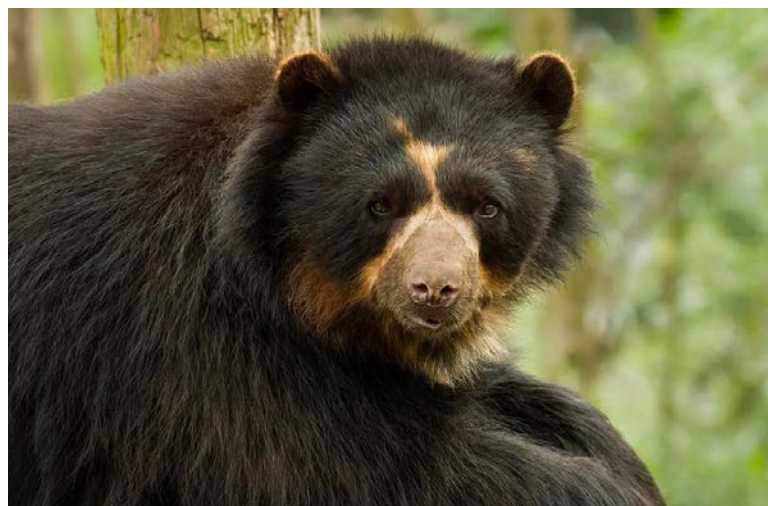
## FOREST TWINNING FOR SCHOOLS

Schools are invited to twin their land by either sponsoring the equivalent acres of rainforest for **£50 an acre**, or **making a donation** to enable Rainforest Concern to purchase land at £385 an acre, which includes forest protection, legal costs and a contribution towards local community projects in Ecuador.

Learn more at [rainforestconcern.org](https://rainforestconcern.org)

## FOCUS 1: GLOBAL FORESTS

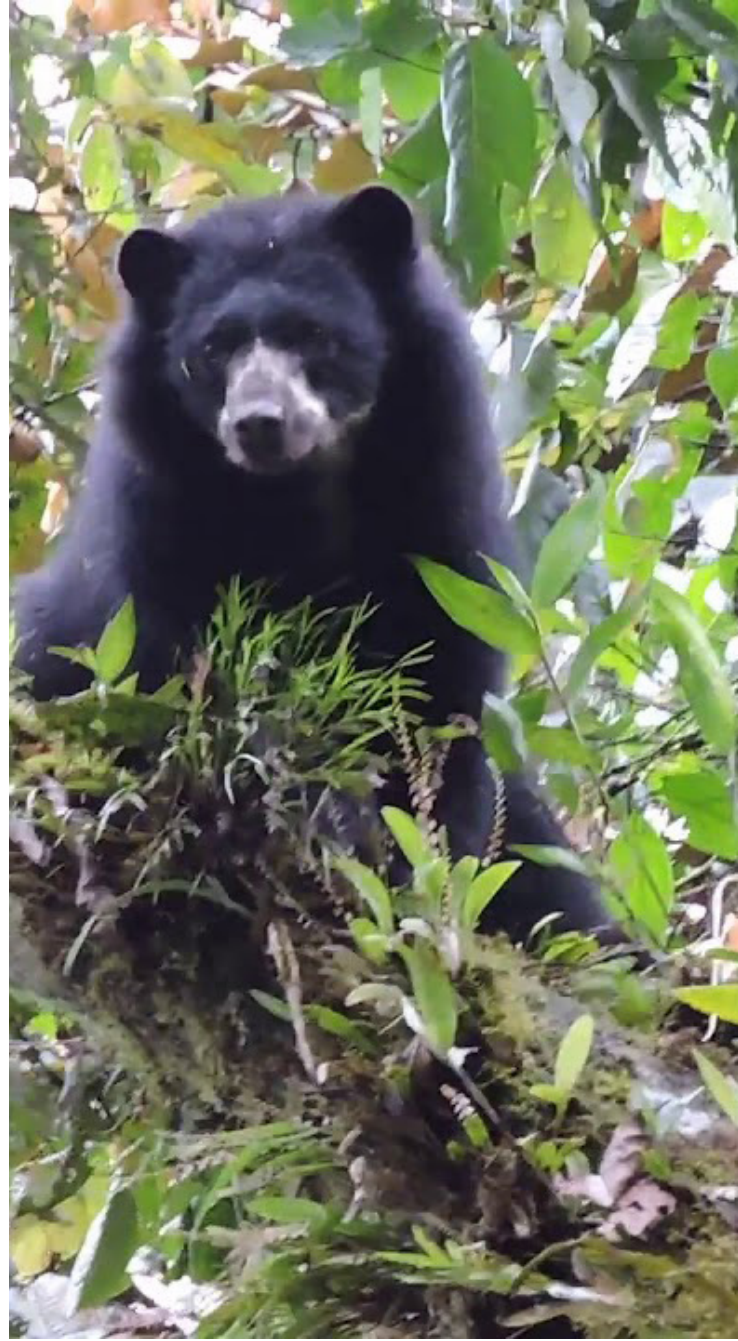
- Use the links to organisations and films to research rainforests, dry forests and cloudforests. How are they different to each other and to temperate forests in the UK? Learn more about the Rainforest Concern project with Gurukala Botanical Sanctuary, India and watch their film: [And the Forest Came Back](#).
- Consider together if there is a particular forest location or type of forest that you want to focus research on. The whole class could focus on one type or groups within the class could focus on their different chosen location. The Neblina Cloud Forest Reserve in NW Ecuador could be used as a focal point. It is a 2,500 hectare reserve in the heart of the Tropical Andes, the most biodiverse region on the planet, and is home to rare spectacled bears - the inspiration for Paddington.



## FOCUS 2: DEEPER ENQUIRY

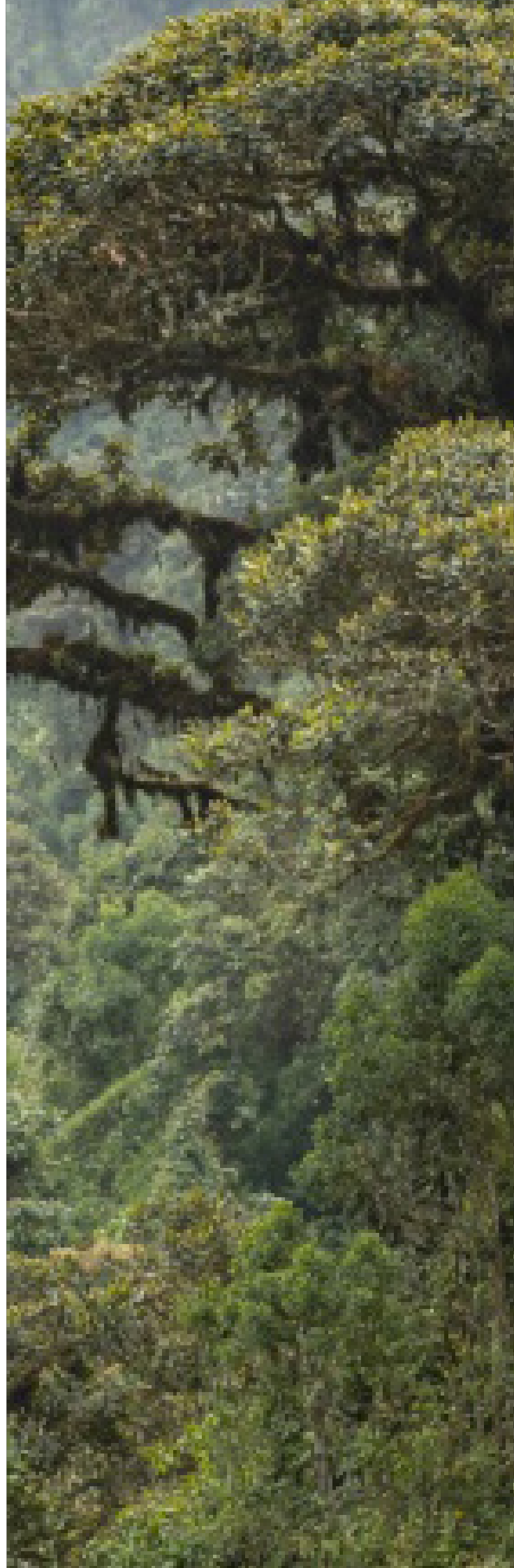
This phase focuses in on taking the children into the ecosystem of their chosen type of forest:

- What is the habitation the trees of the forest support or provide for other creatures, etc?
- How do the trees assemble in the forest? See links to Andean Bears from National Geographic; films on Rainforest Concern website for schools including a short Bear Watch clip, and a cartoon on dry forests.
- Why Rainforests are important: Tropical rainforests contain over 30 million species of plants and animals: half of the Earth's wildlife and at least two-thirds of its plant species. The children may want to explore/research specific plants (e.g. ferns, orchids) and animals (e.g. Andean Bears, Hummingbirds)



## FOCUS 3: TREES AS AN ORGANISM

- Can the children be visual scientists and use **photography and film** to detect the characteristics of different tree's leaves, the texture of their bark, their fruits and seeds and how they are dispersed? Can they **listen** to what the trees hear around them?
- Relating to a **particular tree**: How old might it be? How high is its head? How wide are its arms? How deep are its roots? What does the tree see? Who are its friends? Who are its enemies? How does the tree communicate with its friends? Who does it give shelter to? Who is it reliant upon [symbiotically] and who relies upon this tree?
- **Hands-on enquiry**: many houseplants are native to cloudforests and rainforests such as ferns, climbers and orchids. Give the children time and space to explore their shape, colours, characteristics and textures. Use magnifying glasses to focus in on details. Use drawing as a way of getting to know the plants.
- What are the **issues or questions** raised by the research that are important to the children? Are there local climate change groups that you as a school or class want to link with or invite into school in support of these?

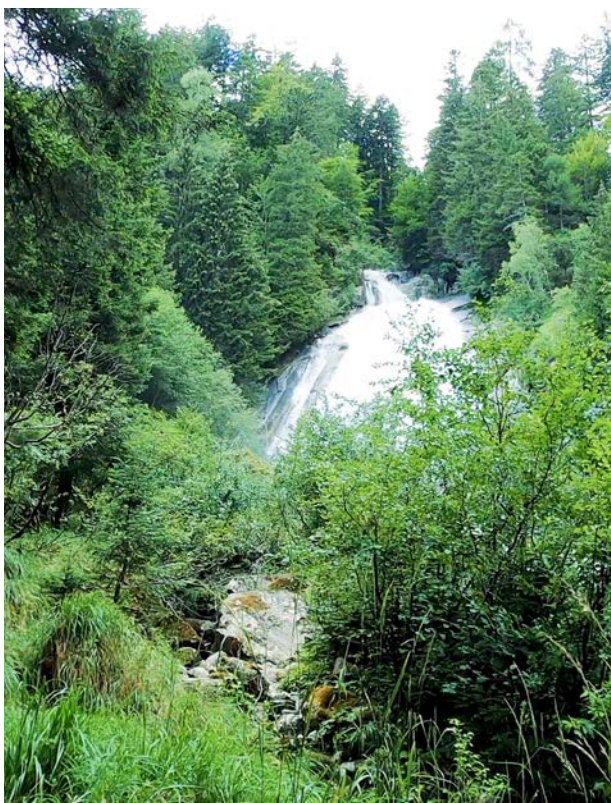


## IMMERSIVE FOREST EXPERIENCE

View the Forest of Imagination [film provocation](#) with the children. What do they notice, what do they hear, how does it make them feel?

Project the film as large as possible into a large open space to allow the children to immerse themselves in the colours, light, sounds and beauty of the forest. You could bring plants in to add to the atmosphere, as well as lights, to cast shadows onto the walls. Bring the smell of the forest into the space by adding woody smelling incense, damp moss, leaves and twigs.

Give the children time and space to quietly explore the space, the light and shadows, the smells and sounds of the forest with the film on loop.



Creative responses to it could include:

- Dance and movement. How might their tree feel, move in the forest? How do the trees assemble in the forest?
- Drawing or painting: They might choose to draw something as they see it or paint how the space makes them feel. Allow quiet reflection time for them to express the space on paper.
- Journaling: Perhaps they would rather respond with words. A short poem or stream of consciousness.
- Explore making sounds: With percussion and/or voice to complement the sound track or to make their own. [See options for soundscapes here.](#) Links to drama, music and creating soundscapes see children creating a rainforest soundscape. For creating a soundtrack with vocals, see the opening sequence of [And the Forest Came Back, Gurukula.](#)



## "IF YOU WERE A TREE, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?"

Returning to this question, give the children time to **imagine, reflect, and exchange ideas**. Journaling, small group discussion and class discussion could be used to support the process.

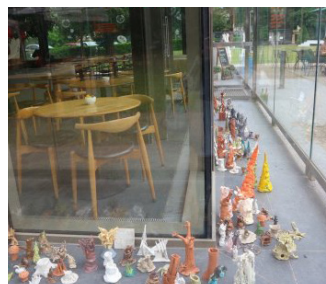
Personal creative responses to the question could be offered or proposed to the children **through different media**:

- Drawing their imagined tree or journaling about it
- Clay, making their tree to assemble in the forest
- Tree ring prints, might represent the uniqueness and age of their tree, see Eleanor Whiteman's [tree ring prints](#)
- Making their tree with natural or repurposed materials
- Painting with watercolours or other translucent medium
- Mark-making with charcoal/pastels or moving the coloured paint across a surface with fingers/hands in response to the film/soundtrack
- Poetry or spoken word
- Digital; explore using digital generated graphics to produce images of their tree, or digitally layering their hand-drawn images

### Some examples to consider...



**Drawing of your imagined tree**  
Rosie Wood, Bath Art School of Design



**Claymaking**  
Clare Day, Forest of Imagination 2017

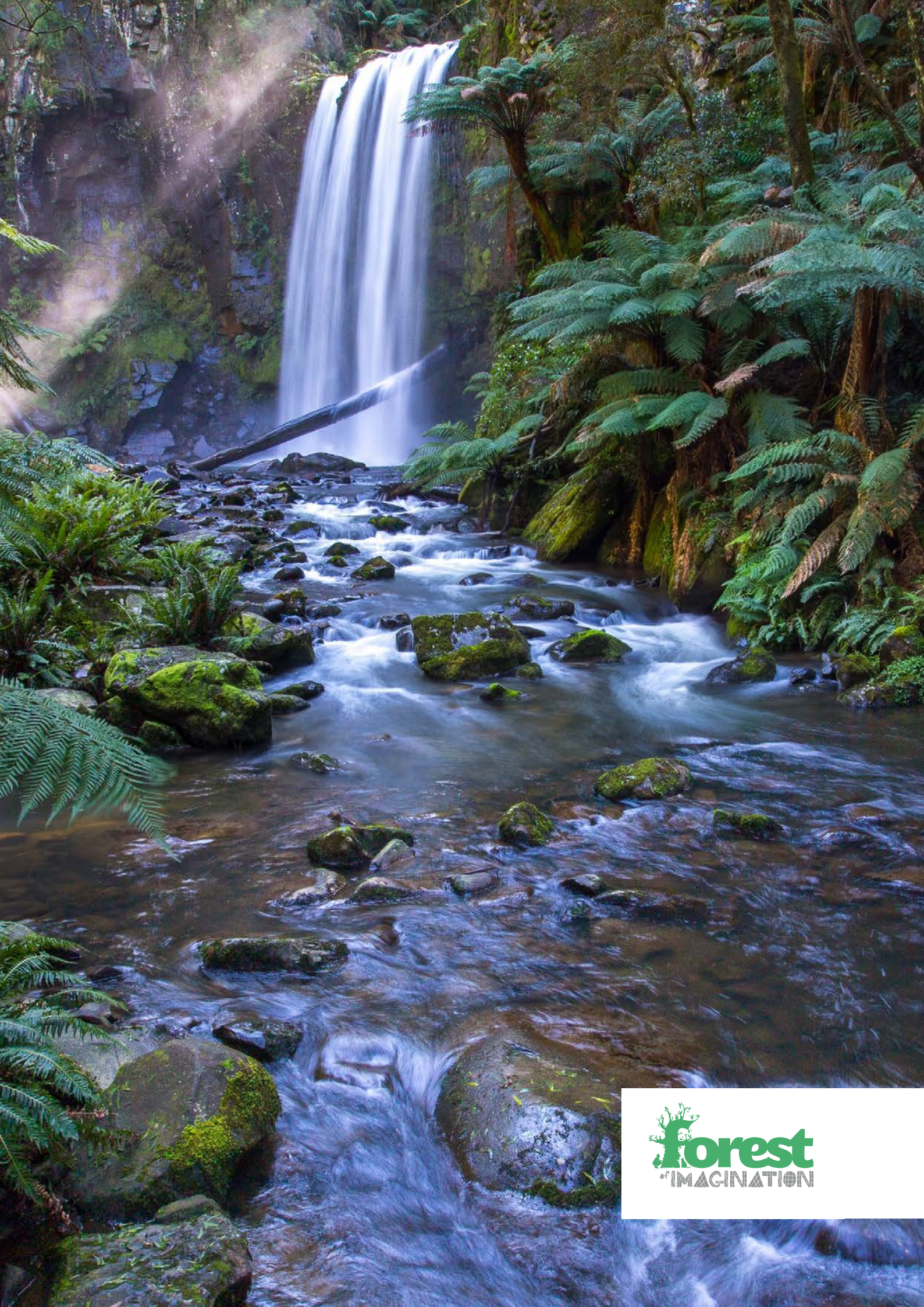


**Tree ring prints**  
Eleanor Whiteman



**Tree made of repurposed materials**  
Helen Lawrence, Forest of Imagination 2018





 **Forest**  
OF IMAGINATION