

# Foster Art & Wilderness

FOUNDATION

**THE FOSTER ART & WILDERNESS FOUNDATION  
LAUNCHES IN PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, 27 FEBRUARY 2016  
WITH EXHIBITIONS OF TONY FOSTER'S WORK TO TOUR  
LONDON AND THE UK, SUMMER 2016**

*'All my work is about journeys' – Tony Foster*

*'In his quest for beauty in the wildernesses and around the edges of the world Tony reminds us constantly of time as well as space, of our own journeys through life.'*

*-- Duncan Robinson, Director Emeritus of the Fitzwilliam Museum and former  
Chair of the Henry Moore Foundation*

PALO ALTO, CA -- The Foster Art & Wilderness Foundation launches in Palo Alto, California, on 27 February, 2016. This non-profit foundation unites the watercolour journeys of British artist and explorer Tony Foster in powerful exhibitions that aim to inspire people to connect with wilderness and to preserve it. These watercolour journeys – series of large-scale watercolours depicting places of wild natural beauty around the world – are available for loan to museums and other public venues.

The Cornwall-based artist Tony Foster (b. 1946) takes an immersive approach to landscape, inspired by artists such as JMW Turner, Richard Long and David Hockney. For over 30 years, he has climbed the heights and explored the depths of the earth to paint wild places in situ in series of large-scale watercolours that evoke the impact and scale of the landscape. The only person to paint all three faces of Everest, this fellow of the Royal Geographical Society has trekked on expeditions to the edges of the earth to paint what remains of the wilderness. He travels on foot, by boat and raft, camping on-site in locations from the Amazon to Borneo, volcanoes to deserts, to absorb himself in a place for weeks to paint huge (7ft x 4 ft.) watercolours. His art celebrates the wild beauty of nature and he hopes to inspire people to preserve it. Along the way, he has collaborated with luminaries including the naturalist Sir David Attenborough and fellow explorer Robin Hanbury Tenison. Each of them has suggested a site of wild beauty for Foster to paint and has written an accompanying statement.

Foster works in the traditional medium of watercolour because it enables him to get closer to nature: 'I use the elements of nature, in the elements, to paint nature.' Since Turner and the great British watercolour artists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, artists have painted in watercolour to capture the quickly shifting lights and colours of the landscape. Watercolour's portable and quick-drying qualities make it ideal for painting in the open air. Foster has designed his own foldable, weatherproof 7-foot drawing board to be

able to paint large-scale works over long periods of time outdoors, and he has even devised a way to draw coral reefs underwater. He never works from photographs because he believes they flatten the dappled light and colours of nature.

The Foster Art & Wilderness Foundation is one of the few charitable art foundations to be launched in Palo Alto, the heart of the Silicon Valley. It is the brainchild of Palo Alto businesswoman Jane Woodward, who has funded the entire project. A geologist and Stanford MBA, who also teaches at Stanford, she founded an energy investment firm focused on US natural gas and wind energy.

Woodward explains: 'I came upon Tony Foster's work by chance in the late 1980s at the Smithsonian – it ambushed me while I was looking for something else. His watercolour journey "John Muir's High Sierra" expressed the wild beauty of the Sierra Mountains in such a powerful way, I felt I was there, transported to the place he painted. So I tracked him down and began collecting his work. Five years ago, I decided I couldn't bear watching the journeys - usually a series of 30 or 40 paintings, which are powerful when presented as one work - being split up to sell to individual collectors. My aim with the foundation is to keep all his journeys intact in order to loan them to public art venues, whose audiences, will, I hope, be inspired to connect with nature, to take journeys, to value wilderness.'

The Foster Art & Wilderness Foundation launches with the exhibition 'Sacred Places', which shows Foster's watercolour journeys across the American Southwest and was first shown at the Museum of Northern Arizona. A fully illustrated catalogue, including essays by Duncan Robinson and Jim Ballinger, Director Emeritus of the Phoenix Art Museum, accompanies it.

In June, 2016, the Royal Watercolour Society will present Tony Foster's work in a solo exhibition entitled 'Exploring Beauty: Watercolour Diaries from the Wild' at the Bankside Gallery, London, 8 – 26 June ([www.banksidegallery.com](http://www.banksidegallery.com)). This show will travel to the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, UK, 16 July – 12 November

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Open to the public free of charge, by appointment

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