

EMMA LEVINE



SPACE BETWEEN US





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For enquires email: [ginny@serenamorton.com](mailto:ginny@serenamorton.com)

*Serena Morton*

343 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 6HA  
[www.serenamorton.com](http://www.serenamorton.com)

## A SHORT HISTORY OF MAKING TREES

"I always have the word braille in my head, the pieces have a tactile quality. Touch is central to the process - going over the piece of paper with my fingertips and feeling the line there or the shift from matt to light to shadow. I constantly remind myself that I am very print and textile based."

There is a pleasing materiality to Levine's work; this tree we are looking at, a perfectly formed thing, is so complete in its final articulation. There is a sense of the familiar, as if the paper and silk she uses to create her trees have found their ideal form "it's as if being a tree is in the paper's DNA - it feels right to make it into a tree." She is working with the essence of things - the naked outline of a winter tree, its delicate branches of cut out of unbleached paper and raw silk – and constructing something that is both completely unique and reassuringly familiar.

Levine first came to screen-printing whilst studying fashion and textiles at Central St. Martins. She then went on to work for Nitya in Paris, as textile and embroidery designer. This role took her to India to work with master craftsmen, getting samples made for all their embroidery and print collections. It gave Levine a deep appreciation for the process, and there is still a studio aspect to her work, but at seed level, seeking to make the ideal prototype.

Following the birth of her second child, Levine experienced a need to return to screen-printing and relearn her craft. "The memory of India gave me the idea, and I wanted to go back and physically do

it. I enjoyed the simplicity of pushing paint and ink onto paper – that application of layering." Early on a Friday morning on her way into Putney Art School Levine found her first tree, a solitary little sapling in the Sainsbury's car park. From the window of her train she took some shots of it and developed them. Working from these photographs she isolated the outline of the sapling's winter branches and found her first archetype, which has since had multiple incarnations.

"That tree has become so many things. Nobody knew that I only had one tree – it took on so many forms and became a thing in its own right – endless ideas have been seeded from that little tree."

First there was repetitive screen-printing on felt in diminishing shades, like the seasonal changes found in Andy Goldsworthy's work. Then briefly there was a bird in the trees, printed in an accent colour after she returned to the photographs and found one in the sapling's branches. But there was a flatness that she wanted to overcome so Levine hand cut the tree with a scalpel on the floor and started layering screen prints, the tree's outline being printed repetitively over thirty times. Her need to layer build was underscored by a desire to make a more rounded and three-dimensional thing.

Unsatisfied with the roughness of hand cutting, in particular how it often failed to preserve the beautiful fragility of the winter branches – Levine went in search of someone who could laser cut

the form for her. Emma's trees are a beguiling mix of hand crafted and technology – she uses the best available techniques to preserve the integral delicacy of the piece, often discarding laser cut pieces when she feels the human element is gone. Levine's trees shiver with delicacy.

"I will never forget opening the package of my first laser cut tree, the smell of burnt wood came up, it was so sensorial. Everything was pleasing from the burnt edges of the paper to the scent of the tree."

Finally Levine had achieved the tactile quality – this hint of brail - that she had been seeking. She is meticulous about the materials she uses. The trees are underpinned with the finest Somerset printing paper. In composition, the hidden elements share equal importance with those elements you can see. Silk with paper-bonding creates a strength that you would not necessarily believe. Often the shadow looks screen printed, and yet "it is an essential layer and I know that the paper behind affords it."

"I love paper, the purity of it and what I want to do with it. Whilst I have hand layered it with silk, knowing what is underneath – a beautiful piece of paper – means that even the hidden bits of this constructed thing have value."

Importantly, whilst she begins with the same essential forms and materials, no two works are the same – vibrating with their inimitable colours, shadows and depth. Her exploration of what the tree can be is a

"never-ending and exhausting process." Despite the integral fragility of the materials she uses, combined they give each of her works the ability to withstand and remain in their final state.

Once you have been with Levine's newly imagined forest , your "eyes look differently." They suggest an alternative appreciation of the landscape, and remind us of Olafur Eliasson's created atmospheres like his *Vitamin Garden*. In some ways Levine is mirroring it, "there's an awareness of my landscape and me in it and how I move through it. A language that comes from the trees passes through me to others. The treeness of the paper – the DNA of that paper is tree!" What began as a young sapling, a vision she has carried in her mind and the construction of how it works on paper, has taken years. Trees take a long time to grow and lots of patience.

"The journey I am on with these trees – and the return. I always circle back to the importance and quality of material – the paper is from the tree. Turning the paper back into a tree. Paper feels comfortable being tree. It does not want to be a bird..."

Nico Kos Earle

Notes:

1. **Materiality** in interior design is the concept of the physical consolidation of matter that informs us about our surroundings. Ultimately materials within an interior environment influence how one experiences that particular space whether they are inhabiting or simply occupying the area.<sup>[1]</sup>

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*Colour, texture and light all inspire, delight and inform me. I look for the journey of my materials particularly paper- the source, the evolution to a finished piece and the eventual destination. It is a silent language usually revealing itself beyond completion. I like to feel fragility and a quiet change between colour and texture. I want light to filter and cast shadows over each work gently forming new life, movement and dimension. I watch for the space in each piece, how the eye travels around the image, how light on the pins pushes the layers forward. I listen to what each piece asks for. ”*

Emma Levine, 2015

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*Emma Levine's trees touch us so deeply because they remind us of our connection to the elements that sustain us: the air that we breathe and the earth beneath our feet. They are the fantastical lungs of nature, only revealed in the stark light of winter, like a mythical archetype. The delicate branches that arc up into their coloured skies are pulsing with the energy of their potential leaves blooming with oxygen. The stillness evoked is reassuring and takes us to a serene place where we belong. A place of lightness you will want to return to over and over again. ”*

Nico Kos Earle, 2015



**Alder I** 2015  
Laser cut paper and entomology  
pins mounted on board  
53 x 51 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640



**Alder 2** 2015

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
53 x 51 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640





**Alder 3** 2015  
Laser cut paper and entomology  
pins mounted on board  
53x 51 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640



**Small Oak I 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
50 x 50 cm

Ex VAT: £1,300 / Inc VAT: £1,560





**Small Oak 2 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
50 x 50 cm

Ex VAT: £1,300 / Inc VAT: £1,560



**Small Oak 3** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
50 x 50 cm

Ex VAT: £1,300 / Inc VAT: £1,560





**Hawthorn Tree 2.1** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hawthorn Tree 2.2 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hawthorn Tree 2.3 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

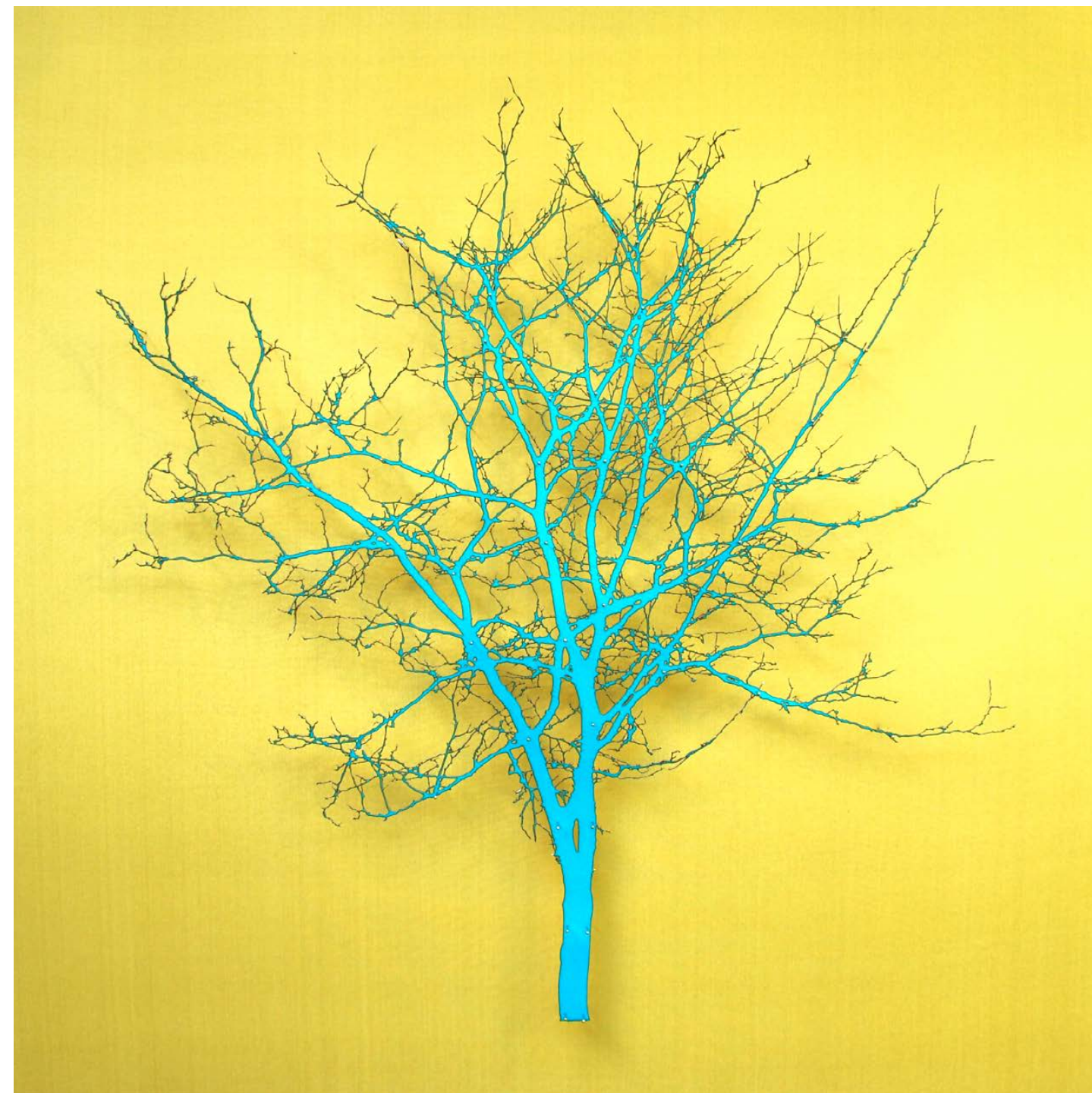
Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hawthorn Tree 2.4 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT:£2,160

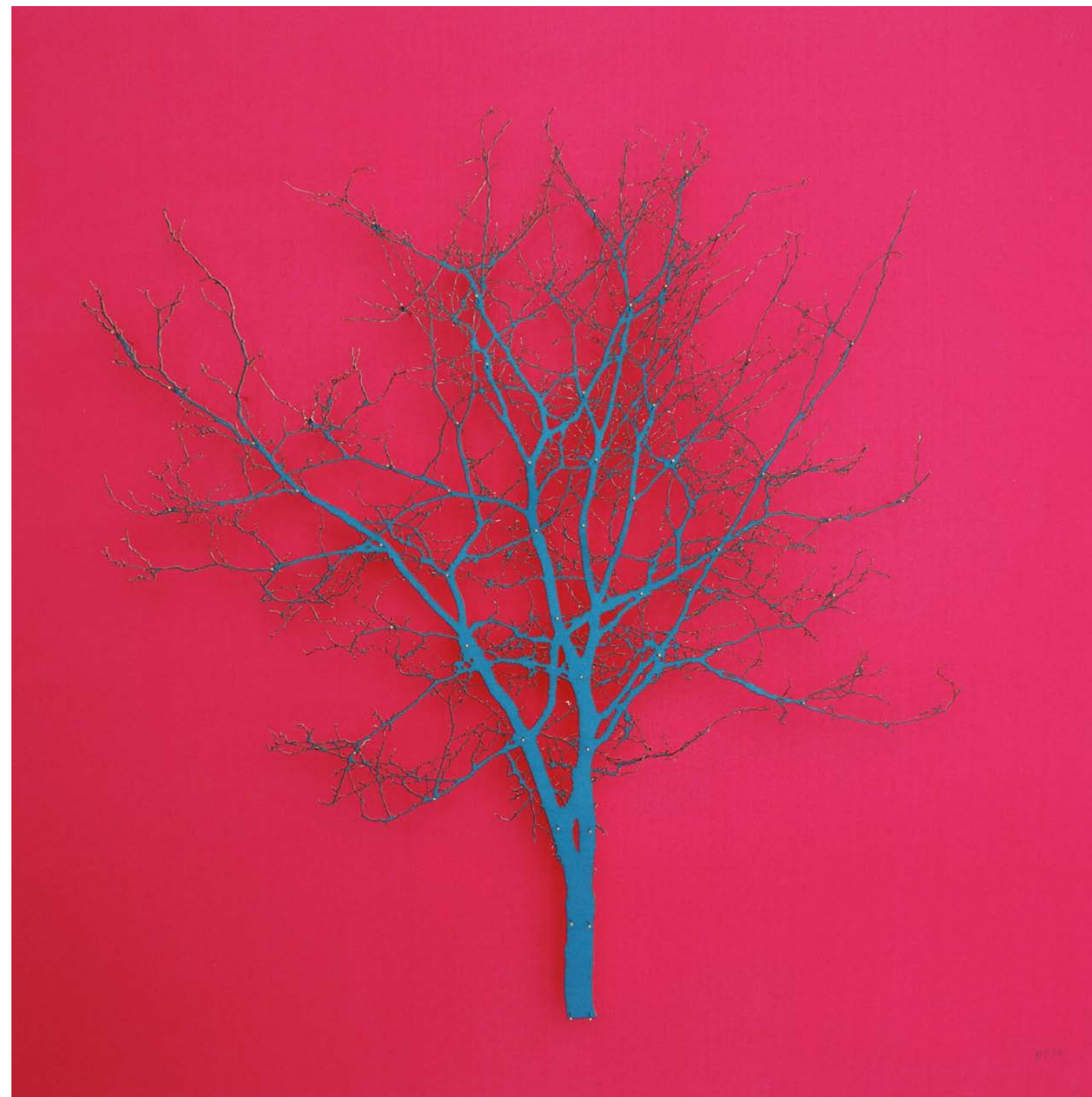




**Hawthorn Tree 2.5 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

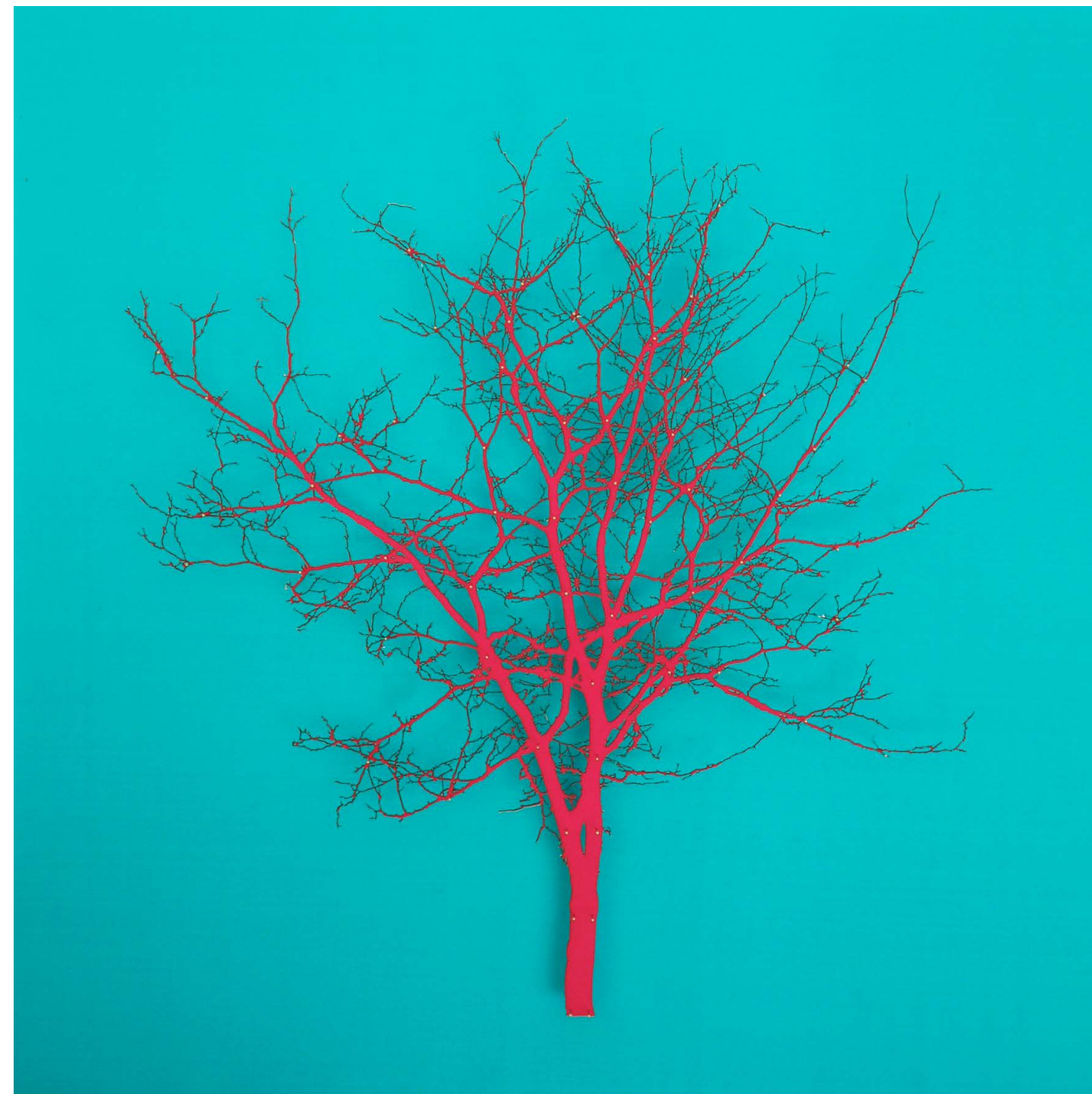
Ex VAT:£1,800 / Inc VAT:£2,160



**Hawthorn Tree 2.6** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160

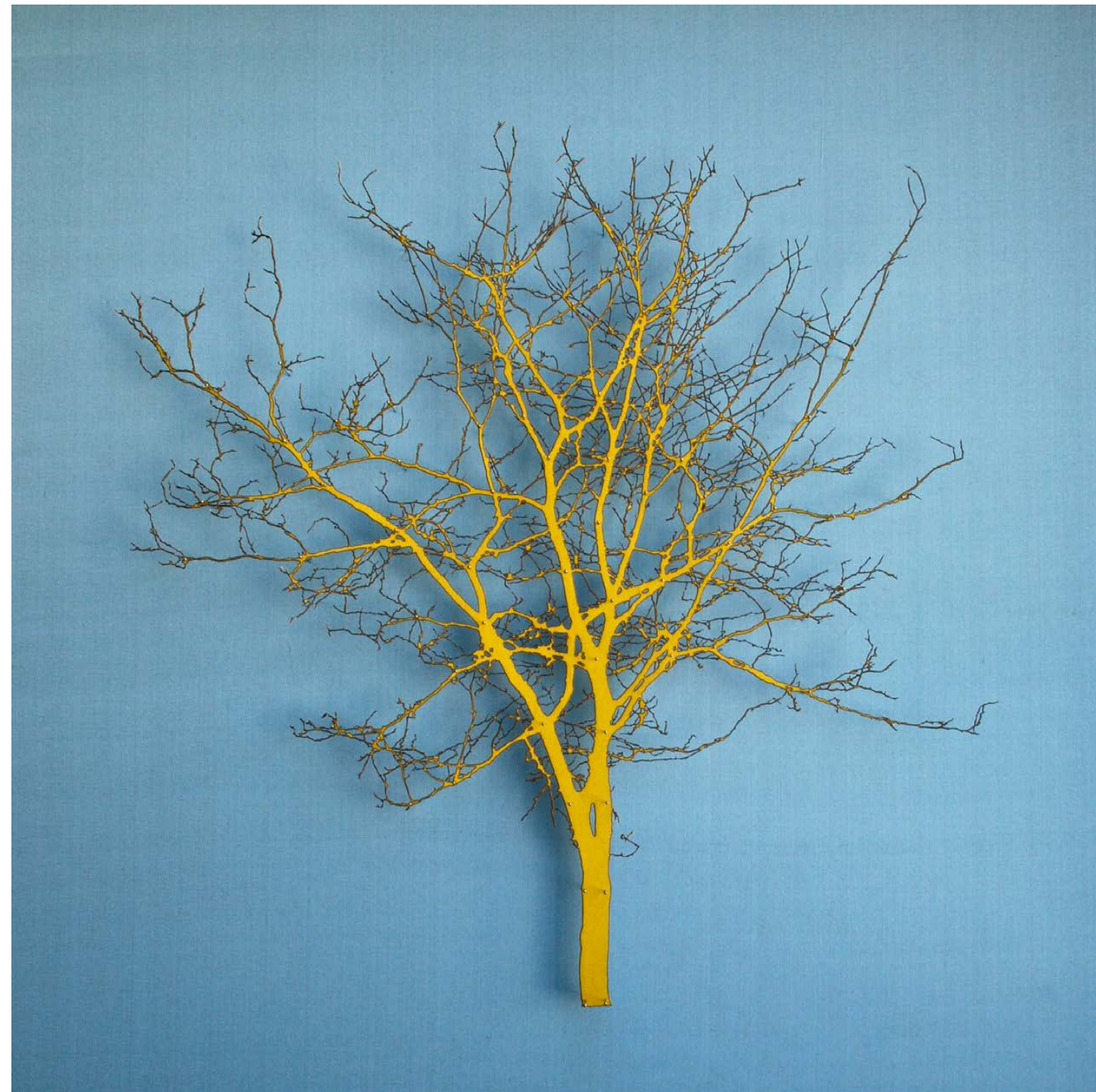




**Hawthorn Tree 2.7 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT:£1,800 / Inc VAT:£2,160





**Hawthorn Tree 2.8** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hawthorn 2.9 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hawthorn Tree 2.10** 2014  
Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

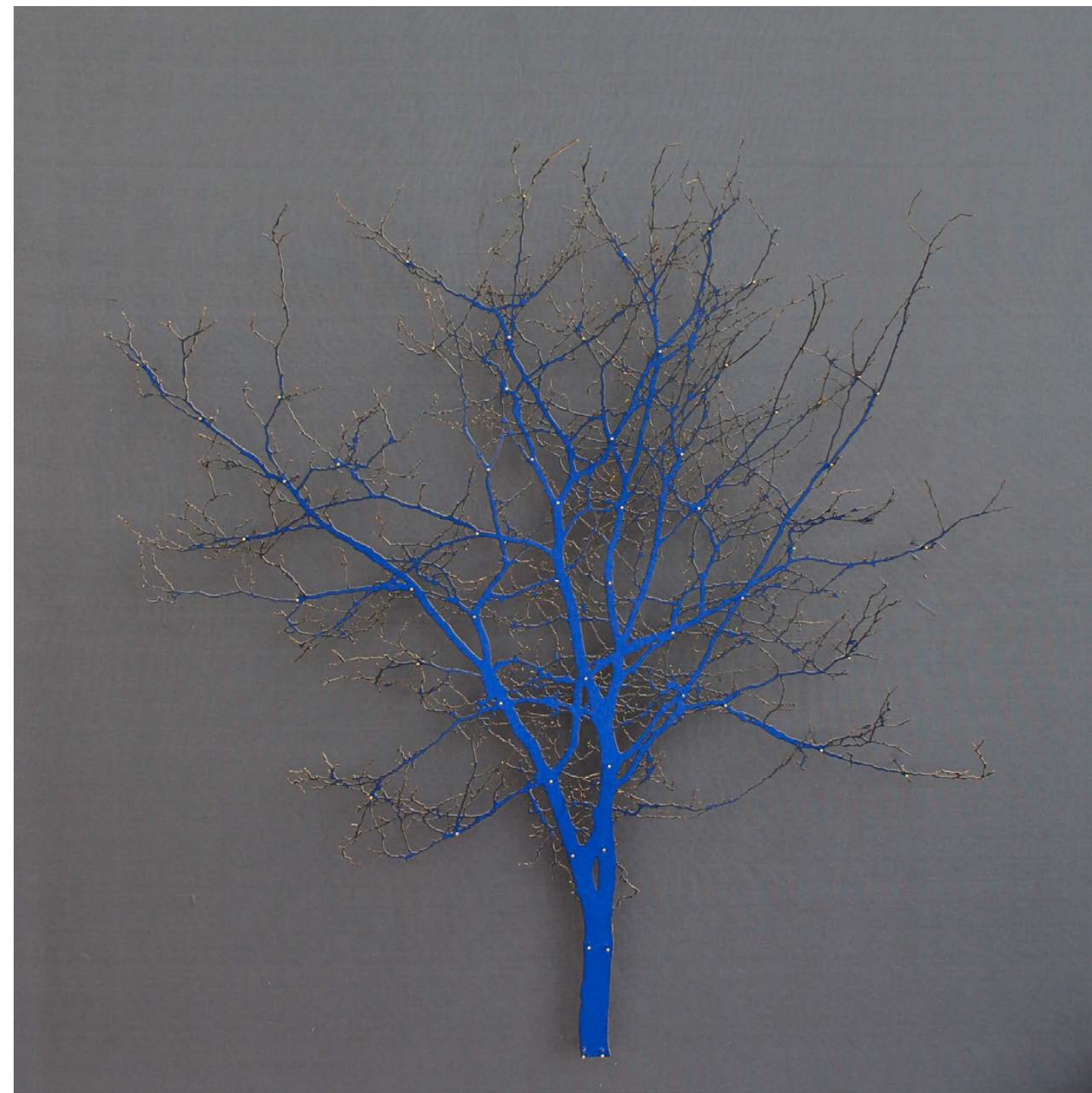
Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hawthorn Tree 2.11** 2014  
Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hawthorn Tree 2.12 2014**  
Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Flouro Tree I 2015**

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
58 x 58 cm

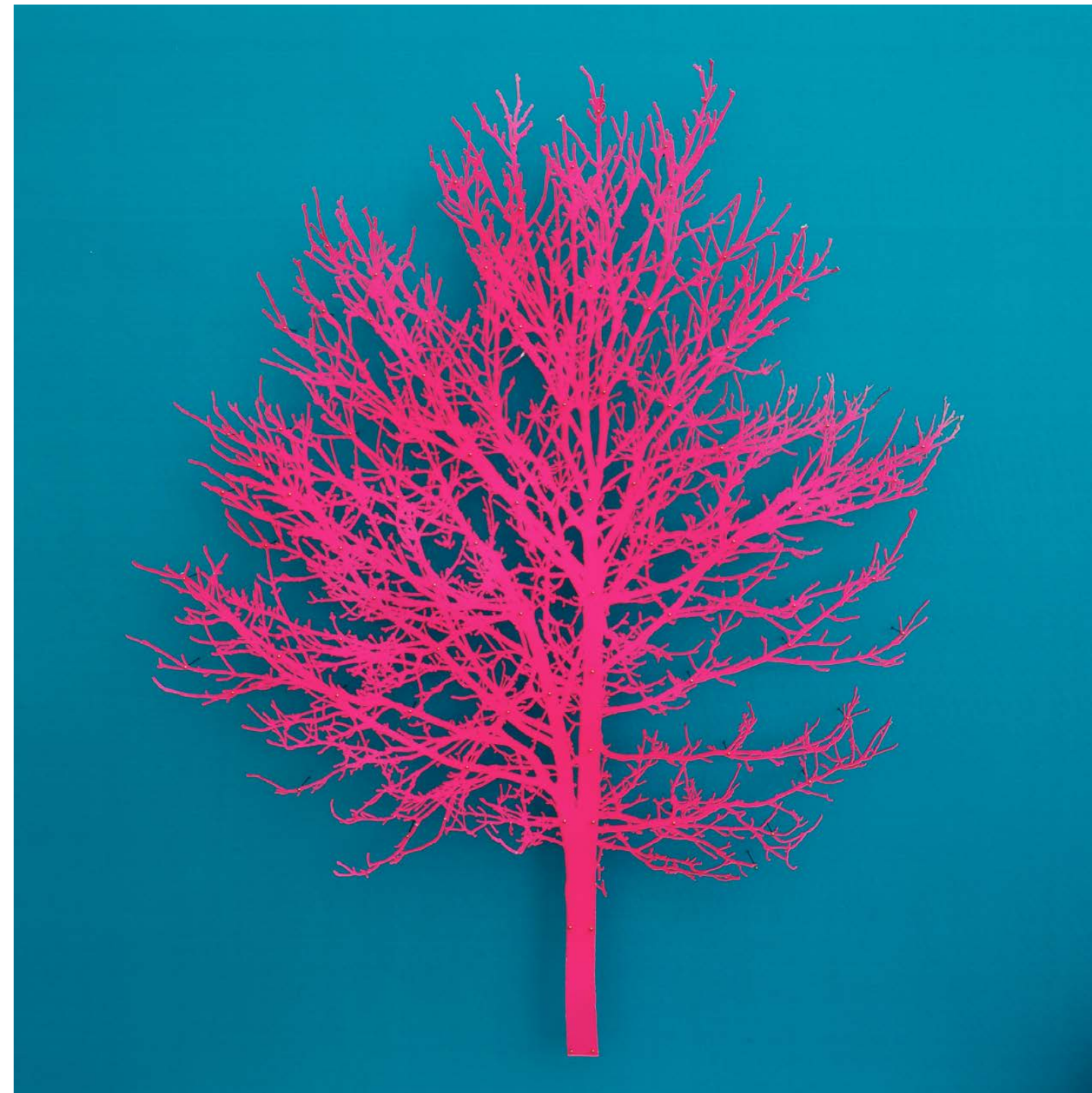
Ex VAT: £1,900 / Inc VAT: £2,280



**Flouro Tree 2** 2015

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
58 x 58 cm

Ex VAT: £1,900 / Inc VAT: £2,280

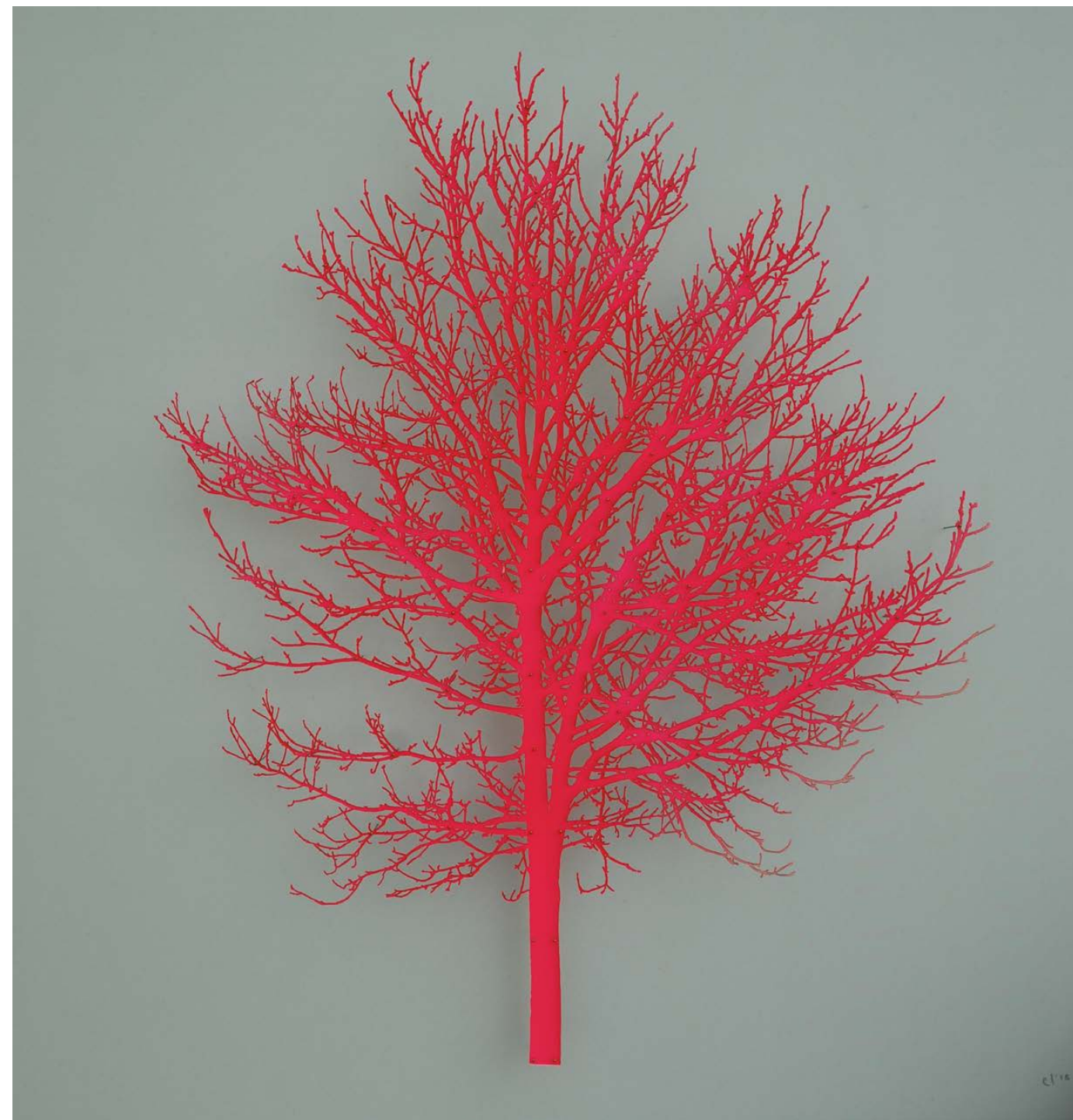




**Flouro Tree 3** 2015

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
58 x 58 cm

Ex VAT: £1,900 / Inc VAT: £2,280



**Flouro Tree 4 2015**

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
58cm x 58cm

Ex VAT: £1,900 / Inc VAT: £2,280

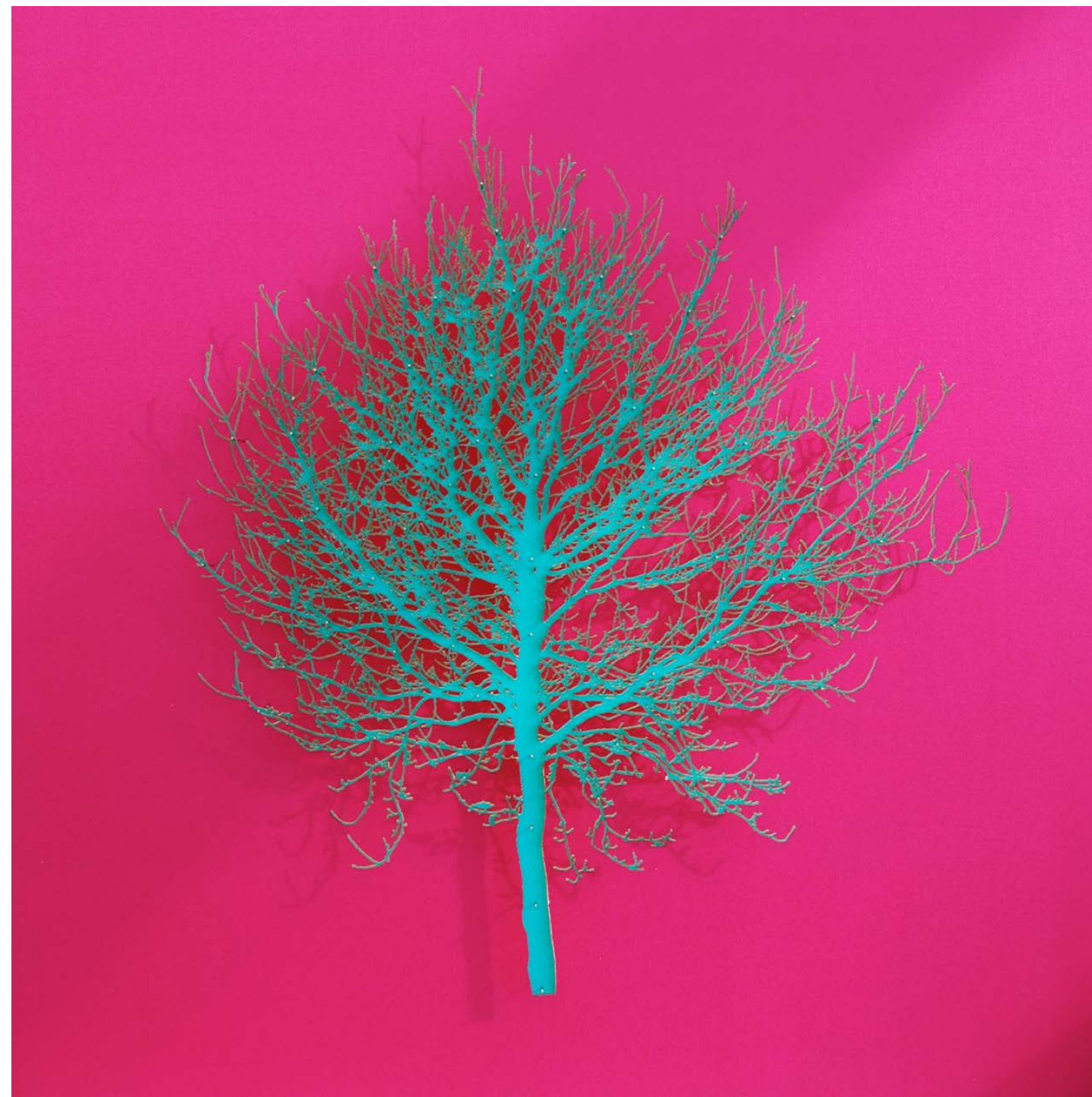




**Hill Tree I 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hill Tree 2** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hill Tree 3** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hill Tree 4 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hill Tree 5 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hill Tree 6 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hill Tree 7 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160



**Hill Tree 8** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hill Tree 9** 2015

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160





**Hill Tree 10 2015**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
59 x 59 cm

Ex VAT: £1,800 / Inc VAT: £2,160

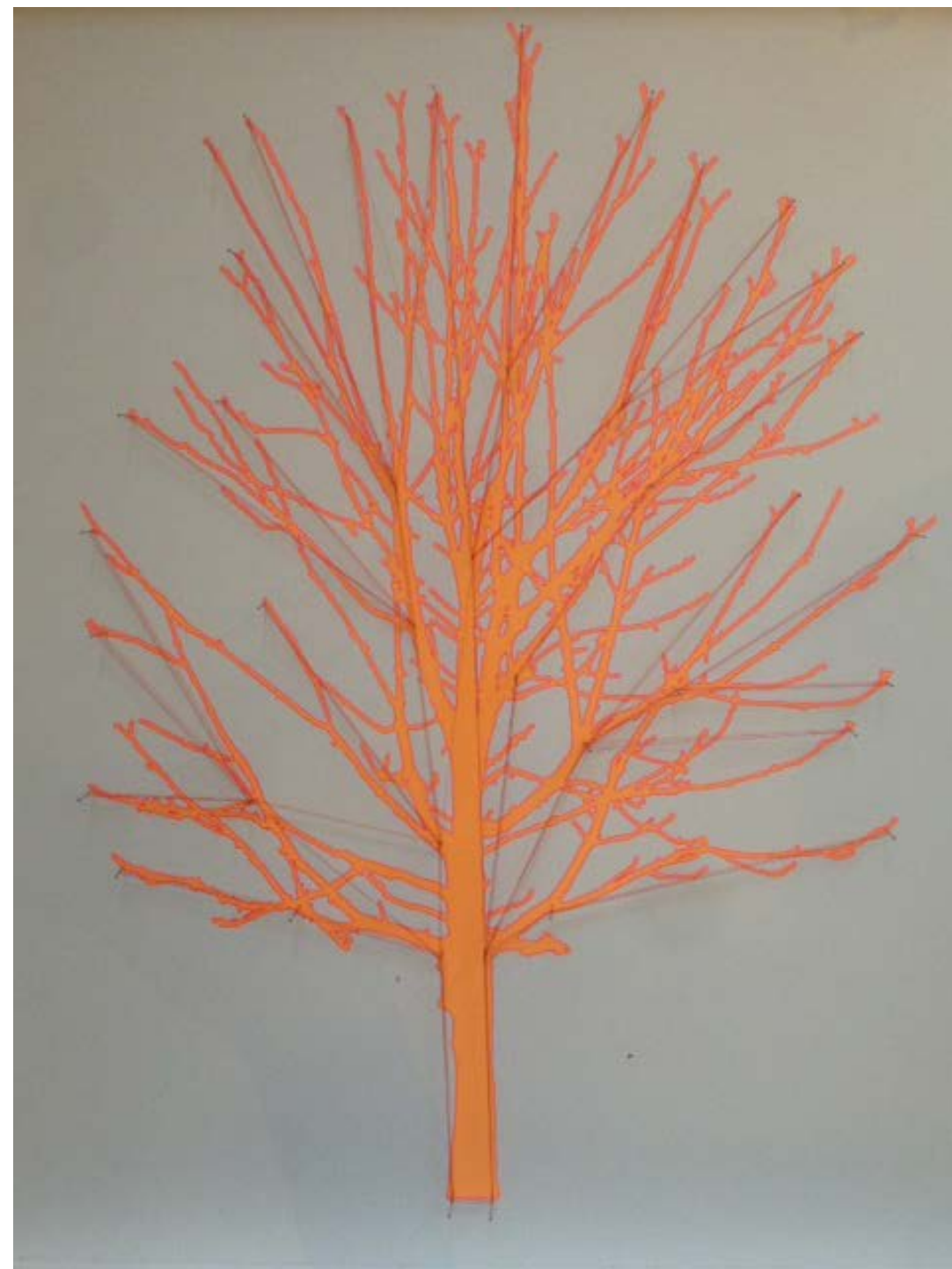




**Orange Tree** 2012

Screen printing and entomology pins with  
thread mounted on paper  
78 x 85 cm

Ex VAT: £2,500 / Inc VAT: £2,550



**Willow** 2015

Paper, silver leaf, pins, crystal dust,  
fluorescent ink. Silk wrapped board  
61 x 85 cm

Ex VAT: £1,900 / Inc VAT: £2,280





**Space Between Us 2015**

Block of 25 frames, laser cut paper and entomology  
pins mounted on silk wrapped board  
300 x 280 cm

Ex VAT: £15,000

Inc VAT: £18,000





**Burnt Oak 2014**

Laser cut paper and silk with entomology  
pins mounted on paper  
60 x 60 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640





**Shadow Tree 2015**  
Lasercut paper and entomology  
pins mounted on board  
53 x 50 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640



**White Tree** 2015

Lasercut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
39 x 40 cm

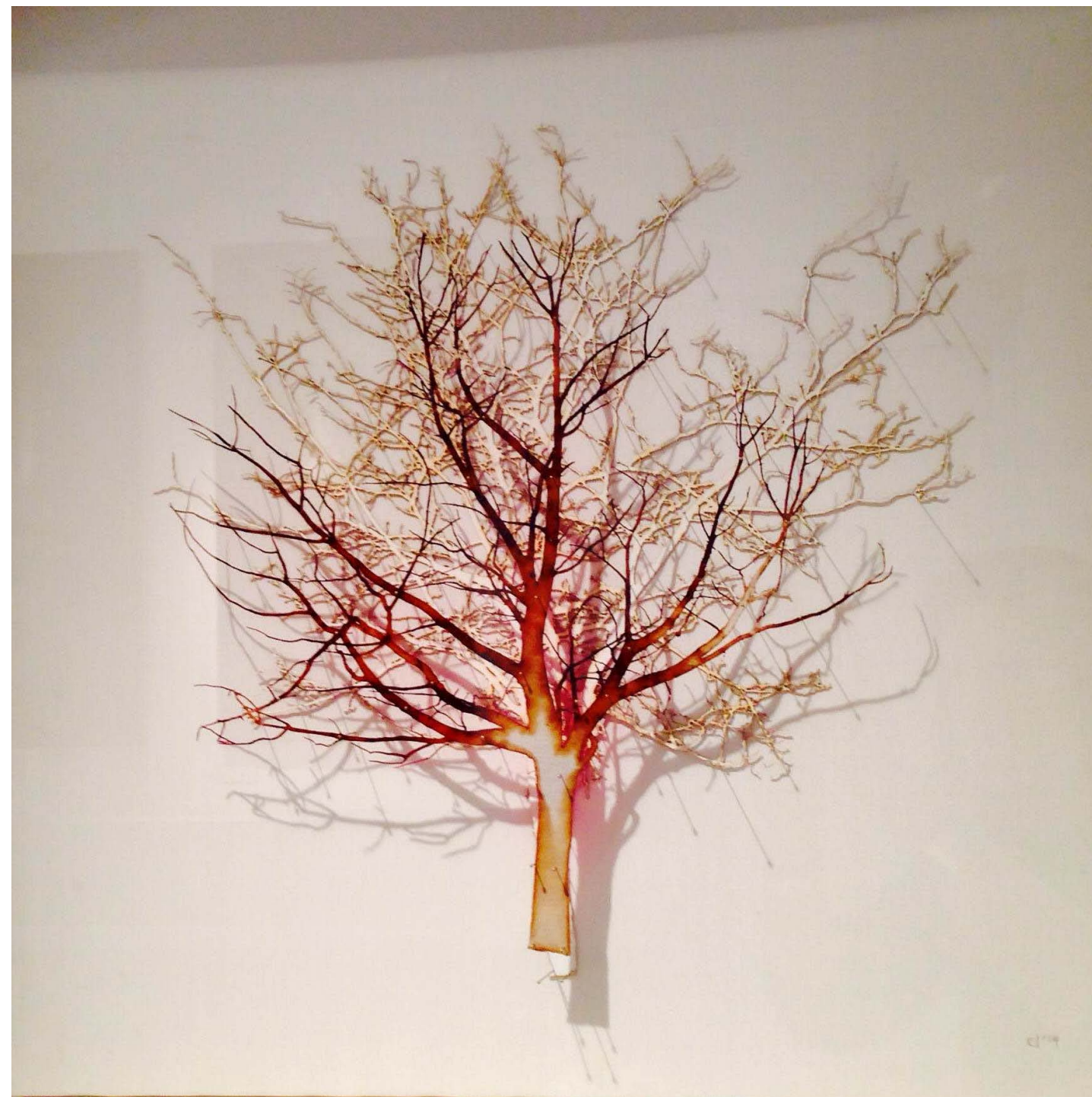
Ex VAT: £1,300 / Inc VAT: £1,560





**Burning Tree 2014**  
Lasercut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
60 x 60 cm

Ex VAT: £2,200 / Inc VAT: £2,640



**Thread Tree** 2015  
Silk wrapped board, laser cut silk and  
paper with entomology pins  
41 x 45 cm

Ex VAT: £1,100 / Inc VAT: £1,320

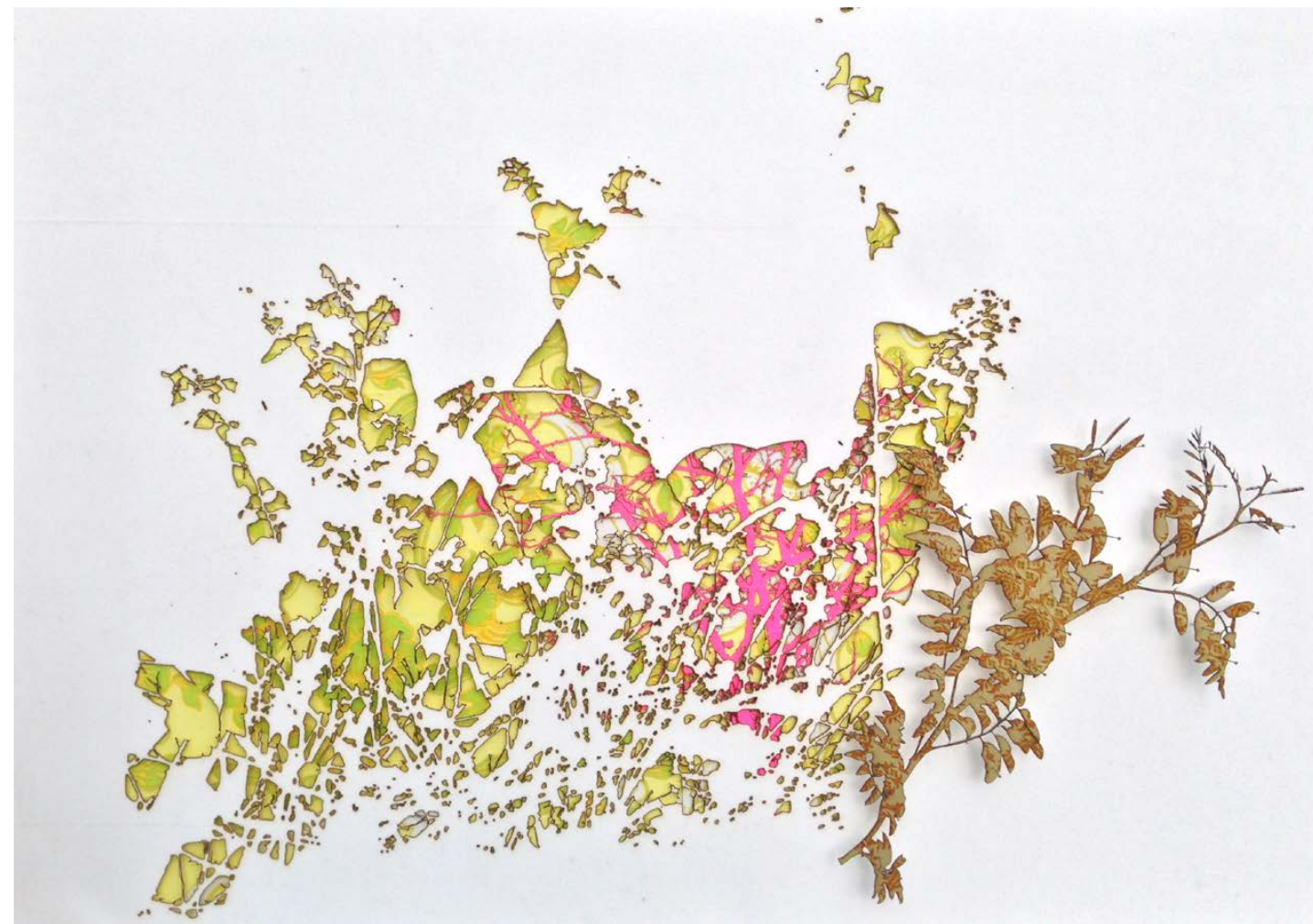




**Hedge Barbary 2014**

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
71 x 55 cm

Ex VAT: £2,500 / Inc VAT: £3,000



**Hedge Mallow 2014**

Paper and silk with entomology pins mounted on  
silk wrapped board  
80 x 64 cm

Ex VAT: £2,500 / Inc VAT: £3,000





**Lucid Tree 2014**

Laser cut paper and entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
66 x 66 cm

Ex VAT: £2,000 / Inc VAT: £2,400



**Campion 2014**  
Paper and silk with entomology pins  
mounted on silk wrapped board  
62 x 91 cm

Ex VAT: £2,500 / Inc VAT: £3,000





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