

M I C R O - A R T M A K I N G L E S S O N

Inspired by the work of Chris Welsby in [Witnesses: James Welling / Chris Welsby](#)

COLLABORATING WITH NATURE

In an [interview](#) with Beatriz Bartolomé Herrera and Sophie Cook, Chris Welsby shared:

I try to construct a film/video as a sort of model in which nature, technology, and a human being can work creatively together.

One way that Welsby works with nature is by placing a camera either within or onto a plant. He records the movement of the wind in the surrounding foliage, which can be seen in [Desert Spring](#). In other videos, he has allowed rain drops or ocean spray to accumulate on the camera lens, obstructing and obscuring the view.



Chris Welsby. *Desert Spring* (detail), 2017. Still from HD video. Courtesy of the artist.

Step 1: Like Welsby, explore a variety of ways to record a video that engages with the environment. Consider where you will place the camera and how different perspectives will effect what is included and omitted from view.

Step 2: Watch your video. Pay close attention to details of light, sound, movement, and subject matter.

- What do you notice that you might have otherwise overlooked?
- In what ways did nature play an active role in the video?
- Did anything happen in the recording process or final video that you did not anticipate?

Step 3: Consider manipulating or changing the audio in your video. Explore heightening certain sounds to emphasize their presence or removing the sound altogether.

- How do these changes impact your experience of watching the video?
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Artist biography:

[Chris Welsby](#) (b. 1948) is a filmmaker. For more than 50 years, he has been making films, videos, and moving image installations focused on themes of environment and ecology. His work has been shown widely, including in screenings at Light Cone (Paris), Doc Films (Chicago), Anthology Film Archives (New York), and the National Film Theatre (London), as well as in exhibitions at the Tate Gallery (London), the Serpentine Gallery (London), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), and the Musée du Louvre (Paris). He retired in 2012 from Vancouver's Simon Fraser University, where he had taught in the School for the Contemporary Arts since 1989. He lives on Gabriola Island, off the coast of British Columbia.

Selections from the press release:

Witnesses comprises recent work by two artists, the photographer James Welling and the filmmaker Chris Welsby. Throughout the exhibition, images of the natural world and of human constructions abandoned within it have been processed or manipulated in ways that disturb a viewer's simple delight in what is being represented. Botanical studies, landscapes, and views of weed-eaten structures are corrupted in these artworks by slight but consuming indications of each artist's method. Borrowing its title from a quote by the 18th-century German playwright Friedrich Schiller, the exhibition deals with the modern problem of a lost oneness with nature, and with the difficulties inherent in trying to regain it.

[University Galleries](#), a unit in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, is located at 11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available in the Uptown Station parking deck located directly above University Galleries—the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public.