

Within A Budding Grove

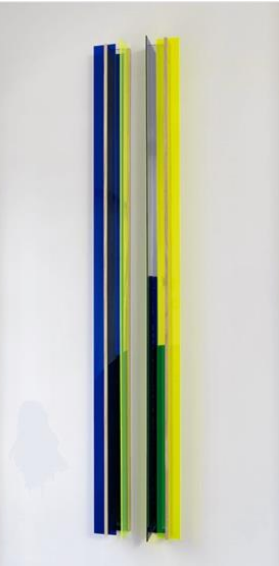
Pi Artworks London is thrilled to present Jyll Bradley's solo exhibition, *Within a Budding Grove*. 55 Eastcastle St, W1W 8EG
20–30 September 2023

Within a Budding Grove takes its title from the second volume of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which follows the protagonist's adolescence and his increasing sense of self-awareness. As a teenager, Jyll Bradley spent a lot of time sitting in her family's greenhouse in rural Kent observing the play between sunlight and glass, a visual language that became integral to her work in the 1980s. And her work has continued to 'bud' ever since, sprouting in new directions and to diverse environments, in a continuous state of growth and change. Presenting early and recent works across sculpture, photography, drawing and film, Bradley draws on the bold geometries of espaliers: agricultural structures developed to direct the growth of young plants to attain the maximum exposure to sun.

In her series of drawings *Umbrella Work IV* (2023), Bradley repeats complex linear patterns across blue carbon paper, revealing the mesmerising geometry of a hop garden and transforming it into the abstract rhythms of an architectural blueprint. Never quite settling between transparency and opacity, visibility and invisibility, Bradley's sculptures also hover between states. Bright zips of neon loudly announce their presence while hazy yellow reflections dance softly across the wall. The agricultural structures they evoke can be used as both gathering places and hiding spots to seek solitude. Meanwhile, *Self-Portrait* (1987) hints at her desire as a queer woman in the 1980s to be seen and understood but also to hide away, obscuring her face from the camera and turning to abstraction in her art as a way to express the strange and unexpected.

Bradley's series of sculptures *Graft 2* (2022-23) form a different kind of self-portrait, grafting together her signature materials of timber and colourful Plexiglass in a form that echoes the line of her spine and mirrors her own height. The intimate connection between agricultural support and the body can also be found in the meaning of 'espalier', which originates from the Italian word 'spalliera', meaning something to rest your shoulder against. While human shoulders might carry the weight of responsibility or provide comfort to a loved one, espaliers in turn offer their support to the wandering tendrils of plants so, in time, they can bear fruit.

Filmed over 24 hours in Cheriton, near Folkestone, Kent, *Brigitte* (2017) tracks a day-in-the-life of Bradley's sculpture by the same name. Named after Brigitte Orasinski, the founder of local community arts organisation Strange Cargo, *Brigitte* takes its shape from local apple espaliers. The work is the first in a series of films in which Bradley uses her sculptures as the site and subject for exploring light and narrative. The films capture Bradley's work not as interventions in space, but as places that meld with their environments and shift and change with the people and light that pass through them.



Jyll Bradley, *Graft (Green and Blue)*
2022, 168 x 11 x 11 cm

Text by Debbie Meniru

***Within a Budding Grove* is curated by Debbie Meniru and accompanies the presentation of Jyll Bradley's interactive sculpture *The Hop* in Frieze Sculpture 2023 curated by Fatoş Üstek. *The Hop* started life as a major commission for the Hayward Gallery and will find its permanent home in Poplar, East London, next year**

Show runs 21 – 30 October 2023. Gallery opening hours are 12 – 6pm, Tuesday to Saturday.
For further information, please contact: london@piartworks.com / +44 207 637 8403

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Jyll Bradley b. Folkestone, UK, 1966.

Bradley lives and works in London, making installations, films, drawings and sculptures. Through a process she describes as 'queering minimalism' her work combines formal rigour with narratives of identity and place. Her recent work *The Hop* was commissioned by the Hayward Gallery, London and will be presented this autumn at Frieze Sculpture, London, 2023.

Collections Include: Arts Council Collection, UK, The Government Art Collection, UK, The National Library of Australia, Australia The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK Canberra Museum and Art Gallery, Australia, Strange Cargo Arts, Cheriton, Hopital Roger Salengro, CHRU, Lille, France.

Bradley's work is represented in numerous private collections both in the UK and Europe.

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