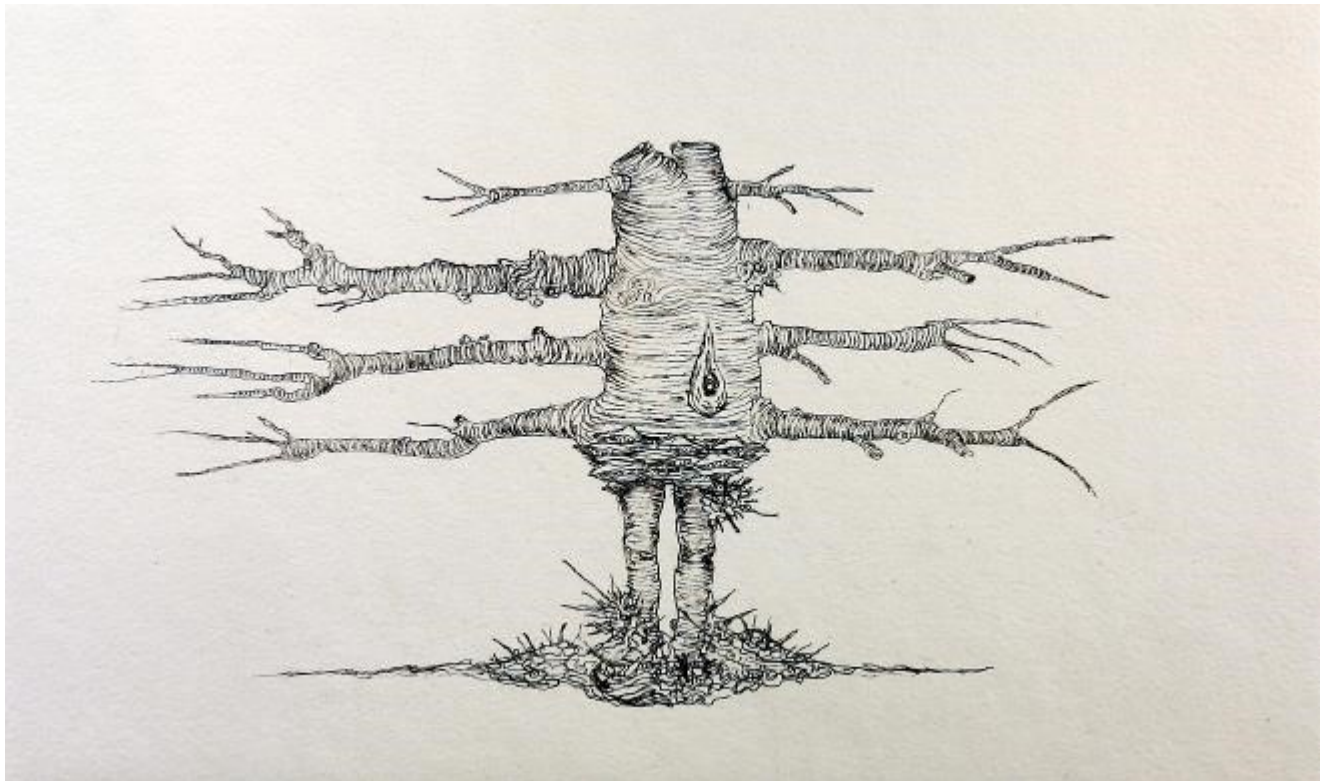


## Life Drawing at Home:

### Laura Ford and the Espaliered Girl



Laura Ford: *Espaliered Girl*. 2008. Print. Oriel Gelf Glynn Vivian

Espaliered trees are shaped and trained by the gardener to take up little space and maximise produce. The trees have not been allowed to grow naturally, but have been forced to fit in to the requirements of the environment in which they have been planted. In Laura Ford's work *Espaliered Girl*, the viewer is placed in the uncomfortable position of drawing a comparison between our manipulation of nature and the power society has in shaping the lives of young women.

If Ford's work is a direct challenge to gender inequality, it also hints at our relationship with nature. If we are uncomfortable seeing the girl's growth restricted in this way, it is inevitable that we eventually turn our attention to the tree. In this sense Ford alludes to a much broader question, namely the impact we have in shaping the natural world to fit our way of living.

In a moment where our world has stood still, the natural world is still turning. While we, like the *Espaliered Girl*, are restricted, it is possible to feel a renewed appreciation for the freedom and voice of nature.

**Life Drawing at Home Challenge 1:** Make a drawing that shows the natural world reclaiming it's space: Example A flower growing in the gap between the pavement. This is a great opportunity to contrast patterns and textures.

**Life Drawing at Home Challenge 2:** Ford's drawing is reminiscent of the famous image of Alice growing up through the house in her *Adventures in Wonderland*. Can you make a drawing combining yourself with another object be it a house, a plant, vegetable or mineral? Have a think about what to combine yourself with and write a note in your drawing detailing why you chose what you did.