
Adventure grant supports field sketching tour of Mont Blanc to document landscape changes.

26 February 2024

Phoebe Sleath will hike and camp around the Alps sketching hidden views of glaciers, plants and geology on her wild tour.

Phoebe aims to use art to conserve views of rapidly changing landscapes and disappearing glaciers to highlight climate change, inspiring others to take more time in nature and encourage the protection of wild places. She will travel to the Small Isles off the West Coast of Scotland, as well as a longer trip around Mont Blanc to document the landscapes.

Her PhD in geology has inspired her passion for science and changing landscapes, and allowed her to develop her painting skills and creative voice. It is hoped that by combining these skills, Phoebe will create a unique perspective on the impacts of climate change and use them to communicate the urgency of the climate crisis to others.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Phoebe said: "I am so excited to be supported by the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace grant, thank you so much to the committee for recognising my project. I can't wait to get out to the wild places around the Small Isles and Mont Blanc with my watercolours and sketchbook in the footsteps of other scientists and travellers. This grant will help support my trip to the Alps, completing a "wild" Tour De Mont Blanc to paint the glaciers and landscape. Climate change and perspectives on landscape need to be documented in understandable and shareable ways. Through this project I hope to show others that science is creative, inspired by connection to nature, and should be accessible to all of us."

Sophie Mackaness of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The grant panel were excited to support a project that has the potential to bring to light the impact of climate change on mountainous regions and share her findings through an underutilised medium for the wider public."

Phoebe's project is one of six successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant in 2024. This grant was established to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places in ways which will benefit both the person, and the wild places themselves.

Editor's Notes

About

The John Muir Trust is a leading voice for the UK's wild places. Its stewardship of some of Britain's most iconic wild places, including Ben Nevis and Helvellyn, is guided by three freedoms; ensuring nature has the freedom to repair itself, people have the freedom to enjoy the benefits, and communities have the freedom to thrive. For 40 years, the Trust has advocated for the protection of wild places by evidencing their benefit to society. Driven by the belief that wild places are for everyone – it also provides opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage with nature through its UK-wide environmental award scheme, the John Muir Award.

About the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant

The grant commemorates two former Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who each led inspiring and adventurous lives. It was set up to give others an opportunity to follow in their adventurous footsteps and experience wild places. Projects should have an educational or scientific component and benefit wild places.

Bill Wallace, died of heart failure in February 2007 while skiing in the Alps at the age of 73 with two artificial hips.

Des Rubens, was a popular teacher at Craigroyston High School in Edinburgh was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident at the age of 63.

Grants are for £200 to £2,000 and open to UK applicants of all ages. Closing date for applications is 15 January each year. Further details on how to apply: <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/grants/des-rubens-and-bill-wallace-grant>

Contact

Sophie Mackaness

Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant Administrator

e: Sophie.mackaness@johnmuirtrust.org

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