



©VG Bild-Kunst ~ in the fields Edinburgh 2006

*ume* captures the precise moment of the cyclical transition from winter to spring, symbolising the hope of regeneration and a new beginning.

Inspiring was a haiku by the Japanese poet Buson of plum blossoms returning on a leafless tree in a moonlit night.

*ume* comprises self-contained revolving images of plum blossoms in the form of thaumatropes powered by solar cells. The thaumatrope “was a popular Victorian toy made from a disk printed with an image on either side attached to two pieces of string. When the strings are twisted quickly between the fingers the pictures appear to merge into a single image in an optical illusion.” ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

One side of the disk depicts leafless shoots stemming from the branches of a plum tree. Hidden on the reverse are bright red blossoms in several stages of development. Only with the rays of the sun will the blossoms be seen in their entirety, as the sunlight provides the essential energy for the work to come to life. Similarly each blossom is unique, printed with a rubber stamp. The shapes of the branches and twigs derive directly from photographs of shadows of the plum blossom trees in Mito (Japan). The shadow is the two-dimensional translation of a three-dimensional life-form.

*ume* is the first outcome of the aim to integrate alternative energy ~ in the fields. The sun should not be seen as merely an energy source – it is an integral part of the concept and forms the work itself.

Each of the 50 components reacts autonomously to the light stimulus provided by 50 solar cells. The motion of the thaumatrope correlates directly to the strength of the sunlight. In the installation even the smallest changes in the sky like moving clouds are mirrored. The blossom can only appear with the sun. In binary terms, there is spring or there is not.

The movement of air created by the thaumatropes evokes the sensation of a breeze wafting through the branches of a tree.

Only the scent of the blossom is absent.