



## Thomas Bewick Tale-Pieces

£24.95

This catalogue accompanies the first exhibition devoted entirely to the vignettes of the extraordinary British artist-engraver and naturalist Thomas Bewick (1753 – 1828).

Bewick's tale-pieces were cut into the end-grain of blocks of box-wood, an exceptionally close-grained hard wood conducive to a graphic fineness.

The fact that the blocks were sections through lengths of timber meant that the pictures could not be anything but small, but this restriction by no means cramped the artist's style.

On the contrary, Bewick developed a meticulousness whereby the slightest nuances could be conveyed through the tiny lines he left in relief after engraving.

Amongst his most ambitious projects were illustrations for General History of Quadrupeds (1790) and History of British Birds (two volumes, 1797 and 1804), both of which also included a great number of vignettes.

Bewick referred to these as 'tale-pieces'. Intended as illustrations of 'some truth or point of some moral' they provide an invaluable insight into social history while also demonstrating the artist's imagination and wit.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition Thomas Bewick: Tale-Pieces at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, April – May 2009, and Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, July – October 2009.

### Product Details

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