

Every year 44kg of pesticides per hectare are used on banana plantations. Of this amount, some 90% is lost to surrounding soil and water



# Life lines

NAME: **JAN NIMMO** AGE: **44**  
OCCUPATION: **ARTIST**

**M**y art career began more than 20 years ago and since then I have travelled extensively throughout Spain and Latin America, experiences that have had a lasting impact on my work and how I view the world.

**I try to raise awareness of issues** I am interested in, particularly political topics such as trade injustice and labour rights, and in doing so build bridges between fields of traditional art and campaigning.

**I work in a variety of mediums** including drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, video, sound recording, documentary, writing and storytelling.

**My current Green Gold project** gives a human face to the day-to-day realities endured by Latin American banana workers, their families and the struggle in these nations for basic human rights. I was in Ecuador when the country's richest man

hired gunmen to shoot at his workers because they dared form a trade union and go on strike in protest at the pathetic \$5 they were paid for a full day's work. One man had to have his legs amputated after being injured during the shooting and these are the kind of stories I want to highlight.

**I was brought up with a strong sense of right and wrong** and that's expressed through my art. I'm planning to put together a short film about the Argyll Colliery [in Machrihanish on Kintyre] which closed in 1966. My dad was a miner there and that job and the occupational hazards affected his quality of life later.

**I had planned to work with my dad** this year to put something together with him, but he died in January, an accumulation of complaints from working in the colliery. Now I plan to make a short film with some reminiscences, archive footage, local testimony and family photos.

**'I have a strong sense of right and wrong and that's expressed through my art'**

WORDS BY  
BILLY BRIGGS  
PHOTOGRAPH BY  
SIMON MURPHY

**I really want people to make that local global connection about workers.** I hope to get permission to put a piece on the only remaining colliery building – now a scrap yard – at Machrihanish, a place now better known for golf.

**I've been involved in education projects** since 1986, from work in schools through to art colleges and universities and community projects looking at activism using art.

**I also enjoy working with special needs groups.** I believe every single one of us has some skill or visual talent of value. ■

*Jan Nimmo's film Pura Vida will have its European premiere at the 14th Catalonia International Environmental Film Festival on June 7 in Prat de Llobregat, near Barcelona. Pura Vida will be shown with another of Nimmo's films, Bonita, in a double bill at the World Justice Festival in Edinburgh on June 28. Visit [www.ewjf.org.uk](http://www.ewjf.org.uk).*

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