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Artist to plant weeping willow Brexit Tree on day of UK's exit

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An artist's image showing how the Brexit Tree will look when it is fully grown (Clemens Wilhelm/PA)

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An artist is to plant a weeping willow as a symbol of loss and healing on the day the UK leaves the EU.

Clemens Wilhelm, the latest international artist to be commissioned by Scottish arts organisation Deveron Projects, said the Brexit Tree will be an “ambivalent image for an ambivalent moment” in history.

He will plant the tree on the banks of the River Deveron, close to Huntly Castle in Aberdeenshire, on March 29 to mark Brexit Day.

The Berlin-based artist and film-maker will be joined at sunset by people from Huntly and beyond in a special event to mark the day the UK leaves the EU.

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Clemens Wilhelm said the tree will symbolise loss and healing (Clemens Wilhelm/PA)

He said: "I have chosen the weeping willow as it is a tree that symbolises loss and sorrow, but it is also one that evokes healing.

"Since the Middle Ages weeping willows have been seen as symbols of lost love, mourning and sorrow, but there are much older sources from Babylon, China and pre-Christian northern Europe that speak of the weeping willow as the tree of healing and magic, because the bark of willows contains salycyl, a substance similar to modern day aspirin which has been used to cure illnesses since ancient times.

"The Brexit Tree is an ambivalent image for an ambivalent moment in British, European and world history.

"Many people in Britain and the world feel an intense sorrow and loss because of Brexit.

"However, more than half of British voters opted to leave the EU and one should assume that they are hopeful and see Brexit as the beginning of a positive new era.

"Just like Brexit, the weeping willow combines both of these opposing feelings – loss and healing – and unites them in its outstanding beauty.

"Let us also not get lost in political divisions, but together look to the bigger problems that we are facing as humanity in this age, such as global warming and climate change."

Claudia Zeiske, director of Deveron Projects, said: "The aim of this project is both to mark this historic day with the planting of a tree as a living memorial to this momentous event, and also to create a new peaceful place for people from both Brexit camps to unite again."

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