

CONVERSATIONS IN SCULPTURE

Huddersfield Art Gallery



Huddersfield Art Gallery
Saturday July 6th 2019
from 1.30pm

Huddersfield Art Gallery
Princess Alexandra Walk
Huddersfield
HD1 2SU

01484 221964

www.kirklees.gov.uk/museums



Exhibition dates

July 6th ~ September 28th 2019

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays 11.00am ~ 4.00pm

Closed on Bank Holidays

Admission Free

Foreword

This exciting exhibition brings together a wonderful range of work from Royal Society of Sculptors artists based in the North and the Midlands. Their materials, approach and ideas are all different but under the careful curation of Lewis Robinson and Grant Scanlan they start a conversation; between the works themselves, the artists who made them and those of you reading this catalogue and visiting the exhibition. I hope you will enjoy the relationships set up by the sculptures and that the range of materials, processes and ideas may broaden your definition of what sculpture can be.

As well as traditional methods and materials such as bronze and stone a contemporary sculptor's practice might include anything from; light, augmented reality, film and performance to plastic and building materials. What is so special about an exhibition such as this is that we can walk within the sculptures, becoming a physical part of the space and spend time thinking and wondering. For the artists in this exhibition their inspiration ranges from

identity, isolation, history and ecology to more formal concerns of colour, light, space, construction and deconstruction.

For the viewer they can form their own perceptions, bring their own ideas and feelings, build their own links between the pieces and create their own interpretation of what the works are about.

The Royal Society of Sculptors is a charity that is a home for sculpture and sculptors. To become a member artists must have a professional practice with critical integrity and distinctive visual quality, and must be approved by a panel of their peers.

The Society is a place of conversation about all aspects of sculpture from the practical to the theoretical and we welcome anyone interested to visit either our website or our headquarters in London and to seek out work by our members. This exhibition captures the essence of what we are about by opening up dialogue and access to interesting contemporary work for many to enjoy.

Clare Burnett, President, Royal Society of Sculptors

Victoria Ferrand Scott MRSS

Victoria Ferrand Scott is a Yorkshire based sculptor with a first class BA in Sculpture and an MA in Fine Art. She pursues an exploratory sculptural practice, significantly informed by a 2010–2011 Leverhulme Trust residency in Civil Engineering at the University of Leeds, experimenting with fluid concrete and flexible forming.

Elected a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors in 2009 she has exhibited in London at the RSS and the Royal Academy and also at the Royal West of England Academy and exhibition venues in the North.

Her abstract sculptures develop through investigating fluid materials and processes. She is particularly interested in harnessing natural forces of flow, elasticity and expansion allowing the material to dictate its own form. As a sculptor she provides the materials and means for physical formation without having absolute control over the final outcome.

Recent works have played with polarities, combining concrete—often seen as a brutal construction material—with silky stretching fabrics tailored into moulds. The concrete flows and bulges, straining at the seams, demonstrating its capacity for creating sensual forms and recording tactile surfaces. The resulting minimalist sculptures retain the memory of their production together with the suggestion of simple life forms and processes.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/victoria-ferrand-scott www.axis.org/p/victoriaferrandscott
www.yorkshiresculptorsgroup.org/victoria-ferrand-scott



Victoria Ferrand Scott
Pulling Asunder
2017
Fabric formed cast concrete
17cm x 65cm x 25cm
Photograph ~ Victoria Ferrand Scott



Victoria Ferrand Scott
Overarch
2018
Fabric formed cast concrete
28cm x 50cm x 35cm
Photograph ~ Victoria Ferrand Scott

Lorna Green FRSS

Lorna Green is a sculptor and environmental artist who works on public art and environmental projects throughout the UK and widely overseas. Utilising site-specific materials relevant to each commission such works vary between those that are permanent and those that are transitory, the large and the small and those that operate indoors and in external environments. She has permanent works in schools, universities and hospitals and has created several large-scale earthworks in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, Korea, Japan, Israel, Gran Canarias, Lapland and widely throughout Europe.

Since 2016, Lorna has been working on a series of five sculptures, the final one being *The News: Remember, Remember*. These works respond to subjects as diverse as the cessation of the First World War, the prisoners and fatalities of war and Brexit.

More recently the work *Framed* was originally conceived for KEMS Concert Band's performance at The Barnaby Festival at Tegg's Nose in Macclesfield in 2018. It references a bandstand as an external and public performance space and also acts as a framing device through which the viewer can be photographed against the backdrop of any given landscape.

When situated in a gallery context the outdoors will in effect be brought inside, the gallery itself framed within a sculpture.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/lorna-green
www.lornagreen.com
www.artundertheflightpath.com



Lorna Green
 River
 2011
 Limestone grit, glass, paint, blue tarmac
 800cm x 1200cm x 50cm
 Photograph ~ Lorna Green
 Commissioned by Blackburn with Darwen Council



Lorna Green
 Framed (at Tegg's Nose, Macclesfield)
 2018
 Painted wood, painted steel, copper
 Dimensions variable, largest 195cm x 90cm x 80cm
 Photograph ~ Lorna Green



Lorna Green
 The News: Remember, Remember
 2018
 Wood, paint, silk poppies and peace lilies
 160cm x 60cm x 60cm
 Photograph ~ Lorna Green

Mark Houghton MRSS

Born in Warrington, Mark trained initially, and gained his first degree at Middlesex University (formerly the Hornsey School of Art) and subsequently at the Cardiff Metropolitan University (MA Fine Art), at the Cardiff School of Art & Design.

His work has long been concerned with our relationship to the built environment, and often incorporates objects and materials encountered there. His practice highlights overlooked characteristics of the everyday, in order to isolate and represent aspects of the urban environment. His aim is to forge a visual poetry of the commonplace, to elevate the irrelevance of the ordinary, in an attempt to decode and decipher the complexity of the environments that we inherit and inhabit.

In relation to the works shown, the material shift is about the realisation of a greater metaphoric or poetic potential. The objects are now the same, but different. Therefore, they have to be responded to differently.

All viewers will bring their own memories and experiences to the work, and therefore a different reading will be elicited each time the work is viewed. This is part of the work's intended function. The objects chosen for casting will be selected to ensure they exude both a sense of nostalgia and pathos.

A nostalgia for the past can induce a nostalgia for the present, as we sense the constant passage of time, and everyday objects sliding towards obsolescence. The objects chosen may often constitute the detritus of daily life, and exhibit a sense of poignancy, associated with failed utopian ideals.

<https://sculptors.org.uk/artists/mark-houghton#pid=4>
www.markhoughton.com



*Mark Houghton
Folded Blue
2018
23cm x 18cm x 3cm
Bronze with blue patina
Photograph ~ Mark Houghton*



*Mark Houghton
Progress
2019
180cm x 5cm x 5cm
Cast aluminium
Photograph ~ Mark Houghton*

Graham Keddie MRSS

Graham Keddie's sculptural practice explores linguistics across visual, written and spoken language. As a research practitioner his sculptural works operate as philosophical, open-ended enquiries. In this context he is a voyeur of himself, experiencing contemporary post-modernist environments of constant momentum and complexity.

He immerses himself in the algorithms of multi-layered information, perceptions, views, comments and conversations that relate to place, time and memory.

The video work, *The Infinite Fraction Part 4, Driving to Huddersfield*, deliberately avoids a singular illustrated narrative by playing simultaneously with multiple perceptions relating to place, time and space. The work combines Keddie's footage with the text an amalgamation of extracts from social media messages, contemporary dramas, news reports, overheard public discourse and person-to-person conversations recorded in real time.

The film is also available for free in 3 parts on the first of each month via; Twitter; @grahamkeddie Instagram; @gkeddie

<http://www.grahamkeddie.com>
<https://twitter.com/grahamkeddie>

The sculptural work *The Lancaster* is part of a group research project exploring the potential offered by an initial measurement of one metre of place and/or material

The making of this work is underpinned by Keddie's family history and house during the war, and includes reference to texts concerning that house, and the flight paths over it, the games played with Airfix models on the stair carpet and the Axminster factory that produced it.

Similarly Keddie makes reference to his reading matter of that particular time, Jean Baudrillard's *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 1987, and his connection to Robert Malaval's poem *The Ghost*. The book itself was published on the same date as the carpet was laid.

<http://aplaceintime.info>
www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/graham-keddie



Graham Keddie
The Lancaster
Axminster carpet and string stitching.
Stuffed with text on paper
82cm x 65cm x 18cm
Photograph ~ Graham Keddie



Graham Keddie
The Infinite Fraction Part 4 Causal Relationships, Driving to Huddersfield
in three parts released on the 1st of each month during the exhibition via Twitter and Instagram.
Ongoing
Film still
Image ~ Graham Keddie

Nicolas Moreton MRSS

Nicolas Moreton is based in rural Northamptonshire. He works in the private and public sectors to make thought provoking humanistic sculpture. Working in a traditional manner his preferred mediums are stone and bronze but more recently less traditional materials such as electrical light and heat have been incorporated. His work is held in public and private collections across the world

The Mountain and Pebble and Stepping Stones are works concerned with relationships and can be read in both a literal and a metaphorical sense.

The Main Element is a fixed one, well rooted, whereas the other/s can change their relationship by how they are positioned. Much like life it is how we interact and engage with our surroundings and the conversations those surroundings prompt that leads to what we understand thus enabling us to grow.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/nicolas-moreton
www.nicolasmoreton.com



Nicolas Moreton
Door of Hope
2012
500cm x 300cm x 300cm
Scottish whinstone granite and electrical light
Photograph ~ Nicolas Moreton



Nicolas Moreton
In The Beginning
2015
150cm x 50cm x 350cm
Medium Ancaster weatherbed limestone and LED
Photograph ~ Tony Rundle



Nicolas Moreton
Mother and Child
2016
33cm x 25cm x 41cm
Ancaster weatherbed limestone
Photograph ~ Steve Russell

Suzanne North MRSS

Material and process is central to Suzanne North's sculptural practice. Serpentine stone and direct carving has been a favoured material and process since observing Zimbabwean sculptors working at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the 1990s.

Some of her carved works are then reproduced in cast iron in collaboration with the wonderfully dramatic Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax, only a short distance from her studio at Dean Clough. Paper is also used as a primary material in some works and has developed into a casting material in its own right.

www.sculpturenorth.com



Suzanne North
Life Order 0206
2012
Serpentine stone
25cm x 25cm x 25cm
Photograph ~ www.acutenorth.com



Suzanne North
Living Rock 0608
2016
Granite and fluorescent acrylic
30cm x 12cm x 12cm
Photograph ~ www.acutenorth.com

Lewis Robinson MRSS

Lewis Robinson studied at Loughborough College of Art, Hull College of Art and Newcastle Polytechnic. Since 1982 he has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally in France, Slovakia, Germany, Italy and the USA. In 2013 he was elected as a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors. He has been commissioned for public art works in the north east of England and has work in private collections. He has taught in several Further and Higher Education institutions since 1987 and has led workshops at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. He is currently based in Yorkshire where he lives and works.

His work involves a process of construction and reinvention using found objects and reclaimed material from the domestic landscape and other habitats. His intention is to reinvent the familiar by extracting it from its ordinary context and making it seemingly unfamiliar and strange. This intervention often involves the physical process of editing, reconstruction or deconstruction and excavation that has become an important metaphor.

The resulting works carry a strangely familiar presence, which is sometimes unsettling and unnerving but always with a respect for the physicality, presence and materiality of things.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/lewis-robinson
www.lewisrobinson.co.uk



Lewis Robinson
*Improvised Resurrection
 of a Domestic setting IV*
 2019
 215cm x 46cm x 102cm
 Wood, found objects, resin,
 hardback books, spray paint, metal
 bracket, pillow, string
 Photograph ~ Ikuko Tsuchiya



Lewis Robinson
*Improvised Resurrection of a
 Domestic Setting IV (detail)*
 2019
 215cm x 46cm x 102cm
 Wood, found objects, resin,
 hardback books, spray paint,
 metal bracket, pillow, string
 Photograph ~ Ikuko Tsuchiya



Lewis Robinson
Incidental IX (shelf)
 2016
 42cm x 7cm x 18cm (two parts)
 Wood, found objects, paint, glue
 Photograph ~ Ikuko Tsuchiya

Antonia Spowers MRSS

Antonia Spowers relocated to Wales from London in 1996 and lived on the edge of the Black Mountains. She recently moved to Presteigne and built a house and studio in the Marches.

Spowers has a particular interest in a wide range of physical materials and their ability to embody and express ideas. There is diversity in the work due to the variety of materials used and themes explored. Importantly there is also an underlying thread of connection to landscape in the broadest sense, whether natural, man-made, buried and unseen or imagined in the mind

Recent work examines disconnection and uncertainty and is apparent in these exhibited works that reference geological processes. Glass as a material is central to these works both in a physical and conceptual sense. Spowers initially became interested in glass, (and paper), when exploring the behaviour of water as utilised in the paper making process, whilst simultaneously recognising that glass has a natural affinity to ice. A sense of curiosity is at work encouraging experimentation, which currently includes examining the flexible nature of paper as a material for sculpture.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/antonia-spowers
www.antoniaspowers.co.uk



Antonia Spowers
Crater
2009
Diameter 110cm
Paper, sand, grit and glass on wood
Photograph ~ Antonia Spowers



Antonia Spowers
Rift
2009
Diameter 110cm
Paper, lead and sand on wood
Photograph ~ Antonia Spowers



Antonia Spowers
Cleft
2018
45cm x 48cm x 46cm
Cardboard with black volcanic sand
Photography ~ Antonia Spowers

Jeremy Turner MRSS

Jeremy Turner started making sculpture whilst undertaking a foundation course at Lincoln College of Art & Design. This led to a Fine Art degree at Manchester Polytechnic, an MA at Bretton Hall College and ultimately a PhD by practice at the University of Leeds. Since 1996 he has held various Fine Art lecturing positions at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, Bretton Hall College, the University of Lincoln and the University of Leeds.

He is currently Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for Fine Art, and Deputy Head of Art & Design at the University of Chester.

Two broad areas of interest define Turner's practice. The first, and most consistent over time, has been a fascination with the manipulation of materials and an engagement with processes central to making.

The second, and something that steers to a certain extent 'the what' as opposed to 'the how' of sculpture, is an interest in ideas. Ideas, stories, anecdotes, histories, jokes, texts, images and so forth, all inform the process of thinking about the making of the work and to a greater or lesser degree, impinge on how the work looks and what is available from it.

Ultimately, sculpture is important to Turner for what it is; a tangible object made for the purpose of being looked at and considered. But it is also important for what it is not. It is not designed with an outcome in mind, not demanded by a customer, does not always adhere to defined methodologies or fit within more mainstream cultural parameters.

As such sculpture for Turner, by the measures above, simultaneously make it wholly unnecessary and eminently essential. But the latter continues to outweigh the former.

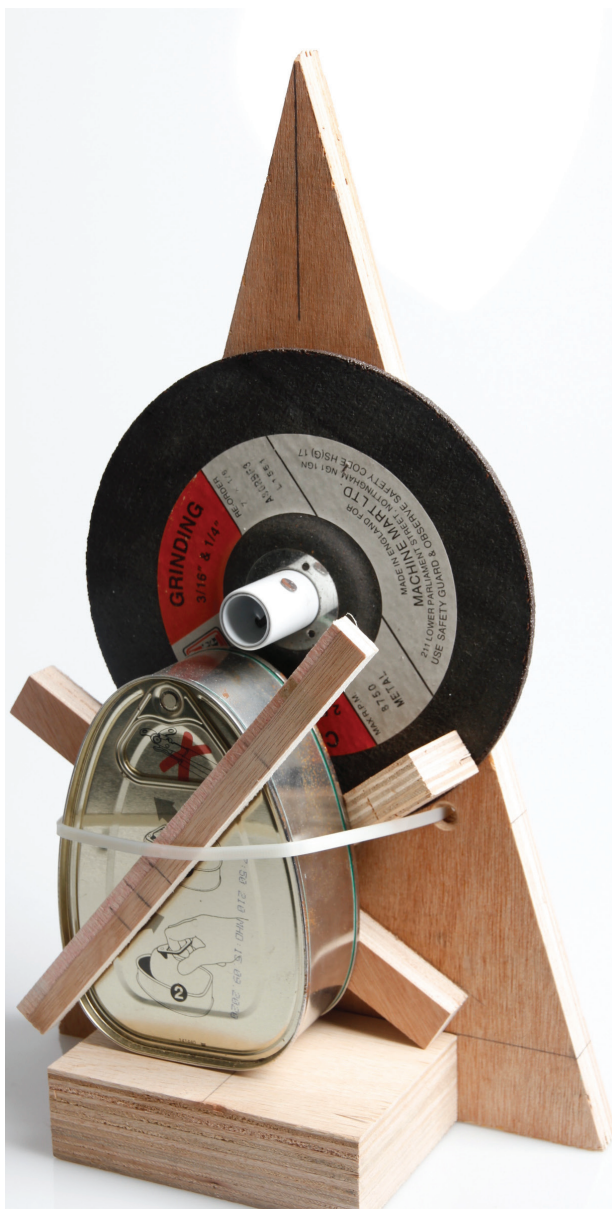
<https://sculptors.org.uk/artists/jeremy-turner>

<https://www.axisweb.org/p/jeremyturner/>

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/art-and-design/staff/jeremy-turner>



Jeremy Turner
 Redacted
 2017
 21cm x 53cm x 30cm
 Undisclosed materials
 Photograph ~ Jeremy Turner



Jeremy Turner
 St. Catherine
 2017
 39cm x 24cm x 11cm
 Plywood, plastic, grinding disc,
 tin (of ham)
 Photograph ~ Jeremy Turner

Susan Williams MRSS

Susan Williams studied at Kingston University and the Royal Academy, London. She works with site-responsive installation, video and photography. Susan uses light, space, air and a variety of materials to explore a place and its connections, creating a kind of fingerprint of a moment in time. Some of her work is kinetic and involves lightweight materials moving in the wind. This work has developed into a larger research project, aiming to make installations in different parts of the world to create an archive of the winds and places of our planet.

Susan has won national and international residencies including the Vermont Studio Center and Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Wyoming. Awarded membership to the Royal Society of Sculptors, Susan has shown her work throughout the UK and abroad. Exhibitions include lakeside installations in Toledo, Spain and Laugarvatn Iceland and exhibiting with the Stadtmuseum, Germany and Geumgang Nature Art Biennale, Korea.

A Londoner from birth, Susan has lived and worked in the town of Kettering, England, for the last six years.

www.sculptors.org.uk/artists/susan-williams
www.axisweb.org/p/swilliams



Susan Williams
Firebreak (Toledo, Spain)
2014
Footprint 35m x 200m
Warning tape
Photograph ~ Susan Williams



Susan Williams
Refresh (Goleta Beach, CA, USA)
2017
Footprint 45m x 2m
Ribbon and canes
Photograph ~ Susan Williams



Susan Williams
Tribute (Cape Cornwall, UK)
2016
Footprint 11m x 13m
Ribbon and rocks
Photograph ~ Susan Williams



Yomping: advances in British sculpture

Standing proud, the bronze statue of *The Yomper* by Philip Jackson looks out across the English Channel. The looming figure, commissioned to commemorate the Falklands War, was unveiled in 1992 by Margaret Thatcher on the tenth anniversary of the conflict. Modelled from an iconic photograph that marked the surrender of Argentine forces to the British, this monumental figure captures a Royal Marine with rifle, backpack, and Union Jack flag, moving steadily onwards. Jackson, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors, produced a traditional figurative sculpture that is seemingly unrelated to the concerns of more advanced contemporary sculptural practices. It is an artwork that sits on the seafront at Eastney in Portsmouth, alongside other attractions that are popular with both residents and visitors.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, sculpture retained its constricted form as a figurative medium, defined by specific materials and given civic purpose. The 'New Sculpture' of the early 1900s practiced by Sir Thomas Brock RA (d.1922) and Sir George Frampton RA (d.1928), founding members of the Royal Society of Sculptors, brought realist tendencies to the practice but not radical change. The movement away from classical ideal to experienced reality is palpable in the war memorials by Charles Sargeant Jagger (d.1934). These cast their shadows across Philip Jackson's interpretation of the 1980s. The avant-garde of European modernism would overthrow this recognisable approach, which, especially by the late 1920s, looked like rearguard activity in relation to revolutionary change. Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth successfully aligned British sensibility with international progression, and abstraction became more acceptable for public spaces.

After the Second World War, influence from America would complete the assault on figuration in sculpture and release more formal, material, and conceptual concerns. The exhibition *Conversations in Sculpture* (2019) includes work by ten members of the Royal Society of Sculptors who collectively address the expanding field of contemporary practice whilst exploring common threads.

Modernism had led artists in general to concentrate on the basic principles that made their discipline distinct. For sculpture, the emphasis was upon the three-dimensional form made through the processes of modelling, carving, construction, and casting. Added to the traditional materials of stone, wood, ceramic, and bronze were new materials such as plastic. In *Conversations in Sculpture* the artworks by Victoria Ferrand Scott have the appearance of the biomorphic forms made by Moore and Hepworth, yet these sculptures do not adhere to an image of nature; instead her process of casting concrete, with bulging and stretching fabrics, records the actual flow of nature.

The physically hard materials of stone and cast iron are the basis for sculptures by Suzanne North; process and materiality are still dominant but the feel of these objects are in a different register. The works of Nicolas Moreton, perhaps, have more affinities with the early modernists. His preference for stone and bronze forge older alliances that are evident in *The Yomper*—a large lump of cast metal that, although identifiable as a figure—is present as weighty mass.

Further along the coast to the west of Portsmouth and Jackson's commission is a sculpture that occupies the quayside at Poole harbour. *Sea Music* (1991), by Anthony Caro, is both an artwork and a viewing platform. Caro was an assistant to Henry Moore, but in the early 1960s became influenced by the American sculptor David Smith; consequently, he was led away from his European roots to new horizons that would impact on British sculpture as a whole. Through his role as a tutor at Saint Martin's School of Art in London, he provided inspiration and reaction from

younger generations of artists. British sculpture in the 1950s and 1960s would reflect the commercial and industrial processes evident in society. Students would take on the roles of assistants and apprentices in the manufacture of shiny new things. Economic downturn and political instability was the background to the dematerialised art objects of the 1970s. Sculptors, such as Gilbert and George, were being informed by Conceptual Art.

The remit of sculpture was extended beyond the physicality of materials and processes; the truly abstract qualities of site, politics, and audience came to the fore. Knowingly, and naively, the placement of The Yomper statue is site specific. It stood at the entrance to the Royal Marines Museum, however, its prominence near the beach that lines the channel into Portsmouth's naval harbour turns the statue into a sentinel. Awareness of place was brought to the fore by the land artists Richard Long and David Nash, whose legacies can be found in the work of Lorna Green and Antonia Spowers.

Green makes the viewer conscious of site by framing the scene; the sculptural intervention turns the gaze away from the object to where it stands. It is this 'of-placeness' that can be sensed in pieces by Spowers that try to indicate the essence of place, specifically, the borderland of the Marches between England and Wales.

The politics of the Falklands War memorial statue are problematic. The monument may be seen to stand for the triumphalism of British colonialism and Thatcherite policies of the 1980s. In this sense the statue becomes a throwback to the days of conflict and empire that are not in step with contemporary art. This is sculpture as statement with a public function. The question asked frequently about art—"What is it supposed to be?"—is easily answered. The sculpture was fabricated in postmodern Britain when appropriation and irony were embraced as tools, and looking at art entailed an engagement with the sign and signified of semiology. Jackson certainly appropriated the image of the 'yomping' Royal Marine acknowledging the surrender

of the Argentines, a photographic image that had been circulated via the mass media. It is less certain that his intention was irony. The complication is that, unwittingly, this sculpture comments on how the immediacy of a mass media 'sound bite' can be atrophied. This was the strategy of yBa sculptor Damien Hirst who married Conceptual Art with Pop Art to make art as commentary. As Britain turned to the production of signs, its traditional manufacturing industries were being dismantled by Thatcherite policies and the country underwent the process of de-industrialisation. Lewis Robinson, Jeremy Turner, and Mark Houghton make objects whose function is unclear. These devices may be engineered inventions that have come out of practical workshops; their allegiance is to a sculptural practice that poses questions rather than gives answers, which could have Tony Cragg and Richard Deacon as its champions.

By the end of the twentieth century, sculpture was a diverse practice informed by modernist and postmodernist innovations. It had retained its relationship to the act of making but this would be unrecognisable to the founders of the Royal Society of Sculptors. Susan Williams incorporates photography, video and installation into her work, responding to the immaterial elements of light, space, air and movement. Graham Keddie also works with film to explore his interest in linguistics. Both artists are pushing the definition of sculpture to its limits. Their common purpose, with their fellow sculptors, is the use of materials as a method of enquiry. This may seem an eccentric activity in present-day society where new technologies are geared towards instant answers.

Twenty-first century Britain is a service economy, removing its employees from the muck and grit of making. Contemporary sculptors can design by interfacing with computer terminals thereby cutting costs and reducing the risks of Health and Safety. Theory, technology, and economics converge to remove the need for physical engagement. The current 'new sculpture' could easily become the 'lost generation'.

Since its unveiling, Jackson's bronze figure has lost its purpose. The Eastney Barracks is no longer in use by the Royal Marines. The closure of the Royal Marines Museum in 2017, and its offer for sale, completes the building's conversion into private property. The Yomper has been left behind.



The term 'yomp' is Royal Marines slang that describes marching, laden with heavy equipment, over rough terrain and long distance; an arduous and demanding physical activity that tests participants. It is, perhaps, something that is alien to many of us who have been softened by contemporary comforts. What the experience of sculpture can provide is that engagement with the sweat and toil of the physical world. Alongside modelling, carving, construction, and casting, 'yomping' could be co-opted as a descriptive term for the activity of a sculptor. In this lexicon it could mean: 'to work with recalcitrant materials in awkward situations over a long period of time to make a useless object'.

Stephen Clarke,

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University of Chester

Thanks are due to the following:

Clare Burnett, Stephen Clarke,
Michael Moore, Lewis Robinson,
Jeremy Turner, Danny Sheehan,
Grant Scanlan and his team at
Huddersfield Art Gallery.



