

PROCESS

3RD MAY - 31ST OCTOBER, 2010

THE CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE GARDEN

S



C



U



L



P



T



U

R

E

PROCESS: THE HOW AND THE WHY OF IT

All sculpture owes its existence to the means of its production, however during the making process artists can attempt to dominate and control the techniques they use, or alternatively let them actively guide the development of a sculpture. This year's exhibition at Burghley Sculpture Garden explores how sculpture may be defined aesthetically, conceptually or formally by making processes, including techniques such as carving, casting, construction, laser cutting and weaving.

The latter is exemplified by Laura Ellen Bacon, who weaves and knots magical spells. At Burghley, she has woven a funnelled form that resembles an electric blue web into a weeping beech. The process of weaving is also central to Rachel Carter's architectural sculpture; composed of twisting conical arches, it invites visitors to walk through its vaulted interior. Some sculptors play with notions of scale through process; one exemplar being John Squire who has seemingly unfolded a giant steel box to create complex internal spaces that also suggest unfurling metamorphosis.

John's Tractor confirms how a singular making process can result in a multifaceted work. By directly casting one of Burghley's tractors in resin-soaked canvas, the

sculptor Michael Coombs has created an ambiguity of contradictions; seemingly soft, but actually hard; apparently solid, but actually hollow; ostensibly present, but actually absent. Moving around the tarpaulin covered sculpture reveals the absence of any tractor within and the sculpture's inner void. A similar questioning of what things really are has been posed by the curvilinear carving installed by Giles Kent. The timbers of *Mixed Hardwood Branches: Longest 10ft, 21 Pieces*, resemble giant forged iron tendrils, sometimes sinister and at other times more welcoming depending on the light penetrating the laurel tunnel. It is therefore a sculpture that is ambiguous in both content and materials.

Processes of sculptural production can be simple and in the case of *Halo* by Nick Horrigan, one can envisage the repetitious action of wrapping the central wooden totem with its covering of 20km of plastic shrink wrap. The organic geometry of the bulbous tip derives directly from the build up of plastic, layer by layer. In so doing, the plastic film has formed its own subtle peaks, troughs and valleys that are accentuated as the thickness of layers increase; meaning the man-made material has generated its own artificial grain. As well as being reductive, the working process can be more conceptual in nature, and this cerebral approach is exemplified by Anna Mawby's *Something*. The cyclical and somewhat palindromic wordplay of 'there is something / is something there' questions where things begin and end.



Laura Ellen Bacon
Formed Web



Michael Coombs
John's Tractor



Giles Kent
Mixed Hardwood Branches



Nick Horrigan
Halo

The exhibition continues its exploration of the process theme through sculptures that explore broader interpretations including processes such as evolution, erosion, chemical reactions, transformation and metamorphosis. Artists include Ann-Marie James, who has released a swarm of plaster butterflies that allude to the consequences of chaos theory. Each cast butterfly seems benign, even twee from a distance, but on closer inspection reveals its more macabre origins of tiny skeletal hands and feet. Collectively the butterflies dance on the wind to animate the tree of their suspension. Other works include Henry Castle's sound sculpture *River Dulais Revisited* that transposes the sonic gurgling of the river Dulais in Wales to Capability Brown's precisely designed and manicured gardens.

Further pieces refer to nature's cyclical processes and man's intervention in them. One such sculpture is Claudia Borgna's *A Dirty Dozen*, which juxtaposes the lush confines of the stream and its jungle foliage of bamboo, gunnera, aralia elata and false rhubarb with twelve plastic flowers, each wrapped in florist's cellophane. Her alien, triffid-like floral tributes halt the decaying process, whilst questioning our consumerist avarice and the transience of nature's blooms. The life cycle of fauna is also central to *Fall and Rise* by Anna Gillespie. Her iconic effigy to Gaia is suspended in a beech tree and was constructed from the tree's fallen beech nut husks, which the artist previously harvested at Burghley last autumn. Gillespie has also installed a complementary spiritual offering; achieved by building the prone

figure of her *Held* into one of the garden's dry stone walls. Not so much a niche sculpture, but rather an oversize stone in the wall that seems partially in repose, whilst also implying the foetal cycle.

A final cohort of sculptors use technical processes to explore processes active in the real world. For example, Irene Rogan's elegant sculpture *Ray V* exploits a meticulous stringing process to thrust a ray of sunshine through the tree canopy; a diaphanous and shimmering piercing dart of threads; that along with its solar references describes a geometrical drawing in space. Complementary to her approach is Jacek Wankowski, whose sculpture *Reef 22* lyrically explores marine processes through abstract forms. Their flowing rhythm suggests the forces and undercurrents of the tides, whilst their material appearance derive from metal treatments including galvanising and oxidation.

Overall, the exhibition reveals how process can play a pivotal role in shaping the appearance, meaning and sensibilities of sculpture in the round; both from a formal perspective and also in terms of its conception.

Michael Shaw
Curator
Burghley Sculpture Garden

April 2010



Ann-Marie James
The Butterfly Effect



Claudia Borgna
A Dirty Dozen



Irene Rogan
Ray V



Jacek Wankowski
Reef 22



My work is always of a site-specific nature and my cocoon-like forms are made using a single material. In the case of *Formed Web*, I have applied my tactile understanding of natural materials (notably willow) into the use of a man-made material. My fingertip knowledge of the properties of this material (line, tension, knotting) has enabled me to create a form that carries notions of both nests and webs. Whilst the unnatural material and subsequent form is foreign to the tree, *Formed Web* is totally reliant on the tree to support every line and every curve.

LAURA ELLEN BACON

FORMED WEB
polypropylene ribbon





My work entails the investigation of what I call the 'evolution of landscape', a process started and affected by modern life-styles and consumerism. These six hundred recycled plastic bags are part of my collection of thousands of others that I continuously mould into new ephemeral artificial landscapes.

I cannot help but mimic the cyclic action of nature in its infinite sculptural forms to explore the tensions between the contradictions of our neurotic but beautiful world, where the desire for creation and destruction coexist side by side. Despite my great concerns to preserve the work, could I ever prevent a flower from its inevitable wonderful decay?

CLAUDIA BORGNA

A DIRTY DOZEN
plastic bags, wood





The nature of my work is to design and create sculptural pieces for the garden or landscape setting, using mild steel and willow. Inspiration comes from plants within my own garden and trips to Botanical gardens and the English countryside. Nature creates beautiful fluid shapes and this finds its way into the shapes that I create with willow and mild steel.

Willow rods are entwined and woven onto a welded mild steel frame, which creates a structural skeleton for the sculpture. Using traditional methods of metal work and weaving to marry these two materials together creates endless possibilities for style, shape and use.

RACHEL CARTER

WILLOW HENGE
steel, willow





This is one of a series of objects made after removing a particularly beautiful stone from a Welsh river bed. I made hollow resin and bronze casts of this stone. The resin form became a container suggesting that the solid stone had become a bottle carrying the water it was originally found in, away from its source.

In this piece the sound of the river is drawn out of the stone and into the air, as if the stone has a memory; suggesting an energy, which is being released by the stone or held within the membrane of the bronze.

HENRY CASTLE

RIVER DULAIS REVISITED
brass, bronze,
gramophone speaker, sound





I make work that explores our perception of the world. I invite the viewer to look beyond their first impressions and to discover what is really presented to them.

I present casts of everyday objects, which at first allude to things that they are not, creating unexpected and often disturbing twists in the object and the viewer's perception. On closer inspection, all is disclosed, as the objects reveal their true nature to the viewer. For me, this process of realisation of what you are really seeing is fundamental to my work.

MICHAEL COOMBS

JOHN'S TRACTOR
canvas, resin, fibreglass





This piece is a response to a sailing trip I had last year. It was a romantic vision to be on the open sea with the sun on my face and wind in my hair, perfect. In reality this was not true, unwell and unable to move, the trip didn't go as planned. From that day I knew I was not a sailor and never would be. Coming to terms with my inability to sail through the process of making I realised I should stick to what I know best, using my tools on dry land.

PAUL COX

SEA SAW
mild and stainless steel, bronze





The figure *Held* may appear either trapped within the wall or supported by it; condemned or about to be born. Whilst in the past some people have been walled up and left to die, others have found life saving protection from such intense hiding places. Likewise *Fall and Rise*, made with beech nuts collected from the tree that it is suspended in, contains opposites. Reflecting as it does the natural life cycle, it too has association with both death and new life.

ANNA GILLESPIE

HELD (above)
jesmonite, stone wall
FALL AND RISE (right)
beech nut casings, mixed media





The omnipresence of these materials can generate ambivalence to their protracted use and therefore push them into the background of our consciousness. By elevating them from industrial to sculptural this work aims to bring them to the fore and create a new material dialogue about our relationship between environment and industry. The plastic form develops as a direct response to its host and the accumulative process of some twenty kilometres of film. The wrapping of material echoes the perpetual cycles and forms of its natural surroundings and simultaneously amplifies and condenses the process of its ubiquitous purpose.

NICK HORRIGAN

HALO
plastic, wood





The title of this work, *The Butterfly Effect*, refers to a metaphor often used to explain chaos theory - whereby a minute localised change in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere. Each of the small skeletal butterflies were cast from the same 2 moulds, but through this process they picked up subtle and unique differences as each butterfly was assembled, sanded, drilled and suspended.

ANN-MARIE JAMES

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
polymerised plaster, cotton





The work is made by a process of trapping space in successive layers. This trapped space is created either by space-containing objects (jugs, boxes etc.) or by the wrapping of those objects with materials usually associated with protection (corrugated cardboard, tissue paper, etc.). This encased space is then revealed by slicing through the layers and sealing the cut.

JANE JOBLING

SPACE CONTOURS
mixed media





I am inspired by the connections and dichotomies in our understanding of the world as described by quantum physics and by ancient mythologies. These sculptures explore absence of solidity (at a quantum level we are space and energy) whilst suggesting the presence of spirits or ghosts.

Process forms a vital part of my art practice - I examine details to find pattern and form, then using casting, weaving and dissolving processes in creating the sculptures. Interaction with weather is a further process which enhances the sculptures in external environments.

LINDA JOHNS

BODYWEAVE III - (above)
copper wire
BODYWEAVE IV - (right)
copper wire





GILES KENT

MIXED HARDWOOD BRANCHES
LONGEST 10FT, 21 PIECES



My sculptures explore the synergy between laser cut steel and inflated sheet latex, a natural, expandable and ephemeral material. The steel frames control the shape of the latex while allowing orthogonal expansion. As with all living systems there is a balance between growth and control and as with all things biological latex decays with time. *Eve* is of stainless steel and a durable fibreglass casting of the latex before it started to decay, encapsulating the moment she ate the apple in the Garden of Eden, when self indulgence acquired guilt.

JAMES MOFFETT

EVE
stainless steel, fibreglass, resin





Based on an elliptical form, the work gains momentum in the impossibility of reproduction; although conceived according to principles of geometry the juxtaposition with nature and positioning within the landscape ensure a new 'piece' emerges each time *Ray* is constructed. The tree, the quality of surrounding earth and the weather all impact significantly on the outcome. Thus *Ray* demands processural rigour, an almost ritualistic approach to method, in order to ensure each installation of the work responds uniquely to the challenges of location.

IRENE ROGAN

RAY V
monofilament

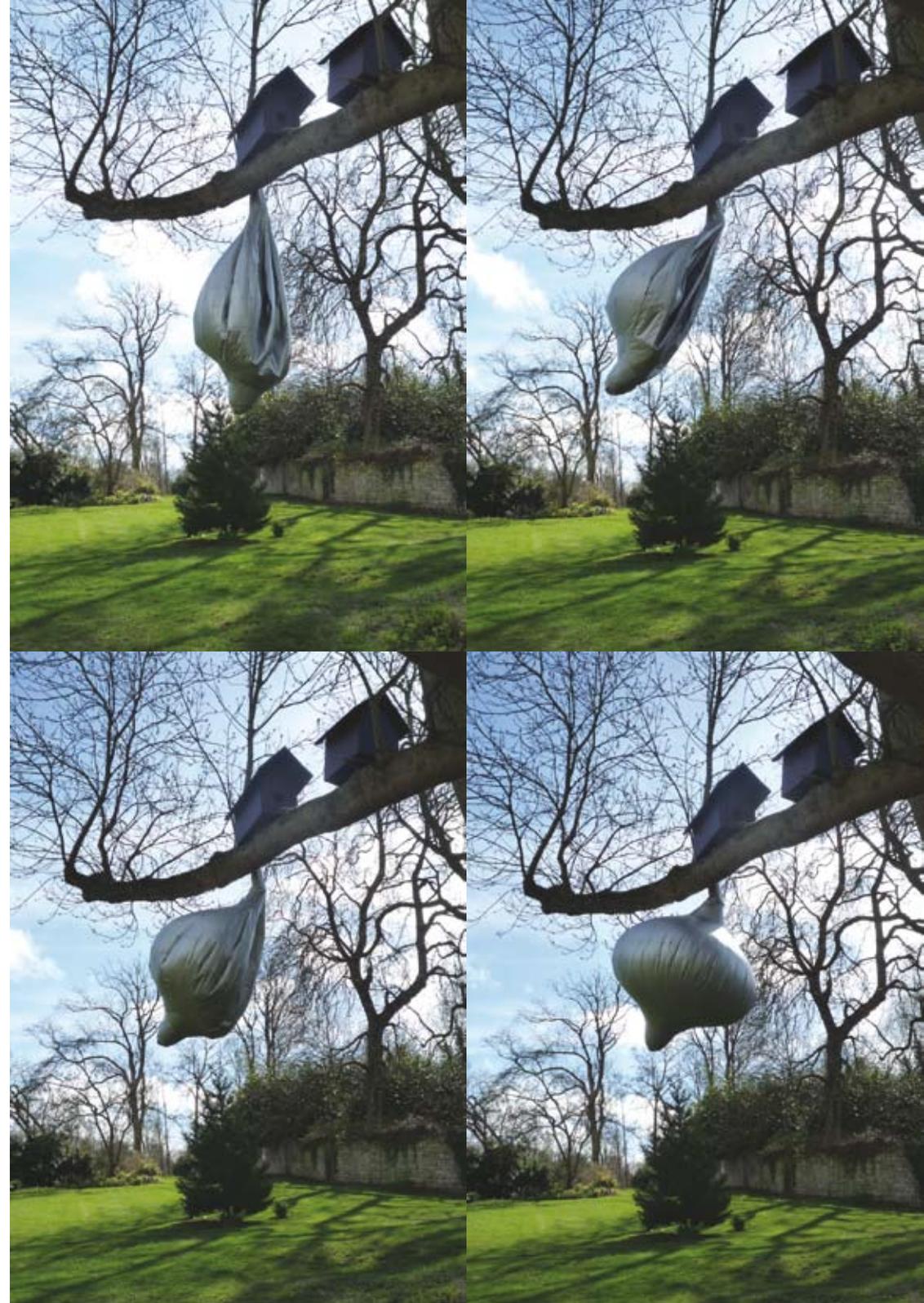




My practice has increasingly become underpinned by digital processes. In the breathing inflatable *INF9*, these include various functions in the CAD software in which the geometry is developed and then unfolded through digital pattern cutting, followed by the laser cutting of the constituent panels. These were then sewn to create the sculpture's envelope. Ultimately, a pulmonary process of inflation and deflation results, whereby chance, gravity and the wind combine to define the precise geometry of the sculpture, its movement, sound and position in space at any given time.

MICHAEL SHAW

INF 9
air, fan, ripstop fabric, timer





I developed a fascination for the design and engineering of the humble cardboard box. I found when disassembling the various packages I'd collected that I wanted to freeze them in partially opened or closed states to reveal the mechanisms involved.

To achieve this I began working with cut and folded lead sheet but found that beyond a modest scale the pieces were unable to support their own weight.

The solution was a switch to plasma cut and welded steel plate with each folded hinge becoming a butt jointed weld on the finished work.

JOHN SQUIRE

DEAD METAPHOR
steel





Starting from a square slinky format, the undulating form of 'Cocoon Line' is dependent on the set system of joined angles and lengths of the steel angle. The one flat side of the sculpture and the painted yellow colour inside the angle, add to the changing views and energy, accentuating the continuous line and drawing the eye inside. The form of the work, the nature of the material, colour and the process of making are interdependent with an aim to express energy and meaning.

SHEILA VOLLMER

COCOON LINE
painted and galvanised steel





Reef 22 explores the dynamic force of the ocean's currents and storms on marine reefs.

The steel is highly worked – cut, shaped, welded and bolted; hot-dip galvanized, oxidised, patinated – but still recognisably steel. Surface treatments retain the 'grain' and other marks of the making process and complex surface patinas develop naturally with age. Constructed through additive joining processes, the components are pre-formed and joined symbiotically – they relate to each other as objects and surfaces; as individual entities and as parts of the whole.

JACEK WANKOWSKI

REEF 22
steel





The technique of sandcasting offers the artist an immediate, fast, free method of working with glass. It involves pouring hot glass into a mould made out of special, damp casting sand, requiring a significant physical and energetic involvement of the creator.

The childlike 'play' in sand evident in the spontaneity of the work, invites the viewer into a poetical space. Contrasting the allure of the miniature with the vastness of inner space opened up within the glass, the artist conjures a private world of the imagination. Freedom and boundless space are consciously pitched against intimate and controlled structures on a condensed scale.

EWA WAWRZYŃIAK

POETICS OF MEMORY
glass, wood





Reminiscing upon the last few years shared with my partner and my children, I decided to gather together a retrospective diary of expanding family life, intending to find an experience or image that would inspire a sole final piece.

There were of course many 'characters' and situations from which to develop a solution and therefore I set about making a selection. Upon viewing the group of maquettes I decided that the group made a story and this became a chronological procession that describes my most recent and powerful experiences of creating a family. A reflected impression of my whole process.

RACHEL WOOD

FAMILY ALBUM
bronze, steel





BURGHLEY

Burghley Sculpture Garden, Stamford, PE9 3JY

www.burghley.co.uk 01780 752451

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The gardens are lovingly nurtured by John 'easing up' Burrows and team. Additional thanks to the house office staff of Philip, Jo, Holly, Ruth and Mel. Sculptures installed by 'London based artist' Anthony Carr, with stone walling by Grady. Last and by no means least, we extend our gratitude to all the participant sculptors without whose hard work, energy, and dedication the exhibition would not have become a reality.

Exhibition & catalogue - Michael Shaw

Photographs - Anthony Carr all except:

Michael Shaw (p6,7,15-23,27,29,31,37,41-43,45-47) Henry Castle (p12)

Front Cover - Michael Coombs, *John's Tractor*

Rear Cover - Anna Gillespie, *Rise and Fall*

Published by BHPT

Copyright: BHPT, the Artists & Michael Shaw

ISBN: 978-0-9565581-0-7

ARTISTS' WEBSITES

www.lauraellenbacon.com

www.paul-cox.co.uk

www.annmariejames.co.uk

www.annamawby.com

www.johnsqwire.com

www.rachel-wood.com

www.straylightstudio.com

www.rachelcarter.co.uk

www.annagillespie.co.uk

www.lindajohns.com

www.jamesmoffett.co.uk

www.sheilavollmer.com

www.claudiaborgna.keepfree.de
(jacek wankowski)

www.michaelcoombs.com

www.horrigan.net

www.gileskent.co.uk

www.michaelshaw.org

www.ewa-wawrzyniak.com

www.henry-castle.blogspot.com

www.axisweb.org/artist/irenerogan