

Simon Gudgeon

The Collection

Introduction

Since launching The Collection in early 2013, a range of smaller and more affordable sculptures, their popularity has exceeded my expectations and I have had many requests to add new pieces to the series. Well, here they are! Two of the pieces, the Pheasant and Lyrebird, are small versions of sculptures at Sculpture by the Lakes and the third, a Kingfisher, is a bird I see most days around the lakes.

All the sculptures in The Collection are cast in the UK with the same high quality finish of my larger works, but at a more affordable price. Each sculpture comes in a beautiful hand-made presentation box together with a certificate of authenticity.

Since moving to Pallington Lakes I have continued to be inspired by the natural world around me, whether it is a bird or the shape of a leaf or the wind moving through the reeds, everything I see influences my work and leads it in new directions. The other factor that has changed my work and diversified my subject matter is the creation of our sculpture park, Sculpture by the Lakes, at our home in Dorset. Set in 26 acres of woodland, lakes, rivers and gardens, it has been described as one of the most beautiful and unique sculpture parks in the UK. There are over 30 of my sculptures carefully placed around the park with a diverse range of subject matter – figurative, wildlife, abstract and kinetic.

I like to have a diverse practice; the challenge of new ideas and new subjects is always inspiring and keeps my work fresh. As an artist I do not want to be compartmentalised as a 'wildlife artist', an 'abstract artist' or a 'figurative artist'; instead I want the freedom to look at new subjects and new techniques and create art that people can respond to. All my work does, however, have a common theme; they are explorations in abstraction and form; expressions of beauty that appeals to the senses. However the work must have a vitality and emotional appeal beyond that. That appeal must be independent of the object it represents and beyond the element of pure beauty. The object is just a medium for conveying this vitality and emotion.

Making an object that is not essentially utilitarian defines humanity; it is the concept of beauty. A sculpture, on a superficial level must encapsulate beauty; it must uplift the spirit and enhance its surroundings, but on a deeper level it should resonate with the viewer and have a subconscious appeal to their emotions. Whether those emotions are the same as the artist intended is not important, what is important is that the viewer connects with the art.

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Kingfisher

We are lucky enough to see one or two Kingfishers almost every day at Sculpture by the Lakes; a sudden piercing two-tone call alerts you that they are about and then a flash of iridescent turquoise-blue darts across the water. Supreme fishermen, they will sit immobile on a reed or branch over the water until a hapless victim swims underneath their perch....

Kingfisher

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

24 X 20 X 15 cms
9.6 X 8 X 6 in



Pheasant

The cock pheasant's natural inclination to display provides a perfect sculptural subject. An iconic bird of woodlands and fields and although not a native, the pheasant is a common sight all over the UK and is a frequent visitor at Sculpture by the Lakes.

Pheasant

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

33 X 8 X 25 cms
13.2 X 3.2 X 10 in



Lyrebird

The Lyrebird gets its name from the male bird, which has a spectacular tail resembling a lyre. I translated the fundamental qualities and shape of the tail to take it from a purely representational form to a more abstract one. The clean lines and proportions suggest the bird's plumage, while allowing viewers to interpret the sculpture as they wish. Producing a more conceptual sculpture allows me the freedom to explore shape and movement as well as encapsulate vitality and emotion in my work.

Lyrebird

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

36 X 12 X 8 cms (inc. base)
14.4 X 4.8 X 3.2 in





Search for Enlightenment

Search for Enlightenment was unveiled at Riverside Walk Garden, Millbank, London, next to Tate Britain, as part of the Westminster City of Sculpture Festival, 2010-2012. Henry Moore's 'Locking Piece' of 1963-4, sited nearby, is on loan to the Garden from Tate Britain and the Henry Moore Foundation. The surrounding area, which is home to Tate Britain, Chelsea College of Art & Design and the 'Parade Ground' outdoor sculpture gallery, has become a site of increasing importance for visual arts in London.

After being exhibited on Millbank the sculpture was moved to a permanent home on Carriageway Drive, outside One Hyde Park, the most prestigious address in London, overlooking Hyde Park.

Search for Enlightenment, which is about our search for knowledge and the acceptance of our place in the universe, is a fitting new addition to the site. Two large bronze human heads stand next to each other, a male and a female, facing towards Hyde Park, their faces raised to the sky. The male is slightly before the female. The space within each cranium is hollow, through which the viewer can see the piece from an inside-out perspective and move around it to view it from all angles, taking in the surrounding landscape and sky. The expressions on these faces are peaceful and accepting; this man and woman are in contemplation, absorbing great knowledge, at a point of realisation about their place in the universe.

"I stood on a 240 million year old mountain in Africa and watched the 4.6 billion year old sun descend below the horizon. As the light diminished, the 200 billion stars in the Milky Way began to glow in the night sky.

Our galaxy extends for 100,000 light years and is part of a Universe that is 93 billion light years across. The Universe is over 10 billion years old and consists of hundreds of billions of galaxies.

It was at that moment I began to grasp the narrowness of consciousness, the vastness of time and the transience of humanity. " Simon Gudgeon

Since creating Search for Enlightenment in 2010, the piece has become very meaningful to many people. A smaller version of the monumental 2.2m high work, which is cast in bronze, was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh for his 90th Birthday by Halcyon Gallery at Buckingham Palace, at the 24th Anniversary Dinner of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award World Fellowship.

Search for Enlightenment

Bronze

Limited Edition of 150

male 33 x 6 x 27 cms (inc. base)

13.2 x 2.4 x 10.8 in

female 31 x 6 x 26 cms (inc. base)

12.4 x 2.4 x 10.4 in



Reflection

Reflection is a further development of an idea first explored in the sculpture Thoth which is itself derived from early sculptural bird forms. In Reflection we see the bird turn in on itself, not in a defensive pose but in reflection and inner serenity. It symbolises peace and spiritual contentment and is a supremely tranquil work.

Reflection

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

33 x 16 x 8 cm (inc. base)
13.2 x 6.4 x 3.2 in



White Swan

My inspiration comes from an enormous variety of sources but is mostly influenced by what I see in nature and the world around me. Living and working as I do alongside the banks of one of Britain's prettiest rivers and surrounded by lakes and wetlands, I can take advantage of the huge number of birds that visit the sculpture park, the largest of which are the elegant and romantically named mute swans. The line of neck and body is irresistible to a sculptor and in my hands this bird then takes on aspects of the human body and the lines become even more sinuous and sensual.

White Swan

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50 (available singly)

20 x 30 x 13 cm
8 x 12 x 5.2 in



Bird of Happiness

The inspiration for this sculpture, Bird of Happiness, comes from the crane itself as well as the Strelitzia, a South African flower, also known as the crane flower. Cranes have appeared in art and mythology for millennia. In the Egyptian Museum in Cairo there is a beautiful limestone relief showing these birds dating back to 2660-2590 BC. They are regularly depicted in tombs and temples including those in the ancient city of Luxor. In China the crane has been adopted as a symbol of good, to signify liberation from earthly constraints, as a symbol of the unshakeable unity of two people, and everlasting happiness.

Bird of Happiness

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

33 x 22 x 8 cm
13.2 x 8.8 x 3.2 in







Reclining Hare

Only rarely to be seen and then most often spotted in early spring chasing one another around stubbled fields, hares spend much of their time resting during the day, either crouched in a shallow scrape or stretched out in the sun on a warm day. In this sculpture I have abstracted the lines and detail of the hare giving it a wonderfully lithe and almost sensual pose.

Reclining Hare

Bronze
Limited Edition of 50

12 x 30 x 12 cm
4.8 x 12 x 4.8 in



Simon Gudgeon b. 1958

One of Britain's leading contemporary sculptors, Simon Gudgeon has a signature smooth style that marvelously concentrates spirit and nature. His minimalist, semi-abstract forms depict both movement and emotion of a moment captured with a visual harmony that is unmistakably his own.

Born in Yorkshire in 1958, Gudgeon lived deep in the countryside on the family farm, learning the essential arts of observation, evaluation and interpretation of how animals and birds behave, both with each other and man. After studying law at Reading University, he practiced as a solicitor, starting painting only in his thirties and first exhibiting at London's Battersea Exhibition Centre in 1992. An impulse purchase of artist's clay at the age of 40 led into his new career as a sculptor, responding to what lay closest to his heart, the natural world.

Since then Gudgeon has attained worldwide recognition, with exhibitions in London, New York, San Diego, Paris and the Netherlands. His works are featured in important private collections abroad and in the United Kingdom, including those of His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, The Duke of Bedford and The Duke of Northumberland. In addition, he has work in the permanent collection of several prominent art museums in the USA, including America's National Museum of Wildlife Art and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum.

Gudgeon's sculpture park, 'Sculpture by the Lakes' at Pallington in Dorset, provides a tranquil backdrop for his monumental finished pieces and houses convenient studio workshops. Hinting at how the creative process unfolds for him, he explains, "Most sculptures don't start out as a conscious thought, with all the aspects of form and meaning carefully considered. What happens is that an idea enters my mind – be it a shape, a movement or an emotion – and I simply want to convey it. I must convey it! Ideas come from a combination of observations, thoughts, beliefs and the profound experiences of one's life."

Gudgeon sculpts primarily in bronze, and occasionally in marble, granite, glass or stainless steel. For the modeling of the form, he uses a number of different materials, depending on the nature and scale of the subject – terracotta clay, oil-based Chavant clay, epoxy resin or foam. Working directly from nature and live subjects, he crafts sculptures that share an elemental kinship of identity with all living things. He is particularly known for his sculptures of birds in flight, often with ingeniously engineered bases that seem to launch them into the air rather than anchor them to the ground.

Trips to Africa, Asia and Australasia have enabled Gudgeon to broaden his subject matter and experiment with a variety of styles and methods. His pared-down approach to sculpture embodies the flowing line of the skeleton, turning it into "something abstract, taking away more and more information, but maintaining the inherent tactile core, so the form is still identifiable". Using the smallest of details, such as the arching of a neck, he suggests rather than depicts a bird or mammal.

In 2009, Gudgeon's sculpture Isis was installed in Hyde Park, London, the first such installation there for over 50 years. With the support of Halcyon Gallery and the artist, the Isis project has raised more than £2.2 million for The Royal Parks Foundation to fund a new, environmentally friendly children's education centre – The Isis Education Centre – in the heart of the park. TRH the Prince of Wales & Duchess of Cornwall were presented with an Isis sculpture in 2011, which is proudly displayed in the family's Japanese gardens at Highgrove House, their private residence in Gloucestershire.

Gudgeon was selected as the Featured Artist for the 2010 Western Visions exhibition at the National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In 2010, he also exhibited his work in numerous shows including Birds in Art at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin and Art and the Animal, the 50th anniversary exhibition of the Society of Animal Artists, at the San Diego Natural History Museum, California. In July 2012, Gudgeon unveiled Isis at America's National Museum of Wildlife Art, located in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. While staying in America, he also took up a short term artist's residency with the Museum.

Showcasing at Halcyon Gallery, London in 2011, Gudgeon unveiled his new monumental sculpture: Search for Enlightenment. Inspired while travelling in Africa, the piece outlines the profile of two large human heads, a male and a female, cast in bronze and placed next to each other. Their expressions are peaceful and contemplative; understanding and accepting of their place in the universe. The form of the sculpture allows the viewer to look through them, which incorporates their existence within the surrounding landscape. On 13 July 2011, in celebration of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's 90th Birthday, as well as his outstanding contributions to The World Fellowship, HRH was presented with Gudgeon's Search for Enlightenment at the annual awards dinner at Buckingham Palace. To culminate this sculpture's success, it was installed at Millbank, London in October 2011 next to Tate Britain, and has been exhibited as part of the Westminster City of Sculpture Festival, 2010-2012.

In Autumn 2011, Gudgeon's Dancing Cranes and Black Swans were selected as key sculpture installations at London's most prestigious and luxurious address, One Hyde Park. In January 2012, Search for Enlightenment was chosen for the same property, and is now situated overlooking Hyde Park and The Serpentine. His work was also shown in the Group Exhibitions, Seeking New Landscapes (March 2011) and Wild Life and Sporting Life II (July 2011), at Halcyon Gallery.

Gudgeon's sculpture park in Pallington, Sculpture by the Lakes, continues to be an evolutionary environment. As works are added in situ, the park continues to serve as a beautiful venue for musical concerts and outdoor events. In May 2012, Gudgeon hosted The Art of Music, which celebrated the start of Dorset Arts Week and launched the event in conjunction with Dorset Visual Arts. He also hosted a Jazz weekend in July, showcasing the musical stylings of accomplished musicians such as Stacey Kent, Tammy Weis, and Tony O'Malley.

Current projects include the development of a new series of kinetic sculptures. These carefully engineered sculptures are based on balance and movement, while simultaneously adjusting to the weather patterns of their potential outdoor placement. He is also working on new abstract sculptures and continues to experiment with new patinations at the foundry.

Always challenged and excited by the extremes and dynamics of nature, Gudgeon is relentlessly innovative in the studio, aiming to "move away from the purely representational towards something that has a deeper subtext and, as it expresses thoughts and emotions, is more satisfying to create". He continues to create and develop new ideas while his work is displayed permanently at Pallington, with the Diehl Gallery in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and a number of galleries in the UK.

Exhibitions

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Launch of Kinetics, Halcyon Gallery, London
- 2012 Permanent Sculpture Room, Halcyon Gallery, London
- 2011 Search for Enlightenment, Halcyon Gallery, London
- 2010 Isis: One Year On, Halcyon Gallery, London
- 2009 Isis, Halcyon Gallery, New Bond St, London
- 2009 Isis, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 Western Visions, National Museum of Wildlife Art, WY, USA
- 2012 Natural Abstraction, Diehl Gallery, Jackson Hole, WY, USA
- 2012 Society of Animal Artists, Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum, USA
- 2012 Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, WI, USA
- 2011 Autumn Exhibition, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London
- 2011 Western Visions Celebration Salon, Diehl Gallery, Jackson Hole, WY, USA
- 2011 Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, WI, USA
- 2011 Summer Exhibition, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London
- 2011 Wild Life II, Halcyon Gallery, Harrods, London
- 2011 Sporting Life II, Halcyon Gallery, Harrods, London
- 2011 Seeking New Landscapes, Halcyon Gallery, London
- 2011 Halcyon Gallery, Sculpture Trail, City of London
- 2010 Sporting Life, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London
- 2010 Wild Life, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London
- 2010 Birds in Art, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, WI, USA
- 2010 Western Visions, National Museum of Wildlife Art, WY, USA
- 2010 Art and the Animal, San Diego Natural History Museum, CA, USA
- 2008 Sculpture at Halcyon, Halcyon Gallery, Bruton St, London

Public Placements

PUBLIC PLACEMENTS

2007-Present Sculpture by the Lakes, Pallington Lakes, Dorset, England
2012 Isis, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Sculpture Trail, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA
2011 Search for Enlightenment, One Hyde Park, London
2011 Dancing Cranes and Black Swans, One Hyde Park, London
2011 Search for Enlightenment, Millbank, London
2009 Isis & the Isis Education Centre, Hyde Park, London

COLLECTIONS

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh
TRH The Prince of Wales & Duchess of Cornwall
TRH Duke & Duchess of Cambridge
The Duke of Bedford
The Duke of Northumberland

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2012	Sculpture by the Lakes Book
2011	Halcyon Gallery Public Art
2011	Sculpture by the Lakes Catalogue
2010	Simon Gudgeon, Museum Shows
2010	Isis
2010	Sporting Life
2010	Wild Life
2009	Isis in Hyde Park



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