

# Course sample

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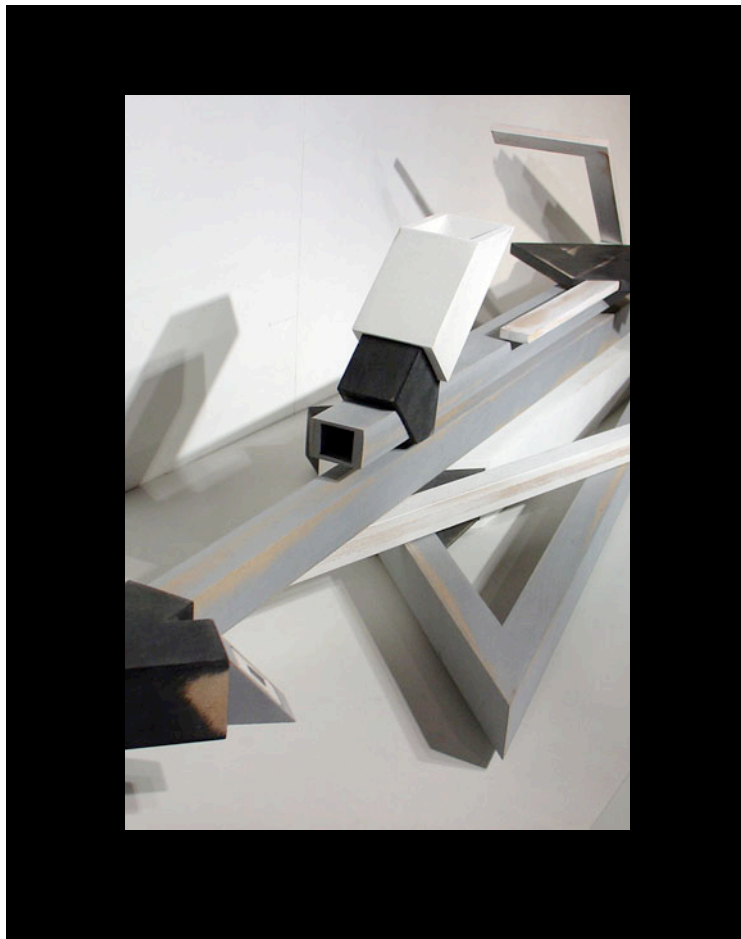
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# Sculpture 2

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## About the author



Chris Sacker is a professional practicing and exhibiting Fine Artist, who since 1976 been a visiting lecturer in Fine Art and Sculpture in art schools and universities in Great Britain and Europe. Amongst these, include Edinburgh School of Art, Dartington College, University of Hull, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and the Accademia di Belle Arti, Perugia, Italy.

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s he was Assistant Sculpture Consultant, Education Co-ordinator and Lecturer for the Henry Moore Sculpture Studio in Halifax, where major International Sculptors were invited to make new innovative works for the Henry Moore Foundation. In this capacity he lectured to B.A. M.A. and PhD students from the majority of art colleges in Britain on the projects of the invited artists.

Over the past 20 years, he has been interviewed on many occasions on radio and television in relation to his own practice as an artist and that of International Contemporary Sculptors, including Radio 4 'Kaleidoscope', Radio 3 'Nightwaves', The Arts Channel, and Yorkshire Television.

Chris has also taken part in a number of International sculpture conferences in Italy on 'Contemporary British Sculpture' 'Old Age and Creativity' and 'Transformations of Art at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century'.

Chris was co-designer and editor of the book 'Sculpture on the Page' [drawings and text] by Tony Cragg, published by the Whitechapel Gallery and the Henry Moore Trust.

With his own practice, since graduating in 1973, Chris has exhibited his work in galleries and museums, nationally and internationally including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Israel and the Ukraine.

Recent major exhibitions include; the Biennale of Florence and the X11 Biennale of Sculpture in Cararra, Italy.

Chris's work is held in a number of major museums and collections which include; Museo Luigi Pecci, Prato and Museo di Scultura, Cararra, Italy.

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# Introduction

## Course overview

You will now have had the experience of the main techniques in the art of building sculpture: construction, modelling, casting and carving.

Sculpture 1 took you through a series of projects and assignments that we hope gave you a comprehensive insight into the sculptural techniques and related aspects of the history of the subject of sculpture.

We hope it has helped you gain confidence, knowledge and understanding of the subject of sculpture.

Sculpture 2 is designed to build on your experiences that you gained in the previous course, giving you the opportunity to work more ambitiously and independently as a student, this will be done by asking you to choose your projects and the way that you deal with them in three-dimensional terms by developing your own ideas from the project briefs and assignments that will be set.

This course aims for you, as a motivated and confident student, to approach the experience of sculpture, new techniques and skills with a broader range of sculptural materials, increasing your independence and self-motivation as a sculptor.

Throughout this course you are encouraged to consider some of the theories that have emerged within modern sculptural practice during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Health & Safety**

It is important for you to write your own risk assessment prior to commencing any practical studio work and consider what personal protection you will require for each of the tasks.

You will also be required to write 'project commentaries'. These will take the form of self-appraisals, (your aims and objectives and success of your outcomes for each of the projects) in relation to your work and will be presented to your tutor for comment.

There is also a written element to the Sculpture 2 course in the form of an extended essay of approximately 2000 words. This should take the form of a critical review of a contemporary work/movement or a critical essay on a sculptor that you will choose to complement your programme of practical work. The format of this essay will be discussed in consultation with your tutor, who will direct you in subject choice and the content of your essay. This is all part of your development, as the contextualisation of your work is an important part of your activity as a sculptor.

During the first year of your course, you were confronting the basic problems of sculptural activity in relation to the methods and techniques of composing and building three-dimensional form and solving the physical problems which occur in the making of sculpture, rather than what you were trying to develop in the content of your work. You were focussing on the 'hows' rather than the 'whys' of producing sculpture.

During Sculpture 2, we would like you to develop the idea of the 'whys' (the content of your work). These include choice of subject matter, the form of your sculpture, your materials, methods and techniques of production, how you make the decisions within your sculptural practice, and your work in relation to that of other sculptors through the contextualisation of your sculptural practice.

The sculptor Reg Butler once said “Creative development is directly proportional to the exposure to art, both past and present”.

We would also like to emphasise the importance of experimentation in all your developmental work. Sometimes, through this process, new lines of enquiry can be explored and decisions can be made. Occasionally there are ‘happy accidents’ which can give you a different aspect on the forms that you create, which can be developed further.

Throughout Sculpture 1, you may have been exposed to styles and sculptural form, some of which will have excited you as a student and to techniques that you feel very comfortable with as an individual and you may now feel that you wish to develop further in a much more ambitious and individual way.

As you progress through Sculpture 2, you will be given the opportunity to develop the idea of the ‘whys’ in relation to the content of your work and the ‘hows’ in relation to the production of your sculptural form.

In many ways Sculpture 2 is less prescriptive about the content and production of your work, giving you a much more individual and independent approach to your own sculptural activity.

# 1: A proposal for a public sculpture

## Introduction

Throughout art history sculptors have made works which have existed in the public domain, from the colossal temple monuments of ancient Egypt and Greece, Rome's 'Trajan's Column' celebrating the victories of the Dacian Wars, the heroic bronze statue of 'Marcus Aurelius' on the Capitoline Hill, the Renaissance fountains and public works in the piazzas of Rome, through to the war memorials of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, commissioned by civic authorities as a country's expression of loss.



The Roman army crossing the Danube, detail from Trajan's Column

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century /beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, contemporary public sculpture has once again come to the fore, with more commissions for sculpture by public and corporate funding of the arts. At this moment in time, there

appears to be three types of public sculpture, all of which are site-specific in their conceptual nature: public sculpture which commemorates events in the context of their conception, sculptures that are commissioned for their aesthetic enhancement of a public space and other work commissioned from sculptors that are designed to fit into civic situations and facilitate social interaction – these are usually collaborations between artists and architects.

The architectural scale of sculpture had intrigued sculptors even at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 'The Monument to the Third International' 1919-1920 by the Russian Constructivist Vladimir Tatlin was intended to be on a huge scale, twice the size of the Empire State Building in New York, and in Kasimir Malevich's 'Architectonics' 1924-28 we can see that the sculptural composition derived from cuboid forms has aspirations of a large-scale work, possibly for the public domain.

Two contemporary examples of large-scale public sculpture that fall into the category of commemoration are Antony Gormley's (1950-) 'Angel of the North' 1998, a monumental cast-iron figure with a 54 m wingspan, which stands overlooking the A1 near Gateshead, on the site of a disused colliery, and pays tribute to the industrial heritage of the North-East.

Jaume Plensa's (1954-) 'Breathing' 2008, for the BBC at Broadcasting House in London, is a sculpture shaped in the form of a giant inverted glass spire 10 m high, with a poetic text etched around the sculpture in a spiral to evoke the themes of speech, silence, life and death and, during the hours of darkness, a beam of light is projected 900 m into the night sky. The work is a memorial to the journalists who have lost their lives around the world.

Sculptures are also commissioned for their aesthetic enhancement of public spaces. A number of examples of these can be seen in London. Two such examples are Richard Serra's (1939-) 'Fulcrum' 1987, which is a huge abstract geometric sculpture, made from sheets of Cor-ten steel, sited at the Broadgate

Complex, London EC2 and Henry Moore's (1898-1986) 'Knife Edge, Two Pieces' 1962, in bronze, which is opposite the House of Lords.

Henry Moore appears to be the forerunner of the commissioned public sculptor in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and produced large-scale works for public spaces. His work can be seen in many cities throughout the world and in this country in cities such as York, Leeds and London.

Since 1999, the vacant fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, London, which was originally intended to support a statue of William IV, is a site where sculptors have been commissioned on an annual basis to create a work for the site. In 2007 Thomas Schutte (0000-) created 'Hotel for Birds' (a response to the pigeons which inhabit the square), a construction of interlocking, multi-coloured Perspex boxes.

The collaboration between sculptors and architects in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has become more established. A major collaboration took place during 2000, when the sculptor Sir Anthony Caro, the architect Sir Norman Foster and the engineers Arup and Partners won the competition to design and build the 330 m 'Millennium Bridge', which links the City of London and the Tate Modern on Bankside across the Thames. Even though this is a practical, functioning bridge, which affords social interaction between communities, it not only functions as a bridge but as an interactive sculpture.

In this set of projects and assignment, you are asked to design a public sculpture, which should be site-specific and have reference commemoratively, aesthetically or socially interactive to the site that you choose to exhibit the work. Of course, this is only a proposal and should result in a maquette of the final work that you propose.

## Health & Safety

It is important for you to write your own risk assessment prior to commencing any practical studio work and to consider what personal protection you will require for each of your tasks.

# Project 1: Site selection, context and form of the work

## Introduction

Your first task is to select a site for your proposed sculpture. This could be a public square, an open space in front of a civic building or in a public park. The choice of site is entirely yours, but we feel it would be more of a challenge to set your work in a man-made environment, where it could harmonise or compete with its surroundings.

The selection of your site should depend on much more than its visual appeal. You should research into the context of the site you have selected with regard to its significance historically, emotionally, socially etc. This may be of help in formulating your ideas in relation to the content and form of your work: is it to be commemorative? Is it to be an aesthetic imposition on the site? Is it to be functional and socially interactive? These are all questions you should be asking yourself when making your decisions.

Once you have selected your site, make photographs and drawings of the surroundings for your studio reference. Try to make these as comprehensive as possible, including approximate measurements of the site, as your final proposal has to have scale in relation to the site and the maquette that you produce.



Antony Gormley  
Angel of the North, Iron 1998