



MARJAN WOUDA

Cover: *Dog Performing Headstand (detail)*, 2000

1 *Laughing Dog*, 1999



MARJAN WOUDA

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Richard Weltman, Marjan Wouda and Rod Young.



ONE WORK IN ONE COLLECTION

Nineteenth century British painting is the particular strength of the permanent collection at Bury Art Gallery in Lancashire. Two very prominent elements in this grouping are the depiction of animals and the telling of stories. Interest in these two 'elements' of art has never completely waned and they are brilliantly revived and brought up-to-date in the work of Marjan Wouda. Marjan's 'Dog Performing Headstand' was purchased in 1998 to add to the collection and, in a sense, helps to bring it up to date too. In Marjan's hands the depiction of animals is immeasurably enriched by being turned into an exploration of how art works and of its capacity to 'speak' on many different levels. So much so, that we are able to look at the work of artists such as Sir Edwin Landseer, Briton Riviere and Thomas Sydney Cooper with altogether new eyes. At a glance, their work seems comfortably re-assuring because the animals appear in their paintings much as they do in nature.

In Marjan's work, on the other hand, things are not as they immediately appear. In the Bury piece we find, on closer inspection, that the dog, the artist's thesis as it were, is composed of a myriad of different textures that inform its 'impossible' pose. These could be seen as the antithesis; a potentially lifeless collection of inanimate surfaces that includes, muslin, coarse sacking and knitting. However, from these raw materials cast in bronze Marjan has created an artwork that both challenges and engages the viewer. The tail, vital to the dog's balancing act, is a hank of rope; its musculature, where compressed, has the texture of corduroy, where taut and under strain the texture is of that made by cogs from some unknown machine. The ears, though made of bronze, appear exquisitely soft. This fundamental conflict between the means of representation and the thing represented lends a dynamic force to the piece that, in turn, 'enables' the dog's balancing act. There is wit too. 'Dog Performing Headstands' is a splendid conceit and would make anybody smile. Marjan manages to persuade the viewer that the beast's unnatural pose is perfectly natural and in so doing conveys a curious and liberating sense of elation, which must surely be the synthesis flowering out of this whole artistic process.

Richard Burns
Curator
Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Archives

January 2007

MARJAN WOUDA

Our emotional relationship with animals has always been complicated: fear, admiration, love, envy, wonder and amusement are just a sample of the responses that arise from our interaction. Our physical connection with the creatures who share our world is equally complex: enemy, prey, companion, beast of burden, provider of food and transport, deadly threat. From being one among them, pre-historic man became the observer. He noted their specific characteristics of grace or speed, strength or aggression, social cohesion or solitary survival, characteristics which became metaphors for his imaginative longings. More pertinently he must have observed that their familial and herd interactions mirrored relationships in his own family and tribe.

For sculptor Marjan Wouda each work begins with drawing what she observes. She writes: “I have to understand the form from inside out.” Through such free yet accurate drawings from life and small clay maquettes in which she explores movement, gesture, pose and the subject in the round, she starts to create the working basis for the piece. The expression of the work’s emotional and psychological content is defined and refined at this time. The next stage is to build a full size model in clay - or wax if the sculpture is to be small and cast from solid bronze. Using the most successful maquette and visual references such as her drawings, skeletons and anatomy drawings, she builds a metal armature or a hollow clay structure made from coiled forms and cylindrical slabs. There is always an underlying sense of this in her sculptures, like the invisible foundation of a building which nevertheless dictates its final volume.

Some sculptors are naturally carvers, others, like Marjan, are modellers. The additive process of modelling allows the form and surface to remain provisional for a long time before the final decision to cast is taken. Clay is a lively medium: it reflects light while it stays moist and, like bronze, actively reflects the relationship between the form and the space that surrounds it. This active relationship is paramount to the expressive purpose of Marjan’s work, the communication of ideas and feelings. We recognise dog or goose but the nature of that dog or that goose is expressed through Marjan’s engaging repertoire of surface textures which, while at first glance appear to mimic skin, flesh or feathers, do not and are indivisible from and inherent to the metaphors which are at the heart of its meaning.

Picasso wrote: “I achieve reality through the use of metaphor. My sculptures are plastic metaphors...not trompe l’oeil but trompe l’esprit.” Marjan’s inventive use of meaningful textures is the result of her playing with the medium: layering, imprinting, cutting, tearing and rippling in an exploratory and celebratory use of the material. It is this playful activity which makes her sculptures live and spending time with them such a participatory and joyful experience. However, without a strong idea articulated via observed pose and gesture, we would be left with merely a contemporary cousin of the animalier tradition.

The goose in *Ganzebord Gans* has the naturalistic weight, balance, skeletal structure and characteristic form one would expect of a skilled modeller who draws from nature. But, as with all Marjan Wouda’s sculptures, a second, third





and fourth look poses questions and draws attention to most un-geese-like ideas. There is no attempt to imitate feathers yet the overlapping rolled and cut layers of pieces of clay convey the stiff quills and soft airiness of a goose's plumage. The raised wings imply the bird is about to take off or flutter away in panic from some threat, yet the head twists round to see what is being left behind, a most unlikely pose in nature. The conception of this piece came about when a friend of Marjan's was very ill and she linked her empathy for her friends' predicament, (especially as a mother contemplating having to leave her children), with a Dutch board game in which the counters are geese who meet all kinds of trials and tribulations, including death. This pose approximates to the taking of 6 moves back in the game. It also vividly suggests a moment of ambivalence and indecision about whether to fly away or stay at home.

Over the millennia, in art, and particularly in sculpture, the abstract qualities which man has associated with them has meant that animals have frequently become icons, totems or symbols and their specific behavioural characteristics have too often been subverted or expressed via superficial caricature or thoughtless anthropomorphism. Marjan Wouda brings the animal and human worlds together, creating moments of memorable complicity with wit and insight. She undertakes an exploration of the individuated personality of each animal, one which offers revelations relating to our understanding of ourselves. Another rich strand of her oeuvre takes inspiration from a wide range of literary sources such as fables, proverbs and children's rhymes from diverse cultures in which animals act as stand-

ins for human types. With exceptional technical skill and integrity of purpose she articulates those reflections on human relationships and life experience which give meaning to art.



4 Ganzebord Gans, 2001

5 Sleeping Squirrel Monkeys, 2005 (top)

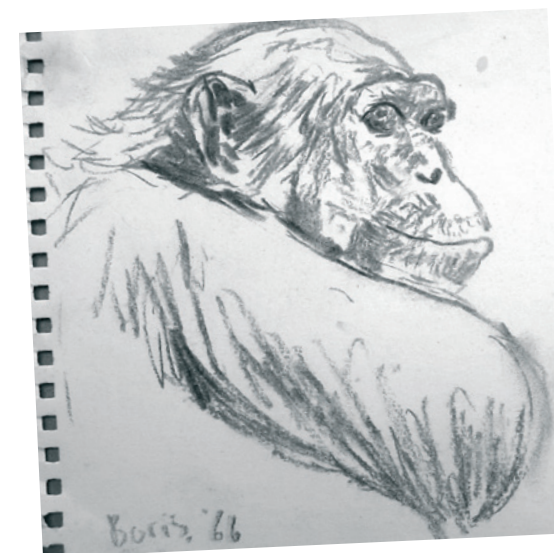
6 Fritz, 2001 (bottom)



Equivalent to human emotions in the forms and posturings of animals are brilliantly realised in the series of works made by Marjan Wouda during the Chanticleer project in which she collaborated with printmaker Adrienne Craddock. Chaucer's telling of the Nun's Priest's Tale brings on the cast of cockerel, hen and fox and in the seemingly simple fable he gives the animals human attributes whilst remaining true to their animal natures. They become emblems of human folly, pride and treachery as Chaucer examines issues important to his times and society. Daun Russel slinks through the undergrowth, watching for a chance of a kill. This fox is a thin, hungry predator. His lean body ripples under textures impressed and cast from rope and corrugated card and the rusty patina places him in his earthy context.

He is the outsider; adaptable, shrewd, getting a living from the hypocrisy and venality of others. Chanticleer himself, so vainglorious in Chanticleer II and self-absorbed in Chanticleer I; is magically realised in overlapping strips and laths of clay, with textures from cogwheels and chains referring to the jerky, quasi-mechanical way chickens move. In Hound Dogs, part of a commission for a new town built in an old English landscape near a medieval hall, Marjan utilised moulds made from impressions of machinery parts and rope pressed into the clay to emphasise their sinewy strength and tension in motion.

A recent work, Mothermonkey, offers an excellent illustration of the artist's approach to subject, idea and execution. The mother holds the infant between her legs and enclosed by her arms, almost as if the baby has just been born and brought to the breast. It arises from Marjan's experience of motherhood, when the very new born child is most primitive and monkey-like in appearance. The work is an exploration of ourselves at our most primitive, but also relates to a proverb from Martinique which runs: "The monkey smothers its young by hugging it too much." Marjan became interested in the idea that excessive mother love can be overwhelming and damaging for the child and conversely the mother's need to be loved can be impossible to fulfil. One of the textures used is of thickly knitted textile, redolent of domesticity and warmth yet we read the skin and fur as vividly monkey-like and at the same time identify with the fiercely protective mothering.



7 Mothermonkey, 2005

8 Chimp Study, 2005

Other works have also dealt with the relationship between mothers and children, albeit more obliquely. The vulnerable, limp new born Lamb of God waits for life and blood to pump energy into its limbs; the mother's responsibilities have begun. Goose on one Leg is the all powerful mother as the child experiences her, dominant and dominating. In Haigh Didil Dum the stolid drake carries the petrified cat on its back, stepping carefully to preserve them both despite the discomfort of the cat's needle like claws trying to keep a safe purchase on his slippery feathers. Roll Up, a sleeping squirrel monkey enlarged to ape-like dimensions, conveys the desire to withdraw from a hostile world into a private space where what we choose not to acknowledge cannot harm us, a response not solely the preserve of children or monkeys. Emerging themes move on to notions of female strength as in the exquisitely strange De Zachte Kracht (Gentle Power) in which the artist gives her interpretation of the unicorn as a symbol of feminine healing energy. However, the creature's trembling muscles and angular pose indicate that it is poised to flee in the blink of an eye: the result of the unicorn being the object of man's impossible desires.

Public and private commissions have inspired the artist's imagination. Fatkin the mole was commissioned for a country park on Tyneside and is based on a character from a local story. Mining tools and drills are impressed into his 'fur' and his near blindness and huge digging 'hands' are effectively exaggerated as he emerges from the soil. The pond on Cottam Village Green near Preston is the site for her Wild Boar (chased by two hounds) and his stiff bristles are

made from impressions of nails. Humour and playfulness in Marjan's work can ambush the adult viewer and delight the child in us all. The Black Knight of Ashton, an almost heraldic and traditional horse and rider for a public space, is revealed as having trouble staying mounted as the horse tries to unseat him, while the pun, pose and perch of Owl of Few Words on his pile of old books installed on a newel post at Accrington Library will amuse readers of all ages. Commissions have also offered chances to work with new materials: Heron's Head is made from steel, like a line drawing in the air.

Having observed Marjan Wouda's career as a sculptor over many years, my enjoyment of her work has increased and appreciation deepened with every new piece that has appeared. Alexander Pope's admonishment: "The proper study of mankind is man," might have been chosen as her motto, when as a student she first essayed sculptures of animals that, in their posture and character, would express something of human nature. Her talent showed itself early, but with maturity comes greater self-knowledge. Two decades after she completed her formal training, Marjan Wouda is now proving to a critically sophisticated audience what her many clients and friends have always known, that she is a significant artist of considerable stature.

Mary Sara 2006

1. "Know thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man."
(Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man 1733)





WORKS



11 *Touch Down*, 2010
12 *Rover*, 2010





13 Owl of Few Words, 2003
14 The Year of the Ox, 1996





15 Ape Glancing Sideways, 2007
16 De Zachte Kracht (Gentle Force), 1997







- 18 *MyBody*, 1997 (top)
- 19 *Hound Dogs*, 1996 (bottom)
- 20 *Woolly Mammoth*, 2008



21 *Sentry* (detail), 2007
 22 *Crescent Monkey*, 2011



23 *Mating Tortoises*. 2002
24 *The Black Knight of Ashton*, 1995



BRONZE SCULPTURE

Bronze has been used to cast sculpture since ancient times. Today, modern techniques and materials are used but the process remains essentially the same that man has been using for 3000 years.

The casting procedure is called the lost-wax process because it requires creating an exact replica of the original sculpture in wax. This pattern is then encased in a mould and heated in a kiln to burn away the wax leaving a cavity to fill with molten metal. This mould is then broken off to reveal the casting.

Lost-wax is perfect for casting sculpture because any shape can be cast and fantastic “finger print” surface detail from the original sculpture is reproduced.

Chris Butler
Castle Fine Arts Foundry

THE PROCESS

1. The Maquette

The artist explores ideas in the form of a small 3D sketch in clay or in wax. Sometimes she draws on the maquette to work out the form of the armature (support structure, often made out of metal).

2. The Original

The sculpture is created, usually in clay on an armature. The clay remains soft and damp, and can be used to create a new sculpture as soon as the mould is taken. It is possible to cast from other materials such as wax or a (previously fired) ceramic sculpture.

3. The Mould

The first stage of the casting process is to make a mould in silicon rubber. The flexible rubber creates a negative version of the sculpture - a container into which molten wax is poured. The mould can be used many times to allow the artist to make more copies of the sculpture – usually a limited edition which is numbered and signed for authenticity.

4. The Wax

A hollow wax replica of the original is created. The artist checks the wax or works with foundry technicians to assemble the various parts of the sculpture, making small alterations if she wishes. The sculpture is signed and the edition number marked onto the wax surface.

5. The Shell

Now another mould has to be made; this time in ceramic. First, a funnelling system, called “runners and risers”, is created onto the wax replica made from wax bars and a wax “cup”, allowing the molten bronze to fill the mould and air



to come out. The whole piece is then coated in a ceramic material in layers to form a thin “shell”.

6. Firing of the Shell

The shell is fired in a kiln at a very high temperature to achieve two things: all the wax melts and flows out of the shell and the ceramic shell is fired to create a pot – strong enough to pour bronze into.

7. The Pouring

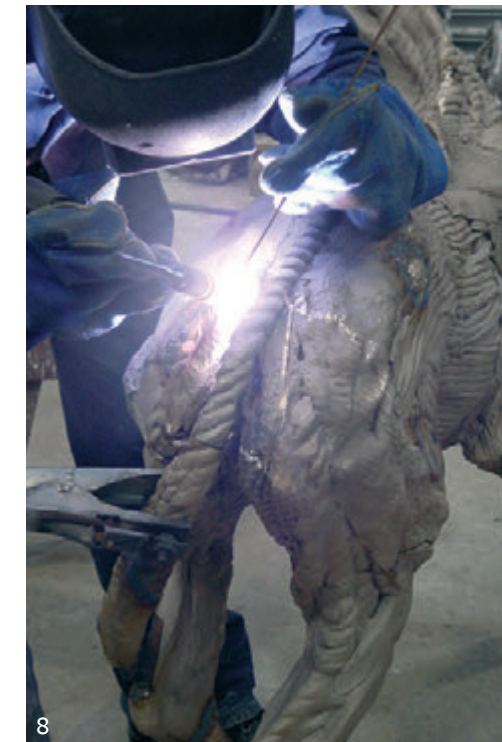
The bronze is melted in a furnace to a temperature of 1120 degrees centigrade and then carefully poured into the shell. It is an exciting time when, in the noise and the heat of the foundry, the sculpture is cast and the shell broken away to reveal the cast for the first time.

8. The Metal

Once cast the finishing stage commences. Parts of the sculpture may need to be welded together, the runners and risers to be cut off, and the seams and “flashes” to be worked so that they fit in with the surrounding areas. The sculpture is sandblasted to remove all traces of the process.

9. Patination

Finished bronzes come in an endless array of colours but the metal itself is the same. The colours are achieved through application of different chemicals to the heated surface, which react with the copper in the bronze. A coat of wax is then applied to the surface to seal and bring out the richness of the colour.



LIST OF WORKS

All works are photographed by the artist unless stated otherwise.

Front Cover Dog Performing Headstand (detail), 2000
Bronze, ed: 6, 77 x 69 x 42 cm

1 Laughing Dog, 1999
Bronze, edition: 6, 48 x 60 x 20 cm
Photographed by Heather Brown

2 Dog Performing Headstand, 2000
Bronze, edition: 6, 77 x 69 x 42 cm

3 Sleeping Squirrel Monkey, 2005
Terra Cotta, 7 x 7.5 x 5 cm

4 Ganzebord Gans, 2001
Bronze, edition: 9, 100 x 74 x 58 cm
NB. Image shows clay original in the studio prior to casting

5 Sleeping Squirrel Monkeys, 2005
Charcoal on Paper, 21 x 15 cm

6 Fritz, 2001
Charcoal on Paper, 21 x 20 cm

7 Mothermonkey, 2005
Ceramic Sculpture, 84 x 49 x 32 cm

8 Chimp Study, 2005
Charcoal on Paper, 21 x 15 cm

9 Chanticleer Returns, 2014
Bronze, edition: 9, 52 x 45 x 20 cm

10 Mother Hubbard and her Dog (detail), 1999
Jesmonite, 130 x 117 x 35 cm
Also available in bronze, edition: 9
Photographed by Heather Brown

11 Touch Down, 2010
Bronze, edition: 9, 57 x 98 x 56 cm

12 Rover, 2010
Bronze, edition: 9, 52 x 27 x 20 cm

13 Owl of Few Words, 2003
Bronze, edition: 59 x 39 x 28 cm

14 The Year of the Ox, 1996
Charcoal on Paper, 135 x 90 cm
NB. Commissioned by Terry Farrell & Partners (Architects) for new British Consulate in Hong Kong

15 Ape Glancing Sideways, 2007
Bronze, edition: 9, 45 x 30 x 35 cm

16 De Zachte Kracht (Gentle Force), 1997
Bronze, edition: 9, 130 x 120 x 70 cm
Photographed by Eddie Powell

17 Gathering Intelligence, 1997
Bronze, edition: 6, 34 x 75 x 54 cm

18 My Body, 1997
Bronze, edition: 9, 60 x 70 x 45 cm
Photographed by Eddie Powell

19 Hound Dogs, 1996
Bronze, edition: 6, 58 x 178 x 51 cm
Photographed by Eddie Powell

20 Woolly Mammoth, 2008, from: People before People, commissioned by Felix Dennis
Bronze, unique, 2.76 x 2.58 x 3.60 m

21 Sentry (detail), 2007
Bronze, edition: 9, 43 x 38 x 26 cm

22 Crescent Monkey, 2011
Bronze, edition: 9, 39 x 27 x 34 cm

23 Mating Tortoises, 2002
Bronze, unique, 167 x 270 x 120 cm
Photographed by Bethan Page
NB. First public sculpture on Mustique, commissioned by Felix Dennis

24 The Black Knight of Ashton, 1995
Bronze & copper, unique, 200 x 300 x 90 cm
Height incl. pennant: 550
Photographed by Len Grant

25 Stork, 2002
Bronze, edition: 9, 97 x 37 x 24 cm

26 Artist in studio, 2014 Photographed by Phil West

Back Cover Hare after Ts'ui Po, 2011
Bronze, edition: 9, 39 x 24 x 34 cm



25 Stork, 2002

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

Born	1960 The Netherlands	2003	The Affordable Art Fair, Battersea Park, London; represented by Red Gallery, Marlow The Mare’s Tale travels to Scotland and finalizes its tour at the: Natuurhistorisch Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands	to develop proposals for artworks connecting Bentham with the cycle route
Education				
1983-84	Visual Arts Foundation Course, Manchester Polytechnic			2012
1984-87	BA Hons Fine Art (Sculpture), N.E. London Polytechnic			
1987-88	MA Fine Art (Sculpture), Manchester Polytechnic	2002	New Work, Solo exhibition at Curwen Gallery, London	2010
Exhibitions Include		2001	Beastly , major solo exhibition at Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery	
2015	Sculptures in 2 Suffolk gardens: solo show, Chelsworth Prints and sculptures in a Midsummer Garden, Herefordshire, with Adrienne Craddock Ripley Arts Centre, Bromley, Gr. London: Wild among Us, with Laura Weston John Michael Kohler Arts Centre, Wisconsin, US: Folktales and Legends	2000	Royal Cambrian Academy, Conwy, Wales: Sculptures by 3 new members Launch of The Mare’s Tale , an exhibition initiated by the artist, exploring traditional nursery rhymes from around the world, at Bury Museum & Art Gallery. The exhibition tours to municipal galleries around the UK	2009
2014	New Year – New Work, Curwen Gallery, London; selected artists Beelden in Gees, the Netherlands – summer show in sculpture garden and gallery The King of the Cats , Book and Touring Exhibition of Lancashire Tales Creatively Explored	1999	Full Circle , Curwen Gallery, London: Solo Exhibition	
		1998	Art ‘98, Contemporary Art Fair, London Chanticleer tours to: Dingle Festival, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland Royal Netherlands Embassy, Dublin, Ireland	2008
2013	3 Staffordshire Moorland Gardens – Solo Sculpture show Sculptures at Dean Manor gardens, solo show nr. Chipping Norton Sculptures at Dipley Mill gardens, solo show in Hampshire Chelsea Flower Show, London	1997	Curwen Gallery, London: Solo Exhibition Art ’97, Contemporary Art Fair, London Courcoux & Courcoux, Hampshire Chanticleer tours to: Promenade Hotel Gallery, The Hague, The Netherlands Royal Netherlands Embassy, London Wilbee’s Kunstwerken, Alkmaar, The Netherlands	2007
2012	Curwen Gallery, London Chelsea Flower Show, London			
2011	Chelsea Flower Show, London Wild Sculptures in a Wild Garden – Solo Show at Tattenhall, Cheshire	1996	Bruton Street Gallery, London Royal Netherlands Embassy, London: Solo Exhibition British Council, Manchester: Solo Exhibition Chanticleer continues its tours around the UK	2005
2010	Affordable Art Fair, London			
2009	Chelsea Flower Show , Chelsea, London Richard Attenborough Centre, University of Leicester: a Celebration of British Sculpture Tregoning Gallery, Derby, selected sculptures Curwen Gallery, London	1995	Galerie Willbee’s Kunstwerken, Alkmaar, Holland: Solo Exhibition Kunsthandel Pieter Breughel, Amsterdam, Holland Fletcher Challenge, Auckland, New Zealand Chanticleer , Two Women Exhibition with Printmaker Adrienne Craddock launched at Manchester Town Hall, touring to 7 municipal galleries around the UK	2004
2008	Wagging Tongues continues its tour around the UK	1993	Civic Centre, Walsall, East Midlands; Exhibition Coinciding with Erection of Public Sculpture	2003
2007	Sotheby’s Exhibition and Auction, 20th Century British Sculpture, London Olympia Curwen and New Academy Gallery, London: The Great Outdoors Show Prudential Headquarters, London: Summer Selection Show Making Connections moves to Mecklenburg, Germany	1990	Flaxman Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent: Solo Exhibition Edge Hill College of HE, Ormskirk, Lancs: Solo Exhibition Salford Museum of Mining: Solo Exhibition	2002
2006	Chelsea Flower Show, Sotheby’s Stand, Chelsea, London Wagging Tongues , a touring exhibition and education initiative inspired by proverbs from around the world, with artists Shellie Byatt and Adrienne Craddock is launched at: Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter, and travels to municipal galleries around the UK	1987	Germinations IV; Biennale of Colleges of Art FRAC of Marseilles, France, touring to: De Beyer, Breda, The Netherlands Royal College of Art, London Frauenmuseum, Bonn, Germany	2001-2002
2005	Edinburgh Festival, where a selection of sculptures featured in the International Book Festival	2014	Sustrans/Pioneer Projects; Way of the Roses Commission to realize a number of sculptures for the Bentham Bike Loop	2000
2004	Newby Hall Sculpture Park, Ripon, North Yorkshire (and again in 2005 and 2008)	2013	Sustrans: Way of The Roses – Passing Places, commission	1999-2000

1995	MAB(UK) LTD: Bronze Sculpture of legendary Black Knight at centre of Arcades Shopping Centre, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Gtr. Manchester
1993	Walsall MBC: Public Sculpture outside Civic Centre, Walsall, East Midlands
1992	London Docklands Development Corporation: Two Public Sculptures at Barnard Wharf, Rotherhithe, London
1991	Groundwork Trust, Wigan: Sculpture at Spinning Gate, Leigh, Lancashire

Public Collections

Dean Clough Art Gallery, Halifax, Yorkshire
Drumcroon Education Art Centre, Wigan
Provident Financial, Bradford, Yorkshire
Bury Art Gallery & Museum
Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery
ABCG, Groningen, The Netherlands
The Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston
The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

Work In Stock

Curwen Gallery, London
Susan Calloway Fine Art, Washington DC, US
The Pride of the Valley Sculpture Park, Farnham, Surrey
Broomhill Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden, Barnstaple
Gavagan Art, Settle, North Yorkshire
Beelden in Gees, the Netherlands



26 Artist in studio

