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JOHN ATKIN

John Atkin's sculptures have something in common with the work of David Smith, in their use of industrial materials and in the references they make to machinery. They also, however, have a quirky sense of humour that is not usually present in David Smith's work.

Some of his pieces are clearly figurative, in the sense that they reference the human figure – others are less so. The unifying factor, as visible in the maquettes that make up this exhibition, as in the completed sculptures, which are often very large, is a determination to use sculpture to give a particular locality a sense of place. One of Gertrude Stein's more memorable aphorisms, inspired by a visit to Oakland, California, was her comment that "There is no there, there." If we are honest, we could apply this description to any number of current spaces and places. When we visit them, we get no sense of exact, specific location – we might as well be somewhere else.

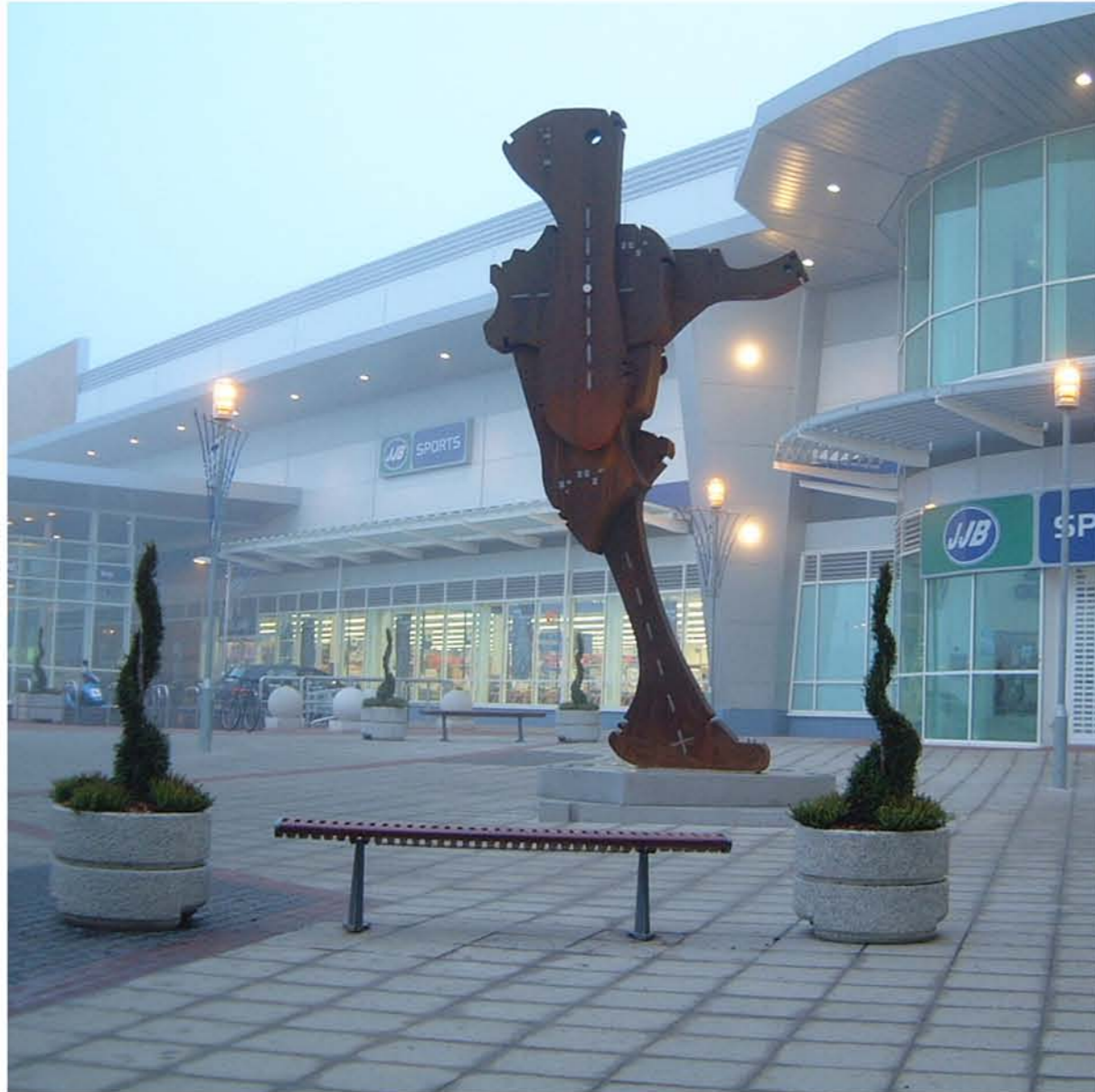
One of the tasks Atkin has set himself, or been set by those who commission him, is to cure this malaise through the use of art. Contemporary public sculpture treads a very fine line. On the one hand there is the Scilla of vacuous abstraction. On the other, there is the Charybdis of equally vacuous realism. The function of too much new sculpture is purely decorative – a nice shape, plonked down in some vacant area. It's no surprise to learn that many sculptures of this type are in fact created by architects, reluctant to have any object made by a different hand in close proximity to a building they have designed, or placed with its interior. Commemorative portrait sculpture – images of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi or some famous footballer – tends to be coarsely executed and almost null in its rendition of character. Atkin's sculptures, by contrast, are personages in their own right, beings that he has invented. Each is carefully fitted to its setting, each offers a potentially memorable encounter.

It may perhaps be argued that there is something nostalgic about his use of industrial fragments – these allude to an age when heavy industry was king, a time that is now rapidly vanishing into the mists of the past. In fact, nostalgia contributes to the power of these three-dimensional images, because it reminds one that the industrial past is often an important element in the history of the place where a given sculpture is located.

These heavy, metallic forms carry a powerful resonance, they concentrate an echo, and dredge up for the spectator things that he or she already knows subconsciously. That is why I think they will have a wide-ranging appeal, even for people who are not necessarily in sympathy with contemporary art.

Edward Lucie-Smith

Signaler



Corten & stainless steel

Commissioned by Highland Metrobrook
for The Rushes, Loughborough

Height : 793 cm (26 ft)



1. *Signaler* (maquette)

Poured resin

Height : 66 cm (2 ft 2 in)

The Navigator



Corten & stainless steel

Commissioned by Ipswich Borough Council
On behalf of The Orwell Riverside Development, Ipswich

Height : 550 cm (18 ft)



2. *The Navigator* (maquette)

Corten steel

Height : 69 cm (2 ft 3 in)

Pound Mill



Corten and stainless steel

Commissioned by Spellthorne Borough Council
for the historic Pound Mill site, Staines

Height : 430 cm (14 ft 1 in)

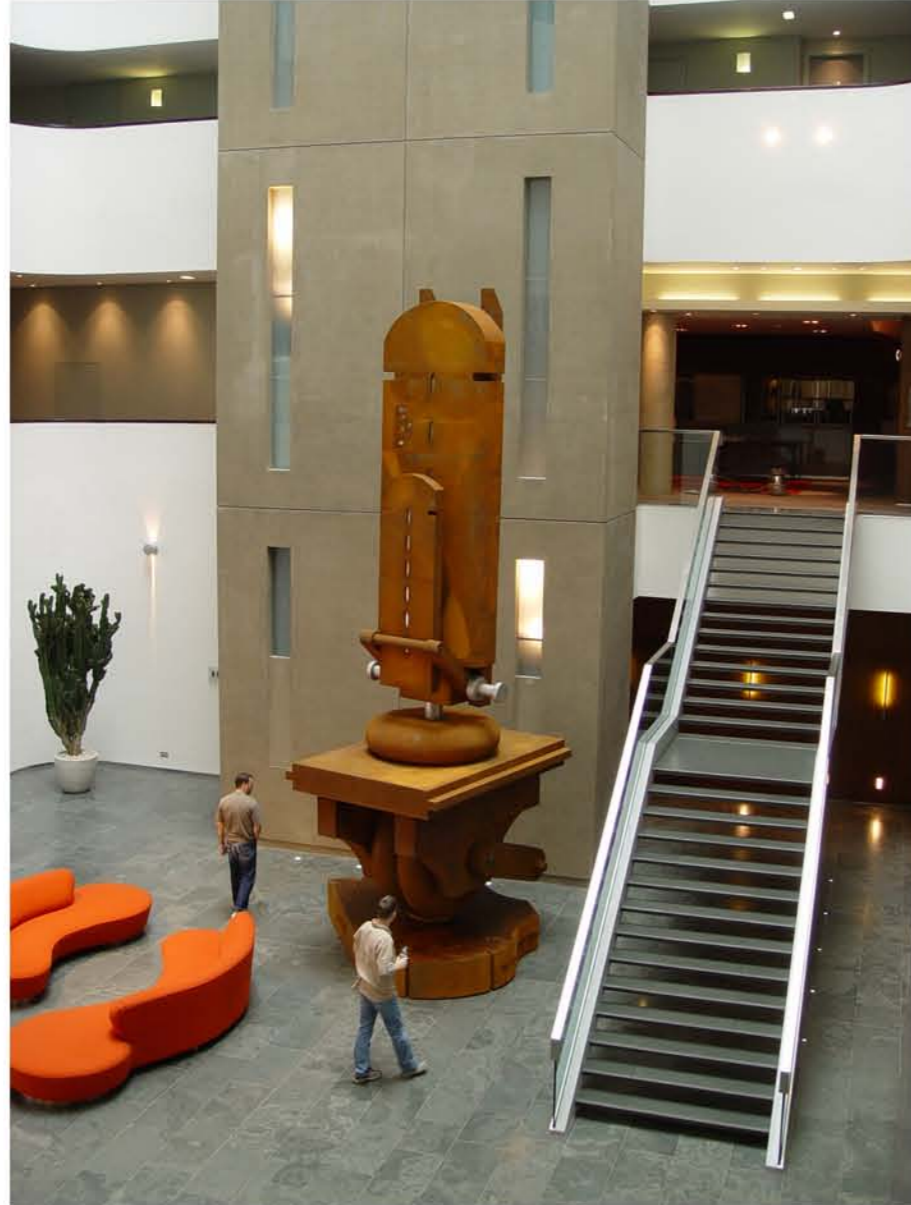


3. *Pound Mill* (maquette)

Painted cast aluminium

Height : 33 cm (1 ft 1 in)

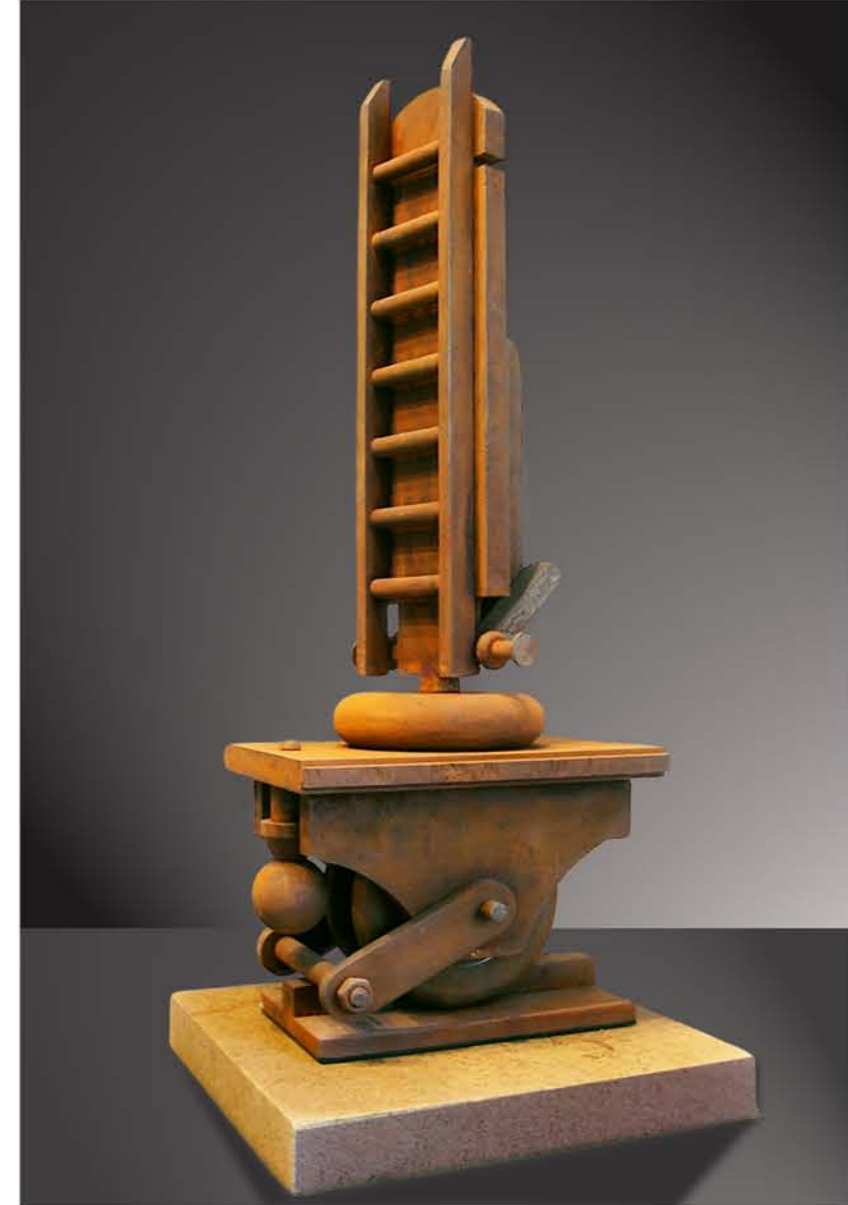
Dal Fabro's Chariot



Corten & stainless steel

Commissioned by Beetham Organization
For Beetham Towers, Liverpool

Height : 920 cm (30 ft 2 in)



4. *Dal Fabro's Chariot* (maquette)

Corten steel

Height : 66 cm (2 ft 2 in)

The Clicker



Bronze

Commissioned by The Friends of the New Walk, Leicester

Height : 244 cm (8 ft)



5. *The Clicker* (maquette)

Bronze

Height : 57 cm (1 ft 10 in)

Strange Meeting



Marble & granite

Commissioned by Beijing Municipal Government
for Olympic Park, Beijing

Height : 250 cm (8 ft 2 in)

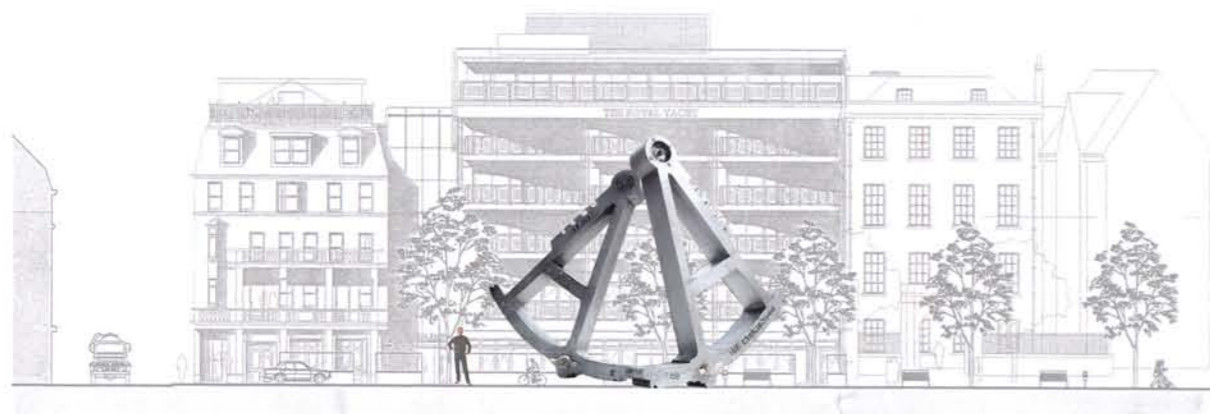


6. *Strange Meeting* (maquette)

Marble and granite

Height : 35 cm (1 ft 2 in)

Twin Sextant



Stainless steel and granite

Visualisation of project for Jersey Sculpture Trust
The Weighbridge regeneration project, St. Helier, Jersey



7. *Twin Sextant* (maquette)

Granite

Height : 44 cm (1 ft 5 in)

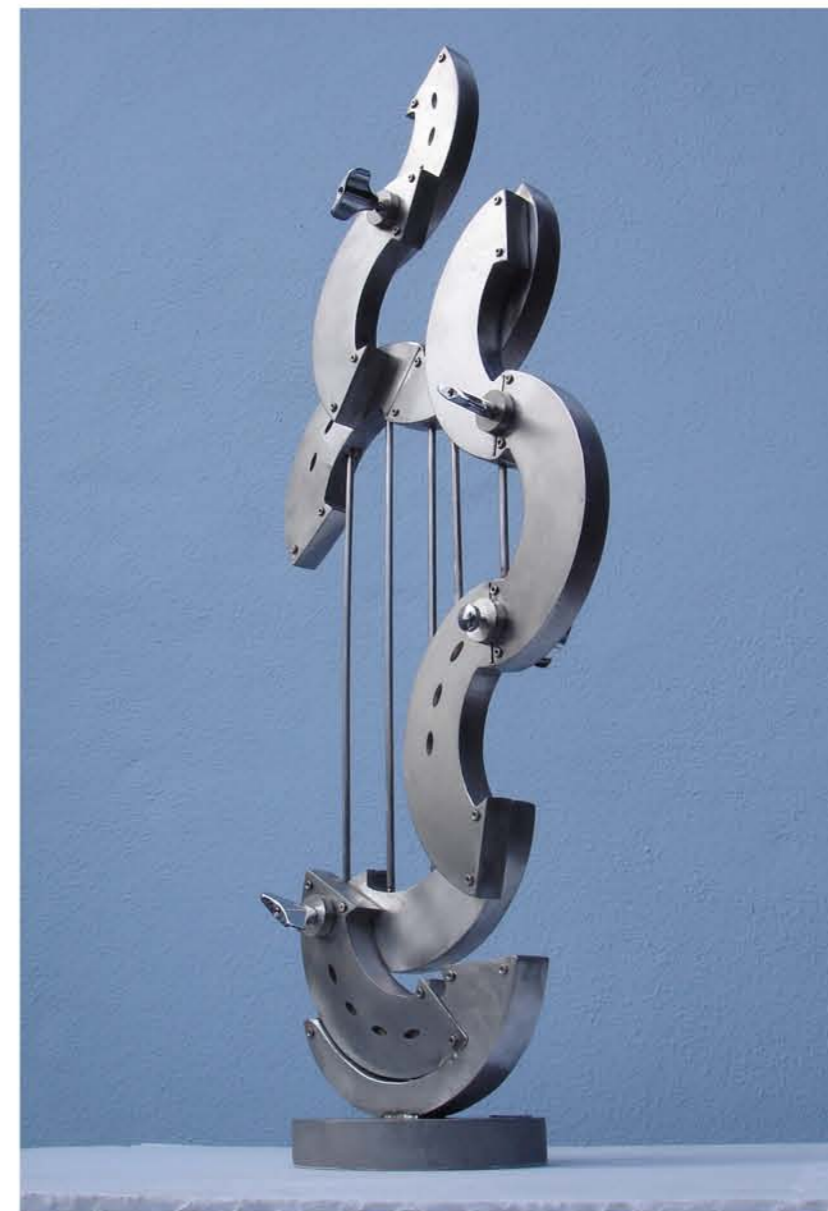
Hard Bop



Visualisation of Hard Bop Stainless steel

Commissioned by Laramar Group LLC
For Fillmore Plaza, San Francisco. CA

Height : 490 cm (16 ft 10 in)



8. *Hard Bop* (maquette)

Stainless steel

Height : 57 cm (1 ft 10 in)

Hunter and Trap



9. *Hunter and Trap*

Cast aluminium

Height : 50 cm (1 ft 8 in)

Clicker II



10. *Clicker II*

Stainless steel

Height : 61 cm (2 ft)

Landing Gear



Corten & stainless steel & rope

Commissioned by The Royal British Society of Sculptors
Through open competition for the RBS forecourt exhibition

Height : 250 cm (8 ft 2 in)



11. *Landing Gear*

Available for sale by appointment
Location : Artist's Studio

Height : 250 cm (8 ft 2 in)

NZ323135



Corten & stainless steel

Commissioned by Arts Council Commissions North
On behalf of City & Northern (Newcastle upon Tyne)
For Morton Palms Business Park

Height : 260 cm (8 ft 6 in)



By Hook or by Crook



Corten steel & stainless steel & oak

Commissioned by Tesco Ireland
For Wexford, Ireland
To celebrate the site of Pierce Engineering
County Wexford

Height : 580 cm (19 ft)

The Klansman



Steel, galvanized steel, stainless steel, glass

England Representative
EMAAR International Sculpture Symposium
Dubai, U.A.E.
Sculpture commissioned for the Burgh Dubai

Height : 427 cm (14 ft)

CURRICULUM VITAE

Publications

The Navigator, ISBN 0-906688-40-X
Scorched Earth, ISBN 1-900856-41-7
Distant Voices, ISBN 1-900856-30-1
Cut, The Made and the Unmade, ISBN 0-9704605-0-3
Cut, ISBN 1 901560 65 1

2008 **Fillmore Center Plaza** public art commission. Collaboration with Sculpturesite Gallery: Axis Architects: Laramar Group. Fillmore Neighbourhood, San Francisco, USA.

Phoenix Parkway. Site specific gateway feature for historic site, Corby. Collaboration with Wilson Bowden Developers: CORUS: SGP Architects and Masterplanners

2007 **Landscape Institute Award**. Breaking Boundaries, Ashford. Collaboration: Whitelaw Turkington (Landscape Architects)

Rootstein Hopkins Award. Drawing

The Clicker. Bronze. The Friends of the New Walk. Leicester. Collaboration with Munro & Whitten, Landscape Architects

Strange Meeting. 3m x 3m x 3m. Marble. Beijing City Space Sculpture Exhibition. China

By Hook or by Crook. Bronze/ oak/ steel. Commissioned by Tesco Ireland for the site of Pierce Engineering, Wexford, Ireland.

Lead Artist-Kent County Council. Collaboration, Jacobs and Whitelaw Turkington, (Landscape Architects), Ashford ring road project. On-going project into 2008.

2006 **Pound Mill**. Stainless steel, corten and concrete. Site-specific urban regeneration of the historical site, "Meeting of the "Two Rivers", Staines. Spellthorne Borough Council

Morton Palms. Phase 2.State of the art Business Park in Darlington. Commissioned by Commissions North, Newcastle upon Tyne. Collaboration with Red Box Design, Architects and funded by City & Northern (Developers). <http://www.commissionsnorth.org/showcase/portfolio/276>

Breaking Boundaries. Lead Artist appointed by Kent County Council to collaborate with Whitelaw Turkington Architects on urban regeneration project in Ashford Kent. Works will include developing site sensitive sculpture, paving, seating, features and other works within the proposed new Elwick Road/West Street district, Ashford

2005 **NZ323135**. 5 meter tall cor ten & stainless steel. Commissioned by City & Northern (Developers) in collaboration with Red Box Design (Architects), and Wardell Armstrong, (Landscape Architects): Newcastle upon Tyne in collaboration with Arts Council, Commissions North. Morton Palms Business Park Development, Darlington, Co, Durham. Unveiled by Rt. Hon. Alan Milburn MP

The Great Artistic Metropolis. Exhibitor and delegate. Oxford House, Bethnal Green Landor conference hosted by Art & Architecture Journal

Bowes Moor. 3-meter tall, wall-based sculpture. Commissioned by Systems Engineering Innovation Centre, Holywell Park UK. Celebration of collaboration with B.A.E. and unveiled by Mr. Ron Dennis, C.O.E McLaren/Mercedes

Sculpture & Design: Symposium. Faculty of Arts & Architecture, University of Brighton: Plenary panel member and exhibitor. Supported by the Henry Moore Foundation.

2004 **The Klansman**. 4-meter tall steel and glass sculpture. Commissioned by EMAAR and Air Emirates for the Burgh Dubai, Dubai, U.A.E. Assistance from Carillion PLC

England representative. Stone & Steel Sculpture symposium. Dubai. Sponsored by EMAAR, Air Emirates and Systems Engineering, Dubai

Dal Fabro's Chariot. 30 feet tall corten & stainless steel sculpture for Beetham Towers, Liverpool. Sculpture selected as Tate Liverpool's audit of Public Sculpture, City of Culture 2008. Commissioned by Beetham

Organisation and collaboration with Carillion PLC, Aedus Architects Ltd and PlanArt Ltd. Beetham Tower, Old Hall Street, Liverpool, UK. Art & Architecture Journal.

Sentinel. 3.5-meter tall sculpture. Cor ten & stainless steel. Selection via international jury panel for **Sculpture by the Sea**. Invited Artist. International Sculpture Exhibition, Bondi coastline, Sydney, Australia. Sponsored by Kodak, Sydney Water, Waverley Council, SXS.

Sculpture within the Urban Environment. Conference. Keynote speaker "The first Ten years" collaboration with Cass Sculpture Foundation, UK, at the **Art Gallery of NSW**, Sydney Australia.

2003 **The Signaler**. 24 feet tall, corten & stainless steel. Commissioned by Highland Metrobrook PLC. Collaboration with REID International (Architects): John Rowan & Partners: The Rushes, Loughborough, UK

The Navigator. 18 feet tall cor ten & stainless steel sculpture. Commissioned by Ipswich Borough Council, The River Action Group, Commissions East, and Arts Council for Orwell Riverside Development, Ipswich, UK

John Atkin, Sculpture & Drawings. Solo exhibition of drawings and sculptures relating to the Orwell Riverside Project. Publication launch, "The Navigator", ISBN 0-906688-40-X

1st Guilin International Sculpture Exhibition, Guilin. China. Competition selection, juried panel, and sculpture retained for permanent outdoor sculpture collection

Railway Rumble. Internal entrance lobby commission, commissioned by Conran & Partners. Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, London

Other selected project partners on recent successful commissions include:

Goyne Adams. Architects & Masterplanners

PRC Architects Ltd

Kingston Design Review Panel Member. Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames

LDA Design. Landscape Architects and Masterplanners

River Action Group, Ipswich

Commissions East, Cambridge

Beetham Organization

Aedas Architects Ltd

PlanArt London

Carillion PLC

Highland Metrobrook PLC

John Rowan & Partners

EMAAR Dubai

Systems Engineering Dubai

Mirage Glass Dubai

Murray & Associates, Dublin, Ireland

Conran & Partners

Wardell Armstrong Landscape Architects

City & Northern Planners & Developers

Commissions North, Newcastle upon Tyne

Joe Doyle Architects, Dublin, Ireland

Current project partners include:

Jersey Sculpture Trust; Waterside Development Agency. Jersey

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, K+20 Urban Regeneration program

Kent County Council, Ashford Ring Road. Champions Group. Jacobs Landscape Architects, Master Planners

Friends of the New Walk, Leicester. Stage-2 sculpture project

WB Group Development. Landscape & Environment. Landscape Architects & Masterplanners

SGP. Architects & Planners. Leicester

Beijing Olympic Committee, Beijing, China

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