



WORCESTER
COLLEGE
OXFORD

SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: *THE STORYTELLERS*

Contemporary figurative sculpture in
a hidden garden

Worcester College, Oxford, 1 May – 5 July 2026
Press view Tuesday 28 April 2026

Curated by Iwona Blazwick and Katie Delamere,
Curators Inc.



Grace Schwindt. *When I Remember Through You*, 2025

Reza Aramesh, Leilah Babirye, Anderson Borba, Dorothy Cross, Hazel Dowling, Kira Freije, Elisabeth Frink, Antony Gormley, Jarad Jackson, Oren Pinhassi, Lucia Pizzani, Grace Schwindt, Daniel Silver, Renee So, Francis Upritchard

A magical park sets the stage for an exploration of figurative sculpture today.

Right in the heart of Oxford, yet hidden behind a medieval wall, lie the grounds of Worcester College – complete with a park, lake and orchard. Fourteen artists hailing from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Oceania will take visitors on a journey around Worcester College's verdant gardens and historic architecture, each with a story to tell.

Artists around the world are turning again to the body in sculpture. Their outdoor statuary may draw on ancient or indigenous forms; it may metamorphose from human to vegetal. Some sculptures are totemic, others expressionist. Each work engages us in a drama that may be poetic, symbolic or sensual. Two 2025 graduates from The Ruskin School of Art will create performances that will animate both sculpture and landscape.

The exhibition is structured in five acts, each inspired by a line from Shakespeare, as a tribute to the outdoor plays performed for over 90 years by the Buskins, Worcester's student dramatic society – the oldest in Oxford.

Act 1 commences in the central quad framed by medieval cottages and a Hawksmoor façade; *We know what we are, but not what we may be* features sculpture by **Antony Gormley, Kira Freije** and **Daniel Silver** each of whom explore form as a state of becoming. A lush herbaceous garden frames Act 2: *One touch of nature makes the whole world kin* with sculptures that metamorphose the human into the vegetal by **Anderson Borba, Lucia Pizzani** and **Grace Schwindt**. **Dorothy Cross** and **Reza Aramesh** appear in Act 3: *Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones*, their marble statuary arranged around an ornamental lake, infused with poignant expressionism. In Act 4: *There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture* figures by **Elisabeth Frink** and **Francis Upritchard** are occupied in a parallel world. Act 5: *Thou, Nature, art my goddess* sees

Leilah Babirye, Oren Pinhassi and Renee So delve into cultural tradition and identity to create totemic deities.

Hazel Dowling with **Lorna Ough** and **Jarad Jackson** stage performances that bring together dance, poetry and the remarkable natural environment that unfolds across the Worcester College campus.

The exhibition is free of charge and is generously supported by the *Sculpture in the Garden Patrons Circle*; Hiscox and Art Fabrications.

Provost of Worcester College, David Isaac, Lord Isaac CBE, said: *“Worcester is a forward-looking college that supports its students to excel academically and to engage in society, including through the arts. For the past 300 years, Worcester’s magnificent gardens have played host to generations of students and Shakespeare plays. Sculpture is a natural fit in our grounds and I’m delighted that The Storytellers will showcase the work of exciting contemporary sculptors; it will undoubtedly please and provoke our students in equal measure. I can’t wait to see how these phenomenal works respond to our big green canvas and how the Worcester community responds to them in turn.”*

Sculpture in the Garden: The Storytellers

1 May – 5 July 2026

Worcester College, University of Oxford

Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HB

Opening times, Tues-Sun, see Worcester College website for admission details

www.worc.ox.ac.uk/storytellers

More on *The Storytellers*: <https://www.instagram.com/worcestercollegeoxford>

Free Entry

PRESS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

ARTISTS

Reza Aramesh

Born in Iran and now based in London, Aramesh's exquisitely carved sculptures transform images of conflict and suffering into classical figurative forms. Working in marble, bronze and wood he restages scenes of violence - often drawn from media coverage of war - through the lens of Western art history and religious iconography. Aramesh's work confronts themes of power, race, masculinity and martyrdom, creating haunting allegories of endurance and vulnerability.

Exhibitions include Museum of Fine Arts, St Petersburg, Florida (2025); Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Maine (2025); Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2025); Bienal de la Habana (2025); Chiesa San Fantin, Venice (2024); Muntref Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires (2024); Royal Academy of Art, London (2021); Fitzwilliam Museum's Octagon Gallery, Cambridge, UK (2020); and Sculpture in the City, London (2019-2022). He is represented by Dastan Gallery, Tehran.

Leilah Babirye

Babirye's remarkable sculptures combine roughly hewn wood, tangles of salvaged bikes and rope with the lustrous surface of glazed ceramics, drawing on an African visual language of masks and totems. Having been forced to flee Uganda, Babirye found asylum in New York in 2018 where she now lives and works. She creates ambiguously gendered figures that express the struggle to assert a sexual identity and to pay tribute to the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community.

Recent exhibitions include the De Young Museum, San Francisco (2024), the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2024), *Liquid Gender* at the Sainsbury Centre (2024) and Frieze Sculpture (2023). Babirye was shortlisted by High Line Art for the Fifth and Sixth Plinth Commissions on the High Line at 30th Street, New York and will exhibit a solo show at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in 2026. She is represented by Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin and London; and Gordon Robichaux, New York.

Anderson Borba

Based in London, Brazilian artist Anderson Borba burns, chisels and sutures the surfaces of rough and inexpensive materials, leaving visible joints that embrace the process of making. A distinctive trait in Borba's approach is the synthesis of traditional craft and contemporary modes of expression, such as digitally manipulated imagery. Taking cues from both art-historical canons of sculpture and the self-taught craftsmen of inner Brazil, the artist's process-oriented approach results in tactile abstractions that set off bodily allusions as one circles the space around them, shifting our perception of proportion, mass and shape.

Borba's recent solo shows include: *Secret Ceremony*, The Approach, London, UK (2025); *Anderson Borba & Dudi Maia Rosa*, Auroras, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); *Anderson Borba & Gokula Stoffel*, François Ghebaly, New York, USA (2024); *I've seen one of these*, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo, Brazil (2022). He is represented by Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel and The Approach, London.

Dorothy Cross

Born in Cork but based in Connemara, Cross' work ranges from object to opera, sculpture to photography. The work also moves between gallery or museum and external projects that may take years to make - and may only exist for a short time. Her recent project *KINSHIP* (2025) involved the return of the body of an Egyptian man to Cairo who had been in Ireland for 100 years and had been buried in Egypt 2000 years ago. Much of the work looks at time and transformation, and what may be considered sacred or maligned. Shark-skins gilded with pure gold, operas in handball alleys, feet carved in marble from around the world and kisses cast in silver taken from the inside of two mouths.

Recent exhibitions include: '*Veins of Other*', Kerlin Gallery (2024); '*Damascus Rose*', Frith Street Gallery (2022), Termenherre Sculpture Park, Cornwall (2022), Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, (2015) and '*Connemara*', Turner Contemporary (2013). She has represented Ireland in several biennials including Venice in 1993, Istanbul 1999 and Sydney 2025. She is represented by Kerlin Gallery, Dublin and Frith Street Gallery, London .

Hazel Dowling

Dowling's practice engages with moving image, performance and text, staging filmic and performative encounters. Movement and motion often act as elliptical prisms for topics such as familial trauma and histories of land use and labour. Dance has been a field of enquiry that she has approached through the practices of animism, the somatic and spiritual principles; so that being in motion displaces language centred on ontology, moving from the verbal to an embodied knowledge of specific ecosystems.

Graduating from The Ruskin School in 2025, recent projects include 'Brightling Woods', a collaborative singing project with Lorna Ough, performed at Modern Art Oxford in 2025; and shows and residencies with The Blackshed Gallery, East Sussex, Worcester College, University of Oxford, Kommunal Kunst Og Teknik, Copenhagen, Joya, Spain, Chisenhale Dance Space, London and Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh.

Kira Freije

Living and working in London Freije uses strips of stainless steel metal to create life-sized figures that are like 3D drawings; yet their hands, feet and faces are cast from the artist's body or people who are important to the artist. Sometimes wearing costumes or surrounded by props, the figures interact, their gestures evoking emotional narratives, art historical tableaux, or historical periods or events. Yet they maintain an enigmatic ambiguity.

Freije completed her BFA at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford before postgraduate studies at Royal Academy Schools. Recent solo exhibitions include *Unspeak the Chorus*, The Hepworth Wakefield (2025-2026) travelling to Modern Art Oxford; *The Throat is a Threaded Melody*, E-WERK Luckenwalde, Germany; *river by night* , Cample Line (2023). She is represented by The Approach Gallery, London.

Elisabeth Frink

Celebrated for her bronze and stone figures, totemic male heads and animals, Frink is one of the towering figures of 20th century sculpture. Her 1993 *Times* obituary noted the three essential themes in her work as "the nature of Man; the 'horseness' of horses; and the divine in human form". Her childhood was overshadowed by the Second World War and her sculptures often explored the crisis of post-war masculinity, heroism and vulnerability.

Frink was only 28 when she began showing with London and New York galleries; she was included in the Royal Academy summer show in 1971 and was the subject of a retrospective there in 1985. She created numerous public commissions including *The Dorset Martyrs* in Dorchester 1986. Her work is held in the UK's Ashmolean Museum, British Museum, Tate, V&A and Yorkshire Sculpture Park collections.

Antony Gormley

Gormley is widely acclaimed for his sculptures, installations and public artworks that investigate the relationship of the human body to space. His work has developed the potential opened up by sculpture since the 1960s through a critical engagement with both his own body and those of others in a way that confronts fundamental questions of where human beings stand in relation to nature and the cosmos.

Gormley's work has been exhibited worldwide with recent shows at Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2025), Musée Rodin, Paris (2023-24), Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg (2022), National Gallery Singapore (2021) and the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019). Permanent works include *Angel of the North*, Gateshead and *Another Place*, Crosby Beach. He is represented by White Cube, Hong Kong, London, New York, Thaddaeus Ropac, London, Paris, Salzburg, Xavier Hufkens, Brussels and Galleria Continua, Beijing, Havana, San Gimignano, Paris, Rome.

Jarad Jackson

Drawing on his training from the Royal Ballet School, Jackson explores the body as sculpture. He enjoys the notion of 'set' as both a fixed state and as a pretend environment; continually attempting ways of maintaining all objects mobile. Jackson graduated from the Ruskin School of Art in 2025, where his degree show was awarded the Mansfield-Ruddock Highly Commended Prize.

During his studies, Jackson won the Egerton Coghill Landscape Prize and a 650th Trust Fund Award, which supported a period of research in Rome. He was also elected a Michel Scholar at The Queen's College, Oxford. Jackson has exhibited and performed in group exhibitions in Oxford and London, and premiered a new performance for Modern Art Oxford LIVE in the autumn of 2025.

Lorna Ough

Ough's UK based practice as an artist, writer, curator and vocalist explores our relationship to the more than human world, specialising in immersive, participatory projects – she is working in partnership with Hazel Dowling. Ough is fascinated by animism, folkloric figures, crows and imagined inner worlds of household objects. One of her favourite quotes is from Dorothea Tanning 'keep an eye on your inner world, and keep away from ads, idiots and movie stars.'

Ough has worked with numerous galleries and curated exhibitions at The Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, ONCA Gallery, Brighton and Cathkin Park, Glasgow. Additionally, she is currently Curator and Programme Coordinator at blackShed Gallery in Sussex and co-coordinates for Culture Declares Emergency.

Oren Pinhassi

Pinhassi translates documentary images of conflict and translates them into sculptural compositions that borrow the visual language of classical European iconography, creating a critical conversation with its historical lineage and definitions of beauty in order to explore the relationship between beauty and violence. Through marble, bronze, embroidery, photography and drawing, scenes of brutality are configured into contemplative forms that suspend the

moment between terror and stillness. The figures exist in a heightened state between fragments, looking at how representation can reshape our understanding of history.

Pinhassi lives and works in New York and has exhibited in the UK, the US and Europe. Recent solo shows include *Into Your Arm's Length*, Arts Club Chicago (2026); Edel Assanti Gallery, London (2024), Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2024). He is represented by Edel Assanti and Lehmann Maupin galleries.

Lucía Pizzani

UK based Pizzani channels her Venezuelan roots and background in conservation biology and environmental activism into a multimedia practice of ceramics, photography, print, drawing, performance and installation. She explores the entangled histories of women, plants and migration using clay, seeds and solar prints to weave together human and botanical legacies. Her 2025 show *Clay, seeds and other ancestors* at Frieze Studios in London blended talismanic clay sculptures with drawings and performance, reflecting on language, ancestry and the survival of material cultures across time.

Her work is part of public and private collections such as the TATE, Magasin3 Museum of Contemporary Art (Stockholm), Essex Collection for Art from Latin America (Colchester) and Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (New York/Caracas). Recent shows and collaborations include: SEEDS for the Serpentine Gallery, London (2025), Amazon Biennial, Brazil (2025), Harewood Biennial, UK (2024), *Planet B Climate Change and the new sublime* curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, Venice (2022), Casa Wabi, Oaxaca (Permanent public sculpture), and Frieze Sculpture, London (2025) amongst others. She is part of the 2nd edition of Climate Biennial in Vienna and her first UK institutional show at Focal Point Gallery, Southend (2026) tours to KARST, Plymouth in June and to Mostyn, Wales in 2027.

Grace Schwindt

German born but London based, performance artist, film maker, painter and sculptor Schwindt creates, in her words, 'defiant bodies', that survive stress through adaptation. 'I strive to bring traumas to light, rather than concealing them as we often do. By exposing vulnerability, one can transform it into a source of strength. Or perhaps it is both: strength and vulnerability.' Her sculptures fuse different mediums such as bronze, wood, and ceramics with painterly coloured glazes, unfolding visual narratives that explore the effects of capitalist culture on the body and psyche of the individual. She analyses the role that bodies, language and objects play in the construction of history and memory.

Solo shows include: *A Boxer's Dream*, Tanks Shanghai, China (2026); *A History of Touch* at the M-Museum Leuven, Belgium (2025). She has shown across Europe including Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland, Kunsthall Gent, Belgium, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow, Museum of Contemporary Art, Vigo, Spain and Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, Belgium. Her exhibition *Only the Free Individual Can Create a Free Society* toured the UK and Germany between 2014 and 2016. She is represented by the Peter Kilchmann Gallery, Paris/ Zurich.

Daniel Silver

Silver's sculptural installations combine the art of antiquity with modernism and Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Using concrete, bronze, marble, stone, wood and clay his works look like fragments of a ruined monument. He uses sculpture to explore what it is to be human, both physically and psychologically. Silver's 2013 Artangel installation *Dig*, set in an excavation site

in London, laid plaster body parts out on archaeologists' tables alongside bearded heads of ancient patriarchs. In a 2019 commission for the Mithraeum Bloomberg Space monumental figures reared up like pagan gods. Like Freud, Silver draws on mythology to explore unconscious states.

Silver lives and works in London. Recent solo shows include *Uncanny Valley*, Frith Street Gallery, London (2024); *The Walking Moon*, Time Traveller, Sweden (2023). He has exhibited in the UK and internationally, including Camden Arts Centre, London, the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, NEON Foundation, Athens, Kunsthaus Glarus, the Hepworth Wakefield and London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE. He is represented by Frith Street Gallery, London.

Renee So

Working across ceramics, textiles and glass, Renee So creates figures and vessels that weave together cross-cultural craft histories with representations of the female form. Drawing on ritual masks, prehistoric Venus figurines, Bellarmine jugs and imperial snuff bottles, her work blends humour and critique to explore authority, history and everyday mythologies.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Commodities: Sculpture and Ceramics by Renee So*, Compton Verney, UK (2025); *The Essence*, Lowry, Salford, UK (2024); Kate MacGarry, London (2024) and *Provenance*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, Australia and UNSW Galleries, Sydney, Australia (2023). She is represented by Kate MacGarry, London.

Francis Upritchard

Upritchard's work draws on figurative sculpture, blending references from literature to ancient sculptures, burial grounds to science fiction. Her installations showcase a wide variety of materials; her distinctive figurative sculptures are made using polymer plastic, amorphous mythological figures in balata - a natural rubber, bronze dinosaurs, glass vessels and ceramic urns.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Any Noise Annoys an Oyster*, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2024), *A Loose Hold*, Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel, Switzerland (2022), *Wetwang Slack*, Barbican Gallery, London (2022), *Paper, Creature, Stone*, Christchurch Gallery, New Zealand, the Art Gallery of New South Wales where she recently unveiled a major public sculpture (2022) and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2014). Upritchard represented her native New Zealand at the Venice Biennale (2009) and is represented by Kate MacGary Gallery, London and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

CURATORS

Iwona Blazwick was formerly Director of Whitechapel Gallery, Head of Exhibitions at Tate Modern and at London's ICA. She has curated numerous solo and group shows of modern and contemporary art around the world including outdoor sculpture shows in Greece, the UK and the US. She is Lead Curator for Wadi AlFann, Arts AlUla, KSA and serves on London's *Fourth Plinth* and *Sculpture in the City* advisory boards. She has published widely on the art, artists and art institutions of our time.

Katie Delamere is an independent curator and producer who works closely with artists to realise ambitious sculptural and interdisciplinary projects bringing art into dialogue with architecture, landscape and place. Recent projects include Lawrence Lek's exhibition *NOX*:

Confessions of a Machine at the ArtScience Museum, Singapore (2026), his new commission for the V&A Storehouse and his Frieze Artist Award in 2024. A member of the curatorial team for Desert X AlUla 2024, KSA Delamere produced Tschabalala Self's commission *Seated*, Coal Drops Yard, (2022) and Tracey Emin's HS1 Terrace Wires Commission, *I want my time with you*, at St Pancras International (2018).

Curators Inc. is a curatorial studio specializing in art commissions, exhibitions and programmes in public spaces and institutions within the UK and abroad.

WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

Worcester College was established in 1714 on the site of a much older educational community founded by Benedictine monks in the 13th century. As the only 18th century foundation still extant in the University of Oxford, Worcester is home to a unique combination of medieval monastic buildings, genre-defining Georgian neo-classicism, and the best of award-winning contemporary architecture – all set against 26 acres of lush gardens. Wrapped around a 200-year-old lake, the gardens include stunning formal lawns, exuberant planting, wildflower meadows, a working orchard, hundreds of mature trees, and the only playing fields within an Oxford college. The gardens as we know them today were first laid out at the beginning of the 19th century and it was at the beginning of the 20th that a team of gardeners began to grow in order to tend them; today's team of 9 ranges from apprentices to senior gardeners and groundspeople, working together to help Worcester flourish.

The College's diverse community brings together over 700 students, 250 academics and staff, and more than 8,000 alumni around the world. We believe that a Worcester education should be accessible to all with the ability and potential to benefit from it. Worcester's students come from all walks of life, with more than 85% of UK undergraduates educated in the state sector and a fifth admitted from the most disadvantaged areas of the country; the diversity of our people is reflected in the College's academic excellence and supportive community. While taking pride in our long heritage, Worcester is a forward-looking college that balances tradition with modernity and strives to prepare students for the world of the future.

Simon Bagnall, Head of Gardens & Grounds, joined Worcester College in 2002 and leads the team of gardeners and groundspeople dedicated to maintaining the College's 26 acres of Grade II* listed parkland. Trained in horticulture, Simon started his gardening career at Oxford's Lady Margaret Hall. Work on a private estate and at Trinity College, Oxford led him to be appointed as Worcester's Head Gardener, the sixth holder of this position since 1922. Simon has spent the past two decades getting to know Worcester's unique landscape while adding his own mark to the gardens. From overseeing the transformation of the College's iconic herbaceous borders and designing the contemporary planting around award-winning new buildings, to leading developments in arboriculture and sustainability, Simon has helped to cement the reputation of Worcester's gardens in Oxford and beyond. His popular Instagram account @worcestercollegegardener continues to inspire audiences old and new.