

# CONTEMPORARY RUSTIC ART

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**Qualifications** B.A.(Hons.) Politics. Certificate in moral philosophy. Accredited F.E. teacher in woodland management and crafts. Community art celebrant.

## Active long term projects

**Stanholme. 1992-current.** 'Stanholme' is an off-grid and unplugged vintage wood cabin (as studio) located in a semi-ancient Northumberland woodland. What better place to observe the unfolding tragedy of neoliberal climate chaos, mass extinction event and the collapse of western civilisation.

**Tree circus. 1994-current.** Tree circus' is a live 'nature craft' sylvan artwork located next to the public footpath at Stanholme. In this artwork topiary skills are used to create weird trees that perform spooky shapes for our amusement and reflection.

**Writing. 1998-current.** My current 2019 free pamphlet is titled 'NATURE CURE POLITICS'. This pamphlet claims that global capitalism needs to be replaced by something better. Think global reforestation and global rewilding creating a healthy, pacifist and future fit civilisation. This campaign pamphlet is the latest in an endless stream of propaganda leaflets in the war against normality.

**Narrative watercolours. 2010-current.** A total of thirty two A2 watercolour paintings have been completed. They collectively explore our post truth and post natural outsider world. Out of the thirty two completed twenty four are now seeking exhibition and sale.

**Meditation as art. 2015-current.** Public/private formal meditation as art in one hour slots. Meditation as art began on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Between that date and the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 a total of 2,272 one hour session had been completed. The work continues.

## Current

**Flotilla 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019-current.** Flotilla consists of seven handmade toy sailing boats that will be photographed in and around local Whittle Dene burn. Sailing to 'that other shore' the flotilla will be photographed on sacred days using a vintage 35mm camera. The final results will be presented as untouched A2 colour prints.

## Recent

**Mail art intervention. 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018-23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018.** In this mail art project a total of 193 'NATURE CURE POLITICS' leaflets were posted to targeted politicians, columnists, NGO's, celebrities, church leaders and the like. Each letter contained the two sides A4 'NATURE CURE POLITICS' leaflet itself and a 'Nature cure politics' A4 press release with hand written complementary slip. This mail art project was very much in the tradition of the letter writing campaigns undertaken by the suffragettes and Buddhist activists.

**Laing 15<sup>th</sup> August-6<sup>th</sup> October 2018.** Laing was in part a performance and involved seventeen visits to the Laing art Gallery, Newcastle during its 'Enchanted Garden' exhibition. A total of nineteen and a half hours were spent reflecting on

Stanley Spencer's 'The dustman or the lovers' during this exhibition. This painting remains an endless source of wonder and seems even more relevant as we turn planet earth in a plastic coated toxic dump.

## Historic

**'In Tara we trust' 1<sup>st</sup> January-31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.** A broadsheet of 1166 words on two sides of A4 that promoted the idea of a Buddhist post capitalist and post-industrial utopia. This was both a mailart project and hand distributed propaganda campaign.

**Mothership drawings 2004-2009.** Pencil drawings on paper that began in 2004. Exhibition at Northumbria University as part of the 'Northern spaces group show'.

**Living with a landslide 2009.** Self-publication of artist book in limited edition of 200. In full colour this graphic collage format 60 page publication explored apocalyptic climate change and was distributed free.

**Waygood wood 2008.** The creation and performance management of a thirty tree mobile wood. The wood itself consisted of 30 assorted indigenous 2 metre tall trees planted in handmade wooden crates fitted with casters. This mobile wood was then moved around Newcastle city centre and acted as both backdrop and venue for nine Fluxes public art performances.

**Mothership drawings 2008.** Exhibition and sale of pencil drawings at the Waygood Boutique, High Bridge Street, Newcastle.

**Mothership drawings 2008.** Exhibition of pencil drawings as part of the SAGE Newcastle art fair.

**Senseless acts of beauty 2002-2007.** This work of 'tree graffiti' began in 2002 and the results were then photographically documented.

**Rustic voodoo doll 2003-2006.** This began with the making of a life sized doll out of salvaged dead elm. This doll then became the focus of photographic work.

**Fluxes mailart 2004.** In this collaborative project with Topsy Quret a CD was created and posted.

**The potting shed 2004.** In this collaborative work with Topsy Quret a working horticultural potting shed was created in an art gallery setting. This work was part of the Waygood International art fair.

**INSIDE/OUT 2003.** A BBC profile of my work.

**Gardening with the devil 2002.** A 90,000 word manuscript that reveals one year in the life of a contemporary rustic artist. Extracts from unpublished artists journals. A public performance reading of the journals extracts was performed by Carole McGaugin at the Waygood gallery.

**No home but the war 2000-2002.** Exhibition at Highbury Allotments, Newcastle. A five metre diameter Hindu Swastika was created by planting 250 willow sets and growing/pruning them for two year to form a hedge. This work received media coverage and threat of prosecution after a complaint by the Jewish community. It was an animal rights work comparing our 2001 response to the foot and mouth epidemic (in which 11 million animals were slaughtered) to the holocaust.

**Studio at Cluny, 36 Lime Street 1995-2002.** Design, creation and sale of rustic sculpture, art, furniture and interiors. As well as ongoing exhibitions, workshops and displays the annual Cluny Open studio weekend was (and remains) a regional cultural attraction.

**Woodland art and craft 1995-2003.** Creation, management and delivery of accredited woodland art and craft courses/ workshops and displays throughout the North East. Courses accredited by the Northern Collage network that I ran at Byker City Farm included woodland and coppice management, green woodworking and woodland crafts. Craft courses and creative workshops took place at venues including Queens Hall, Shipley art Gallery, Gateshead City Farm, Chopwell woods and Green Festival. Collaborative organisations included Woodland Trust, Forestry commission National trust and English heritage.

**Horse and cart art 2000.** A 'Year of the artist' major work that attracted national funding and publicity. This work involved me taking a traditional horse and cart on a six week tour of the rural villages and communities of Northumberland. The idea was to turn a traditional horse and cart into a mobile gallery of contemporary art and take the exhibition to people and places usually isolated and/or culturally excluded. Four regional artists were commissioned to create work that was then displayed on the cart. Featured on T.V. documentary 'ARTBLAST' and Radio 4 'Today' programme.

**Thinking Trees 2000.** A tree graffiti work in which the names of twelve great philosophers were carved into different trees. These were then photographed for documentation and display.

**Sunday Sun 2000.** A centrefold spread on my life and work as a rustic artist.

**Green Festival arts 2000.** The community creation of a large live art willow maze at Leazes Park, Newcastle.

**Horse and cart art 1999.** A traditional Horse and cart becomes a mobile contemporary art gallery. In this work I take a traditional horse and cart on four one day tours through the streets of central Newcastle. Each tour exhibited work by four very different contemporary artists.

Green Festival arts

**Dendrophobia 1999.** An exhibition of live potted trees that had been damaged, vandalised or mutilated. Exhibition at Stevenson Building, Newcastle as part of VANE99( Visual arts North East).

**Rustic Bestiary 1999.** An exhibition of fantasy animals made from Hazel coppice wood at Waygood gallery, Newcastle.

**Farmart 1995-1999.** A radical community art company formed with Topsy Quret. Based in and around Byker City Farm this company undertook exhibitions, performance and creative workshops with deprived inner city communities.

**Farmart Vanity Fair 1998.** An equestrian themed work in collaboration with Stepney Bank Stables. A community fair in which the highlight was horses and volunteers parading in fancy dress that was judged by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle. Fair included free food.

**Glory 1998.** A rustic themed sculptural art installation exhibition as part of VANE98.

**Rustic Chapel 1998.** A religious themed installation of rustic sculptural art at the CLUNY gallery, Newcastle as part of VANE98.

GEORGE FRENCH 2019

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