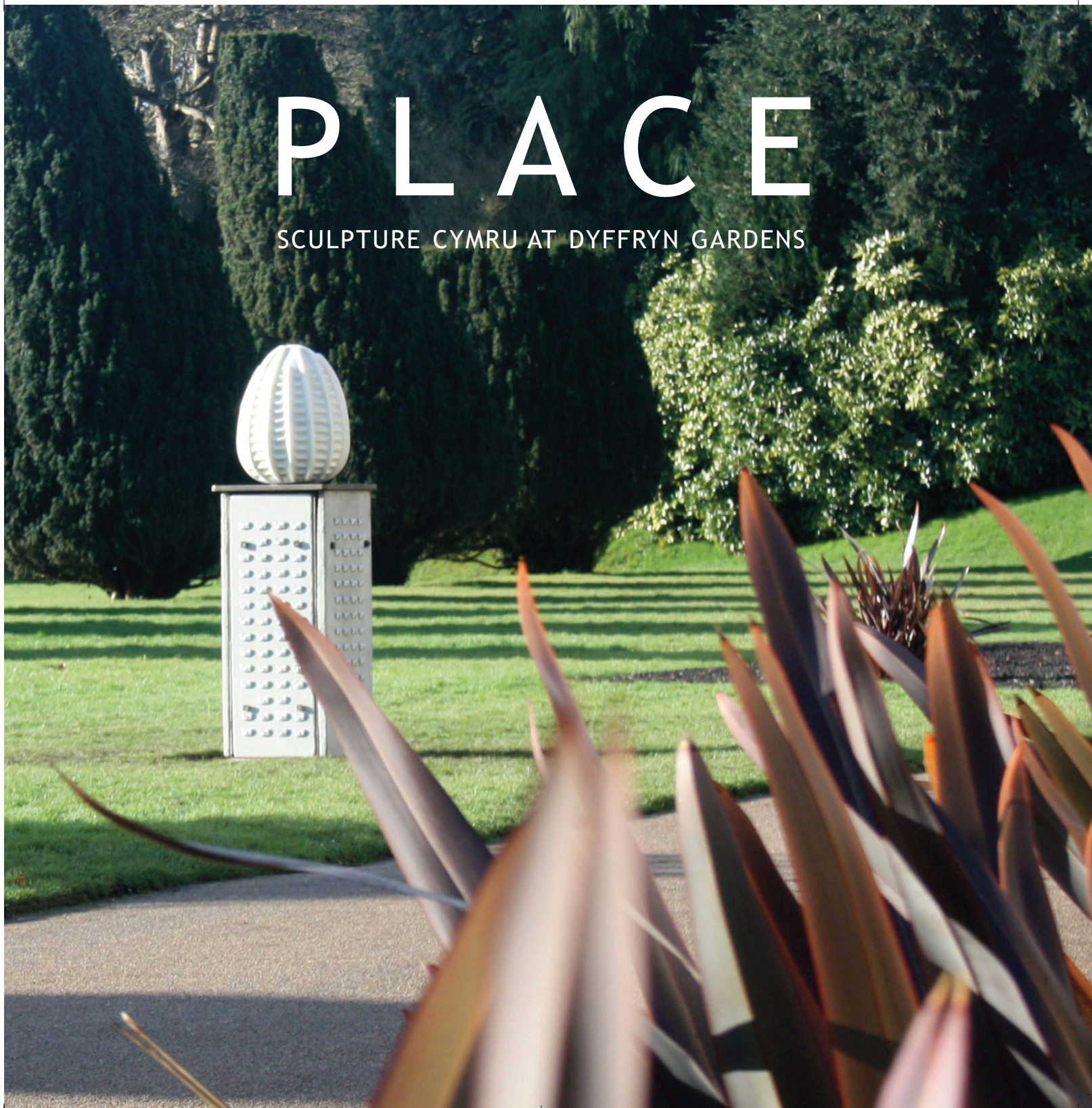
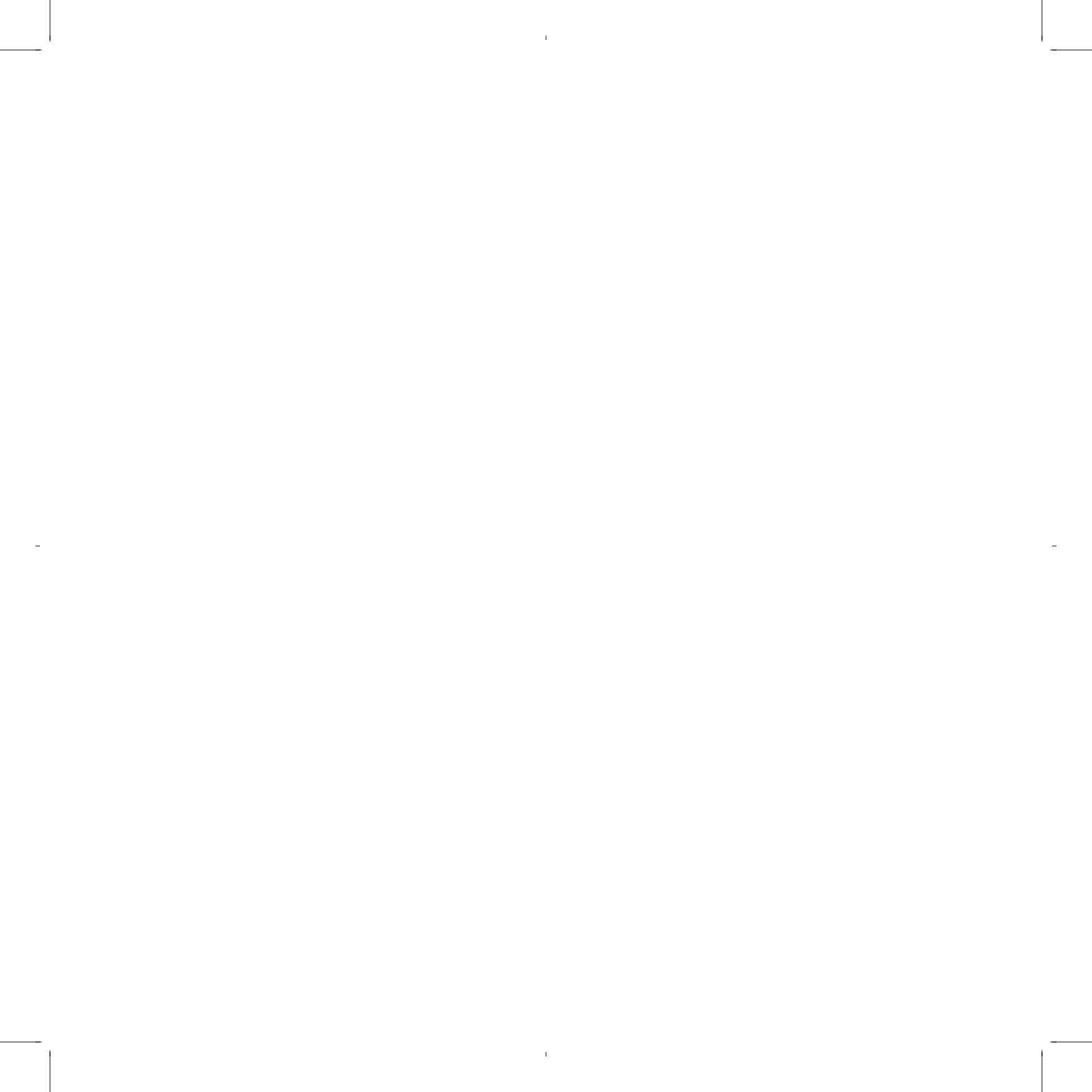


PLACE

SCULPTURE CYMRU AT DYFFRYN GARDENS





P L A C E

John Howes
Dilys Jackson
Mandy Lane
Ali Lochhead
Lyndon Mably
Glenn Morris
Lee Odishow
Valerie Coffin Price
Gwyneth Price
Sue Roberts

SCULPTURE CYMRU AT DYFFRYN GARDENS 2017

Acknowledgements

Emma Geliot trained as an artist at Cardiff School of Art & Design. It was at art school that she discovered the possibilities of sculpture and went on to co-run Sculpture at Margam in the early 1990s, before working for Cywaith Cymru . Artworks Wales (formerly The Welsh Sculpture Trust) and then as senior visual arts officer for the Arts Council of Wales for over seven years.

In 2009, she made a career shift and retrained as a journalist at Cardiff School of Journalism. As a freelancer she has written, and continues to write, for numerous periodicals and publications. In 2013, she co-founded and is editor of *CCQ* magazine. www.ccqmagazine.com

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Design: John Howes

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www.sculpturecymru.org.uk

John Howes trained as a graphic designer and worked in London for a number of years before moving to South Wales to set up his own design practice. Alongside this work he lectured at the School of Art & Design, Swansea Institute of Higher Education where he helped to develop and establish a number of courses becoming the director of the BA Fine Art programme at what is now University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Swansea.

He has been particularly active with artist groups and international exchange programmes and has been a key figure in the development of Sculpture Cymru since its inception.

SCULPTURE
cymru
SCULPTORS IN WALES



**Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust**

PLACE

Sculpture Cymru and its members are constantly exploring new ways of working together and new possibilities for the engagement of sculptors in projects that expand their practice and contribute to the general awareness and enjoyment of sculpture by the public.

The exhibition, 'Place', at Dyffryn Gardens is one such project. Here, within their works, each sculptor has explored some of the aspects of the history, design and rich plantings of the Dyffryn Gardens. From its beginnings, through its near demise due to war and now to its return to former splendour, there has been much to inspire and intrigue each sculptor. The sculptures will add to the enjoyment of visitors and encourage them in their turn to explore this special place.

Sculpture Cymru is grateful for the help and support of Gerry Donovan; General Manager, Kate Simons; Visitor Experience Manager, Chris Flynn; Head Gardener, and Jennifer Park and Rachel Morris; Marketing and Communications Officers of The National Trust at Dyffryn House and Gardens and for that of their colleagues and volunteers. Sculpture Cymru would like to thank Emma Geliot for her Introduction to this catalogue and John Howes for its design and production.

Exhibiting Sculptors

John Howes
Dilys Jackson
Mandy Lane
Ali Lochhead
Lyndon Mably
Glenn Morris
Lee Odishow
Valerie Coffin Price
Gwyneth Price
Sue Roberts

PLACE

Sculpture Cymru at Dyffryn Gardens 2017

Dyffryn Gardens, situated in the Vale of Glamorgan in South East Wales, is an outstanding Grade 1 Edwardian garden, currently under the guardianship of the National Trust since 2012.

The house, gardens and surrounding estate came to be owned by the Cory family whose wealth was based on coal and shipping. Reginald Cory, son of John Cory owner of Dyffryn, was a great collector of plants from around the world. Together with landscape architect Thomas Mawson he created a garden and arboretum of very special plants. The arboretum alone contains numerous Champion trees.

During the days of Reginald Cory the gardens flourished, but deteriorated later during the world wars when gardeners went to war and there were few left to care for flowering plants and trees. Many ornamental beds and grassed areas were turned over for vegetable growing and the nature and character of the gardens changed. However, in recent years, there have been several ambitious and exciting restoration projects of both house and garden.

The 1906 Mawson design is still seen today and 2016 marks the 110th anniversary of these magnificent gardens.

In celebration of Dyffryn's revival, we have invited members of Sculpture Cymru to make works for a sculpture trail around the arboretum and gardens. Many sculptors were fascinated by this interesting idea and, in discussion and collaboration with the team here, have produced unique works that are inspired by the history, environment and the plants of Dyffryn.

There are innumerable and wonderful plants and trees, wide vistas, brilliant seasonal colour, intimate garden rooms and enormous lawns for visitors to explore. We are delighted that the many and varied works of the artists of Sculpture Cymru are adding an intriguing aspect to the rich experience of all our thousands of visitors.

Kate Simons
Visitor Experience Manager
Dyffryn House and Garden
2017

Life and Death at Dyffryn Gardens

Emma Geliot

When a place is so beautiful and so redolent with history, there are rich pickings for artists to find subject matter, landscape, or themes that carry on the threads of their own practice while making something specific to place. Sculpture Cymru, now in its sixteenth year as a loose collective of artists, was invited by the National Trust to make a year-long intervention into the gardens and grounds at Dyffryn.

Together, or in varying combinations, I've seen these artists make work for castles and botanic gardens and even galleries. While the latter offer the opportunity to see works more closely together - bouncing ideas off each other - it is the site-responsive projects that I have found so interesting.

Sculpture is a physical discipline and the audience response is often structured around a reaction to sharing a space with a three-dimensional form, which shifts with the viewing perspective and changes with the light. Dyffryn Gardens, from formal planting to a more natural, albeit tamed, wildness, offers endless possibilities for an artistic intervention.

Like so many grand places in Wales, Dyffryn was born of the industrial history of the nation. The story of such houses and their spectacular grounds is a narrative mixture of the personal and the global. If the black gold in the South Wales coalfields paid stone to build the house, it also paid for the army of servants and gardeners to maintain and sustain the trappings of wealth. Built as the century began to turn, there was only a short period of croquet on the lawn and lavish dinner parties, before World War One decimated the staff.

John Cory, who built the house on the phantoms of former estates, co-founded Barry Docks and extended his fortune exponentially. While Cory Senior shipped coal across the world from Barry, it was his third son, Reginald, who brought plants and seeds from exotic and far-flung places to Dyffryn. There's something beautifully circular in the planting of trees, whose seeds were hunted with funds from a fortune based on their fossilised ancestors. The human owners and their servants may be long gone, but some of these trees live on in the arboretum.

My early memories of Dyffryn are from its more functional recent past, when it was a training centre and hosted educational courses. I can remember walking around iced-up ponds, declining German verbs under my misty breath, in the depths of winter. A year or two later, as an art student, I sat on a rickety camping stool, drawing frosted trees, with cold fingers around a stump of charcoal. Why I always ended up going there in winter, I don't know, but the chill air and low light added to the mournful air of past grandeur and gentle decline. This was a couple of decades before the restoration work began. Now Dyffryn is loved again, albeit in the aspic coating that goes with a transformation from the lived-in to the visited place.

Sue Roberts, in *Forever Winter*, takes a portion of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* [Part Two, Sonnet XIII] as her starting point:

Be ahead of all parting, as if it had already happened.

Like winter, which even now is passing.

For beneath the winter is a winter so endless

That to survive it at all is a triumph of the heart.

Written in 1922, not long after WWI, for Roberts it conjures up the sense of the gardens with no one left to care for them and, by cutting the words into sheet metal, the gardens and

changing skies behind the words are integrated into the piece.

John Howes, too, uses text, but of a more prosaic kind. In *A Postcard from the Front*, he has made postcard plaques, based on missives from his grandfather during the Great War. Made of brass, they will create a link to the art made by soldiers in the trenches of the Somme, and serve as a reminder of the gardeners who marched off to war and never came back to their herbaceous borders.

Continuing the links to WWI, Glenn Morris' *Lost Comrades* offers a giant butterfly egg, carved in granite, to bring together several ideas: the butterflies seen by soldiers on the battlefields, like the lost souls of their brothers in arms, and the contemporary decline of butterfly species.

Mandy Lane's response is more literal than literary, in *Elizabeth Andrews To Do Pile*, and references the manual labour that went into creating Dyffryn, with a cast of the back of an adolescent child in iron, the figure's youthfulness embodying new growth in the gardens.

Also working in metal, in *Reflect* Gwyneth Price's mirrored steel gardeners, their tools

integrated into the bodies seen digging or working in the landscape, absorb their reflected surroundings to create the effect of man and nature inextricably combined.

Because, along with geological events, it is people that change landscape - from farming, to mineral extraction, to taming the environment into orderly gardens. Ali Lochhead's clay and earth figures, in *Displacement of Species*, illustrate the many people who would have lived on, or passed through, the site, and the movement of materials - clay, coal, earth, stone - that shaped the landscape in some way. Lyndon Mably's miners' cage, for *Mine/Ours*, references the industrial heritage that funded Dyffryn. With its integral viewing window, Lee Odishow's cast iron casket, *Fisk*, gives us an insight - literally - into ancient burial practices.

Death and rebirth are marked in the shift of seasons and natural decline, which Valerie Coffin Price take as her theme, in *Sidetracked*. Coffin Price collected fallen leaves from the gardens and hung from the branches of a tree, to contrast with their more verdant surroundings. This visual surprise will catch the eye as it tries to makes sense of something not quite right.

And, following the natural theme, Dilys Jackson's bronze *Spiked Pollen Form II* and her three small cactus-like pieces in the Glasshouse serve as a reminder that horticulture is sexy; that plant life relies on the coming together of the masculine and the feminine to reproduce, to hybridise and to adapt. Just as these art works will adapt and change with the seasons; the growth and death cycles of nature.

Emma Geliot

A Postcard from the Front

John Howes



During World War 1 the British Army issued pre-printed Postcards to the soldiers with a selection of messages that they were allowed to tick or cross out as suited their condition. Instructions read that *'Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.'*

My Grandfather, Lance Corporal Alfred Howes enlisted on the 11 December 1915 into the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment and was at the Somme during 1916 to 1918. During this time he sent a number of these cards to my father who was then a boy three years of age. He also made a matchbox cover out of a brass shell case and engraved it with a design and lettering.



I cherish these items from my Grandfather and my work makes reference to them. The siting of my installation in the Garden Room known as the *Cloisters* seems a fitting space as in monastic life these are places for meditation and writing.

www.johnhowes.co.uk

Spiked Pollen Form II

Dilys Jackson MRBS



During the last few years I have been working on plant forms such as cactuses and seeds. Most recently I have become fascinated by the many shapes of pollens which I have seen via an electron microscope. An aspect of pollen that is intriguing to me is that individual pollens are invisible to the naked eye, so their forms exist normally in a sphere invisible to us, in a secret world, and yet through the technology of the electron microscope and the work of sculptors, their nature can be made visible and even tangible. Their spikes, protuberances, hollows and cavities form shapes that are both strange and familiar. They are often reminiscent of forms such as may be found in seeds, fruit, human body structures and even of the forms of man-made objects, such as mines and weapons.

www.dilysjackson.co.uk



Elizabeth Andrews To Do Pile

Mandy Lane



Elizabeth Andrews was born in Penderyn, Rhondda Cynon Taf in 1882.

After first hand experience of the horrid mining conditions within Rhondda communities like those under the Cory family, in 1919 Andrews worked as a campaigner for mining families of the Rhondda valley. The introduction of pithead showers were largely down to her, with the help of two other miners' wives giving evidence of the working lives of women in the mining communities to the Sankey commission.



Caring “passionately about the suffering she saw around her and vowed to change the lot of miners’ wives in the South Wales valleys”, she helped outline the poor social conditions such as: Over crowded homes. Poor sanitation. High death rate of their children.

The lifting, carrying and moving of boiling water often resulting in scaldings.

High miscarriage rate.

Constant drying of clothes in small damp kitchens having detrimental effects on family health.

<https://mandylanesculpture.wordpress.com>

Displacement of Species

Ali Lochhead



The figures are formed using a variety of materials from places associated with the gardens; earth, clay, rocks and coal; and the creation of the figures is based on the displacement of materials and people from one place to another. Many different people have inhabited the Dyffryn land, from the Neolithic burial chambers nearby to the gardeners who went to war. Plants were brought from every quarter of the world funded by the extraction of coal from the land which was shipped out to every quarter of the world. The gardens you are walking through are created from the movement of resources across the world.

www.alisonlochhead.co.uk



Mine/Ours

Lyndon Mably



My sculpture was created to highlight the industrial heritage that was a vital part in creating the grandeur of Dyffryn House and the verdant beauty of Dyffryn Gardens that visitors see today.

Research into the Cory family and the recent history of the site led me to want to create a moment here, to reflect on the the importance of coal mining in wealth creation in South Wales. My intent by placing the miners' cage directly in the grounds was to cause a slightly jarring effect for the viewer.



I sought a contrast between the formal beauty of the gardens and the dirty, dark, dangerous industry that helped form them.

The title of the sculpture reflects the passing of Dyffryn Gardens from private ownership to public stewardship.

www.sculpturecymru.org.uk/mably.htm

Lost Comrades

Glenn Morris



Gardens are places where people feel a connection with beauty and nature; where reflection, remembrance and quiet meditation can take place.

In this time, when we remember the carnage of the First World War, one wonders how the men in the trenches reacted to the stark contrast between the disease, death and destruction of the battlefield and the fragile beauty of the natural world that existed alongside them.



It is reported that the sweet-sounding birdsong and the delicate butterflies landing on the fragments of twisted shrapnel in the lulls between shelling had a deep and profound effect on the soldiers. Butterflies were thought to be the souls of their lost comrades.

Since the First World War, 187 million people have been killed in conflicts around the world. The butterflies on 'Lost Comrades' are made from lead bullets collected from the Somme and each butterfly represents 1 million people killed since the end of the 'war to end all wars'.

www.glenmorris.co.uk

Fisk

Lee Odishow



Although macabre, one of my varied interests and artistic influences is in death rituals. I am intrigued by the different ways people across the world treat and have treated their dead. I am drawn to all forms of ceremonial practices, from the bog bodies of Europe, to sky burials in Tibet to the mummies of ancient Egypt. Sarcophagi and body wrapping inspired the basic concept of *FISK*.



Generally, within my art, I combine man-made industrial elements with organic elements and this piece is no exception. The hard lines of the bolts and porthole are softened by the curves and flow of the figurative form.

FISK gets its title from Almond. D. Fisk who patented the first cast iron burial casket in the 1800's. His sealed caskets had a viewing window for people to view the deceased within.

www.odishow.blogspot.com

Sidetracked

Valerie Coffin Price





As an artist-letterer my work deals with issues to do with the environment, language and cultural identity; the poetic resonance of language and its connection to a sense of place. Part of this involves an immersion in the landscape through walking. These peripatetic journeys allow me to explore and discover cultural traces embedded in the land. These traces include fragments of objects, memories, history and remnants of text and sound. It is these 'unseen paths' that connect us to nature, to the liminal, to the invisible world of currents, winds, ideas and language.

A series of seasonal installations at Dyffryn Gardens will change throughout the year, the result of a sequence of investigations, or interrogations, into the arboretum. Each piece coming out of a separate 'conversation' with the arboretum and its visitors (whether two or four footed), capturing a sense of the fleeting beauty of a place and its inhabitants.

www.axisweb.org/p/valeriecoffinprice/

'to be sidetracked is, after all to be led astray by a path or an idea ...' Richard Holmes

Reflect

Gwyneth Price



The people who have worked and still do so in the gardens at Dyffryn are an essential part of its appearance and history.

In the period before WW1 a large number of people were needed to keep the estate in a perfect condition. Plants were collected from across the world, and new forms bred here with a consuming passion for plantlife. The War ended the lives of some workers, while others found different work as a result of their experiences at the front. The garden faded. Now the group of volunteer gardeners give freely of their time guided by National Trust staff.



My figures of gardeners have a mirror finish so that they reflect the greenery around them, and almost “disappear”, as the gardeners did disappear after the War. They also reflect us, watching gardeners going quietly about the business of keeping Dyffryn beautiful.

www.vogaartists.com

Forever Winter

Sue Roberts



This piece of work is a reflection on winter and finality.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) was a Bohemian-Austrian poet and novelist, "widely recognized as one of the most lyrically intense German-language poets". His writing "invokes haunting images that focus on the difficulty of communion with the ineffable in an age of disbelief, solitude, and profound anxiety."

Rendered silent by a psychological crisis caused by the events of World War I the Sonnets to Orpheus marked the return of the poet's voice. They were written during a three-week period in 1922 which he described a "savage creative storm." Inspired by the news of the death of Wera Knoop a playmate of Rilke's daughter Ruth, they are considered his masterpieces and the highest expression of his talent.

www.suerobertsartist.co.uk

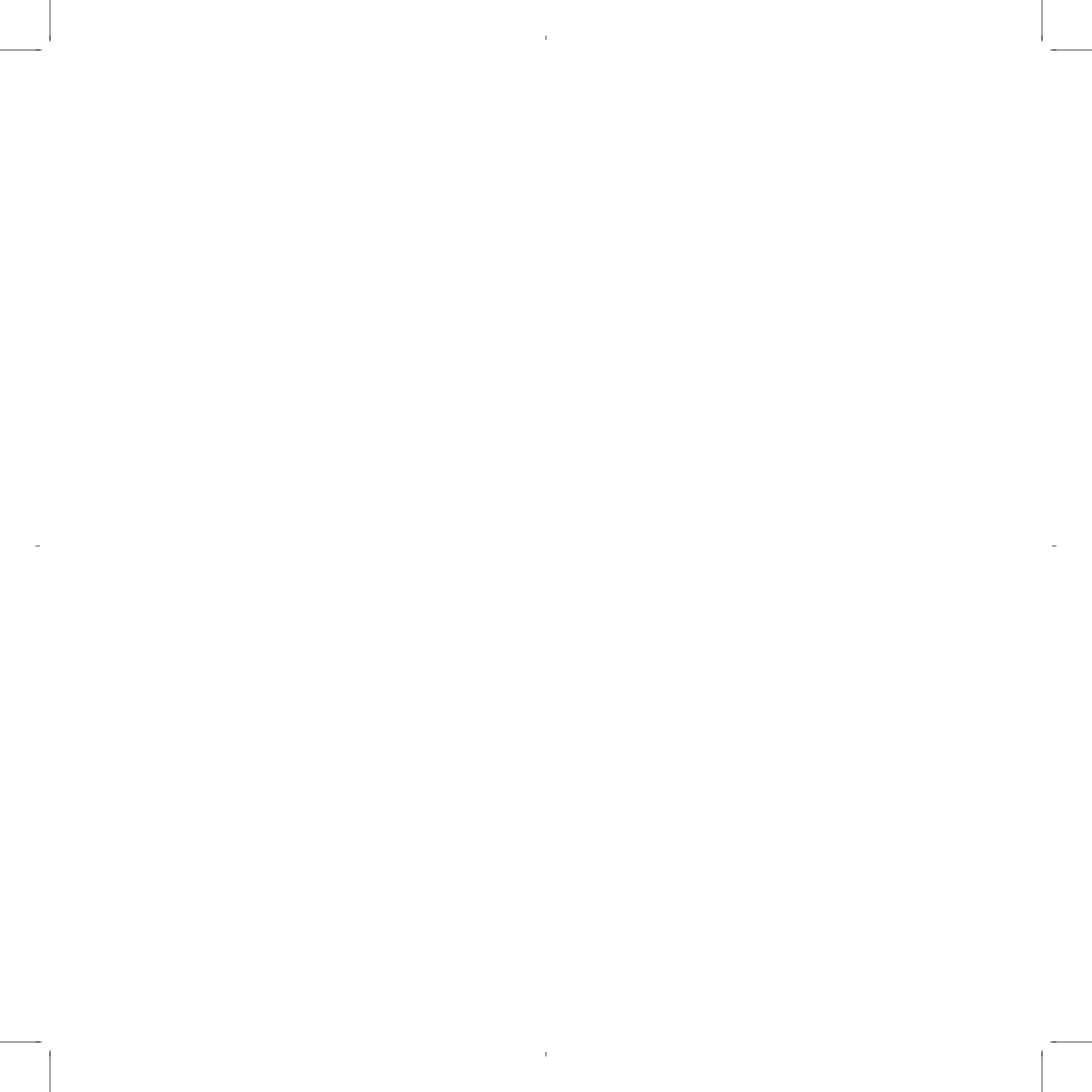


Sculpture Cymru - Sculptors in Wales

Sculpture Cymru was formed in 2000 as an exhibiting group invited to exchange with Sculpteurs Bretagne, an organisation of sculptors of Brittany. Since then Sculpture Cymru has expanded its activities to exhibit with artists of Ireland, Catalonia, the US and Argentina. The organisation has not only increased its visibility in its own country, with international exhibitions such as Sculptureworks at Margam Park and the Kidwelly Castle exhibitions, but has undertaken other activities such as a Cast Iron Residency at Carmarthen and a touring exhibition in Germany, London and Barry. Recently members have produced work for Sculpture Trails at The National Botanic Garden of Wales and at Mid Wales Arts Centre.

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