

## Laurence Edwards: SCULPTURE

Messums Wiltshire

6 August – 16 October 2022

**PREVIEW PARTY:** Friday 5 August, 6:30pm

**TALK & TOUR:** with Laurence Edwards, Saturday 6 August, 11am



Laurence Edwards, *Walking Men*

*'Whenever I see a new work by Laurence Edwards, I feel I am being confronted by an ancient and archetypal myth: something to do with metamorphosis and transformation and the nature of what it is to be human – part angel and part beast.'*

Julia Blackburn

A major presentation of work by sculptor Laurence Edwards will be on show at Messums Wiltshire showcasing large scale bronze figurative sculptures together with small scale maquettes and studies on display for the first time, offering a comprehensive survey of his working process.

One of the few sculptors who casts his own work, Laurence Edwards is fascinated by human anatomy and the metamorphosis of form and matter that governs the lost-wax process. The driving force behind his work is bronze, an alloy that physically and metaphorically illustrates entropy, the natural tendency of any system in time to tend towards disorder and chaos. His sculptures express the raw liquid power of bronze, its versatility, mass and evolution, and the variety of process marks he retains tell the story of how and why each work came to be.

As the largest exhibition of his sculpture to date, this show presents the culmination of 10 years of work and development for Edwards. A 'tribe' of giant bronze 'Walking Men' stride through the barn, amid a number of other arresting large-scale works. These have been created during an incredible period of growth for the sculptor, a time that has seen 26-foot-high figures cast, monuments to the miners of the north and exhibitions around the globe. The exhibition introduces motifs nurtured and evolved over a long period in the studio, finally realised with the expansion of his foundry in Suffolk.

*'...it is their expression of utter lost-ness and abandonment that makes them belong so clearly to our own uncertain time and place in history.'*

Julia Blackburn



Laurence Edwards, *Walking Men*

On display at the same time are small scale casts, ideas and working studies that take the figurative form as caryatid for our contemporary concerns. Bound with twists of twine and twigs they convey thoughts of our entangled lives and uneasy relationship with nature. These experimental works, trials and test pieces show risks that are taken in the studio, fleeting ideas made permanent by the delicate and precise casting facility that Edwards and his team have developed. Bronze, acting as a sealing agent for a myriad of materials including ply, clay, stick, plaster, steel, leather, string, plant and modelled forms, collage and collide in this fascinating journey through the sculptor's studio and mind.

## **FILM SCREENING: Yoxman – While the Whole World Changes Tune**

**Saturday 3 September and Saturday 15 October**

Film screenings at 6:30pm of the two-year Yoxman project introduced by Laurence Edwards, followed by a Q&A with the artist. The film follows sculptor Laurence Edwards from 2018 as he undertakes the most significant challenge of his career: the creation of a monumental 26ft figure for the Suffolk landscape. The artist explores shared passions with author Robert Macfarlane, resulting in a documentary that is both exploration of artistic process and meditation on time, landscape and transformation.



Laurence Edwards, *Yoxman*

## EXHIBITION PUBLICATION



This 100+ page, fully illustrated publication accompanies the exhibition and features essays by Julia Blackburn, Isabel de Vasconcellos and Steve Hurst illuminating aspects of Laurence Edwards' practice and the lineage of bronze casting in the UK.

## EXHIBITION TOUR

The exhibition will tour to Orange Regional Gallery, Australia where it will be on show from 4 February to 26 April 2023. Director of Orange Regional Gallery, Bradley Hammond comments, *'It is my hope that this presentation of Laurence Edwards' works in Australia, will contribute to the re-emergence of the figure in contemporary sculpture, which has largely moved to the periphery.'*

## Biography

Laurence Edwards studied sculpture at Canterbury College of Art and bronze casting at the Royal College of Art. After winning a Henry Moore Bursary, the Angeloni Prize for Bronze Casting and an Intach Travelling Scholarship, he studied traditional casting techniques in India and Nepal, an experience that not only influenced his treatment of form and technique, but also gave him the necessary tools to establish his own atelier and foundry.

For the Aldeburgh Festival in 2008, Edwards created three 8ft bronze figures inspired by the marshes. On first meeting them, writer Robert Macfarlane commented, *'I came over time to see the Creek Men not as eldritch paramilitaries set on vengeance, but as more ethically neutral emanations of the Suffolk terrain itself.'*



In 2018, Edwards was commissioned by Doncaster Council to create a sculpture that celebrates the lives of those who worked in the collieries around Doncaster. *A Rich Seam* was unveiled in Print Office Street in 2021. In November 2019, *Man of Stones* was unveiled at the Sainsbury Centre in Norfolk. In November 2021, he completed and installed the 26ft bronze sculpture named *Yoxman* at Yoxford by the side of the A12 in Suffolk.



Laurence Edwards, *A Rich Seam*

## PRESS

For further information and press images, please contact: [press@messumswiltshire.com](mailto:press@messumswiltshire.com)

MESSUMS WILTSHIRE is an innovative multi-purpose gallery and arts centre set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn and surrounding buildings with exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant.

MESSUMS LONDON is a 2,000 sq ft exhibition space on Cork Street behind the Royal Academy. It hosts a rolling programme of exhibitions for our contemporary artists and is home to our photography department.