



1 Still life

I chose Breon O'Casey's 'Stylised Bird' for my garden at Chelsea this year, because I find it peaceful and meditative, solitary even. It's a strong piece, and it would work equally well if placed in an enclosed space, among foliage.

1 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER



Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire.

Sculpture

Garden sculptures come in many moods and forms, adding a human fingerprint to the art of nature.

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD



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2 JASON INGRAM, 3 ARNE MAYNARD, 4 & 5 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER



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2 Passing Angel

'Angel' by Edwina Bridgeman stands by a path that leads to a village church. Made of found materials and painted, she's transient and will eventually vanish. But for now she makes people chuckle, a little reminder that you are being good, that you're going to church.

3 Light and dark

The bronze 'Walking Madonna' by Elisabeth Frink stands at the edge of a dark coniferous wood at Chatsworth. She is a sombre figure, but placing her in the light-filled meadow with orchids at her feet, is a wonderful piece of theatre.

4 Heraldic beasts

Wooden heraldic beasts carved and painted by Mark Bridges along a walk at Elizabethan Stiffkey Old Hall. We wanted to bring alive the intricate and colourful craftsmanship that would have existed in the garden at this period.

5 Focal point

The white-painted, lead faun within a yew hedge at Rousham is less a sculpture, more an architectural element. It's placed to draw you on your journey around the landscape.

6 Semi-colon

A small stone vase stands at the base of the steps at Montacute, where it acts as a little punctuation mark, announcing a change. Slightly tilted, covered in lichens, it has a minor but characterful part.



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7 Flight path

In a friend's garden, a sculpture by Christopher Marvell is placed at the transitional point where it merges with the fields beyond. It adds a little humour, and is a lovely way of slowing the eye down before it travels off into the open countryside.



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8 Water snail

A giant snail shell by ThomasonCudworth pours water into a dipping pool in an old kitchen garden. It is hand-sculpted in pale English terracotta, and in a part of the garden where the planting tends to be horizontal, it adds both height and humour.



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9 Hand made

A ring of pollard willow stems that I made and hung in a tree as I was wandering around a friend's garden. Proof that sculpture can be free, these little installations are human traces that show someone has been there, playful and unexpected.



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6 JASON INGRAM, 7 WILLIAM COLLINSON, 8 BROWNY ISAAC, 9 WILLIAM COLLINSON

I think of sculpture as a reflection of the inner self, a biography of one's own tastes and moods, so the act of choosing a particular piece and placing it in the garden is a very personal one. It's not something I suggest to clients, because it's not a principle that when you make a garden you have to have sculpture in it. If the client wants it, then it will be their choice. Neither would I base a design on a piece of sculpture that's already in the garden, instead I'll make a design and let the sculpture find its own place within it. Similarly, if sculpture gets added later, it needs to find its own home. Sometimes a

piece may wander around the garden for years until it finds the place that's right for it. And sometimes you have a brainwave about where to put it and it works immediately.

A single beautiful piece is usually more effective than having sculptures everywhere. Most modern gardens aren't like Renaissance or classical gardens where the sculptures are part of the garden's architectural narrative. Then there's the question of how you define sculpture? It can be figurative or abstract, man-made or found. I visited a garden recently where the owner had placed a shaped piece of flint on a plinth, just



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10 BRITT WALLOUGHBY DYER

something she'd found in the garden, but the effect was quite magical.

Sculpture creates a focal point, or a destination in the garden. Why do we use it? I think we use it to create or evoke an emotion, and because it adds humanity to nature. Trees and plants create an atmosphere, but sculpture creates a reaction. It has the human fingerprint. The reaction might be that you admire the form and artistry of the piece, or it might be something quirky that makes you laugh. There is a distinction between sculpture that's used to evoke a mood or emotion, and sculpture used as

a focal point. The faun at Rousham [picture 5], for instance, is there to draw you on and make an architectural statement. The urn on the wall [picture 6] is a little punctuation point; it is sculptural but doesn't evoke the same emotion as Elisabeth Frink's shadowy figure [picture 3] or the bronze bird [picture 1]. This abstract bird is an interpretation that's come from somebody's heart. It's quirky, it stimulates the mind, and you can see it was originally formed in clay. It has the sculptor's fingerprints still in it, like a biography of the imagination that formed it. □

NEXT MONTH Winter at Allt-y-bella

10 Centrepiece

This very simple urn sits at the centre of a copper-beech spiral in my garden. It's a beautiful, hand-carved piece and I chose it for the strength and plainness of its shape, but it is there as an architectural element, not to evoke an emotion.

Suppliers

Christopher Marvell
Christopher Marvell's website gives details of exhibitions around the country where you can see and buy his sculpture. Tel 01223 880444, www.christophermarvell.com

Edwina Bridgeman
Based in Bath, Edwina Bridgeman makes work that is full of enchantment for both inside and out. www.edwinabridgeman.com

Yew Tree Gallery
An excellent selection of artists in changing exhibitions throughout the year. Tel 01736 786425 www.yewtreegallery.com