



CHARLOTTE MAYER
A LIFE IN THE STUDIO

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PANGOLIN LONDON



FOREWORD

Charlotte Mayer first visited Pangolin Editions in its infancy back in 1985 when we were based in little more than a greenhouse in Islip, Oxford. Introduced by a mutual family friend, Richard Hughes, Charlotte gave us a goose to cast. She didn't express it at the time but it was of course a test piece.

Though casting the goose head with its delicate expression took us a number of attempts, by the time Charlotte returned and saw the pile of discarded 'miscasts' she understood that we were healthily self-critical as well as having the skills that would meet her exacting standards. Charlotte continued to cast all her sculpture with us for the next 38 years.

Charlotte had a fortitude that pervaded all aspects of her life - first and foremost her care and commitment to her family - but also to her sculpture. Perhaps it was her extraordinary upbringing as a child refugee coming to the UK with her mother at the tender age of 10 along with the influence of her beloved and culturally dynamic grandmother; that gave her the strength and determination to continue with such gratitude and generous warmth. Visits to Charlotte's house and studio in Highgate were always joyful with wide ranging discussion paired with either a hearty bowl of homemade soup or a delicious plate of biscuits.

The strong influence of nature combined with Charlotte's lifelong practice of meditation enabled her to experiment with forms that though abstract are clearly rooted in an elegant, organic beauty. Her approach often incorporated natural materials such as dried apple peel, reeds, wood and wax to create

Charlotte Mayer with
Monumental Turning
at Pangolin Editions
2016



interesting surface textures. Some sculptures were deceptively simple, solid forms, others experimented with complex movement and flight. Her most recent works *Morning*, *Noon* and *Evening* created only last year have a universal elegance.

We will miss Charlotte greatly, for her warmth, laughter and enthusiasm for each and every project she took on from the miniature sculptors' jewellery to the monumental commissions we worked on together. Her indefatigable commitment to push the boundaries of her work right up until her last days was truly extraordinary. She leaves behind an important legacy and inspiration to those that follow her.

RUNGWE KINGDON, CLAUDE KOENIG
& POLLY BIELECKA



(ABOVE)
Goose
1987, Bronze
Edition of 6
56 cm high

(LEFT)
Noon
2022, Bronze
Edition of 9
38.5 x 34 x 28.5 cm





CATALOGUE



Let us make a thing of beauty
That long may live when we are gone;

Let us make a thing of beauty
That hungry souls may feast upon;

Whether it be wood or marble,
Music, art or poetry,
Let us make a thing of beauty
To help set man's bound spirit free.

Edward Matchett

(RIGHT)
Morning
2022, Bronze
Edition of 9
35 x 31 x 13 cm







Scintilla
2009, Bronze
Edition of 8
47 x 60 x 43 cm
Base diameter: 45 cm



Turning
2015, Bronze
Edition of 5
100 x 120 x 104 cm



Solar
2009, Bronze
Edition of 12
102 x 59 x 21 cm
Base: 20.5 x 20.5 cm





(LEFT)
Turning Point in the
studio.

(RIGHT)
Turning Point
1969, Stainless steel
Unique
30 x 10 x 31 cm





(LEFT)
Big Planar
1969, Stove -
enameled steel
Unique
123.5 x 60.5 x 20 cm

(RIGHT)
Wall (Untitled IV)
1968, Stove -
enameled steel
Unique
48 x 60 x 20 cm





Blue Edge
2019, Acrylic on paper
Unique
38 x 49 cm





Kasta
2005, Stainless Steel
Edition of 6
80 x 90 x 70 cm

Wind
2012, Bronze
Edition of 8
58 x 120 x 17 cm





Guardian
2009, Bronze
Unique
145 x 55 x 40 cm







Luna
c. 2008, Bronze
Edition of 8
88 × 88 × 41 cm



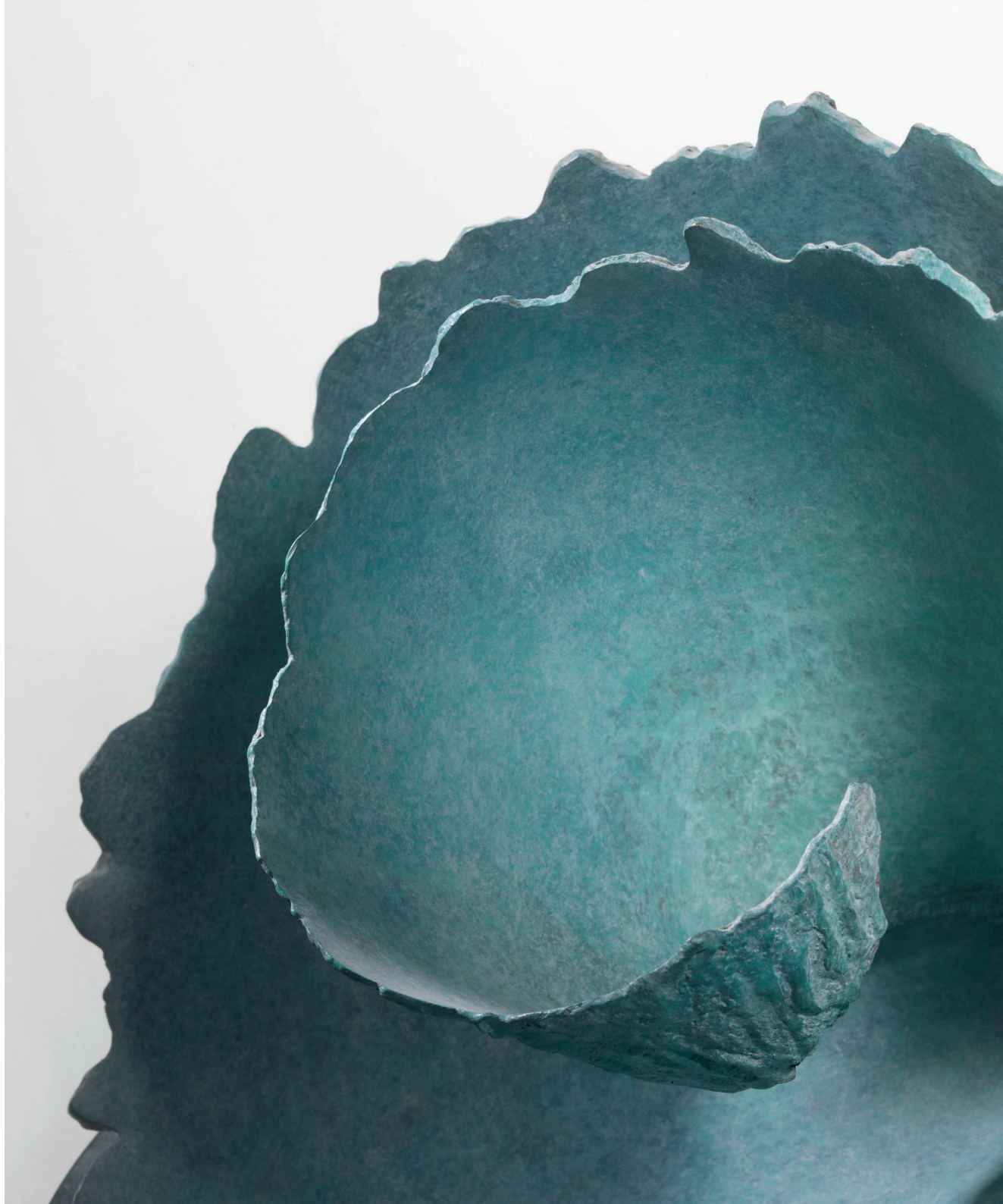
(LEFT)
Double Ribbon Pendant
2014, Sterling Silver
Edition of 20
7.7 x 8.2 cm

(RIGHT)
Above
2019, Acrylic on paper
Unique
47 x 59 cm



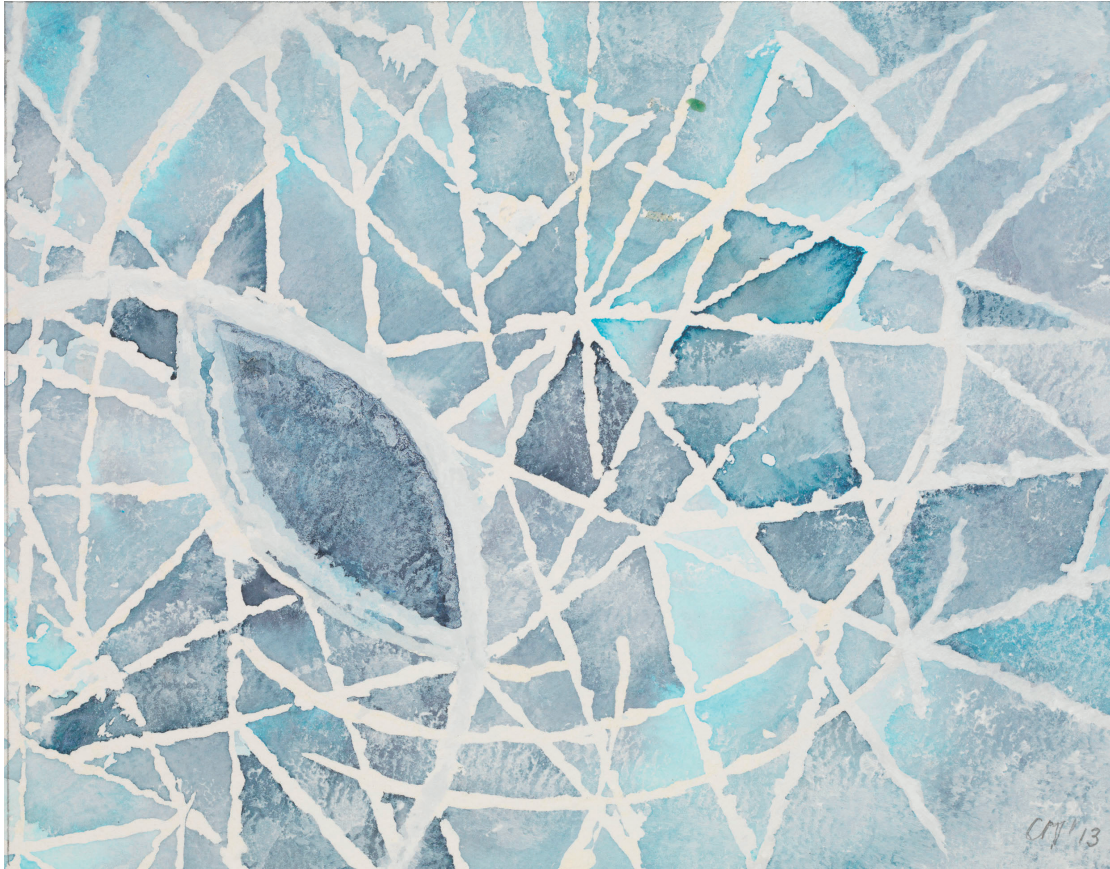


Sea Scarf
2003, Bronze
Edition of 7
35 x 44 x 37 cm
Base diameter: 38 cm



Earth Fire
2009, Bronze
Edition of 7
29 x 40 x 40 cm





(LEFT)
Congress 2
 2013, Watercolour
 on paper
 Unique
 46 x 40 cm

(RIGHT)
Storm Bird
 2012, Bronze
 Edition of 8
 55 x 44 x 15 cm





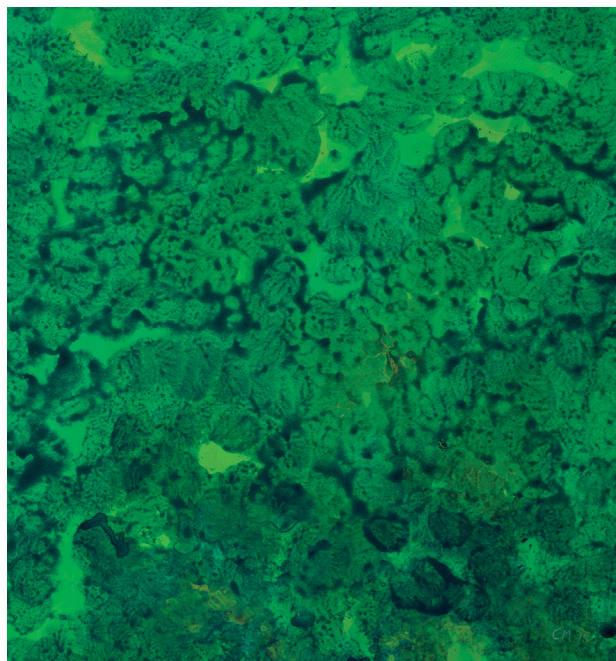
(RIGHT)
Charlotte Mayer in
her studio, 2003.

(LEFT)
Flight
Bronze
Edition of 12
40 x 48 x 26 cm



Rondo
1997, Bronze
Edition of 12
60 x 63 x 55 cm
Base diameter: 53 cm





(LEFT)
Green Moss 2
2019,
Acrylic on paper
Unique
48 x 44.5 cm

(RIGHT)
Leaf Form
c. 2010, Bronze
Edition of 6
28 x 27 x 11 cm





Largo
1998, Bronze
Edition of 6
75 x 70 x 35 cm
Base diameter: 36 cm





(LEFT)
Moon Dance
c. 2008, Stainless steel
Edition of 6
16 x 21 x 21 cm





(LEFT)
Charlotte Mayer with
The Thornflower which
joined the collection
at Coventry
Cathedral in 2022.

(RIGHT)
The Thornflower
2006, Bronze and
Stainless steel
150 x 60 x 60 cm
Base diameter: 50 cm





Tree of Life Maquette
1989, Bronze
Edition of 12
66 cm high

Charlotte at
Waterperry
modelling a goat, 1983.







Goat
c. 1980, Bronze
Edition of 6
30 x 30 x 15 cm



(LEFT)
Hen
c.1980, Bronze
Edition of 10
14 x 15 x 13 cm

(RIGHT)
Crow
Bronze
Edition of 12
28 x 59 x 23 cm



OBITUARY

CHARLOTTE MAYER

Born in Prague in 1929 Charlotte Mayer (née Fanta-Stutz) was captivated by natural forms and sculpture from a young age thanks to the influence of her grandparents who were important cultural figures in 1930s Prague and regularly held informal salons for writers, artists and musicians at their home 'Das Rosel Haus'.

In April, 1939 a month after the German Army had entered Prague and with tensions mounting, Charlotte – aged just ten – left on a train bound for Holland with her mother, on the precarious pretence of a wedding. Spending a week in Amsterdam, they travelled to England to begin their new lives as refugees. With little English to communicate with and the looming spectre of war these early years were not without their challenges thanks to bullies at school and a nomadic refugee existence of moving around the country. Corresponding with family back in Prague was extremely difficult and suffered a terrible blow when Mayer's beloved grandmother was sent to the death camp Treblinka in 1942.

One glimmer of light in these difficult times was a stay in Ambleside, during which her high school teacher recognised her artistic talent and recommended she apply to Goldsmith's College. Here she enjoyed two years studying as a Fine Art student making predominantly figurative work and portraits in clay and plaster. Accepted onto the sculpture course at the Royal College of Art in 1950 Mayer found a different environment where an intense misogyny towards women sculptors still reigned. Determined to ignore this, Mayer focused on her work under the tutelage of Frank Dobson, John Skeaping and the wood carver Heinz Henghes a German émigré who had been a protégé of Isamu Noguchi. Here Mayer learnt to experiment with natural materials incorporating bull rushes into plaster for texture or carving large chunks of Yew – an approach which inspired her use of a wide range of natural materials in her later work.

Whilst at the Royal College of Art, Mayer met her future husband the ambitious young architect Geoffrey Salmon whom she married in 1952. The following year Mayer completed her first public commission 'Mother and Child' in carved alabaster for the maternity wing of Epsom General Hospital. To her delight she soon became the mother she had depicted in the commission with the birth of her son Julian who was followed by twin daughters Louise and Antonia in 1959.

(RIGHT)
Charlotte with
Monumental Turning,
2016. at Bicester
Office Park, Oxford





Whilst Mayer temporarily paused her career in exchange for family life, by the mid 1960s Mayer's sculpture stirrings had returned and a highly influential trip to New York with her mother in 1967 inspired a series of sleek new works titled *Black Cities*. Energised by the seeing the skyscrapers of Manhattan in the snow she focused on this series for the next five years - first in painted wood and then, having enrolled herself on a welding course, in stove-enamelled steel.

Driving along the Embankment one day in the early 70s Mayer was struck by the smoke billowing from the chimneys of the iconic Battersea Power Station and immediately returned home to make a sculpture inspired by the rings of smoke. This began a long-lasting interest in circular and spiral forms elegantly poised in space and often inspired by the natural world.

Practicing meditation for over fifty years also provided a rich source of inspiration and helped Mayer to see the forms of work in her mind's eye before creating them in her studio in Highgate. In an interview Mayer emphasised the importance of meditation in her practice saying: "One realises meditation isn't just sitting still - it's more than that. You can have movement in stillness."

(ABOVE LEFT)
Charlotte with
Caring Hands,
1980s.

(ABOVE RIGHT)
Charlotte with
Sea Circle, 1980s.

(RIGHT)
Flight II
2013, Bronze
Edition of 8
80 x 94 x 94 cm
Base diameter: 40 cm



Whether working at monumental scale for her varied public commissions or in miniature for her jewellery, Mayer's work carries an innate elegance, strength and poise that makes her pieces instantly recognisable. The sculptures have a calm stillness combined with a visceral energy which is powerfully yet quietly communicated. As Tom Flynn, the author of Mayer's monograph 'In Essence' describes:

Many of the works Mayer has made over the years seem to speak with extraordinary clarity to those who have suffered pain or loss in their lives. The healing quality that certain objects possess defies easy explanation.

In Mayer's case it is surely a combination of her choice of iconography, her ability to conjoin contrasting formal elements, her facility at selecting the right surface finish for the materials she uses, and an instinct for suggesting the essence of something ineffable and beyond language.

Charlotte will be much missed at both Pangolin galleries and at Pangolin Editions where she cast her work for over thirty years. Three weeks before she passed away I visited Charlotte to discuss her forthcoming exhibition at the gallery next year. As always Charlotte astounded me by showing works in the studio she had just made at the grand age of 93 that were full of fresh vitality. Her exhibition at Pangolin London will be a celebration of her extraordinary life and work and by recreating her Highgate studio of forty years, hopes to capture a glimpse of her tranquil yet dynamic working space.

POLLY BIELECKA

Charlotte Mayer passed away on the 9th November aged 93. She leaves behind her two daughters, Louise and Antonia and her grandson Joshua.

An obituary was published by The Guardian on 9th December written by Christopher Masters which can be found here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/dec/08/charlotte-mayer-obituary>

(RIGHT)
Rising
2013, Bronze
Edition of 6
220 x 43 x 43 cm
Base diameter: 43 cm



CHARLOTTE MAYER

b. 1929, Prague

Trained: Goldsmith's College of Art & Royal College of Art

Elected: Fellow of the Royal British Society of Sculptors (1992)

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Charlotte Mayer: A Life in the Studio, Pangolin London
- 2019 The Space Between, Pangolin London
- 2018 ongoing 'The Thornflower', Coventry Cathedral
- 2013 Charlotte Mayer: In Essence, Gallery Pangolin, Chalford, Glos
- 2010 'The Thornflower', Southwark Cathedral, London
Also shown Chichester Cathedral (2008), W. Sussex
- 2009 'The Thornflower' and other works, Salisbury Cathedral, Wilts
- 2006 The Garden Gallery, Hants
- 2004 Matara Center, Kingscote, Glos
- 2002 Bohun Gallery, Henley on Thames Oxon
- 1999 Ashbourne Gallery, Derbyshire
- 1999 Gallery Pangolin, Chalford, Glos
- 1997 Coombs Contemporary, London
- 1977 Crypt of St John's Hampstead, London
- 1973 The Iveagh Bequest Kenwood, London
- 1969 Institute of Directors, London

SHARED EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 FE216, Morley College London
- 2012 Two in One: Charlotte Mayer & Almuth Tebbenhoff, Pangolin London
- 2011 Mayer / von Stumm, Turill Garden, Oxford
- 2006 Fe2O5: Gili / Mayer / Rance / Tebbenhoff / Vollmer, Canary Wharf, London
- 2006 Fe2O5, APT Gallery, London
- 2005 Fe2O5, Darlington Arts Centre:
- 2003 Hubbard / Mayer, Thompson's Marylebone, London
- 1999 Hodgkins / Hubbard / Mayer, Royal British Society of Artists
- 1970 Ten Sculptors, Two Cathedrals, Salisbury and Winchester Cathedral
- 1969 Frink / Mayer / Piche, Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford

GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND GALLERIES (SELECTED)

- 2017 Ark, Chester Cathedral
- 2016 Sculpture in the Garden, Pangolin London
Spring Show, Pangolin London
- 2014 Crucible II, Gloucester Cathedral
- 2010 Crucible, Gloucester Cathedral
- 2009 & 2010 University of Leicester
- 2008 Robert Bowman Modern, London
- 2005 Curwen & New Academy Gallery, London
- 2001-02 Pashley Manor Gardens, E. Sussex
- 2001 Cass Foundation, Goodwood, West Sussex
- 2001 Bohun Gallery, Henley on Thames, Oxon

2000	Bronze, Holland Park, London
1997	Berkeley Square Gallery, London
1997	Sladmore Gallery, London
1995	The Garden Gallery, Hants
1996	Foundation Helan-Arts, Bornem, Belgium
1995 & 1998	Belgrave Gallery, London
1994-2001	Richard Hagen, Worcs (annual)
1993	Chelsea Harbour, London
1992	Gallery Pangolin, Chalford, Glos
1992-93	Bruton Gallery, Somerset
1983-89	Art in Action, Waterperry, Oxford (annual)
1981	British Artists Show, London
1979	Amnesty International, London
1972	Art in Steel, London

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Barbican, City of London
 Inner City, Liverpool
 Giles Shirley Hall, Cheshire
 Nene College, Northampton
 North London Hospice
 Paribas, Marylebone, London
 The Cass Foundation, Goodwood, West Sussex
 St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation & Peace

CORPORATE AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS

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Hong Kong Airport	Wadham College Oxford
JCDecaux SA France	Westhill College Birmingham
Mittal Steel London	

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The Space Between, Pangolin London, 2019
 Charlotte Mayer: In Essence, Gallery Pangolin, 2013
 Two in One, Dual Exhibition with Almuth Tebbenhoff, Pangolin London, 2012
 Bronze Casting, Steve Hurst, Schiffer, London, 2005
 Modern British Sculpture, Guy Portelli, Schiffer, London, 2004
 The Art of Prior's Court School, Ann Elliott, Bohun Gallery, 2002
 Sculpture at Goodwood, Ann Elliott, Sculpture at Goodwood, 2001
 The Alchemy of Sculpture, Tony Birks, Marston House/ Pangolin Editions, 1998
 The Arts in Health Care, Charles Kaye & Tony Blee, eds., Jessica Kingsley, London, 1996
 Liverpool Seen – Post war artists on Merseyside, Peter Davies, Redcliffe Press, 1992
 Patronage & Practice, P. Curtis, ed., Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1989
 The Mystery of Creation, Lealman and Robinson, CEM, 1983

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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