

Anthony Lysycia
Sculptor in stone
and wood



Q: How did you start as an artist - what inspired you?

A: Artists don't start, they are. From a very early age I was fascinated in making things. After leaving the Royal College of Art in 1984, I simply continued doing what I've always done. 25 years later I'm happy to say I'm still busy 'making things'

Q: What is it that attracts you to working with people?

A: Working with people throws up new challenges, several years ago I was commissioned by Groundwork Blackburn to sculpt a series of oak seats for the Asian woman's group. They had never worked with an artist before and I had never worked with Asian women!! Struggling to get them to think of a suitable theme/design for the backs of the oak benches, they all threw up their hands in an 'haven't a clue' gesture... In an instant I saw the solution... the beautifully decorated henna designs on their hands. 4 weeks later the woman had carved into green oak their own design based on their hands.



Another Hand - The Hand of Industry

Another interesting commission was working with children in a very deprived park on the outskirts of Barnsley. Sculpting a 400yr old beech tree that had fallen down during a heavy storm. Carving the tree from Mon to Fri only to return after driving up and down to Essex, the carved tree had been burned in various sections by the local teenagers in an attempt to destroy the work.... My solution was to hire an industrial blowtorch and burn the surface of the whole lot!! Imagine the surprise on the local 'yoof' when they saw I had been inspired by their creativity and indeed thanked them for giving me such a great idea. They stopped trying to burn it, instead started carving the tree with me most evenings after school. The finished result was a beautifully carved, **jet black** shiny beech tree. I still use this technique now.

Q: What is the philosophy about your work?

A: I love working with wood and stone for many reasons. The natural organic beauty of oak, red cedar, beech or Portland/York stone has always appealed to me. I have made some great contacts over the years and enjoy nothing more than scrambling around a quarry or wood yard searching for the perfect slab of rock or wood... I recently completed a very successful commission for a school in Bosham carving 20 or so York sandstone panels. A local geologist dated the stone to approx 450 million years old.. The imagination of the 8 to 10 years old children soared as we cut into the ancient rock.

St. Marys School Project.

This was a week-long stone carving summer project working with children from yr 6. Approximately 30 children worked with me designing and carving the 3 upright sculptures. This East London school has a mixture of children from various backgrounds/cultures and over the five days we all worked together on the sculptures.



The final day was spent digging the 3 sculptures in the ground of the school. We dug the 3 holes, mixed cement and stood the sculptures up. The children and staff of the school loved the finished work and they will probably last longer than the school !



The stone was Yorkshire sandstone from a quarry near Huddersfield. I find this good quality stone for the children to carve, not too hard but hard enough to last years. The children find it fascinating when I tell them it's millions of years old...



Q: How do you visualise your work within the landscape?

A: I have always been an 'outdoors person'. Coming from Rural Lancashire, surrounded by beautiful landscape I love working in all the elements. I am also a very keen gardener and can spend hours moving pots around, bits of wood, just to create the right balance. I always dream of making a massive sculpture to really fill a space. On a recent trip to Brazil, I was amazed by the power of the Christ Redeemer overlooking Rio De Janeiro. The sculpture can be seen for miles and towers above the rain forest.

Q: What piece in the environment are you working on now - or have recently made?

A: Hardly Rio, but Halstead in Essex! I was commissioned by Knightom Homes to produce a carved oak bench for the community gardens. The unveiling was last week.



The Halstead Bench



Project at Dagenham



Q; Given all the time in the world (and limitless funds) what would you like to do?

A: Carve something similar to Trojan's Column in Rome... Could I have a dozen hundred slaves too please?

PORTFOLIO OF RECENT WORK

The Battle of Benfleet



Ponciau Park, North Wales



Castle Park School



Gemini



Llangollen Sculpture



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