



**Terence Coventry: Farmer - Sculptor**  
*An Insider's View*

**2024**



Win and Terence Coventry, 2011  
In the sculpture park moving the chicken coop

It is an oft-used expression that farming is a complete lifestyle, not solely a profession or pastime: it is all-consuming, hectic, challenging, yet deeply rewarding. Ask almost any farmer, and you may find yourself confronted with a resounding variation of "I wouldn't change it for a thing". As well as the ceaseless manual labour involved, one of the most demanding aspects of being a modern-day farmer is the multifaceted, incessantly competing expectations. They are required to be meteorologist, nutritionist, agronomist, accountant, politician and entrepreneur. It is perhaps less common to include 'sculptor' in that list.

Yet it is immediately obvious to those familiar with, or just discovering, Terence Coventry's life and work that he excelled at wearing these many hats, responding to the varied challenges and embracing the opportunities that came with this. Indeed, it was with tenacity, perseverance and ability to turn his hand to anything that led to wide recognition as both pig farmer and artist.

Born in Stourbridge, a young Coventry demonstrated a natural aptitude for fine art, and enrolled at the Stourbridge School of Art in 1954. After considerable success here, he won a place at the Royal College of Art, then and now recognised as one of the leading centres for artistic education in the world. Dissatisfied with the Painting course, the gruff barring he encountered in the Sculpture department, and general resentment of living in London, Coventry began his National Service in 1959. Fatefully, he was stationed in Plymouth, where he met his future wife, Win, the daughter of a West Country farming family. After completing his National Service, he took on a small holding of 3 acres on the Coverack coast, where he and Win worked tirelessly, day-and-night, as pig breeders. After years of earnest labour, this would develop into a farm of nearly 150 acres, and afford the Coventry's with national recognition for their innovative approach to rearing and selling their animals.

Then, in the 1980s, at the onset of Dutch Elm Disease, Coventry could not bear to simply burn the felled trunks from his farm, and awakened his earlier artistic pursuits by carving directly into these immense carcasses. This would be the point of departure for a remarkable body of work produced over the successive three decades of Coventry's life.

His subject matter are the animals he farms, wildlife he witnesses from his clifftop home, and the people he loved. Far too familiar with his subject for mere observation, he constructs forms between abstraction and realism, rooted in a deeply personal understanding of his surroundings, offering a world that is unrecognisable without our fellow animals, whilst epitomising a relevance to us all. As a farmer, this inspiration was all around him, waiting to be harnessed: the brutish aura of a bull, the natural inquisitiveness of cattle, the proud sentinel-like figures of our canine companions, and the personal relationships he had. The movements of birds are recurrently explored: hovering, gliding, diving, looking. Coventry offers a privileged view into these motions, distilling the sights and feelings that confronted him each day into his sculpture, expressing them how he wanted to.



Terence Coventry  
1963/64  
With one of his British  
Saddleback boars

The practical elements of farming were also formative on Terence Coventry. The manual dexterity gained, proficiency with tools and machinery, and mentality of mending and reusing, all transpired to his artwork. Welding in particular, a skill first learned to fix broken farm machinery, allowed Coventry a creative independence when making his sculpture. The marks, striations, grooves and indents that are such a distinguishing feature of his sculpture – sometimes straight, other times swirling – were first encountered during the mundane, but vital, tasks of farming: ploughing a field, fencing a boundary, overlooking an expansive horizon, or encountering the frenzy of birds on a recently seeded field. Through this experience, Coventry gained a completely holistic insight into his subject, that not only influenced, but defined, his entire identity as an artist.

As a result, the distinct strands of farmer and sculptor are constantly blurred within the life and work of Terence Coventry, often together and always connected. For the majority of his life, these two seemingly disparate elements were intangibly and indelibly linked as an occupation, livelihood, passion and lifelong pursuit.

Without his unique experiences as a farmer, constantly in dialogue with his surroundings, Coventry's sculpture would not speak of the virile world around him. Never content with just looking, Coventry directed a conscious observation to visualise, interpret and sculpt the world around him. It is this sincere desire between himself, his experiences, the hardships and successes he had as a farmer, and his output as an artist, that all present a body of work that is deeply personal, imbued with honesty and authenticity.

An often-solitary artist who was wary of interviews and overt publicity, Coventry preferred that his work alone should speak for itself, harnessing the visceral and individual responses each viewer has. In a succinct moment though, Coventry spoke about the conjunction of farming and sculpting, seeing one as vital to the other:

"Farming is not that different to making sculpture. I get a tremendous amount of inspiration for subject matter from my association – for the greater part of my working life – with farming."

It is through the co-existence of Coventry's life as a farmer and sculptor that created his own unflinchingly independent and self-assured style, charged with his own personal experience, as well as the thoughts, feelings and understandings of a man who is determined to document, perceive and give voice to the world around him. It is this intimate knowledge of his surroundings, gained from decades spent farming the land, and his innate ability to observe the animals, people and natural world, that led Coventry to be acutely aware of the aspects that others ignore or fail to see.

Presented in this exhibition are a diverse and encompassing selection of artworks, produced over Coventry's three decades as a sculptor, and speak of the breadth of the artist's inspiration: from lounging hounds, the gratitude shown to working farm animals, and the fleeting chorus of birds, among many others. Contained in all is the distillation and reaction to these from the artist himself, interpreted and voiced through his own experiences as a lifelong artist and farmer.

Luke Sainsbury  
2024



Hendrika, 1991  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
28 x 60 x 12 cm



Avian Form II, 1995  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
35 x 36 x 16.5 cm

Spiralling Rooks, 2018  
Coloured Giclée Print  
Edition of 25  
105 x 83 cm





Avian Form III, 1995  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
40 x 40 x 15 cm





Animal Form I, 1995  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
15 x 27 x 12 cm



Standing Bull I, 1996  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
31 x 47 x 13 cm



Seated Bull, 1996  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
41 x 49 x 26 cm



Rider Relief, 1997  
Bronze  
Open Edition  
22.5 x 22 cm



Bull Head Relief, 1997  
Bronze  
Open Edition  
22.8 x 22.2 cm

Avian Form Maquette, 1999  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
28 x 26.5 x 12 cm





Standing Bull II, 2001  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
44 x 43 x 23 cm

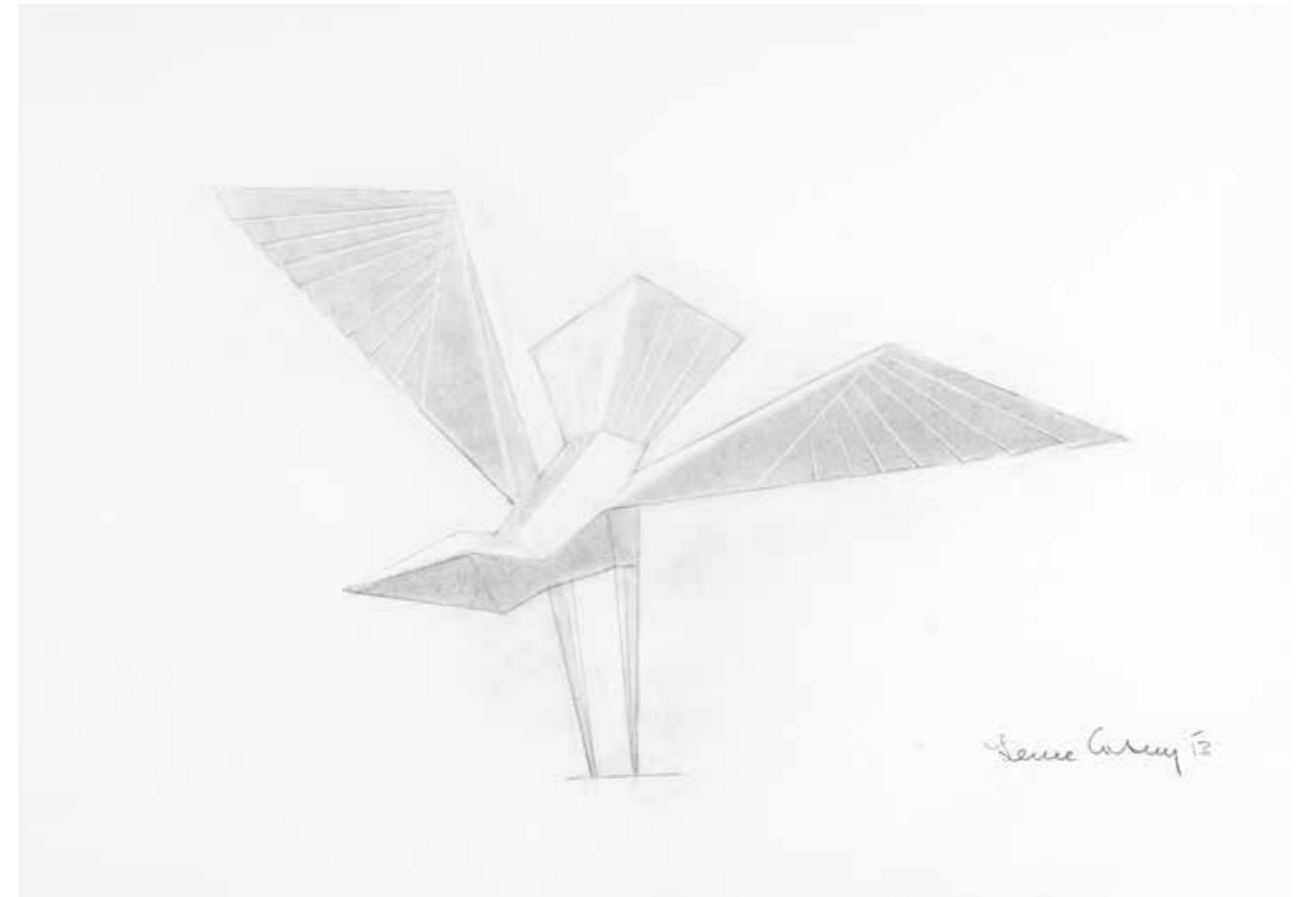


Boar II, 1999  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
100 x 230 x 42 cm



Rook, 2002  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
31.5 x 12 x 41 cm





Study for Bird Alighting, 2013  
Charcoal  
Unique  
74 x 98 cm



Bison, 2003  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
28.5 x 55 x 12 cm



Predator, 2003  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
18 x 47.5 x 16 cm

Hounds, 2011  
Photographic Print  
Edition of 30  
84 x 60 cm





Lying Hound Maquette, 2003  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
34 x 19 x 44 cm

Standing Hound, 2003  
Bronze  
Edition of 7  
75 x 96 x 25 cm





Goat I Maquette, 2004  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
40 x 38 x 11 cm

Goat I, 2004  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
158 x 160 x 58 cm







Sitting Boar Maquette, 2004  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
27 x 32 x 25 cm

Gannet Head Maquette, 2004  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
67 x 18 x 18 cm



Avian Form V, 2005  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
28.5 x 51 x 20 cm





Sea Horse, 2005  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 10  
17 x 12.5 x 7.5 cm

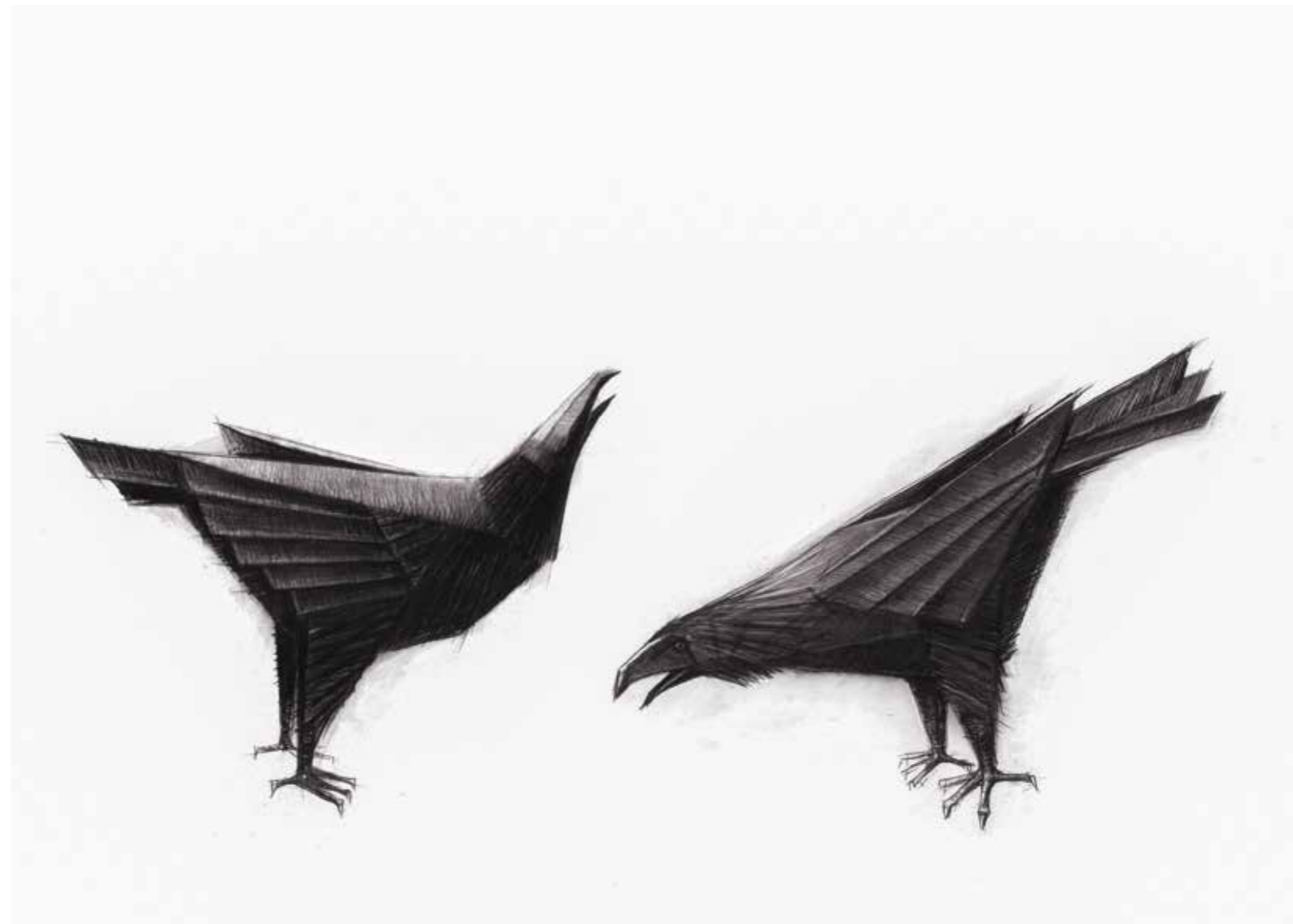


Avian Form VI, 2005  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
32.5 x 52 x 19 cm

Goat II, 2006  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
88 x 50 x 191 cm



Ravens, 2011  
Photographic Print  
Edition of 30  
60 x 84 cm



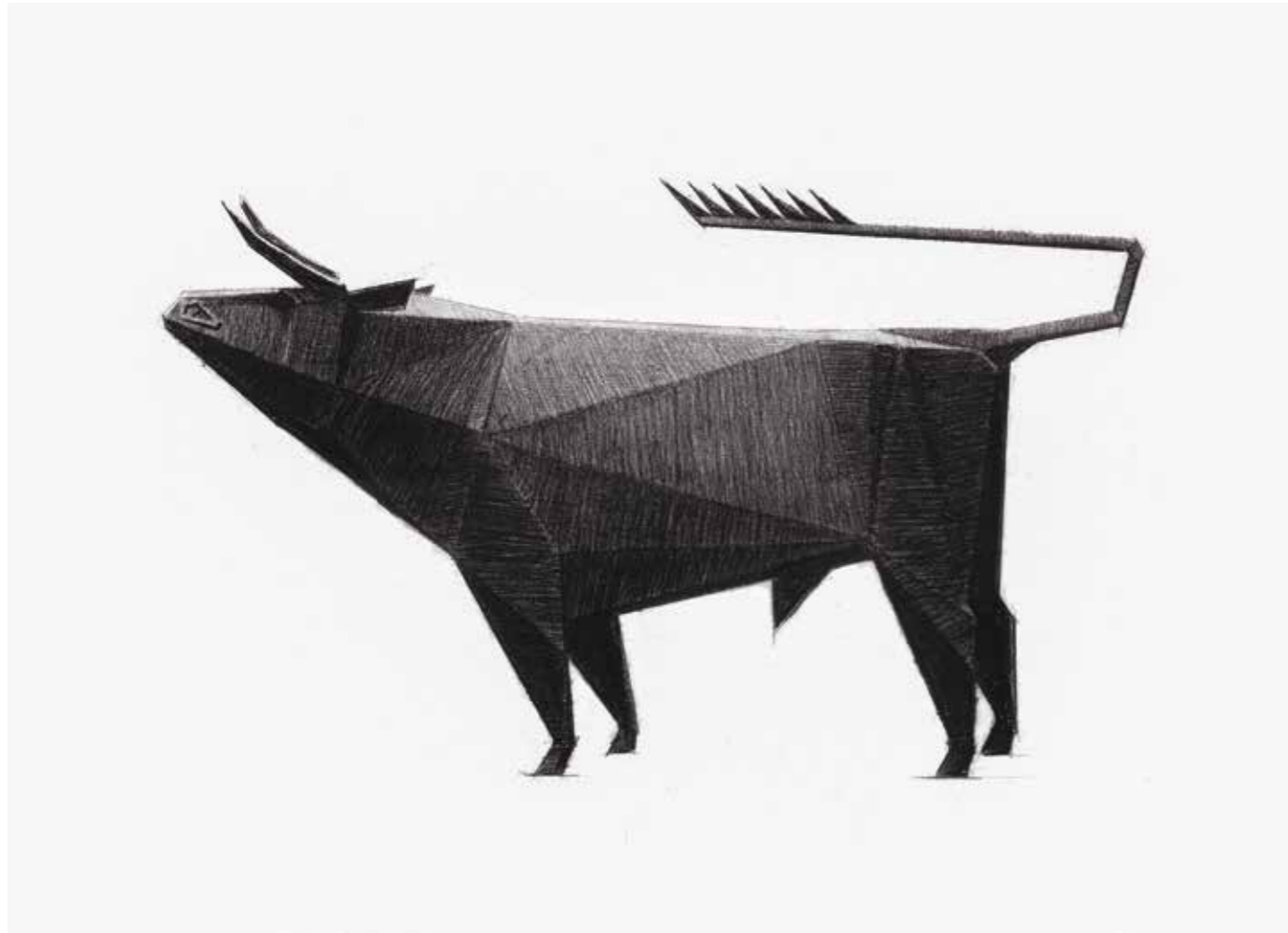
Choughs, 2006  
Bronze and Stainless Steel  
Edition of 10  
60 x 110 x 56 cm







Jackdaws on Chimney, 2006  
Bronze and Stainless Steel  
Edition of 10  
50 x 40 x 40 cm



Bull, 2011  
Photographic Print  
Edition of 30  
60 x 84 cm



Standing Bull III, 2006  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
39 x 72 x 14.5 cm



Horse Fragment, 2007  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
59 x 50 x 20 cm





New Riders, 2007  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
64 x 69 x 38 cm

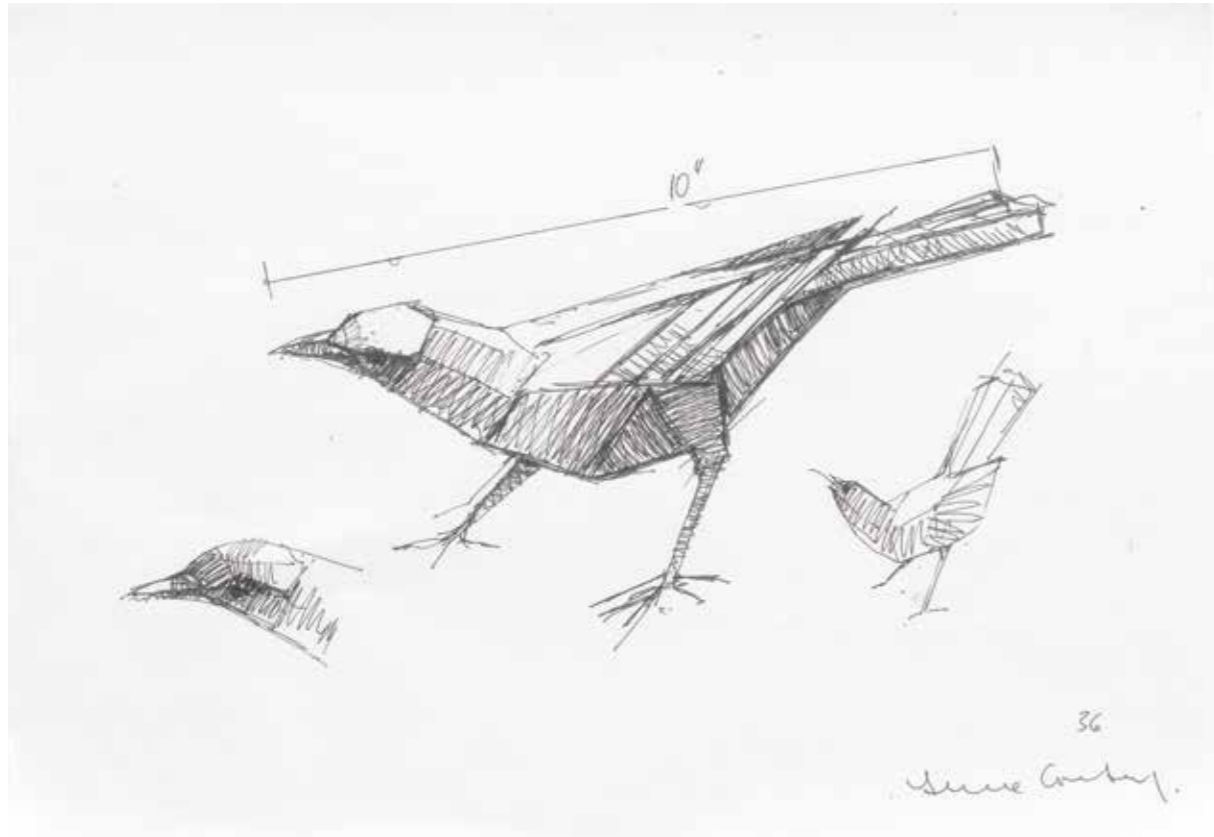


Joyrider I, 2008  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
52 x 41 x 10.5 cm





Miniature Horse, 2008  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
18 x 15.5 x 4.5 cm



Study for Listening Blackbird, c.2009  
Ink  
Unique  
29 x 42 cm



Listening Blackbird, 2009  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
18 x 29.5 x 18 cm



Displaying Blackbird, 2009  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
26.5 x 23 x 15 cm





Walkies, 2009  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
33.5 x 42 x 13.5 cm



Bird I, 2010  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
103 x 126 x 157 cm

Bird II, 2010  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
144 x 154 x 147 cm



Tree of Jackdaws, 2011  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
75 x 44 x 33 cm



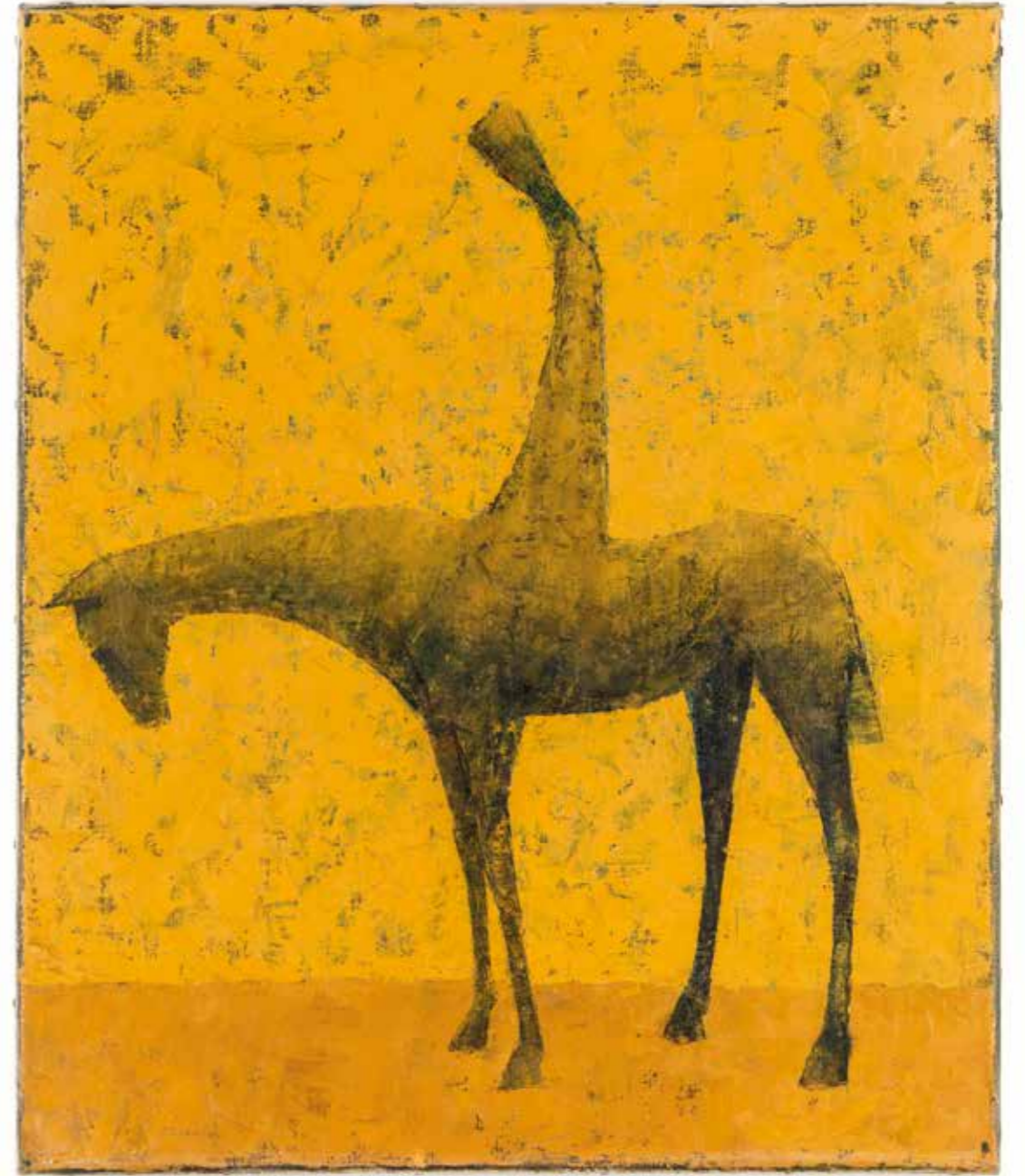


Small Standing Dog II, 2012  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
35 x 38 x 18 cm



Bird on Branch, 2012  
Steel  
Unique  
54 x 40 x 28 cm





Rider, 2018  
Coloured Giclée Print  
Edition of 25  
69 x 59 cm



Mother and Child, 2013  
AKA Two Winged Forms,  
Winged Form  
Bronze  
Unique  
58 x 30 x 30 cm





Silver Avian Form II, 2014  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 20  
9.5 x 9 x 4 cm





Bronze Form II, 2014  
Bronze  
Unique  
83.5 x 16.5 x 11 cm





Man Releasing Bird III, 2016  
Bronze  
Edition of 10  
95 x 44 x 25 cm





Small Owl, 2016  
Bronze  
Edition of 12  
15 x 9 x 8 cm



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Sculpture measurements are height x width x depth  
Works on paper measurements unframed are height x width

GALLERY PANGOLIN  
9 CHALFORD IND ESTATE CHALFORD GLOS GL6 8NT  
T: 01453 889765 F: 01453 889762 E: [gallery@pangolin-editions.com](mailto:gallery@pangolin-editions.com)  
[www.gallery-pangolin.com](http://www.gallery-pangolin.com)

