

House of Commons Exhibition

Artist's Statement

This 'Collection' of sculpture is topographical in nature and is part of a research project drawing together interests in revealing the northern landscape with the developments of new crafts in making sculpture. The inspiration comes from the idea of journeys and in this case celebrating the great northern rivers of the Tyne, Wear and Tees as they travel to the sea.

These 'journeys' are recorded through tracings from aerial photographs of the rivers. The traced images are used to make precision digital templates from which layers of sheet glass are cut using a water-jet cutter, each layer becoming a template for the succeeding layer. Through small increments of size, introduced by the process, the sculptures evolve tapering downward from top to base; marking, layer upon layer, in geological fashion, the time of their making. Sometimes these become 'patterns' for casting in materials relevant to the location, such as iron, glass or lead. In other work such as the work in this exhibition they stand as stratified float glass pieces in their own right.

I am interested in how journeys explore landscapes; how paths get worn, compress and build up over many generations; how rivers cut and change course as they journey to the sea. These routes and points where they cross reveal the topography of the world and tell us something about how we come to know and navigate it. These sculptures extend an ongoing engagement with landscape and through sculptural metaphor seek to give the *genius loci* or a sense of the chosen places.

Biography

Professor Brian Thompson

Professor Brian Thompson is the Associate Dean in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Media and Director of the research 'beacon' of *Creative & Cultural Practices* at the University of Sunderland.

From a background in fine art, Professor Thompson maintains a continuing practice in sculpture, exhibiting his work in this country and abroad; recently London, USA and Portugal. His research is based on ideas about making sculpture on the subject of nature, mapping and landscape. He works in a variety of materials and through a range of processes, including carving, casting, construction and the use of computing in relation to sculpture. A pioneer of practice-based doctorates in the UK since 1992 Professor Thompson continues to supervise PhD's in the studio arts subjects.

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