

INCOMPLETE SYSTEMS

1ST APRIL - 31ST OCTOBER, 2011

THE CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE GARDEN

S



C



U



L



P



T



U

R

E

Burghley Sculpture Garden is delighted to host Julian Wild's solo exhibition *Incomplete Systems*: a show in which the artist premieres a series of sculptures that reveal a shift in his practice from pre-determined to more indeterminate forms. The concluding activity deals with 'complete' forms that are more strictly ordered, such as the spherical *System No. 18*; whereas, the nascent enterprise is typified by 'incomplete' forms whose geometry is less explicitly defined such as, *New Shoot*.

In using systematic techniques to explore sculpture in the round, Wild follows a mechanistic cannon that begin in the early Twentieth Century with Constructivist artists such as Naum Gabo and Alexander Rodchenko. This approach subsequently achieved its most formulaic manifestation through the career of Sol LeWitt, which gained momentum in the 1960s. His sculptures, being invariably composed by grids of open cubes, rely on entirely orthogonal relationships. In contrast, Wild's particular use of methodical and repetitive fabrication processes confers more organic forms and relationships between parts that deviate from the right angle, and which are therefore less strictly ordered. Thus, it might be concluded, they deliver a more balanced experience between geometric and organic attributes, and industrial and natural characteristics.

A good example of this harmony is *System No. 18*, a sculpture that is also synonymous with Wild's extensive public commissions, which due to their expansive architectonic or landscape contexts demand a certain monumentality. This spherical sculpture is no exception, being over two and half metres in diameter and weighing several



SYSTEM NO.18



SPRING GREENS

tonnes. Notwithstanding its physical presence, this work exhibits a spatial lightness, due in large part to its skeletal and transparent structure, that implies volume, rather than mass.

Spring Greens also uses modular linear construction, but translates it into a zig-zag journey around an ellipsoid like form. The lack of symmetry in the travelling lines is heightened by the dramatically leaning installation of the sculpture, meaning it appears to be about to roll off down the slope on which it has been installed. The implication of movement around the form, and in relation to its surroundings, contribute to a perceived lack of stasis. Complementing this sense of energy, is its bright green powder coated surface that vibrates in the lush gardens of Burghley.

Incomplete System marks the boundary between Wild's more precise method of making sculpture and an approach in which the outcome is less tightly controlled. Whilst evidently fabricated in a spherical mould, this sculpture remains incomplete. The transformation of planar parts into volumetric form has resulted in a transparent structure that emphasises the sense of openness. This, along with the truncated geometry of its aperture suggests the moon rising. A visual phenomenon brought to earth by the sculpture's shimmering surface.

Wild's loosening of control is more fully embraced in subsequent sculptures. The latter is exemplified by *Hoola Systems*, which consists of six rotund elements that float around the lake designed by Capability Brown. Their bulbous geometry is mirrored



INCOMPLETE SYSTEMS



SYSTEM NO.14

by the circular hoola hoops from which they were constructed using cable ties. It is perhaps this more primitive construction technique that has precipitated Wild's relinquishing of control over the sculpture's appearance, by allowing the forces of gravity and buoyancy to be determining factors in each element's geometry. Rather than being perfectly spherical, the forms have slumped to create geometries that feel more alive. Their animation is naturally extended by the consequences of the wind and movement of the water beneath. The latter both mean the sculptures move around the lake in a kind of unscripted ballet, often spinning around their own centres. This creates a rather poetic red drawing in the lake that has neither beginning nor end. Intriguingly, these sculptures seem incomplete because much of their mass resides below the water's surface; yet at moments of stillness, when the wind dies down, their form is completed by reflections in the water.

Whilst *System No. 18* creates a sense of energy being compacted, it is subsequently reversed in the sculpture *Revival*. It, on the other hand, suggests explosive forces bursting outwards. Being composed of agricultural scrap from several of Burghley's tenant farms, it also contains historical connections that establish site specific relationships. Its aged industrial components have been reinvigorated through a process of zinc galvanising that also unifies the sculpture's form.

The role of drawing is self evident in many of Wild's sculptures and *Growth System* is no exception. In fact, the notion of 'drawing in space' is central to its execution; however, in this case, space has been replaced by the mass of a dead tree trunk around



HOOLA SYSTEMS



GROWTH SYSTEM

which the sculpture is defined. Clinging to the tree's surface, it circumnavigates the bark like some kind of alien parasite: a man-made ivy, creeping menacingly..

A final element of Wild's exhibition concerns a more vertical exploration; with several sculptures charting a thrusting upwards trajectory. *Doodle Form* traces a simple line towards the sky that has been looped into a sinuous knot. The continuity of line is more abruptly interrupted in *New Shoot*, where the line becomes jagged, whilst spiralling up around the sculpture's central axis. Its angular zig-zag geometry implies a man-made symbol for growth or perhaps even a stylised lightning bolt drawn down from the sky in a tonal arc of shifting reds and oranges.

To conclude the exhibition, Julian is developing a permanent commission for Burghley based on a giant explosion of highly polished stainless steel discs. In so doing, a connection may well be established with the more sensuous and optical work of British Constructivists, such as Mary Martin. It is anticipated that the circular surfaces that constitute *Exploded System*, will fragment and unite reflections of the Burghley gardens, along with the sun and sky. These visual qualities should animate the sculpture, and thereby give further life to the notion of the incomplete system.

Michael Shaw

Curator

Burghley Sculpture Garden

April 2011



NEW SHOOT



EXPLODED SYSTEM

Maquette

JULIAN WILD

The Burghley Gardens, created in the 18th century by the renowned Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, have been infiltrated by a series of apparently incongruous sculptural intrigues. It's as if some eccentric scientist had arrived on site and attempted to construct 3D abstract diagrams of the underlying structures of Brown's artfully contrived natural landscapes. Brown's genius artifice consisted of an ability to systematically order nature so it looked as if it had simply ordered itself. Calling himself a 'place-maker' rather than landscape gardener, Brown worked at a time when the romance of nature was intensified by the encroaching threat of the industrial revolution. Julian Wild's sculptures are created in a post-industrial era when the global landscape appears to be threatened by ecological precariousness. His sculptures, dotted throughout the Burghley Gardens, are collectively titled *Incomplete Systems*.

It's as if two contrasting breeds of sculptor are combined in Wild. On the one hand there's the structural formalist, the purist abstract artist seeking out primal forms. This artist inclines towards the geometric building blocks of the cube, the sphere, the minimalist's penchant for reductive composition. On the other hand there's the spontaneous improviser, the expressive artist with a personal touch who is willing to let the varying characteristics of his raw materials lead him astray into fields of baroque elaboration. This artist follows the wayward routes of delightful unpredictabilities and treasures serendipitous mistakes. Here the two artist types meet in one to converse and catalyse a series of outdoor sculptural surprises.

Talking of these recent works, Wild uses terms such as failure, indeterminateness, anti-monumentality, parasitic-like incompleteness. It's as if perfectly resolved sculptural systems would seem unnatural, untrue,

perhaps even dehumanized in their formal symmetry and mathematical rationality. We look around our manufactured environment and find that formal aesthetic symmetry tends to be the stuff of authoritative structures: banks, military and governmental buildings, structures that are made to loom and last and imbue a sense of infallible security or disconcerting power. Wild's work, like Brown's marvelous Garden, is of a different order. He sets up a train of sculptural thought, takes his sculptural lines for a predetermined walk, then allows himself to be sidelined into all manner of fascinating aesthetic digressions. His plastic hoola hoop globes are distorted by the changing weather systems of the lake on which they float. His *Totem* is a tower of imbalanced I-beam off-cuts. The deep red thrust of *New Shoot* emerges skyward to flower in a wayward zigzag of sunflower orange. The galvanized starlight eruption of *Revival* is adorned with fragments of agricultural scrap assembled from Burghley's tenant farms. *Colony* is an infestation of orange ceramic fungi. *Spring Greens* tips as if about to topple. Throughout, imperfection is endearing, even, at times, amusing. It introduces a pathos of common fallibilities. It demonstrates nature's refusal to be tidily contained, simply defined or ultimately demystified. Wild creates room for standing in wonder.

Robert Clark

Robert Clark is a writer and,
under the name Robert Casselton Clark, an artist.



SYSTEM NO.1
copper
70 cm³

SYSTEM NO.18
scaffolding
250 cm³





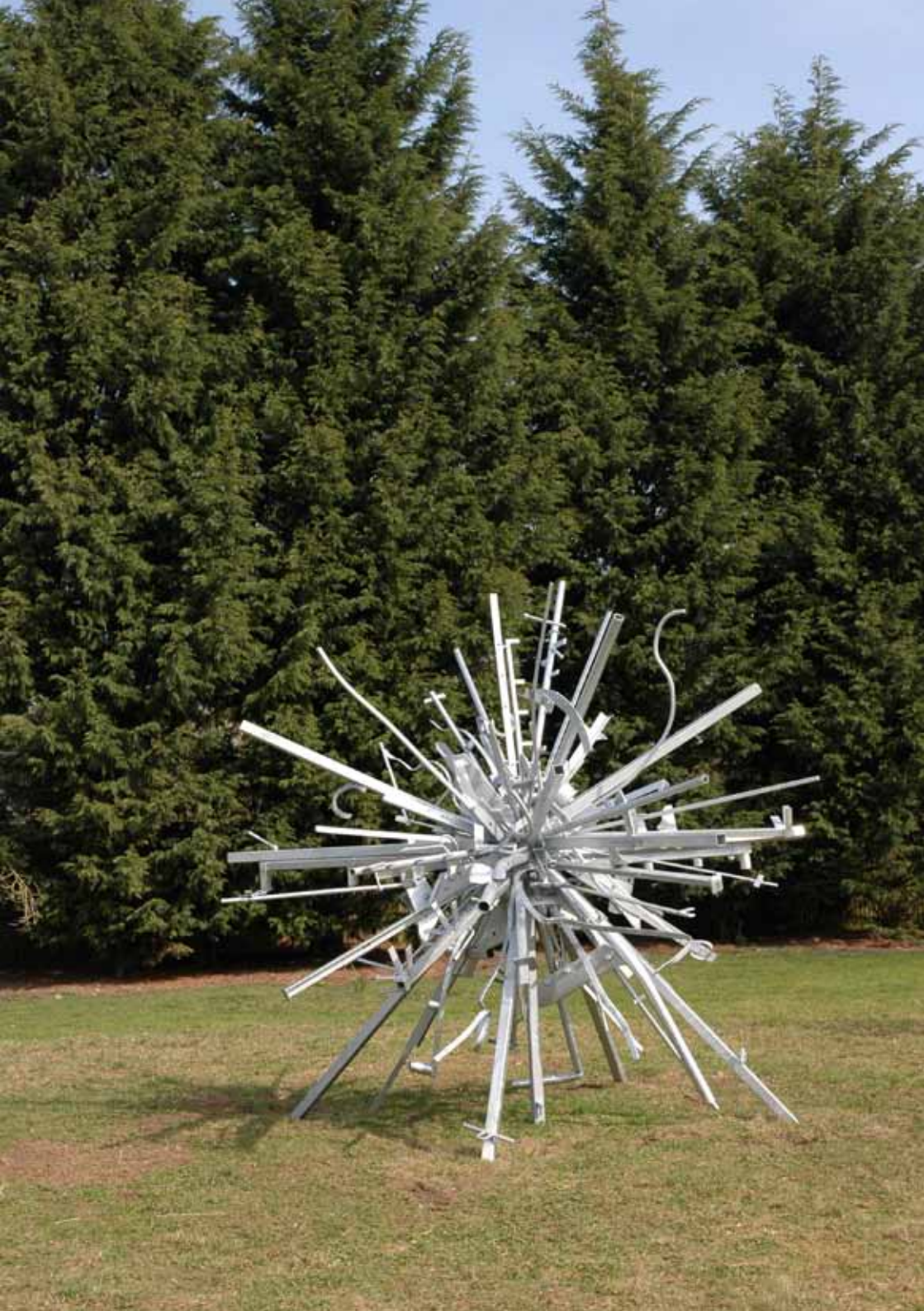
SYSTEM NO.14
copper (left)
50 cm³

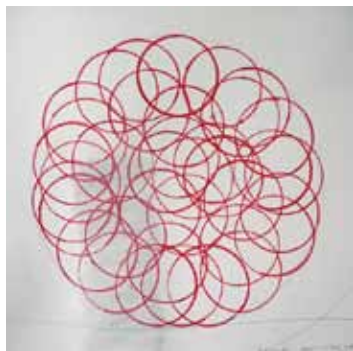
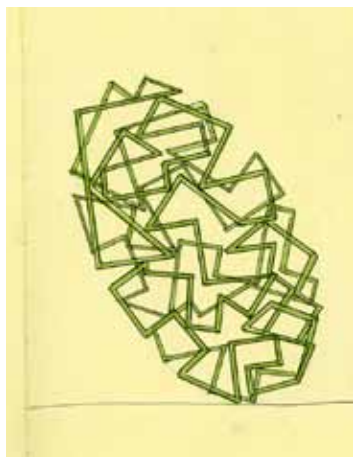
INCOMPLETE SYSTEM
aluminium (right)
150 cm³





REVIVAL
galvanised agricultural scrap
300 cm³





STUDIES FOR
INCOMPLETE SYSTEMS
(left)

HOOLA SYSTEMS
hoola hoops (right)
6 units each 250 cm³

SPRING GREEN
powder coated stainless steel
200 x 120 X 120 cm (overleaf)









COLONY (ORANGE)
ceramic (left)

GROWTH SYSTEM
plastic tubing (right)





DOODLE FORM
stainless steel (left)
400 X 35 x 35 cm

TOTEM
galvanised steel (right)
460 X 120 x 120 cm





NEW SHOOT
painted steel
530 x 140 x 140 cm



INTERVIEW

Michael Shaw: Let's begin with the title of the show; what does Incomplete Systems refer to?

Julian Wild: The word system implies a network or a sense of prevailing order; and also a construction method. The earlier works in the show are predominantly structures made within the confines of a geometric form, in which a chaotic line bounces around an inner surface. The recent works in the show are taking the system apart and breaking it down; so hence the title, Incomplete Systems.

MS: How has interacting with Capability Brown's gardens at Burghley affected your thinking whilst developing these sculptures?

JW: Capability Brown seemed to get around a lot in his time and recreated his Arcadian landscapes in many places; and some would say he changed a lot of gardens that were very much in tact, in order to stamp his own vision on them. I imagine a lot of the original gardens at Burghley have disappeared underneath Capability Brown's subsequent design. I was interested in this idea of something that's man-made to evoke a sense of countryside.

MS: I suppose you might conclude Brown was keen to re-configure; do you now feel like you're re-ordering the landscape through your interventions?

JW: Certainly with the piece in the lake, *Hoola System*, which works with the landscape and the idea of a vista. The lake's dam enables you to stand and look out over Capability Brown's design and within that I've placed these structures that are ordered, but have become distorted. They're spherical forms that have collapsed slightly. The material is something used in schools for exercising or a game and has a sort of throw away quality; so placing those objects within that environment felt like I was subverting that notion of that landscape.

MS: The sculpture in the lake does seem to represent an evolution in your language; one where control has been ceded to outside elements. How has this development occurred?

JW: It's really through the nature of the material. I think it was by placing them in the lake that I realised the form wasn't going to stay in a perfect sphere and maybe it was more interesting that they became slightly amorphous forms that adapted to their environment through shifting form and movement.

MS: Could you discuss the general evolution of a sculpture? For example, do you begin with a drawing or maquette?

JW: I usually begin with a drawing and that can be just a tiny little sketch in a notebook. That then develops into a maquette and then travels on to be a larger work. It sounds quite restrictive but like that, but if I make a maquette it's about the idea of the piece, rather than defining its specific form. Consider for example *New Shoot*, that was something indeterminate; it wasn't predetermined when I made it.

MS: Invariably one can look through your sculptures due to their transparent structures; is there a particular reason for this attraction to open forms?

JW: I think the open forms relate to drawing actually; they relate to this idea of a line that describes a volume; and that's a contradiction in a way because there's this delicate expressive agent that is moving around and trying to describe something solid. I'm trying to create a volume from something that's linear, so that's why you end up with a transparent structure. In a sense, wherever you put them they do relate to their context because you're looking through them to what's beyond.

MS: Would it then follow that the reason you're often joining parts together is because you're taking this line on a journey around the form?

JW: Yes, I think so; a line or maybe a series of units and elements. Generally, my practice is about adding, not subtracting.

MS: I would say another dominant characteristic of many of your sculptures is their colour and how the introduction of this colour into the landscape has made a very vibrant contrast. What are the specific reasons for these tonal choices?

*JW: When you're presenting sculptures in a large open environment they can easily become insignificant. Colour is an excellent tool for giving presence, but it can also provide a kind of narrative. For example with *Spring Greens*, its colour was based on a handrail that I found on an underground train. It's a man-made urban colour that's been brought into this natural environment; and this unnatural green will, at certain points in the year, merge into its background and at others, will stand out and look incongruous.*

MS: Following on from the idea of applying colour to surfaces, you are premiering two sculptures that have been galvanised. Could you discuss their treatment?

*JW: Totem, was constructed from I-beams, stacked into a sort of impossible tower; something that's almost badly made in a casual manner. Somehow, using the galvanising process gave it a humorous monumentality and importance that it almost didn't deserve. On the other hand, the objects within *Revival* were items of agricultural scrap collected from the tenant farms around Burghley House, which were then welded into a starburst explosive form. Galvanising seemed logical because it's used in the construction of agricultural equipment such as cattle grids and gates. It seemed to be apt that I was reviving these artefacts by dipping them in a galvanising solution.*

MS: Let's conclude with a prediction for the future, in terms of what working at Burghley has contributed to your practice...

JW: I've always been opposed to having a narrative in my work, but I think this experience has drawn me closer to incorporating narrative. Also, I'm increasingly interested in the idea of making a sculpture that doesn't really have a predetermined plan; in which there's a greater scope for change and movement. So I'm looking to build and expand on these aspects.

BIOGRAPHY

Julian Wild graduated with a BA in Fine Art Sculpture from Kingston University in 1995 and has since developed his sculptural practice through three-dimensional drawings. The linear structures that he makes either explore the boundaries of pre-determined shapes or those of the architecture within which they exist.

Wild's sculptures often respond to the history or context of the site, as has been the case in large external commissions for clients including; Millfield School, The Cass Sculpture Foundation, Crest Nicholson, The Jerwood Sculpture Park, Radley College and Sculpture in the Parklands in Ireland.

Wild has also exhibited widely with recent venues comprising; The Saatchi Gallery, The Victoria and Albert Museum, V22 Ashwin Street, The Wharf Road Project and The Hospital Club. Allied to his public artworks, Wild has also been commissioned to produce sculptures for internal spaces at Schrodgers, the National Institute for Medical Research, Wyeth Europa and for various private clients.

In 2005, Wild was shortlisted for The Jerwood Sculpture Prize, and his maquette was exhibited at the Jerwood Space, London. He is the current recipient of the Royal Borough Kensington and Chelsea and Chelsea Arts Club Trust Studio Bursary. As well as developing the sculptures for Burghley in 2011, he is presently creating new works for a solo installation project at Leighton House Museum, Holland Park in September 2011.



COMMISSIONS & PROJECTS



MAKING THE CONNECTION
@ WHERE???
2009
plastic tubing
size ????? cm



SYSTEM NO.6
Bog Standard @ PricewaterhouseCoopers
2003
copper
180 x 180 x 60 cm



SYSTEM NO.30
@ *Sculpture in the Parklands*, Ireland
2009
peat cutting machinery and steel
350 x 450 x 2100 cm



SYSTEM NO.12
Crest Nicholson PLC @ Maida Vale
2006
stainless steel
300 x 70 x 300 cm



SYSTEM NO.24
@ Jerwood Sculpture Park
2008
powder coated stainless steel
400 x 120 X 120 cm



SYSTEM NO.19
@ Cass Sculpture Foundation
2007
stainless steel
500 x 100 x 500 cm



SYSTEM NO.11
@ Millfield School, Somerset
2005
mild steel
250 cm³



SYSTEM NO.20
@ Schrodgers Investment Management
2007
stainless steel
150 cm³

CV

EDUCATION

- 1992-1995 B.A. in Fine Art Sculpture, Kingston University
1991-1992 Foundation in Art and Design, Cheltenham Art College

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 *Incomplete Systems*, Burghley Sculpture Garden, Burghley House, Stamford
 Wrestling Pythons, Leighton House, London
2010 *Toad In The Hole*, The Hospital Club, Covent Garden, London
2003 *Bog Standard*, Atrium Gallery, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, London

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 *Abstract*, Maddox Arts, London
 Cabinet, John Martin Gallery, London
 Matter, Morley Gallery, London
 Art Fiera, Bologna, Italy
2010 *Village Green*, Stanton-St.John, Oxon
 Flaming July, Leighton House, London
 Occidental Dimension, University of Brighton Gallery
 RHA Annual, Ely Place, Dublin
 Art of Giving, Saatchi Gallery, London
2009 *Sculpture at Woburn*, Woburn Abbey
 2 I2D, Royal British Society of Sculptors, London
 RHA Annual, Ely Place, Dublin
2008 *Wharf Road Project*, Tom Rowland Fine Art, London
 Maddox Arts Summer Show, Brooks Mews, London
 Make Do, Tom Rowland Fine Art, London
 Clay, Royal British Society of Sculptors, London
 Figure, Burghley Sculpture Garden, Burghley House, Stamford
2007 *Monochromed 2: White Out*, Fine Art Society, London
 Spectrum, Abbey House Gardens, Malmesbury
2006 *Contemporary Sculpture*, Rollo, London
 London Art Fair, Artlab, Business Design Centre, London
2005 *Sculpture in the Making*, Atkinson Gallery, Millfield School, Street
2005 *Jerwood Sculpture Prize*, Jerwood Space, London
 Boundless, Stenersenmuseet, Oslo, Norway
2004 *Model Village*, 18-22 Northdown Street, London

- 2004 *Trion Contemporary*, Arndean Gallery, London
Freehouse, The Hare, London
Lost Landscapes, Seven Seven Gallery, London
- 2003 *Stealth*, MOT, London
- 2002 *Lot 1\$, Candid Gallery*, London
Make, Morley Gallery, London
- 2001 *Giant*, Unit 16, Three Mills Film Studios, Bromley-by-Bow, London
- 2000 *Snow Gallery*, Kennington Park Road, London
- 1999 *Visual Assault*, Blue Print Gallery, Truman Brewery, London
Summer, Sun and Doves Gallery, London
- 1997 *New Work: Thomas Rowland and Julian Wild*, Clerkenwell Gallery, London
- 1995 *Exchange*, Knights Park Gallery, Kingston
- 1994 *Transmission Report*, Curtain Road Gallery, London

PUBLIC ART / COMMISSIONS

- 2010 *Exploded System*, Burghley Sculpture Garden, Burghley House, Stamford
Making the Connection, communal sculpture project
 Touring: The Jerwood Sculpture Park and The Tabernacle Arts Centre
System no.18 on show at BISHOP'S SQUARE, Spitalfields, London
- 2009 *System no.30* commissioned by SCULPTURE IN THE PARKLANDS
 Lough Boora, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, Ireland
System no.26 commissioned by VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
- 2008 *System no.25* commissioned by RADLEY COLLEGE, Oxfordshire
System no.24 commissioned by JERWOOD SCULPTURE PARK
- 2007 *System no.21* commissioned by WYETH EUROPA
System no.20 commissioned by SCHRODERS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
System no.19 commissioned by CASS SCULPTURE FOUNDATION
- 2006 *System no.12* commissioned by CREST NICHOLSON
- 2005 *System no.11* commissioned by MILLFIELD SCHOOL, Street, Somerset
- 2003 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH. The Ridgeway, London

AWARDS / PRIZES

- 2010 Arts Council England
 Finalist for National Art Prize, Saatchi Gallery, London
 Shortlisted for HTC Art Award
- 2009 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Arts Club Trust Studio Bursary Award
- 2005 Jerwood Sculpture Prize: shortlisted
 Millfield Sculpture Prize winner



Burghley Sculpture Garden, Stamford, PE9 3JY

www.burghley.co.uk 01780 752451

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The gardens are lovingly nurtured by John 'office boy' Burrows and team. Additional thanks to the house office staff of Philip, Jo, Holly, Ruth and Mel. Sculptures installed by Anthony Carr. Last and by no means least, we extend our gratitude to Julian without whose hard work, energy, and dedication the exhibition would not have become a reality.

Julian wishes to thank: Michael Shaw and everyone at Burghley House for making this project possible.

Thank-you to Mario Palencia, Paul Hardman, Stacey Young, Alison Hay, Tara Cranswick, Elizabeth Louis, Barry, RBKC Arts services, Chelsea Arts Club Trust. *Incomplete Systems* is dedicated to Mary Grant.

Exhibition & catalogue conceived and designed by Michael Shaw

Photographs - Michael Shaw all except: Anthony Carr (p4, 8, 15 top, 19, 20 left, 21, 22) Noah DaCosta (p28 br, 29 br)

Mario Palencia (p27 left), Julian Wild (p5, 14, left, 28 tl tr bl, 29 tl tr bl) Stacey Young (p27 centre & right)

Cover - Julian Wild, *Hoola System*, photo - Michael Shaw

A selection of the sculptures will be subsequently be shown in Spital Square, London in May 2012

Published by BHPT

Copyright: BHPT, Robert Clark, Michael Shaw & Julian Wild

ISBN: 978-0-9565581-1-4

www.julianwild.com



Spitalfields

