

Your name:	Imogen Long
Your course and year of study:	Historic Carving: Architectural Stone, Year 3
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Current bursary recipient:	Yes / No

1. Tell us about your final project:

Please keep your answers to 300 words

1.1 What do you want to do?

I intend to carve a foliate relief sculpture. The carving is to be used as a stone lintel.

The design will be reminiscent of the Romanesque style, evoking the era when the portals of churches and cathedrals were carved with messages to those who passed beneath them about the coming of the Last Judgment and through this message urging them to review their conduct while on earth.

This theme is developed to suggest that our current conduct on earth will lead to catastrophe and flood if we do not assess and change our behaviour and relationship with the planet, not in the next lifetime but in this one. The selected foliage specimens are therefore seaweed. The seaweed will entwine fragments of the built environment, with allusions to sea level rise and the engulfing of not only buildings but much of human culture.

While often referred to as 'flat' or 'planar', perhaps because of their overall composition, the Romanesque style of carving on portal tympanums and lintels shows great movement and deep relief in the individual elements. There are foliate elements in these carvings, which are heavily stylised, but other parts also recall plants and leaves, such as the flow of the drapery around the figures.

In terms of shape and movement, seaweeds have a beguiling range of forms to explore. Their inherent form is further enhanced by the way in which they are acted upon by the movement of tidal water.

I will create an original design incorporating the ideas discussed above and carve it onto the face of the lintel. Text will be carved onto the underside of the lintel, intended to view as one passes beneath.

1.2 What does it involve?

The work will involve three components, which will overlap to a certain extent:

- Research
- Design
- Carving

The research will be both desk-based – reading about Romanesque design, carving and seaweed, for example – as well as requiring visits. I would like to go to the Natural History Museum, which has recently installed a seaweed display, and to the coast (probably Devon, which has interesting and accessible seaweed) in order to study seaweed first hand. I have already been to Cornwall over summer and started this type of research.

The research will result in written and drawn work. I also intend to make casts of seaweed to study. Covid-19 permitting, I want to visit the great Romanesque portals in France – Autun, Moissac, Conques, Beaulieu and Vezelay. This could be done over a long weekend or the Christmas holidays.

The design will be developed alongside the research. This will involve clay and plaster maquettes of individual elements and of the whole lintel; drawings at reduced scales and at full scale; and sample carvings in stone. The composition and details will draw on what has been learned from the Romanesque examples.

In order to start the carving, the stone will need to be ordered. Although a final design will be complete prior to commencing carving, I anticipate that the design will continue to evolve alongside the carving as more is learned about the piece and the nature of the stone as I go along.

1.3 What do you hope to achieve?

Through carving the lintel, I hope to create a piece that is useful and beautiful, but which also goes beyond this to mean something to those who see it. The lintel will be of a size that is functional and could therefore be incorporated into a contemporary building. If the appropriate opportunity arose, it could also be installed in an existing building.

On a personal level, this project will develop the skills that I have worked on during the first two years. I have loved every aspect of the historic stone carving course – the carving, modelling, drawing, lettering and art histories – and am excited to have developed a piece that can continue to improve my abilities in all of these areas.

When I graduate I would like to continue this kind of work, bringing historic carving into our built environment. This project will enable me to showcase what the course has taught me.

1.4 Why do you want to do it?

I have learned a great deal about the different styles of historic carving in the first two years of the course. They all inspire me for different reasons, but I have been most strongly drawn to the Romanesque. There is a deceptive simplicity to the carvings, which when looked at in detail are in fact complex and fascinating – stylistically, compositionally and technically. Herbert Read refers to their 'remoteness in time' and the 'symbolic nature of their representations' as well as the 'unity, harmony [and] serenity' that they achieve. This also resonates with me.

The course has involved copy carving as well as design work in particular historic styles. I feel that creating an original piece which reveals something about historic carving as well as our current era – and how they relate to each other – is very important in order to keep the tradition and skills of stone carving relevant and alive, both to those who practice them and to those who take pleasure or interest in the outcome of the work.

1.5 How does this relate to the interests of Sir Denis Mahon?

Sir Denis Mahon took a deep and serious interest in many aspects of art and had a particular period of painting – the Italian baroque – that became his life-long curiosity and study. At the time he became interested in it, it was not fashionable or well-

researched. The Romanesque period had similarly been neglected in art history and only became the subject of scholarly study in the late nineteenth century, so he would have been aware of how the fates of different eras rise and fall in the contemporary academic and cultural world.

It was Nikolaus Pevsner who introduced him systematically to the subject of the Italian baroque while Mahon was at the Courtauld. During this period (the early to mid 1930s) Pevsner not only gave lectures which Mahon attended, but was also asked by Mahon to provide him with some private tuition. I would like to think that they found their discussions ranging beyond the period of the Italian baroque, particularly given Pevsner's promotion of the 'spirit of the age' and putting art history within the wider context of the times. The importance of art within any era and the way in which it takes themes that have always been part of the human experience and presents them in new physical and aesthetic forms would be something both men were likely to support.

Mahon was an advocate of art being accessible for all. I hope that he would be thoroughly sympathetic to the idea of art adorning buildings, rather than hidden within them. The Romanesque portal carvings are an excellent example of this. I hope that the lintel project I am undertaking would also be something Sir Denis would believe to be worthwhile.

2. How will you spend the grant funds?

Please keep your answers to 300 words

2.1. Please give a total and break down of the budget. (include: materials, travel, research, beyond average use of specific Art School facilities, additional technician time, exhibition installation materials)

Research

- Books £100
- Materials (alginate, silicone, plaster) £100
- Devon coast visit for seaweed collection £150
- France visit (Autun, Vezelay etc) to see portals £400

Design

Materials (clay, plaster, tools, sketchbooks) £200

Carving

Materials (stone, tools) £800

Exhibition requirements (fixing, blockwork jambs) £200

Total

£1,950

Regarding school facilities, the project can be undertaken without beyond average use of facilities or technician time.

2.2 What difference will the grant make to your project?

The grant will enable the project to reach its full potential and be as ambitious as possible.

- The depth of research that I will be able to undertake if I can travel will make a significant difference to my understanding of the subjects and the final piece of work.
- I will be able to buy more specific tools required for the carving.
- I will be able to get the most appropriate stone for the project.
- I will be able to display the completed lintel to best effect by mounting it in the exhibition with jambs supporting it.

2.3 If the project will require beyond average use of specific Art School facilities or technician support, please give more information here (e.g. Kilns, metal workshop, wood workshop, print room)

The clay maquettes will need to be fired in the kiln, but I do not anticipate beyond average use.

2.4 Will you need any equipment the Art School does not currently have?

No.

3. Tell us about yourself

(300 words maximum word count for each question)

I came to City & Guilds of London Art School having decided that I wanted to pursue a career making work in stone. The historic carving architectural stone course combined, to an astonishing degree, all of my interests and felt like the perfect next step. I had always enjoyed art, design and making things at school and had originally trained as an architect. I worked in practice for over ten years, running projects in existing and listed buildings. I gained accreditation as a conservation architect and as part of the training for this went on a visit to York Minster, spending time in the workshop and drawing office as well as up the scaffold. This was a key moment for me and I started to realise I had become too distant from the materials and making that were at the heart of the process. I wanted to return to this and to continue learning and improving my skills.

I have loved the course so far and feel it has provided me with an incredible variety of experiences and opportunities to develop skills. Every project we have undertaken has opened up a new and exciting avenue to explore. While at the Art School I have been very honoured to receive awards for my work – the Knights of the Round Table Award and the Mason's Company Prize for Studentship and Commitment.

statement: *I certify that this is my original idea.*

signed: Imogen Long

date: 8th October 2021

PLEASE INCLUDE VISUAL MATERIAL HERE (up to 4 pages):







