

Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Award 2021/22
End of Project Report

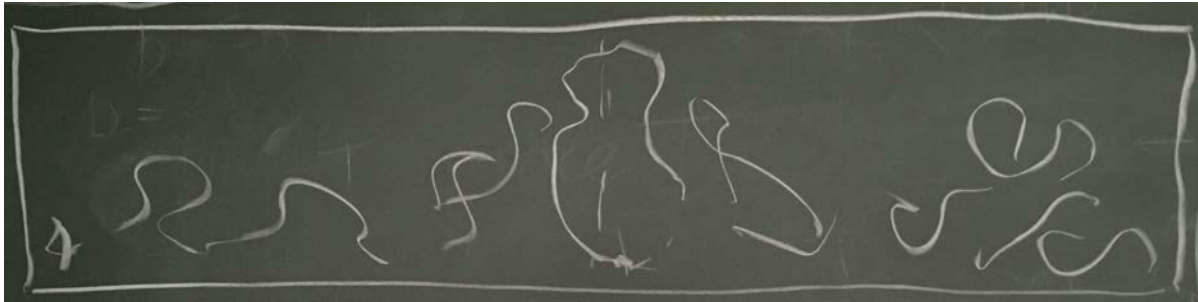
Imogen Long

Third Year, Historic Carving: Architectural Stone

Academic Year 2021/22

City & Guilds of London Art School

LINTEL WITH SEAWEED RELIEF CARVING



(top to bottom)

Initial idea sketched on blackboard

Drawing of design

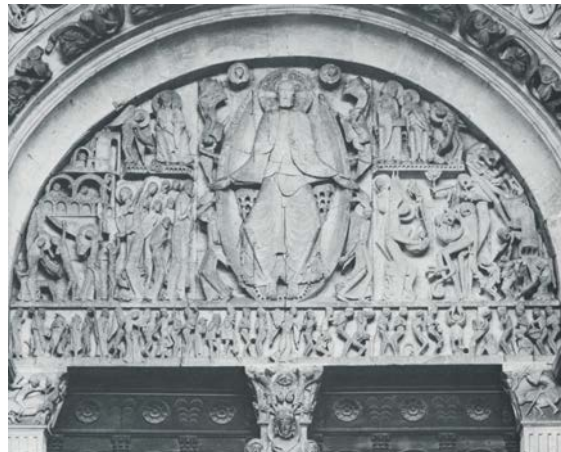
Clay model of design

Ciment fondu cast of clay model

Final carving in Purbeck Pond Freestone

Thank you for the fantastic opportunity that the Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Award has given me to pursue new and exciting work in stone carving. I have gained so much from this project, particularly enjoying the chance to explore my own designs in the context of historic carving. Thanks to the grant, I was able to spend time investigating the type of stone that would suit the project best and to purchase the perfect stone for the carving.

Over the course of my third year I developed the Lintel with Seaweed Relief project. I was inspired by the Romanesque tympanums in France – Autun, Vézelay, Conques, Beaulieu and Moissiac – which mark the reestablishment of monumental stone carving after a lapse of a number of centuries. All but one of these carvings depict the Last Judgement and send a powerful message to those passing below them into the church.



Autun Cathedral Main Portal, Autun, France

I began to think about what form and message might be more relevant for our current times. My design incorporates seaweed and buildings (fragments from the Autun Tympanum) caught in a writhing sea. The composition of the design is based on the loose symmetry of the Romanesque tympanums and the stylisation of the seaweed is inspired by the drapery carvings of this period.



Stone samples

The process began with small clay maquettes and composition sketches. Then I developed a 1:1 clay model of the design. I ordered a range of stone samples and tested these to find the most appropriate for the design I had made. Purbeck Pond Freestone was selected. While in the Isle of Purbeck visiting the quarry, I also collected seaweed, which I studied in order to develop the design. I wanted to capture the movement and detail of the seaweed and after casting the seaweed in various materials, made a glass piece – seaweed forms in four panes of coloured glass - that sits alongside the lintel.



*Working on the clay model for the Seaweed Relief (left)
Working on the Seaweed Relief stone carving (right)*



*Seaweed glass pieces in kiln (left)
Two of the finished glass pieces (right)*



Details from the finished carving catching the evening light

I have enjoyed this project and my time at the Art School immensely and learned a huge amount. I wish to continue carving – sculptural pieces and letter cutting - and have a studio space where I will begin to create new works, starting with a commission for a piece of carved drapery.

In addition to the Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Award, I was the recipient of a number of awards during my BA course:

2022	<i>City & Guilds of London Art School Lettering Prize</i>
2022	<i>Masons' Company Prize for Studentship and Commitment</i>
2022	<i>Brian Till Art Histories Thesis Prize</i>
2021	<i>Masons' Company Prize for Studentship and Commitment</i>
2020	<i>Honourable Society of Knights of the Round Table Award</i>



Lintel with Seaweed Relief on display as part of my degree show



Undulating flow across the relief in the evening light