

8th APRIL 2019

Local artist Christopher Townsend creates sculpture for national TV competition



Burford-based sculptor Christopher Townsend is set to appear in this week's episode of 'Home Is Where The Art Is' on BBC1 at 3.45pm Monday 15th April. During the programme he competes for a commission to produce a sculpture for an Oxfordshire couple who wish to add interesting bespoke art to their walls.

'I was interested in taking part in the competition as I thought it would stretch me artistically and make me look again at the process of making something bespoke for an everyday home,' says Chris, 'and I was thrilled to be chosen.'

'For the filming, I first went to a terraced cottage in the centre of Chinnor along with two other artists, a textile artist and a painter, against whom I was competing for the commission. The mystery buyers had left a brief for us which was fairly broad: they asked for something uplifting that "felt like jumping in muddy puddles!" I loved that idea and it gave me lots of scope for ideas.'

'We had a chance to nosy around the house and get a feel for the ethos, taste and interests of the people who lived there and we speculated on what they might be like in person. It was a lovely neat home with lots of art – their own, I suspected as well as other people's - that showed an appreciation of nature. There were also lots of little touches suggesting it was a home full of love, from pairs of things illustrating a close couple to a message from other family members on a chalk board. I had a strong feeling that they were real family people and so my proposal for a piece of metal wall sculpture reflected these values.'

'I went to the BBC studio in Manchester to put my pitch to the buyers – who weren't quite what I was expecting! - and it was fascinating both to meet the personalities who lived in the house and hear the ideas of the other competitors which, although inspired by exactly the same environment, were very different from mine.'

'Although I was excited about being invited to be on the programme, at the outset I thought the experience of being filmed would be pretty nerve-wracking: actually I enjoyed the whole process. I was delighted to have the chance to give interested viewers an insight into way I work and the process of commissioning an artist, showing the way metal can be formed from its raw state into meaningful sculpture that will last a life-time.'

'I've always loved to demonstrate my methods and talk about the materials I use and reasons my sculptures take the forms they do, whether they are organic or figurative or something else entirely, and I'm looking forward to opening my studio as part of the Oxfordshire Artweeks festival in May (Artweeks venue 332) when I'll be showing my sculpture from little to large alongside delicate pieces by jeweller Guen Palmer – each of her earrings, rings and pendants is like a sculpture in miniature! Then you'll be able to see carefully-crafted metal from tiny 10mm to toweringly tall and compare Guen's very different techniques to mine! I hope lots of people will come along.'

Accompanying images of Chris at work and images of sample work

Notes to editors

Christopher Townsend is a full time sculptor with a studio in Asthall near Burford in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds creating large pieces from steel, found metal objects, stone and wood. Chris creates pieces with pleasing line, form and balance for the wall, ceiling and floor and sees his art as a way of describing and interpreting a journey through life, and a response to stimuli, feelings and emotions. He is particularly influenced by the environment and location around his studio and the agricultural heritage of the land and landscape, of the earth! The inspiration for many of Chris's popular #lovethetree designs comes from the historic Wychwood Forest, an ancient and mystical forest in Oxfordshire near to Chris's home and studio. He is also influenced both by the sea and a desire to live closer to it, and by Tai chi and kick boxing and the balance of the human form that comes from the study of these disciplines.

www.christophertownsend.co.uk <http://www.lovethetree.com>

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BBC 'Home Is Where The Art Is'

Home Is Where The Art Is is inspired by the real world trend of commissioning artwork. Rather than spending money on 'off the shelf' pieces from the high street this series will show how accessible and easy it is to commission local artists to create beautiful, bespoke art for the home. Each episode will see three artists, who work in completely different disciplines, from sculpture to screen printing to needle-work and wood carving.

The one thing they'll have in common is a desire to win a commission from their Mystery Buyers. But before they meet their potential new clients, all three artists will get to snoop around their home and work out who they are and what they might like based on their personal belongings and the brief they've left behind. If the artists are successful and correctly identify their taste and personalities, it could help them formulate ideas that will appeal to the Mystery Buyers, but if they fail, it could cost them the commission.

Home Is Where The Art Is is produced by BBC Studios. Created by Pam Cavannah and Damon Pattison. The Executive Producer is Dymrna Jackson. The BBC Commissioning Editor is Alex McLeod.

Oxfordshire Artweeks www.artweeks.org 4th-27th May 2019

The Artweeks festival is Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival and the UK's oldest and biggest Open Studios event. It is a three-week not-for-profit celebration in May each year of the county's artistic and creative talent encompassing the visual arts in their broadest sense. Around 1000 artists open the doors to their homes and studios and welcome the public to see their creations and watch them work –over 100,000 people visit Artweeks exhibitions each year and a million pounds of art changes hands!

Further press information, area-specific details within Oxfordshire, copy written to a word count, and/or high res images, contact **Esther Lafferty** 01367 242498 or 07715 640228 esther@artweeks.org

Work by Guen Palmer

