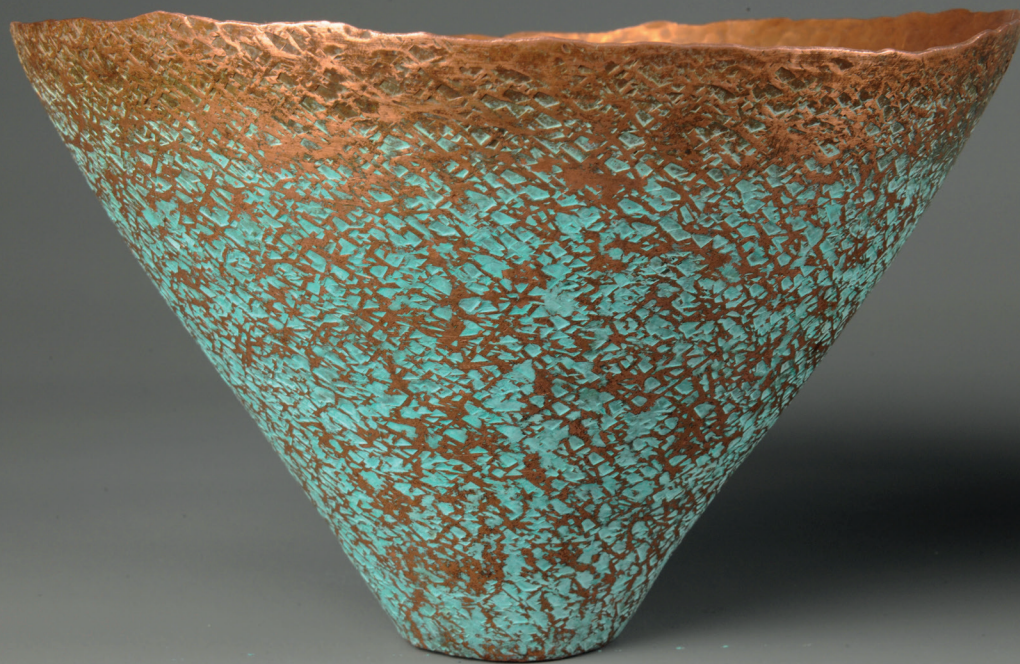




CREATE

Introducing Whitewater Contemporary's Winter Sculpture Collections.



Objects of DESIRE

WORDS BY MERCEDES SMITH

In Cornwall, sculpture on a grand scale is everywhere. From the wonders of Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens in Penzance, to Tim Shaw's iconic Drummer on Truro's Lemon Street, to the ghostly form of King Arthur at Tintagel, public works of sculpture tell Cornwall's story of myth, fact and fine art history. But what of collectable sculpture? Browse Cornwall's art galleries and you will see a great deal of painting and pottery, but less perhaps in the way of contemporary sculpture.

What is here, though, brings with it a long and illustrious history. The ground breaking sculptures of St Ives School artists Barbara Hepworth, Naum Gabo, Peter Lanyon and others, still influence Cornish art. They worked with stone, metal, wire, perspex and wood, making semi figurative

and abstract sculptures in response to Cornwall's coastal environment, from the curve of its headlands to the movement of water, air and light.

That thread can be seen in the work of today's makers, both in their use of materials, and their choice of subject. "Most art lovers appreciate sculpture," says Gallery Director Nick Wapshott of Polzeath's Whitewater Contemporary. "It's true that painting is usually foremost in people's minds when

they visit an art gallery, but a really great painting makes a wonderful backdrop to a sculptural work, and vice versa." Displaying art well means giving some thought to contrast and balance, and the same is true in any home as much as an art gallery. What sculpture brings to a room is unique.



TOP
Simon Hawkes - Copper Vessel

XX

ABOVE
Richard Holliday - Fish



TOP LEFT
Richard Holliday - The Conversation

TOP RIGHT
Richard Holliday - Something Within

ABOVE LEFT
Chris Buck - Honore De Balzac

ABOVE RIGHT
Chris Buck - Ipsos Facto

It fills space, adds height, casts light or shadow, and looks different from every angle, and the materials used are so varied that the options are endless, from wood and stone to clay and bronze.

This winter, Whitewater Contemporary presents a month-long exhibition by artist Richard Holliday who, after a long career as a sculptor of public artworks, now focuses on making beautiful studio pieces. Richard began his career in the 1980s as a stonemason for large scale architectural projects. His work can be seen in the structural and ornamental stonemasonry at Westminster Abbey, Kings College Chapel and Ely Cathedral, and as his career progressed, he made his name as a sculptor of public and private commissions. Now based in West Cornwall, Richard works with Cornish greenstone, Ancaster limestone, Portland stone, English alabaster and marble, creating stylised works inspired by birds, fish, standing stones and other natural subjects. These are quiet, minimalist pieces in a sense, yet totally commanding in their solidity and refinement. They are sculptures that sit perfectly in any well-designed space, from a modern Cornish

beach house to a Georgian town house or walled garden, and his craftsmanship, as you would expect, is second to none.

The exhibition centres around three large outdoor works which show Richard's considerable understanding of form and technical skill. The collection also includes smaller works, including the beautiful Standing Stone, sculpted from Cornish Greenstone, and the marble work Oculus, which leans firmly into pure abstraction. The sculpture Resting Bird, perhaps, best represents Richard's ability to blend figuration with an elegant abstraction. Its force of presence contrasts its seemingly weightless balance of line and curve, making it a masterclass in art and geometry.



Whitewater's wider collections also reflect Cornish art traditions, from landscape to mid-century inspired works. They include sculptures by highly respected artist Chris Buck, whose distinctive pieces are influenced by the work of the St Ives Modernists. Each is sand cast in bronze before being textured, patinated, polished and mounted on slate. His elongated and curved metal forms pair polished surfaces

INSET
Richard Holliday - Oculus



C R E A T E

with the deep green of the patina, which emphasises the sweeping lines of their shape. Collectors have long admired Chris's work for the way it captures the colours and shapes of the Cornish landscape, and for its links to Cornish abstraction.

Nick and fellow Director Suki Wapshott have also brought emerging sculptors to the gallery, the most recent being metalworker Simon Hawkes. Simon uses the critically endangered heritage craft of 'raising', an ancient metalsmithing technique, to make sculptural forms and vessels. In vivid blues, greens, greys and bronzes, Simon's collections are inspired by landscapes of slate and samphire, ocean pools, and the silt and sand of the tidal waterline.

Taking us deeper into the ocean are Sara Ross's sculptures of clams, mussels, oysters and sea urchins, in porcelain, stoneware and cold cast bronze. Sara spent many years working as a sculptor in the film industry. Now a full-time artist, she uses experimental glazes and slips, as well as metal oxides, organic matter and crushed natural minerals to detail the elaborate colours and textures of her subjects.

The sea, of course, is a huge inspiration to many of Whitewater's artists, including goldsmith and sculptor CJ Crooks. His beautiful Water Series is cast in bronze

and mounted on marble, but has the liquid feel of its subject, with the same light reflecting qualities and sense of movement. Crooks began his career as an underwater photographer at the Shark Lab biological field station in the Bahamas, making images that highlight the precious nature of our oceans. Later, as joint founder of ethical gold brand Pascale James, he began making jewellery inspired by nature's shapes and patterns, before a diagnosis of early sight loss caused him to experiment with artworks on a larger scale. The resulting sculptures show his mastery of metals and his passion for the environment.

Artists like Richard and CJ and others, bring real meaning to sculpture through their personal stories, and through their craftsmanship. "Sculpture as an artform is incredibly diverse," says Nick. "At Whitewater we are blessed with high ceilings and flexible

exhibition spaces that allow us to show small and large-scale sculpture alongside great paintings, so our collectors can engage with varied and beautiful works of art."

See Richard Holliday Featured Artist from 13th December 2025 to 10th January 2026 alongside other collections at Whitewater Contemporary, The Parade, Polzeath, PL27 6SR and online.

 wwcg.co.uk



INSET
Richard Holliday - Fledgeling



TOP LEFT
CJ Crooks - Splash



ABOVE
Simon Hawkes - Copper Vessel 2



TOP LEFT
CJ Crooks - Spray