

Queen B



Queen B, 2009

Follow the trail of links for Ron Haselden on this website, and you will see something of the importance and impact of this artist, particularly in terms of public art. He has a prior nomination on Public Realm, for a piece featured in the 2006 Liverpool Biennale.

Anyone involved in major public art projects will appreciate the stamina, patience and faith required: qualities that are tested again and again. Projects will often eventually come to nothing, or be heavily compromised in various ways, or take far too long. Added to this, there's the scrutiny of committees at every stage.

Imagine having the freedom to do what you want, whenever you want. Ron Haselden, who lives for much of the year in deepest rural Brittany, bought a field there five years ago. Slightly raised from the road, the field is triangular and edged on all sides by mature chestnut trees. And in this out-of-the-way place he has created a series of sculptures – all according to his whim and fancy.

Haselden says: 'the field itself is a prime element in the way I think about the work. The effects of the sun breaking through the trees, the sun's changing position, the rain, wind, mist, the sloping ground, grass, flowers, the deer and even wild boar.'

The sculpture I saw there is titled 'Queen B'. It's a three-dimensional rectangle made with steel poles, guy-ropes and tautly strung cord. And inside this structure, further cords describe the edges of forms based on the angular shards of sedimentary rock found on the local beach. Up close, it's as if the viewer has entered a towering, computer generated 3-D drawing.

Haselden mows strips into the grass to suggest walkways and vantage points. He's planted rows of flax, too, and the pale blue flowers serve as a subtle framing device. Significantly, in terms of the title, to one side there's a row of beehives: it's another form of industry in which angular forms are created within a rectangular framework – in this case, wax hexagons in a honeycomb.

The sculptures in this remote field have a public, nevertheless. Recently, 150 people came from the surrounding villages to see 'Queen B', as part of an artists' and gardeners' event. Haselden: 'the response was a kind of surprised bemusement I think.'

A sculpture originally made for the field was exhibited at Camden Arts Centre last year. And Haselden's photographic record of the field, which was first shown at the local town hall, is now available as a boxed set from domobaal gallery, London.

But think of it now, a curious structure on a small grassy triangle, miles from anywhere... Doesn't that feel good?

Angela Kingston 2009

Further information

www.ronhaselden.com/

Copyright Axis 1999-2009 unless stated otherwise. No reproduction of text or media without written permission. For terms and conditions visit www.axisweb.org/copyright.

The logo for Axis, featuring the word "axis" in a stylized, lowercase, cursive font.