

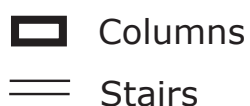
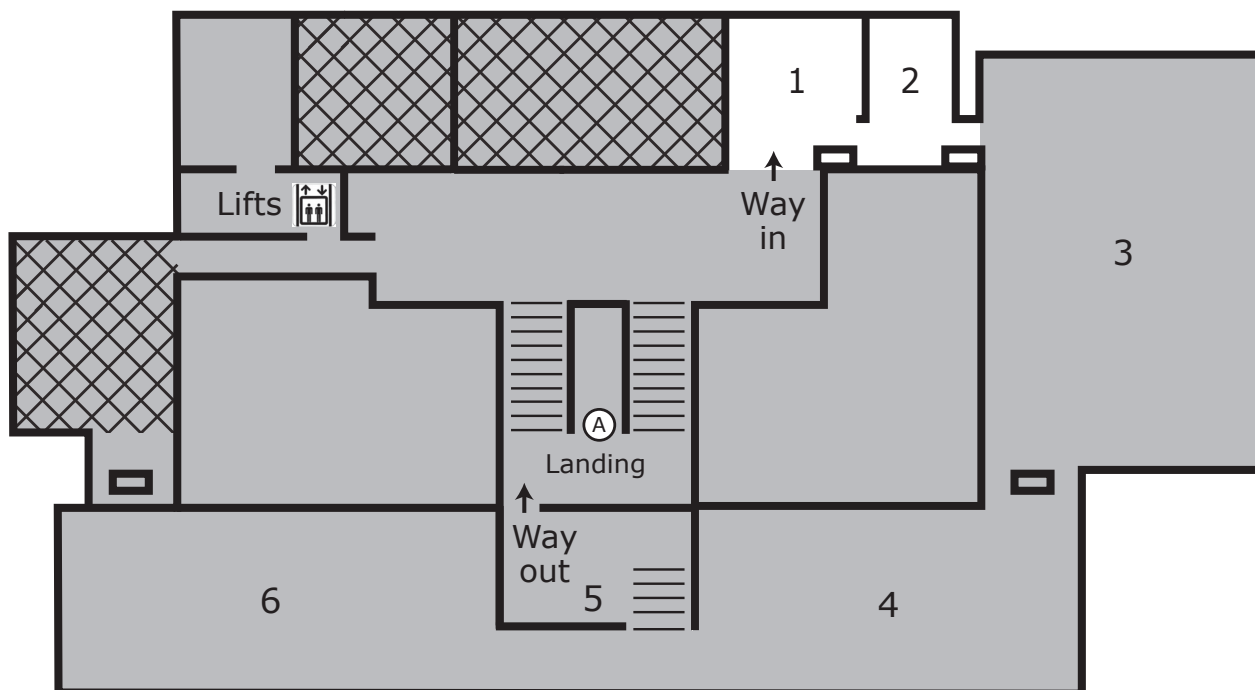
Royal Academy of Arts

Bill Woodrow RA

Rooms 1 & 2

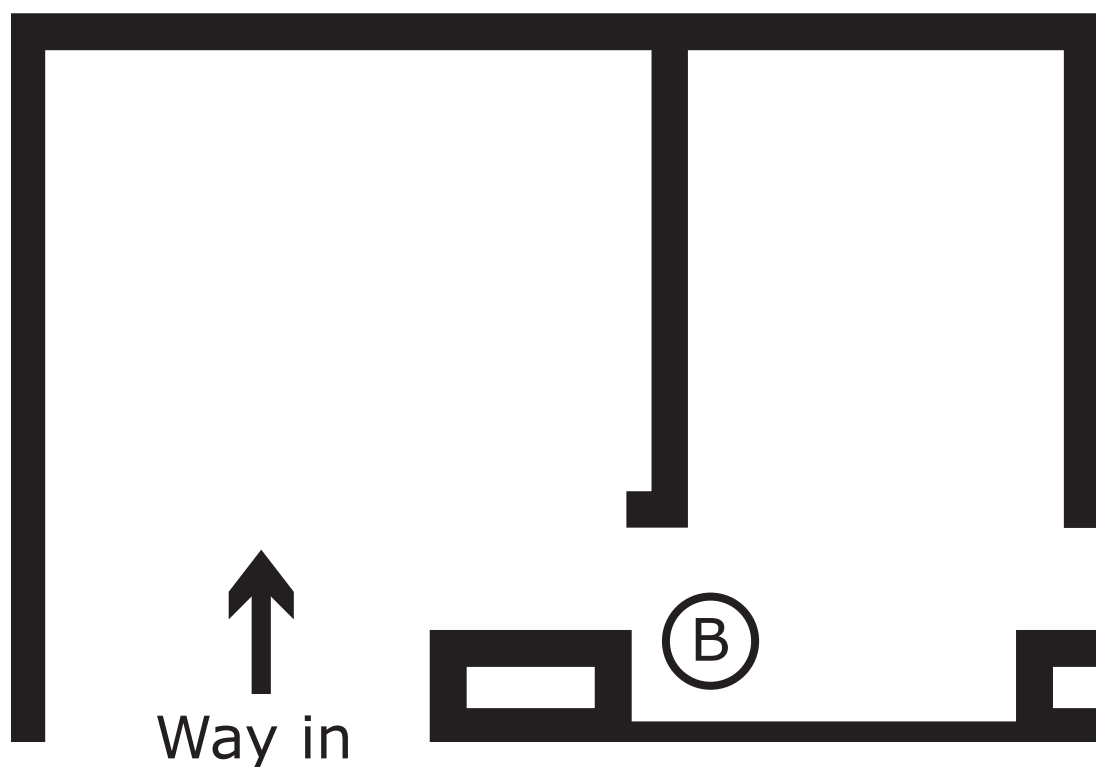


Do not remove from gallery



If you have mobility difficulties and need to use a lift, please ask a member of staff for assistance.
You may find changes of level at some room entrances.

You are in Rooms 1 & 2



○ Video display

Bill Woodrow RA

7 November 2013 – 16 February 2014

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Self-portrait in the Year 2089 2013

Wood and gold leaf

Courtesy of the artist, **A on gallery plan**

Introduction

Bill Woodrow RA has long been identified as a member of the group of British artists born in the late 1940s and early 1950s who have established themselves as a dominant force in international sculpture, among them Woodrow's fellow Royal Academicians Tony Cragg and Richard Deacon.

Woodrow first came to prominence at the end of the 1970s, a few years after he had left art college. He studied at Winchester School of Art, St Martins School of Art and then the Chelsea School of Art.

His reputation was firmly established by the early 1980s, when the first of his celebrated "cut-out" sculptural works appeared.

As Julia Kelly and Jon Wood have outlined in their recent monograph, Woodrow's work is generally divided into two phases: the "cut-outs" of the early 1980s and his subsequent move into bronze and other unrestricted materials from the end of that decade.

But within these two phases Woodrow has produced distinct series, in which works share a common focus as well as the method and material of their fabrication.

This exhibition's largely chronological presentation of Woodrow's work from 1969 to the present seeks both to highlight the characteristics of each series and also to illustrate the extent to which one series emerges from, and is informed by, its predecessor.

Constant progression is discernible throughout Woodrow's career, with themes and processes from his earlier series being developed in those that follow.

Woodrow's inventiveness and curiosity make it almost impossible to attach a definitive overall description to his output; and many of the superlatives that could be applied to his work appear to be at odds with each other.

His constant expressions of humour, irony and loss (among many others), his examination of the human condition and modern society, and the range of his differing processes and materials, all skilfully employed, have ensured that his work has remained consistently challenging and fascinating over the five decades of his career to date.

Bill Woodrow was elected a Royal Academician in the category of sculpture in May 2002.

Plasma screen outside rooms 1 & 2

Bill Woodrow RA

The Artist and his work
2013

Watch the video online at
www.royalacademy.org.uk/woodrowvideo

Early works

By 1968, when Woodrow joined St Martins, Richard Long, Gilbert and George, and Bruce McLean had recently graduated; they left a strong impression behind them.

Although he admired all these new graduates for their professionalism and practice, it was Long's focus on the non-urban environment that struck a chord with Woodrow, who had retained an enduring love of the countryside and outdoor pursuits from his childhood.

Woodrow's early interest in photography as a "means of trickery", and his awareness of the power of performance both emerged strongly in his student work.

The steel camera from 1969 ('Untitled') reproduces this portable object in heavy metal. Woodrow was fascinated by the way in which feigned use of this "camera" could influence the behaviour of those at whom it was pointed.

The use of photography within the construction of sculpture is a feature of his early work.

The photographic landscape with stick ('Untitled'; 1971), first exhibited in his diploma show at St Martins, comprises two photographs, both representing the same stick, one in the landscape and the other its reflection in the water – the images shown at right angles to each other with the stick itself appearing to connect the two.

This concept is further developed in the free-standing work 'Corral' (1972), in which a stick remains the subject but appears only as a photograph.

Sticks appear in much of Woodrow's early work, with their associations with nature and natural pursuits such as fishing, which Woodrow has long enjoyed.

Although Woodrow's early land-based subject-matter has often been understood as an indication of his interest in the environment, this is only one of many interpretations of his multifaceted work.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Room 1

Corral

1972

Photographs and wooden panels

Courtesy of the artist

Ear-ring for Ablah

1969

Mixed media

Courtesy of Ablah Mallett Asfar

Untitled

1969

Steel

Courtesy of private collection

Floating Stick

1972

16 mm film, digitally transferred

Courtesy of the artist

Room 2

Babylon

1975

Adobe and photograph

Courtesy of the artist

Six Squares

1970

Typesetting on paper

Courtesy of the artist

Five Rivers

1972

Lithograph

Courtesy of the artist

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Wheelchair users can also benefit from our volunteers, who can assist with taking you around the galleries so you can enjoy our exhibitions at your leisure. With prior notice we can arrange these at a time that fits in with your schedule. Contact me for further information.

Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access Officer



InTouch  **at the RA**

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