

# Timothy Sandys

a body of work





## invert

(original carving)

Timothy Sandys has a mastery of carbon fibre that comes from years of working with the material in an engineering context, so it is perhaps significant that he doesn't write about his own work but rather expresses his inspiration in the form of flow charts and diagrams.

His commercial work demands both extreme precision in execution but also an enquiring and problem-solving mind, and though the diagrams exploring his art seem to take logical steps towards certain conclusions, many of them are circular or looped, suggesting that there are other routes to be explored, that nothing is fixed and linear.

His expression is structural rather than verbal and it is up to others to provide the written background, but Sandys's verbal skill lies in the succinct titles of his works which, though brief, prove to be crucial to the understanding of his sculptures and the deeper thinking behind them.

Alt r



## SEX & SEXUALITY

These are themes central to many of the works and though the initial impression might be of eroticism, the titles of the works allude to a much deeper and sometimes darker subject matter, not least that of sexual stereotyping (homo-hetero, male-female...) and the way in which it is used and abused to control, divide and manipulate.

Sandys also seeks to confront the fact that in contemporary society and the media the lines between sexual beauty as a commodity and sex as a subject for sensationalism and entertainment are distinctly blurred and these stark but beautiful forms provoke mixed emotions.



## performance

This duality is reflected in the titles of many of the sculptures.

**performance** ... an entertaining act or a deception, but also loaded with overtones of machismo, sexual performance, being 'up to it'

work



**work**, so often defining a duty of virtue, has a very different sense in the phrase 'working girl' or to 'work-up'.

This is perhaps the first hint that these sculptures reveal themselves only slowly and where the process of revelation depends upon a point of view, spatial, moral or the two combined



## work

The 'work' referred to in the title is that of a prostitute, in this case pregnant, and this realisation gives the subtly rounded belly form a new meaning.

**work** goes a step further and alludes to the pernicious effects of commercialisation. Once all things and even all people become devalued to the level of mere consumer products, gratification through consumption can take extreme forms.



invert



A further aspect of sex and sexuality explored here also deals with blurred lines –between male and female, both physically and mentally, in terms of their roles both within relationships and in society.

**invert** even puts one object with aspects of male and female sexuality into a single object within a box. The box design is ingenious, recalling that of a toy car; but this box, with its peephole and purple cellophane, is for a sex toy.



## ingénue

The ambiguity of some sculptures also suggests 'male becoming female', the swapping of fixed roles for something more flexible and opening up the much-discussed issue of sexuality – hetero, homo, bisexual.

**ingénue** for example, has a masculine, armour-like upper part wrapped around a feminine core.



Alt r



Sandys seeks to explore male and female sexual and behavioural stereotypes and the viewer's automatic reactions to the sculptures are likely to move along these set lines which he seeks to question and challenge – the intentional ambiguity of the work leaves much room for interpretation and for the viewer to enhance the work by their response to it.

The cropping and slicing of human body forms also alludes to pornographic photography, but Sandys takes a non-critical view. This sort of dehumanised, dissected photography is an occasional influence and a possible topic for discussion, rather than a subject for moralising or a polemic on gender politics.

play



role

## ROLE(s)

The recurring theme of 'roles' in Sandys's work is explored by encouraging or challenging the viewer to put themselves into a particular position to view the sculpture.

Whether through making them bend to touch the finger marks on the neck of **role**, to squint through the peephole of **invert** or to circle round a form on a plinth, Sandys prompts the viewer to take a particular physical point of view with the very intention of challenging their fixed mental point of view





role

The themes in this area of his work – control, responsibility, perception, interaction with others – inevitably cross over into sex and sexuality but the context he seeks is much wider. Attitudes to family life, work and societal roles have all played a part in shaping Sandys's forms and titles.

On occasions the sculptures provoke a moment of sudden understanding that all is not what it seems – **role**, with its upward-welling lines and open-mouthed gape, is a physical representation of the violent reaction, mental or physical, to the realisation that all is not right.

eve

## PERCEPTION

There is a certain circularity in the way he also explores perception from different angles. We are being asked to open our minds, to accept that the reality is grey, not black and white, that the polarisation of points of view is insidious and deceptive.

The viewer's point of view is not only defined spatially but also mentally – the sculptures change dramatically as the viewer circles round them and each view offers a new perception, a new judgement coloured by the viewer's mental and moral point of view.

**eve** is a case in point - one side a sumptuously curved vase form, the other indented with an inescapably sexual orifice – flower vase becoming provocative erection, but with great subtlety.





ripe

Similarly **ripe**, in spite of its spherical form, has two contrasting aspects.

The title is once again well chosen, with its multiplicity of meanings, some innocent, some suggestive.

consume







Perception also has many meanings. Visual perception and its manipulation by the media or individuals once again crosses into the world of sex, pornography and the human form as a commodity to be sliced, cropped, packaged and shared.

In a non-visual context, perceptions of fear stoked up by the news industry can seem very different depending on your point of view.

Sculptures such as **trammel** also give a sense of 'who's watching who?', redolent of the modern media where yesterday's nonentity is today's celebrity and tomorrow's figure of hate.

It also challenges perceptions of observation and supervision – at what point does legitimate vigilance turn into controlling surveillance? Once again, it depends on your point of view...

role

## FAÇADE

All is not what it seems. Almost all aspects of the media, relationships, consumerism, even the human body, involve an element of dissembling, whether the motivation is concealment from others – denials of sexuality, hiding behind an image or a layer of make-up – or from oneself – the restless search for consumer satisfaction where goods which promise so much ultimately disappoint.

The moment of realisation depicted so graphically in **role** is the moment at which this façade breaks down. The comfort zone and confidence of self-image, carefully built and bolstered by the commercial world, being violently torn apart, either in a literal and physical or metaphorical and mental sense.





trammel

The consequences of a generalised lack of empathy for others in society is another rich seam for Sandys. **trammel** with its roving camera eye, asks us to consider what leads a society to a point where people accept surveillance cameras, ID cards, challenges to long-held tenets of law.

Unlike many of his works, where the viewer circles the sculpture to seek new viewpoints, **trammel** allows the viewer to stay still while the sculpture moves,

tracking and menacing but also hypnotic and satisfying with its perfect balance and improbable centre of gravity.

Sandys alludes to a generalised loss of empathy, leading in turn to bigotry, a loss of a sense of community, a rise in fear (often fuelled by the media) and a consequent acceptance of certain roles, where the previously unacceptable becomes the norm and where we agree to control and observation.

## EMPATHY

## ingénue

The inspiration for Timothy Sandys's sculptural work is sometimes as dark as the material he uses but sheds light on some important and highly topical issues.

Far from being mere representations of the human form or pure abstract shapes, his work looks deep into some uncomfortable areas of human interaction and sexuality, not aiming to shock or harangue but to explore, stimulate and encourage self-examination.

The purity of the material means that his only modes of expression are form and title and he manipulates both with great technical and artistic subtlety to delve into some fascinating areas. He strives for visual beauty in his work and hopes, refreshingly, to go beyond the ornamental and to touch on something deeper without resorting to shock tactics or wilful ugliness.



height 45cm, carbon fibre, lead, aluminium rivets, stainless washers, p9



height 33cm, carbon fibre, lead, p15



height 64cm, carbon fibre, lead, p13



height 259cm, UD carbon fibre, lead, steel rod, p1, p8



26 x 9 x 14cm, carbon fibre, card, acetate, p7



length 39cm, carbon fibre, lead, aluminium rivets, stainless washers, p4



**Alt r**

**Consume**

**Eve**

**Ingénue**

**Invert**

**Performance**

**Play**



length 29cm, carbon fibre, lead, cast Perspex tube, p10

**Ripe**



height 22cm, carbon fibre, lead, p14

**Role**



height 153cm, carbon fibre, lead, p11

**Trammel**



length 202cm, carbon fibre, lead, SLR camera lens, Bowden cable, p16

**Work**



length 64cm, carbon fibre, lead, aluminium rivets, stainless washers, p5



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