

Rick Kirby
At The Oakley Court 2012

Summer 2012

The Oakley Court Hotel, Windsor Road, Water Oakley, Windsor SL4 5UR
01753 609 988 (hotel) or 07971 580 572 (Marcelle Joseph Projects)

Marcelle Joseph Projects proudly presents *At The Oakley Court 2012*, a solo exhibition featuring four welded steel sculptures by British artist Rick Kirby sited in the grounds of this country house hotel situated along the Thames River just outside Windsor.

Rick Kirby has a prodigious body of work, with an impressive 90% of it being in the public domain. His work has been unveiled by the Queen, Princess Margaret, the Duke of Kent and, amongst other notables in politics and culture, the Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney. Rick's sculptures remain in permanent display throughout the length and breadth of the country – from Glasgow in the north to London, Kent and Suffolk in the south. The advantage of this, he says, is that not only can thousands of people see them, but he himself can return to see them again and again. Each piece he creates carries a part of him and marks a particular period in his development as an artist. Steel has what Kirby calls “a whoom-factor!” Rick's mainly figurative sculptures are made of small pieces of steel welded together – he compares them to pixels. It enables him to give nuance and feeling to both small and even large-scale sculptures. In the artist's words, ‘it is the juxtaposition of steel in its raw form, cold-industrial, and the warm-human that my art breathes into it – that is my fascination’. He cites the architect Frank Gehry as being “the most influential artist” to have inspired him and Rick's stunning work is now almost as recognisable in his own chosen field.

His works on display at Oakley Court this summer include the mild steel *Crouching Figure* placed in the center of the front forecourt of the hotel - a woman kneeling down, static but ready to spring forward at any moment as if guarding her precious offspring. In the gardens behind the hotel, you will find two other magical female figures made of shiny stainless steel plates – one a life-size mermaid in repose and another standing woman arching her back to look up at the heavens above. The final work is a mild steel man's head looking out over this private stretch of the Thames as if it has been presiding over this English country house throughout its esteemed history.

Born in 1952 in Kent, **Rick Kirby** lives and works in Ware in Hertfordshire. His art education began at the Somerset College of Art, followed by his BA from Newport College of Art and then teaching art for 16 years. Kirby then took the leap into being a full-time sculptor and has never looked back since. After three years of stone carving, he moved to working with steel – an important transition in Kirby's career as he has only worked with welded steel since then. Kirby has exhibited extensively in sculpture parks and galleries in the UK and undertook 29 public commissions in the UK over the last 15 years, including at St Thomas' Hospital, London and Castlemilk, Glasgow. He has also participated in residencies in Switzerland, Canada, Russia and the UK and won the Rouse Kent Public Art Award in 1998.

Founded in 2011, **Marcelle Joseph Projects** is a roving contemporary art projects company devoted to promoting contemporary art in different venues or found spaces across the United Kingdom. The core activity of this commercial venture is to showcase contemporary work of emerging to mid-career international artists who work in a variety of media. Including this exhibition, Marcelle Joseph Projects will mount five exhibitions in 2012. For more information, go to www.marcellejoseph.com.

Visitor Information: Opening hours: 10am – 6pm daily.

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