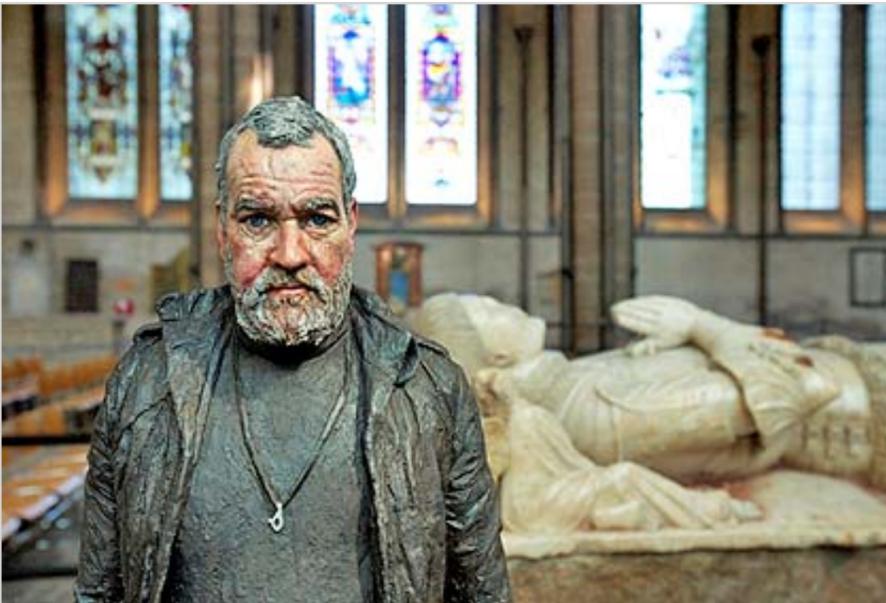


Sean Henry's Conflux: A Union of the Sacred and the Anonymous at Salisbury Cathedral

By Culture24 Reporter | 28 July 2011
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Exhibition: Conflux: A Union of the Sacred and the Anonymous, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, until October 31 2011

Sean Henry's sculptures comprise incredibly life-like depictions of giant women, shaped in bronze and staring glacially over parks, or couples peering over painted steel piers within Northumberland coastal defences.

He's put sombre statues of walking men in London's Holland Park and balanced levitating chaps above plinths on the streets of Newcastle, so Conflux – a follow-up to Catafalque, the bronze and steel figure he left snoozing outside Salisbury Cathedral in 2010 – should be something to see.

It brings together more than 20 of his works in "expected and unexpected" points around the spectacular setting. The show represents the largest group of polychrome sculptures in the building since the Reformation of the 16th century.

"The title expresses quite succinctly what visitors will see," says Mark Bonney, the chair of the Cathedral's Exhibitions Committee.

"The 'sacred' refers to the Cathedral's medieval and classical sculpture, which celebrates historically important men and women and the glories of faith.

"Sean's figures depict the humanity of the common man and pay homage to the anonymous and unknown. They will occupy vacant plinths both inside and on the exterior of the building, joining the daily throng of clergy, worshippers and visitors."

Bonney says Catafalque proved "hugely popular". "We are particularly delighted that he is bringing so many of the sculptures he has created in the past 12 years," he admits.

"There is a feeling of gravitas, timelessness and indestructibility within the building. It contrasts with the sense of fragile individuality that drives his work."

Henry also loves the atmosphere of the holy hall, calling it a "fascinating environment" for his sculpture. "But the building is nothing without its relationship to the lives of those who use and visit it," he adds.

"By placing my figures on existing empty plinths and platforms and in

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Areas where other, older sculptures would once have stood I'm interested in memorialising the everyday - in drawing the viewer's attention to the significance of our own experience of the here and now.

"Sculpture occupies the same space, the same air that we do and it is my hope that the figures will provoke a degree of self-contemplation in the viewer, temporarily lifting them from the sphere of daily life into a different place.

"To recreate oneself in front of a work of art is at the root of the experience of art and its affinity with religion."

- **Open 8.30am-6.15pm (recommended Sunday viewing times 12pm-4pm). Admission free.**

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