

Newlyn Fisherman Memorial by Tom Leaper Promenade. Credit: Bruce Hobbs & Art UK

The UK's significant collection of public sculptures is available to explore online for the very first time.

Art UK has photographed and digitised more than 36,000 sculptures on public display and held-in collections across the UK – and now you can see them all online.

The digital archive includes:

- over 13,500 outdoor sculptures across every nation and region of the UK, from city centres to remote islands
- almost every sculpture inside UK public collections from the last 1,000 years

The sculpture Winning Shot (Ade Adepitan) by Christine Charlesworth

Winning Shot (Ade Adepitan) by Christine Charlesworth. Credit: Mike Longhurst & Art UK

The project was made possible with the help of over 500 photography and data volunteers, and supported by a £2.8million Heritage Fund grant.

You can see them all on the Art UK website.

Opening up heritage

As well as allowing members of the public to search for and discover artworks, the database will also contribute to the protection and preservation of the outdoor sculptures.

> The pandemic demonstrated just how important access to our heritage is, and how digital can play a vital role.
>
> *Eilish McGuiness, Chief Executive of the Heritage Fund*

Traditional red telephone boxes positioned leaning to the side and falling like dominos

Out of Order by David Mach. Credit: Mike Longhurst & Art UK

Eilish McGuiness, Chief Executive of the Heritage Fund, said: "The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic demonstrated just how important access to our heritage is, and how digital can play a vital role.

"Thanks to the tireless work of the project team and hundreds of volunteers, we can discover the stories behind the sculptures we walk past day-to-day, as well as those in remote locations or towns we've never visited.

"It opens up a rich world of heritage that belongs to all of us."

Telling sculpture stories

The unique online resource showcases the rich history of public sculpture in the UK and how public sculpture itself represents our history.

> This is a wonderful resource allowing all of us to know and visit the works that we collectively own.
>
> *Sculptor Antony Gormley*

Famous figures depicted range from Pocahontas to the Bee Gees.

Three bronze statues of the Bee Gees, standing on the sea front in 1970s clothing

The Bee Gees bronze statues by Andy Edwards in Loch Promenade, Isle of Man. Credit: Patricia Tutt & Art UK

Research also revealed some interesting facts about representation in the history of UK sculpture:

- of 13,000 outdoor sculpture records, just over 2,600 depict or commemorate named people – and **77.5%** of these are men
- of these 2,600, just under **2%** depict or commemorate people of diverse ethnic communities
- The largest group of named people commemorated are royalty, with over **460** public sculptures: 175 public monuments and sculptures are dedicated to Queen Victoria alone.

- Other people depicted and commemorated in large numbers are military figures, politicians, religious figures, writers and poets.

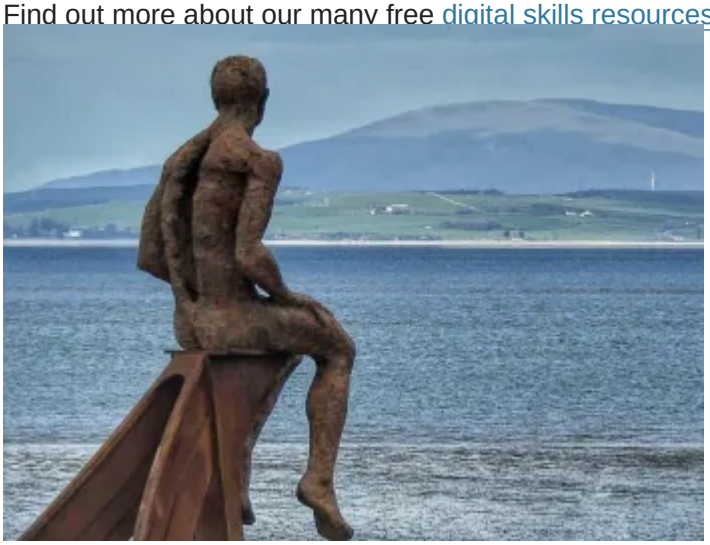
Bronze sculpture showing the head and shoulders of a woman

Noor Inayat Khan by Karen Newman. Credit: Colleen Rowe Harvey & Art UK

Artist Antony Gormley, whose work Angel of the North is one of the UK's most famous public sculptures, said: "This is a wonderful resource allowing all of us to know and visit the works that we collectively own."

Find out more

Find out more about our many free digital skills resources for heritage organisations.





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George Wyllie - Paper Boat



[res life along Scotland’s coastline]

[Secrets of Essex's Sculpture Town revealed in new archive]