

FIGURE AND FORM

'There are still serious artists in Hampstead'

Some may think that artists in Hampstead are as rare as red squirrels but an exhibition featuring two of the area's finest sculptors proves there's artistic life in NW3 yet.

Glynis Owen, who works on the ground floor of her Pilgrim's Lane home, is showing six pieces in Sunny Art Centre's Figure and Form exhibition. She exhibits alongside five other UK based sculptors including Belsize Park artist Dawn Rowland who says her life was "changed forever" by a two week stone carving course.

Drawn to the "physicality and sensuality of working in stone" Rowland favours the freshness and spontaneity of direct carving revelling in what she calls the "fluidity and sprit of the stone". Works in the exhibition include pieces from The Warrior Dreams series about a young man preparing to leave home to fight "which resonates with the transient nature of bringing up a child to adulthood." My Sister Myself references Rowland's status as a twin and explores "the fragility and interdependency of human relationships" through two separate figures almost touching.

"As a twin I have never been alone and the double images and faces in my sculpture reflect this special duality," she says in her personal

An exhibition features two local sculptors who explore the human soul and the abstraction of the face discovers
BRIDGET GALTON

statement.

Owen, who has lived in Hampstead for 35 years, and works with bronze and aluminium says she's "delighted" the gallery asked two seasoned artists from Hampstead to show their work.

"It's really nice. We are not young but still working incredibly hard. Dawn and I have been friends and colleagues ever since she joined the Royal British Society of Sculptors. Her studio is close to mine and it's nice to have someone close working in the same field. We both have families and a lot in common. It's wonderful doing an exhibition with her."

Owen's project is to express the human anatomy with the simplest and most direct use of line and form; she is fascinated by the abstraction of the human image.

"My pieces are mainly figurative based on the head. I've pared down



■ Top, Alabaster by Dawn Rowland. Bottom, My Sister Myself and Head. Right, See It My Way by Glynis Owen.

the detail so they are not like a portrait. I am seeing how far you can push the head so it's still representative of a human."

Owen also shows two abstract pieces which were part of a Terra Firma series of larger reliefs. She took a degree at Goldsmiths College in sculpture and painting and says: "The moment I went into the sculpture studio and saw the piles of stone, the way the light fell on it, the process of carving, I fell in love with it."

After college Owen worked in the 60s as an assistant to the sculptor Lynn Chadwick which was "such an

exciting time."

Her career has included three books on sculpture techniques, a public work for Stevenage town centre and a three year project to create a 12 foot high bronze for Covent Garden piazza depicting the fruit and vegetable sellers who plied their trade there from the 1600s.

"I looked through the archive at photographs. I wanted to show the humour and banter through a tableau of a market trader competition to carry baskets on their heads."

She has also designed statuettes for Lord David Puttnam's annual

Teaching Awards, and sculpted her fellow Pilgrim's Lane resident the cellist Jacqueline du Pre for her former Oxford college St Hilda's.

"She was born the same year as me and I would see her being wheeled around. I felt so moved by the tragedy of her having MS and dying so young."

She adds: People think there may not be any artists left in Hampstead so it's nice for them to know that there are people working pretty seriously here."

Figure and Form runs at Sunny Art Centre in Gray's Inn Road until December 21 sunnyartcentre.co.uk