

PUTNEY SCULPTURE TRAIL

.....stimulating the unconscious?

Have you noticed *Pygmalion** and *Nexus* in the Park?

You may have walked past them many times and not really have taken much interest.

These two sculptures are part of the Putney Sculpture Trail, installed in 2008. This trail is a 1.5 mile walk featuring nine near life-sized bronze, figurative sculptures by Alan Thornhill. You can follow the trail by starting in Leaders Gardens, with *Exodus* and ending in Riverside Quarter with *Fall*. Each statue has a map on its base showing the location of the sculptures (you can also download the trail from the TiCL app). It is one the largest outdoor collection of work by one artist in London and it's a great way to revisit Putney on an art trail you didn't know existed.



Alan Thornhill died earlier this year, aged 98. He was very much part of the local community, he had a studio in Felsham Road, Putney where he worked for the last sixty years. He also taught sculpture at Morley College, and donated the first statue *Load* to the people of Putney in the 1980s.

He thought art was for the observer. He said “I think one of the functions of the artist is to really exercise the faculties of the observer.You can't generalise but good art is an exercise for the observer, not in a high-handed way, but I think it's our duty as artists to offer exercise for the faculties. I think we don't pay sufficient attention to our unconscious nowadays”.

His art challenged the conventional approach to sculpture by not using the traditional internal skeleton, but just allowing the form to emerge, often resulting in a mix of abstract and figurative. He often worked by unconscious sketching - walking around drawing, without looking at the result on paper.

Try walking the trail and see what your gut reactions are - where does your mind go when you look at one of his sculptures?

*Be warned: in ancient Greek mythology *Pygmalion* fell in love with one of his sculptures which then came to life.

You can find out more about Alan and his journey into sculpture in an thoughtful documentary on his website (www.alanthornhill.co.uk).