



# These Mad Hybrids



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John Hoyland and Contemporary Sculpture

Olivia Bax

Sam Cornish

Contributions by James Fisher

Contributions by Hannah Hughes

Edited by Andrew Hunt

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- Published on the occasion of an exhibition of the same name at Royal West of England Academy (RWA), Bristol, 2 February–12 May 2024, and Millennium Galleries, Sheffield, 20 February–18 May 2025
- Lavishly illustrated throughout with several details
- Curated by sculptor Olivia Bax in collaboration with Sam Cornish and Wiz Patterson Kelly of The John Hoyland Estate, the exhibition is inspired by a group of unique ceramic sculptures by Hoyland, which he affectionately called his "mad little hybrids."
- This is the first public display of the ceramics since 1994 alongside contemporary sculpture
- The exhibition challenges the boundaries of what both sculpture and painting can be and how they speak to each other
- The featured artists share a common fascination and appreciation for colour, materiality, and creative process
- They work with materials ranging from cement or synthetic fabric to glitter, combining human and animal bodies, furniture, everyday objects and architecture into playful, bold, new sculptural hybrids

In 1994 painter John Hoyland made an unruly group of ceramic sculptures. Loaded with colour, humour and creatureliness, he dubbed them 'these mad little hybrids'. They now appear remarkably contemporary, in sync with a broad range of recent and current sculpture. ***These Mad Hybrids: John Hoyland and Contemporary Sculpture*** presents the ceramics in dialogue with sculpture by Caroline Achaintre, Eric Bainbridge, Phyllida Barlow, Olivia Bax, Hew Locke, Anna Reading, Jessi Reaves, Andrew Sabin, John Summers and Chiffon Thomas.

Essays by co-curators Olivia Bax and Sam Cornish situate the ceramics within contemporary sculptural discourse and in relation to Hoyland's deep personal engagement with sculpture. How and why could a sculpture be funny? How did sculpture help an abstract painter rethink his relationship with the High Modernist tradition and find a new relationship with the wider world? James Fisher considers hybridity in the guise of an imaginary dialogue with King Kong, while Hannah Hughes's visual essay explores the Polaroid photographs that Hoyland employed to help move his dramatic and powerful imagery between two and three dimensions.

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