

Huddersfield artist painted Newsome Mill just two weeks before it burned down

Maxwell Doig to have a major exhibition at Huddersfield Art Gallery

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By Andrew Hirst 12:00, 5 NOV 2017

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Artist Maxwell Doig

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Huddersfield artist Maxwell Doig has an exhibition at Huddersfield Art Gallery all over winter.

The aspect of his work here, entitled A Sense of Place, reflects his increasing concentration in recent years on architectural subjects.

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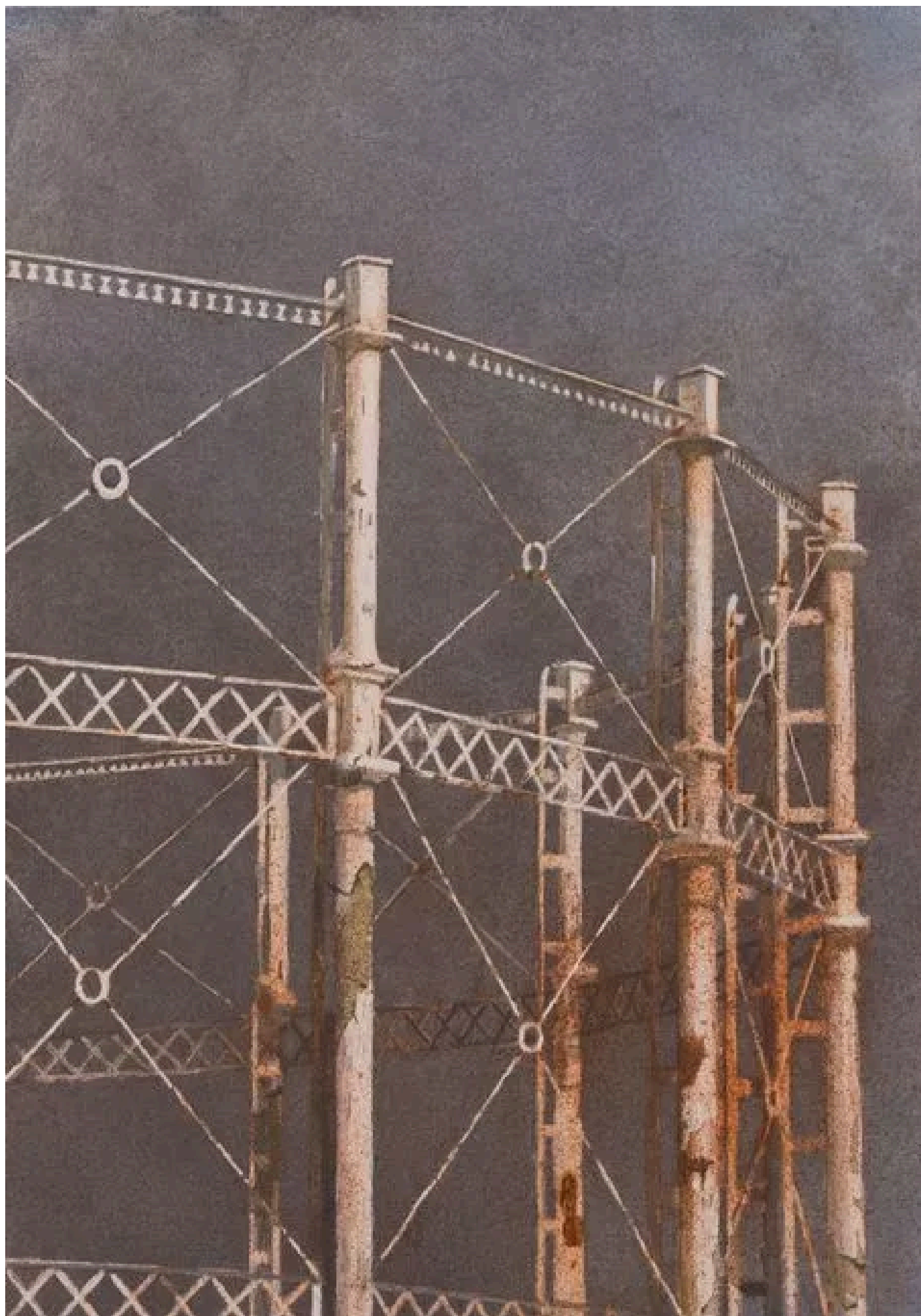
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Some of the 51-year-old's work will be instantly familiar to Examiner readers – especially his depiction of Newsome Mill which he painted just two weeks before it [was gutted in a fierce blaze](#).

The exhibition runs from November 11 to March 3.

Maxwell now lives in Berry Brow but was brought up in Birchenccliffe. He's been painting for 30 years and is represented by London-based Messum's fine art.



Gasometer by Huddersfield artist Maxwell Doig

His last show at Huddersfield Art Gallery was 20 years ago in 1997. Since then he's had more than 50 exhibitions in London and overseas.

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Maxwell said: "All the works in this latest Huddersfield exhibition are architectural, quite a few of which are from the Huddersfield area, including the 'Gable End' series, 'House,' 'Moorland House' and 'Late Summer Greenhouse'. A few are from the east coast, Yorkshire and a several from Dungeness on the south coast."

Messum's adds: "All the paintings are typical of Maxwell's style which combines delicate colour, tone and texture to communicate a variety of equally subtle matter: fog, snow, sand and grass: the windswept wooden sides of beached boats and fishing huts, and the stony, metal featured faces of industrial architecture.

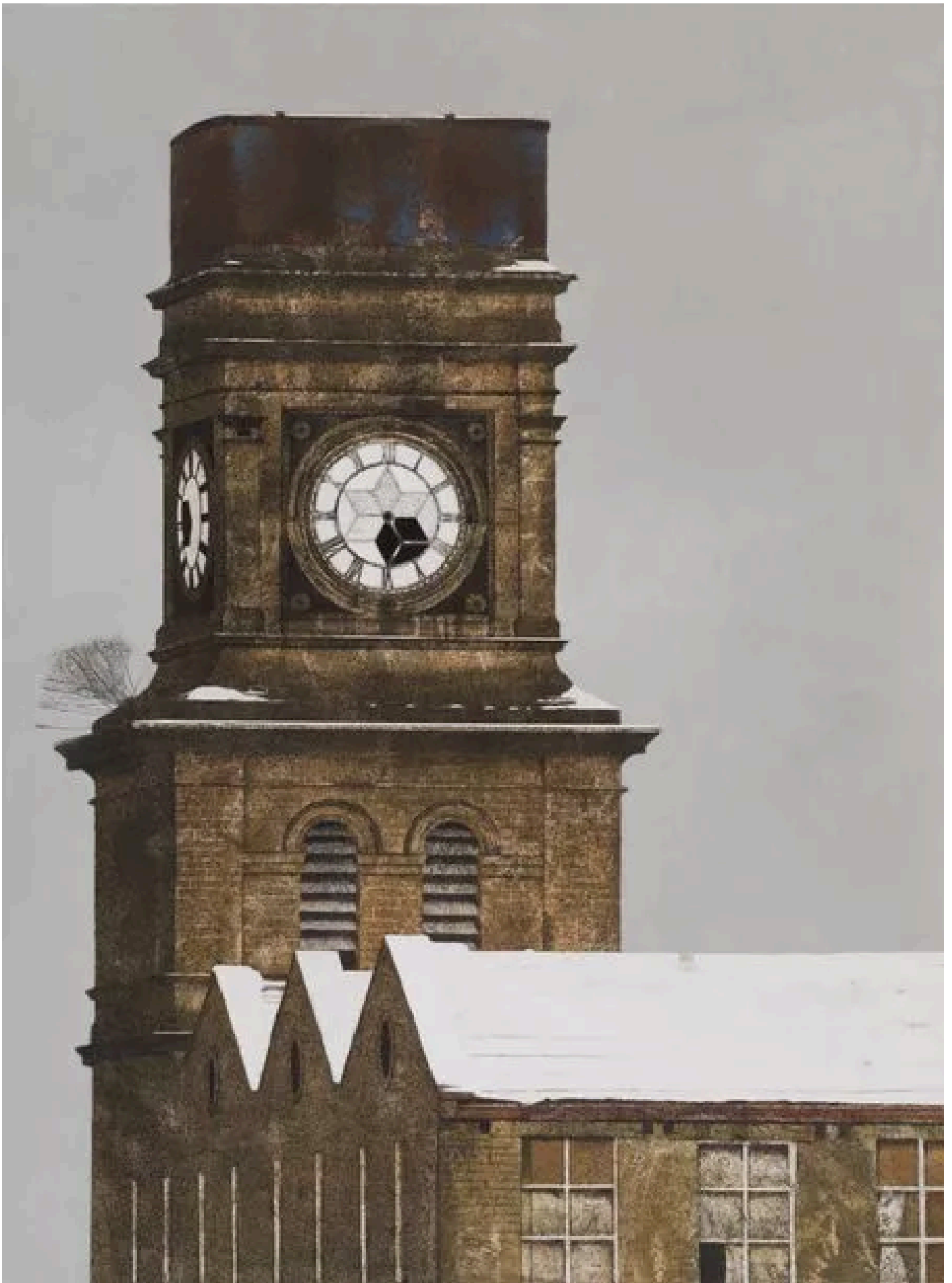
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"Newsome Mill, a former Victorian textile works and a Huddersfield landmark, inspired several of Maxwell's new pictures and the paintings show a level of detail seldom found outside architectural plans, but are in no wise prosaic."

Only two weeks after he completed many of these paintings, Newsome Mill, which was planned for major development, was destroyed in a fire leaving little else but the clock tower.



Newsome Mill in the snow by by Huddersfield artist Maxwell Doig

Maxwell said: "I caught it just in time and I'm glad I did. Just when you think something is permanent it disappears. Perhaps this is part of my job, to capture something before it

disappears.”

Maxwell works primarily in acrylic, building up layers of refined tone and colour over various coarser grounds, often mixed with sawdust.



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He added: “Once I have three or four layers built up I scrape it back to the ground, hoping to find interesting textures that might suggest a wall, plastered, rendering or maybe drystone.”

In his forward to the exhibition, art historian and curator Robert Hall says: “There is a sense of homage to his artistic predecessors here, not only to his friend and mentor David Blackburn, but also to Trevor Stubbley, who captured the essence of the local landscape with a similar mastery of media, albeit to somewhat different visual ends.”

News

My Yorkshire: Artist Maxwell Doig

By The Newsroom



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Huddersfield-born artist Maxwell Doig trained at the Slade and studied anatomy at University College London. He now lives back in his hometown.

What was your first Yorkshire memory? Sitting in the back garden, on the lawn looking up at my mum putting the washing out on the line. My memory of this moment, with blue sky and white clouds is very clear. I was about three years old.



Artist Maxwell Doig.

What's your favourite part of the county and why? The landscape around Huddersfield with its moorland hills, wooded valleys and traces of its industrial past. From high up on Bolster Moor you can see into and across the Colne Valley which leads into Huddersfield. There are always interesting viewpoints because it's so hilly.

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What's your idea of a perfect day, or perfect weekend out in Yorkshire? Going out for a walk on a sunny autumn morning. Through Mag Wood, which is nearby, along the River Holme and stopping to take a few photographs of the abandoned Lord's Mill. Lunch at Hinchliffe's farm shop and restaurant with my partner Nicola. Then onwards to the hills and plateau of Deer Hill reservoir. If it's a weekend, then a peaceful day on the east coast at Port Mulgrave with Nicola.

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Maxwell Doing enjoys the landscape around his home town of Huddersfield. The sun sets on a wintery scene at Buckstone Edge near Huddersfield as the first major snow of the winter fell. Buckstone Edge is part of the National Trust owned Marsden Moor estate , covering 5.685 acres rising to 1,600 feet above sea level and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The reservoir reflecting the golden glow of the sunlight is March Haigh reservoir built in the mid 1800's by the Huddersfield Canal Company to provide water to the Huddersfield Narrow canal. Taken on Nikon D1, 17-35mm lens at 320th sec @ f8.

Do you have a favourite walk or view? I have so many favourite walks. From Deer Hill reservoir you can see for miles on a clear day. Another begins high up on Pole Moor. Walking along New Hey Road with Scammonden Dam below on the right and then down the valley side towards Deanhead reservoir. Then back alongside Scammonden Dam.

Which Yorkshire stage or screen star, past or present, would you like to take for dinner?

James Mason. North by Northwest is one of my favourite films. He was an interesting person; he trained as an architect before he became an actor.

If you had to name your Yorkshire hidden gem, what would it be? I know so many, it's hard to narrow it down. The lovely old church, St Stephens, in Fylingdales near the coast or Lord's Mill near Honley, if you like industrial architecture. It was built in 1792.

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If you could choose somewhere or some object, from in Yorkshire, to own for the day, what would it be? I have been painting allotments for the last couple of years, I find them visually interesting and I like that they stand for health and independence. I would really like a day pass to visit Lowlands allotments in Mirfield, especially at this time of year. On a sunny autumn afternoon with the sun low in the sky, the light glows through the greenhouse glass, it's really nice. I would spend the afternoon drawing and taking photographs.



Artist Maxwell Doig admires poet Tony Harrison, pictured here at his parent's grave in Holbeck Cemetery in Leeds.

What do you think gives Yorkshire its unique identity? Its stone and the buildings made from it. The weather shapes the buildings and people too.

Do you have a favourite restaurant or pub? Hinchliffe's restaurant and farm shop in Netherton, Huddersfield. We go there often for lunch; it's really nice. It has simple menu: soup of the day, sandwiches, salads, burgers and homemade cakes.

Do you have a favourite food shop? Hinchliffe's farm shop. Locally sourced food and friendly staff. We stock up on local vegetables, free range eggs and Cornish pasties.

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How do you think Yorkshire has changed for better or for worse, in the time you have known it? For worse, definitely more traffic on roads which used to be quiet roads. For better, Yorkshire Sculpture Park has gone from strength to strength since the mid-80s. It's now a major international venue.



Maxwell Doing enjoys the landscape around his home town of Huddersfield. The sun sets on a wintery scene at Buckstone Edge near Huddersfield as the first major snow of the winter fell. Buckstone Edge is part of the National Trust owned Marsden Moor estate, covering 5.685 acres rising to 1,600 feet above sea level and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The reservoir reflecting the golden glow of the sunlight is March Haigh reservoir built in the mid 1800's by the Huddersfield Canal Company to provide water to the Huddersfield Narrow canal. Taken on Nikon D1, 17-35mm lens at 320th sec @ f8.

Who is the Yorkshire person that you most admire? The poet Tony Harrison because I think he's a great poet. His poems are visceral and scholarly. His collection *The Loiners* and his poem *V* are particular favourites of mine.

Has Yorkshire influenced your work? Yes, the parts of Yorkshire I know have influenced my work. Over the years, I've absorbed their texture, for example, the weathered

sandstone walls and stone roof slates of the Huddersfield area, or the beached boats of Port Mulgrave. They give me a sense of place.

Who is your favourite Yorkshire book/author/artist/CD/performer? A Kestrel for a Knave by Barry Hines. My favourite CD would be music by folk singer Norma Waterson.

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What are you working on at the moment? A painting of Westwood Mill in Linthwaite. The Mill was built in 1798 and is a very interesting abandoned building. The roof has fallen in so you can see right through the building on the upper floor. I have also been very busy getting ready for a A Sense of Place an exhibition which has just opened at Huddersfield art gallery. It consists of paintings, drawings and monotypes of buildings, boats and places I know, most of which are in the Huddersfield area or on the Yorkshire coast at Port Mulgrave.



Artist Maxwell Doig admires poet Tony Harrison, pictured here at his parent's grave in Holbeck Cemetery in Leeds.

Maxwell Doig has been shortlisted for the high profile fourth biennial New Light Prize Exhibition, which will tour three various art galleries, including Barnard Castle, to January 18 and Huddersfield Art Gallery, March 10 to June 18. newlight-art.org.uk

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Maxwell Doig's own understanding of his subjects comes from close observation, from studying them in person, by water or by land, often camping out with them and coexisting in their own terrain.

About

His most recent journeys have taken him to the Southern Cornish coast, exploring the coastal inlets and fishing towns including Polperro, Flushing and the artistic haven of Mousehole.

Long aware of the artistic tradition of 'plein air' painting associated with Cornwall, this exhibition sees the artist embracing the unique Cornish light and colour. He has also re-visited the East Coast, exploring further through Suffolk and Norfolk where the temperament of the pictures explores the built environment in direct communication with nature. All the paintings in this exhibition move seamlessly from water, to stone, to grass, to sky, perfectly demonstrating Doig's ability to combine man-made geometry with the natural landscape.

MENU

Maxwell Doig

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'A really good artist makes you look at the familiar in a new way; things you might once have passed without a second glance become suddenly remarkable. Paul Nash did it with his winter landscapes and paintings of trees; Maxwell Doig does it with the gable end of an old building, a deserted farmhouse, or the clock-tower of an abandoned woolen mill. What at first sight seems ordinary becomes, through his hands and eyes, extraordinary. And you can never look at those things in quite the same way again.'

David Boyd Haycock Author and curator

Once pre-occupied by the human form, Max's recent popularity in exhibitions with Messums confirms that his portrayal of architectural gems hidden within the moors above his home town of Huddersfield have caught peoples imagination. His pictures record ancient Mills, and crofters dwellings as a celebration of the past, but it is within the surface of the work that his reputation has been made. The works speak of age and durability, of industry and human endeavour they are palimpsests to an industrious past.

Maxwell Doig was born in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire and trained in the 1980s at Manchester School of Art, where he received his BA (Hons) in Fine Art, between 1988 and 1990, he then undertook postgraduate studies at the Slade and at UCL where he also studied anatomy. In 1990 he had his first solo show with the Hart Gallery, Nottingham and won the Joseph Webb Prize for Draughtsmanship.

In the early 1990s, he was Artists in Residence at the Hochschule Der Kunst, Berlin and began to develop his mixed-media technique. After he returned to Huddersfield, he set up his first studio at Slaithwaite and started to explore aerial compositions. After winning the Villiers David Prize in 1997, he travelled extensively throughout the USA, particularly its coastlines, as well as to Australia and Mexico, where he became increasingly fascinated by anthropology. All of these travels informed the series of textural aerial views that comprised his Villiers David Prize show, which ran at the Hart Gallery between 1998 and 1999. After lecturing part-time at Leeds Metropolitan University, he had his first solo show at the Albemarle Gallery in London, which were followed by associated shows in New York and Bologna. By this time, he had become interested in Flemish art, having travelled throughout Belgium and studying works from Van Eyck to Permeke.

To celebrate Maxwell Doig's 2020 exhibition at Messum's St. James's, we produced a short film exploring the exhibition with commentary from the artist and David Messum please [CLICK HERE](#)