

Obituary



Upton Lovell

Althea Wynne, Sculptor

Althea Wynne, who has died aged 75, was a sculptor of large works in bronze and ceramic for gardens and public spaces, perhaps most notably Minster Court in the City of London.

When this was built in the early 1990s it was the largest office development in the Square Mile. Its owners, Prudential Property, commissioned Wynne to cast three bronze horses to be sited at the top of the steps leading into the building's atrium. Each stands 10ft high and weighs 4.5 tonnes.

They were swiftly dubbed Sterling, Dollar and Yen, and commentators made comparisons between their powerful form and those which adorn the church of St Mark's in Venice, another city built on international trade.

Althea Wynne's inspiration was not, however, commerce. Her chief influences were classical art, notably that of the Etruscans, whose directness she admired, and the natural world. She had ridden horses since she was a child, and was well able to transmit in her equestrian sculptures her own sense of joy in their movement as well as their energy and grace.

The daughter of an RAF officer, Althea Kathleen Wynne was born on October 6 1936. She was educated at North Foreland Lodge and then studied Art at Farnham, Hammersmith, and finally the Royal College of Art. One of her first commissions was of a group of swimmers for London County Council in 1959, made from ciment-fondu. The following year she designed a trophy for a race at Aintree. Following her marriage to Philip Dresman in 1960, however, she gave herself over to raising their children and later to teaching Art and History of Art.

By the time of her second marriage, to Antony Barrington Brown in 1982, she had resumed her career as a sculptor, and in 1988 made Doves Rising, the centrepiece of a fountain for a "peace park" in Hounslow. Her other major pieces included White Horses, the focal point of the Caronia restaurant aboard the liner Queen Elizabeth II, and Europa and the Bull, a life-size bronze cast for a cattle dealer.

In 1995 she showed a group of figures inspired by Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* outside the otherwise drab headquarters of Marks & Spencer on Baker Street, and, with help from Barrington Brown, she also constructed the three giant columns which pierce the three floors of the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent. Her garden at Upton Lovell in Wiltshire also contained several fine examples of her pieces.

Wynne had solo exhibitions at the Salisbury Festival in 1988 and 1991, at Exchange Square, Broadgate, in 1993, and in Winchester's cathedral close in 1997. She featured in a retrospective of 20th-century British art, again at Salisbury in 1999, and in 2010 on the Wylde Valley Art Trail. She had recently been commissioned to make two large bronzes for Windsor Great Park to commemorate its connections with the Queen, and she and her husband were killed in a car accident while returning from the foundry that was to make them.

Althea Wynne was a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. She is survived by the son and two daughters of her first marriage, and by her four step-children.

Althea Wynne, born October 6, 1936, died January 24, 2012

(The Telegraph)



The horses being installed in the City



Althea Wynne adds finishing touches to Sterling, a plaster cast of the first of three horses which will be finished in bronze. The other two will be called Dollar and Yen and the statues will stand in the Prudential Building in the City. Photo: Gerald Penny