
In pictures: Swiss artist Vital's first major UK show

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Swiss artist Not Vital discusses his work, which forms his first major UK exhibition at Yorkshire Sculpture Park.



The enigmatic Swiss artist Not Vital has been exhibiting internationally since the early 1970s, but his show at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is his first major UK exhibition.



The park's programme director, Clare Lilley, says it brings together sculpture and paintings from across Not Vital's career, in hues of white, grey and black, which are 'essentially the palette of his valley, the Engadin - grey mountains, white snow'.



The exhibition contains everything from small works like 1999's Snowball – a glass ball apparently containing a sphere of snow – to huge pieces, shown both in the park's Underground Gallery and out in the open air.



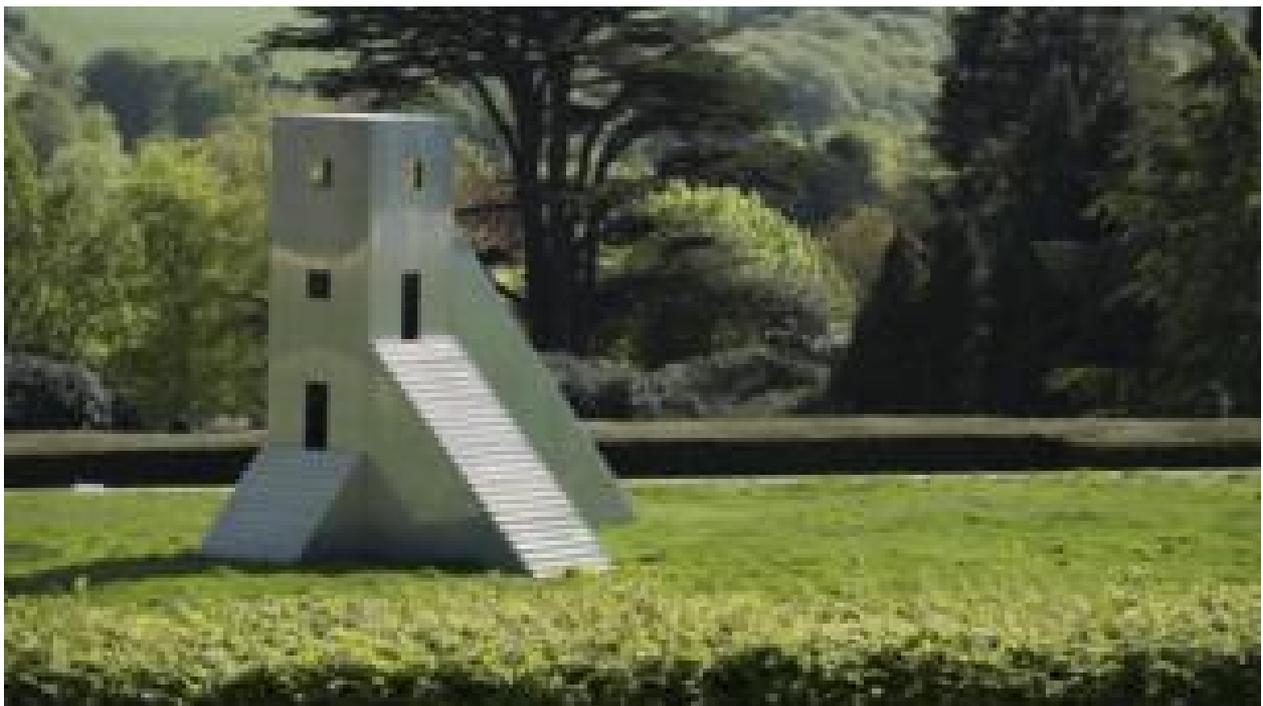
Not Vital says it is the first time some of the sculptures have been shown outside, something which concerns him because 'usually it loses because if you put a 7m sculpture next to a 13m tree, the tree wins'.



One of the most striking pieces, 2010's *Tongue*, certainly does not lose. A stainless steel representation of a cow's tongue, rising nearly 8m into the air, it is a striking and slightly unnerving work, as is 2008's *Pelvis*, which stands at more than 3m.



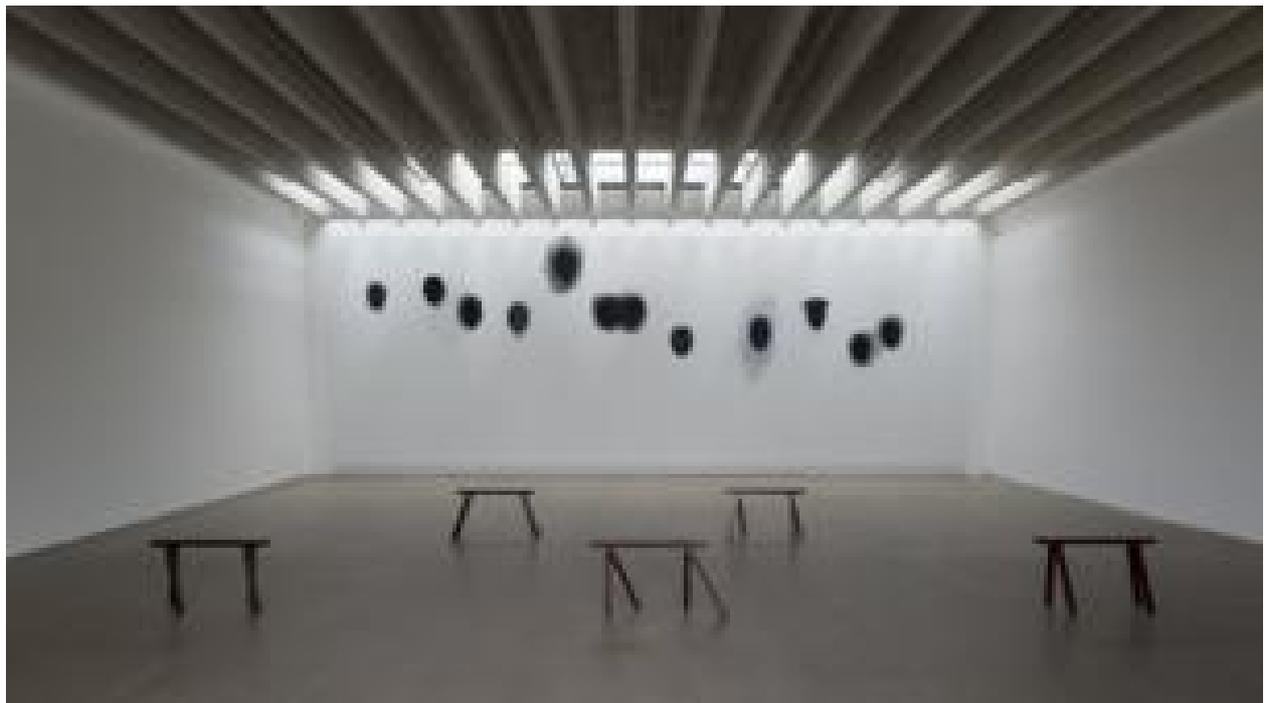
Clare Lilley says animals feature often in Not Vital's work and his relationship with them 'is one that is very close and very pragmatic - there's nothing sentimental about that relationship. If you go to his village in Switzerland, it is one of those places where goats are traipsing through, and people have a very natural relationship with animals, as they do with hunting. I've seen guys draw up on their mountain bikes with guns on their backs to go out hunting, it's the most normal thing'.



Walking around the exhibition, Not Vital says it is 'like seeing your family', though he says he is not pleased to see all the pieces again. Except for one work, 'all the rest I could throw away', he adds.



The one piece he is pleased to see again is 2010's *Hanging and Weighting*, a plaster form suspended precariously from a metal bar, which he says 'has what I'm like. It's cerebral, ephemeral because it's plaster and it could fall at any minute'. It is also a piece 'you have to look up to', Not Vital says, which is a feature of much of his work.



Clare Lilley explains this is because of his roots in a Swiss valley, where one's gaze naturally turns upwards towards the snowy peaks. Indeed, she says, she's noticed that when Not Vital concentrates, his head tips back. As she says, despite being an international artist, the *Endagin* is 'something that he carries with him, no matter where he is in the world'.



Not Vital is at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park until 2 January 2017.

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