

The Making of “Dandy”

By the artist, Marjan Wouda



THE SUBJECT OF ANIMALS

Animals have been a constant subject in my work; having grown up on a dairy farm, our connection – due to a history of living side by side remains a deep source of interest. Our stories are a testament to those intertwined lives, and no less relevant today as we wake up to the fragile reality of our planet’s finite resources.

“SKRIKER”

There is an earlier sculpture which led to and influenced the making of Dandy.

The sculpture depicts a large wolf-like dog, called Skriker, also sometimes known as Padfoot or Trash. This gigantic shaggy black dog is a well-known character in British folklore, often featuring in fireside tales of the ghostly variety.



PROCESS: THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA

My sketchbook is the place where an idea first finds expression in an image. It's the place I go to, to start exploring it. A sketchbook is essentially a safe, private space, where I allow myself to make “bad drawings”. For anything new and original to be made, you must take risks; hopefully the bad drawings will lead to better ones and will point to what “research” you need to do. By research, I mean finding out how a dog's bone structure allows it to move. Where its joints are. How its expression changes when the mouth is open. And whether you can see its teeth.

Often I make a 3D “sketch” in clay or wire, to explore on a small scale how the forms works “in the round”, making sure that it looks dynamic and interesting from all angles.

PROCESS: STEEL, PAPER AND COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN

When I set out to find an alternative to bronze, which would allow me to create larger pieces for the public realm and to put those sculptures back in the places that first inspired their story, I discovered that Lancashire has also the most up to date technology in metal-cutting and fabrication, opening new doors for me. It was also at this time that I was introduced to Computer Aided Design at The Making Rooms in Blackburn. This application allowed me to design very precise shapes on the computer; shapes which were infinitely scalable, and which could be used to instruct a laser cutter.

I needed, however, to find a medium other than a computer programme to start developing my ideas, and that medium was paper. Paper of a sufficient thickness to stand up and hold its form. I figured that anything I could make using paper, could be recreated using steel. In this way Dandy first saw the light of day in the form a small 3D paper model or “maquette” made by cutting, bending, and sticking together paper shapes, using bits of cardboard as spacers. Once translated into CAD, they were scaled up and sent to the metal cutting factory. Finally, the steel shapes were bent and welded together in the metal fabricator’s workshop. I decided on stainless steel for the promise of a long life and because it could be sandblasted – leaving it matt as opposed to shiny – which in turn allowed it to be patinated in a dark tone.

