



Colin Booth

Artist, 59, born in Gateshead.

As children get older their work changes as they think about perspective and making things look life-like. At a very early age they don't bother – they like making marks and building things.

Sensibilities are formed at an early age. I was really into lines, rectangles and colour, even at the age of seven. It's not a million miles from what I do now.

After graduating in fine art I worked as a journalist, which wasn't very fulfilling. After a while the creative element went and I started dreaming about painting.

Your personal life has everything to do with why you do certain things in your career.

When I went back to art I did nothing but drawing for two years.

My painting has always been about texture, surface, light and reflection. The newer sculptural work is the same.

The new development in my practice coincided with my four-year-old son Reuben being born.

I use reclaimed wood from a furniture factory to build installations. My children Reuben and Teddy come to the studio and build towers and knock them down .

My father used to bring home off-cuts of wood for me to play with as a child. He was a joiner. Now I take home wooden off-cuts for my children to play with.

Institute of Play was an expensive commission by the Victoria & Albert Museum of Childhood, now showing at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. I can't afford for anyone to play with that apart from me.

Showing at the Laing is like me coming home. It is a milestone.

I place all the blocks intuitively. I start with an idea and something is worked out in my head or drawn up. This will never be shown as it is again.

I have three pieces at the Laing and it is interesting to see how work reacts to other work.

The work is getting bigger, so in a few years I will fill a whole exhibition space with one sculpture.

A huge truck came to pick up more than 200 boxes from my studio for the exhibition in Newcastle. I am thinking about producing work which doesn't involve tons of wood.

This work is massively labour intensive. It is also logistically hard to store.

The light and changing patterns of the sea in East Sussex, where I live, has been a big influence on my work.

My work references modernist architecture. The De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea is one of the greatest buildings of the period in this country.

There is a playful element to wooden blocks. The installations are fun in a way.

I feel that this is a great time in my life.

* Colin Booth: Institute of Play is at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle until October 2. To celebrate national Playday on August 3, designer Lynsey Rollins is running a children's workshop using architecture to create large displays. Please book in advance. For more information visit www.twmuseums.org.uk