



**12 sculptures inspired by Jungian archetypes.**

**History. Ideas. Process.**

**Jo Fairfax**

I always wanted to be an artist/inventor. My father (poet) and mother (dancer) brought my brother (also an artist) and me up in a remote thatched cottage in rural Berkshire, England with no bathroom and very little money. My mother stole vegetables from the local farmers field, we had a homemade lavatory placed inside a wardrobe located outside of the house and we shared a tin bath one after the other in front of a log fire once a week. I was the last to enter the same warm tub of water.

My father used to read poetry to us and my mother taught us to be mischievous. The local gamekeeper would leave us dead pheasants by the shed hanging by their necks on a hook. My mother would pluck and cook them. In winter I couldn't see out of my bedroom window because the beautiful frost patterns on the inside blocked the view. On the outside hung long magical icicles as long as my arm from the freezing drips of water from the thatch. Living so close to nature gave me an understanding of how nature works, its beauty, its brutality and its rhythms. My mother was fascinated by how the brain works and encouraged me to explore the psychological side of life.

My dancer grandmother was a Jewish German refugee (her father was killed in Auschwitz). She emigrated to England in 1938 and was fascinated by Carl Jung.

I went to art school as soon as I could and studied sculpture. I further developed my studies exploring light and in particular holography at the Royal College of Art, London. It was magical to be able to create forms that required no suspension or support where the interior can be visible. It was like studying at Hogwarts. I continued my fascination with light and gravity with a holographic residency at the Holocenter in New York where I made a holographic animation. I loved the psychological and emotional potential as the images were so elusive and the viewer had to move from side

to side to make the animation work. A dialogue was created between viewer and artwork. This led me to want to explore virtual reality so that the viewer was not just looking at the light artwork from the outside but actually inhabiting the same space within the artwork.

I was awarded a NESTA Fellowship (National Endowment for Science Technology and Art) to explore, research and develop my art into virtual reality. I learnt how to program images to move and respond to a viewer's roving in virtual space. I made a tall sculptural chair for the public to sit on while they explored the virtual reality artwork. Their feet would physically dangle and not touch the floor. I thought that if I could break the relationship between a person and the ground then the brain would receive the artwork differently, more openly because they no longer had a floor and its implied rules of gravity of this world.

The challenge for me was to keep all that I loved about nature and our primal psychological structures while using technology. This is a critical axis. After I made my virtual reality artwork, I realized that, while I loved the potential magic that technology could offer, I was missing the physicality of the real world. There is something primal about standing next to and trying to understand a physical object.

This led me to make sculptures again so that I could offer physicality and retain the magic that technology can offer. I explored using 3D printers and making forms that are in my head but couldn't be made before having my own 3D printer.

I felt that the physicality of sculpture represented our bodies and technology represented our imagination.

Increasingly, I was thinking about the primal brain and how we receive the world and how we receive art. I was exploring how the mind works. I was less interested in the behavioral mind and more interested in the primal mind. Then I remember being told about Jung's idea of the collective unconscious a few years earlier which, before, had never really clicked for me. Now it did. I read about his ideas on the connection between us all before any societal influences come in and I loved it. It made so much sense. This led me to explore his idea of archetypes. My work was increasingly veering towards my fascination about how the brain works and Jung's archetypes seemed like a perfect way to further explore the brain.

Since 1999 I have financed myself by making sculptural artworks in the public realm mainly from light, again trying to dovetail the magic of technology with the human spirit.



**Figure 1** - Line of Light. Nottingham Railway Station. LED strips are connected to a sensor on the platform of the railway station above. As trains arrive and depart, the LED's change pattern. A different short poem is programmed to be projected each night.



**Figure 2** Strata. Bury, Greater Manchester. Interactive LEDs inside polycarbonate triangular prisms. There are sensors located at ankle level so that as people walk through the lights, they trigger a pattern of color behind them.



**Figure 3** Chimney, Burnley. 3 spotlights and gobos make a pattern inspired by cotton printing wooden blocks for the chimney at ‘Weavers Triangle’, once the cotton producing capital of the world.



**Figure 4** Chester le Street Arch. A brick arch entrance to the Market Place. The shape is inspired by the arches of the viaduct seen in the background. Made from bespoke bricks and a comb of polycarbonate tubes and programmed LEDs so that the top of the arch slowly changes color throughout the night. The Floorscape has inlaid lights programmed to slowly ripple blue along its length referencing the river which is buried along this axis.

In 2021 I decided to concentrate fully on my sculptural and technological combination focusing on the primal brain using a 3D printer.

I thought about the idea of the Jungian archetypes and loved the connection and bond that it gives to all humans. Every time I turn on the news there is item after item where the newsreader describes us and them situations causing havoc, separation, hierarchy and fighting. The Jungian archetypes imply connection, togetherness, bonding. The timing seemed perfect to try and create a 3D printed set of Jungian archetype sculptures.

I applied to the Crafts Council's wonderful 'Collect Open' exhibition at Somerset House, London with a proposal to make 12 Jungian archetypes using a 3D printer combined with hand crafting and they said yes.

I have been working on these 12 sculptures since July, 2023. I developed a technique where I use my 3D printer like a carver uses a gouge. It is simply a tool to aid in the creation of the artworks. I design my pieces using 3D drawing software, combining Blender with Tinkercad. I then use Cura to cut the components into smaller pieces. Once the pieces are printed, I fettle each one and coat them in spray putty. I then join the pieces together and coat them with 4 layers of paint. I design and make my own varnished decals and adhere these to the sculptures and finish with two layers of wax.

For this series of Jungian archetype sculptures, I printed the name of each piece at the front so that people would have an anchor to explore the piece and perhaps consider how the strength of each archetype grows or shrinks within them in relation to the water that feeds them as Jung says:

‘Archetypes resemble the beds of rivers: dried up because the water has deserted them, though it may return at any time. An archetype is something like an old watercourse along which the water of life flowed for a time, digging a deep channel for itself. The longer it flowed the deeper the channel, and the more likely it is that sooner or later the water will return’.



## Lover

I tried to create a sense of being on stage as a Lover. The lights are there to create a sculptural area for the Lover, combining stage with a four-poster bed. His plinth has a relief design of concentric circles and he is at the center. Everything leads to the Lover. He needs chutzpah to be identified as Lover. The spots and large circular accessory perhaps give a sense of peacock to the Lover.





## Rebel

The Rebel's body is partially like a hand grenade and partly like a church font with exhaust pipes or breathing tubes exiting it. His legs are inspired by the suspension mechanism of a 1932 all-wheel drive Bugatti and the back wheel has a five-pointed star, quietly referencing rebel Che Guevara. He wears earrings. The Rebel is the only figurine within the set to have a rectangular shaped head and large ring eyes. The Rebel does his own thing.



## Jester

The forms around the Jester are inspired by the movement of juggling, the swirling of objects around him makes the space come alive. The diamond decals are taken from the diamond-shaped patched garments; by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a “patch” was another name for a clown, a fool or Jester. The diamond motif in continued in relief on the plinth top. The rhythmic lines leading to the outlying wheels are there for sculptural reasons, to add surprise within a package of balance.



## Magician

The Magician stand on a plinth where the lines warp around him as if he has the powers to move space and time. His upper legs are bloated like sacks and he has a similar sack suspended from his back wheel. In my mind these sacks are full of potential magic. He has his own helmet around his head and this helps divorce the magician from normality, almost like his own halo. He is from somewhere else, somewhere magical and he walks among us. The figure is symmetrical apart from the swirls surrounding him which are like the magic spells that he carries with him, as we all do.



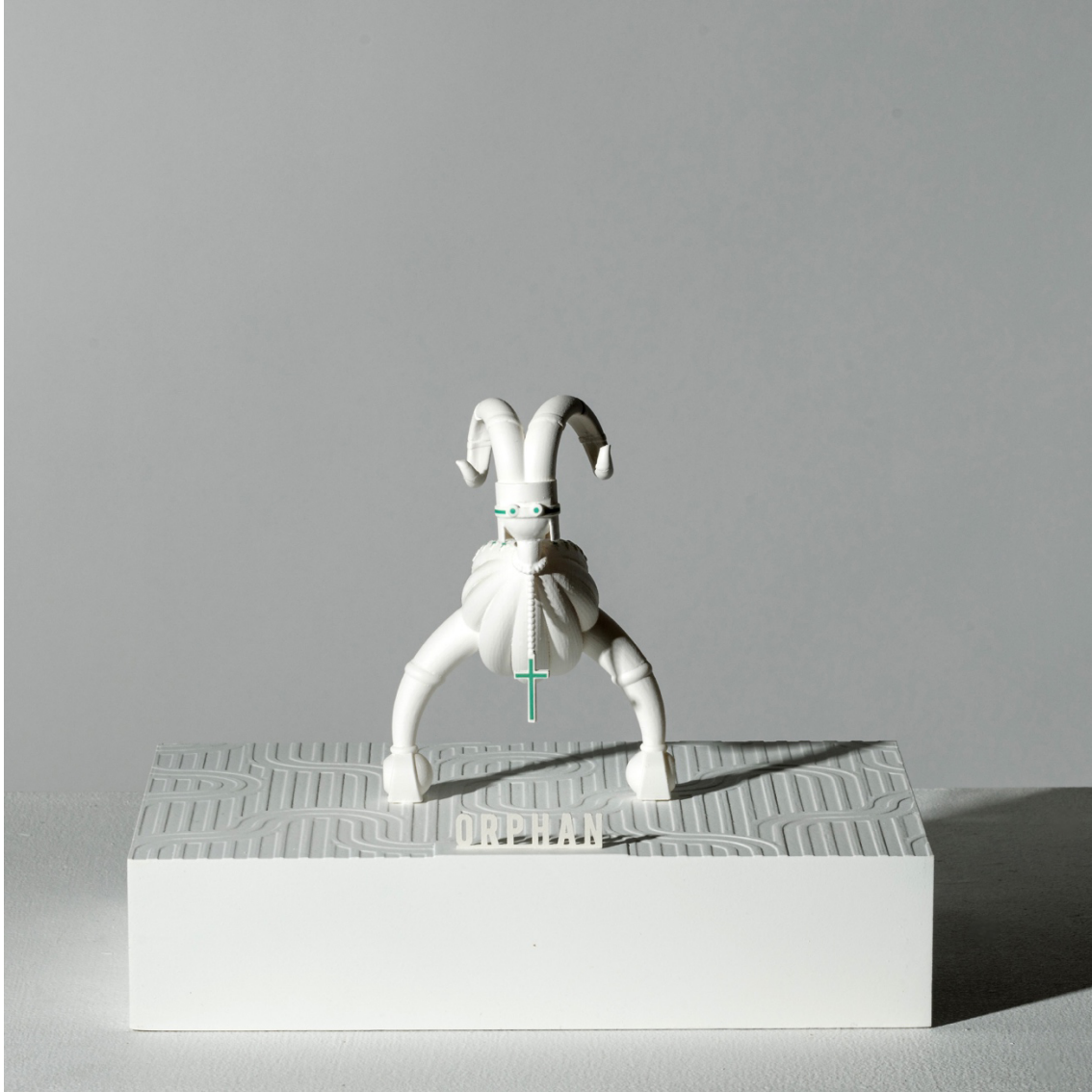
## Hero

I wanted a sense that the Hero was in procession, perhaps during a ceremony where this respected figure entered our world. The form is partially inspired by the Trundholm sun chariot. The ornate patterned platform that the Hero stands on is replicated on the plinth surface making a connection between the Hero and the rest of us. This Hero is one of us. The four framing mini spires create an arena and pathway for the Hero and can suggest a community and location. These are made from the same forms which make up the Hero, again reiterating that the Hero is one of us. The Hero is balanced on cone tips which suggest that the position of Hero is precarious and transient.



## **Innocent**

The Innocent has a halo which is a continuation of her body. The repeated circular motifs suggest a completeness. The innocent is untainted and radiates this completeness. The decals on the Innocent are also circles reiterating this sense of perfection. She has a quiet, containing dynamic. Her energy is neither dull nor explosive, she quietly occupies a serene space, her innocence isn't naive.



## Orphan

I wanted a powerful figure for the Orphan, not a figure that triggered a sense of sympathy. I love the idea that we can create our own destiny so no matter what start we have, we can still move and are not trapped by external situations. The Orphan here has powerful legs ready to be energetic, he is the only figurine in this series with his body made on the diagonal, an energetic pose. He has horns rather than a headdress. This is an empowering statement. He wears a cross around his neck and has taken this emblem of establishment and wears it on his own terms.



## **Explorer**

The explorer is part astronaut, part deep sea diver and part rambler. The shapes exiting his head and base are like pathways, the ones exiting his head are like psychological journeys and the shapes exiting his lower part are like physical journeys. The base top is made of relief geographic contour lines suggesting potential travel. The decals on his body are made from OS map symbols of pathways and destinations.



## **Creator**

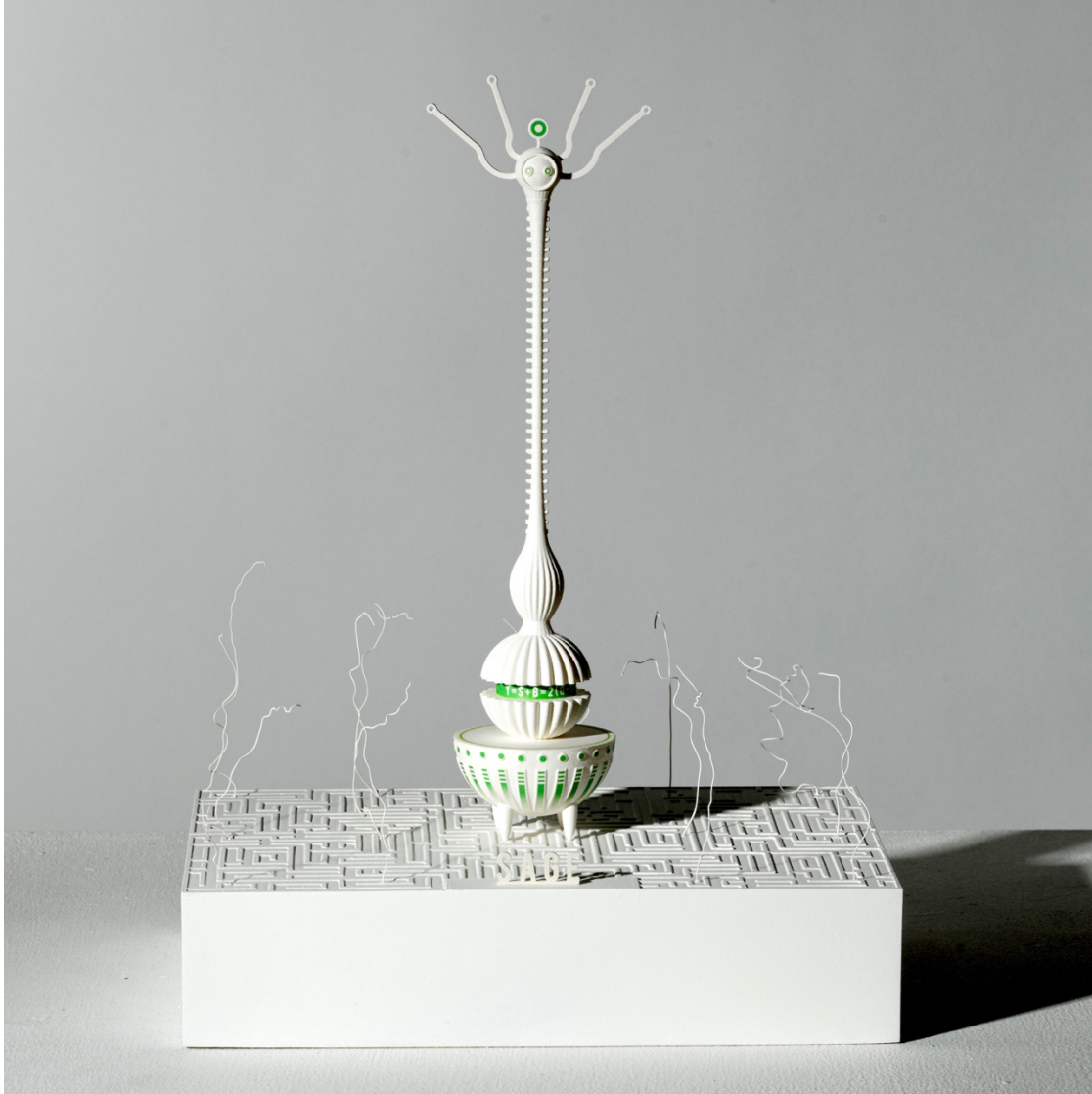
The Creator has inherent movement potential with its wheels and tracks. The plinth top of the Creator is inspired by genome images and quietly suggests information for us to create. Emanating from the Creator's body are flat discs suggesting planets and lower down is an array of small globes confirming the planetary reference but in a different sculptural way. These combine to suggest an orrery circling around the Creator. The Creator is center of the universe.





## Caregiver

The Caregiver's base is made from ripples of water overlapping, a quiet reference to the life-giving nature of water. The Caregiver rises from these ripples and is made from her own ripples, a gentle fluidity. She has ten small bowls and the decals changing tone leads down to each bowl suggesting a life force giving moment. The repetition of circles in and around the Caregiver create a gentle dynamic for her.



## Sage

The Sage's tummy has a decal with an equation for Quarks on it. Quarks are currently considered the smallest building block in all living matter and therefore building blocks of knowledge. The linear protuberances from the base are like electrical charges reaching towards the Sage, he is surrounded by life force. Emanating from his head are four lines which are like antennae and allow the Sage to collect all the information around him. His lofty position enables him to be all-seeing. Both the electrical non symmetrical lines and the formal antennae lines create a spatial connection between the two and help enliven the sculpture.



## Ruler

The Ruler has a base made from simple geometric forms which can suggest communities and or organization under the Ruler. His large hat implies authority and status while creating a dynamic conclusion to the top of the sculpture and inverts the shape of the simple geometric forms to help hold the negative space within the sculpture. His cloak is like lacework which suggests a gentle rule. There is symmetry and a formality to his form that reduces the dynamic of the sculpture and creates a calmness, a status quo.

**Jo Fairfax** is an artist whose practice includes both physical sculpture and sculptural light. He trained in sculpture and subsequently studied holography at the Royal College of Art, London and the Holo Centre, New York. He makes public and private artwork and was awarded a NESTA Fellowship to develop work in virtual reality. He is a Board Director for Design: Midlands, has exhibited widely including the Barbican Gallery, Oxo Tower and Royal Academy. His work has been featured in Blueprint and Light magazines and has had a solo show at the National Centre for Craft and Design in 2021, He is currently exhibiting 12 pieces as part of Collect Open 2024 at Somerset House and has a one-man show at the Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham in 2025.

[www.jofairfaxstudio.com](http://www.jofairfaxstudio.com)