

**Sculptor/Artist: Pierre Diamantopoulos ARBS**

**Title: 'Kandi Sky'**

Medium: Painted Steel

Size: 11 metres (H) x 22 metres (W)

Location: Middlesbrough College  
(Transporter Bridge Entrance)  
Dock Street  
Middlehaven  
Middlesbrough  
TS2 1AD

Client: Middlesbrough College

Background: Middlesbrough College and Commissions North, Arts Council England North East, proposal to commission artwork on the new college campus located at Middlehaven - a Tees Valley Regeneration site.

Fabricators: Art Fabrications

Completion Date: 2008

**Description: Pierre Diamantopoulos ARBS: 'Kandi Sky'**

Pierre Diamantopoulos's sculpture, '**Kandi Sky**', created in painted steel, approximately 22 metres wide, and weighing around 10 tons, stands at the Transporter Bridge Entrance of the new Middlesbrough College in Middlehaven - within view of the famous blue Bridge itself (and a few hundred yards from the proposed site for Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond's "Temenos").

'**Kandi Sky**', with its gateway arch, is an abstract representation of a learning curve, comprising of brightly coloured shapes and figures balancing almost 11 metres above the ground and spanning the West entrance to the new College in Dock Street.

This work forms part of the first phase of the twenty-year futuristic regeneration plan for the whole of the Tees Valley Corridor with the controversial architect Will Alsop as the visionary force behind what is being described as "a designer playground".

Diamantopoulos's early stage designs for "Kandi Sky" were created with funding assistance from The Arts Council England, North East. The sculpture was fabricated in the Midlands, in the workshops of Art Fabrications.

**The Idea Behind 'Kandi Sky'. Artist Statement:**

"The sculpture is a metaphor for the processes of discovery and learning: the throwing of ideas in the air, balancing of thoughts; the leverage of knowledge and the roller-coaster ride of experience, then the bounding energy of physical education and the performing arts."

**'Kandi Sky'** alludes to my primary inspiration in the works of Wassily Kandinsky, shown in 'The Path to Abstraction' exhibition (Tate Modern visit 2006).

There is a quirky, bouncing abstraction at play; this is a sculpture of coloured forms and figurative elements tossed in the sky with the musical randomness of an improvisation and the control and calculation of a composition. In a way, the sculpture's line describes the fun spirit of education and the arch is one of its many learning curves.

### **Gateway to Education**

The idea of a gateway is central to this sculpture (and I also see this theme falling in line with the wider urban renaissance agenda of the 'Northern Way': the concept of gateways to the north being pivotal to this strategy.)

The new Middlehaven site is the main 21<sup>st</sup> century gateway to education and training in the Tees Valley.

The sculpture is therefore ambitious in its scope and scale, bold and contemporary in its use of colour, with a central gateway arch at its focus and a dynamic tension throughout its span.

The sculpture addresses a need to demarcate the College's Dock Street entrance from a distance, inviting visitors to pass through its arch.

### **Complementing the New Architectural Environment**

The new Middlesbrough College, with its hydrofoil, monochromatic sweep, provides a dramatic backdrop for **'Kandi Sky'**.

Many of the sculptural elements are designed to resonate with the coming architectural iconography of Will Alsop in the wider landscape: cubes, stilts, spheres etc.

In the sculpture's towering lines and angles, there are echoes, too, of the industrial heritage of the immediate area: the shapes that rigs and cranes make against a skyline, the ever-present angularity of the Transporter Bridge girders – they share a common geometry belonging to what Alsop described as 'a land of giants unfolding in front of us'.

### **Profile/ Pierre Diamantopoulos ARBS**

Pierre Diamantopoulos is a prolific sculptor/artist working in many different media and varying scale. As an Associate Member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, Pierre has had a wealth of mixed and solo shows in London and throughout the UK and was included in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century British Sculpture Exhibition at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice in 2002. He has been included in The Cass Sculpture Foundation's New Concept Gallery for Monumental Art since 2001. His art is in international and corporate collections and in 2008 he was awarded a commission through The Arts Council England, North East, to fabricate a monumental steel sculpture for a futuristic regeneration programme in the UK.

Much of his work is focussed on the art of movement - an exercise in perfect but seemingly improbable balance. The figurative style of his monumental work is often set against strongly convergent lines, shapes and forms.

Pierre's sculptures are one-offs. His gallery work often showcases original maquettes for full-scale sculptures designed for the public realm.

He makes original figurative pieces and installations, engaging in sculpture that likes to poke fun at gravity. In his animalier work he focuses on physical articulation, whilst his figurative compositions are allegorical. His work may be commissioned in bronze.

Pierre's work is also collected as pencil drawings, charcoals, oil pastels and oil painting.

