

## **World Party in the Park**

Just before starting on this commission I had returned from a six-month trip to Poland. It is a country that proudly celebrates their folk art and traditional crafts. I drew upon this experience (in particular Polish wooden toys) to gain a starting point for my design for 'Polska Pani' (The Polish Lady') and the clutch of animated chickens that surrounded her.

I used the World Party commission (rightly or wrongly) not as a job, but as an opportunity to make an ambitious piece I would feel proud of. I had an image of what I wanted to make regardless of how long it might take.

For quite a while I have wanted to make a large figure from wood and have also felt the need to show my miniature installations to a wider audience. I used the commission to create a new piece of work, combining my studio working practice with my community arts background. It felt I was using all the skills that I had been developing over the years and put them to good use when working on this commission.

After the event in the park 'Polska Pani' went to her new temporary home at Kings Furlong School in Basingstoke, and to the children that had created the wonderful pecking chickens that accompanied her. I am hoping they will decorate her in line with the changes of the seasons, and that they will use her as an educational tool.

The project allowed me to develop my community art work and to get my studio based work to a much wider audience, but has left me frustrated because I now have a head full of projects I want to develop, so I am now busy applying for further commissions.

Now I have made 'Polska Pani' I feel I have evidence to prove I can work within a different commissioning field, so hopefully I will be given the opportunity to work like this again. What I made on this project felt closer to the creative path that I want to follow, which I sometimes felt I was being diverted from. However, that is not to say that I have no further interest in more conventional community arts activities in the future.

I am presently working on a commission of quite a different nature, to create the American Express float for Brighton Gay Pride, this time with the help of another artist. We have a truck on which we are making a two-and-a-half metre high alien, with thirteen metre tentacles entwining her baby. I'm looking forward to having fun and sharing the responsibility of the project with my studio partner Sarah Parsons.