



Sophie Ryder  
Born 1963 UK  
Exhibition in Lower Park  
The artist

Sitting, 2007  
Galvanised wire  
Crawling, 1999  
Bronze

Sophie Ryder's association with YSP started in 1986, with a residency immediately after graduating from the RA Schools. In 2008, YSP presented a major exhibition of her work at Longside Gallery and in the open air and this display remains at YSP as a continuation of that exhibition.

Ryder's work includes human, animal and mythological figures, frequently melding forms to combine the attitudes and instincts of each. Anthropomorphic characters are used both to explore the human condition and as a metaphor for Ryder's own feelings. Over several years she has evolved an ongoing narrative around the female/mother figure of the Lady-Hare; a hybrid with the head of a hare, and its body modelled on Ryder's own. The Minotaur also features strongly in the artist's work, often interacting with Lady-Hare in a relationship which even sees them depicted as a family with a child.

Ryder first began sculpting with wire when she was completing a foundation course at Kingston Polytechnic. These first sculptures were very simple, linear forms with the wire suggesting form, almost like a three dimensional drawing. Over the years, Ryder has developed her technique into a refined skill and she is now able to create incredibly complex forms with wire.

Ryder begins with a steel armature around which she moulds and bends different thicknesses of wire, generally using only her bare hands. She has described wire as a marvellous material to sculpt, as mistakes can be rectified relatively easily.

Wire sculpture intended for the outdoors, like the monumental *Sitting*, must be galvanised to protect against the weather and this involves dipping the whole work in boiling zinc. Ryder's preference is for the rusty finish of the ungalvanised wire, although works left in this state would disintegrate quickly if left exposed to the elements.