

# **Bog Oak, Historic and Fossilised Wood**



**Modra-Sculptures**

**Dr Siegfried Modra** deliberately selects unusual wood of more historical provenance or with unique natural characteristics for his thematic sculptures.

**Bog oak** refers to sections of oak trees, which became submerged in peat bog or embedded in sediment at the end of their lives. A natural preservation then took place. The reclaimed bogwood is generally from three thousand to eight thousand years old.

**Fossilised wood** is millions of years old. The deeply buried sections of wood have neither succumbed to natural decay, nor undergone the usual transformation from wood to coal or to stone. The coniferous wood has to be preserved after being extracted from the earth.

**Historic wood** may be archaeological finds, objects which were fabricated and used by people in previous times. These items could have lain under the earth or under water for up to eight hundred years before being reborn as modern-day sculptures. Perhaps they were formerly pit props, ship timbers, parts of buildings or bridge supports and posts. Living works of art hewn from timber with fascinating attributes and backgrounds. Equally the wood may have been in use until the present day, for example as beams or bell cages from refurbished churches, reclaimed timber from house demolitions or simply sections of old furniture.

**The wood bears witness** to long-gone eras and bridges the gap to the dominant aspects of modern-day life, with its ever-changing social processes. The complexity of relationships, of structured compositions and the need to reduce everything to absolute basics are encompassed within the ingrained characteristics of the sculptures.



Bog Oak, height 148cms





Bog oak, Heights of 124cms and 112cms.

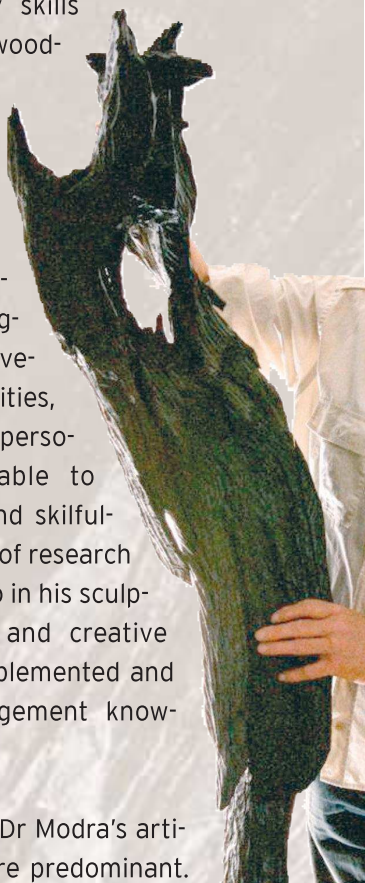


»Divulging ourselves« and »Hiding ourselves«

From childhood onwards, **Dr Siegfried Modra** was influenced by a close relationship to wood, more precisely to old wood. The family home was situated in the middle of a wood and the surrounding small timber-cutting enterprises became his natural playground. Bog oak was often uncovered during peat-cutting in the area and the fairy-tales of the region entwined around these mysterious finds.

Dr Modra's professional life was multi-faceted. His background includes traditional wood-working, carpentry skills and development of his wood-carving talents. As a trained tool-maker, he also studied mechanics and graduated from Dresden's Technical University. His wide-ranging competencies, strengthened by depth of involvement in all relevant activities, enhanced his distinctive personality traits. He was able to demonstrate creativity and skilfulness in not only the fields of research and development, but also in his sculptures. His handcrafting and creative expertise were both complemented and bulwarked by his management know-how.

With increasing maturity, Dr Modra's artistic side has become more predominant.





He was fascinated more and more by thematic creations. The constituent items of his works appeal to everyday people - their desires and their actions, their shortcomings and inconsistencies, their strengths and weaknesses, together with existential possibilities and individual limitations. Even aspects of cohabitation within family and society, spiritual influences on human life and the ethically unacceptable facets of an "earthly existence" are illustrated in his sculptures.

At this stage in his life (born 1940) he experiences both involvement and distance in equal measures. He contended with two quite different political and economical systems and this, in turn, enabled him to develop quite personal, unique perceptions of individual and social realities. His knowledge of the differing artistic trends in East and West Europe has endowed him with the capability of forming his own personal method of expression.

His sculptures have been exhibited in numerous galleries over the years. The audience's varying reactions to the exhibits and to the occasionally somewhat complex themes, motivates him to dig deeper into the human psyche and open up more avenues for artistic illustration.



**Modra-Sculptures** are discrete, balanced shapes and creations extrapolating the disinterred, natural lifelines and composition of the wood.

The form of the finished sculpture is defined by a harmonious combination of the unique features of the wood with overlain complexity of design. The features of earlier design and manufacture, of use and sometimes centuries of sunken internment under extreme conditions, are retained in the finished sculptures. The unique objects are thus inimitable and irreplaceable.

A Modra-Sculpture is made of a single piece of wood. The size and shape of this wood, therefore, exerts a significant influence on the design manifestation. The sculptures are created by hand, using traditional tools of the carver's trade on priceless raw materials. The unique toolmarks thus appearing on the surfaces of the sculpture serve as the "signature" of the artist. They are also an indispensable, essential element of design.

The characteristic features of timber as a natural material include splitting, warping and twisting and these are highlighted. Such signs of life are normal and desired - a stimulating challenge for the artist. Changes occurring within the finished sculpture, in compliance with the undisputed laws of timber development, document the authenticity of the material. Artifacts are thereby created which display the characteristic features of living material, simultaneously symbolising a fascinating freedom of expression.

All sculptures retain the original colour of the reclaimed material. The objects frequently appear archaic, whilst radiating an aura of stability and durability.





Bog Oak, Height 220cms.



Archaeological underwater find, Baltic, beginning 17th Century.

**Modra-Sculptures** in bog oak, historic or fossilised timber are only available in limited quantities and cannot be recreated. Each item is sold to an individual and may only be resold or given to a third party with the express agreement of the artist. Conditions of lease or sale and all financial agreements may vary. Contacts will be the artist himself or his legal manager.

Exhibitions at gallery events, museums, churches or any other suitable venues with public access may be negotiated. Individual items may be exhibited by means of a leasing agreement. The artist is prepared to collaborate with trusted, reputable galleries.

Further information on the wood sculptures is available from

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Fossilised wood, 15 millions years old,  
Heights of 27 und 22 cms