

CRAFTS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURIE EVANS
AND NICK BROWNGARDEN
CITY

The Oxford Gallery's
biennial exhibition of garden
art and craft takes place
this summer at the
Barbican Centre, London.

Preview by Margot Coatts



This summer the Oxford Gallery brings the vast paraphernalia of its biennial garden crafts exhibiton to the Barbican in the City of London. I was amazed at the size of the task when I first tramped around the bare site with the Gallery's directors Lindsey Hoole and Valerie Stewart and their designer, Sally Tarshish of Inscape Gardens, also of Oxford. I felt I should have been more suitably dressed in farmer's coat and wellies, but nevertheless the organisers' unbounded enthusiasm for the uncompromising sculpture court, barricaded in by the Barbican Arts Centre on all sides and Lego-land flats above, became quite infectious. They set about planning a

garden – the siting of screens, the building of planters, the choice of trees and plants of various colours, fragrances, shapes and sizes – with energy. In the adjoining barn-like conservatory they raced from palm to pond, pointing out promising hideouts for pots, sculptures and furniture, while reeling off the names of 50 or more exhibitors whose work is now sited there.

For the *Avant Garden* exhibition, the centre of the Barbican's sculpture court has sprouted a grove of hornbeams which is in turn planted around a fountain of bronze and stainless steel by William Pye. Near it are the spiny steel chairs of Jud Shadbolt, and leading from the grove – through gates by Tim Fortune – are paths or

ABOVE
'SUNDIAL' BY
SU LUPASCO –
CERAMIC,
BRASS AND
WELDED METAL,
62CM HIGH, (1989)