



OBSERVATORIES

PARTICIPATORY PROJECT
BY RICH WHITE

Produced with the
assistance of:



OBSERVATORIES

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE VIEW OF THE WYE VALLEY?

Inspired by Bruce Allan's 1988 sculpture 'Observatory' which was part of the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail from 1988 - 2014, artist Rich White developed a project called Observatories.

During lockdown the project aimed to engage with audiences to imagine the views and locations they couldn't currently access around the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

Referencing Bruce Allen's contemplative call to 'stand and stare' Rich asked members of the public to submit photographs of their favourite view of the area along with a short explanation of why the view is important to them.

Rich then used the images and information to inspire a series of theoretical and fantastical towers designed to make us think about how we look at these landscapes and to help us imagine ourselves placed somewhere else, somewhere impossible.



Observatory, Bruce Allan, 1988

THE PROJECT

The following pages reproduce the original submissions, and the text and resulting Observatory image for each.

Following this there is a brief description of the process of making the works.

Finally, there are two full-size reproductions of submitted views, paired with a simple ink drawing, which you can print out and create your own Observatory.

SHADOWED EYES

‘Sneaking up on the Severn’. He chose this image, taken from Eagle’s Nest viewpoint, because of its ‘grand view of two great rivers’.

The Observatory has two platforms to provide a stunning, unique view of each river.

Twitter: [@EyesShadowed](#)





FRANCES DAVIS

Symonds Yat in FoD. 'Breathtaking' and makes you 'stand in awe'.

The Observatory's many steps will add to your breathlessness, but the view will be rewarding.





MATT NIGHTINGALE

FoD Sculpture Trail at Beechenhurst. 'This view stopped me in my tracks. The backdrop of fir trees made me think of a stage with the younger plants performing in the wind for the onlookers of the elders behind.'

The Observatory takes the form of a low, wide platform, perhaps for performing on as well?





DAVID BROADBENT

Symonds Yat Rock, taken whilst leading a photography group on a dawn shoot. 'This spot is about the WOW factor of seeing the whole bend in the River Wye'.

The circular Observatory emphasises the sweeping curve of the river.

Instagram: [@davidbroadbent](https://www.instagram.com/davidbroadbent)





HEATHER WRIGHT

Standing on Brockweir Bridge. ‘The rich tones and curvaceous quality of the trees give a sense of comfort and calmness.’

The Observatory is supported by a geodesic sphere - a curved shape made from straight lines - and encloses the trees.

Instagram: [@hj.wright78](https://www.instagram.com/hj.wright78)





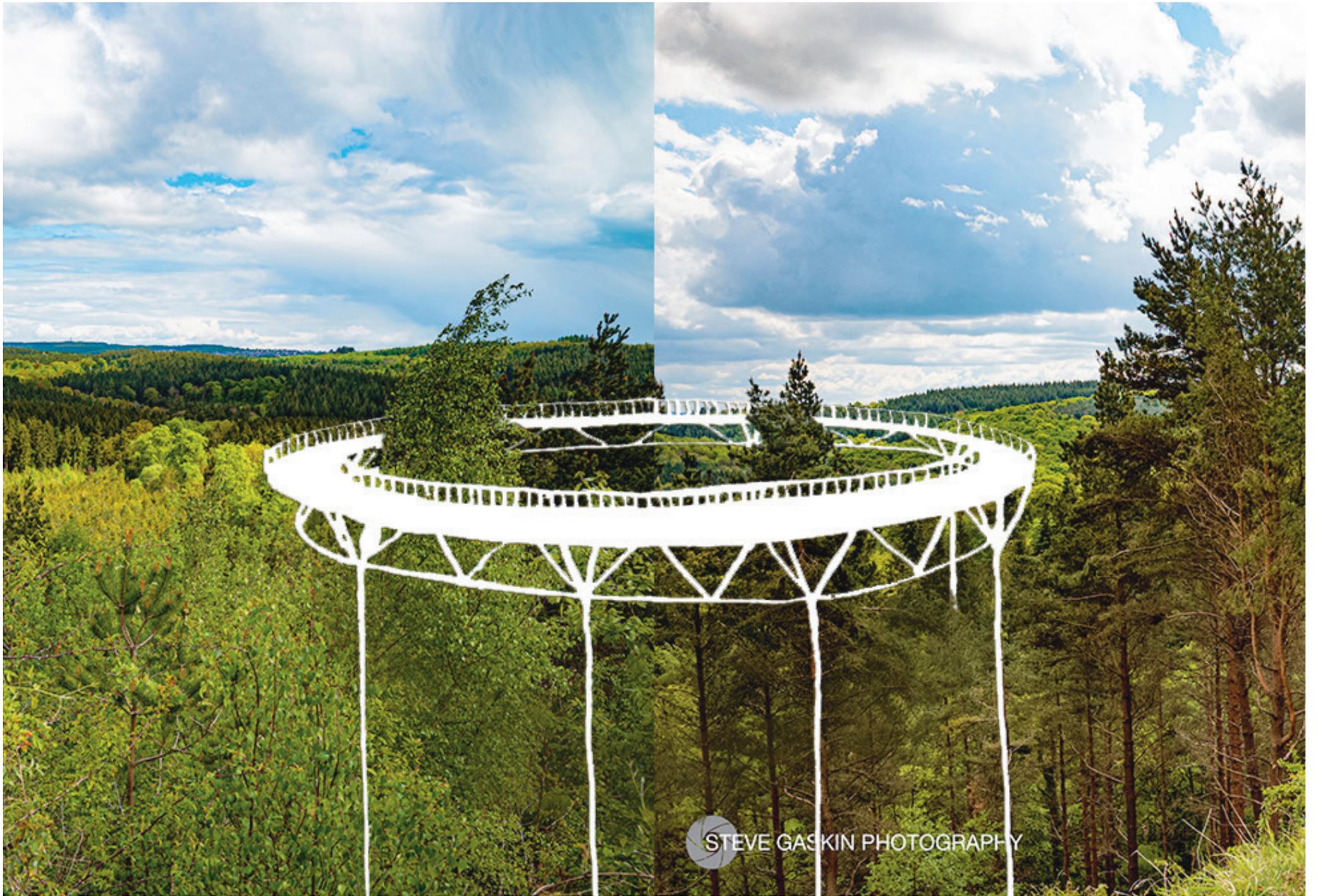
STEVE GASKIN

The view from New Fancy provides you with a 'full 360 degree view over the Forest.' The images are the 'best views East and West.'

The Observatory spans both views in a circle, allowing for an optimum panorama.

Instagram: [@stevegaskinphotography](https://www.instagram.com/stevegaskinphotography)





STEVE GASKIN PHOTOGRAPHY

JENNY CASHMORE

The view 'between Redbrook and Bigsweir Bridge where the Welsh/English border runs directly along the centre of the river.'

The Observatory is made of two subtly different halves that meet at the border with a gateway.

Instagram: [@jennycashmore](https://www.instagram.com/jennycashmore)



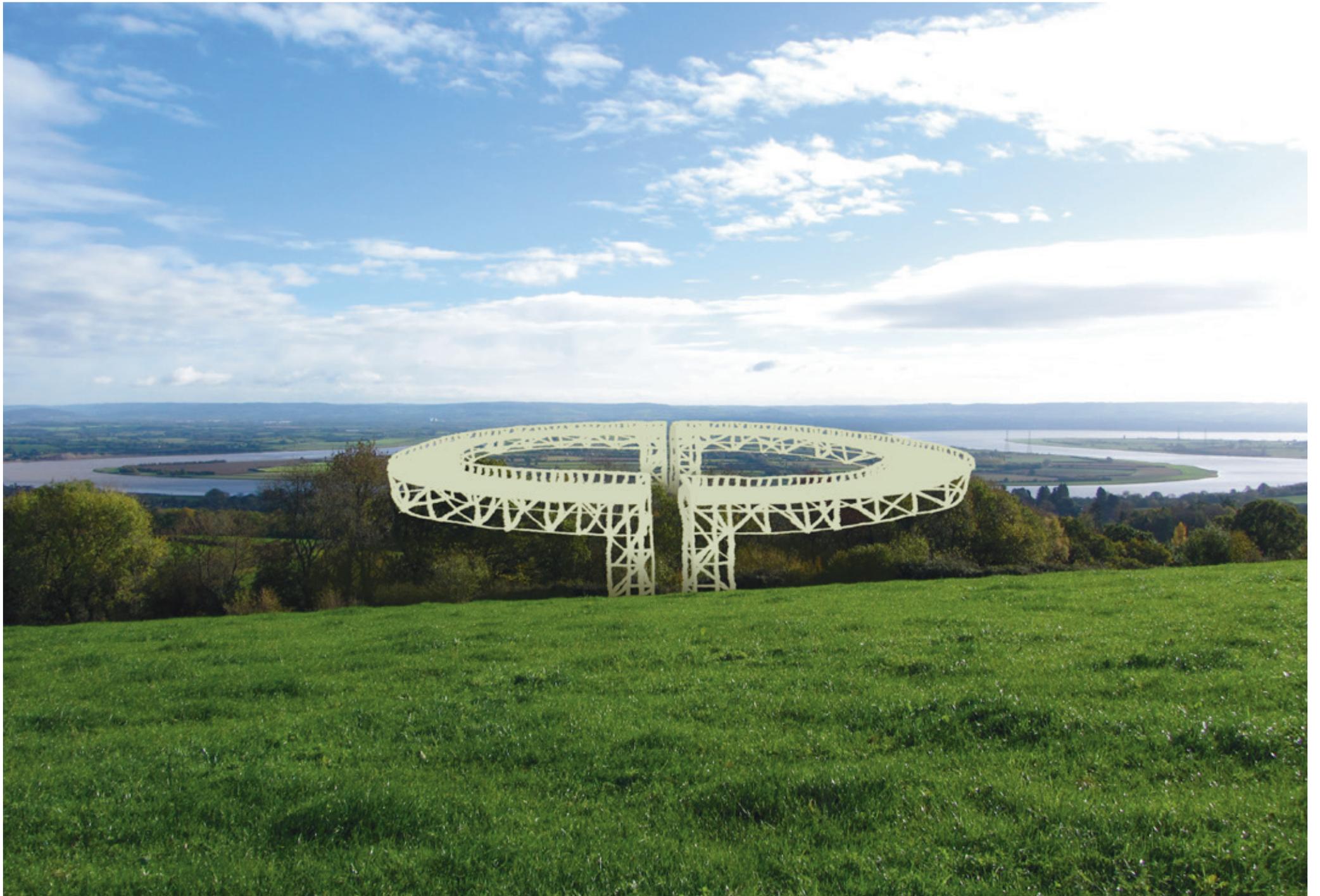


STEWART CARSWELL

The River Severn from 'close to the Roman Temple at Littledean. I like the symmetry of the large sweeping meander at this point.'

The Observatory consists of two symmetrical, sweeping arcs.





RICH WHITE

The Forest of Dean. 'I love these breaks in the tree cover where the sun comes streaming in.'

As an homage to Bruce Allan's original sculpture this Observatory mimics the staircase, but as a shaft of sunlight.

URL: counterwork.co.uk





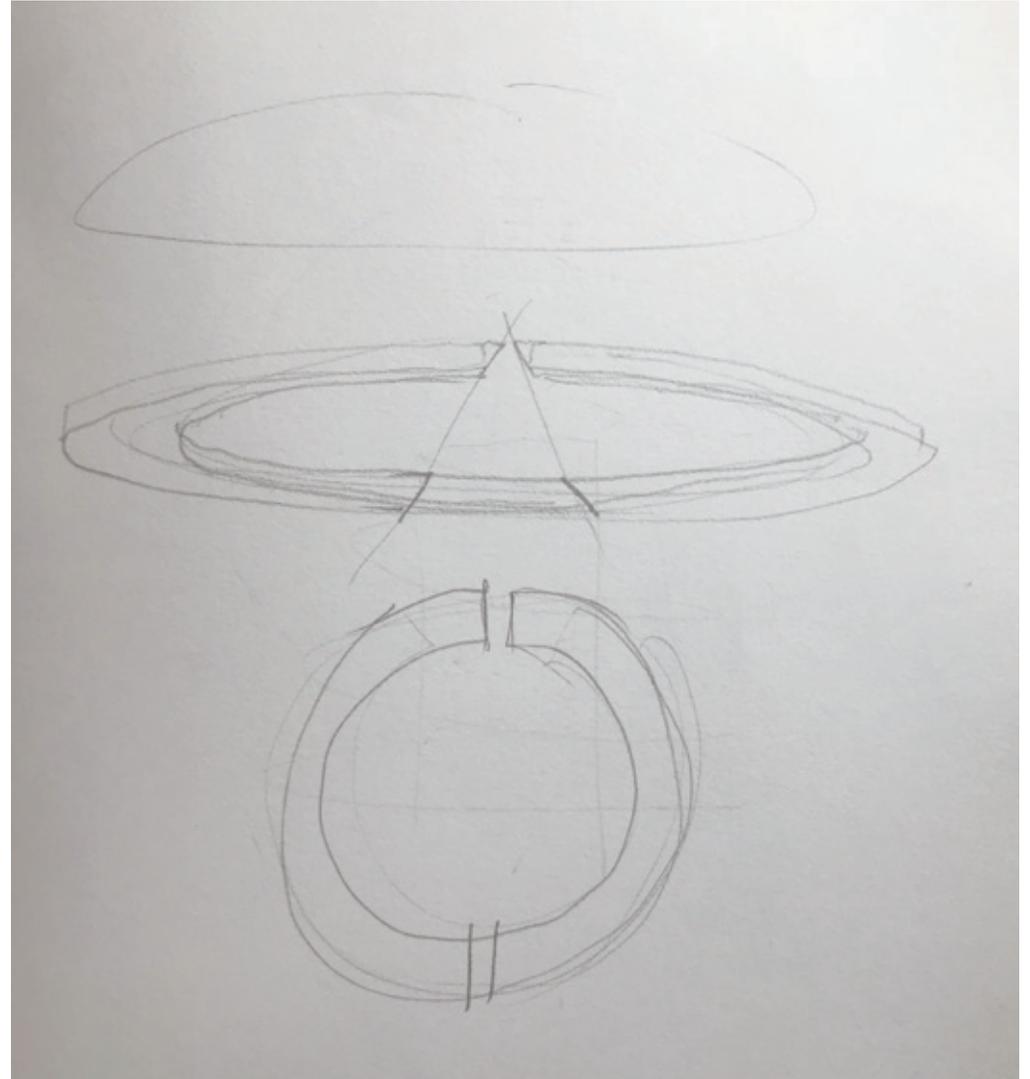


PROCESS

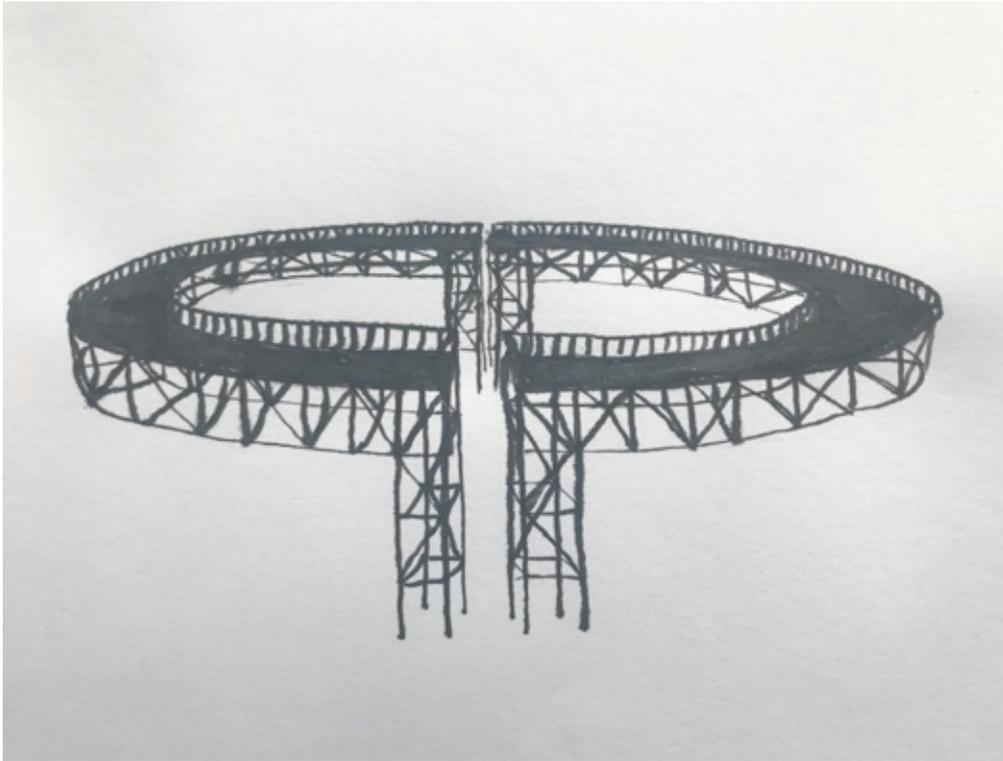
Each work started with a photograph submitted by a member of the public, along with a short piece of text describing where it was taken and why.

For the above photo the sender, Stewart Carswell, talked about 'symmetry' and the 'large sweeping meander' of the river.

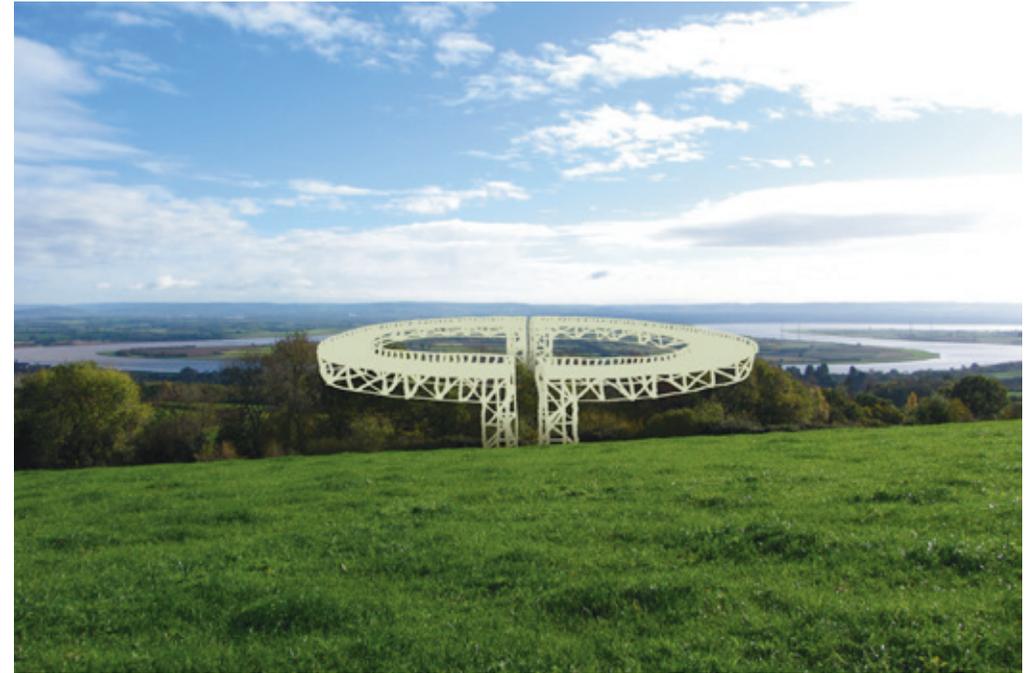
Rich took these descriptions, and the photo itself, as a starting point to think about how the Observatory could reflect the landscape and Stewart's thoughts about the location.



The descriptions were key in beginning the design process. For example, the symmetry of the landscape suggested that the Observatory should also be symmetrical.



Once the Observatory is finalised it is drawn up, inked and photographed.



The Observatory is then digitally inserted into the original photograph with colour changes and editing to integrate it into the landscape.

The Observatory is not meant to be a seamless addition, it is stylised and, in many cases, an impossible structure.



Print out and draw your own Observatory

Photo: @EyesShadowed





Print out and draw your own Observatory

Photo: Frances Davis



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Many thanks to:
Cathy Mager
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ShadowedEyes
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Heather Wright
Steve Gaskin
Jenny Cashmore
Stewart Carswell