Salvaged steel and a slice of countryside: Caro sculptures on show in Oxfordshire fields

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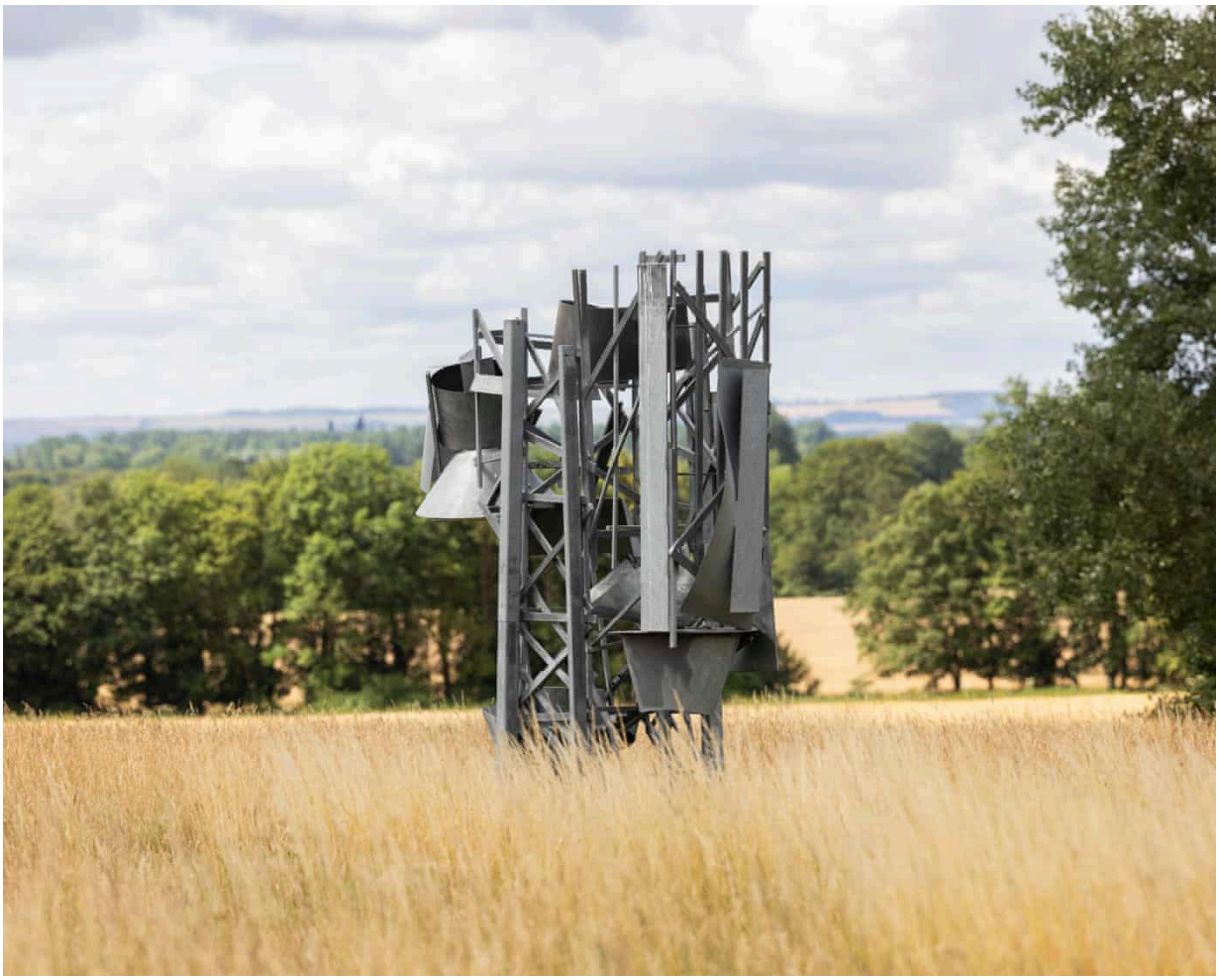
Steven Morris July 3, 2026



Anthony Caro's Star Flight at Albion Barn and Fields in south Oxfordshire. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

Visitors can get free peek at works by one of UK's most significant 20th-century artists and one of his successors

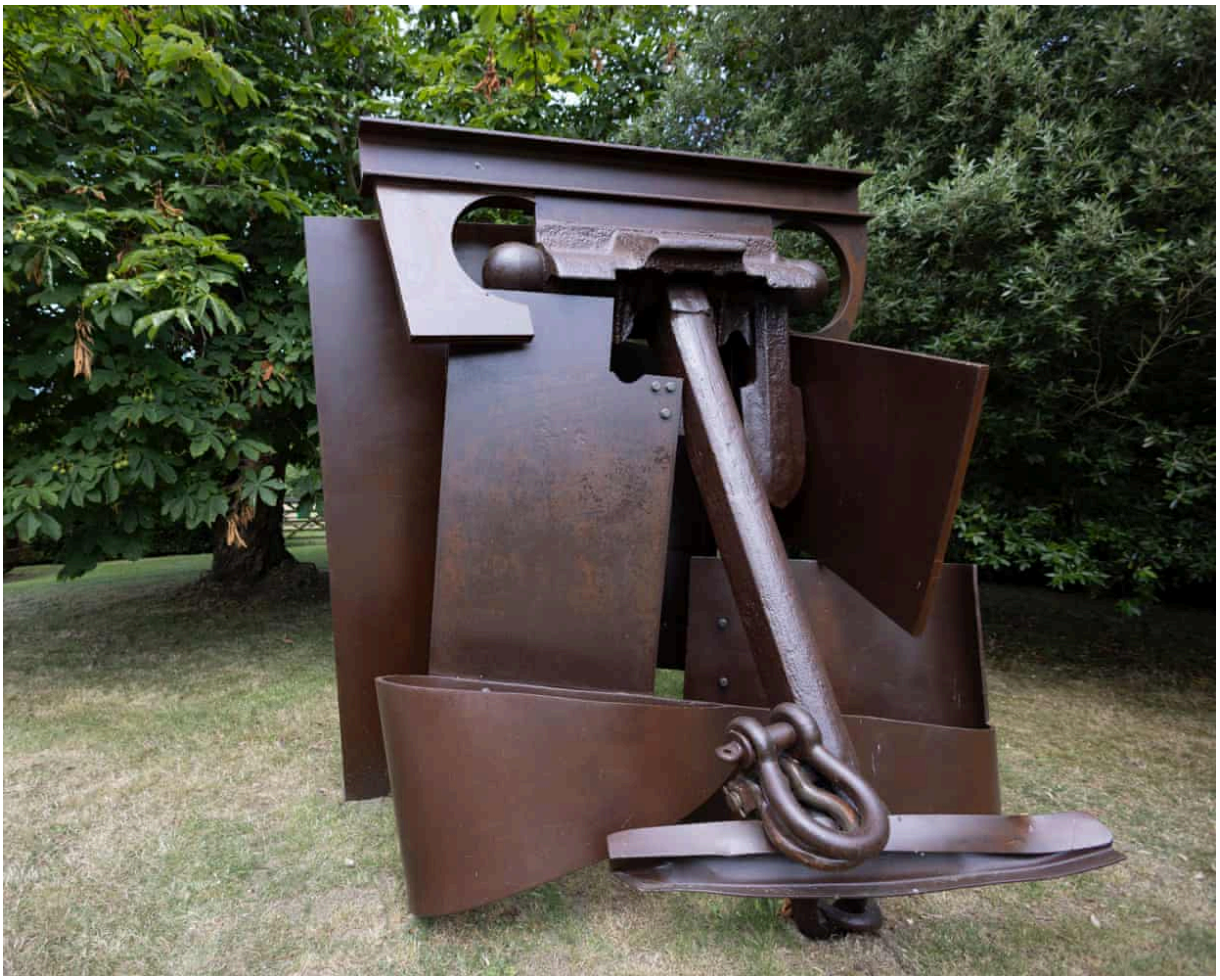
Swifts screech overhead, hares lope along the grassy paths and butterflies flutter in the woodland fringe. There is an orchard; there are chickens, beehives. It seems simply a lovely, if conventional, slice of English countryside – until you happen upon striking sculptures fashioned out of chunks of reclaimed steel or machinery parts salvaged from factories, shipyards and farms.

The pieces are the stars of a show called Heavy Metal, which brings together work by one of the UK's most significant 20th-century artists, Anthony Caro, and one of his successors, James Capper.

Michael Hue-Williams, the director and owner of Albion Barn and Fields in south Oxfordshire, where Heavy Metal is on show, said he was not a fan of conventional sculpture parks. “I like the idea of suddenly seeing a sculpture emerge. You walk around for a while and just discover something wonderful as if by chance.”

Those with very deep pockets can buy – Hue-Williams is a well-known and successful dealer – but ordinary lovers of art and nature are invited to take a peek for free as long as they book in and promise not to clamber over the sculptures.

Caro, who died in 2013, is considered one of Britain’s most influential postwar sculptors. He was involved in the creation of the Millennium Bridge in London and is celebrated for his use of repurposed scrap metal.

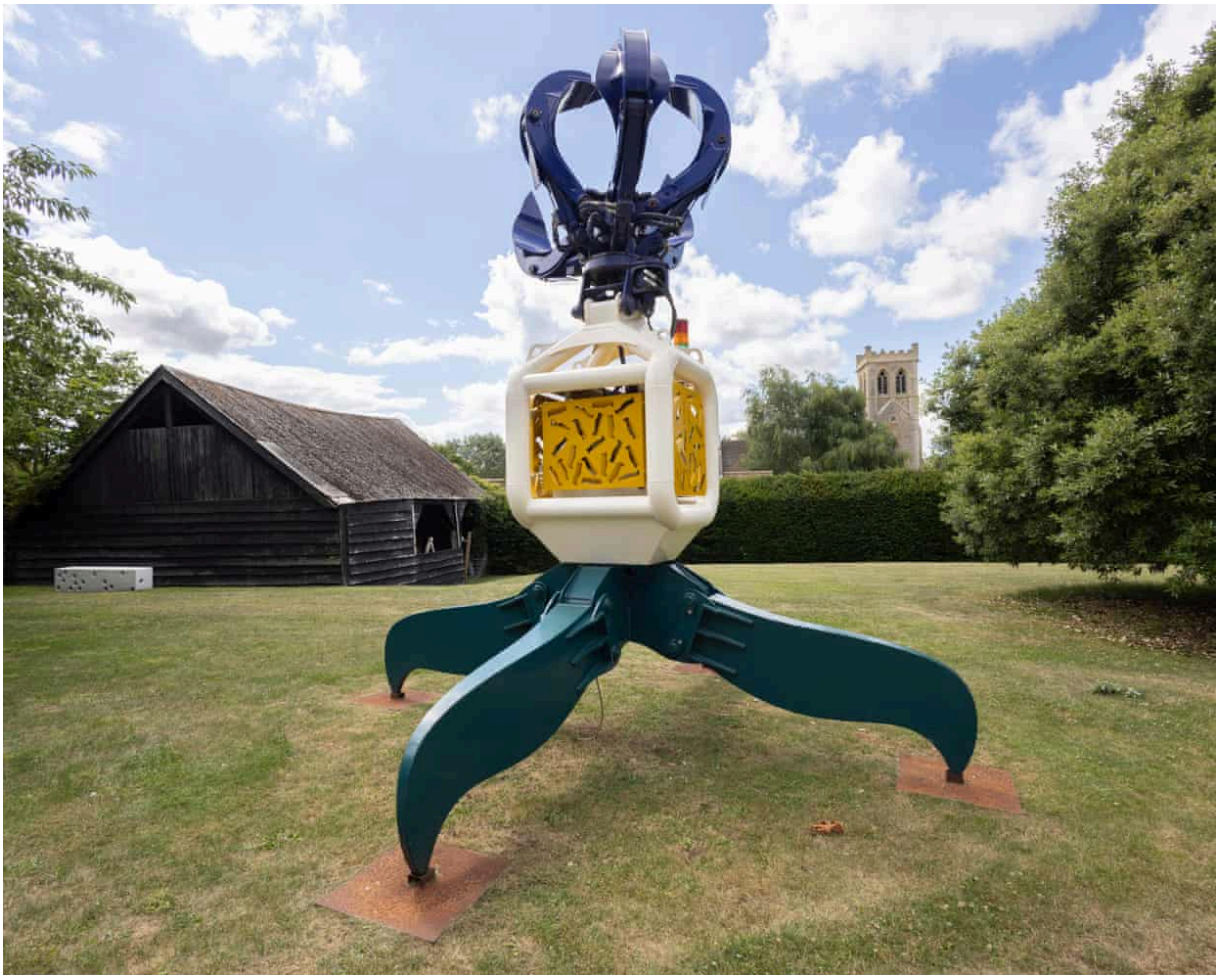


Erl King resembles a hulking medieval helmet. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

The show at Albion Barn includes pieces such as Erl King, in which a hefty ship’s anchor is used to create what seems to be a hulking medieval helmet.

Another, Star Flight, is made out of galvanised steel. From one angle, the parish church of St James provides a backdrop; from another, the faraway Wittenham Clumps, a pair of wooded chalk hills, do the job.

A third Caro, on the edge of woodland close to a barn owl nest, is made out of a cattle crush, which would have been used to hold cows when they were being examined or treated. Called Slow Passage, parts have been painted red, which Hue-Williams said reminded him of work by the Dutch abstract painter Piet Mondrian.



Parts of Capper's IRIS open like a flower's petal. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

One of the standout pieces by Capper is called IRIS, which features what appears to be a repurposed industrial "grabber". Some of Capper's pieces move. The grabber parts of IRIS open like a flower's petal.

A Capper sculpture inside a tractor barn converted into a gallery comprises two objects made of fierce-looking nipping blades perched on a girder like stag beetles squaring up.

The catalogue produced for the show tells how Capper went for an interview as a welder for Caro but the senior artist told him to go back to his own studio and keep working on his own sculptures. He did just that and now works in a studio on an old military airfield in Wiltshire.

Atlas 2017 looks like stag beetles squaring up. Photograph: Graeme Robertson/The Guardian

The woods at Albion Barn were planted by Hue-Williams's father, Giles Hue-Williams, a rewilding project before the idea became popular. Sadly, he was killed by a swarm of bees while working in his orchard.

But he created a spot that suits art well. Visitors should be warned: there is no gift shop and no cafe (the thatched pub over the garden wall is picking up a few extra customers), just acres of fields and woods and sculptures that loom out of the landscape.

Hue-Williams's daughter, Lucca Hue-Williams, who is the director and founder of the central London gallery Albion Jeune and jointly curated Heavy Metal, admitted there was something a little crazy in the concept of a show of such important artists tucked away in the Oxfordshire countryside.

"It's a hidden gem but I thought it was important to have an intergenerational show," she said. "It's a dialogue between Anthony Caro, one of the greatest artists from the last century, and an artist whom he has particularly inspired and had a relationship with, James Capper. People can come, wander in the fields. It's very British but fun."

Open Thursdays and Fridays, with visits bookable on the website. It is not suitable for under-12s, and children aged 12-17 must be supervised by an adult at all times.