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THE RURBANIST

Sculptor **Conrad Shawcross** on building treehouses and the importance of STEAM subjects



Where do you go to escape the city? The Seven Sisters in East Sussex. It's under two hours from east London and we try to go twice a month. We love walking along the cliffs and taking in the views of the Channel.



What are Saturday afternoons made for?

Sailing, walking and building treehouses.

What's your favourite game to play? I can't pick just one, so I would have to say flying trapeze and sailing, for the exhilaration.

What would you change about yourself? I wish I had webbed feet and two more thumbs.

What three items would you save from your burning house?

Where's home to you? Clapton in Hackney, in an old horse stable I converted over several years.

What has been the most memorable night out you've had in London? Being from London I have had many memorable nights here. The trouble is all the best nights are difficult to recall.

Last play/concert/film you saw? When I'm on the treadmill I have been watching GLOW on Netflix, which is fictional but based on a real female wrestling show from the 1980s. It's hilarious.

What would you do as mayor for the day? I would make STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics), as opposed to STEM, compulsory in schools. A combination of disciplines has been very important to my own creative process and I want other children, including my own, to have the same freedom of cross-disciplinary thought as well.

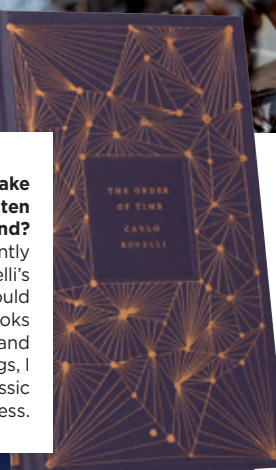
What brings out the worst in you? Lack of sleep.

Where do you go when you don't want anyone to get hold of you? There's a secret chamber in the studio I disappear into that no one knows is there.

Post Brexit Britain... Sum it up in a sentence... I think we may end up going from being called the United Kingdom to something like Lesser Albion.

Which book would you take and song would you listen to on your desert island?

The book I am currently reading - Carlo Rovelli's *The Order of Time*. I would happily take any of his books - he is an excellent writer and thinker. In terms of songs, I would listen to an old classic - *Insomnia* by Faithless.



As many of my sketch books as I could carry, and the model for my new sculpture at Chelsea Barracks.

What would really improve your life? More exercise. I have been biking everywhere as much as possible lately - it is so easy to cycle around London and I love the efficiency of combining transport and exercise into

one activity. But the flying trapeze is my favourite kind of exercise and somehow I would like to incorporate it more into my daily life. **Who's coming round for dinner and what are you cooking?** My best dish is a venison stew but the weather is a bit hot for that right now. For security reasons I can't say who's coming though.

Where was the last place you 'discovered'? Coventry Cathedral in the West Midlands, designed by Basil Spence in the 1950s. It is a stunning modernist building, uniting the remains of the former cathedral (bombed by the Germans during World War II) with the new.

Conrad Shawcross will be creating the first sculpture at the 12.8-acre Chelsea Barracks development. chelseabarracks.com

Conrad Shawcross, *Paradigm* (2016)

