

Salisbury-based specialist JA Mackenzie has cornered much of the market for fine art haulage. Ian Norwell talks to its founder about how he specifies, equips and runs his chosen vehicles

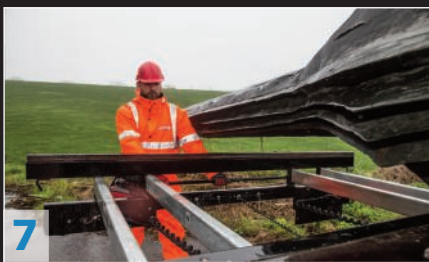
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Public art movements rarely hit the headlines. Installing Sir Anthony Gormley's Angel of the North certainly did. Hauling 200 tonnes of steel from Hartlepool and standing it up safely on site was no mean feat. But, while most art is not on that scale, even moving modest pieces takes serious equipment and skill.

was nicely appointed for the drivers with leather, but also managing the combination of driving and living space well. There's plenty of bling, but cornering spotlights, for example, are not regarded as a luxury: they help prevent damage when light conditions are poor and space is confined.

Local builder Wessex Vehicle Services provided the 6.5m rigid

well executed needs a dealer that's on the ball," comments Mackenzie. "There's no plain vanilla on this fleet." That's why he's regularly on the phone to DAF in Eindhoven and Thame, as well as Palfinger in Welwyn and Salzburg. As for trailers, his preferences are Dutch manufacturer Broshuis, local maker Andover, and Muldoon, from County Tyrone. For this latest truck,



For Jimmy Mackenzie - the man behind JA Mackenzie - that process starts with assembling the right vehicles and lifting equipment. His fleet may be small in number - with four late variant DAF trucks, a Scania and a Volvo - but it's the detail that counts. A mix of wagon-and-drags, a tractor and a light rigid, this fleet's latest addition is a DAF CF510 FAX 8x2 drawbar with a twist.

The chassis starts with a lifting and steering rear axle to maximise manoeuvrability. Mackenzie also went for the CF Space cab, ensuring that it

bodywork, with further Mackenzie-inspired features, including a sliding 1.5m extension. That enables more deck space for large sculptures when the trailer is dropped. Meanwhile, on site the muscle for precision lifting and positioning heavy art comes courtesy of a front-mounted Palfinger PK78002. Its capacity is 14 tonnes at four metres, with a maximum reach of more than 20 metres. Solid handrail edge protection and access steps all around the truck top off a safe, professional unit.

"Getting the specification right and

Mackenzie turned to Adams Morey DAF, in Bournemouth - one of the longest serving DAF dealers in the UK, with more than 40 years' experience.

But it's not just about the trucks and their cranes. Building a reputation for specialist heavy movement isn't earned overnight. Mackenzie has been in the business since 1987, starting out moving industrial equipment. Back then, typical loads would include transformers, and they still account for a sizeable chunk of his business. However, moving artwork - public and

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private - has grown to 60% of turnover.

Qualifications and compliance certificates abound, covering everything from abnormal load movements and project management to CPCS (Construction Plant Competence Scheme) and ALLMI (Association of Lorry Loader Manufacturers and Importers) membership. And JA Mackenzie is also

making an effort, not just paying lip service to safety issues, he says.

As for the drivers, there's no shortage at this operator - and they're not just drivers. "If my drivers didn't work here, they probably wouldn't be drivers at all. It's interesting work and you get attached to it," says Mackenzie.

Having watched drivers Steve Meader and Martyn Robson delivering

with the Palfinger crane moving the eight-metre-tall sculpture a millimetre at a time - ultimately holding it steady while it was packed with lead and securely bolted in place.

The sensitivity of the chassis-mounted crane was impressive - as was the skill of its operators. We've all seen heavy objects craned into position, but none more deftly than this.

Mackenzie and his people clearly relish the work. He and his staff plainly enjoy the satisfaction of a professional job completed without fuss. And there's the variety: Mackenzie works throughout Europe and his office walls



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FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) Gold registered.

Mackenzie is hands-on - himself certified as an appointed person, lifting operations supervisor, with an NVQ Level 6, CPCS certification for unlimited cranes and a slinger/signaller. His drivers are similarly qualified and Mackenzie has put them all through TfL's cyclist awareness programme, with the seven hours chalked up to their DCPC. That's not just about altruism: it's good business sense. High-profile clients seek out hauliers seen to be

a relatively small three-tonne bronze to an art gallery in the New Kings Road, Chelsea (see picture sequence), it's clear that driving is almost incidental. Parking at 6.00am, supervising the footway closure and preparing the site for placing the piece on a plinth was quickly and efficiently carried out.

The distant reach into the corner of the courtyard, over a set of railings, was then planned and issues with one of the fixing bolts in the piece (found to be not quite true) were resolved. Painstaking work was then required,

are decorated with pictures of jobs ranging from Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth, where he placed the Gift Horse, to the tram lines in Oslo, where power was shut down overnight for another movement. Risk assessments, method statements and road closure documents fill his filing cabinets.

Whether it's delivering a grand piano of immense provenance through a fourth storey window in London, or delivering bronze sculptures to a private collector in France, it's bound to be an uplifting experience. **TE**