# Controversial Shakespeare sculpture restored at BBC's Broadcasting House



A controversial sculpture featuring characters from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has been restored and reinstated at the BBC’s London headquarters, Broadcasting House, positioned behind a protective screen. This decision comes after the statue, created by sculptor Eric Gill, had been largely concealed following an incident of vandalism in 2022, when it was damaged with a hammer.

The BBC has acknowledged the problematic history associated with Gill, whose private diaries, published long after his death in 1940, revealed he had sexually abused his two eldest daughters and engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct with a family dog. As a result of these revelations, there have been sustained calls for the removal of his works; however, the BBC has stated its stance on the matter. A spokesperson for the corporation mentioned, "The BBC in no way condones Gill’s abusive behaviour, but it draws a line between the actions of Gill and the status of these artworks."

The statue, which depicts Prospero and Ariel, was originally carved for Broadcasting House between 1931 and 1932, reflecting Gill's prominence among early 20th-century sculptors. Following the restoration, visitors to the location can now engage further with its history by scanning a QR code installed nearby, which provides context regarding the creator's troubling past.

The restoration efforts, which adhered to the building’s Grade II\* listing, incurred a cost of just over £500,000. The BBC indicated that this was part of a determined effort to maintain the historical and cultural significance of Broadcasting House. The spokesperson elaborated, "Broadcasting House is a building of historical and cultural significance and has been so for almost a century. The sculpture of Ariel and Prospero – depicted as symbols of broadcasting – is an integral part of it."

Furthermore, the BBC consulted experts throughout the restoration process, including Historic England and Westminster City Council, to ensure compliance with the building's heritage status while also addressing the previous vandalism of the sculpture. Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England, commented on the situation, noting, “We recognise that, since details of Gill’s abusive behaviours came to light in the late 1980s, he has understandably become a controversial character. We welcome the BBC’s approach to repairing the sculpture and providing interpretation which explores this complex history."

This restoration and installation of protective measures illustrates the balance the BBC aims to strike between acknowledging the dark legacy of the sculpture’s creator and preserving an important piece of artistic and architectural heritage within London.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/eric-gill-bbc-statue-police-b2730267.html> - This article supports the claim that the sculpture by Eric Gill has been restored and reinstated at the BBC's Broadcasting House with a protective screen, and it also acknowledges the controversy surrounding Gill's past.
* <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/04/09/bbc-unveils-restored-sculpture-by-artist-and-sexual-abuser-eric-gill> - The article confirms the restoration of the sculpture and its display behind protective glass, as well as the installation of a QR code providing information about Gill's controversial history.
* <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/the-bbc-will-repair-a-controversial-statue-by-a-disgraced-artist-after-a-protester-attacked-it-with-a-hammer-2298778> - This article details the vandalism incident in 2022 that prompted the restoration of the statue and provides context on the controversy surrounding Eric Gill's works.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - Although not specific to the article, the BBC News site would contain information on the historical and cultural significance of Broadcasting House, aligning with the BBC's stance on preserving such landmarks.
* <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/> - Historic England's website supports the importance of maintaining Grade II\* listed buildings like Broadcasting House, which houses the sculpture, emphasizing the need to preserve historical sites.