Fire and Brimstone

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Hamish Black
Christie Brown
Jon Buck
Daniel Chadwick
Steve Dilworth
Abigail Fallis
Sue Freeborough
Steven Gregory
Steve Hurst
Charlotte Mayer
David Nash
Peter Randall-Page

Fire and Brimstone

Over the 6000 year history of bronze casting, mankind has become so technically proficient that the creative possibilities of the process are often overlooked. The ambition driving precise, ever-better accuracy of reproduction and the constant constraints of cost have largely kept cast metal sculpture as a traditional form of art. Not even the Arts and Crafts movement or the varied groups within Modernism with their 'truth to materials' ethos, strayed far from the traditional role for bronze casting.

'Fire and Brimstone' is an attempt to reveal the magical transformation effected by fire and metal on sculptural media. It seems a perfect opportunity to explore the ambiguity suggested by positive and negative or solid and fluid, the idea of an enclosing skin, a metallic membrane that flows and entombs either a space or another object and all the raw, creative and sensual possibilities of the casting process. To this end, we have invited 12 artists to use the foundry processes to create an object.

The most immediate response to this brief is one of direct transformation. The amazing feeling stimulated by finding a fossil shell, which has been in effect cast into stone, is one of the joys of an inquisitive nature. The casting of a natural object into cold, hard, permanent bronze holds some of that same magical feeling; the shock of reality transformed, a fragile transience made durable and the illusory delight of 'trompe l'oeil', that make us look at the ordinariness of things in a different way. **Daniel Chadwick's** 'Apple Branch' and 'Grape Stem' confound, not just by the question 'how were they cast into metal?' but by the value given to such ubiquitous pieces of our natural world – trees of life or knowledge perhaps, or maybe the physical embodiment of historical seasons, the mystery of life petrified forever into bronze, or could they simply be mimetic devices for the tree itself?

The fossil-like sense of frozen life pervades **Steve Dilworth's** sculpture, or is it death? Set up in a diorama of the endless cycle of life and death, of eat or be eaten, a haunting relic of the vivacity of living things, the cat and rat are choreographed in balletic expression. Once living animals, after dying they

dried out and were mummified, their skin stretched over fleshless bones. These dried animals were encased and fired in a mould, their remains cremated by the heat of the kiln leaving a space around ashy bones. The space was then filled by the lava of molten metal which burnt what was left of the bones, recreating their fleshless remains. Just like the plaster casts of the citizens of Pompeii moulded by the superheated toxic ash of Vesuvius, their moulded reality is a major element of their poignancy.

The pyromaniacal thrill of fire, controlling the elements and creating significant objects with them, drives any artist interested in casting. The danger and beauty of such elemental processes is often lost in the refinements and repetition of reproductive casting. In **David Nash's** 'Encased Cross 2009' the raw beauty of melted metal and carbonised wood is redolent of their fiery creation. Molten metal at 1100 degrees poured over the green-wood carved cross within the confines of its sand-mould, created a vortex of fire 20 feet-tall, spinning up into the sky. A tornado of incandescent heat instantly mineralised the wood into carbon. Opening the mould revealed frozen shards of exploded metal, while puddles of bronze had burnt their way deeply into the top surface of the cross, the process by which it was made now an inherent part of its image. Bronze naturally oxidises green, the colour of life. Consciously or not, this is the colour David chose to complete the piece against the velvety black of charcoal, the colour of death, in a symbolic reversal of their original material.

The violence involved in creating Nash's sculpture finds a calm, almost gentle opposite in **Peter Randall-Page's** 'Brimstone'. His starting point was a glacial granite boulder of random, rounded shape. He totally encased it in a matrix of wax pellets to form a spiral-like pattern of cellular shapes conforming to mathematical laws of growth to create extraordinary patterns and shapes. The core of granite, itself no stranger to great heat and pressure from deep below the earth, accepted the 1100 degree heat of molten bronze within its mould without any dramatic pyrotechnics. The only signs that below the crystalline bronze surface its igneous core remains are the fine stress cracks in the metal, torn as it shrank around the rock while cooling. The geological elements that created the rock and the environmental conditions that eroded it into the beautifully rounded shape which caught Peter's eye, have now been

embellished with a bronze skin that tells its own story of growth and pattern, material and process, time and beauty.

In 'Guardian', **Charlotte Mayer's** delicate winged tower, the hand-built fragility of her wax and cane original has been preserved. An amalgam of combustible materials, it was painstakingly constructed like Icarus's wings to self-immolate like a pyre in the firing thus creating a brittle reflective structure, alive with electric energy. The organic materials long gone, the patina of silver nitrate glints the cold gleam of metal through its fragmented surface. Random gaps and breaks where wood ash blocked the path of the molten metal somehow add to the nervous energy of the sculpture, part pylon, part figure, part bird. That is the excitement of creating a work in this way; uncontrolled elements can destroy or change it by chance into a new arrangement. The casting leaves its marks as maker, mutations that could make the artist discard the result as useless or recognise an unexpected and exciting image.

With 'Tuna Fish (with strings attached)' **Abigail Fallis** takes her series of burnt and mutilated fish to a new level. Like the Ancient Egyptian mummified animals which accompanied a pharaoh in the afterlife, her bronzes contain the bones of the fish, capsules containing the genes of a species which may survive or more likely become extinct, as a result of our harvest of the sea. Even after the firing of the kiln and the pouring of the metal, the pungent smell of fish exudes from the sarcophagus through the pores of the bronze; nature remains a force after all our artifice. Transformed into a harp, the 'tunerfish' can play a lament for its own demise, a fish out of water, its streamlined shape hacked open, its flesh filling tins on the supermarket shelf. The strings play the plaintive music of the sirens calling Man to his greedy end in the waves.

The skull in **Steven Gregory's** 'One and All' is seen as a world, overpopulated with a teeming miniature populace, a 'Gulliver' experience with an ecological message. Pre-cast, individual tiny figures were painstakingly collaged onto a wax skull, creating a fragile eggshell of a model to be cast into silver. To preserve each figure intact, the runners and risers were all internal, leaving the visible surface untouched. All the myriad people are like ants on their nest providing hours of discovery, scrutinising the surface in search of clues to personal identities, profession, dress, age or other aspects of humanity's endless diversity.

Jon Buck's armoured 'Underdog' started life as a bronze, onto which he modelled a wax covering. Spiky cones and circular holes were added on or cut through and the whole piece was reinvested in a plaster mould which when fired left a space into which lead was poured. It is extraordinary how different metals change an object, their associations impossible to ignore. With the weight and colour of the lead and the pale turquoise of the patinated bronze within, the sculpture has a completely different feel than if it was made entirely of bronze, silver, or iron for example. The softness of the lead is important, its protective impermeable cloak a contrast to its spiky exterior. Jon has not only used the casting process to create the forms and image but he has also exploited the very different character of the metals to their own expressive effect.

In a different use of materials, **Sue Freeborough** has taken apart the constituents of bronze: copper and tin. Using them separately, she has simultaneously cast them at either end of an open-backed mould shaped as a male and female figure, laid out in the form of the X and Y of our sex chromosomes. The two metals have flowed into one another giving a variable alloy, pure tin in places and pure copper in others but alloyed together across most of the sculpture. Cast in an open sand-mould, their configuration reminds me of early Bronze Age 'ox-hide' ingots of copper from the Mediterranean, objects of huge value and widely traded as currency.

The moulding process without the use of the fire of kiln and furnace which **Hamish Black** explores in 'sounds like o', is nevertheless casting. He wanted to find a sculptural equivalent to the sound made by blowing air over an empty bottle. Rather like a doctor dissecting a living body using a CT scanner to provide cross-sections through it, the internal form of the bottle was cast into plaster and sliced up like a loaf of bread but on a diagonal axis. Hamish then arranged the slices in imitation of a sound chart. The sculpture's extreme delicacy in plaster rendered necessary its reproduction in bronze, a visual and aural object inspired by the attempt to cast sound.

Steve Hurst is both sculptor and bronze founder and has been using the casting process to create sculpture for some time. His 'Wheeled Crucible' and 'Chariot of the Wind' are collages of cloth, string and wax, impressed objects all unified

by their transformation into metal. For his Fire and Brimstone piece 'Gaia', he chose to work in the sandcasting department and moulded spheres and wax figures directly into sand. He then altered the moulds, drawing into the sand and removing the wax figures before casting the various pieces into bronze and iron and fitting them together. The patination used the same concoction of chemicals both to rust the iron and give the bronze its green colouring. Stimulated by the whole experience, Steve is continuing to work in this free manner and is refining some of the directness and experimental nature of this first piece.

The historical link between ceramics and bronze casting is the area **Christie Brown** chose to explore. Ceramics, the second great technology after stone flints, was an essential step towards the third technological breakthrough, bronze casting. Kiln firings and clay-based materials were familiar to craftsmen 6000 years ago when bronze was first discovered. Christie's ceramic figures and heads are already about moulds, casts and process and in 'Lost and Found' she added a bronze element. Using the ceramic heads as a core, she cast bronze as a skin to clothe them and different degrees of coverage enclose each head to vary expression over the series. The huge and rapid temperature shocks of the pour cracked the ceramic material and these random cracks have been exploited and highlighted with gold leaf, making a delicate tracery which records how the bronze affected the clay.

One of the few artists to experiment with bronze casting during his long career, Miro described the process as a means of *'crystallising the memory of something intangible'* or *'a sudden firework'*. Fire and Brimstone has been an exciting exhibition to work on. For the sculptors involved the intangible has been made more tangible and the drama and excitement of the creative journey has been made more visible in sculptures that remain close to the making process. If, as a result of our brief, some of the precision and accuracy of reproductive casting is less apparent, this is more than compensated for by the direct and honest immediacy of the objects. The symbiosis between art and craft, artist and craftsman is expressed, explored and celebrated in these extraordinary sculptures that may not otherwise have existed.

Rungwe Kingdon

Hamish Black

Stories of how art gets made range from the casual to the tragic; all artists have them and they make good copy as does the making process as it attempts to embody all the in-betweens but however engaging the diary of events is, it's a diary, not the work.

What follows are some recollections on adding a piece to the 'sounds like' series, which almost choose their subjects themselves as with site-specific pieces, made from a place name or a former association, through the invitation to work abroad or a commission.

The familiar picture of the zigzag drawing trace from a sound is the start of a process of rendering a recorded sound wave using a pc. I have used this image very directly but with 'sounds like o' the ripple effect of the wave pattern was enough to trigger the making process.

The simple act of blowing air across the top of a bottle is child's play: the familiarity of filling the chest cavity, then overfilling the bottle with more air and at a speed faster than the bottle's inner space can cope with as it drags out the familiar drone of the bottle's void. It's this enormous elastic space of sound compared to the smallness of the bottle that interests me.

I had started by casting the bottle, thinking if I could take the inside and pull it outside, I might get somewhere. The result was the inside on the outside but still attached at the neck. The most obvious route was a synthetic flexible mould, but this lacked a certain self weight and was easily deformed by the weight of the liquid plaster after it was filled.

sounds like o detail
Hamish Black
Bronze
Unique
18cm high

A more direct pressed clay mould proved more successful as it was self-supporting and slumped well, giving the direct plaster cast its own sense of gravity. The two cast together was complicating things, so I concentrated on the inside as this is where the sound had come from. A computer animation of a sound wave scribes a vertical line that shortens or lengthens according to the sound's pitch across its horizontal time-line. Employing a similar interval, I cut slices through the cast void of the bottle at an acute angle across its length, from the neck to the bottom and laid it out like a winning hand of cards.

The cut sections concentrate attention on the graphic edge and the extreme angles in each fragile plaster veneer. When joined from start to finish at their points of contact, the parts appear stretched between two circles that act as rockers in repose.

A few simple steps: taking a void, filling it with something solid then cutting it up and stretching it out. At the time of making there were no footsteps to follow, only chance and error made possible by casting.

sounds like o
Hamish Black
Bronze
Unique
18cm high

Lost and Found
Christie Brown
Bronze and ceramic with gold leaf
Unique
19cm high

Christie Brown

Bronze, clay and wax have a long and well-established relationship, a connection through process that stretches back many centuries, in which both wax and clay have usually played the role of the lost materials. Bronze sculpture however depends heavily on these more humble materials and clay especially has frequently played an essential role in the origin of form. Through the ability of clay to receive an imprint or to reveal a trace, to be freely modelled into a range of forms and to retain the mark-making that the artist may desire, this ancient material has provided human beings with a medium to explore formal ideas in a range of expressive ways. In its fired form clay is warm and fragile in contrast to the cold hard permanence of the cast metal, but both materials share the dynamic process of being transformed by fire, a process that carries with it a host of metaphorical associations concerned with metamorphoses and change.

My work largely deals with these concerns through a range of figurative forms and an interest in archaic fragments and myths of origin. I often make reference to archaic fragments, the stuff of museums, and I am interested in the overlap between archaeology and psychoanalysis where layers are carefully uncovered to reveal new knowledge. I am keen to expand the language of materials beyond my constant ceramic starting point and this work, *Lost and Found*, demonstrates the potential for the continuing development and exploration of a post-medium context for contemporary sculpture where traditional boundaries and methodologies are open to challenge and experimentation.

Image courtesy the artist

Image courtesy the artist

In *Lost and Found*, I have brought fired ceramic into a dynamic relationship with molten bronze in a sequence of five repeated heads which become increasingly enveloped and almost overpowered by the metal. Painting wax directly onto the fired ceramic surface dictated the eventual presence of the bronze coating and each head retains the evidence of its dramatic encounter with the rigours of the metal casting process.

As the bronze envelopes the head, the sleeping fragment slowly awakes to become increasingly encased by the bronze, and yet it is no longer just the lost material but a newly found one, existing in a direct and intimate encounter with its historic partner. Only the wax cannot survive the trial by fire and has evaporated into the air, while these remaining material fragments claim their right to co-exist in a contemporary and complementary relationship.

Image courtesy the artist

Jon Buck

Working with Pangolin over the years has given me the opportunity to cast my sculpture into a variety of different metals. Unsurprisingly bronze has predominated but I have also made a number of experiments using silver, tin, copper and iron. Each of these metals has its own set of properties and has given its own unique quality to the finished work.

Although a sculpture's appearance can be changed dramatically depending on the metal chosen, the processes by which it is produced are essentially the same. Having been invited specifically to experiment with the process of casting for this exhibition, there were a number of different elements in my normal working practice that I wanted to change.

Lead is a new medium for me. Although a frequent choice for sculptors in the past, it is now seldom used and as a casting material its qualities are very different to the other metals I have mentioned. Another innovation I was keen to try was to create a sculpture combining two very different types of metal in a single piece of work. Finally, rather than use the normal mould and replication process to cast the work I decided to work directly with wax to make a single unique sculpture.

To me, lead has a rather sombre, sinister quality that I associate with protecting or preserving from some kind of outside corrosive agent. Bronze on the other hand has a bright sensuous quality that I associate with giving vitality to a sculpture. My aim for this exhibition was to take a bronze sculpture, in this case representing an abstracted dog-like form, and to wrap it a protective coating of cast lead. To achieve this, the bronze cast had first to be made in the conventional way before it could be encased in a thin layer of wax. The embalmed sculpture was then re-invested and re-introduced to the 'fire and brimstone' of the casting process all over again. The results were by no means guaranteed.

Underdog detail
Jon Buck
Lead and bronze
Unique
32cm high

Many of my sculptures carry geometric patterns on their surfaces. In this work I have made circular repeats cut right through the wax. When cast these have become small vents in the lead cocoon through which the hidden bronze is tantalisingly revealed. To enhance the idea of a protecting surface there are additional leaden spikes covering the entire form. Imaginatively, this invests the sculpture with a certain ambiguity of meaning - is this a ‘guard dog’ or is it the dog that is being guarded?

Underdog
Jon Buck
Lead and bronze
Unique
32cm high

Daniel Chadwick

Seasons Lynn Chadwick

The natural structure of the ‘Grape Stem’ and the ‘Apple Branch’ drew me to them and when converted into bronze, the ‘Grape Stem’ found its way onto the mantelpiece next to the sculpture ‘Seasons’ by my father.

Lynn always had a strong sense of structure and I was happy to observe a friendly reference.

Grape Stem
Daniel Chadwick
Bronze
Unique
4cm high

Steve Dilworth

Both animals were gifts; such are the friends I have. The cat, dead for over a hundred years, was a present from an anatomical museum in Vienna, and the rat was served to me on a dinner plate one evening in north London by a consultant psychiatrist.

It is a miracle that they exist in bronze; the risks of failure using the traditional lost cat process or even the lost rat process are great. They are truly lost but are now reborn, permanently caught in a dance of death; tip toeing on a disc of moonlight.

Magical and dark as only a nursery rhyme can be.

Dance of Death
Steve Dilworth
Bronze
Unique
44cm high

Abigail Fallis

This sculpture was inspired by a talking fish I once had. It was a catfish that sat on the wall and would flap about and yell out gags, such as "you can't tuna fish but you can tuna piano". I wished to prove this robotic fish wrong.

I sourced my Tuna and skinned it down to the bones. I then took the skeleton along to the foundry where I spent time working on the bones in preparation for the lost wax technique. I prepared the skeleton by coating it in wax, shaping and fixing it before it went to the plaster stage. This particular skeleton proved quite difficult because the bones didn't respond to the configuration I wanted. Eventually after much sawing, shaping and waxing, the desired form was achieved. Because of the decomposition process it's never a good idea for these skeletons to hang around in the foundry, so luckily I don't have to wait too long to see the effects of this magical transformation.

I never know what to expect with each fish although I do know that if they haven't exploded in the firing process they have survived to become a unique fossil encased within a bronze sarcophagus. What I really love about this process is the development from an idea through to a finished work: the transition from a humorous quip into a contemporary bronze sculpture.

So there you have it: a unique Tuna fish with strings attached. Play if you desire.

Tuna Fish (with strings attached)
Abigail Fallis
Bronze with steel strings
Unique
76.5cm high

Sue Freeborough

While reading 'The X in Sex' by David Bainbridge my imagination was sparked by his description of the 'Chromosomal Dance' that takes place during the division of chromosomes in the embryo, discovered by the biologist Henking in 1890.

One of the most intriguing features of chromosomes was apparent only in testicles and ovaries, where cells divide to make sperm or egg cells, the cells that make the next generation. The cell divisions that made sperm and eggs seemed very different from the divisions that make all other cells. Instead of the single-step cell division that takes place when other cells are made, the chromosomes go through a strictly choreographed sequence of two successive divisions, and during these divisions, they are in a state of constant interaction with each other. Why should there be such an especially elaborate chromosomal dance when eggs and sperm are made, if chromosomes are not involved in inheritance? Bainbridge

Henking had in fact discovered the female X chromosome. He noticed that during the two-part chromosomal dance in the testicle there was one chromosome that stayed apart and was not divided equally, ending up in only half the sperm and giving a fifty-fifty chance of sex determination. Not until the 1990's was it discovered that the Y chromosome carries a very special single gene called SRY which secretes a protein lasting only a couple of days and determines the male sex of the new embryo in about the sixth week of gestation.

The question of gene dominance, the apparent lottery of determination and David Bainbridge's description of the 'Chromosomal Dance' inspired my experiment with metals. Would two metals, copper and tin, components of bronze, when poured simultaneously into a half mould, mix between the two dancing figures when reaching the joining point? Which would be dominant and what would be the effect of different melting temperatures?

Chromosomal Dance
Sue Freeborough
Copper and Tin
Unique
41.5cm high

Image courtesy the artist

Image courtesy the artist

My simple experiment showed that the copper flowed into tin and tin into copper during the pour, giving a rich mix that was determined by the melting points of each metal. The temperature of one tin pour was too high and fractured a female figure but also crystallized sand from the mould giving her a jewel-like quality. Two of the male figures had small overflows which enhanced their forms and as I was prepared to leave things to chance I stayed with the results.

Steven Gregory

My favourite sweets are liquorice allsorts. One afternoon I was sitting and thinking about allsorts. I hate liquorice but I like to strip the liquorice out and eat the allsorts and it was the thought of allsorts that made me want to make a piece using people. Because we are 'all sorts'.

Originally the idea for *One and All* was going to be a skull made entirely of tiny busy people so the people would make the shape of the skull like a lattice work.

I first experimented with jewellery grade stainless steel in Hatton Garden, working on half a jaw bone, which took a week to sprue-up and two days to cut all the sprues off. I then decided to change my method as it was way too labour intensive.

I decided to use a wax skull and set all the figures directly into the wax, again very labour intensive but transferring the onus onto the foundry in getting a successful cast without a mould.

Pangolin loves a challenge, so although I had only left the wax skull at the foundry for Rungwe to see, before I knew it they had cast it successfully.

I have always had bones and skulls in the studio to draw from. Any and all figurative sculpture is based on an armature and an armature is based on the skeleton.

The original idea had been to make an entire skeleton out of tiny people. Because we are all skeletal, it is our armature. Under our skin we are all bones.

I used silver because I like the idea of an innately precious material and I like the feel of silver and the fact that it tarnishes. It changes as do bodies.

One and All detail
Steven Gregory
Sterling silver
Unique
16cm high

One and All is the forerunner for a complete skeleton made of tiny people.

When you have made the piece it either says it or not. If people relate to it, it is because it evokes the understanding that we are all the same, the same components with variations.

You can't avoid life or death; the two are juxtaposed, interwoven. The tiny people are a sign of our frenetic life and fragility in the face of our impending death.

As usual Pangolin have surpassed themselves in the casting of this piece.

One and All
Steven Gregory
Sterling silver
Unique
16cm high

Photo: Bob Elsdale

Steve Hurst

My thoughts on the *Fire and Brimstone* project were similar to those of the print-maker William Hayter writing in the mid-twentieth century:

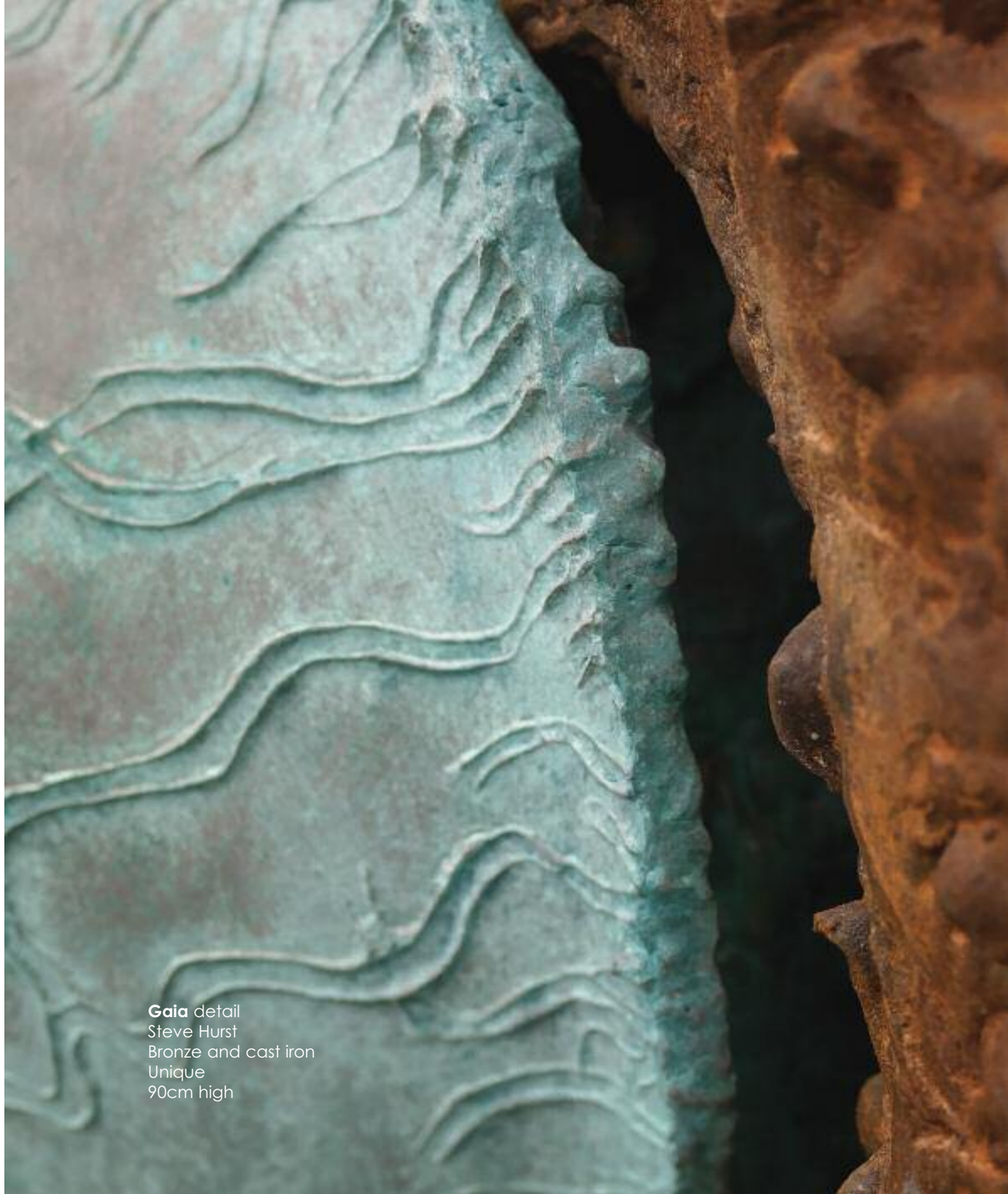
'My approach to art is fundamentally experimental. I consider that art – painting, printmaking, sculpture etc – is a means of research or the pursuit of knowledge, rather than a method for producing objects for pleasure, decoration or entertainment. Together with disciplines such as physics and mathematics, as with music and poetry, art is an attempt to extend and deepen our knowledge of life and our relations with our world.'

There is an affinity between print-making and sculpture. Etching, lithography, and wood engraving all use the same materials as the object-makers. In each craft the artist draws inspiration from intense mental and physical contact with simple materials. As Hayter wrote, the experiment, the physical labour on the project and the experience gained are infinitely more important than the object produced. The pleasure of my period working at Chalford was that of experiment on a scale far bigger than anything I could do in my own studio. Equally important was the chance to work with a variety of highly skilled specialist craftsmen. If I was commissioned by a patron to make something similar I would use tested and tried methods to produce a predictable object and this would take most of the fun out of it.

The *Fire and Brimstone* project is both a generous and an unprecedented move to reclaim sculpture from those sterile manipulators who talk a great deal about art but create nothing. The sculptor in steel David Smith wrote:

"We have all let anthropologists, philosophers, historians, connoisseurs and mercenaries tell us what art is or what it should be. But I think it ought to very simply be what the artist says it is. And what the artist says it is you can see by his work. I would like to leave it just like that."

Three elements: concept, material and method, came together in an uncanny way in the project. Method came naturally because I had worked in the sand section of the foundry, felt at ease and had made friends there; materials were bronze and cast iron; lastly, the concept; this came later and came to me as I was working on preliminary models.



Gaia detail
Steve Hurst
Bronze and cast iron
Unique
90cm high

'Gaia or Gaea. The Goddess of Earth.
The Gaia Hypothesis. The hypothesis that the earth functions as a self-regulating organism rather than a passive subject of external forces.'
(Readers Digest Universal Dictionary 1998)

Sometime in the 'sixties I read of the concept of *Gaia*. This is an interesting idea; that if a species becomes a threat to its habitat, a danger of causing damage beyond repair, then the earth will remove it, vomit it out like some noxious substance. This nightmare came up from the subconscious while at the same time I was aware of the ghastly pictures of the aftermath of the Tsunami in South East Asia. That, to put it crudely, is what my *Gaia* is about.

I conducted the experiment myself because I believe in the artist's hands on the work, though happy to accept expert assistance and use equipment and processes normally outside my reach. Alongside fifty years working as a sculptor run almost forty years earning my living in foundries, either working as a craftsman or teaching foundry practice. Not one of these foundries would have allowed me the chance to conduct a cross between concept and experiment with materials in the way Pangolin has done. It was an intense experience that stimulated creative ideas in many directions (and still does). I am profoundly grateful to everyone that I worked with in the foundry. To add one more quote, this one from Julio Gonzalez the Spanish steel-worker who taught Picasso to weld and who made the iron mask *Crying Monserrat*.

'All true artists are of their time. It could not be otherwise, for if it is true that a period produces its artists that is because the artists have left their mark on the period. If one generation has not succeeded in giving full expression to its aims the next may succeed. Whether the public understands it or not, the artist must not yield an inch.'

If I started the project now I would do it differently. In that sense *Gaia* is a failure. But in another sense it is a glorious success because this botched job opened up a whole area of new ideas and ways of doing things. As William Hayter remarked, the object produced is less important than the experiment itself. That is true in particular of Fire and Brimstone.

Gaia
Steve Hurst
Bronze and cast iron
Unique
90cm high

Guardian
Charlotte Mayer
Bronze
Unique
145cm high

Charlotte Mayer

My sculpture, ‘Guardian’, stands in an attitude of complete stillness.

Clearly, it is waiting.

We do not know why it waits, for whom it waits and for how long it must wait. But, like a sentry it remains alert - absolutely alert - and perfectly still.

We sense that it is guarding, or protecting, something – something important, something vital for existence. We can speculate endlessly as to what this is. But, short of any indication save that suggested by its stance, its attitude and the direction of its gaze, the subject of its attention remains unknown.

But we know instinctively that absolute stillness anticipates action.

The alertness that ‘Guardian’ possesses is present in all sentient beings. Study a crouching cat watching a mouse, a hovering kestrel above the countryside or a spider and a fly . . . . . and so on. Total stillness provides, above all, the wellspring for immediate action.

The sculpture was originally constructed in cane and wax and this, in itself, results in a fluid way of working. Unexpected form can result from the flexing of the cane within the warm wax in which it is held. Like a drawing, a linear quality comes about producing relative transparency. Parts of the developing sculpture may have to be destroyed and remade successively.

‘Guardian’ is a unique piece. Casting it in bronze was a risky business. It involved the so-called ‘burnout’ process whereby the original construction itself was, quite literally, ‘burnt out’ and destroyed by the intense heat of the firing. Even with all the expertise that Pangolin employs, the sculpture that had taken many months to make could have been entirely lost.

However, the spontaneity which resulted from this process was worth the risk.

I hope that ‘Guardian’ has succeeded in encapsulating that feeling of anticipatory stillness that I have described above.

David Nash

The tree weaves earth, light, water and air into a body. By unravelling these elemental activities they can be followed into different weaves that are bronze or glass or concrete. Bring fire and air to solid bronze and its earth element melts into the fluid ‘water’ element and can be poured into a wooden mould or over a wooden form.

Encased Cross 2009
David Nash
Bronze and oak
Unique
80cm high

Peter Randall-Page

The starting point for this work was a pebble which became the core for the casting process.

I covered the entire surface of the eroded stone with a matrix of hexagonal and pentagonal pellets of wax. After casting, the wax becomes a bronze carapace enveloping the stone.

The matrix of bronze yields to the random form of the rock.

Brimstone
Peter Randall-Page
Bronze and granite
Unique
18cm high

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