



Front cover **Gorilla Standing** detail
Bronze
Edition of 9
29cm high

Michael Cooper

BRONZES

2007

Foreword

Michael Cooper is a friend and near neighbour of mine and, some years ago, I asked him whether he would be prepared to do a piece for a new garden I was making at that time and in which there was an empty plinth.

'I will do you a gorilla', he said and there it stands, or rather sits, today – greatly admired and loved by all the children who visit the garden during the summer. Michael has the most wonderful talent for portraying animals, as those of you that have seen his sculpture in many public places will know. I am lucky to have one of his rather smaller sculptures of a hippopotamus in bronze, a comfortable and substantial animal which sits on a table in front of the fire.

He is, of course a well-known sculptor and needs no introduction from someone like myself. He has the skill and the gift of portraying animals in a way which delights all of us and the illustrations in this catalogue clearly demonstrate the extraordinary talent that he possesses.

Lord Carrington



Penguin
Bronze
Edition of 9
52cm high

Michael Cooper

From the Aztecs to the Shona of Zimbabwe, the Inuit to the Ancient Egyptians, everywhere in the world, irrespective of time or culture, there are artists who Michael Cooper would call 'chippers'. It seems that buried within the human spirit is an urge to draw out from intractable lumps of stone deeply satisfying, sensuous incarnations of the animal or human form.

Carvers and modellers are at opposite ends of a spectrum; working into a form from the outer edges of a block of stone is conceptually different from building up on a skeletal armature. It is the nature of the material that lends itself to Michael's flowing harmonies of surface that so seductively suggest the power and grace of the natural world. Weight and mass are real and controlling elements as are the grain and crystalline structure of rock itself.

Michael's empathy for his subject allows his chisel deftly to reveal not only the inner calm and beauty of the stone but also the essence of the animal itself. This is not 'Nature, red in tooth and claw', nor sanitised sentimentality; Michael's sculptures are dignified, self-assured, independent and respectful. They have a deep and quiet energy perhaps imparted by the long hours of chipping which bring them forth from the stone.

How then to give a reality or relevance to the bronze versions?

Firstly, the inherent strength of the forms throws back light and absorbs shadow. For six thousand years, sculptors have delighted in and exploited the timeless quality of finely honed and crafted bronzes. Secondly, the patination which oxidises the metal's surface with deep, rich tones, amplifies the colour and glows as if from within the sculpture itself. Echoing the mineral pigments of stone, the acidic metal salts that themselves corrode into colourful oxides of their elements on metal, are the same constituents that Nature, over millennia, has infused within the rocks.

The objective is not to set stone and bronze into competition but rather that the range of patinas for bronze opens exciting new possibilities of colour exploration suggested by the stone, yet unique to the metal.

The timeless quest for intrinsic beauty is Michael's purpose; an empathy for natural or human forms, his muse. In bringing together these two elements through the processes of stone-carving and bronze casting, he enables us all to share his vision.

Michael Cooper's work brings the third dimension vividly to life through the irresistible urge to feel and caress surface and form. With eyes closed, this abstract, almost musical pleasure is an essential part of the appreciation of his sculptures.

Rungwe Kingdon
January 2007

Standing Torso with head
Bronze
Edition of 9
109cm high





Crab
Bronze
Edition of 9
12cm high





Tiger
Bronze
Edition of 9
23cm high





Small Camel

Bronze

Edition of 12

12cm high



Torso without head

Bronze
Edition of 9
92cm high





Lion Resting

Bronze

Edition of 9

28cm high



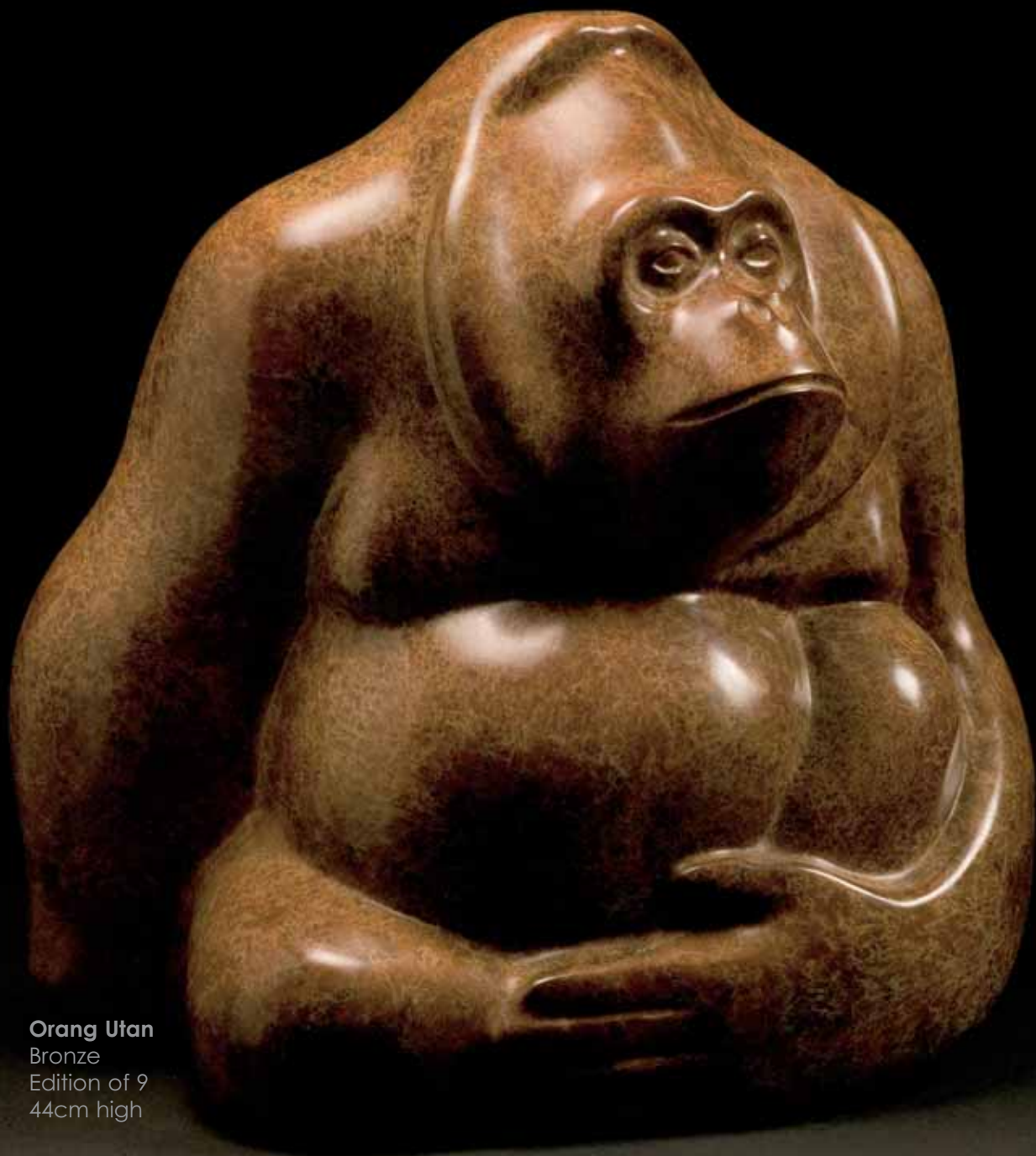


Seated Gorilla detail
Bronze
Edition of 9
42cm high



Turtle
Bronze
Edition of 9
20cm high





Orang Utan
Bronze
Edition of 9
44cm high





Madonna Head

Bronze
Edition of 9
50cm high



Reclining Head

Bronze
Edition of 9
14cm high

Seated Bear

Bronze

Edition of 9

45cm high





Linked Figures small

Bronze

Edition of 9

14cm high





Walrus
Bronze
Edition of 9
32cm high





Grizzly Bear
Bronze
Edition of 9
30cm high





Cheetah
Bronze
Edition of 9
40cm high





Hippo
Bronze
Edition of 9
11.5cm high





Girl Curled
Bronze
Edition of 9
33cm high





Polar Bear
Bronze
Edition of 9
22cm high





Camel 3.5cm high **Snail** 4cm high
Sterling silver Open edition

Seated Gorilla 4cm high **Bear** 3cm high



Jaguar
Sterling Silver
Edition of 9
4cm high

Jaguar
Bronze
Edition of 9
48cm high



Lion Alert
Bronze
Edition of 9
37cm high





Reclining Gorilla

Bronze

Edition of 9

29cm high



Gorilla Standing
Bronze
Edition of 9
29cm high

Python
Bronze
Edition of 9
14cm high



Acknowledgements

This is Michael Cooper's first one-man show at Gallery Pangolin, long overdue. It has been an enormous pleasure working with him and we are extremely grateful for all his help and encouragement.

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Jane Buck
Claude Koenig





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