



# KENNY HUNTER SCULPTURE COURT

For sculptor Kenny Hunter the monument is a form in flux. *Sculpture Court*, his new exhibition for Aberdeen Art Gallery, is both a provocation and a reflection on the role of public artforms such as the traditional monument.

Monuments are loaded with meaning, they stand as testaments to our social and political pasts, reinforcing historical legacies that continue to shape our world today. As objects in the public realm they address us all and have an active and serious role in defining collective memory. This in turn informs opinion, shapes social groups, and ultimately constitutes national identity.

Hunter presents his sculptures here against the magnificent backdrop of Aberdeen Art Gallery's classically-inspired Sculpture Court as ambiguous and open to varied interpretation. Today, the original power and purpose of the monument can seem incongruous. Their failings, fragility, and fallibility are widely acknowledged.

## About Kenny Hunter

Born in Edinburgh in 1962, Kenny Hunter graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1987 and then studied classical sculpture at the British School in Athens. In 2008 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Aberdeen University.

Hunter has exhibited extensively both in Britain and abroad. He has created many public sculptures including *Citizen Firefighter*, 2001, outside Glasgow's Central Station, *Youth with split apple*, 2005 for Kings College, Aberdeen and *iGoat*, 2010 in Spitalfields, London. *Feedback Loop*, 2003, is in the collection of Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums. Hunter is currently working on a new work for the Thomas Blake Glover memorial garden in Fraserburgh. He has also been commissioned by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to create a memorial to healthcare workers for their tireless efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

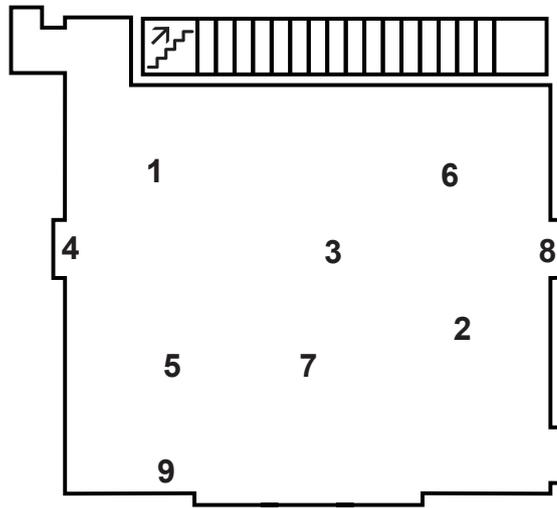
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**SCULPTURE COURT FLOOR PLAN**

- 1 **Universal Monument (To a Better World that Never Showed Up)** takes inspiration from sculptor Henry Moore's study of bones, his processes of abstraction, and his general optimism for a world based on shared human values. Hunter's skeleton communicates a similar universality, but the figure's neutral stance and reliance on structural support suggest that Moore's post-war ambitions for a better world did not fully emerge.
- 2 **Horse and Rider (Ancient Model)** inverts the traditional expectations of the equestrian monument. It also alludes to the fact that classical sculpture has historically been misrepresented as white in appearance when it was in fact often painted in vivid colours. The contrast between the highly-coloured contemporary girl sitting on top of a monochrome antique horse addresses this false art history. The rider's appearance highlights the diversity of the Mediterranean, its people, and its history.
- 3 **Elephant (Divided)** is the original fibreglass resin sculpture from which an iron version was cast and installed in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park in 2015. This sculpture has accrued the physical alterations of the manufacturing process, such as lifting eyes which allow the sculpture to be slung and moved, seams which show how it was cast into sections as well as traces of the runner system which indicate where the molten iron entered the mould. *Elephant (Divided)* addresses collective memory as well as the legacies of the British Empire and the Industrial Revolution.
- 4 **Clear History** suggests notions of accountability and transparency. The banner also provokes the question whether acts of remembrance and the construction of memorials and monuments can redeem us from repeating the mistakes of the past? Could we instead choose to view historical memory not as a necessity but as a possibility?
- 5 **Father of Dread** is a sculpture presented in sections, allowing a better understanding of its fabrication process. This reveals not only its internal structure but the monument's essential fragility and hollowness. A sculpture in fragments might signify societal trauma or transformation. *Father of Dread* invites us to consider either state: unfinished or under deconstruction?
- 6 **As Above so Below** symbolically depicts a cross-section of undersea landscape and its geology. It represents the largely unseen practice of North Sea oil and gas extraction and the uneasy coexistence of industry and nature. It is an open form with holes suggesting the early modernist traditions in sculpture, giving us the choice of viewing the world through the artwork or looking at the sculpture alone.
- 7 **Bonfire** works against classical sculpture's preference for stillness and whiteness, using vivid colour to suggest the rapid movement of flames. The generation of fire so vital to early human culture and development also symbolises our destructive capacity, which has ultimately led us to the climate crisis of today.
- 8 **What the Thunder Said** is a title taken from T.S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land*. Widely regarded as one of the most important modernist poems of the 20th century, it communicates the ultimate power of nature over human history. The context and concerns of this poem remain relevant today. The banner attempts to stress the importance of viewing the world holistically rather than through short-term human-centred concerns.
- 9 **Faith in Flux** is a text work which offers two readings to the viewer. Does it remind us that belief systems that once dominated our culture are now either disappearing, or being radically challenged? Or does it simply ask us to view societal change as a constant throughout history? Can this be an opportunity for positive adaptations? This new text work was made at Peacock Visual Arts in Aberdeen.

Find out more about Kenny Hunter's work at  
[www.kenny-hunter.com](http://www.kenny-hunter.com)  
 or follow the artist on instagram  
[@realkennyhunter](https://www.instagram.com/realkennyhunter)