



AMM Spotlight: Nick Hornby “Still And Still Moving”



Arts Management Magazine: Tell us about the show, Still and Still Moving, at Wynn Fine Art Gallery and how it interacts with the other works in the gallery.

Nick Hornby: The show started with a conversation about Cubism – ideas around fragments.. My work frequently quotes from other artists, “remixes” if you will. Still and Still Moving was a perfect opportunity to make those connections more tangible by showing the works alongside Picasso, Matisse and Léger. The artists were chosen because I’m really interested in perception, and how a three-dimensional form can be experienced like an image when it snaps into view or is ‘readable’ from certain angles only. That approach puts aspects of cubism on their head, hence Picasso, Léger, and Matisse.. Because I’m making deliberate connections with the ideas these artists were wrestling with a hundred years ago, but bringing very different technologies into the mix, the title of one of my sculptures, Still and Still Moving became a motif. It comes from a TS Eliot poem, and for me expresses the paradoxes of art’s progress and its historical orientation: the way ideas can stay new across a century.

AMM: What makes your pieces unique?

NH: In some ways my work is the opposite of unique – because, as I said, it is composed of quotations. And yet from this method I seem to have developed my own language. ‘Style’ is a fascinating concept: what makes something recognisable by an artist, what makes an object a ‘signature’ piece. If I’m borrowing a Hans Arp curve, or repurposing a Matisse glyph, or taking a line from a poem as a title, I’m deferring some elements of creativity, perhaps even collaborating across time. I’ve also frequently used a clean, crisp finish or immaculate surfaces to make my sculptures feel almost machine-made.

AMM: What is the process for making your pieces?

NH: Each work goes through many processes: a combination of digital, robotic, and manual work. There are mathematical Boolean calculations, some 3D printing as well as traditional bronze casting to name a few. I give a lot of care and attention to the surfaces – an exposed edge of a bronze or glassy reflective lacquer. But there are also aspects of the work which evade the process. With early industrial manufacture you can see edges and seams, bolts and fixtures, and get a sense of how something is made. I want my sculptures to be uncanny and slightly mysterious in their creation. Ideally, on the one hand they seem very real and material, on the other hand, they appear almost virtual or digital.

AMM: What was the inspiration for your new series?

NH: I’ve been thinking of the show as an installation as much as an exhibition, as a kind of hall of mirrors where there is a conversation between my sculptures and the work surrounding them, which echoes the conversation within the sculptures. Offcut, the biggest work in the show, is emblematic because it is so referential: in conception, it comes from the series of portrait busts also on display. It is a fragment to the extent that it is part of that series and its conversation with other objects. But it is large, and its scale is an assertion of its autonomy, of its own kind of completeness. The inspiration was really that triangulation of meaning: the way placing things together can reveal aspects which are within each object but which are otherwise invisible.

[cont...]

AMM: What do you hope people will learn when seeing your series?

NH: I think I'm most interested in our relationship with images today, which is really a preoccupation with screens. For a sculptor that might seem an odd starting point, but the touchscreen is fundamentally radical in ways that haven't yet been fully processed. Their peculiar combination of tactility with the distance of seeing something through a screen, always mediated, is a quality I'm pursuing in sculpture through generating forms digitally, constructing them physically and, in the newer work, applying an image to their surface through a dipping process. The image is suspended across the surface of liquid, and as the sculpture is pushed through the image wraps around it: like piercing a screen with a real object. I'm resistant to the idea of a viewer "learning" anything from the work, though. I've always been a fan of the art historian Ernst Gombrich's notion of 'the beholder's share', which he used to describe how active perception is, how reliant artists are to the audience to bring their own experience in order to 'see' work. After the intricacies of my process, after making objects in the virtual world and realizing them through the many stages involved in making something in bronze and marble, what those sculptures then mean is always going to be up to the viewer. I am the one who learns – through the dialogues during and following an exhibition – with other people. It is always surprising and it is always exciting.

British sculptor Nick Hornby is known for his monumental site-specific works that combine digital software with traditional materials such as bronze, steel, granite, and marble. His work is the physical meeting of historical critique, semiotics, and digital technology, creating hand-crafted sculptures of marble, resin, bronze, and steel that feature expanding shapes, silhouettes and shadows.

"Still and Still Moving" at Wynn Fine Art Gallery, Palm Beach, features seven original works by Nick Hornby in an array of materials that perfectly communicate both their abstract and figurative nature. Showcasing Hornby's unique sense of art-historical storytelling through sculpture, in regards to his incorporating of the many perspectives and intersections of master artists before him, Wynn Fine Art presents Hornby's sculpture surrounded by the same masters that have helped inspire his impressive career; namely, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Fernand Léger. Epitomizing decades of art-historical commentary into one enthralling contemporary experience.

As one views each sculpture by Nick Hornby from varying perspectives, they delightfully discover its ever changing faces and artistic influence, that merge together in a dizzying array of line, shape, and form, creating eye-boggling optical illusions of the highest level of beauty, craftsmanship, and technological sophistication.

A student of the prestigious Slade School of Art and Chelsea College of Art, where he was awarded the University of Arts London Sculpture Prize, Hornby has exhibited at the Tate Britain, The Southbank Centre, Leighton House London, CASS Sculpture Foundation and the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge. Internationally, Nick Hornby has exhibited at The Museum of Arts and Design New York, Ponznan Bienalle, Poland, and Eyebeam (New York).

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors, his work has been reviewed in the New York Times, Frieze, Artforum, the Financial Times, Architectural Digest, covered British VOGUE featuring Zendaya, and many more.

