A collage of a woman's face and upper torso. The top half shows a close-up of her eyes and nose, with a red lip painted over the lower part of her face. The bottom half shows her neck and shoulders, wearing a necklace with white beads and a gold chain. The image has a layered, artistic feel with some horizontal lines and a soft, ethereal background.

Nick Hornby

Nick Hornby is a British artist based in London (b.1980). His work addresses queer identity, semiotics and art-historical critique. He employs experimental digital technologies that result in traditional objects made from resin, bronze, steel, granite and marble. In 2023 he unveiled three significant public commissions in London. Each of these critically engages with the core tropes of public art - equestrian, memorial and abstract. In 2022, he published a major monograph with Anomie. Hornby studied at Slade School of Art and Chelsea College of Art where he was awarded the UAL Sculpture Prize. In the UK, he has exhibited at Tate Britain, The Southbank Centre, Leighton House London, CASS Sculpture Foundation and the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge. And internationally at The Museum of Arts and Design New York and Poznan Bienalle, Poland. Residencies include with Outset (Israel), Eyebeam (New York), and awards include the UAL Sculpture Prize. In 2014 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors. His work has been reviewed in the New York Times, Frieze, Artforum, The Art Newspaper, The FT, and featured in Architectural Digest, Cultured Magazine and Artsy among others.

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www.nickhornby.com
enquires@nickhornby.com

Sculpture and the Self

'I'm British... one doesn't have emotions.'

Sculpture is fundamentally an exploration of the balance or tension between an abstract idea and the material thing that it becomes. It's comparable to the difference between an image and a tangible object with volume and surface – indeed, between a selfie projected digitally across social media and the flesh and blood of the real person. The artist is, unavoidably and perennially, caught between thinking and feeling; idea and matter; image and object, virtual and real. Nick Hornby's career, and his wry statement from 2018 above, invite similar considerations about the relationship between the artist's inner life and outer work. Is Hornby's personality essential to the sculpture that he makes? Even a battle to depersonalise a work of art becomes an element of its meaning – there is no evading authorship, no escaping oneself.

Removing subjectivity from his work has long been an idea of interest to Hornby. At first, depersonalisation came by merging a multiplicity of voices – young collaborators stimulated new strategies for democratising sculpture. His virtual battleground: the forces of abstraction versus the power of representation. And then there are the giants of the past – milestones in sculptural history that have been revisited by Hornby in innovative ways. Whether figurative or not, Michelangelo, Rodin and Arp all explored the tactile appeal of the three-dimensional, the thing that is not just seen but palpably made, touched and which shares our space. What happens, then, if that thing is turned back into an idea, rethought on a computer screen using technologies available today? What does it mean if digital interfaces now dominate the constructed object, with human qualities converted to shape and line, flesh turned to coordinates and binary code? Hornby, of course, embraces these questions. He's been drawn to Michelangelo's Dying Slave or to his David as ideas, perhaps as Platonic ideas, but also as boy pin-ups.

In 2020, for his first institutional solo exhibition, at MOSTYN, Wales, Hornby directly addressed his identity alongside the ideas of authorship and meaning that originally captivated him. See-sawing between the personal and the analytical, the new work he exhibited made the inseparability of those influences clear. Nineteenth-century busts of British subjects from the V&A were reimagined and brought back to life with glossy photographic surfaces that animate and confuse by means of icons, drag queens and transsexuals – striking imagery by photographer Louie Banks that Hornby laid over those respectable, abstracted, architectural heads. For centuries artists have wondered how much autobiographical fact should encroach into their work, how much they should conceal, and how much creeps in whether they like it or not. It is a dilemma Hornby is brilliantly, and honestly, resolving.

In this publication, the first major trade monograph on his oeuvre, Hornby's artistic trajectory over the past twelve years is considered by means of an engaging interview with the artist by Dr Helen Pheby, Associate Director, Programme at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and through an essay – the most substantial critical text to date on Hornby's practice – by Dr Hannah Higham, Senior Curator of Collections and Research at the Henry Moore Foundation. The publication comes at a key moment in Hornby's career; following his first institutional solo exhibition and his first permanent outdoor sculptural commission for Harlow Science Park in Essex.

As he enters the mid-career period of his work, we can take the opportunity to contemplate and celebrate his impressive oeuvre to date. At the time of publication, Hornby had recently been exploring ambiguous figuration, biomorphic sculpture and 'the bulge' in modernist abstraction – solid, concrete and caressable, or simply an idea, a queer idea. The references to works of art of the past persist – Arp, Hepworth, Moore – but in this new work they are literally overlaid with bodies in Speedos. Some of the featured subjects were encountered in real life, others online, far away. The photographs were made during the 2020 pandemic lockdown, when human contact became restricted, and so powerfully precious. Images on screens, on phones and on laptops became even more pervasive, more seductive. The work addresses an unreality that sits at the heart of human experience – the creation of physical, bodily ideals and their entanglement with desire. In one sense, it's true to Hornby's collaborative process, to his trajectory of mixing art from the past with the discourse of today; in another it's a significant shift – the personal and the subjective are now also embraced and celebrated within his practice. I find it fascinating and, yes, touching.

Luke Syson (Forward from Monograph, published by Anomie 2022)

PUBLIC SCULPTURE



Power over others is Weakness
disguised as Strength
2023
Corten Steel
5 x 3.5 x 1.3m
Orchard Place, Westminster, London

Power over others is Weakness disguised
as Strength
2023
Corten Steel
5 x 3.5 x 1.3m
Orchard Place, Westminster, London





Twofold
2019
Corten steel
5 x 3 x 2m
Public commission, Harlow, UK



Twofold
2019
Corten steel
5 x 3 x 2m
Public commission, Harlow, UK





The Age of Bronze

2017

Steel, paint

350 x 130 x 60 cm

Unique

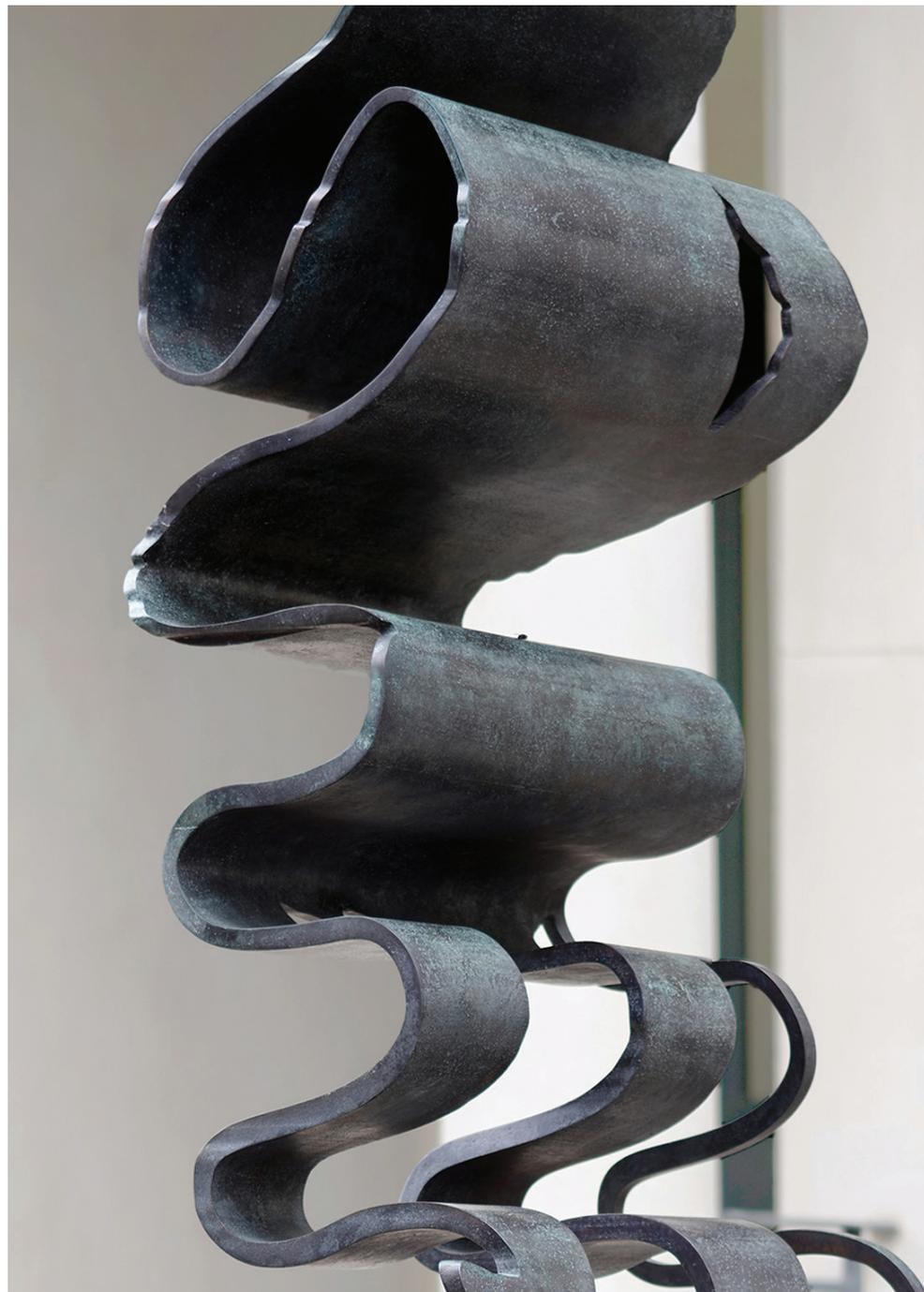
Installation view from the exhibition:

Nick Hornby: Sculpture (1504–2017), Glyndebourne, UK

Here and there
2023
Bronze
3.3 x 1.2 x 1.2m
One Kensington Gardens, London



Here and there
2023
Bronze
3.3 x 1.2 x 1.2m
One Kensington Gardens, London





Do It All
2023
Bronze
5.7 x m 2.4 x 1.6
Royal Warwick Square, London

Do It All
2023
Bronze
5.7 x m 2.4 x 1.6
Royal Warwick Square, London





BIKE ROUTE
SHARED
LANE

Kennedy
LaGuardia
→



INTERSECTIONS

This body of work began in 2009 and was the direct result of a commission for the Southbank Centre in London – a socially engaged participation project to accompany the exhibition *Walking in My Mind* at the Hayward Gallery, London. Setting himself the task of co-authoring a single object with six young people, Hornby devised a computer-aided system to combine their ideas by intersecting the participants' extruded drawings, evenly rotated around 360 degrees. Parts of each contributor's drawing, converted into three-dimensional form, could thus be viewed from different angles as the viewer moved around the sculpture.

Following this project, Hornby replaced his young collaborators with key figures from the history of art, such as Rodin, Brâncuși and Hepworth. The resulting sculptures were hybrids composed of partly identifiable and recognisable sculptures from the canon of art history. The first series was designed for the artist's solo show *Atom vs. Super Subject*, which opened in London in spring 2010.

Hornby has since continued to expand and develop the series, exploring some of the many critical and formal lines of enquiry that this pioneering approach invites.



Vanity working on a weak head produces
every sort of mischief (Jane Austen)
2010
Marble resin composite
60 x 30 x 30 cm Edition of 6 + 2AP



Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown
(Shakespeare)
2010
Marble resin composite
60 x 30 x 30 cm Edition of 6 + 2AP





I never wanted to weigh more heavily
on a man than a bird (Coco Chanel)
2010
Marble resin composite
240 x 125.3 x 38.6 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP



The Butterflies of Vertigo (Beckett)
2010
Marble resin composite
160 x 99.5 x 39.3 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP





We last longer we violent ones (Rilke)
2010
Marble resin composite
200 x 100 x 80 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP







We turn the cube and it twists us
(Erno Rubik)
2010
Marble resin composite
88.5 x 141.6 x 71 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP

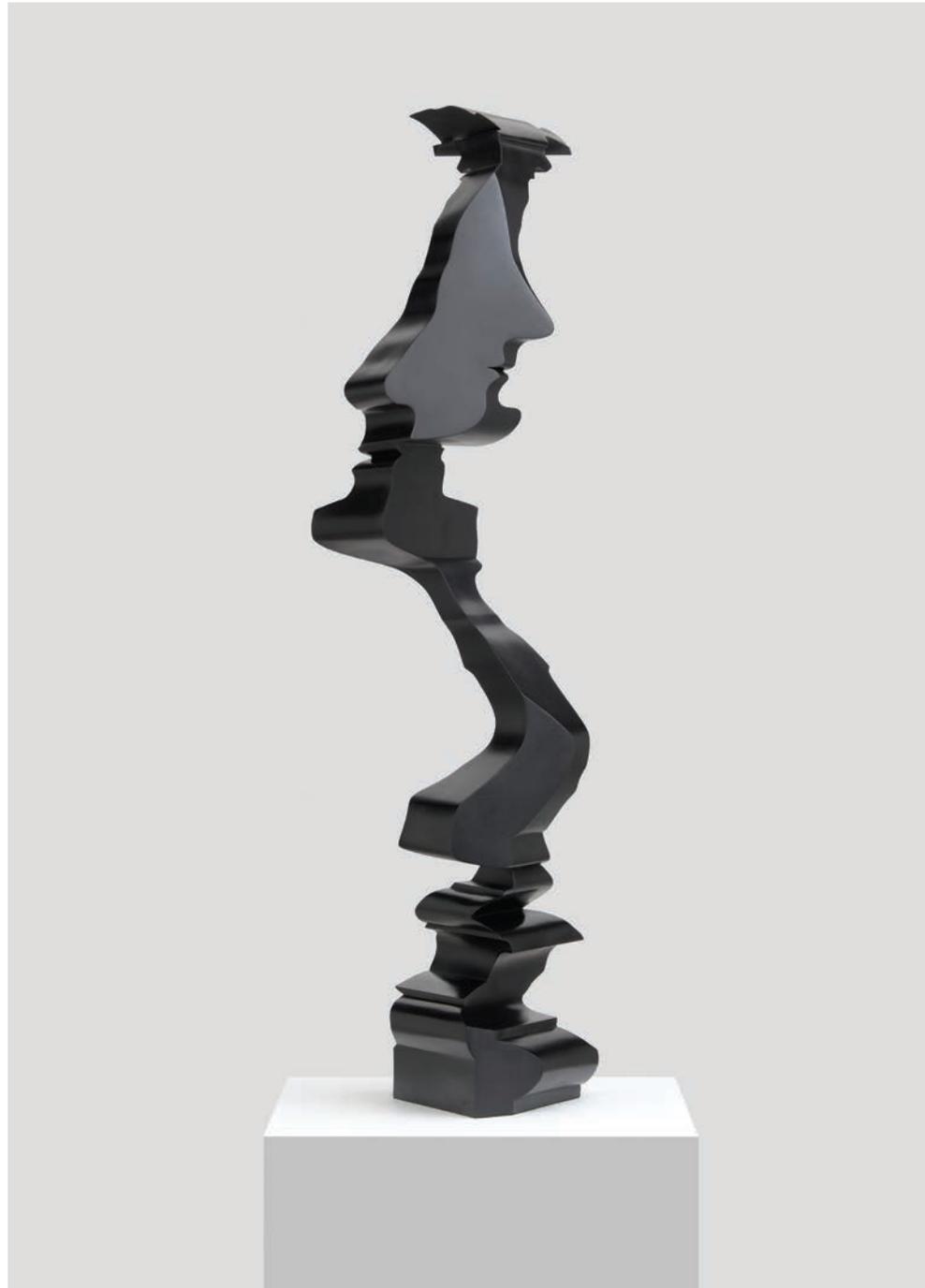


Vanity working on a weak head produces
every sort of mischief (Jane Austen)
2014
Bronze
60 x 30 x 30 cm
Edition of 6 + 2AP





Muse Offcut (Reduction I)
2018
Bronze
100 x 44 x 37 cm
Edition of 6 + 2AP













The Age of Bronze

2017

Steel, paint

350 x 130 x 60 cm

Unique

Installed in the exhibition:

Nick Hornby: Sculpture (1504–2017) Glyndebourne, UK,

20 May–27 August 2017







Vanity Working on a Weak Head Produces Every Sort of Mischief (Jane Austen)

2017

Marble

100 x 50 x 50 cm

(Sculpture 1504 - 2017, Glyndebourne, UK, 2017)

EXTRUSIONS

This body of work started when Hornby was shortlisted for a commission to make a permanent sculpture for the cast courts at the V&A in London. His design was for a twelve-metre long 'stalactite' formed by taking the outline of Michelangelo's David and extruding it to a single point. While he did not win the commission, the research that went into the project would go on to form the basis of Hornby's solo exhibition Nick Hornby: Sculpture (1504–2013) at Churner and Churner in New York and the concurrent public commission: God Bird Drone, also presented in New York in 2013.

The basic principle of this ongoing body of works is a single silhouette extruded and then an action performed, such as reduction to a point, twisting, enlarging and so on. Unlike the Intersection works, the Extrusions to date have involved no combining of sources, only simple manipulations of a single source. As with other bodies of Hornby's work, digital technology plays a significant role in his design and production processes for the Extrusions.

Subsequent Extrusion pieces include a console table for David Gill Gallery, London, and a number have been exhibited at Glyndebourne. A selection of sculptures that form part of the ongoing body of Extrusions works is illustrated in the following pages.

Don't spend time beating on a wall, hoping
to transform it into a door (Coco Chanel)

Console Table / Sculpture

2016

Marble resin composite

H90 x L90 x D90 cm

(Young Bright Things, David Gill Gallery,
London, 2016)



The Assyrian came down like the
wolf on the fold (Lord Byron)

2016

Silver

19 x 19 x 19 cm

Edition of 5 + 2AP



The Assyrian came down like the
wolf on the fold (Lord Byron)
2016
Silver
19 x 19 x 19 cm
Edition of 5 + 2AP



Still and Still Moving (T.S. Eliot)
2016
Bronze
19 x 19 x 19 cm
Edition of 10 + 2AP



Still and Still Moving (T.S. Eliot)
2016
Bronze
19 x 19 x 19 cm
Edition of 10 + 2AP



6° Takes One Minute
2013
Marble resin composite
90 x 29 x 19 cm
Edition of 3 + 3AP



The present is just a point
2013
Marble resin composite, aluminium
290 x 180 x 75 cm
Unique
Nick Hornby: Sculpture (1504–2013)
Churner and Churner, New York
19 September–2 November 2013





God Bird Drone

2013

Epoxy resin compound, autobody paint, lacquer

365 x 180 x 90 cm

Unique

Glyndebourne, UK, 20 May–27 August 2017

HYDROGRAPHICS



1940-1950

The artist's work in this period is characterized by a focus on organic forms and a rich palette of colors. The sculptures often feature smooth, rounded shapes that evoke natural elements like shells or stones. The use of vibrant colors such as red, blue, and white adds a dynamic quality to the pieces. This era marks a significant development in the artist's style, moving towards more complex and multi-colored compositions.

The artist's approach during this time was highly experimental, exploring various materials and techniques to achieve a sense of movement and depth. The resulting works are both visually striking and conceptually rich, reflecting a deep engagement with the interplay of form and color.



Resting Leaf (Joe)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
77.5 x 48 x 27 cm
Unique

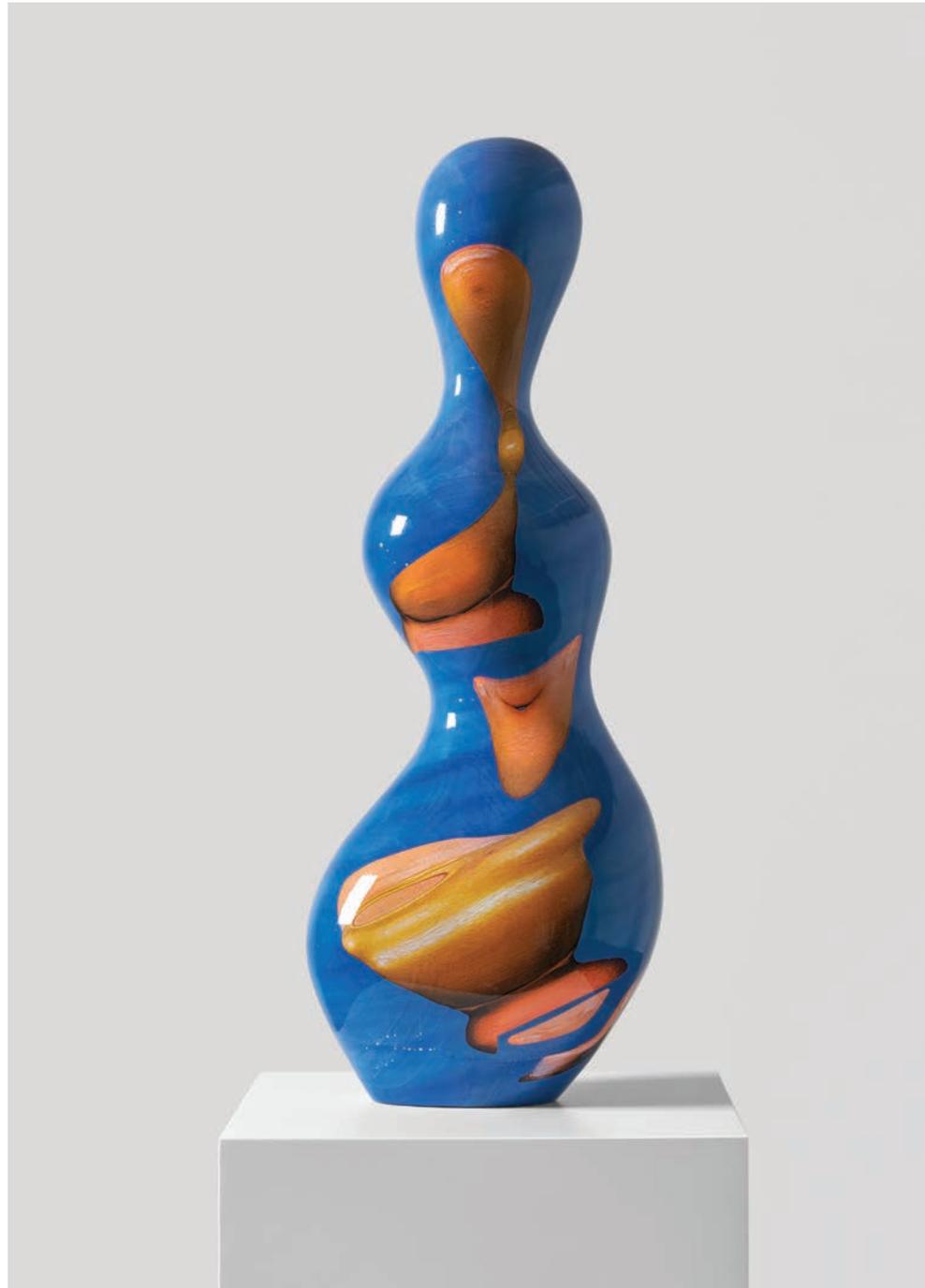




Winged Being (Francesco)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
110 x 33 x 24 cm
Unique



Demeter's Doll (Cindy)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
80 x 29 x 20 cm
Unique



Nick Hornby in collaboration with Louie Banks
Muse I (Candy Jazzelle) VOGUE II
2020
Marble resin composite, ink, lacquer
59 x 27 x 28 cm
Unique



Nick Hornby in collaboration with Louie Banks
Muse I (Lady Eliza)
2020
Marble resin composite, ink, lacquer
59 x 27 x 28 cm
Unique

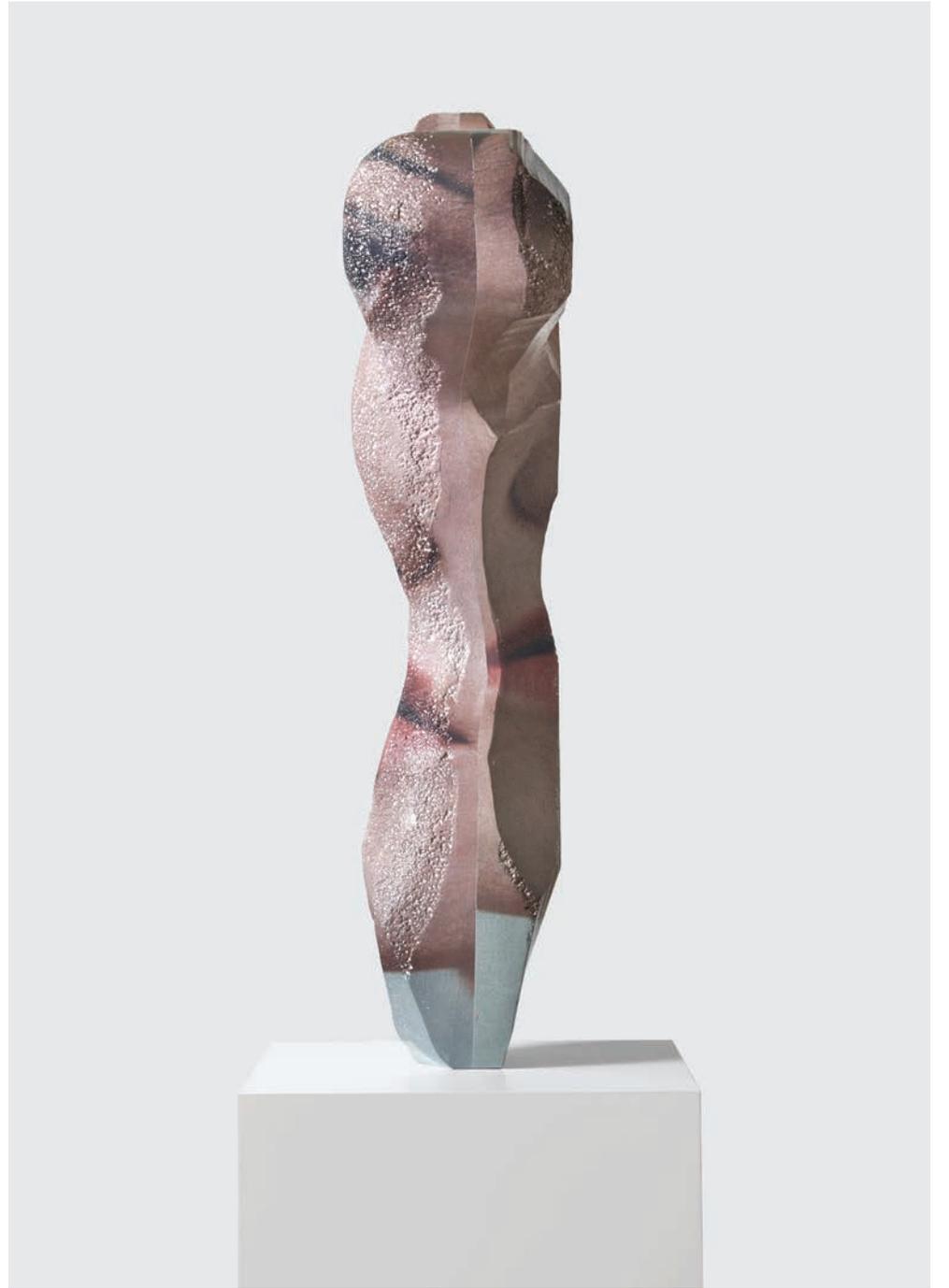
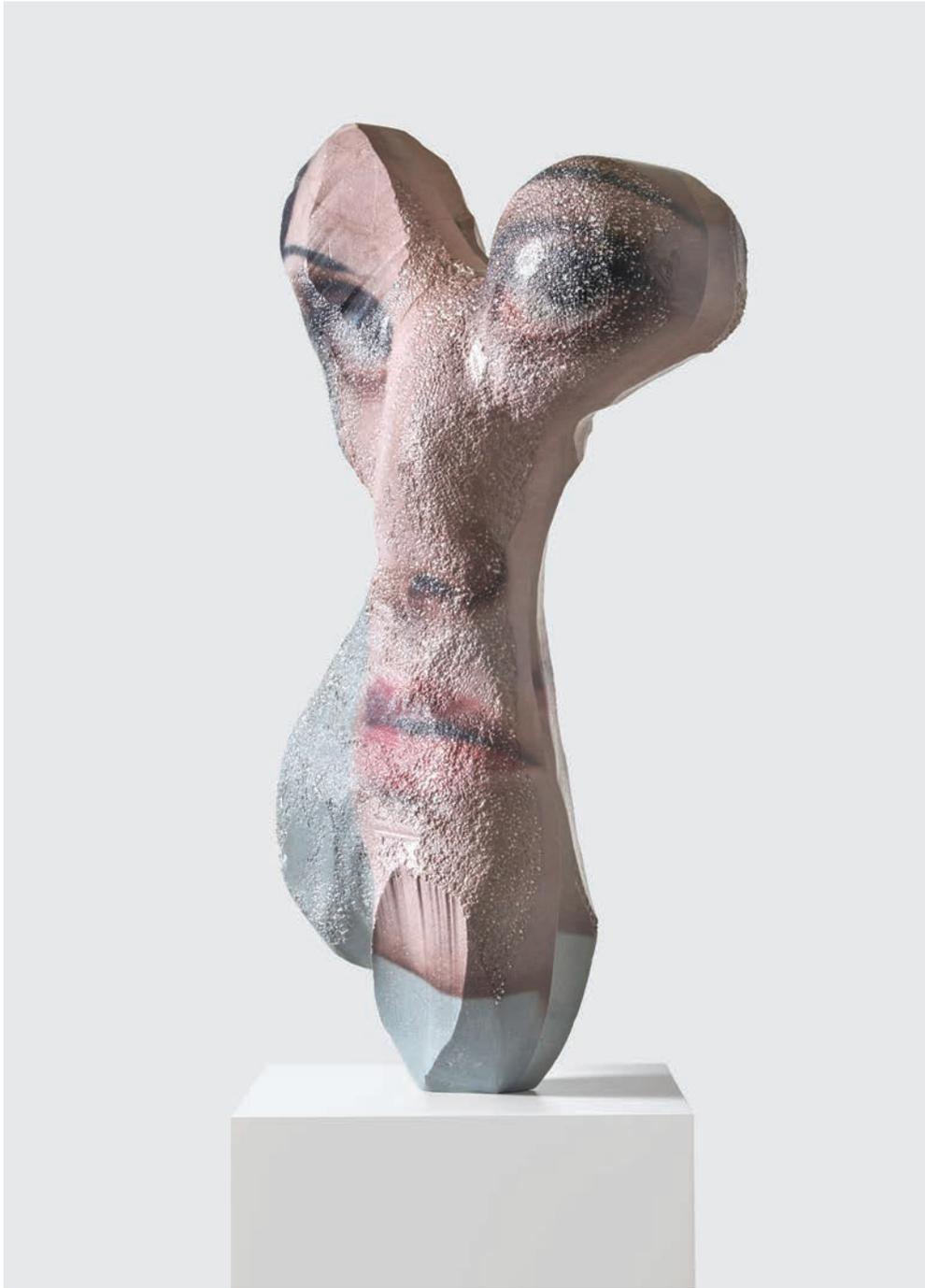


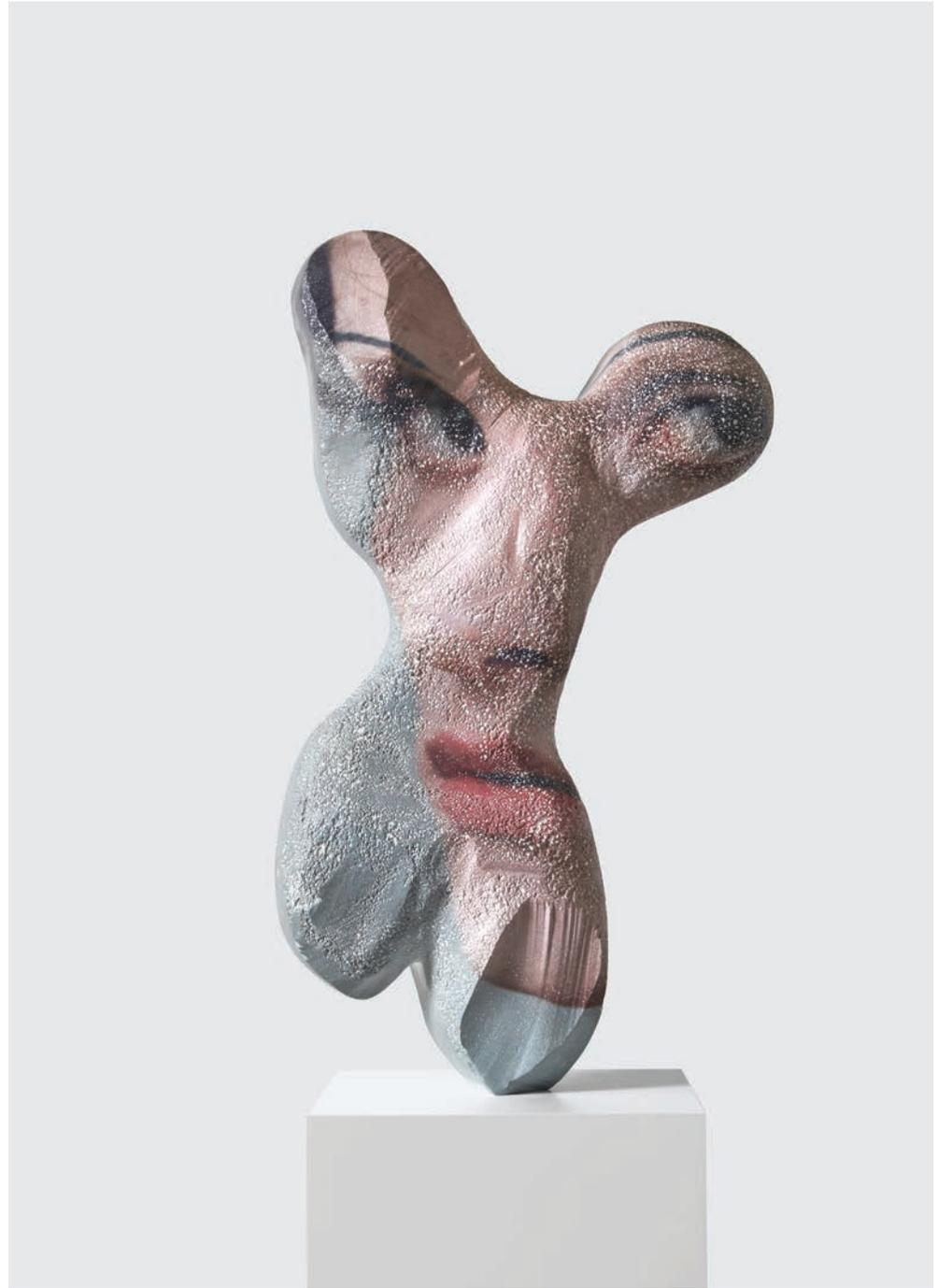
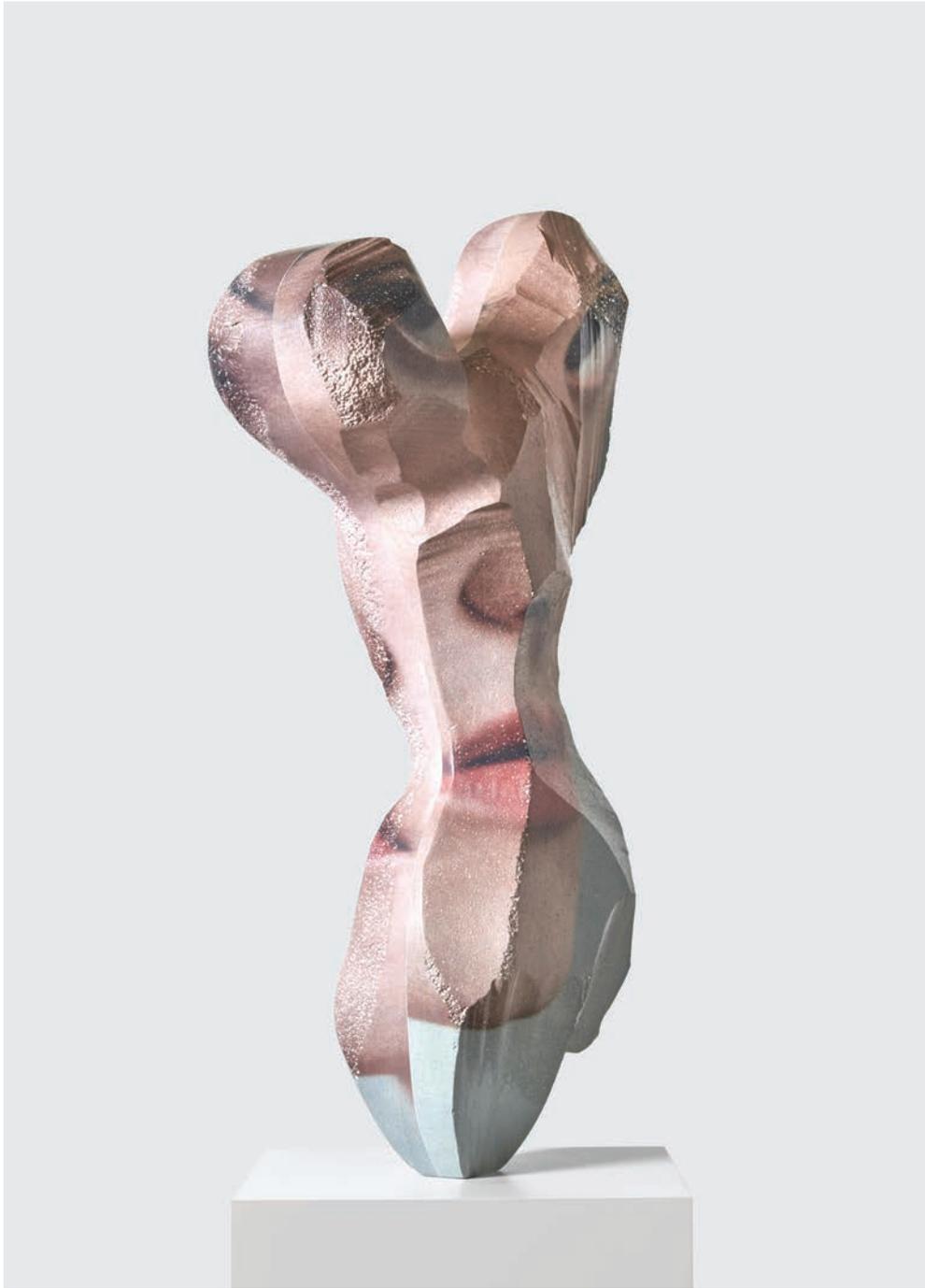
Nick Hornby in collaboration with Louie Banks
Little Sphinx (Jazzelle)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
80 x 36 x 15 cm
Unique

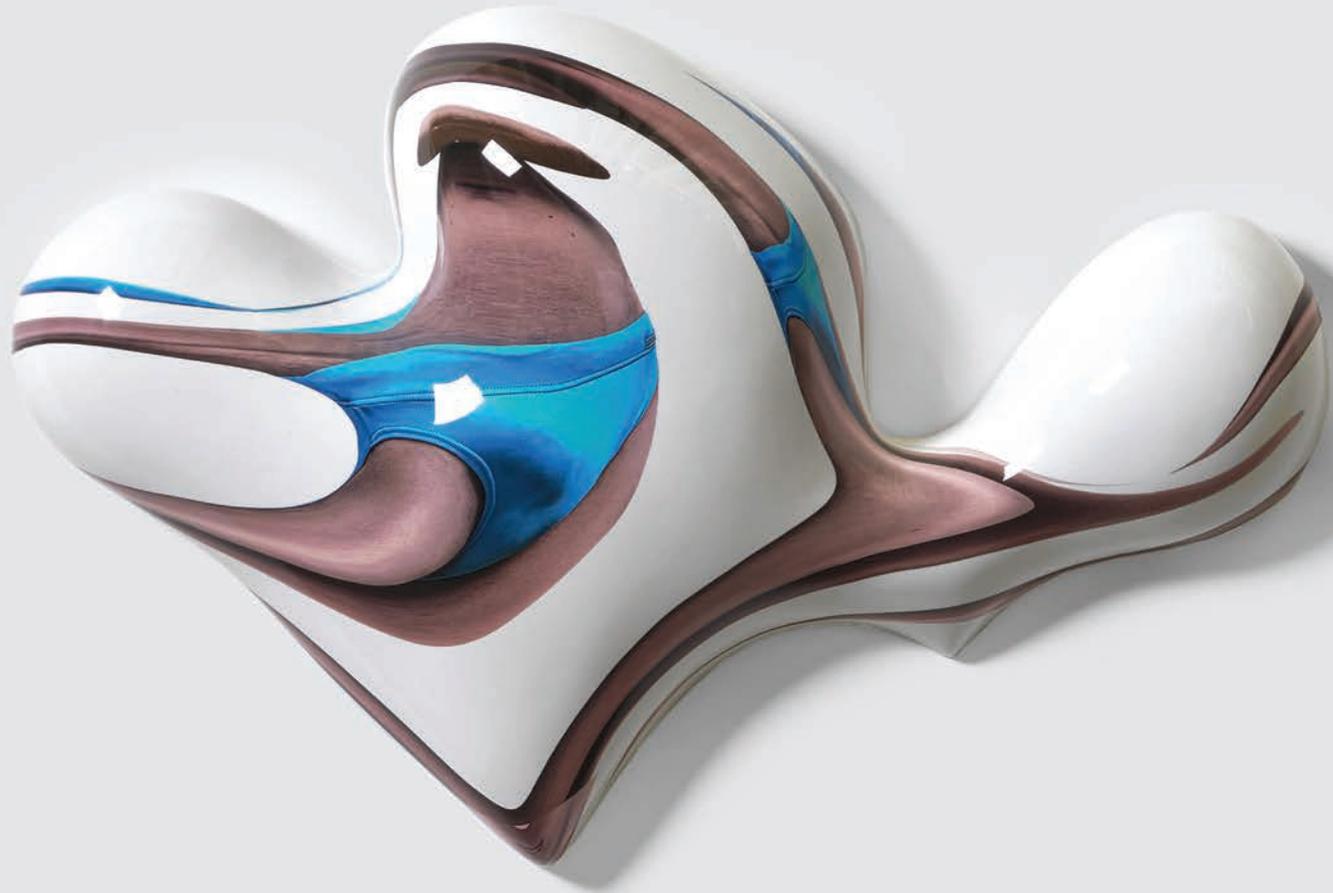


Nick Hornby in collaboration with Louie Banks
Torso (Lady James)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
90 x 55 x 20 cm
Unique









Tear (Simon)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
42.5 x 34 x 26 cm
Unique





Compression Fitting (Cindy)
2020
Resin, ink, lacquer
42.5 x 37 x 10 cm
Unique





COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration, in different forms, is integral to Hornby's practice. As has been noted, his first major body of work, the Intersections, grew out of a genuine attempt to collaborate with a group of young people for a commission for the Southbank Centre. The result was a single object mathematically and evenly designed by six people. Hornby's presence as an artist was in the final composite form, simultaneously demonstrating the artist's role as producer, orchestrator, architect, curator, facilitator and collaborator.

Hornby considers his inclusion of works from art history to be an act of collaboration as much as appropriation. Collaboration is a form of dialogue – a two-way process in which the sharing of ideas creates something new that perhaps neither party would have conceived or produced on their own. Sculpture, as Hornby is keen to point out, is 'inherently and historically collaborative', the artist working closely with foundries, technicians, engineers and many other specialists in the daily production of his work.

Hornby has also actively sought out collaborations with fellow living artists. 'If my practice conceptually engages with authorship,' he says, 'then co-authorship with another artist is a way to make visible that dialogue.' The two most significant collaborations Hornby has undertaken to date have been with painter Sinta Tantra and photographer Louie Banks. In both cases the collaborators embraced the possibilities of wrapping images around objects, investigating how allusions to pictorial depth relate to objecthood.

Hornby Tantra
Muse I: Experiments in Colour I
2015
Marble resin composite, paint
60 x 30 x 30 cm
Unique



Hornby Tantra
Prof I: Experiments in Colour I
2015
Marble resin composite, paint
60 x 30 x 30 cm
Unique



Hornby Tantra
I never wanted to lean more heavily on a
man than a bird in Chinese Blue, Hague Blue,
Cornforth, Telemagenta and Incarnadine
2015
Marble resin composite, paint
110 x 57 x 18 cm
Unique



100
Paul Hastings
L35 South
L34
L33

Signature
Cadwalader
L16
L10

Jefferies



Hornby Tantra
All of Leighton in Hague Blue, Lush Pink and
Cornforth
2012
Marble resin composite, paint
98 x 75 x 44 cm
Unique



Hornby Tantra
Yes, Yes in Chinese Blue, Hague,
Cornforth, Telemagenta, Railings, Lush Pink and
Drawing Room
2015
Marble resin composite, paint
200 x 100 x 46 cm
Unique



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