



ANTHONY SCOTT

Hunter / Hunted



gallery

solomon

Tara Murphy requests the pleasure of your company
at the private view of

ANTHONY SCOTT

Hunter / Hunted

to be opened by

Rowan Gillespie

Sculptor

Thursday 29 September 2022

from 6pm to 8pm

The exhibition continues until Saturday 20 October 2022

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10.00am – 5.30pm / Saturday: 11am – 4pm

Artworks may be viewed and acquired in advance at the gallery by appointment, via the Online Viewing Room
at www.solomonfineart.ie - or simply scan the QR code below with your smartphone camera for prices and availability.

Solomon Fine Art

Balfe Street, Dublin 2, D02 T802, Ireland

t: +353 (0)1 672 4429 / e: info@solomonfineart.ie / www.solomonfineart.ie

front cover: *Elk (Study)*, 2022, bronze, edition of 6, 2022, 90 x 100 x 25 cm

inside cover: *Etain*, 2022, bronze, edition of 3, 120 x 120 x 85 cm



Give Back to the Land What Always Belonged There: the Sculpture of Anthony Scott

Even in my lifetime, Ireland has changed irrevocably. When I was a boy, visiting the Dublin aunts, horses, traps, and manure were omnipresent. In Belfast, the milkman, the lemonade man, the knife-grinder and the fishmonger all came to your door. 'Country' was just down the road. Walk a mile in almost any direction and fields were in front of you. Then, religion was an inescapable fact of life: controlling, powerful and politically aligned. Then, television, in black and white, was in its infancy, so people still came round to the house 'for a chat'.

Nowadays we are plugged into social media which usually means being anti-social. Instead of communally watching movies, or the family watching TV together, we are plugged into our smart phones and laptops. What has been lost, and why is this relevant to the sculpture of Anthony Scott? What has been lost is the rural connection and the sense of community. What has been lost is storytelling linked into the fabric of our lives. With Anthony Scott we are plugged back into the world of the farm, forest, and landscape; plugged back into that mythological world (Greco-Roman, Celtic, Biblical) which united Man and Beast, and which told archetypal stories about them. Instead of the restlessness and rootlessness of the city, we are earthed into a landscape whose palimpsests stretch from the present, back into biblical times. Elks, bulls, wolfhounds, horses, and boars still roam; warriors still stride the land; fertility rites and rituals still link our pagan past into the contemporary world.

But this is not an Antiques Roadshow spectacle. It is not a bathed-in-aspic version of Lady Gregory's retellings of the Irish myths, even though the artist has used them as source material. Rather it is a re-imagining, one which fertilises the old myths with contemporary sources. The *Dream of Conlaoch* may use imagery from the fertility tales of the Green Man, much as Kingsley Amis did in his novel of the same name. But just as Amis rewrote the ancient fertility myth into modern clothing, so too with Scott, whose final image was suggested by a photograph of the art critic Brian Sewell, holding his whippet as if it were a little child. *Elk* was suggested, not only by the skeleton of same in the Ulster Museum but also by a painting of an elk by the Australian artist Barrie Cooke who was for long domiciled in Ireland. *Doberman (Hunter)* has its source in the contemporary Doberman dog while *Fergus Hunter* references the work of the sculptor Elizabeth Frink - not to mention a number of the *Horse* sculptures bearing a distinct kinship with the work of the Italian sculptor Marino Marini.

What is noticeable about Anthony Scott's work is that it continues to develop, both in terms of content and style. While the Irish myths are still primary source material, he, like an archaeologist developing new excavation techniques, is constantly looking for ways in which to reinterpret the myths. This time round, the focus is on the theme of the Hunter and the Hunted: the predator and his prey. The biblical references, although recessed, are there. Expelled from Eden, Man is forced to become a hunter, even training animals to kill for him as referenced by *Doberman (Hunter)*. As the artist wryly noted, much of Christianity is but 'paganism rebranded'. Put another way, the Hunter and Hunted theme is about survival: a potent reminder of our violent, atavistic past, and perhaps a stark metaphor for a society today in which so many people are finding it increasingly difficult to do just that.

Perhaps the power of sculptures like these, is that they combine an intense physicality (something else that urban man has lost) with the potency of their connection to the landscape, both real and metaphorical, that surrounds the mythic stories. If we are losing our connection to, in the artist's words, 'things that have relevance' – how many times have you described something as 'soulless' over the past decade or so? – then perhaps art, and in this case, sculpture, provides us with 'soul' in abundance.

Often, when people look at seemingly naturalistic or realistic sculpture, they see what they expect to see. Perhaps they have dim memories of French Salon sculpture, such as that of the *animalier* Antoine-Louis Barye who was largely responsible for making the small animal bronze a recognised genre, and whose work lovingly and dramatically depicted every tensed muscle of an animal. However, if you look closely at Scott's work, what you will find is that much of it is not naturalistic or realistic at all. Observe *Fergus Hunter*, seated on his horse. The sculpture isn't remotely accurate anatomically. The length of the horse is too short, the legs are too slender in relation to the horse's weight, the scale of the relationship between figure and horse is wrong anatomically but correct dramatically, and if you look at the horse's head, it bears no relation to that of a horse that you might see in a farmer's field or on a racetrack. Instead, it has a primal, 'primitive', atavistic quality: an Ur horse. As with Marini, it is the essence of a horse.

An even bolder reinvention of the horse is to be seen in the depiction of the foal *Etain*. As opposed to the weight, heft and loaded stance of *Elk*, almost plumb into the ground in its watchful stillness, the foal is skittishly all curves and undulations, to such an extent that (as with an illustrator depicting a *femme fatale* with an impossibly small waist

and an hourglass figure), the foal becomes a paragon of the perfect female form. This is then emphasised by the texturing which, as befits an unformed animal (the child as opposed to the adult), is softer, rounder, and only lightly incised. This soft, graceful femininity is emphasised further by its neck which slips downwards in one long, slow curve, and which is then offset by the ears, pricked into watchfulness.

If much of the earlier sculpture tended to be more naturalistic, it is noticeable that current work, such as *Etain* or *Horse*, or *Fergus Hunter*, opts for a balance between an implied naturalistic surface and a much more abstracted figuration. Likewise, there has been a gradual change from earlier, smoother surfaces, to much more textured ones such as *Large Elk*, or *Bres*. There is also a tightrope walk between large-scale exterior, 'park and garden' sculpture and its smaller, domesticated, living-room scale, as indicated between the large and small versions of *Elk*.

Another marked development is the shift towards an almost installational environment in some of the works, as with *Communion*. This shift seems to be linked into the artist's increasing use of found materials (give back to the land what always belonged there), which in turn links back to the much more textured surfaces, as with *Bres* in which twigs and branches were inserted at the modelling stage, creating the effect of a dense, matted yet bristlingly protective armature. In *Communion*, the twigs and branches have been used to assemble a grotto, a protective area a bit like a Crannog, where *The Hunter* goes to commune with Nature. His face is the colour of red ochre, a pigment used for ritual ceremonies, but the overall patination, both for Man and Grotto, is a protective green and dark brown. Perhaps the gap between contemporary 'civilised' Man and his ancestors is less than we think...

This installational element also emerges in some of the big, exterior sculptures. If the gallery-sized small *Elk*, has its tiny ridges and incised marks burnished into brightness, so that they reflect a sparkling light, giving it the effect of a gentle animal, caught in dappled sunlight, then the large-scale *Elk*, some fifteen feet high and twenty-five feet broad at the antlers, is an entirely different proposition. Originally created for an outdoor garden at Howth, overlooking Dublin Bay, this huge sculpture with its massive legs rooted into the landscape, its fearsome, gigantic antlers like a clarion call for a battle, its recessed, smoother areas of mark-making, abutting densely and heavily textured surfaces, is, unlike the more feminine, smaller *Elk* (which is in the exhibition), an indisputably aggressive, male beast, reeking of physicality.

Let us now return to the subject of myth. Artists have always depicted myths, usually those of Greece and Rome. Some of them, Titian for example, knew the stories and gave them a then modern form. Others, Poussin being the obvious example, were learned individuals who researched the myths in detail and worked out elaborate programmes of meaning. Anthony Scott is somewhere in-between. He is familiar with the classics such as Frazer's *Golden Bough* or the aforementioned Lady Gregory's retelling of the Celtic myths. He is also interested in new interpretations of myth, referring often to Roberto Calasso's *The Celestial Hunter*. Calasso, in nine books, retold most of the key myths (Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Vedic etc.) emphasising the notion that blood, especially ritual killing, was at the roots of our civilisation.

So, the artist is knowledgeable, he can tell you the stories, and he is aware of new interpretations of them. But just as importantly, he was born on a farm (so plugged into the realities), a farm which also happened to be in the immediate locale of many of the Celtic myths. So, he combines the personal and the public. Intellectually he can observe the similarities and the cross-connections between, for example, Biblical, Asian, Celtic and Greco-Roman myths, with their use of ritual and sacrifice to assuage guilt. But emotionally he has a taproot, enabling him to imagine what it was like to live in mythic times; what it was like to be both Beast and Man, hunter or hunted, predator or victim. It is a taproot which, of course, leads us directly back into the present.

Brian McAvera



Left:
ETAÏN
2022
bronze, edition of 3
120 x 120 x 85 cm

Right:
DOBERMAN HUNTER
2022
bronze, edition of 9
42 x 36 x 12 cm





Left & right:
HORNED GOD
2022
bronze, edition of 6
60 x 30 x 30 cm





Left:
BRES
2021
bronze, edition of 6
60 x 92 x 26 cm

Right:
NAOISE
2021
bronze, edition of 6
40 x 64 x 28 cm





Left & right:
HUNTER RED FACE
2022
bronze, edition of 6
69 x 26 x 20 cm





Left & right:
HORSE
2021
bronze, edition of 6
48 x 48 x 14 cm





Left & right:
THE DREAM OF CONLAOCH
2022
bronze, edition of 6
60 x 30 x 30 cm





Left:
AILBHE (small)
bronze, edition of 9
20 x 19 x 24 cm

Right:
TUIREANN
bronze, edition of 9
42 x 42 x 12 cm





Left & right:
FERGUS HUNTER
2022
bronze, edition of 6
76 x 70 x 24 cm





SEATED WOLFHOUND
2022
bronze, edition of 9
32 x 23 x 17 cm

ANTHONY SCOTT

EDUCATION

1991 – 1993

M.A. Ceramics, C.I.H.E, Cardiff

1988 – 1991

B.A. Hons. (1st Class), University of Ulster, Belfast

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2022, 19, 17, 14, 12

Solo exhibition, Solomon Fine Art, Dublin

2022 - 1999

Annual exhibition, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin

2022 - 1999

Group exhibition, Beaux Arts Bath, UK

2022 - 1998

Group exhibition, Solomon Fine Art, Dublin

2020-12, 07

London Art Fair, Islington London (with Beaux Arts Bath)

2019 - 2014

Summer exhibition, Beaux Arts, London, UK

2018, 16, 13,

11, 09, 07, 05

Solo exhibition, Beaux Arts, Bath, UK

2015

Solo exhibition, Beaux Arts, London, UK

2014

Horse (Group exhibition), Beaux Arts London, UK

2011 - 1999

Annual Exhibition, Royal Ulster Academy, Ulster Museum, Belfast

2013 - 2008

20/21 British Art Fair, Royal College of Art, London, UK

2013 - 2007

Art London, Chelsea & London Art Fair, Islington, UK

2012

Artists of Fame and Promise, Beaux Arts, Bath, UK

2011 - 2005

Group exhibitions, Jonathan Swift Gallery, Belfast

2008

The Secret Garden, Solomon Gallery, Iveagh Gardens, Dublin

2005

Sculpture & Gardens, Solomon Gallery, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Castle Upton Gallery, Antrim

2004

Group show, John Martin Gallery, Mayfair, London, UK

2001

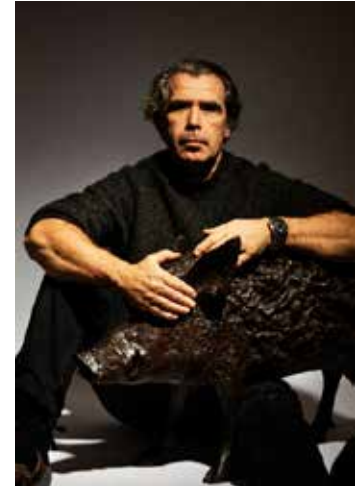
Two Person Sculpture Show, Solomon Gallery, Dublin

2001, 1999

Sladmore Contemporary, Bruton Place, London, UK

2001, 2000, 1999

CASE, The Lavit Gallery, Cork



2000, 1996, 95, 94	Group exhibitions, Blackheath Gallery, London, UK
1999	Iontas, Sligo Art Gallery, Sligo and Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast
1998	New Sculpture, Castle Museum, Enniskillen
1999 – 1996	Group exhibition, Tom Caldwell, Belfast
1997 - 1994	Group exhibition, Fitch's Ark, Little Venice, London, UK
1996	Leading Irish Artists, Lavit Gallery, Cork
	Contemporary Irish Ceramics & Glass, Jean Monnet Building, Luxembourg
1995 - 1994	Crafts, A New Generation, Arts Council Touring Exhibition, Northern Ireland

AWARDS

1997	Crafts Council of Ireland, Purchase Award, Royal Dublin Society
2017	Morgan O'Driscoll Sculpture Award, RHA Annual Exhibition

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland
 Design & Crafts Council of Ireland
 The Irish National Stud, Kildare
 US Ambassador's Residence, Phoenix Park, Dublin
 AIB Bank
 The Castle Museum, Enniskillen
 The Barbican Centre, London
 The Ark, Temple Bar, Dublin
 MoLI Museum of Literature Ireland,
 Meridian Point, Greystones
 Kelly's Resort Hotel, Rosslare
 The Rabbit Hotel & Retreat, Templepatrick
 Galgorm Luxury Estate & Spa, Ballymena

SELECTED PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Lord and Lady Glentoran
 Dame Judi Dench
 Sir Anthony & Lady O'Reilly
 Thomas Kretschmann
 Basil Blackshaw
 Brian Keenan CBE
 Sean O'Criadan/Peter Lamb, Dublin
 Daniel Day-Lewis
 Barry McGuigan
 Alexis Fitzgerald

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Hunter / Hunted

29 September - 20 October 2022

1.	Etain	2021	bronze, edition of 3	120 x 120 x 85 cm
2.	Bres	2021	bronze, edition of 6	60 x 92 x 26 cm
3.	Elk (Study)	2020	bronze, edition of 6	90 x 100 x 25 cm
4.	Fergus Hunter	2022	bronze, edition of 6	76 x 70 x 24 cm
5.	Horned God	2022	bronze, edition of 6	60 x 30 x 30 cm
6.	Naoise	2021	bronze, edition of 6	40 x 64 x 28 cm
7.	The Dream of Conlaoch	2022	bronze, edition of 6	60 x 30 x 30 cm
8.	Horse	2021	bronze, edition of 6	48 x 48 x 14 cm
9.	Hunter Red Face	2022	bronze, edition of 6	69 x 26 x 20 cm
10.	Tuireann	2017	bronze, edition of 9	42 x 42 x 12 cm
11.	Small Foal	2021	bronze, edition of 9	30 x 34 x 14 cm
12.	Doberman (Hunter)	2022	bronze, edition of 9	42 x 36 x 12 cm
13.	Seated Wolfhound	2022	bronze, edition of 9	32 x 23 x 17 cm
14.	Ailbhe (small)	2019	bronze, edition of 9	20 x 19 x 24 cm

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back cover: *SMALL FOAL*, 2021, bronze, edition of 9, 30 x 34 x 14cm



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Solomon Fine Art, Balfe Street, Dublin 2, Ireland / t: +353 (0)1 672 4429 / e: info@solomonfineart.ie / www.solomonfineart.ie