



ADRIAAN DIEDERICKS

CONTINUUM



ART IN THE YARD GALLERY

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MINOTAUR . .

ADRIAAN DIEDERICKS'S
CONTINUUM

*Over the past six years, sculptor Adriaan Diedericks has established a rich visual language of mythological signifiers and forms; drawing primarily on Classical, African and European references. At first glance then, the peculiar arborescent figures which make up the new *Continuum* series may appear to mark an incongruous break from that previously established iconography. However, this is a measured and intentional move on the part of the artist, and precisely where the particular significance of the title of this body of work lies.*

*'Continuum' implies a sort of narrative progression, where changes between individual stages are imperceptible, but the extremities are visibly distinct. Here, that idea seemingly points to a narrative shift from *Untitled (Flotsam)* – the work which most closely resembles Diedericks's prior output – through increasing stages of transformation in each of the *Continuum* works. Read within the broader context of Adriaan Diedricks's established motifs, these new figures represent what could be called a 'Minotaurian hybrid' for the artist.*

The connection between the sullen wooden stance of Diedericks's imposing bronze figures and the bull-headed Greek mythological creature may not be immediately apparent until one takes into account the metaphorical role that the Minotaur has served within Art History, and with the Surrealist movement in particular.

*Trying to make sense of the modern world in the wake of the first World War – and thick in the build-up to the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War – the Minotaur offered the Surrealists an ideal image of an entity at war with itself. The creature served as the namesake of *Minotaure* – a Surrealist magazine edited by André Breton and Pierre Mabille, published in Paris between 1933 and 1939 – and cropped up in a number of important artworks by artists as diverse as André Masson, Man Ray, Pablo Picasso (who was hobnobbing with the movement during the 1930s), and Leonora Carrington.*

The Surrealist's fascination with the Minotaur stemmed from its existence as a hybrid being, one which personified a fusion of human and animal traits in a singular

lumbering form. It was the coexistence of these traits which was absolutely key, conveying the idea that violent, animalistic id-driven behavior was embedded within the fabric of humanity; that the drive of modernist progression simultaneously gave birth to the horrors of the Great War.

The figures in Adriaan Diedericks's *Continuum* series seem to enact a similar gesture of hybridisation and represent the artist's own take on this idea of Minotaur as metaphor. An association between humanity and wood (usually in the guise of boats, ships, or tree trunks) has been a long-running visual motif within Diedericks's work, but it has never been so explicitly synthesised than in these new sculptures. There has certainly been a sort of absurdist metamorphosis in many of his earlier works, a 'becoming ship' in works such as *Exhale*, *Untitled (Sasha)*, and *Corpus*, but all of these have thematically played on the juxtaposition of two separate binary oppositions.

In Diedericks's oeuvre, casting scraps of rotten wood in bronze has functioned symbolically as a representation of the enticing corruption of power. "I find the dry rot wood due to excess water seeping into the center quite symbolic," the artist relates, "...Absolute power corrupts absolutely";

in the same way the water corrupts the wood over time." This inherent potential for corruptibility serves as what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'plane of consistency', a metaphorical commonality, which allows for connections to be drawn between disparate elements.

Earlier sculptures such as *Burden* and *Elegy*, find Diedericks delving into an intense and highly expressionistic representation of the internal struggle and anguish which arises from the self-destructive pursuit of power, incorporating the wooden elements as a sort of violent constraint or prison. The development of these themes in the *Continuum* works is that they eschew the separation between the two, and locate the potential for innocence and corruptibility within the same entity. Metaphorically it stands for the latent potential of absolute corruption as a defining trait of humanity. A particularly significant property of the *Continuum* figures is their scale. The full-sized, non-maquette versions all stand in the region of 1.8 to 2 meters in height, placing them at the taller end of the life-size spectrum and bestowing a substantive physical presence. Consequently, there is a strong impression of monumentality about the figures, both in the sense of scale and of commemoration.





Diedericks's medium of bronze casting furthers this connection to public memorialisation and statues. Returning to the idea of continuums, an intrinsic quality is that of change, something which memorialisation hubristically attempts to push back against in a bid for immortality. Following on from Percy Bysshe Shelley's perennial sonnet *Ozymandias*, if the recent political climate in South Africa has emphasised anything, it is an inherent fallibility in the omnipotence of public memorials and institutions.

In this sense, the childlike appearance of these figures, which could be said to resemble a makeshift or self-assembled wooden toy, reflects an astute juxtaposition on the part of Diedericks between naivety and monuments to power. These sculptures are both an endearing nod to the free roaming innocence of childhood imagination and play, and a farcical distortion of megalomaniacal hubris.

Adriaan Diedericks, following a similar ideological trajectory to an artist such as Wim Botha, is well aware of how to channel the signifying potential of mythology. For as Roland Barthes reminds us in his iconic essay *Myth Today*, "*Myth is a type of speech...a system of communication...myth cannot be possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification*".

The sculptures which comprise the *Continuum* body of work function as a system of signification precisely because of the multilayered and complex internal mythology which Diedericks has been building over the course of his career as a sculptor. Working in tandem with the meticulous craftsmanship of the artist and his accomplished studio, it is this mythological discourse that allows us to readily infer a deeper understanding of the incisive gesture of Minotaurian synthesis encompassed in the *Continuum* figures.



Untitled (Flotsam) / 2018
Bronze on Granite Base
620 x 210 x 210 mm
Edition of 8



Continuum I (Medium Maquette) / 2019

Bronze on Stainless steel Base

1010 x 320 x 200 mm

Edition of 8





Continuum I (Maquette) / 2018
Bronze on Granite Base
430 x 110 x 110 mm
Edition of 12



12



Continuum II (Medium Maquette) / 2019

Bronze on Stainless steel Base

1010 x 320 x 200 mm

Edition of 8





Continuum II (Maquette) / 2018

Bronze on Granite Base

430 x 110 x 110 mm

Edition of 12





Continuum III (Lifesize) / 2018
Bronze on Granite Base
1820 x 500 x 400 mm
Edition of 8





Continuum IV (Lifesize) / 2018
Bronze on Granite Base
1820 x 500 x 400 mm
Edition of 8





Continuum IV (Medium Maquette) / 2019
Bronze on Stainless steel Base
1015 x 300 x 200 mm
Edition of 8





Continuum V (Lifesize) / 2018

Bronze on Granite Base

1680 x 530 x 480 mm

Edition of 8





Continuum V (Medium Maquette) / 2019
Bronze on Stainless steel Base
1010 x 400 x 380 mm
Edition of 8

Continuum V (Maquette) / 2019

Bronze on Granite Base

430 x 120 x 110 mm

Edition of 12





Continuum VI (Lifesize) / 2018

Bronze on Granite Base

2060 x 500 x 400 mm

Edition of 8





Continuum VI (Maquette) / 2019

Bronze on Granite Base

435 x 110 x 110 mm

Edition of 12

CIRRICULUM VITAE

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 Continuum, Art in the Yard Gallery, Franschhoek
- 2017 Perceptive Resonance, Art in the Yard Gallery, Franschhoek
- 2017 Christened Ships, Solo Exhibition, 99 LOOP Gallery, Cape Town
- 2016 Traveling Bodies, Rust and Vrede Gallery, Durbanville
- 2015 Seraph, Jan Royce Gallery, Cape Town
- 2015 Binne Buiteland, Gallery on Leviser, Bloemfontein
- 2015 as is, so was, Grande Provence, Franschhoek

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 Woordfees (L'acte Final Scene one: Louis & Friends), GUS Gallery, Stellenbosch
- 2018 Cape Town Art Fair, 99 LOOP Gallery, Cape Town
- 2017 Best-of-4 Künstelersymposien, Villa Böhm, Germany
- 2017 Hermanus FynArts Festival Artist
- 2016 Beyond the Limit, St Lorient Rooftop Gallery, Pretoria
- 2016 Ledeganck Advocatenkantoor, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2016 Lords of Winter, Cavalli Gallery, Somerset West
- 2016 CANSA Exhibition, Arts Association of Pretoria
- 2016 KKNK (Huisgenoot Centenary Exhibition)
- 2016 Cape Town Art Fair, 99 LOOP Gallery, Cape Town
- 2015 1.99 Group Exhibition, 99 LOOP Gallery, Cape Town
- 2015 Winter, Everard Read, Cape Town
- 2015 Die Burger 100 Eeufees, Headoffice, [Selected works]
- 2015 BYOID, Knysna Fine Art, Knysna
- 2015 Fear&Loss - The Industrial Karoo, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria
- 2014 Art Fair Cologne, L'Art Industriel Gallery, Germany
- 2014 Art Fair Strasbourg, L'Art Industriel Gallery, France
- 2014 Summer Season Exhibition, Everard Read Cape Town, Cape Town
- 2013 Cape Town Art Fair, Represented at EBONY/CURATED

SELECTED AUCTIONS

- 2019 MAD Charity, Silapha Art Auction 2019, Somerset West
- 2018 MAD Charity, Phakama UK Benefit, London
- 2018 ABSA Champagne Festival Art Auction, Johannesburg
- 2018 Art Angels, Ellerman House, Bantry Bay
- 2017 Art Angels, Ellerman House, Bantry Bay
- 2017 MAD Charity, United Kingdom
- 2017 MAD Charity, Annual USA Golf Classic Auction, US
- 2016 MAD Charity, United Kingdom
- 2016 Art Angels, Ellerman House, Bantry Bay
- 2016 Chefs Who Share, Johannesburg
- 2015 Art Angels, Ellerman House, Bantry Bay

COLLECTIONS

- 2018 Quoin Rock Wine Estate, Stellenbosch
- 2018 Bartinney Wine Estate, Stellenbosch
- 2016 NAC VIP Lounge, Lanseria Airport, [Launch 2017]
- 2015 Cavalli Wine & Stud Farm, Somerset West
- 2014 Art Association of Pretoria, Pretoria
- 2013 PPC, Private Collection, Johannesburg

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

South Africa, England, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Australia, United States of America, Canada, Barbados

PUBLIC SCUTLPTURE EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 The Man in the Stone, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany
- 2017 Torso I (Large), Art Fair Franschhoek
- 2015 Sculptures on the Cliffs, Hermanus
- 2015 Echo of Derogation I Neerhalende Weerklank, REFLECTIONS: Public Sculptures in Stellenbosch III
- 2014 I have to go see a man about a Horse, KOMSit: Stellenbosch Public Sculpture III
- 2013 Atila (Ascending), Metalwork: Public Sculptures II, Jan Marais Park, Stellenbosch

COMPETITIONS

- 2014 SASOL new signatures, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, [Finalist]
- 2013 PPC Young Concrete Sculpture Award Finalist, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria
- 2013 VULEKA, Merit recognition Award, Art B Gallery, Bellville
- 2010 SASOL new signatures; Finalist, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria
- 2009 US Kuns en Foto Kompetisi; Finalist, GUS Gallery, Stellenbosch
- 2008 Wes-Boland Eisteddfod, Best Work Trophy (High School), Show Grounds, Piketberg

OTHER EXPERIENCE

- 2013-2014 Apprentice under Lionel Smit

SELECTED RESIDENCIES

- 2017 Internationales Künstlersymposium, Museum Villa Böhm, Germany

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