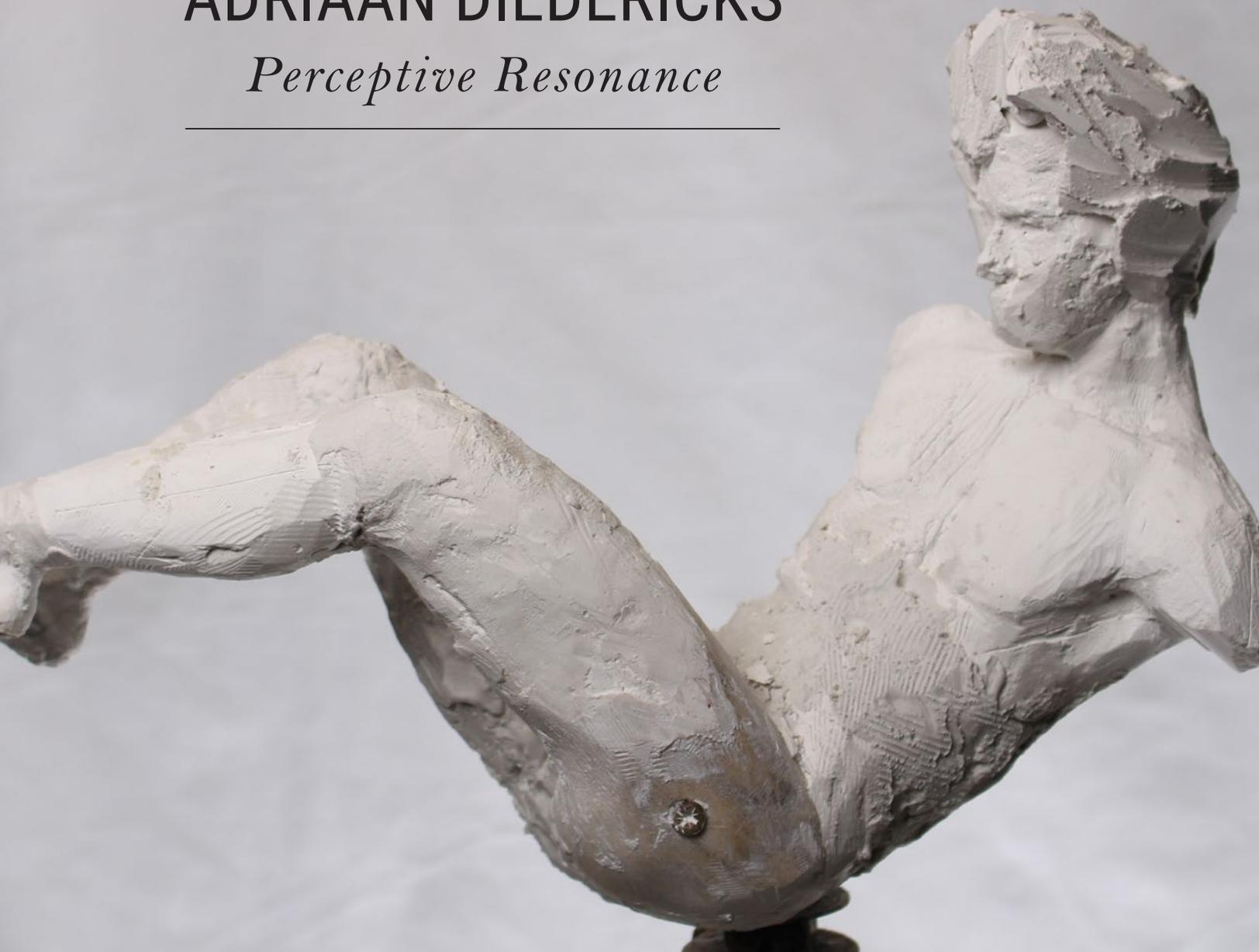


ADRIAAN DIEDERICKS

*Perceptive Resonance*

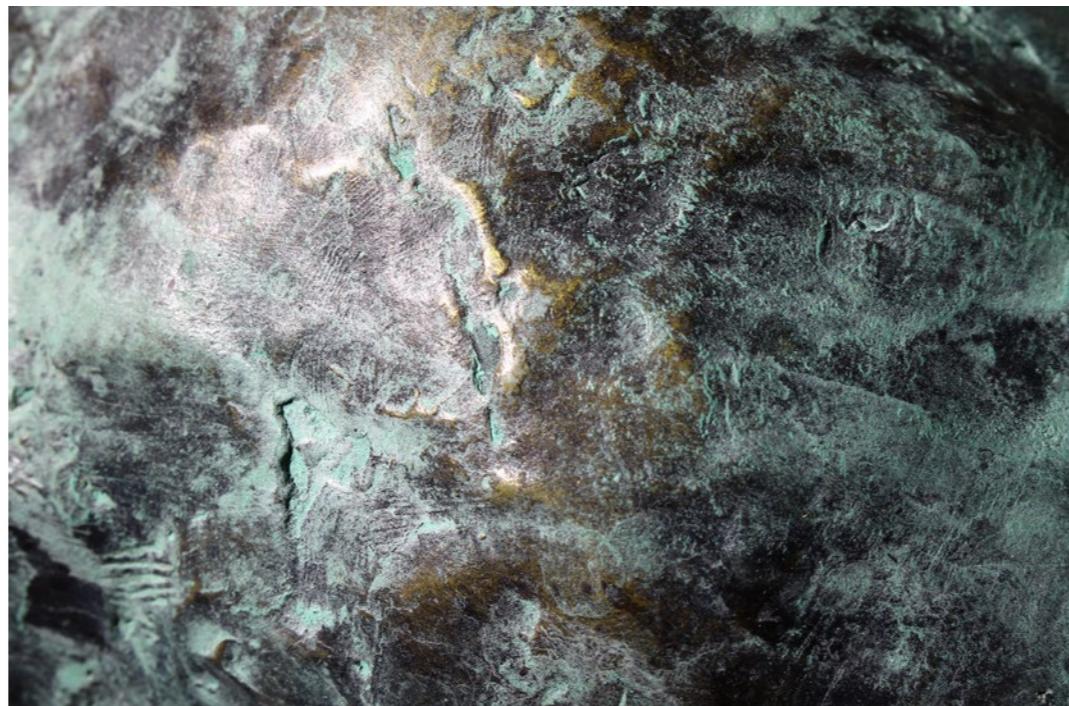
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*The Burden of Consciousness:  
Adriaan Diedericks's 'Perceptive Resonance'*

As the title of this body of work suggests, 'Perceptive Resonance', finds acclaimed sculptor Adriaan Diedericks in a reflective and observational mode, moving away from the overarching nautical/mythological motifs which defined his previous exhibition 'Christened Ships'.

Instead, this new series of sculptures ventures further into the realm of a more universal social critique, taking the form of contrasting allegorical sculptures imbued with a number of astute observations surrounding the paradoxes of the human condition, emotional states and philosophical musings. In so doing, Diedericks follows in the footsteps of richly contemplative artists such as Auguste Rodin, Michelangelo (both evident formal influences) and Francisco Goya, as well as poets like Dante Alighieri, often straying into similarly despairing territory.

If there is a centerpiece which sets the tone for this body of work, it is the impressive bronze *Contemplation*. The sculpture is a clear homage to Rodin's signature piece *The Thinker*, both in terms of the posture of the nude male figure and in the title, where the two are very much synonymous. Considered alongside the number of other sculptures in 'Perceptive Resonance' which extend this motif of pensive introspection – such as *Untitled I (Stoic)* and *Resolution*, evidently the 'Eureka!' moment – and a cyclical narrative on the Sisyphean nature of creativity and consciousness starts to emerge between these works and Rodin's.

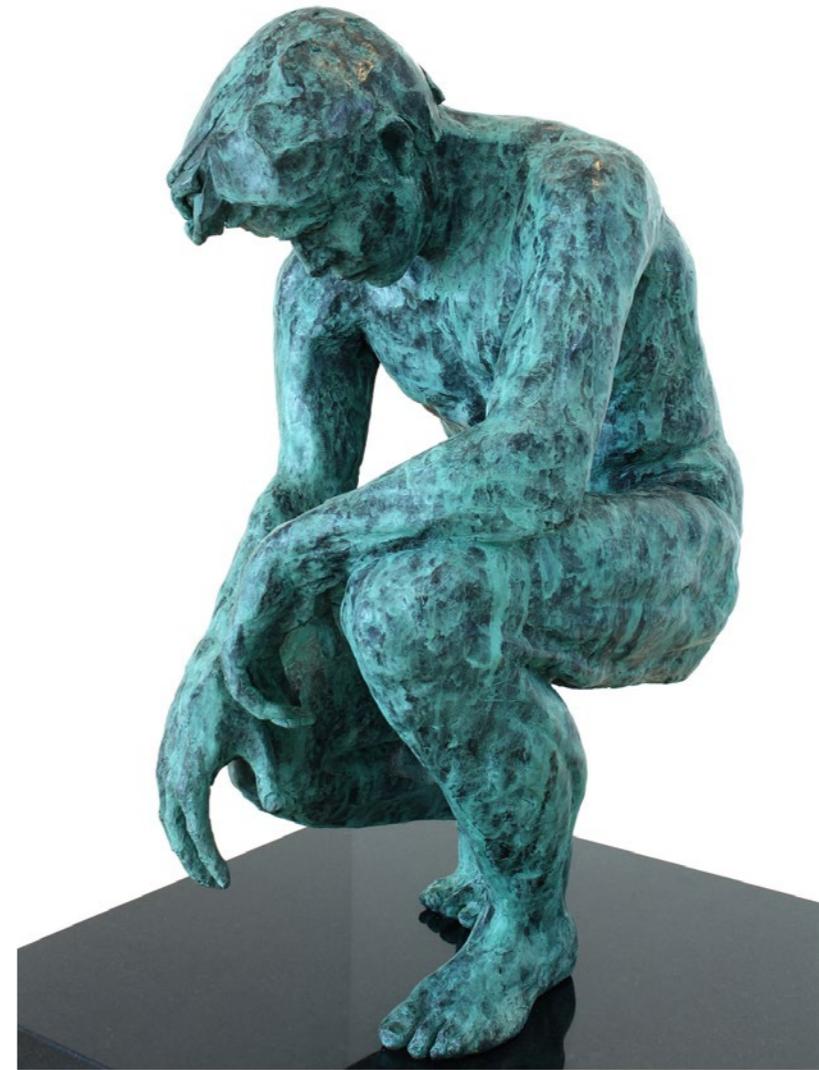
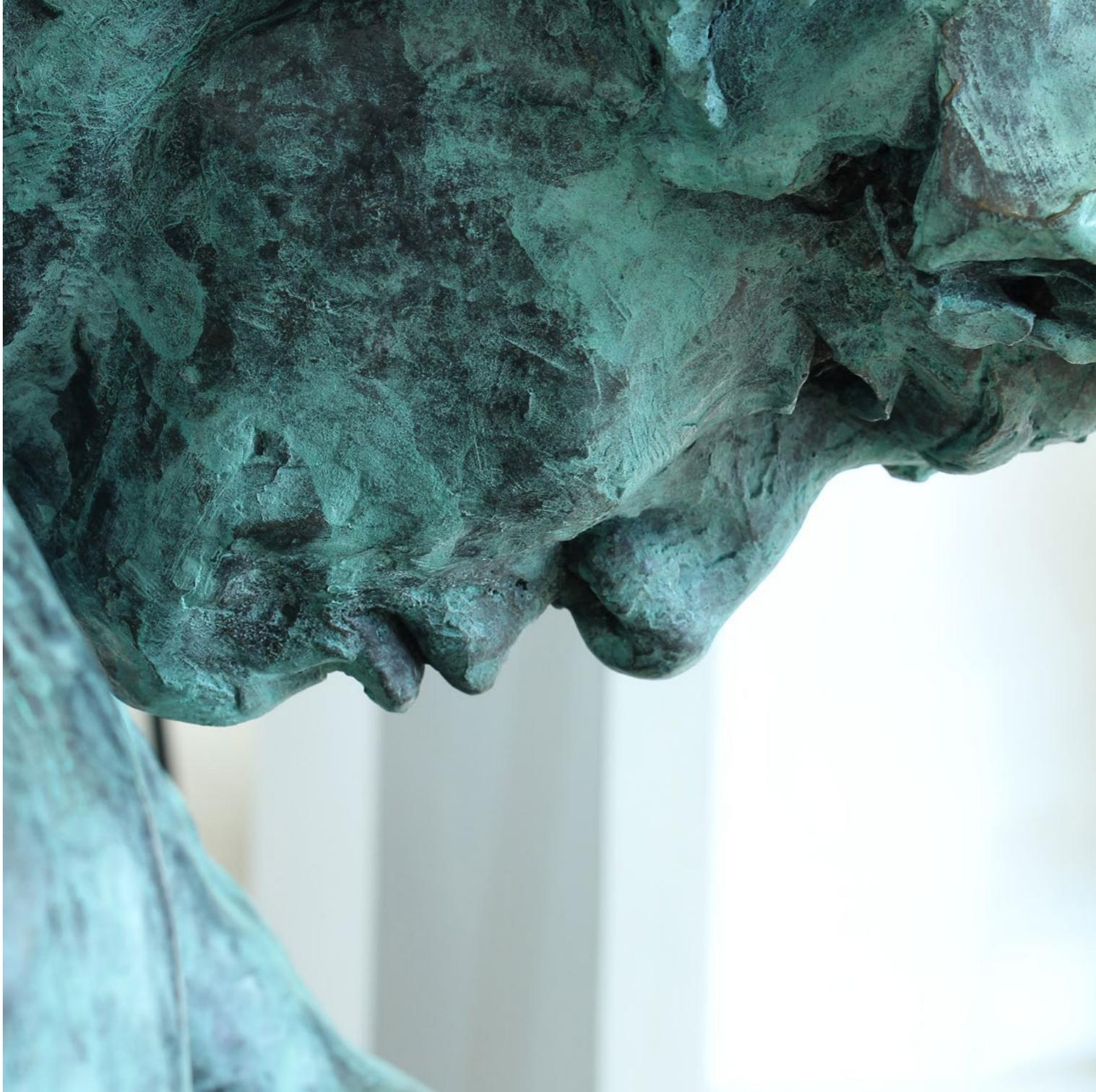


Worth recalling here is that before becoming Rodin's definitive work, *The Thinker* began life in a much smaller incarnation atop *The Gates of Hell*, a sprawling sculptural doorway based on Dante's *Inferno*. Albert E. Elsen has suggested that Rodin intended this figure to represent Dante himself, contemplating the themes of sin and salvation in his poem:

*"The tense solitary stillness of The Thinker dramatizes the effort of concentrated thought required to comprehend human tragedy and create poetic art that expresses it truthfully. Commitment to this impossible task... is the artist's private inferno".<sup>1</sup>*

Goya rephrased this sentiment another way: The sleep of reason produces monsters. While it is almost certainly a much darker and more macabre reading than Diedericks probably intended, the three suspended male torsos of *Trio* visually recall Goya's *Grande hazaña! Con muertos!* (*A heroic feat! With dead men!*), the 39th plate in the infamous 'Disasters of War' series. Notably more disturbing than his previous work, Goya was grappling at the time with the atrocities that he had witnessed during the Peninsula War, wherein the values of the Enlightenment and Spain (both of which he had previously held dear) were revealed to be equally susceptible to deplorable barbarity. While Diedericks is not responding to anything as specific (or severe) as that in 'Perceptive Resonance', there is certainly a trend amongst pieces such as *Truncated VI* and *Lineation Bust I*, which channel a kind of dehumanization in their grimmer tone.

In both Goya and Rodin then (and Dante by proxy), we see an artist funneling social critique of the fallible nature of humanity into their creativity as both a compulsion and a coping mechanism, the "private inferno" which Elsen alluded to earlier. What we are in effect talking about here, is the burden of consciousness, which is arguably the common thread which runs throughout this chapter of Adriaan Diedericks's work.



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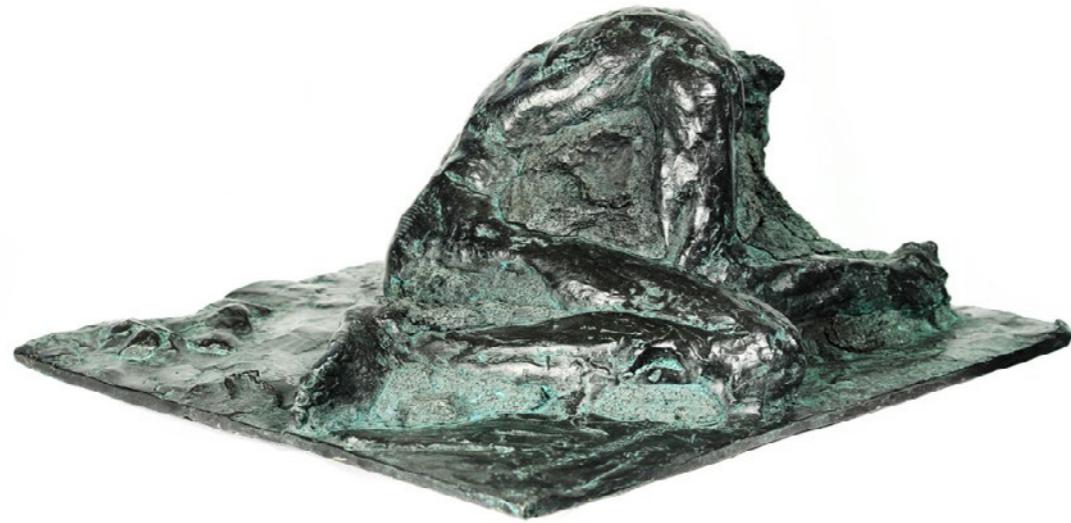
*Contemplation* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 1100 x 800 x 800 mm | Edition of 12



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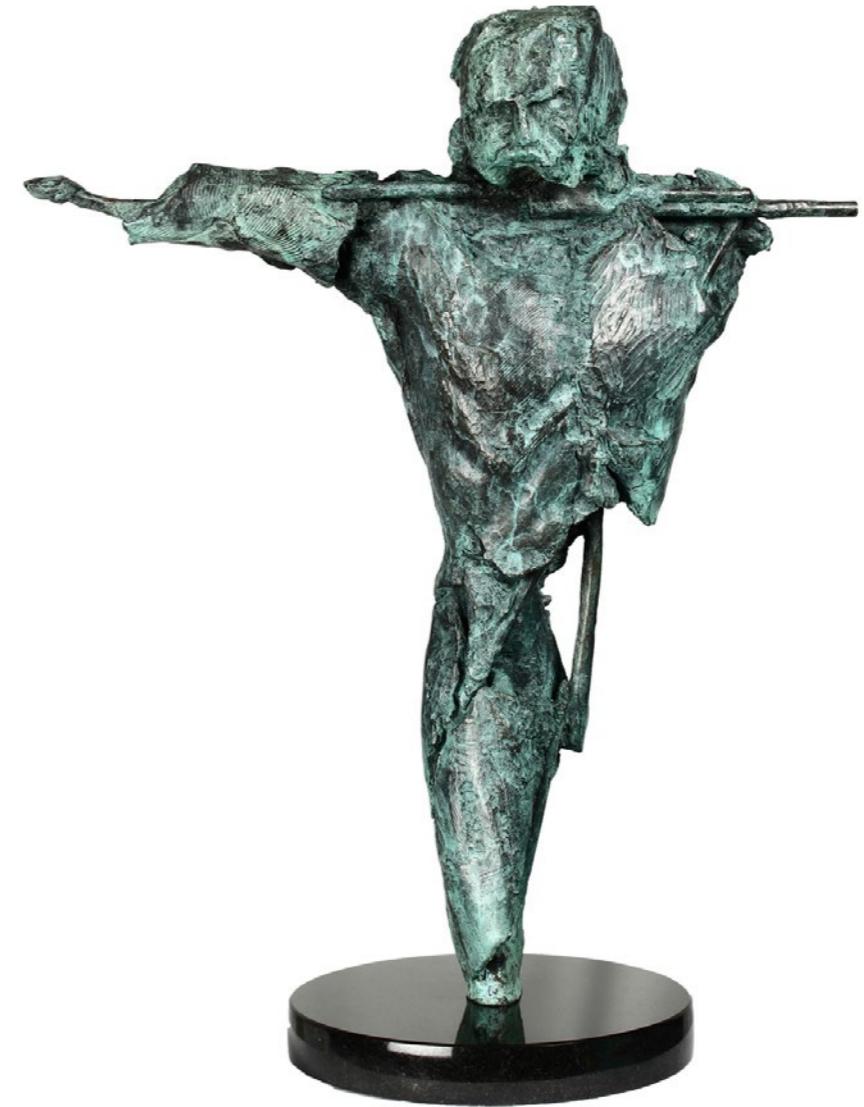
*Resolution* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 1550 x 940 x 750 mm | Edition of 12





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*After Aegeus* | 2017 | Bronze | 140 x 270 x 260 mm | Edition of 1



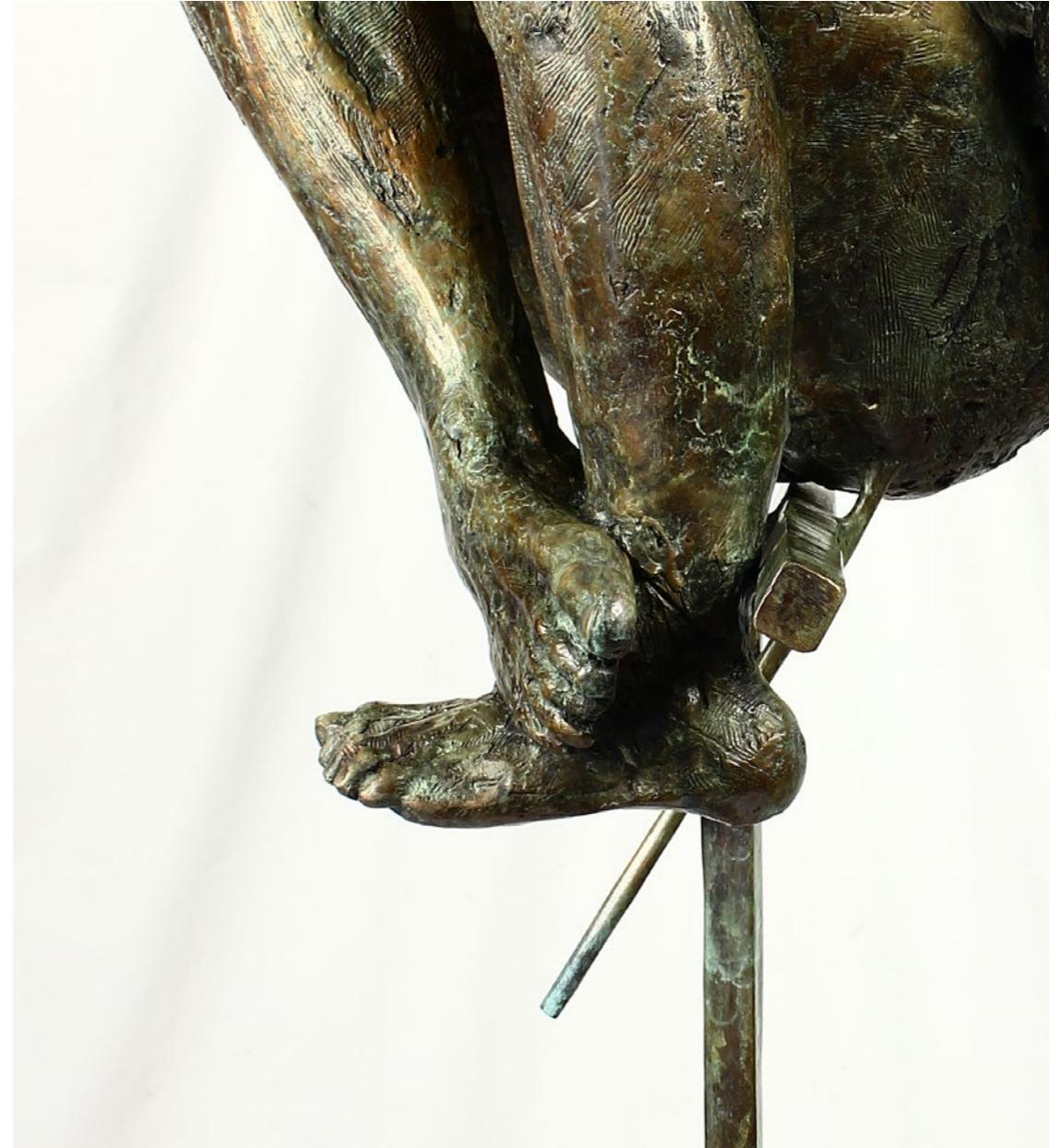
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*Truncated VI* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 530 x 430 x 210 mm | Edition of 12



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*Oblivion* | 2017 | Bronze on Steel | 1320 x 600 x 600 mm | Edition of 12





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*Oblivion Maquette (with head)* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 530 x 300 x 230 mm | Edition of 12

In a frequently cited paragraph of Book XI of the *Collected Works*, Carl Jung makes the observation that:

*The unconscious wants to flow into consciousness in order to reach the light, but at the same time it continually thwarts itself, because it would rather remain unconscious. That is to say, God wants to become man, but not quite.*<sup>ii</sup>

In an extreme nutshell, Jung's suggestion here is that in grappling with what it means to have consciousness, one has two options: reject the challenges and complexities of the so-called burden of consciousness and regress towards the comfort of a purely id-driven state, or confront these difficulties head-on and (however painfully) surmount them in the name of heightened growth as an individual. Thornton Ladd insightfully refers to this as "the Janus-face of the unconscious".<sup>iii</sup>

Adriaan Diedericks channels this Janus-face idea in the remarkably shrewd *Absorption*, which is an ideological companion piece to a work produced earlier that year in 2017 while on residency at the International Artist-Symposium in Neustadt an der Weinstraße, Germany. The German sculpture – the artist's first encounter with sandstone – was a tribute to Michelangelo's *non-finito* slave statues, wherein a human form is partially carved from a block of marble in order to thematically convey the challenge of individuation (precisely what Jung was talking about). In *Absorption*, the embracing figures appear to be fusing into each other, returning back to a stone-like pillar and metaphorically regressing to the primordial unconscious.





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*Refraction* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 760 x 320 x 380 mm | Edition of 12



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*Burden III* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 420 x 240 x 200 mm | Edition of 12



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*Lineation Bust I* | 2017 | Bronze on Steel | 300 x 140 x 170 mm | Edition of 12



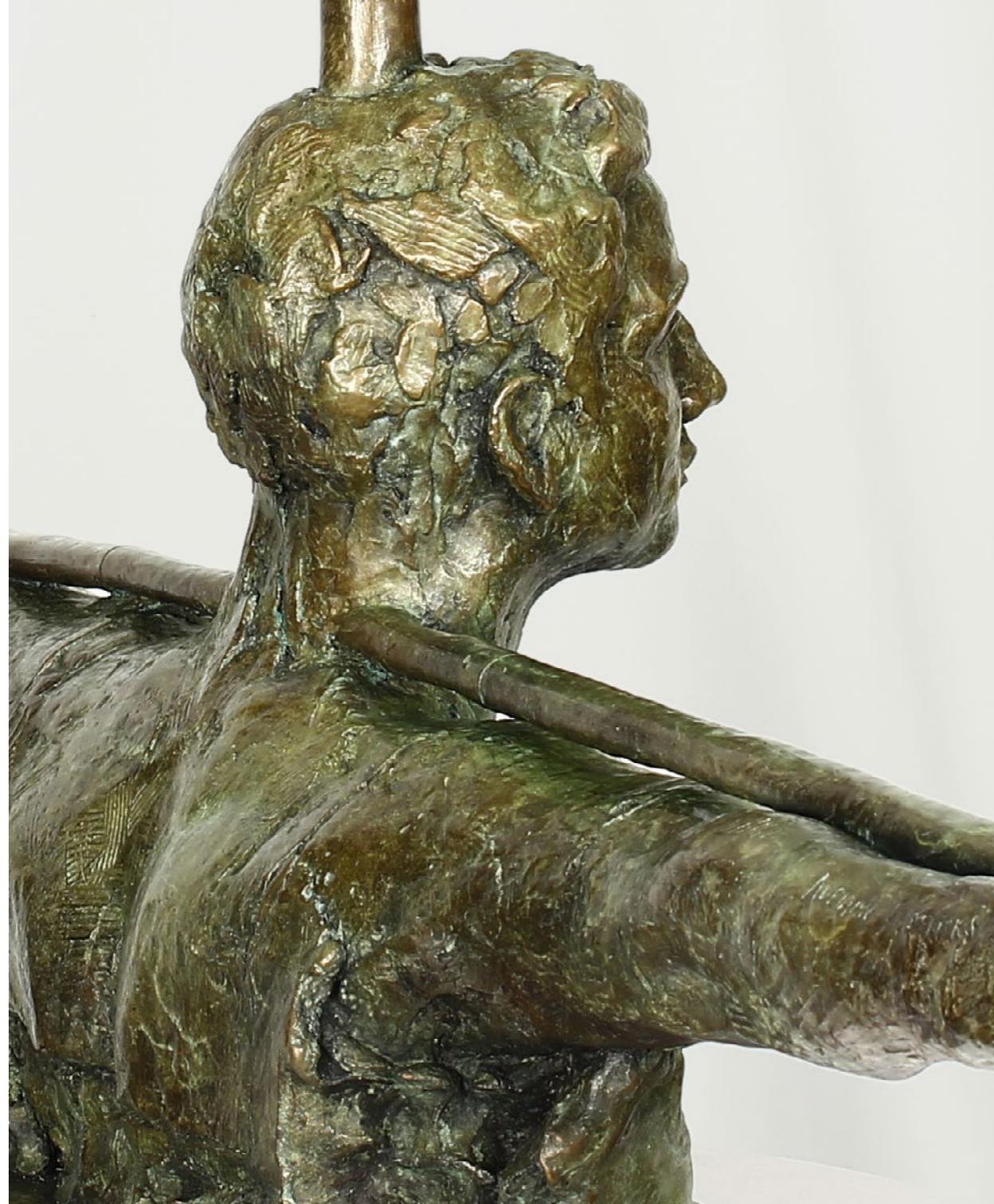
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*Lineation Bust II* | 2017 | Bronze | 160 x 200 x 190 mm | Edition of 12



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*Lineation Bust III* | 2017 | Bronze on Steel | 400 x 150 x 180 mm | Edition of 12



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*Corpus (Bust)* | 2017 | Bronze on Copper | 470 x 900 x 180 mm | Edition of 12



Diedericks's sandstone sculpture most closely resembled Michelangelo's *Atlas Slave*, wherein the partial figure appears to be pushing back against a substantial load in reference to the Greek mythological titan Atlas, who was condemned by Zeus to hold up the sky on his shoulders. This is a theme that he picks up again in 'Perceptive Resonance' through the sculpture *Burden II*, reimagining the sky as an architectural support beam which the figure appears to be on the verge of buckling underneath, and unable to hold level.

Physically and in terms of art historical associations, classical bronze figurative sculpture lends itself to these sorts of morose interpretations. It is against this heavy backdrop of burdens and weight that Adriaan Diedericks astutely juxtaposes the athletic jubilation of the nimble trio of the *Cohesion* series (who are no more burdened by their respective beams than a tightrope walker or pole-vaulter) and the vibrant International Klein Blue colouring of *Reclining Figure II*. Contrasting the near-lifesize of the larger bronzes, these playful euphoric figures could perhaps be read as the bliss of a higher state achieved through facing the tribulations of one's consciousness head-on.

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I) Elsen, A. 1981. 'The Gates of Hell'. in Elsen, A. (ed.). 1981. *Rodin Rediscovered*. Washington: National Gallery of Art. 65.

II) Jung, C. 1975. *Psychology and Religion: West and East (The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 11) (2nd Edition)*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 456.

III) Ladd, T. n.d. 'Janus-face of the Unconscious'. in *Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism*. Available: <https://aras.org/concordance/content/janus-face-unconscious>. [2019, June 29].



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*Cohesion I* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 440 x 310 x 130 mm | Edition of 12





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*Cohesion II* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 300 x 280 x 130 mm | Edition of 12



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*Cohesion III* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 300 x 280 x 200 mm | Edition of 12



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*Reclining Figure I* | 2017 | Bronze on Steel | 400 x 390 x 140 mm | Edition of 1





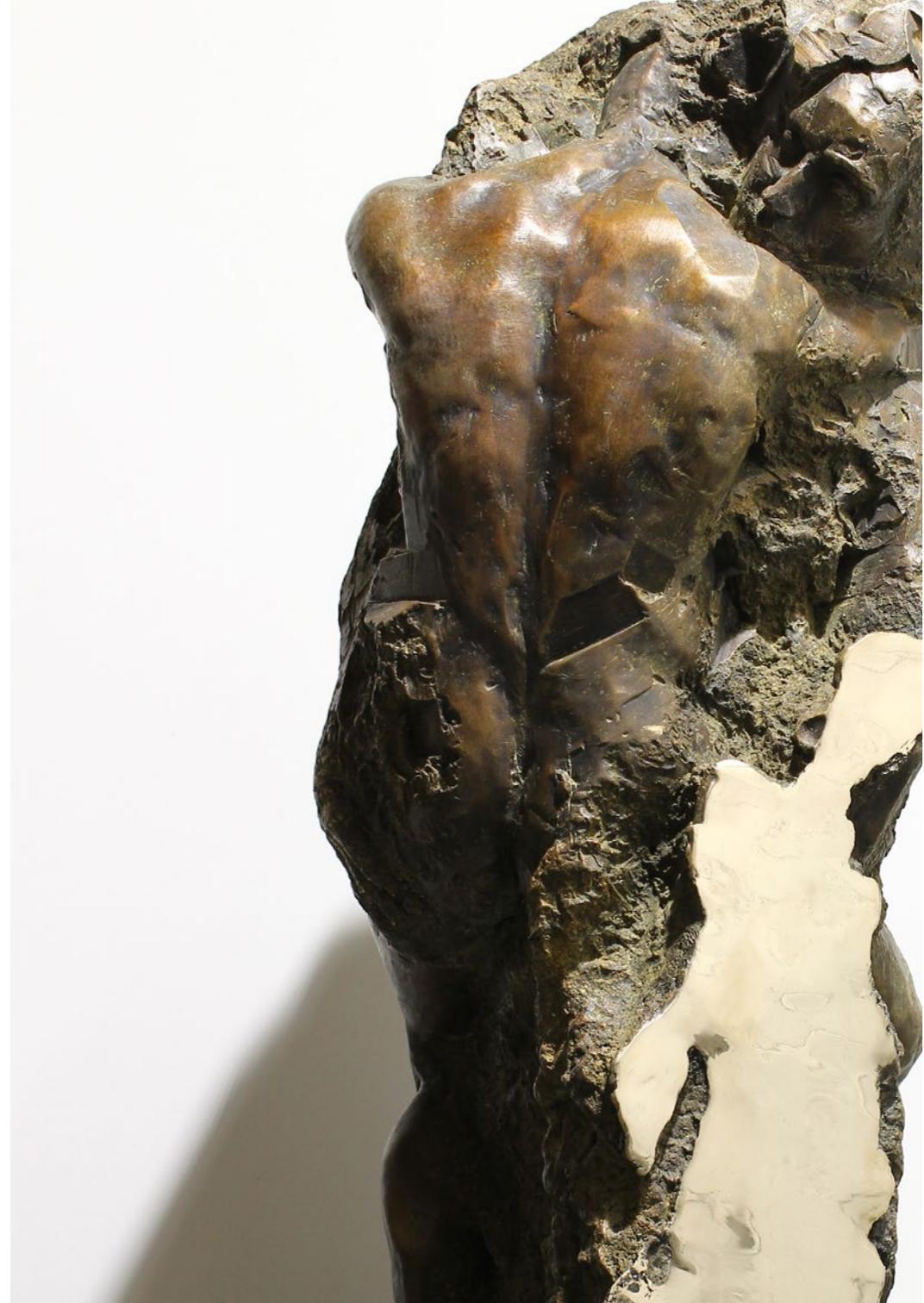
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*Reclining Figure II* | 2017 | Bronze | 380 x 110 x 120 mm | Edition of 12



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*Absorption* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 900 x 500 x 400 mm | Edition of 12





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*Floating Fragment* | 2017 | Bronze on Crystal | 400 x 130 x 100 mm | Edition of 1



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*Trio* | 2017 | Bronze on Steel | 230 x 140 x 140 mm | Edition of 1 (each unique)



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*Untitled II* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 580 x 540 x 350 mm | Edition of 12



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*Burden II* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 1550 x 1900 x 500 mm | Edition of 12



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*Untitled I (Stoic)* | 2017 | Bronze on Granite | 630 x 320 x 250 mm | Edition of 12

# ADRIAAN DIEDERICKS

## Curriculum Vitae

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

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

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

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

### SELECTED AUCTIONS

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

### COLLECTIONS

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

### PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

<i>South Africa, England, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Australia, United States of America, Canada, Barbados</i>
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### PUBLIC SCULPTURE EXHIBITIONS

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

### COMPETITIONS

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

### OTHER EXPERIENCE

<i>Apprentice under Lionel Smit</i>	2013 – end 2014
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### SELECTED RESIDENCIES

<i>Internationales Künstlersymposium, Museum Villa Böhm, Germany</i>	2017
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Catalogue published by Adriaan Diedericks Studios (Pty) Ltd.  
in conjunction with Art in the Yard Gallery, Franschhoek  
Cape Town, 2019

Catalogue Design by Rayke Loftie-Eaton  
Photography and editing by Jaco Schroeder and Rayke Loftie-Eaton  
Text by Tim Leibbrandt

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