

Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Award 2022/23
End of Project Report

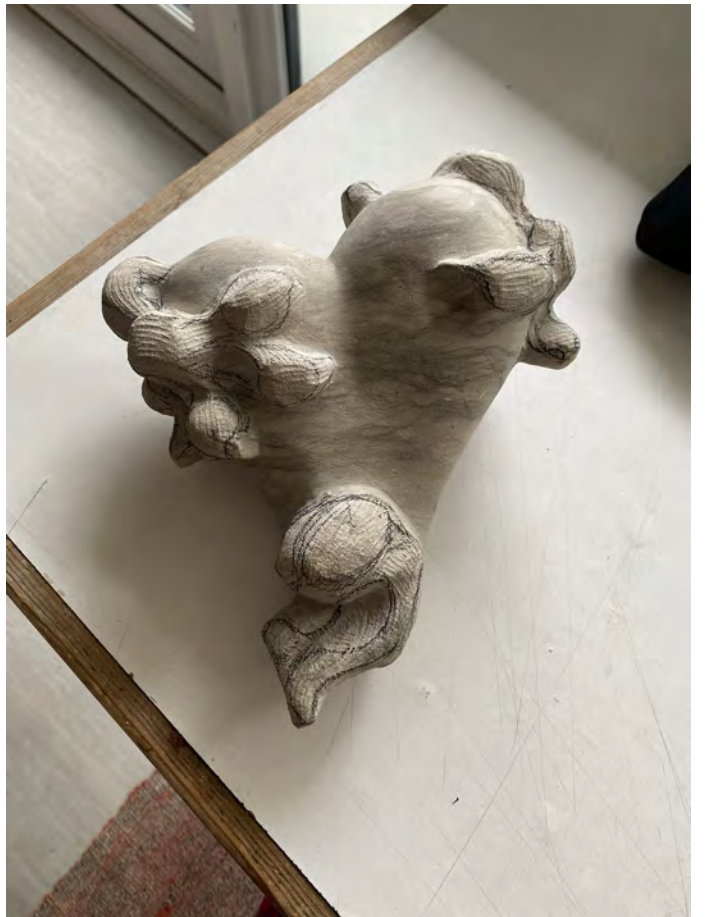
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Academic Year 2022/23
City & Guilds of London Art School

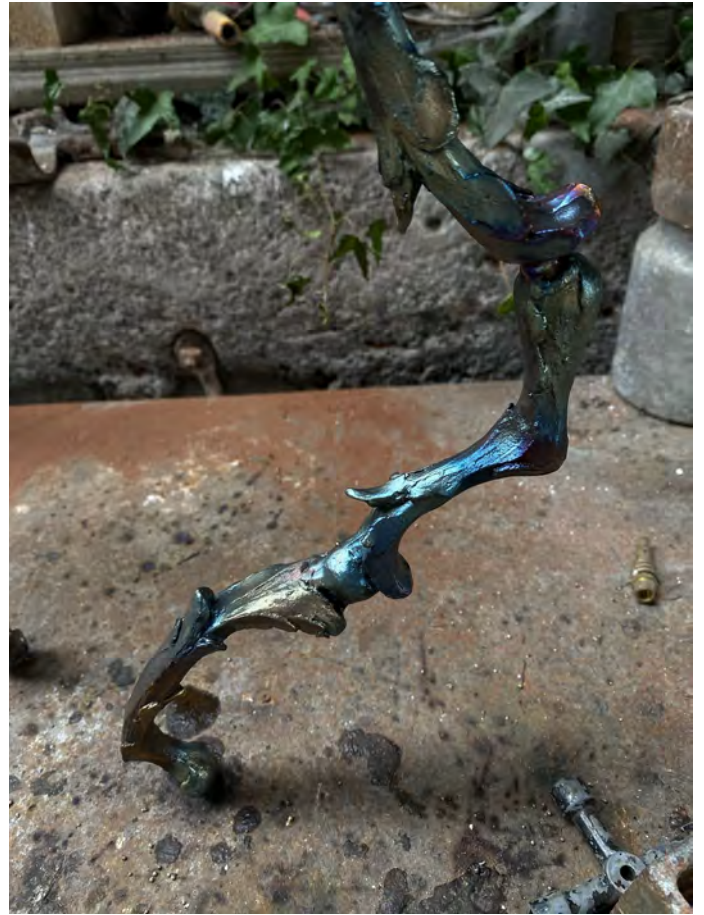


During my graduating year at City and Guilds of London Art School I created the piece entitled *Proud City Ornament*. This piece consists of three elements, two of stone and one of bronze, that combine to form an object displayed as one. The piece was produced in response to my dissertation thesis entitled 'PROUD CITY: STRANGE ORNAMENT' which was centered upon the postmodern buildings that make up Minster Court, a network of commercial office buildings in the City of London, as an example of Modern Gothic in London. 'Proud City', which takes its name from a cabaret club located within Minster Court, is a polysemous phrase that points also to the historical importance of the Gothic tradition within London's built environment, the influence of which is still visible in the present day. My research established the origins, characteristics and evolution of Gothic and postmodern architectural traditions, and went on to investigate the development and significance of Gothic fiction in an attempt to define this strange new Gothic and to understand the amalgamation of the real world and the fictional.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Sir Denis Mahon Sculptural Award for their support towards this final year project. This support meant that I was able to use quality materials and a Richemont Bleu limestone from France for the carved pieces. The striation in the stone is something which is not common in limestones from the United Kingdom and is something which I think is integral to the piece. I was also able to purchase some stone carving tools specific to carving such an intricate piece. The bronze pieces that form the cage were cast welded and finished with Mark Haliwell in Wales where I travelled to work with him one on one and was able to have a dedicated period of time to work on the waxes and cast the bronze myself with his assistance which has been an invaluable learning experience which I shall carry with me into my future practice.

I started the process by loosely sketching ideas. I initially had proposed entirely separate objects but from these sketches I came to the idea of having a central gothic ornamented object which was framed by another baroque ornamented object. I needed to be sure that these two different styles of architectural ornament would be able to work together harmoniously so the use of negative space in this design process felt very important. From the initial sketches I started to make a clay model to work from into stone. The size of the stone carving was a little larger than the clay model as I only used the model for visual reference. I also used this clay model to design the exact scale and angles for the bronze cage. I slowly worked the stone down incrementally, refining the detail and surface finish throughout the process. The bronze cage was lost wax cast in pieces. I made clay models in various sections which I then made silicone moulds from. I cast wax into these moulds which was then shell coated, burned out and the bronze was poured using these. I then welded together all the individual sections of bronze before finishing the metal and patinating the surface.





Having now graduated from City & Guilds of London Art School I will be embarking on my career. I was awarded the De Lazlo Carving Prize for outstanding work at the graduation ceremony at the culmination of my three years at the art school which was a vote of confidence for the future. I am currently in the process of moving to a new studio/ workshop where I have joined a team of carvers in South London, all of whom are City & Guilds alumni. I shall be working with them on architectural carving projects alongside continuing to develop my own artistic practice. *Proud City Ornament* will be shown on the 9th August 2023 at Cafe Oto for a 5GateTemple night alongside audio from Rocheman, Scattsman and Jennifer Walton & Daniel Evans.



