

Elementals

by André Stead

The Elemental Man Series

The Elemental Man series is derived from an in-depth study of the human male. The development of the series started with a number of nude photographic shoots documenting the physical attributes of the male form performing everyday actions and movements. The photographic reference was used to create a series of realistic figurative oil paintings that illustrate the movement of the male figure. The paintings allowed the artist to explore the reference material in-depth and to transcribe it at an intellectual level. It is during this phase of the creative process that the conceptual value of a body of work is defined and the series forms its own identity. As this series is part of an ongoing study of the human condition, it is not only the physical attributes of the male form that is studied but rather the male as a whole, mind, body and soul.

The painted works act as a filter between the photographic material collected during the research shoots and the sculpture pieces that are ultimately created. The subject matter of the photographs is the models from the shoot, the subject matter for the paintings is the photographs of the models and the subject matter of the sculptures is the painted works. This multiple step development of this series bears an interesting resemblance to the multiple step processes used in the sculpturing and finishing of three dimensional artworks. First the original "soft copy" is carved and formed then it is moulded and cast in a hard medium like resin. The "master copy" allows for a higher level of refinement and will be moulded to produce the final editions that in turn are individually cast, refined and finished by hand.

The research into a new subject matter starts at roots level in the studio with the first photographic shoot. Meeting the models often creates a first impression that will permeate throughout the entire body of work. As the sculptures are all about the subtleties, it is often the subtleties of the subject that define the work. The process of photographing, drawing and painting becomes a way in which the physical attributes of the model is programmed into the artist's mind in order to fluently express the fundamental dynamics of the form during sculpturing. Strangely, it is the "research" done while having a coffee break and making small talk that reveals the true nature of a person's temperament and it is this element that sets the tone for the series.

The elemental man series depicts the morphology of man in its elemental form, uninhibited by complex detail. The sculptures are impressionistic, capturing only that which the artist chooses to reveal about the subject. The simplified form embodies the essence of the subject and its relative action. A person's actions and personality have a natural association with a relevant temperament and each temperament has its own association with a physical element. For example: A running man would be displaying an energetic temperament associated with the burning of energy and the burning of energy relates to fire. The references to elements in the series places man firmly in the realm of nature and as part of nature, not separate from it. It is from this perspective that the elemental man series was conceived.





Left:

Studio Shoot

15 09 2012

Photographic shoot to capture and study the movement and form of the model.

Centre:

Fracture I

10 10 2012

Oil on Canvas
1000 x 500 mm

Right:

Aquatic man

20 02 2013

Resin on granite
740 x 275 x 210 mm



Earth man

The Earth man sculpture portrays a man bending over forward with his arms hanging down and his feet firmly on the ground. The man's posture emulates a melancholic gesture as he looks downward and inward towards himself, his face shielded from the viewer. The concept of caves representing the solemn, solitary sanctuaries of the earth is evident in the negative space created by the bending figure. Although the figure itself is devoid of negative space, the man's bent back and hanging arms create what appears to be an arched doorway. This imagery is very reminiscent of the Dolmen of Northern Ireland (standing stones that resemble Pi, the most recognized mathematical constant in the world), that are called giants graves. This was also used as the symbol for earth in some ancient cultures.

Earth man
2013
Resin
540 x 200 x 350 mm



Aerial man

The Aerial man is based on an earlier piece titled "Star gazer", a carved wooden female figure gazing at the stars, hands clasped behind her head. The Aerial man, although quite different, is also focused at the heavens supporting his head with his hands. It is in the head that fleeting thoughts reside and human thought has long been associated with the air. A person with an expressive and social temperament is as free flowing and interactive as the wind and that is perhaps why this association has been so widely used throughout the ages. The Aerial man represents the thoughts of man and it is through thinking at a social level that man will grow and mature in the future.

Aerial man

2013

Resin

760 x 200 x 270 mm

Fire man



The Fire man is inspired by the 14th century sculpture of David by Michaelangelo, a piece that depicts David, a young man who conquered Goliath the giant. Fire is often associated with a choleric or driving personality, a temperament coherent with leaders and heroes. The Fire man represents the strength and courage of men and the power and energy of conviction. The figure's forearm and head is fused together indicating the synthesis of coherent thought and action. The man's subtle masculine features are testament to the underlying power of this seemingly calm and collected figure.

Fire man

2013

Resin

750 x 245 x 210 mm

260 x 420 x 240 mm



Seed of man

The Seed of man sculpture is the first piece in the series. It depicts a man kneeling down into a foetal position with his arms clenched around his knees. From within the sculpture there is a bright glow of light emanating from the figure's chest and he appears to be slightly elevated creating a floating feeling. The title reveals the comparison between seed and man and the association to procreation and growth. The light coming from within the figure represents the unseen energy stored in a seed that has the potential to produce a full grown tree. The man is compared to a seed and therefore also has the potential energy to grow into something large and impressive by comparison.

Seed of man

2013

Resin

750 x 245 x 210 mm





Aquatic man

The Aquatic man portrays a man walking forward whilst looking sideways, as if his body is going one direction and his thoughts and focus in another. This is often the nature of emotion, flowing in a direction as if by a force of its own. Water is also associated with a phlegmatic personality or someone who is calm, supportive and understanding, and has an emotional connection with the world. Similar to the currents and cross currents of the oceans that are in a constant state of flux the sea of emotions in a man are ever changing. The Aquatic man portrays this constant movement through the fluid forward motion of the figure's flowing form.

Aquatic man

2013

Resin

740 x 275 x 210 mm



Leap of faith
Maquette
2012
Resin
430 x 889 x 140 mm



Anamorphic Series

The *anamorphic series is defined by its combination of different and even opposing imagery. Each piece in the series has two figures that constitute the artwork. These figures are performing different actions' within the singular form of the sculpture piece. From one angle the sculpture has a distinct silhouette of a figure and perpendicular to this view there is a different figure altogether. The two figures are perceived as one object, and as one moves around the artwork, the complete integration of the two forms is apparent. This makes it possible for two contrasting concepts to merge harmoniously regardless of their apparent incompatibility.

In some of the *anamorphic series pieces the second figure is hidden from view, only visible from above. This unlikely point of view denies the viewer all the necessary information needed to understand the form. The influence of this unseen element has an effect on the overall geometry of the artwork and represents the unknown element in any circumstance. Like anything that lies beyond our frame of reference is hard to understand.

The *anamorphic series explores the diverse and antithetical attributes of human nature at a subconscious level. Emotions such as love, joy and happiness are greatly contrasted by emotions such as fear, despair or loneliness. All humans can feel these emotions, but it's ultimately one's perception and understanding of a situation that determines how one responds emotionally to an event. The Anamorphic series is an emotionally charged series and is in many ways my own emotional response to the world, as I see it in its contrasting diversity.

* an-a-mor-phiс [an-uh-mawr-fik]
adjective: Optics . having or producing unequal magnifications
along two axes perpendicular to each other

Incarnation
Maquette
2010
Aluminum
500 x 460 x 200 mm



Reclining figure
Maquette
2010
Aluminum
250 x 420 x 180 mm





Modern Venus



The Modern Venus is a *unimorphic sculpture, in that the piece consists of a singular figure, as opposed to the two figures per sculpture in the anamorphic series. The figure is simplified to the extent of having no negative spaces or humanlike detail. This singular form however captures the contrapposto stance and feminine gesture of the figure without compromise. The faint indication of human traits, create a ghostlike impression and leaves much for the mind's eye to desire. The Modern Venus is inspired by Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" (1486), depicting the goddess of love and forms part of a three piece evolving trilogy, Venus, Modern Venus, and Future Venus.

Modern Venus

Maquette
2011
Resin
680 x 280 x 180 mm



Incarnation
25 11 2011
Resin on glass base
2000 x 1200 x 450 mm
Bantry Bay , South Africa



Seed of man



Earth man



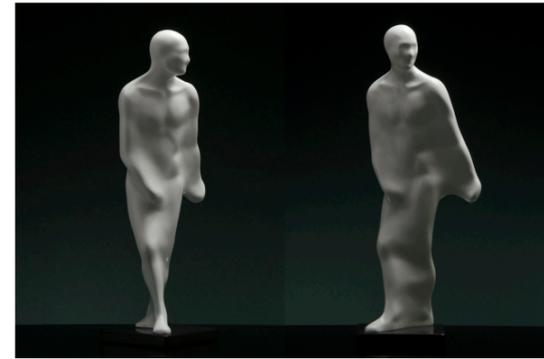
Incarnation



Reclining figure



Fire man



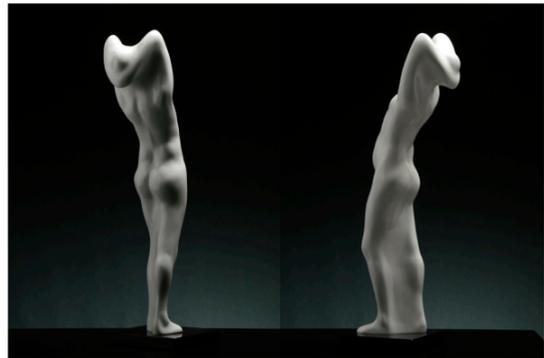
Aquatic man



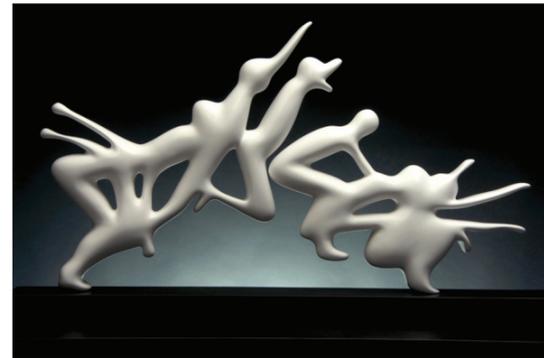
Modern Venus



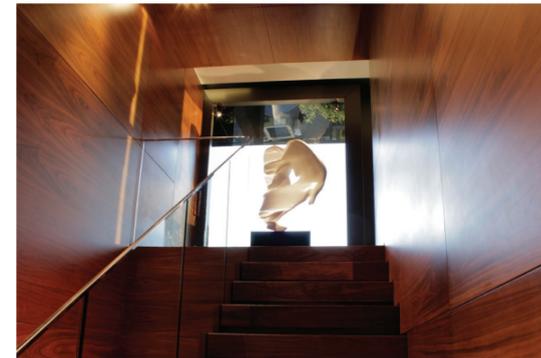
Reclining figure large maquette



Aerial man



Leap of faith



Incarnation - Bantry bay



Oxford Swallows
Oxford, UK

André Stead

Born in Evander, 1975. Lives and works in Cape Town.

Qualifications and awards

2007 Eight years bronze casting experience, Bronze Age Art Foundry, Simon's Town

1997 Metal forging tuition, John Allesandri, Cape Town

1995 Graphic design course, Gunther Komnick, Cape Town

1994 Goldsmith apprenticeship, Pretoria

1993 Pro Arte School of Arts, Distinction with colours for Art, Pretoria

1991 Merit award, Iscor Art Competition, Iscor Permanent Art Collection, Pretoria

Selected Exhibitions and Commissions

2013

Elementals, Solo exhibition, Knysna Fine Art Gallery

Woodfees 2013, Group exhibition, P J Olivier Art Centre, Stellenbosch

2012

Summer, Group exhibition, Christopher Møller Art, Cape Town

Young Minds Charity Fund Raiser, st. Lorient, Pretoria

Illumination, Solo exhibition, Christopher Møller Art, Cape Town

Oxford Swallows, Private commission, Oxford, United Kingdom

2011

Flight of the Swallows, Corporate commission, Delaire Graff Wine Estate, Stellenbosch

Evolution, Solo exhibition, Is Art Gallery, Franschhoek

Group exhibition, Christopher Møller Art, Cape Town

Group exhibition, Dawid's Choice Gallery, Johannesburg

Roodt Inc, Group exhibition, Dawid's Choice Gallery, Johannesburg

2010

Group exhibition, Dimitrov Art Gallery, Dullstroom

Rooftop exhibition, Group show, St.Loriant, Pretoria

Group exhibition, The Upper Deck Gallery, Plettenberg Bay

Group exhibition, Christopher Møller Art Gallery, Cape Town

2009

Group exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg

Identity, Group exhibition, Platform on 18th Gallery, Pretoria

Figures, Solo exhibition, Northcliff, Johannesburg

Female series launch, Grande Provence Heritage Wine Estate. CTICC, Cape Town

2008

Angels, Group exhibition, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek

Group exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town

Medallions, Corporate Commission, Burj Dubai Development, Dubai

2006

Corporate commission, Graham Beck Wine Estate, Franschhoek

Group exhibition, Bronze Age Sculpture House, Cape Town

2000 - 2005

Group exhibition, Seidelberg Wine Estate, Paarl

Miniatures, Group exhibition, Bronze Age Sculpture House, Cape Town

Board of Executors, Corporate commission, Cape Town

Group exhibition, Vineyard Gallery, Cape Town

1999

Group exhibition, The Christie Gallery, Cape Town

Group exhibition, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town

1998

Wooden figures, Solo exhibition, Novalis Institute, Cape Town

Sanlam Restoration - Award, Corporate commission, Sanlam, Cape Town

Group exhibition, Association for Visual Arts, Cape Town

1997

Sanlam Literary Award, Corporate commission, Sanlam, Grahamstown

Group exhibition, Primart Gallery, Cape Town

Collections

Bernard Fontannaz

Laurence Graff

Willy Woestyn

Johnny Walker Stride Awards

Graham Beck Estates

Board of Executives

Hal Shaper

Sanlam

Iscor



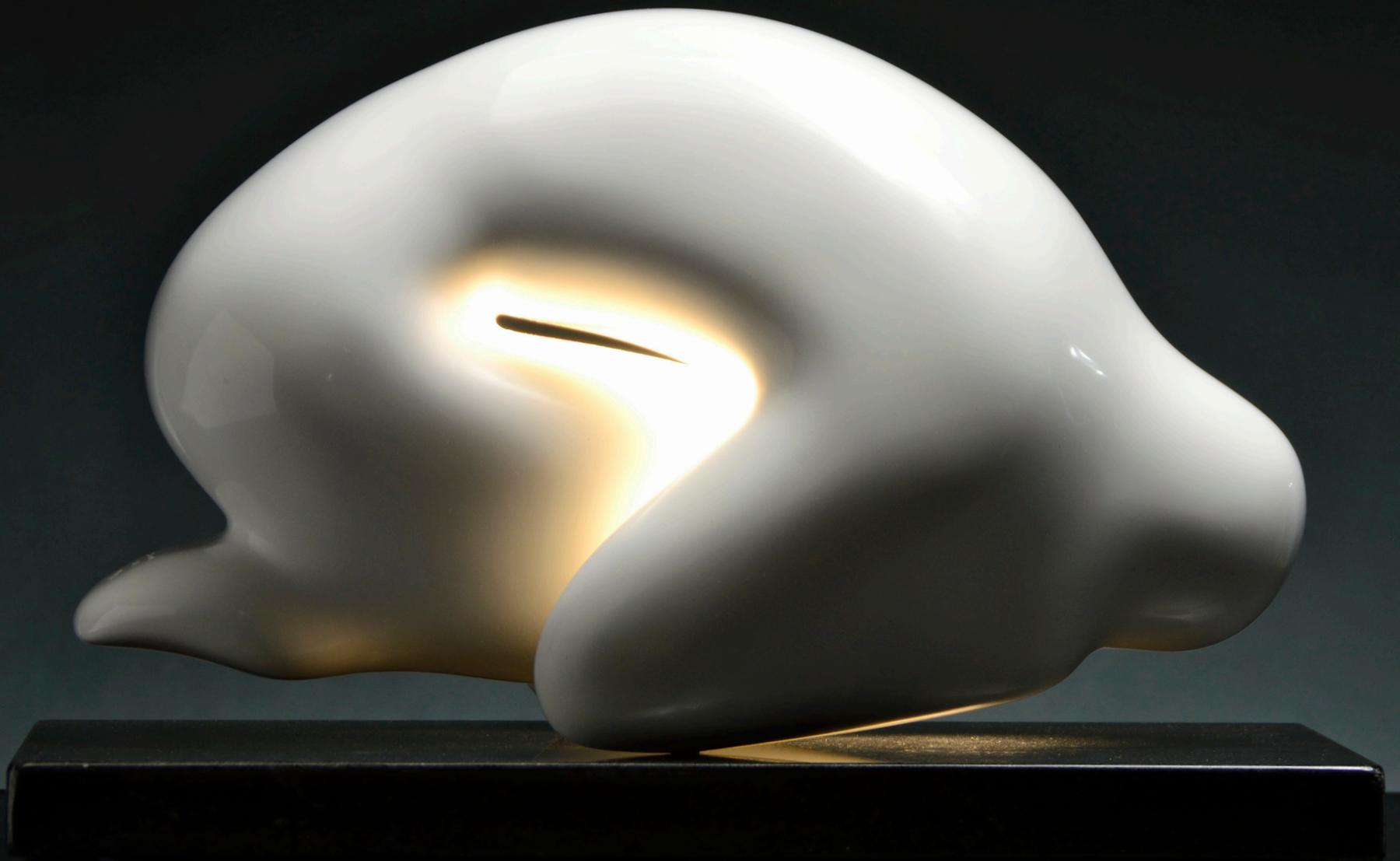
Photograph: Wiehahn Diederichs

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