

WILLIAM PYE

SCULPTURE

2010

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FOREWORD

Smaller sculptures by William Pye have been shown in London galleries over the years, including a recent exhibition of his 60s works in tubular stainless steel, but this is the first time that a major presentation has been possible, to include his well known and dramatic water based sculpture as well as smaller gallery scale works. These include a series of recent bronzes that will be shown for the first time. The catalyst for this long overdue exhibition is the new book on the artist, a comprehensive study of his life and times and his fascinating journey as an artist.

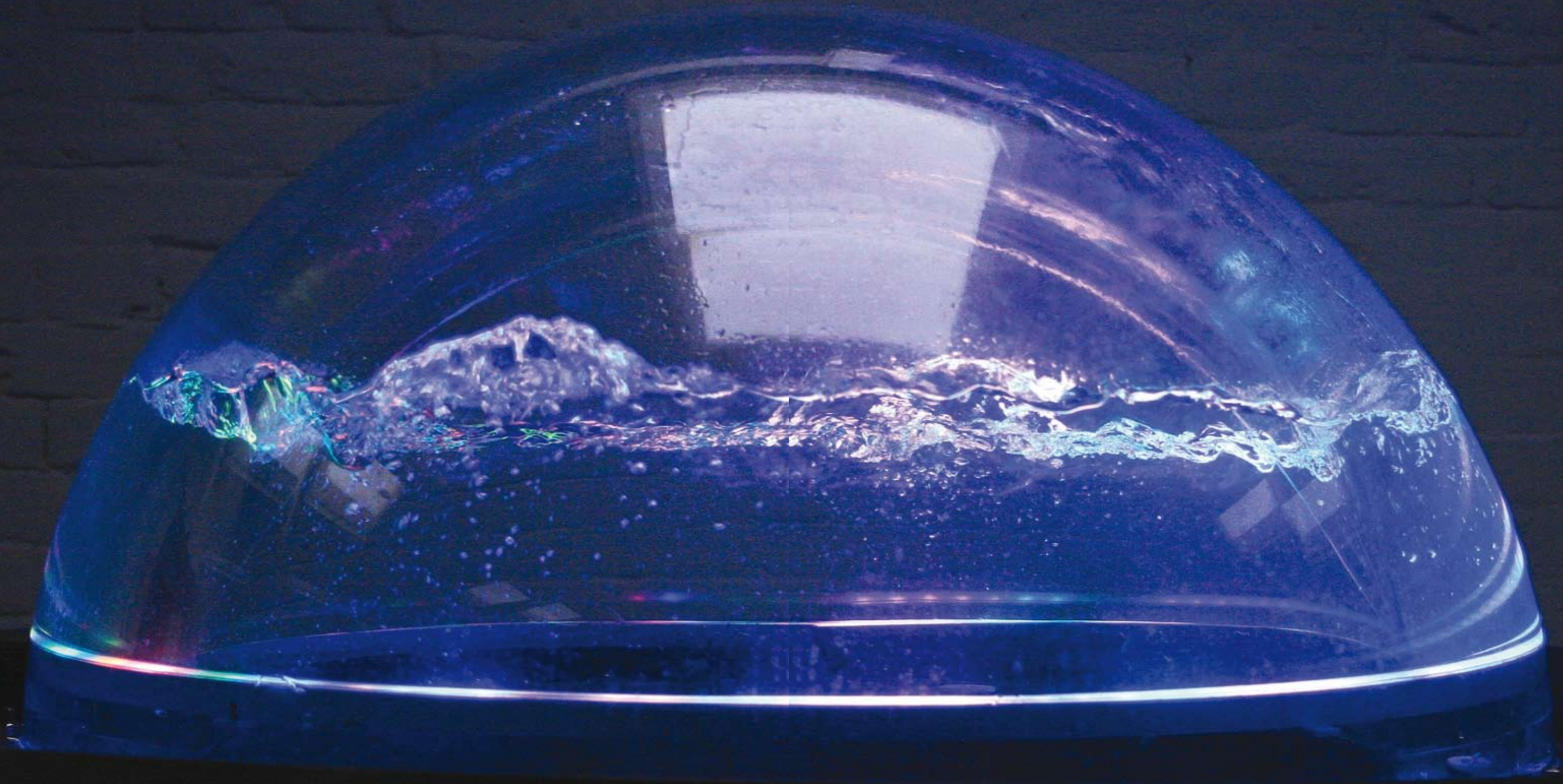
At King's Place there is an opportunity to show the complex and beautifully engineered water based, kinetic sculptures to great effect, so two galleries working together can do justice to the different facets of Pye's art. Ten works have been chosen, each carefully sited within the King's Place public spaces and canalside. At the gallery in Mayfair two water sculptures will also be shown, together with a significant group of works in bronze, silver and stainless steel.

William Pye was born in London in 1938 and studied at the Royal College of Art. He became fascinated by the movement of water from an early age although his major works in this medium come later in his career. His early work in stone and metal was largely abstract with highly polished surfaces and simple forms. He explored kineticism in the 1970s, incorporating naturally reflective surfaces revealing the interplay of movement and light. Water is a logical extension of this practice and from the 1980s onwards he has created a series of spectacular site specific water based installations in high profile locations around the UK and abroad. Some of the best known include the dramatic 70 metre water wall at the Seville Expo, the Cones at Gatwick Airport, several major corporate sites in London and others such as the Derby Cascade and the *Scala Aquae Pembrochiana* at Wilton House. Equally important but often less visible to the public are the many sculptures that he has created for private gardens; the new book chronicles these for the first time.

We are grateful to Bill for his insightful comments about the works in the exhibition.

PETER OSBORNE, OSBORNE SAMUEL
POLLY BIELECKA, PANGOLIN LONDON

Scylla
Stainless steel
& acrylic polymer
205 cm high



'Double Dome' results from the research and development necessary for the design of the dome to go on 'Vannpaviljong' ('Water Pavilion' in Norwegian), my current commission for Drammen in Norway. With this piece I have been able to discover a range of possible effects with water pumped into the gap created when two different sized transparent hemispheres are placed one inside the other.

There are three stages in the cycle of water action: first the turbulent period when the dome is filling, then the period when water overflows at the top and pours down over the outer surface, and finally the tranquil stage when all pumps are off and the water level slowly descends until the dome is empty.

The contrasting views from outside and from within, looking up, compound the number of ways elements of this piece can be seen and experienced.

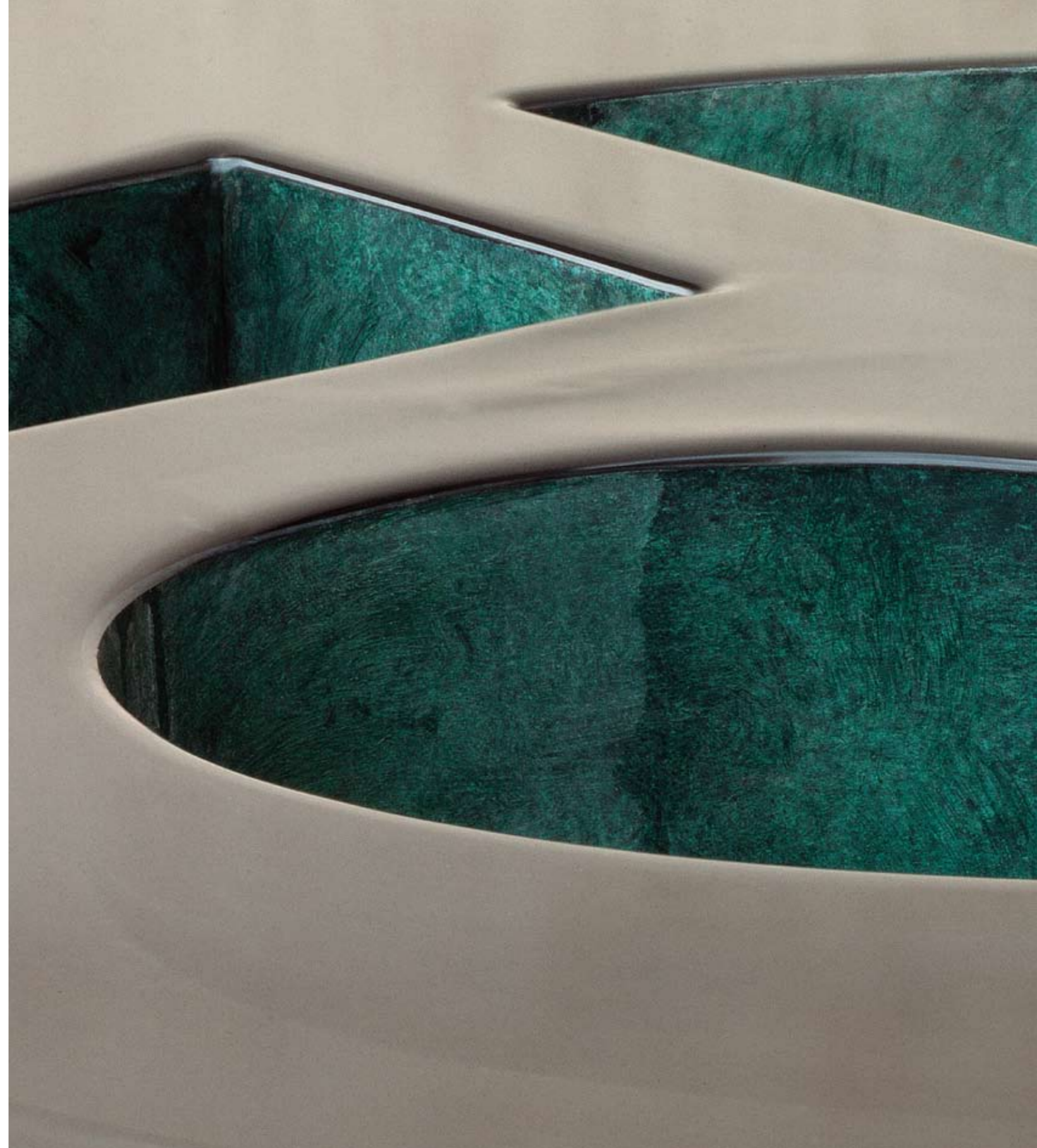
Double Dome
Stainless steel &
acrylic polymer
230 cm high





Water is constantly pumped into the base of the bronze vessel and precise balancing of the flow keeps the container filled to a level slightly higher than the brim to form a meniscus around the edge, while water is flowing down vertical weirs set slightly below the surface. The composition of these weirs was inspired by the geometric shapes in cosmantesque floor designs.

Cosmadish
Bronze
100 cm high





(ABOVE)
Little Equinox
Bronze & white gold
gilding
Edition of 8
11.5 cm high

(LEFT)
Plumb
Bronze
Edition of 15
25 cm high

LITTLE EQUINOX

I have never been to Jaipur in India, but I have always been fascinated by photographs of the giant astrological instruments to be seen there, and certainly these images have contributed towards the formation of this and other sculpture.

This is a very small version of a much larger piece where the light, flexible and tensile nature of stainless steel cable contrasts dramatically with the heavy, inert quality of fired clay cast into these forms which are evocative of architecture and the rugged landscape of cliffs and plateaux.

Anamorphism is the name given to an image which only appears correct from one viewpoint. Equinox bears an anamorphic projection of a circle which is only visible as such from one position.

PLUMB

'Plumb' aims to convey the quintessential relation between vertical and horizontal and the simple beauty held therein. All design is conceived from this benchmark, be it drawing, building or landscaping.



'Swishdish' continues my series of dish vortex pieces and is a smaller version of the one at Alnwick Garden in Northumberland.

An air core vortex is generated within a circular stainless steel dish. Water rises and falls within the dish in a cyclic programme of water activity. As the level drops the water seems to take on a life of its own, increasingly rocking and swaying as its volume diminishes.

Swishdish
Polished stainless
steel and bronze
88 cm high



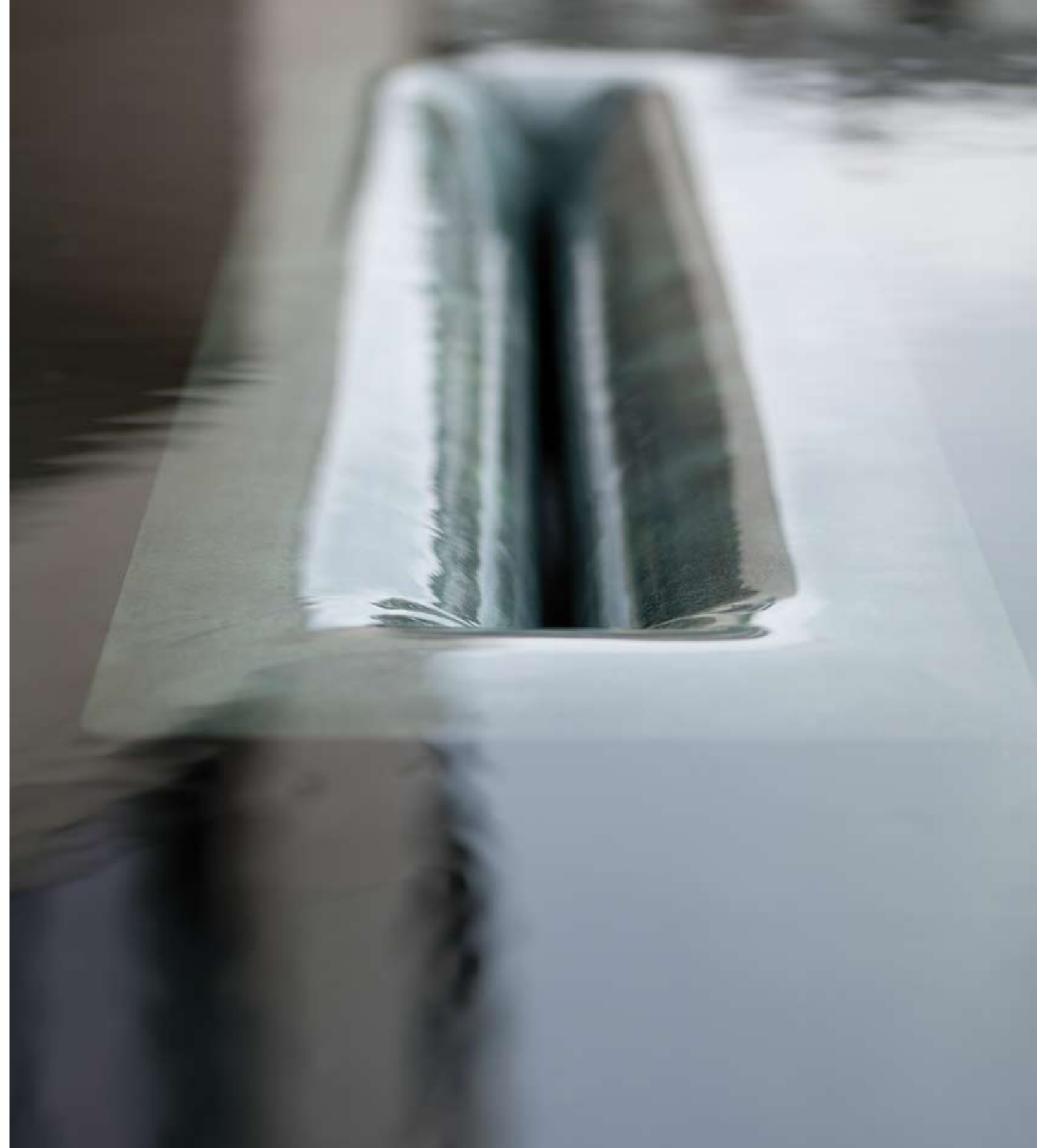


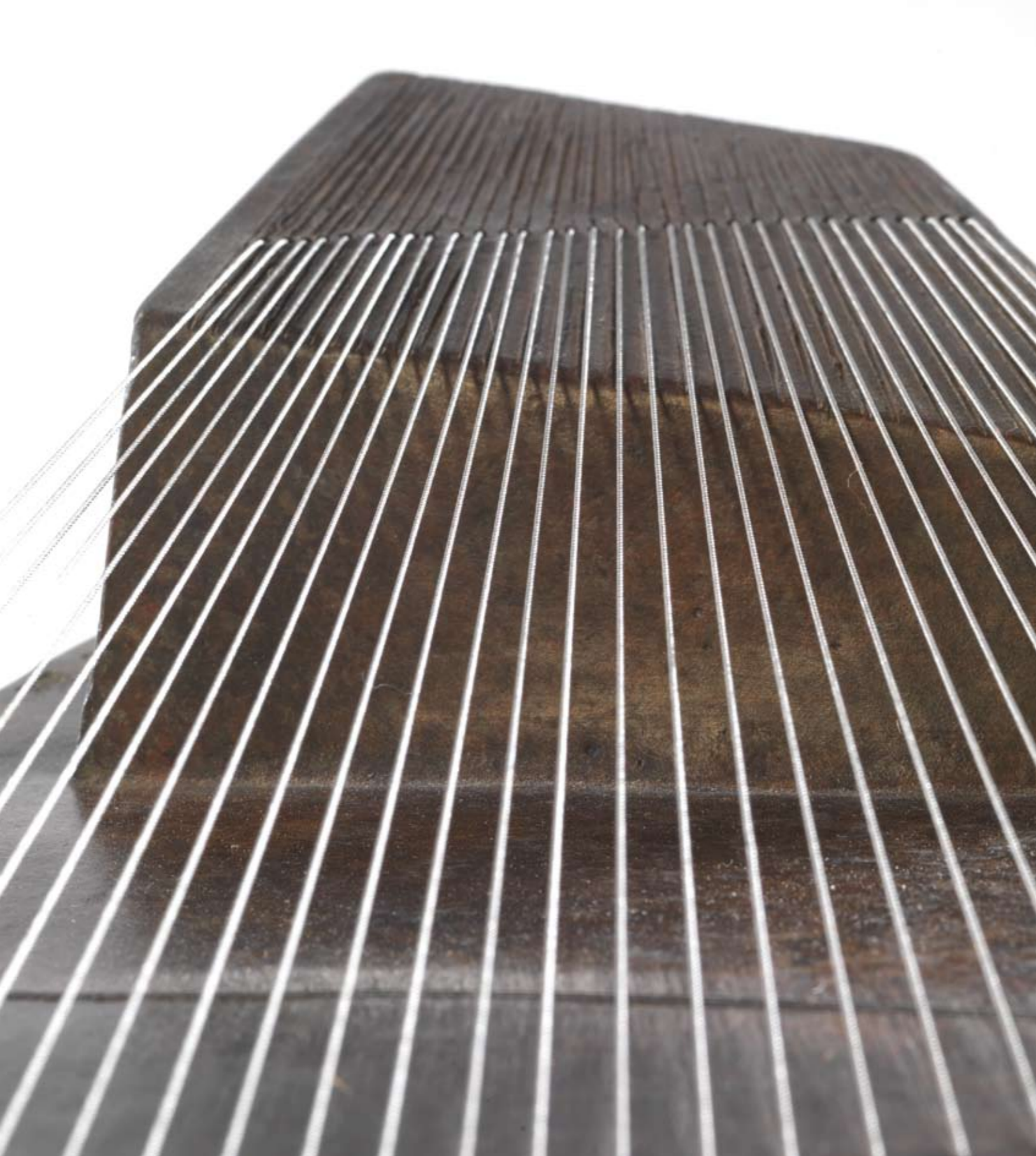


'Coraslot' is a direct development of my 'Brimming Bowl' series, all of which incorporate internal weirs within a pool, both as aesthetic features and also as a means of circulating the water.

Surface tension allows a flat ellipse of apparently still water to occur at a level that is perceptibly higher than the rim of its bronze container. A significant flow of water enters the bottom of the vessel and as this rises turbulence diminishes to give an effect of stillness, while over fifty litres a minute are slipping down the throat of the weir.

Coraslot
Bronze
102 cm high





(ABOVE & LEFT)
Baby Grand
Bronze, stainless steel
wire & silver tube
Edition of 6
18.5 cm high



(RIGHT)
Red Rock Canyon
Bronze, stainless steel
wire & silver tube
Edition of 6
17 cm high

MAYPOLE, LITTLE CWM & LITTLE CADER IDRIS

A synthesis of geometry and landscape is a common theme, evident in almost all the small pieces in this exhibition.

I continue to be fascinated by land formations that result from those fluvial processes that have formed lakes, hills and mountains where domes, ridges and escarpments suggest forms that can be interpreted geometrically.

Two specific sources have been responsible for an ongoing series that epitomises this preoccupation. One is an interpretation of landscape - a painting by Richard Wilson at the Tate of Cader Idris in North Wales; the other a real land form, seen through an aircraft window many years ago - Crater Lake in Northern California.

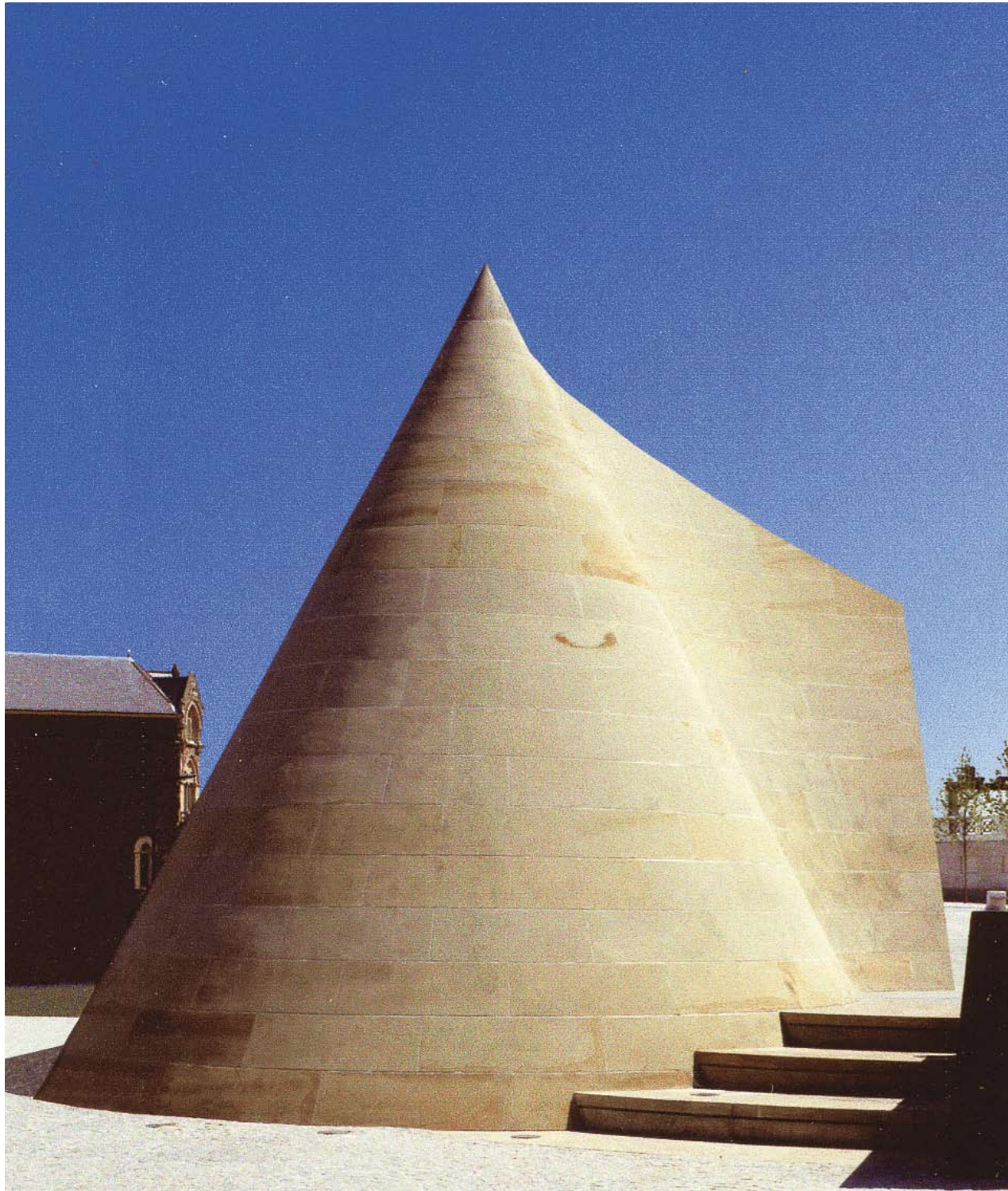
'Little Cwm' and 'Little Cader Idris' are two of the smallest from a series of pieces all on the combined theme of Cader Idris and Crater Lake. This series includes a large stone and bronze piece in Cardiff and a medium sized bronze water sculpture where water collected in the apex of an inverted cone forms a circular pool that spills over onto part of a shallow cone.

The kinetic effect of two simultaneous water movements, one flowing down and inward, and the other fanning out, alludes to processes one can observe in nature. High lakes which form natural reservoirs collect water from surrounding mountains and channel it down through streams and waterfalls to irrigate valleys beneath.



(RIGHT)
Little Cwm
Bronze
Edition of 8
12 cm high

(FROM LEFT)
Little Cader Idris,
Maypole

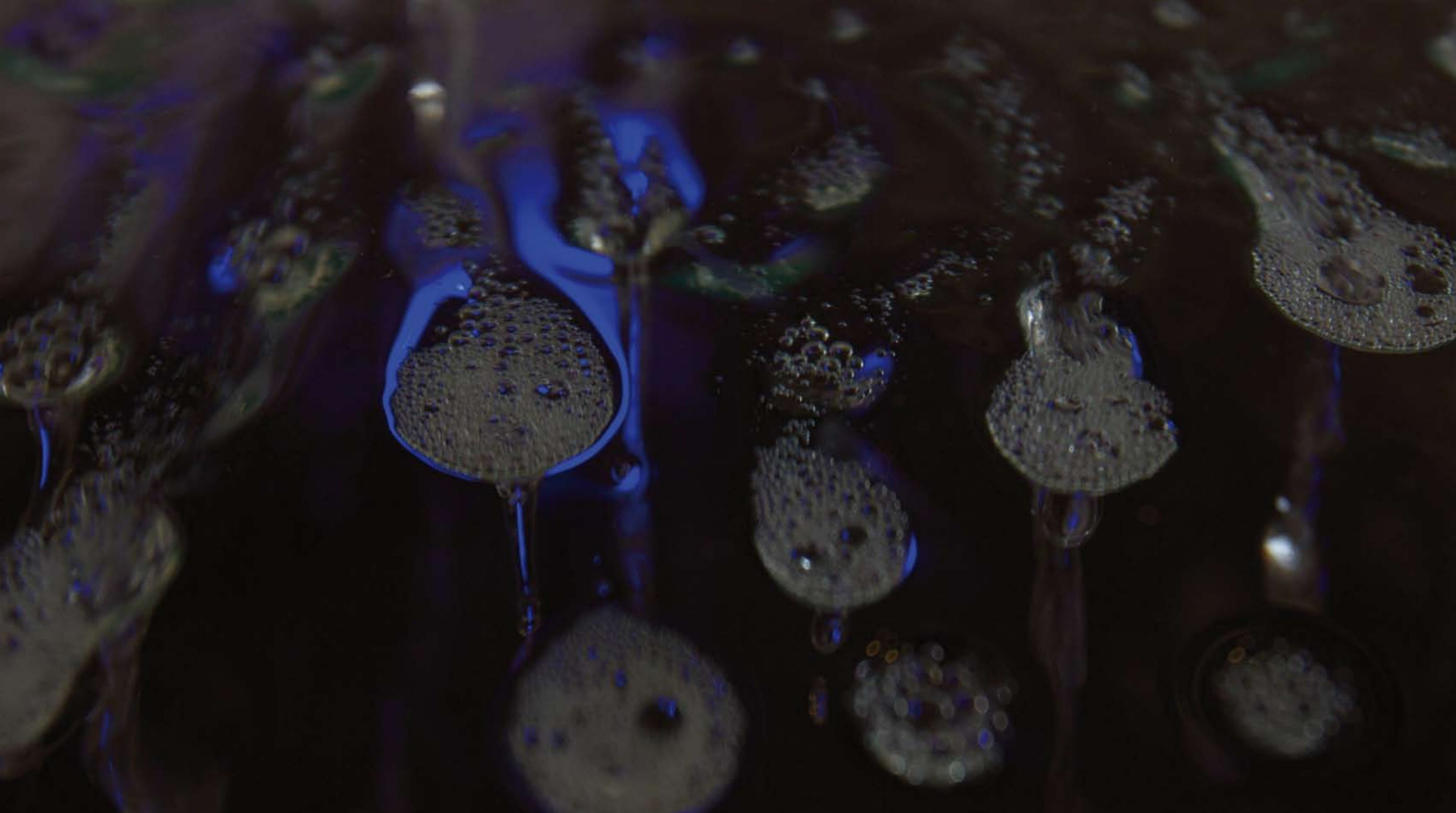


(RIGHT)
Little Cader Idris
Bronze
Edition of 6
5.5 cm high

(ABOVE)
Cader Idris
Bronze
145 cm high

(LEFT)
Cader Idris
Sandstone,
slate & bronze
4 m high
Cardiff Central
Station





This is from a series of pieces where water display is contained within a transparent enclosure of glass or acrylic. Here water is jetted from below, up onto a circular disc of toughened glass. Droplets burst and radiate out under the surface of the glass, changing and transmuting as they travel to the outer limits of their world, reaching a moment at which they appear unable to cling on further, reluctantly dropping into the abyss below.

Versions of this piece have been exhibited set into the ground at Alnwick and free standing at the new Mariinsky Concert Hall in St Petersburg.

Those pieces where water is sealed and contained affords the opportunity to deploy water action that is more dramatic and animated, without risk of spillage onto surrounding fabric.

Starburst III
Bronze & glass
68 cm high





Millenium Leap
Bronze & acrylic
Edition of 6
16.5 cm high



The circular movement of water inside a transparent acrylic cylinder forms an air-core vortex down the centre. 'Scylla' operates to a preset programme which takes it through different states. The plinth that supports and anchors the cylinder is in the form of terraced steps that wrap around, enabling one to see the aircore vortex from different viewpoints. This plinth is also the reservoir that holds the volume of water necessary for operating this piece.

'Scylla' is the smaller sibling of 'Charybdis' at Seaham Hall in Sunderland which has a cylinder 2.4 metres in diameter.

Scylla
Stainless steel
& acrylic polymer
205 cm high







Like 'Coraslot' this is a direct development of my 'Brimming Bowl' series. Surface tension allows a flat disc of apparently still water to occur at a level that is perceptibly higher than the rim of the bronze container, forming a meniscus around the outer edge.

Vesqua
Bronze
104 cm high

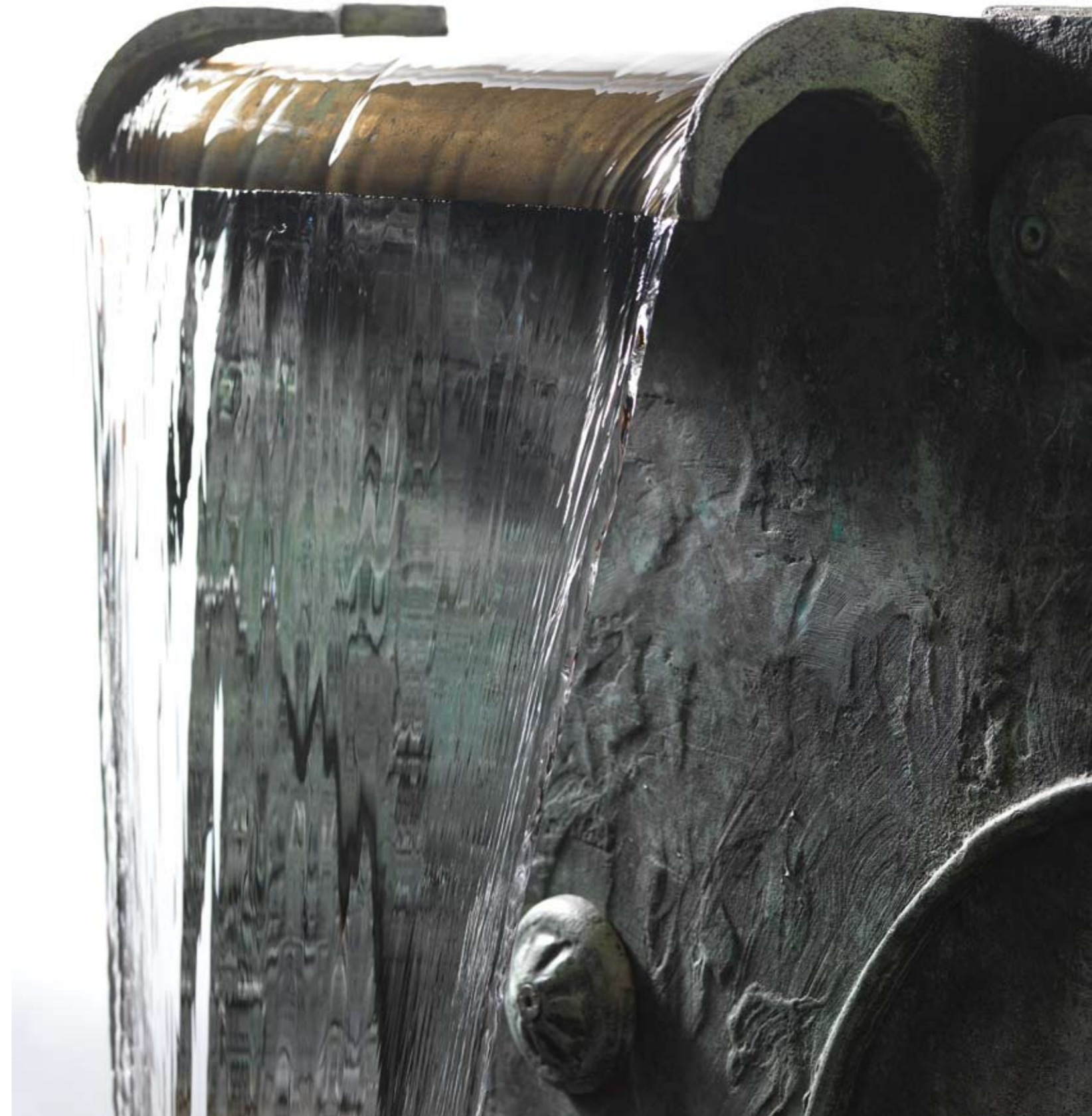




(ABOVE & LEFT)
Spinet
Bronze, stainless
steel wire & silver
tube
Edition of 6
18.5 cm high



(RIGHT)
X Marks The Spot
Bronze, stainless
steel wire & silver
tube
Edition of 6
21 cm high



HIGHGROVE SPOUT

The spout is designed and modelled so that the water flowing over it can be levelled precisely to create a sheet of transparent water that at times appears like glass or ice.

This was the model for four bronze spouts for a pool feature commissioned for the Highgrove Lily Pond, where water from a raised pool flows over the spouts into the main clover leaf shaped pond.

(ABOVE LEFT)
Highgrove Lily Pond
1993
Highgrove

(ABOVE RIGHT)
Prototype for Highgrove
Bronze
141 cm high



'Pole' features a laminar jet of water, where turbulence is reduced to a minimum so that the flow holds together in a smooth integrated filament without breaking up. Gravity pulls the water through a central hole in a tank set high up on four stainless steel cylindrical legs which are the same diameter as the jet of water, giving the impression from a distance that the tank is supported by five identical supports.

Pole
Bronze
200 cm high



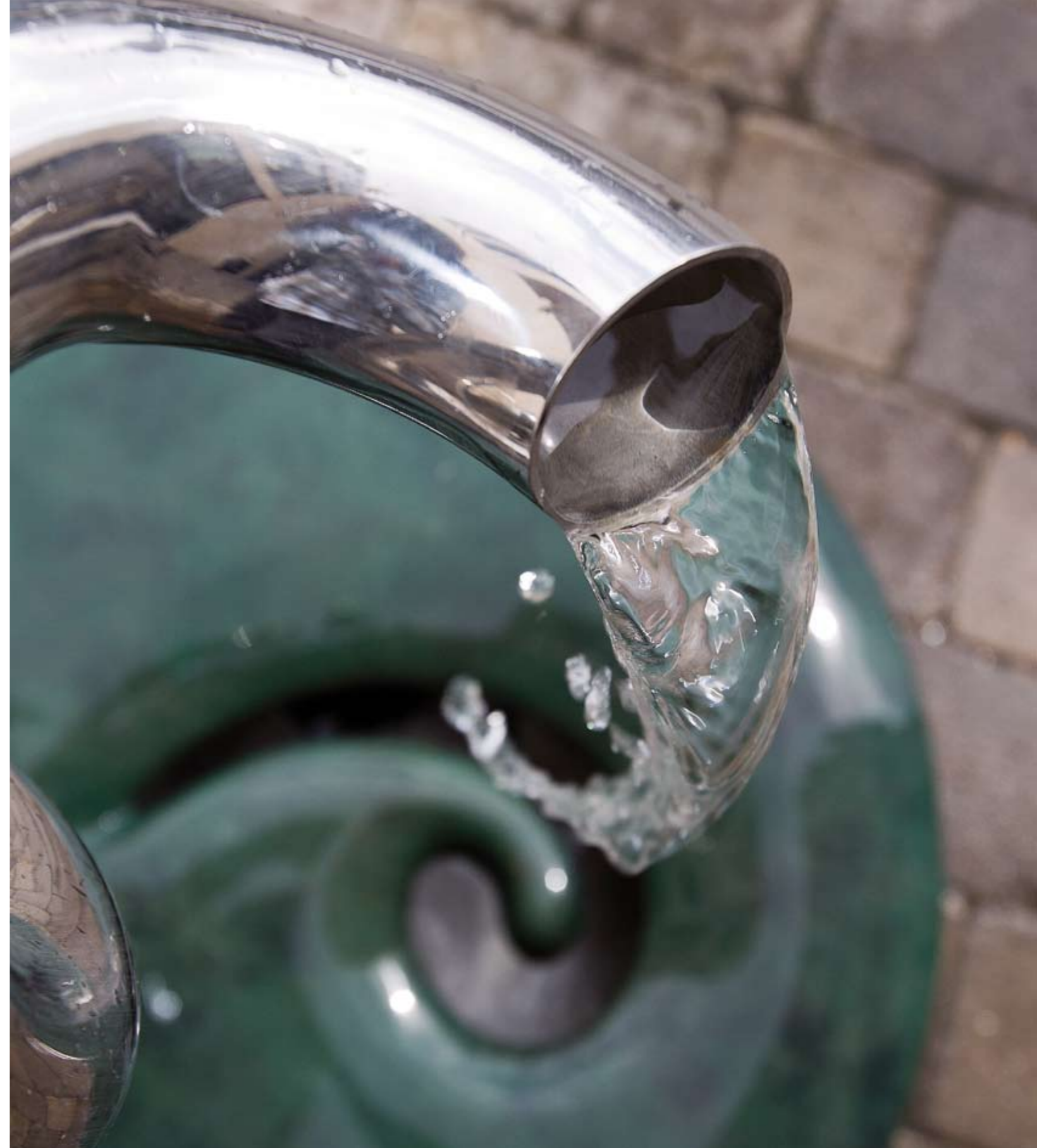


Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician, invented a method of lifting water known as the Archimedes Screw, and this piece is an interpretation of the idea. Water lifted within the coils of a corkscrew-shaped tube pours out at the top with each rotation.

This piece started life as a model for a larger piece that was installed in the dock at West India Quay, Canary Wharf, in 1997. More recently, I have made a bronze enclosure containing motor, tanks and controls, transforming a piece of research and development into an autonomous sculpture.

(ABOVE LEFT)
Archimedes
1997, Stainless steel
Canary Wharf

(ABOVE RIGHT)
Archimedes
Bronze &
stainless steel
104 cm high





This is one of my rollwave series of pieces. Water flows down the surfaces of mirror-polished stainless steel creating rollwave patterning, where the thin film of water is pulled by surface tension into rhythmical wave patterns. The water, creeping and rippling down the surfaces, appears to dissolve the substance of the structure beneath, rendering it apparently translucent. The reflected images of the surroundings in the stainless steel are distorted by both the rippling water and the concave and convex surfaces of the form.

Insideout
Polished stainless
steel
205 cm high

Cluster
Sterling silver
Edition of 8
13.5 cm high



Maypole
Bronze &
stainless steel
Edition of 6
38 cm high





(ABOVE)
Aeolian Duet
Bronze, stainless steel
wire & silver tube
Edition of 6
28 cm high



(LEFT)
Family Portrait
Bronze, stainless steel
wire & silver tube
Edition of 6
27 cm high

(RIGHT)
KX 200
Sterling silver &
stainless steel wire
Edition of 6
28 cm high

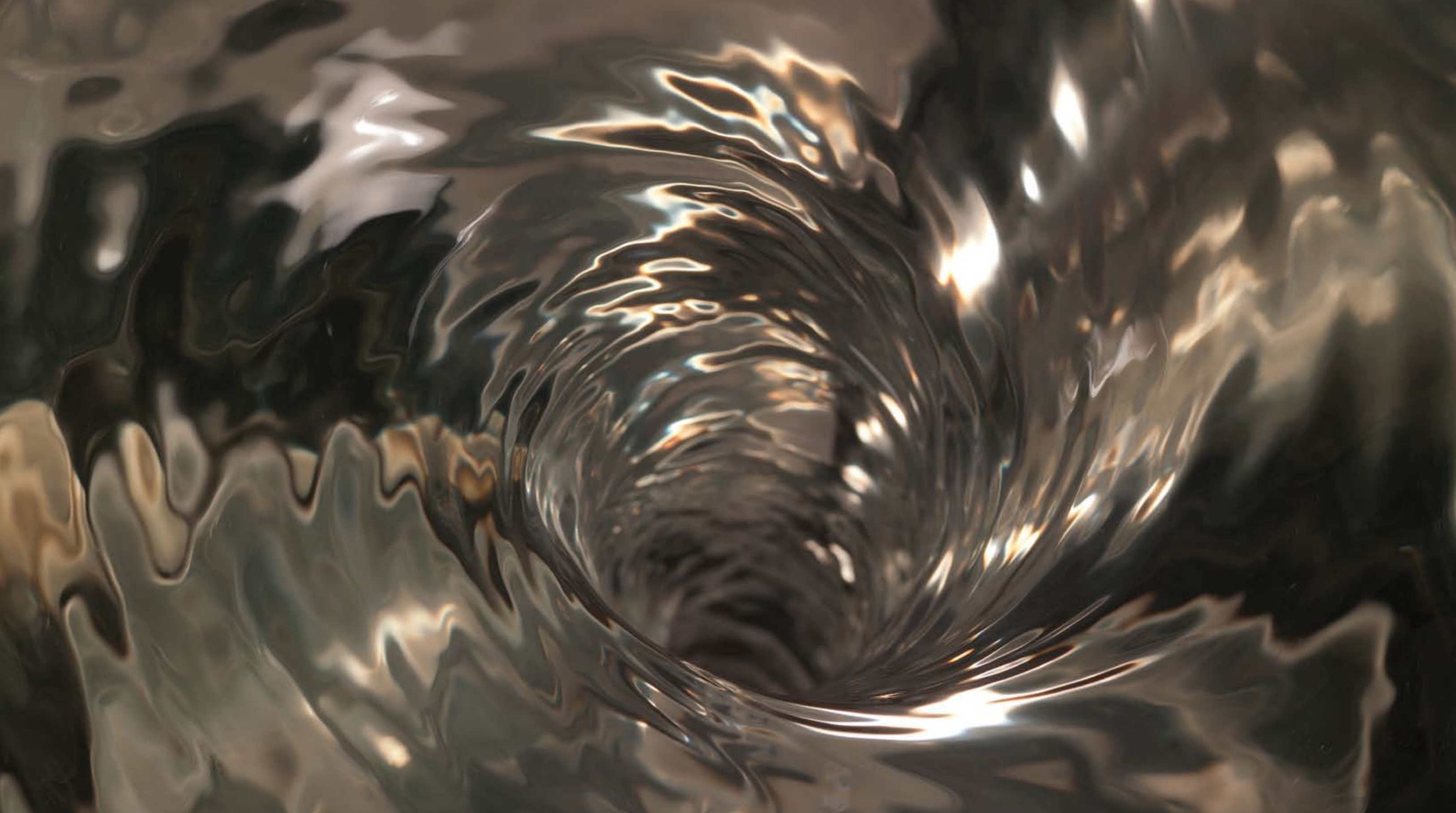




The circular movement of water inside the transparent acrylic cylinder forms an air-core vortex down the centre. The cast stainless steel base inside the cylinder has been modelled to push the water into two rotating currents which form the vortex as the water rises. When the water reaches the top it flows over the edge and down the outer surfaces to slip through a narrow slot into the reservoir contained inside the bronze plinth.

Small Vortex
Bronze & acrylic
62 cm high





WILLIAM PYE

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

1938	Born London
1958-61	Wimbledon School of Art
1961-65	School of Sculpture, Royal College of Art
1970	First exhibition and subsequent tour of the USA
1975-76	Visiting Professor at California State University

William Pye has received many honours for his work, including first prize at the Budapest International Sculpture exhibition in 1981, two ABSA awards and the Royal UENO Award in Japan. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, an Honorary Fellow of the RIBA, and was elected President of the Hampshire Sculpture Trust in 2002. In 2004 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from International Art Consultants.

RECENT COMMISSIONS

- 2010 Working on a major commission for Drammen town square in Norway, several water sculptures in private gardens in England, an entrance sculpture for Maggie's Centre in Cheltenham and water features for a new laboratory at Cambridge University.
- 2009 *Hypanthium* a memorial water sculpture in the University of British Columbia Botanical Gardens in Vancouver
Coldstream, 11 metre high piece at the new Bromma centre in Stockholm, Sweden
- 2008 A font for Salisbury Cathedral, consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury on 28th September
An 8.5m sculpture in King's Cross, London which is a makeover of his first major commission thirty years ago
Offspring II, stainless steel water sculpture in Bath, Walcot Street
- 2007 Private garden commissions and working on a water piece in three sections for a new hotel in Cairo
- 2006 *Attica*, eight metre high stainless steel monolith water sculpture on the slopes of Mount Parnitha near Athens
Three water sculptures in the newly built Mariinsky Concert Hall, St Petersburg

- 2005 Eight water sculptures demonstrating the different properties of water were unveiled in March in the Serpent Garden at Alnwick Castle.
- 2004 *Triple Vortex*, three whirlpool sculptures in transparent cylinders for the Aqua Bar in Gatwick North Terminal departure lounge.
Water sculpture for the Sunken Garden at Aberglasney in South Wales.
- 2003 *The Jubilee Fountain*, Lincoln's Inn, London.
Morphogenesis, for Pfizer Ltd in Sandwich.
Water Topiary, for a private garden in Bradford-on-Avon.
Prism, a water sculpture in the monolith series for Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich.
- 2002 *Argosy*, water sculpture in the courtyard of Lloyd's Register of Shipping in London.
Offspring for the Royal Academy Summer Show, *Offspring II* at La Mandria exhibition in Turin and *Scylla*, a vortex piece exhibited at the Peggy Guggenheim collection in Venice.
Patrimony, *Servitude*, *Redemption*, a sculpture incorporating spouts and laminar jets for the courtyard of the new Haberdashers' Hall in London.
- 2001 *Charybdis*, a whirlpool sculpture featuring an 8 foot air-core vortex within a transparent cylinder for Seaham Hall Hotel in Sunderland.
Cornucopia, a curved monolith water sculpture at Millfield School, Somerset.
Big Tureen, a large stainless steel bowl water sculpture for St John's College, Cambridge.
Monolith, a large stainless steel water monolith for the new Winter Garden in Sunderland.
Nautilus, a 17 metres high stainless steel water sculpture for the atrium of Anglo American plc in London.
- 2000 *Mother and Child*, a courtyard water sculpture for Prior's Court School.
Aquarena, a landmark Millennium project for Bristol Harbourside incorporating water terraces, water walls, waterfalls and jets.
Clear Water Cube for the Chelsea Flower Show, now in a private collection.
Scaladaqua Tonda, circular water steps for the National Botanic Garden of Wales.
Scala Aquae Pembrochiana, water spouts in a stepped arrangement at Wilton House, Wiltshire, for the Earl of Pembroke.
- 1999 *Cader Idris*, a stone and bronze sculpture in Cardiff Central Square inspired by the Welsh mountains
Water Cube at Cogglesford Mill, Sleaford.
Prism, a six metre high water sculpture in the atrium of the Cathay Pacific Hotel at Hong Kong International Airport.
Sibirica, a fountain for the Iris Garden in Holland Park.



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