



BRITISH NEW SCHOOL

BOWMAN SCULPTURE

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British New School

In 1894 Edmund Gosse wrote an article for the Art Journal in which he surveyed the radical developments in late Victorian sculpture. Under the title of *The New Sculpture*, Gosse defined the period of rich experimentation and productivity amongst British sculptors that followed the exhibition of Frederic Leighton’s *An Athlete Struggling with a Python* at the Royal Academy in 1877.

With the exception of the pioneering if under-appreciated work of Alfred Stevens, Leighton’s heroic masterpiece had offered one of the first challenges to the type of neo-classical sculpture favoured by the British establishment at the time. In doing so, the model helped to usher in a fervent period of creativity that lasted well into the early decades of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, New Sculpture, or the New School movement, did not have a particular central theme or a single defining characteristic. Rather it encompassed a number of formal and conceptual changes that amounted to a parallel with the birth of French Romantic sculpture, some three or four decades earlier.

Most importantly, British sculptors of the late 19th century began to move towards a greater naturalism. Central to this trend was a new approach to clay modelling, inspired in no small part by the French sculptor Aimé-Jules Dalou, who taught at the South Kensington School of Art and the Lambeth School of Art during his eight year in exile from France in the 1870s.

The New Sculptors also began to increasingly reference the sculptural prototypes of the Italian Renaissance. The strong contrapposto poses and muscular forms observed during trips to Florence or Rome quickly became assimilated into the work of Frederic Leighton, Alfred Gilbert and their contemporaries. Similarly the stories and subjects of antiquity, which had absorbed the Italian masters of the 15th and 16th centuries, began to be re-appraised and adapted by British sculptors of the 19th century.

The New School movement was also intrinsically linked to improvements in English bronze casting. Whilst English foundries had lagged behind their French counterparts for most of the 19th century, new technical advances began to allow the work of leading sculptors to proliferate in the form of bronze statuettes. In his 1903 forward to the Fine Art Society exhibition ‘Sculpture for the Home’, H.M. Speelman identified that ‘gradually sculptor and public have come to realise that the modeler, like the painter, has his place in the home as well as in the hall and gallery. They are beginning to understand that although statues in life—heroic-size, like great decorative paintings, are very well for palaces—statuettes, like works of art, and bibelots, may take their place in less pretentious rooms along with cabinet pictures, miniatures and the like.’

In this catalogue, we are pleased to present a number of these domestic scale statuettes of many of the most important pieces of New School sculpture. The earliest work presented dates from 1852 and the latest from 1923, a period of time that represents one of the most important important and creative periods in British sculptural history.

Wings of the Wind

Signed Gilbert Bayes
Bronze with a green patination
Height: 6¼ inches (16 cm)

Conceived 1907
This cast circa 1913

Museum Collections:
National Museum of Wales

Gilbert Bayes was born into an artistic family in London. He was the son of the painter and etcher Alfred Walter Bayes and brother of the painter Walter John Bayes. He studied at the Royal Academy Schools under the sponsorship of George Frampton, and in 1899 won the gold medal and a travelling scholarship, which enabled him to study in France and Italy.

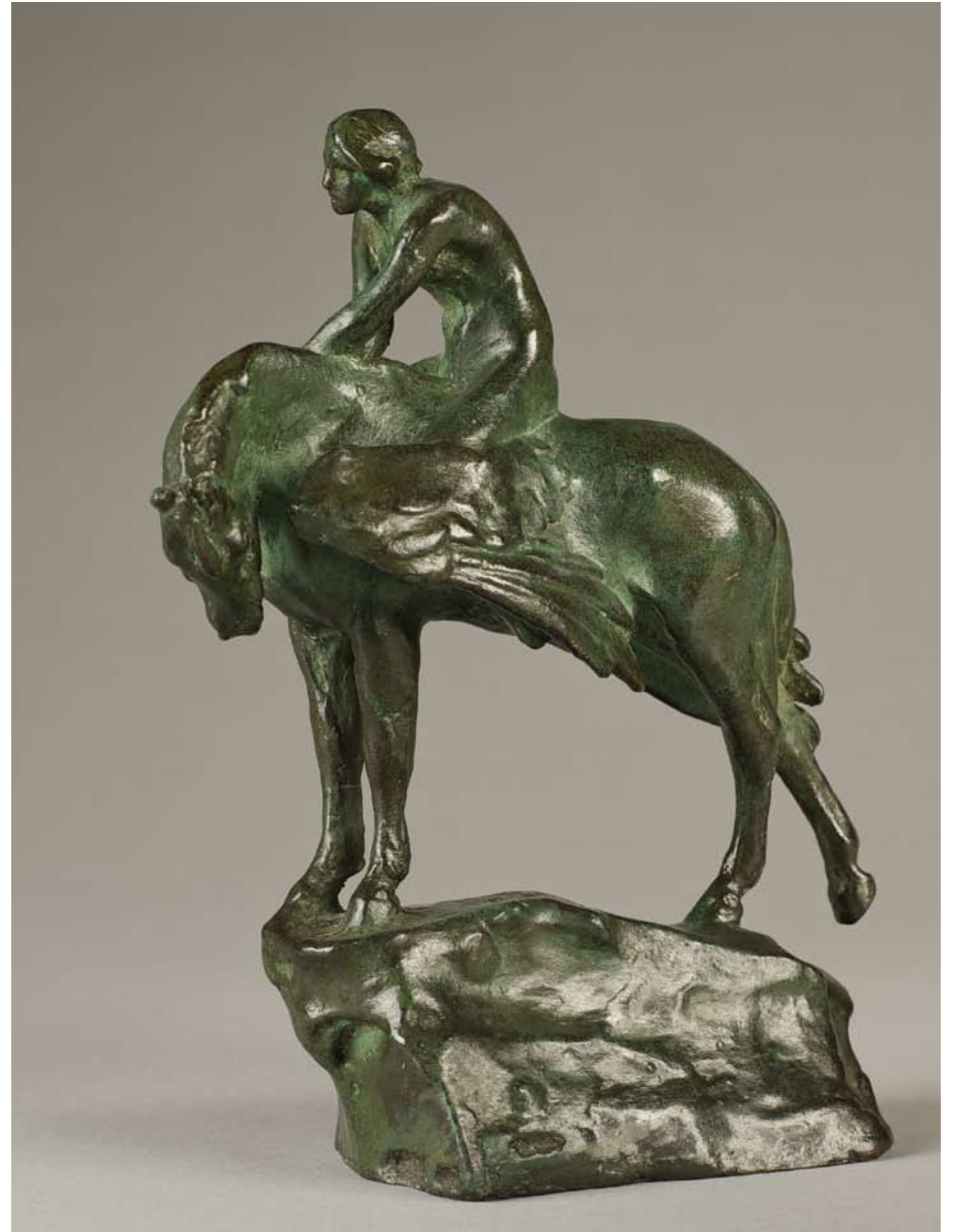
He exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1905 and 1952 and was president of the Royal British Society of Sculptors between 1939 and 1944.

Bayes specialised in reliefs and statuettes modelled on the antique, or derived from folklore, biblical subjects and mythology. The present bronze is one of the sculptor's most charming and depicts a naked woman riding Pegasus, the divine winged horse of Greek mythology. During the 19th century the image of Pegasus had come to symbolise poetry and inspiration.

The model was conceived in 1907 and exhibited the same year at the Royal Academy. The work was very popular and was exhibited a further twenty times in Bayes' lifetime, including at the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, in 1935. It was originally offered for sale by the editor and foundry Goupil for 8 guineas, but by 1913 the rights to market the model had been acquired by the Fine Art Society, who offered casts at 13 guineas.

Some of Bayes' most well known works are the *Great Clock* or *The Queen of Time* at Selfridge's in Oxford Street, London, the *Offerings of Peace and War*, a pair of heroic equestrian statues, that stand outside the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney and *The Destiny War Memorial* in Albion Gardens, Kent.





Francis Derwent Wood

1871–1926

The Bather

Signed Derwent Wood and dated 1909
Bronze with rich dark brown patination
Height: 15¾ inches (40 cm)

Conceived and cast circa 1909

Francis Derwent Wood was born in Cumbria and after a brief period studying in Karlsruhe, Germany, traveled to London in 1889. Here he continued his studies under Edouard Lanteri at the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art) whilst also developing his modeling skills at ceramists' Maw & Co and later at the Coalbrookdale Iron Co.

After leaving the National Art Training School, Wood assisted Alphonse Legros at the Slade School before enrolling at the Royal Academy Schools in 1894. During this period he also assisted Sir Thomas Brock. In 1895 the young sculptor received the Royal Academy Gold medal and traveling scholarship for his bronze group *Daedalus and Icarus*, which is now exhibited at the Bristol Art Museum and Gallery. Four years later, after being appointed master of modeling at the Glasgow School of Art in 1897, Wood won the prize for decorative sculpture at the Glasgow Art Gallery in a competition assessed by George Frampton. Wood would go on to become a founding member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and a leading figure in the English New Sculpture Movement.

In 1914, at the onset of World War I, Wood was already 41 and too old to enlist. Instead, the sculptor began volunteering at hospitals that treated the wounded. Following the war Wood was commissioned to design the Machine Gun Corps Memorial, which was erected in 1925 and currently stands at Hyde Park Corner, London. The monument, arguably his most famous work, depicts the nude figure of David flanked by Vickers guns encased in bronze and laurel-wreathed. Other monuments by the artist include the Memorial to Major General Sir John Eardley Wilmot Inglis at St. Paul's Cathedral, Atalanta at the Chelsea Embankment and Persian Scarf Dancer at Finsbury Circus. His work can also be seen at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, where four of his sculptures adorn the outer architecture. Wood's work can also be found in numerous British public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Britain, The Royal Academy of Arts and the Fitzwilliam Museum. A joint memorial exhibition of his work was held with Sir William Hamo Thornycroft at the Royal Academy in 1927.

The present model, conceived in 1909, was featured prominently in the popular Pall Mall Magazine alongside busts by Alfred Drury and an image of Sir George Frampton's *Peter Pan*. It is one of a number of a number of smaller pre-war works by the artist which show the influence of late 19th Century Romantic French sculpture. During the 1890s Wood made a number of trips to Paris where he particularly admired the work of Auguste Rodin. Here the sculptor expertly captures the movement in the bather's torso and her elegantly outstretched arm giving the model a poise and charm that is less evident in his later memorial sculpture.





Henry Charles Fehr

1867–1940

Standing Nude

Bronze with a mid brown patination
Signed H C Fehr RBS
Height: 28¾ inches (73 cm)

Henry Charles Fehr was born in 1867 to Swiss parents. He began his studies at the Royal Academy Schools in 1885 where he won the Armitage Scholarship. In 1889 Fehr narrowly missed out on the gold medal and traveling Scholarship to Goscombe John. After leaving the Royal Academy Schools he entered the studio of Sir Thomas Brock where he remained as Brock's assistant until 1893. During this period he produced a model of *Perseus Rescuing Andromeda*, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1894 and purchased for the Tate Gallery by the Trustees of the Chancery Bequest.

The present model belongs to a group of ideal nudes where Fehr combines a flowing art nouveau style with references to the allegorical nudes of Edward Onslow-Ford. The figure is typical of Fehr's work, incorporating the contrapposto twist favoured by the New School artists and a strong sensual realism. The torso, arms and legs are wonderfully modelled and the figure's delicate features contribute to the sweetness and charm of the sculpture.

Fehr also created a number of significant monuments and works of architectural sculpture. Most notably his Queen Victoria Memorial, Hull, The Cenotaph, Leeds, architectural decorations for Cardiff City Hall and The Colchester War Memorial. Significant memorial busts include William Morris (Royal Academy 1900), Passmore Edwards and William Ewart Gladstone, as well as statues of James Watt and John Harrison in Leeds City Centre.

In 1904 Fehr became a founding member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and later was elected a fellow.





Sir George Frampton

1860–1926

Peter Pan

Signed G.F. inscribed P.P. and dated 1913
Bronze with a rich dark brown patination on a green marble base
Height: 19 inches (48 cm)

Conceived 1912
This cast 1913

Museum Collections:
National Gallery of Art, Australia.

The present version of this sculpture is the reduction of the full scale model, which was made for the collectors market. Each cast was supervised and approved by Frampton himself. This model was cast in 1913 and has the initials PP (for *Peter Pan*) inscribed on the base. Seven casts of the original Kensington statue were also made, examples can be found in the Parc d'Egmont in Belgium, Utsunomiya Fairy Museum, Japan and Sefton Park, Liverpool, as well as in parks in Australia, Canada and America.

George Frampton was born in London. He studied at the Lambeth School of Art under William Silver Frith before enrolling at the Royal Academy Schools in 1881. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1884 and went on to win a gold medal in 1887 as well as a travelling scholarship. During his travels he went to Paris where he enrolled in the studio of Antonin Mercié.

On his return to England, Frampton became the acknowledged leader of the Arts and Crafts movement and was appointed joint head of the London Central School of Arts and Crafts. Frampton was knighted in 1908 and was the most prominent English sculptor of his time winning the Grand Prix at the Exposition Universelle of 1884.

Frampton's famous statue of *Peter Pan* in Kensington Gardens was commissioned by the character's creator Sir James Barrie and erected in 1912. The work was installed at night so that it appeared, as if by magic, the next day.

The original story of *Peter Pan* was written in 1898 and tells the tale of a fairy child who has adventures in the Gardens of Kensington. The statue depicts Peter Pan playing his pipes, standing above a large pedestal set with fairies and woodland animals. It remains not only one of Frampton's best known works, but has also been voted London's most popular statue.





Richard Garbe

1876–1957

The Song of the Siren

Signed Richard Garbe and dated 1929
Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 34 inches (87 cm)

Conceived and cast 1929

Richard Garbe was born in London and began his training at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1928 and was made an associate member in 1929. He became a Royal Academician in 1936 and between 1929 and 1946 he was Professor of Sculpture at the Royal College of Art. Garbe's best known works are the two groups representing medieval and modern periods which he designed for the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff. Gilbert Bayes sculpted the groups representing the prehistoric and classic period for the same building. Garbe is also well known for his ideal works, including *The Egoist* (1906), *Man and the Ideal* (1907), *The Idealist* (1908) and *Undine* (1909).

The present model depicts the Greek mythological hero Jason, who having recovered the golden fleece from the island of Colchis has to travel past the Sirens in order to return to the city of Iolcus. According to Greek mythology, the Sirens lived on an island called Sirenum Scopuli and sang songs that were so beautiful they enticed sailors onto the rocks, causing them to wreck their ships. In the story of Jason and the Argonauts, Orpheus, one of Jason's companions, drowned out the bewitching songs of the femme fatales by singing and playing music on his lyre. In turn the heroes were able to pass the enticing women without mishap.

Here Garbe depicts a siren in mermaid form, calling up towards the naked Jason trying to entice him. Jason himself is shown with the golden fleece behind him, flowing down towards the water in typical art nouveau style.





Alfred Gilbert was the leading sculptor of his day and a central figure of the New School of sculpture. He was born in London and after a failed attempt to become a surgeon, entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1873. In 1876 he went to Paris where he studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Jules Cavelier. Between 1878 and 1874 he studied in Florence and Rome. As with Alfred Stevens before him, the influence of the Italian Renaissance had a lasting impact upon his work.

Gilbert’s first bronzes exhibited in England were sent to London from Rome. These included *Perseus Arming* (1882) and *Icarus* (1884), both of which were highly acclaimed and cemented the young sculptor’s reputation.

Returning to England, Gilbert re-introduced the lost-wax process of casting, a technique he had learned during his time in Italy. He also began experimenting with mixed media sculpture and alternative metal alloys to bronze.

In 1885 he was commissioned to design the Fawcett Memorial for Westminster Abbey. This was to be the first of many Royal commissions, including the Winchester Jubilee memorial to Queen Victoria, exhibited in 1887, which is now in the Great Hall at Winchester Castle.

In 1886 he begun work on the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain for Piccadilly Circus, London. The monument features a giant model of Eros, which was the first ever statue to be cast in aluminium.

Although Gilbert was highly successful, his perfectionism and high studio costs led to increasing delays in the production of commissions. This inability to finish work and his poor business acumen led him to financial difficulties. The sale of statues from unfinished major projects—such as the tomb for Prince Edward, the Duke of Clarence—was a particular example that led to a major disagreement with the Royal family.

In 1901 Gilbert declared himself bankrupt and moved to Bruges, where he lived in self imposed exile for the next 20 years. His rift with the Royal family over the Clarence Tomb was resolved in 1926 and Gilbert returned to England to finish the work.

Gilbert was knighted in 1932.

Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Offering to Hymen

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 11 inches (29 cm)

Conceived 1884
This cast circa 1886

Museum Collections:
City of Manchester Art Gallery
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Conceived in 1884 whilst Gilbert was still in Rome and first shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1886, this small statuette depicts a naked young woman offering two gifts to Hymen, the god of marriage and attendant to Venus. In the present rare version of this model we see the miniature winged figure of Anteros (the Greek god of requited love) in the girl's left hand, whilst in her right she holds a tiny sprig of hawthorne. In two other variations of the model the hawthorne is replaced with a goblet or a single rose.

The figure stands on a richly decorated pedestal, heavily adorned with miniature grotesques. As Susan Beattie suggests, these decorations 'suggest the hieroglyphics on a pagan altar' and thus echo 'the symbolism of the statuette' itself.

In another reading of the work, the model can be placed alongside Gilbert's *Perseus Arming* and *Icarus*, both of which are concerned with the transformation from youth to maturity. In Gilbert's *Perseus*, we see the hero glancing towards his winged sandals, questioning whether they will be fit for the daunting task of carrying him to the Gorgon Monster Medusa. In the present model the young woman's stiff posture and concentrated expression allude to her nervousness in taking part in such an important ceremony.

The work was highly acclaimed when shown at the Grosvenor exhibition and it was here that Gilbert first met the pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, a chance meeting that developed into a lasting friendship between the two artists.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Victory

Bronze with a rich dark brown patina
Height: 8 inches (20 cm)

Conceived circa 1887
This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:
Royal Academy of Art Collection, London
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Leeds City Art Gallery

In 1887 Gilbert sculpted the Queen Victoria Jubilee Memorial, which is now in the Great Hall at Winchester Castle. He exhibited the full sized plaster at the Royal Academy a year later. The present work is a reduction of the figure of *Victory*, which stands on the royal orb, held by Queen Victoria, in the monument.

Unfortunately for Gilbert, the original model of victory was broken off and stolen from the monument when it was first unveiled at Winchester Town Hall. The damage was perceived as a protest not against the Queen or Gilbert, but rather against William Ingham Whitaker, who had funded the monument and was unpopular with the public at the time. Thankfully the figure was recovered and restored by Gilbert and the monument was eventually moved from the Town Hall to the Great Hall at Winchester castle, where it remains to this day.

The figure of *Victory* is influenced by images of the Ancient Greek Goddess Nike, particularly the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, which was discovered in the mid 19th Century and installed in the Louvre.

The reduction of *Victory* was cast in several sizes, the present being the smallest and most popular. Gilbert gave examples of the model to a number of friends, including John Singer Sargent, Seymour Lucas, Henry Irving and Mark Senior.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Study for the Kiss of Victory

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 24 inches (61 cm)

Conceived 1878
This cast circa 1880

Museum Collections:
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gilbert conceived the present work whilst he was a student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France. He finished the model once he had moved to Rome and sent it for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1878. The work was commissioned by an English patron, Somerset Beaumont, and took Gilbert two years to carve in marble. The final version, which stands at 58 inches, is now in the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The work was a tribute to Gilbert's brother Gordon, who died tragically of tuberculosis. The sculpture depicts a wounded Roman legionary in the arms of a winged figure representing Victory. Gilbert used himself as the model for the warrior, hence the broad powerful chest.

The composition and subject matter relate heavily to Gustave Dore's *Glorie*, exhibited at the French Salon in 1878 and Anton Mercie's *Gloria Victis*, exhibited at the French Salon in 1874 to commemorate the bravery of the defeated French forces in the Franco Prussian War. Gilbert had been in Paris between 1875 and 1878 and was likely to have been familiar with both models.

Unusually for Gilbert, he radically remodeled the work between its conception in clay and its execution in marble. The exact date of the present version is not known but given it is so similar to the finished model, it must have been created during the 1880s as the work does not figure in Gilbert's casting diaries which he begun in 1890.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Perseus Arming

Inscribed C' des Bronzes Bruxelles
Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 14¼ inches (36 cm)

Conceived circa 1881
This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:
The Tate Gallery, London
Victoria And Albert Museum, London
Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow
Anglesey Abbey (National Trust Collection), Cambridgeshire

Commissioned in bronze by Sir Henry Doulton and first shown at the Grosvenor Galleries in 1882, *Perseus Arming* is one of Sir Alfred Gilbert's most popular works. It was modelled in 1881 whilst Gilbert was living in Rome and later received an honourable mention at the Paris Salon of 1883.

In 1879 the young sculptor visited Florence, where he saw the work of the great Renaissance sculptors Benvenuto Cellini and Donatello. The effect of these encounters had a marked impact on Gilbert and he began to adopt both the classical subjects as well as the contrapposto twist associated with the Italian Renaissance.

However, even at the young age of 25, Gilbert was keen to adapt rather than merely replicate the sculptures of the past. He remarked at the time that whilst he was amazed by Cellini's masterpiece *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*, the work left him 'somewhat cold' as it failed to touch his 'human sympathies.'

'At the time my whole thoughts were of my artistic equipment for the future' he wrote in 1903, 'I conceived the idea that Perseus before becoming a hero was a mere mortal, and that he had to look to his equipment'.

Gilbert therefore places himself into the sculpture and uses the subject as a vehicle for a self portrait. We see Perseus looking over his shoulder to his winged sandals checking to make sure his tools were fit for purpose. Just as Perseus was a mere mortal before slaying the Gorgon monster Medusa, Gilbert alludes to his belief that one day he too will master his tools and achieve greatness.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Bust of George Frederick Watts (1817–1904)

Signed Gilbert

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination with light brown highlights

Height: 6¼ inches (16 cm)

Conceived 1888

This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

The Royal Academy of Arts, London

In 1888 Mary Watts wrote a letter to Gilbert asking him to model a portrait of her husband. Hamo Thornycroft had also proposed the same idea three years previously, but the project had not come to fruition.

Gilbert was clearly delighted to undertake the commission as he greatly admired the famous artist. According to Mary Watts, on his first visit to Watts' studio at Little Holland House, Gilbert had said that he could not tell her 'how great an endeavor' he would make in executing the work. The resulting likeness was produced after eighteen sittings during the summer of 1888 and Watts is depicted looking wise and contemplative wearing a skull cap.

Gilbert refused payment for the model and gave the first cast of the work, executed in the winter of 1889, to Watts. This bronze is now in the collection of the Tate, gifted by Mary Watts in 1904. The original plaster is in the collection of the Royal Academy. The present model is a reduction of the original bust, produced by Gilbert for the collectors market.

In return for Gilbert's generosity Watts painted a portrait of Gilbert which he gifted to the sculptor. The portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1896, listed as in the collection of Mrs A. Gilbert. The present location of the painting is unknown.

Watts himself was a highly successful painter, first garnering fame with his drawing entitled *Caracticus* which won fist prize in the competition to design murals for the new Houses of Parliament in 1843. In the following decades he became increasingly allied with the Aesthetic Movement and was greatly influenced by Dante Gabriel Rosetti (whose portrait he painted in 1871). By the 1870s he had begun to move away from the Aesthetic movement but continued to be a leading proponent of Victorian painting until his death 1904. Alongside painting, Watts also produced some accomplished sculpture, the most important of which is *Physical Energy*, modeled in 1904 and erected in 1908 in Hyde Park, London.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Saint George

Bronze and ivory on a wooden base
Height: 18 inches (46.5 cm)

Conceived 1895
This cast circa 1899

Museum Collections:
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, Yale
Castle Museum, Nottingham

On 14th January 1892, Prince Albert Victor (appointed Duke of Clarence in 1890), died of influenza. His funeral took place on 20th January and three days later the Prince of Wales summoned Gilbert to Sandringham to discuss plans for a memorial to his son. Gilbert was to create a tomb that befitted the future King of England and began work on the greatest commission of his career.

The figure of Saint George was created in 1895 and was designed to fill one of twelve niches around the Prince's tomb-chest. Each of the eleven other niches was also to house a saint. The Royal family were so impressed with *St George* that they commissioned an identical model of the figure to be produced in 'white metal' and ivory as a private household memorial for Sandringham Church. This model was delivered to Sandringham on 10th November 1895.

The Sandringham cast differs slightly from the version on the tomb, incorporating a shorter sword that falls behind the saint, a more downcast expression and a slightly different helmet.

The present model is an extremely rare bronze and ivory, cast in the late 19th century by the Compagnie des Bronzes, Brussels. The model relates closely to the version in the tomb, however here Gilbert designed a unique sword which incorporates a decorative Art Nouveau design below the Christ figure and scroll work above the Christ's outspread arms. The treatment of the base is also interesting, which has been patinated dark green—a feature that it shares with the model at Sandringham.





The Clarence Memorial was fraught with difficulties for Gilbert and the project dragged on unfinished throughout the 1890s. In 1901 Gilbert declared himself bankrupt and left London for Bruges. He had entered into a significant rift with the Royal family, owing not only to his procrastination on the Clarence Memorial but the fact that he was discovered to have had made, published and sold replicas of a number of the saints (including the present model) that would later adorn the as yet unfinished tomb.

It was only when King George V decided that the memorial to his uncle should be finished, that Gilbert finally returned to England upon his request in 1926. In a Burlington Magazine article of 1980, the art critic Richard Dormant argued that 'to a small coterie of artistically minded at court, his reinstatement was a triumphant moment in the history of 20th-century English art.' Indeed, the curators of The Royal Collection pronounced the tomb in the Chapel at Windsor as 'one of the great masterpieces of the Art Nouveau style,' with its bold originality and enormous scale making it 'one of the finest royal tombs ever made'.

Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Comedy and Tragedy: ‘Sic Vita’

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination on a green marble base
Height: 26½ inches (67.5 cm)

Conceived circa 1890

This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

National Gallery of Scotland

Nottingham Castle Museum

Leeds City Art Gallery

National Museum of Wales

The Detroit Institute of Arts

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Gilbert regarded *Comedy and Tragedy* as the climax to his trilogy of self-portraits; the first works in the series are *Perseus Arming* and *Icarus*. *Comedy and Tragedy* is reflective of of the sculptor’s state of mind during the early 1890s. By this point Gilbert was a well known sculptor with Royal patronage and a seemingly impeccable career ahead of him. Yet in his private life he was struggling. Mounting debts, problems with his patrons and a sick wife had left the sculptor in a state of anxiety and depression.

The model depicts a theatre-prop boy running with a theatrical mask whilst being stung on the leg by a bee. Through the image Gilbert tells the tale of a double life. On the one hand we see the wide smile of comedy, analogous to Gilbert’s own public persona as he played the role of a successful artist and man about town. Seen from the other side, the work tells a different story with the boy stung by a bee, clearly in pain, reflecting the distress of Gilbert’s chaotic life, both private and professional.

Combining these two images in one work was not easy, and the resulting model is a tour a tour de force in modeling. Whilst *Perseus Arming* and *Icarus* had been based on prototypes developed by Benvenuto Cellini and Donatello, here the mannerist twist is more reminiscent of Giambologna, an early master of the multi viewpoint sculpture.

The title for the work was inspired by W.S. Gilbert’s play of the same name. Gilbert had seen the play many times, particularly at the Lyceum theatre where his friend Mary Anderson played the lead.





Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Comedy and Tragedy: 'Sic Vita'

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 13 inches (33 cm) on a 2¾ inch (7 cm) green marble base

Conceived circa 1890
This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:
The Tate Gallery, London
National Gallery of Scotland
Nottingham Castle Museum
Leeds City Art Gallery
National Museum of Wales
The Detroit Institute of Arts
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Sir Alfred Gilbert

1854–1934

Head of a Capri Fisherman

Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
On a wooden base
Height: 14 inches (37cm)

Conceived circa 1883
This cast circa 1883

Museum Collections:
National Gallery of Victoria, Australia

The present work was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1884 alongside Gilbert's *Icarus*. In its review of the exhibition, the Illustrated London News (10 May) praised *Icarus* before going on to argue that: 'still more extraordinary is the *Study of a Head*, with its thousand wrinkles and markings of age. It is difficult to believe this is not cast from life; nothing closer to nature have we seen—nothing so wonderful in its way. If Mr. Gilbert's rare faculty of imitation admits of full artistic development, there will be no greater sculptor in our time'.

The work was later exhibited in Manchester (1887) and it was at this point that Gilbert identified the study as a head of a Capri fisherman. Gilbert and his family had lived on the Italian island of Capri during 1883 and it is likely that Gilbert began the model at this time.





Sir William Goscombe John

1880–1952

Boy at Play

Signed W. Goscombe John and dated 1895
Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 18 inches (45.5 cm)

Conceived and cast circa 1895

Museum Collections:

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

The Tate Gallery, London

Manchester City Art Gallery

Newport Museum and Art Gallery

William Goscombe John was born in Cardiff and spent his formative years in Wales. In 1874 he entered the workshop of his father, who was engaged as woodcarver to the third Marquess of Bute. John assisted his father on the restoration of Cardiff Castle which was being undertaken for the Marquess by William Burges.

Between 1881 and 1886 John was employed as an assistant in the Lambeth Studio of Thomas Nichols, Burges's architectural carver. During this time he also joined W.S. Frith's class at Lambeth City and Guilds School of Art, where he studied clay modelling under Aimé-Jules Dalou.

John later entered the Royal Academy School, where he worked under Frederic Leighton, Thomas Brock and Alfred Gilbert. In 1889 he won the Academy's Gold Medal and travelling scholarship, which he used to travel extensively before finally taking a studio in Paris where he made contact with Auguste Rodin, becoming his pupil for a short time.

In 1890 he returned to London and in 1895 exhibited the original plaster for *Boy at Play* at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. The young boy is depicted playing a game of 'knuckles', where a stone is thrown out in front of the participant who must reach it with his toe without falling over. The sculptor wonderfully captures the balance and concentration of the boy and we can see the combination of the muscular tension and youthful grace of the subject. The work clearly shows the influence of Dalou and Gilbert.

In 1896 The Tate Gallery bought the life-sized bronze of the work, for £500 as part of the Chantrey Bequest, from The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. A cast of the work was exhibited in 1900 at the Paris International Exhibition, where it won a gold medal. A second life-sized version, known as the Lady Goscombe John Memorial, was given by the artist in memory of his wife to the National Museum of Wales in 1924.





John produced two other reduced scale versions of the work, one at a height of 66 cm, the other at 45 cm. At least three casts of the intermediate sized version are known, one of which is currently in a U.K. private collection (sold by Bowman Sculpture), another at the Manchester City Art Gallery, and a third at the Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

Examples of the smaller version, shown here, can be found in the Newport Museum and Art Gallery and the National Museum of Wales.

John's success, particularly at the Royal Academy Summer Shows and the Paris International Exhibition, gained him numerous public commissions. His monumental works include the colossal seated figure of the seventh Duke of Devonshire for Eastbourne (1901), the Memorial to the King's Regiment at Liverpool (1905), the tomb of the third Marques of Salisbury, Westminster Abbey (1906), and an equestrian figure of Viscount Wolsley, Horse Guards Parade (1920).

Goscombe John was also an admired portrait sculptor and sculptor of reliefs. These include the stone figures of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra for the facade of the Victoria and Albert Museum (1906) and a marble *St David* for Cardiff City Hall (1916).

He was knighted in 1911.

Frederick James Halnon

1881–1958

Peace

Signed F. HALNON

Bronze with a dark brown patination

Height: 14½ inches (37 cm)

Conceived and cast circa 1923

Frederick Halnon began his studies at the Goldsmiths Institute aged only eleven, and went on to become modeling master at the same institution. In 1906 he was nominated by Alfred Drury and Francis Derwent Wood to become a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors. Halnon was a great enthusiast of the New School of sculpture and greatly admired the work of its acknowledged leader Lord Leighton, exhibiting a portrait plaque of him in 1906 at the Royal Academy. In 1923 Halnon became an associate member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, becoming a fellow in 1938.

The present model of *Peace* was exhibited alongside Halnon's *Spring* at The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts Sixty-Second Annual Exhibition, where it was on sale for £25. The composition is clearly influenced by Edward Onslow Ford's earlier model *Folly* (1886), in which the nude figure also bends her right leg and adopts a similar contrapposto pose with her hips tilted to the left. Interestingly Halnon's figure holds the dove of peace in her right hand, but also wears a laurel wreath, the traditional symbol of victory.





Frederic Leighton was known primarily as a painter and only exhibited three sculptures during his lifetime. The first of these, *An Athlete Struggling with a Python* (1877), heralded a new dawn for sculpture of the day. His subsequent models, *The Sluggard* (1885) and *Needless Alarms* of (1886), cemented Leighton’s reputation as a master of three dimensional form and father of the British New School.

Leighton was born in Scarborough in 1830. When he was 24 he travelled to Florence where he studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti, under the esteemed painter and sculptor Jean Leon Gerome. He exhibited at the Royal Frankfurt exhibition of 1849 and stayed in Germany for two years before returning to Italy. In 1852 he went to Rome where he sent work back to the Royal Academy for exhibition. Between 1855 and 1859 he lived in Paris, becoming acquainted with Ingres, Delacroix, Corot and Millet.

In 1860 Leighton returned to London, becoming an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1864. He became a Royal Academician in 1868 and in 1878 he was elected president of the Royal Academy, a position he held for 18 years. Leighton received a knighthood in 1878 and was the first artist to be given a peerage, becoming Lord Leighton of Stretton in 1896. In 1900 he posthumously represented Britain with his paintings at the Great Exhibition in Paris.

Frederic Lord Leighton

1830–1896

An Athlete Struggling With a Python

Signed F. Leighton, dated 1877, and numbered XIII. Pubd. by Ernest Brown & Phillips,
At the Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square, London

Bronze with a rich brown patination

Height: 22½ inches (57 cm)

Collection of Ömer Koç

Conceived 1877

This cast circa 1909

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Leighton House Museum, London

The Royal Academy of Art, London

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The life-size bronze of Leighton's *Athlete Struggling with a Python* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1877 where it was acquired for the nation by the Trustees of the Chancery Bequest. The work was later shown at the 1878 Exhibition Universelle in Paris, where Leighton was awarded a gold medal.

With the exception of the work of Alfred Stevens, which had remained relatively under appreciated amongst contemporary critics, Leighton's *Athlete Struggling with a Python* marked a new dawn for British sculpture. In Leighton's masterpiece the eminent critic Edmund Gosse saw 'something wholly new, propounded by a painter to the professional sculptors and displaying a juster and and livelier sense of what their art should be than they themselves had ever dreamed of'. Indeed, Alfred Gilbert later admitted that 'all I know, and all little I have been able to do as a sculptor, I owe to Leighton.'

The model quickly became famous and in 1887 a life-sized marble, carved by William Pomeroy in Thomas Brock's studio, was commissioned for the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen. Leighton also gave a small number of plaster models of the maquette of the sculpture to his friends and colleagues. When George Frederick Watts RA gave his own example (now in Leighton House) to Mrs Russell Barrington, he said 'I am giving you the most beautiful thing I have in my place'.





Leighton was inspired to produce the work after making a number of small clay models as sketches for the figures in his painting *Daphnephoria* (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight). In an article published in the *Studio*, 1884, he recalled that his first clay sketch 'was admired by several people, who took it for a genuine antique. Some French sculptor—Dalou, I think; I am not quite sure—was particularly pleased with it, and advised me to carry it out life size.' Leighton subsequently enlisted Algelo Colorossi to model for the work and Thomas Brock to assist in its production.

The model echoes the Greek sculpture of *Laocoön and His Sons*, which shows the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons Antiphantes and Thymbraeus being strangled by sea serpents.

The present bronze belongs to a small edition published for the collectors market by the the Leicester Galleries in 1909.



Frederic Lord Leighton

1830–1896

The Sluggard

Signed Fred Leighton, inscribed Founded by J.W.Singer & Sons Frome Somerset and published by Arthur Lesley Collie 39b Old Bond Street London May 1st 1890
Bronze with a rich brown patination
Height: 20¾ inches (52.5 cm)

Conceived 1882
This cast circa 1890

Museum Collections:
The Tate Gallery, London
Leighton House, London
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Anglesey Abbey (National Trust Collection), Cambridgeshire
Collection of the Royal Academy of Arts, London
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Lord Leighton first exhibited the life-size plaster model of *The Sluggard* at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1886. A bronze cast was acquired by Henry Tate in 1896 and is now in the collection of the Tate Gallery, London.

The work was conceived in 1882 and is based on the moment Leighton’s model, Giuseppe Valona, stretched between poses. The work was originally entitled an *Athlete awakening from Sleeping*.

This present bronze is a sketch for the finished model and was published for the collectors’ market by Arthur Leslie Collie. A reduced version of the finished version of the work was never cast. Collie sold this model, along with other New School sculpture, from his joint premises with Agnews in Old Bond Street.

A bronze cast which bore Collie’s name and that of the founder Singer and Sons, as seen on the present cast, was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts exhibition of 1890. Singer and Sons had set up their foundry capable of both lost wax and sand casting in 1888. By 1901 Collie was no longer associated with Agnews and by 1906 he was no longer listed in the art directory. Casts made under Collie’s name can therefore be accurately dated to this period.





Frederic Lord Leighton

1830–1896

Needless Alarms

Inscribed Published by S.L. Fane 49 Glasshouse Street London W. June 1906

Bronze with a light brown patination on a green marble base

Height: 26 inches (66 cm)

Conceived 1886

This cast circa 1906

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Leighton House Museum, London (Sold by Bowman Sculpture)

The Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Leighton exhibited *Needless Alarms* at the Royal Academy in 1886. The model was greatly admired by John Everett Millais and following the exhibition, Leighton presented him with the bronze. In return the painter executed *Shelling Peas* (1889) which he gave to Leighton and is now in the collection of the Leighton House Museum. Along with Millais' model, Leighton produced another cast using the lost wax technique, which he kept in his own collection.

In this sculpture Leighton depicts a young girl peering over her left shoulder at a frog that has surprised her with its croaking at her feet. She holds her hands close to her chest in a gesture of alarm that allows Leighton to display his accurate anatomical modelling and delicate handling of the female form.

The composition also proved highly inspirational for a generation of younger sculptors and Alfred Gilbert's own model *Comedy and Tragedy*, with its similar strong contrapposto and naked youthful form, was undoubtedly inspired by the present work. Henry Pegram's *The Bather* of 1895 also follows a similar format.

The editor Arthur Leslie Collie published an edition of *Needless Alarms* in 1897 and one of these casts was shown in the Sculpture For the Home exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1903. The present model belongs to a further small edition produced by S.L. Fane in 1906, after Collie had ceased trading.





Edward Onslow Ford was born in London. He studied painting in Antwerp at the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten before taking up sculpture, encouraged to join the school by Professor Michael Wagnmüller at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich.

During his time in Munich, Ford fell in love and married Anne Gwendoline Von Kreuzer, the third daughter of Baron Frans von Kreuzer.

The couple returned to London in 1874 making England their home. In 1884 Ford took a studio opposite Alfred Gilbert in The Avenue, Fulham and the pair became firm friends, experimenting with the lost-wax method of bronze casting. Ford later became well known for casting his smaller bronzes with this technique. Along with Gilbert, Ford was also a pioneer of mixed-media sculpture. Works, such as *The Singer* of 1889, now in the collection of the The Tate Gallery, London, incorporated semi-precious stones and the use of enamelling.

Ford produced a series of allegorical female nudes during the 1880s which helped cement his place at the forefront of the New Sculpture movement. The earliest of these nudes, *Folly* (1886), was purchased by the Tate Gallery, London and according to Marion Hepworth Dixon ‘made the fortunes of its creator’ (Magazine of Art 1892, p.328).

Ford also executed a number of portrait busts, including Sir Frederick Bramwell, for the Royal Institution and William Gladstone for the City Liberal Club. His enormous statue of General Charles Gordon, for Chatham and the recumbent sculpture of Shelley, which forms the centrepiece of the Shelley Memorial at University College, Oxford, also show his brilliance as a sculptor.

Edward Onslow Ford

1852–1901

Dancing

Bronze with a light and dark brown patination with green highlights
Stamped with monogram and signed Onslow Ford
Height 13 inches (33.5 cm)

Conceived and cast 1890

Museum Collections:
Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool

In Onslow Ford's original model for *Dancing*, conceived as a pair to *Music* (1890), the half nude figure wears an ornate headdress set with two wings. Illustrated in the 1890 edition of *Magazine of Art*, where the author suggests that the headdress was inspired by Alfred Gilbert's *Enchanted Chair*, this model was later exhibited at the Fine Art Society in 1902. Another life-size cast of the work, without the headdress, is in the collection of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool. The present model is a reduction of the Lady Lever version, with the position of the left hand differing slightly.

As is typical in Ford's work, the dainty idealised figure is left free from classical connotations or mythological themes and here the graceful swooping of the dancers arms and her delicate posture merely serve to illustrate the movement and joys of dance itself.





Edward Onslow Ford

1852–1901

Peace

Signed E. Onslow Ford, London 1890

Bronze with a rich mid and dark brown patination on a green marble base

Height: 24 inches (61 cm)

Conceived 1887

This cast circa 1900

Museum Collections:

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

The Higgins Museum, Bedford

Onslow Ford exhibited the full-size plaster of *Peace* at the Royal Academy in 1887. The work was highly acclaimed and the critic Edmund Gosse considered it to be ‘the most delightful contribution to the exhibition’ that year. Three years later Ford exhibited a bronze cast of the model, now in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Peace was the second in a series of ideal nudes by Ford, the first of which, *Folly*, was acquired by the Trustees of the Chancery Bequest for the Tate in 1886. It was this series, which also included *Singer* (1889) and *Echo* (1895) that not only secured Ford’s reputation as a sculptor but also propelled him towards the forefront of the New Sculpture movement.

These works typified Ford’s output, which adopted the naturalistic modelling and contaposto twist of his New School contemporaries, but lacked the allusion to classical mythology or legend. Rather, Ford’s delicate nude statuettes were purely allegorical, attempting as Susan Beattie argues: ‘to convey pure feeling in realist terms’ (Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, Yale University Press, 1983, p.155).





Sir William Reid Dick

1879–1961

Sling Boy

Signed W. Reid. Dick
Bronze with a rich dark brown patination
Height: 13½ inches (34.2 cm)

Conceived and cast circa 1911

Museum Collections:
Bradford City Art Gallery

Slingboy is one of Sir William Reid Dick's earliest works and was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1911. Set against a backdrop of the increasingly popular Art Nouveau style, Dick's model revived the contrapposto twist and naturalistic modelling associated with the British New School and was greatly celebrated by contemporary audiences.

Indeed, in this charming depiction of the playfulness of youth, Dick cleverly combines the tension of Lord Leighton's *Athlete Struggling with a Python* with the agile twist of his *Sluggard*.

Reid Dick exhibited for many years at the Royal Academy and the success he enjoyed lead to an abundance of official commissions for monuments and statues. Amongst his patrons were King George VI who appointed him King's Sculptor between 1938 and 1952 and Queen's Sculptor in Ordinary for Scotland from 1952 until his death.

The present work was cast in two sizes: a rare 60cm reduction which is only recorded in one public collection, Bradford City Art Gallery, and a 33cm reduction, of which the present model is an exceptional example.

Reid Dick was made an associate of the Royal Academy in 1921 and elected Royal Academician in 1928 before being offered the appointment of President of the Royal British Society of Sculptors in 1935, a post he held for three years. His successful career was crowned in 1935 when he received his knighthood. Eleven years later his portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt was unveiled in Grosvenor Square, London.





Charles Ricketts

1866–1931

Orpheus and Eurydice

Signed with initial C.R. and numbered 5
Bronze with a brown and dark green patination
Height: 13½ inches (34 cm)

Conceived and cast 1906

Museum Collections:
The Tate Gallery, London

Charles de Sousy Ricketts was born in Geneva to an English father and a French mother. He lived between France and Italy as a child, before moving to London to study at the City and Guilds Technical Art School in 1882.

Ricketts worked across a number of mediums and was an accomplished painter, sculptor, illustrator, author, printer, designer and typographer. He exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in 1886 and 1887, and began to sculpt in 1906. He became an associate of the Royal Academy in 1922 and a Royal Academician six years later.

The subject of most of his artistic output, including the present model, was classical mythology. Here he depicts the final moments in the story of *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

According to the legend, the musician Orpheus and the nymph Eurydice were a blissful couple who were tragically separated after Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Refusing to accept her death, Orpheus travelled to the underworld to rescue his wife, finally convincing Hades and Persephone to let her travel back to the land of the living with him. There was however one condition, Eurydice was ordered to walk behind Orpheus, who was not allowed to turn and look at his wife, until the couple had left the underworld.

Hearing Eurydice stumble, Orpheus was unable to restrain himself and with only a few paces to go, turned and looked back at Eurydice, who with a sigh faded away back to the underworld. In this sculpture Ricketts captures the passionate moment as the couple embrace before their separation.





Charles Ricketts

1866–1931

Orpheus and Eurydice

Signed with initial C.R.
Plaster
Height: 13½ inches (34 cm)
Conceived circa 1906
Museum Collections:
The Tate Gallery, London



Firedogs in the form of Male Figures

Bronze on black marble bases
Height: 14 inches (37cm)

Conceived and cast 1852

Museum Collections:
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Although the critic Edmund Gosse did not coin the term ‘New Sculpture’ until 1894, Stevens’ work provided an early challenge to the somewhat stale state of academic English sculpture during the mid 19th century. He not only assimilated influences from Renaissance Italy but managed to translate these influences into a host of architectural and industrial designs which would inform the next generation of sculptors, architects and designers. Indeed, even Leighton’s seminal *Athlete Struggling with a Python* owes much to Stevens’ own *Truth and Falsehood* with its twisting depiction of muscular combat between man and beast.

Stevens joined his father’s decorating workshop at the age of ten, assisting him with house painting and joinery. In 1833 he was sponsored by the Rector Samuel Best to travel to Italy and pursue an education in art. It was whilst studying in Rome and Florence the young artist developed a strong inclination for the Italian Renaissance, particularly the work of Michelangelo.

In 1842 Stevens returned to England, but failing to secure the contract of decorating Parliament, he turned to teaching and spent two years as a tutor at the New School of Design.

In 1850 he took the position of chief artist at Henry E. Hoole & Co, manufacturers of ornamental stove grates and fenders. It was whilst in this position that Stevens designed the present firedogs, which were cast by the same firm in 1852. The firedogs were then exhibited in 1862 at the London international exhibition. The models clearly show the influence of Michelangelo and as Beattie asserts, these homely firedogs are: ‘transformed into heroic figures that echo, in their freedom and power, the ignudi of the Sistine Chapel ceiling’. (Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, Yale 1983, p.2)

Upon his return to London in 1852, Stevens was commissioned to design railings for the British Museum, topped with 25 ornate casts of lions. Following this he was given little large-scale commercial work until 1856, when he started the world-renowned Wellington Monument. The forty-foot structure features a sarcophagus that supports the recumbent figure of the Duke of Wellington. A marble canopy overlooks the effigy, decorated in the style of the late Renaissance period. His most famous works, the composite bronze sculptures of *Valour & Cowardice* and *Truth & Falsehood*, which echo the present firedogs, flank it on either side.





Born in London, the son of two sculptors Thomas and Mary Thornycroft, Hamo received his early training at his parent’s studio. He entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1869 and in 1871 travelled to Italy where he encountered the sculptures of ancient Rome.

Thornycroft’s first academic success came in 1875 when he won the Royal Academy’s gold medal for his sculpture a *Warrior Bearing a Wounded Youth*. The original cast is now in the collection of Leighton House, and the reproduction rights were bought by the Art Union of London, who made a reduction of the model for the collectors’ market.

Thornycroft went on to create a number of works in the classical tradition, usually modelled in marble. These include *Lot’s Wife* (1878), now in the collection of Leighton House, and *Artemis and her Hound*, which was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1880. He continued in a realist vein during the next decade, often referencing classical antiquity and produced his two most well known bronzes *Teucer* (1881) and the *Mower* (1884) during this period. In 1892 he became one of the youngest artists to be elected to the Royal Academy, taking a teaching post at the RA Schools the same year.

Thornycroft received many public commissions including the memorial to William Gladstone (the Strand) and General Charles Gordon, originally erected in the centre of Trafalgar Square. The plaster for his monument to Oliver Cromwell, the bronze of which is erected in Westminster, won the Grand Prix at the Paris International Exhibition of 1990.

Thornycroft was knighted in 1917 and won the Royal British Society of Sculptors’ Gold Medal in 1923, just two years prior to his death.

Sir William Hamo Thornycroft

1850–1925

Teucer

Signed and dated HAMO THORNYCROFT 1881

Dark brown patination

Height: 23 inches (58.5 cm)

Conceived circa 1881

This bronze cast circa 1890

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

The Royal Academy of Arts, London

Detroit Institute of Arts

The life-size plaster for *Teucer* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1881. The bronze was exhibited a year later and subsequently purchased for the Tate by the Trustees of the Chancery Bequest. The bronze reduction of the life-size model, of which the present work is an example, was limited to an edition of 25 casts, each of which were supervised by the artist himself.

In 1880 Thornycroft had the idea for a number of small sculptures ‘illustrative of English Games’, beginning with his model of an athlete *Putting the Stone*. The series was never completed, but in the present work we see the sculptor combining sporting imagery with the classical mythology of ancient Greece.

According to Homer’s epic poem *The Iliad*, which recounts the final year of the Trojan War, Teucer was a formidable Greek archer who entered Troy in the Trojan Horse. Once inside Troy, Teucer tried in vain to kill the Trojan prince Hector who was protected by the god Apollo. The following passage was printed in the Royal Academy Catalogue which accompanied the exhibition of the work:

Since, rallying from our wall we forced the foe, Still aimed at Hector have I bent my bow; Eight arrows from this hand have fled, And eight bold heroes by their points lie dead: But sure some God denies me to destroy this fury of the field, this dog of Troy.

Thornycroft depicts the archer having just released his last arrow, captured in a moment of intense concentration as he watches it fly towards its target. The tension of the figures arm and tautness of the bow is clearly evocative of Leighton’s earlier *Athlete Struggling with a Python* yet Thornycroft’s use of the right-angled form is revolutionary and does not disrupt the models perfect balance.





Sir William Hamo Thornycroft

1850–1925

Mower

Signed and dated Hamo Thornycroft ARA SC 1884, numbered 8, stamped 8 on the front and reverse of the base and signed Hamo Thornycroft in ink on the underside of the base.

Bronze with green patination

Height: 23¼ inches (59 cm)

Conceived 1884

This cast circa 1890

Museum Collections:

The Tate Gallery, London

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Amongst Thornycroft's greatest works is *The Mower*. The life-size plaster was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1884 and a bronze reduction, of which the present model is an example, was exhibited five years later. The life-size bronze was exhibited in 1894 and is now in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Thornycroft began work on the *Mower* as early as 1882 and a small wax model bearing this date is in the collection of the Tate Gallery, London. A bronze cast of this sketch, where the mower's scythe faces upwards, was made in 1884 and can be found in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. The work was conceived after a boating trip on the Thames. Thornycroft had seen a young labourer resting in the fields and began making a number of pencil sketches of the figure. He depicted the worker leaning back on his left leg whilst resting his hand on his hip, a pose that remained almost unchanged in the final sculpture.

The *Mower* showed a key development in Thornycroft's practice. Reliance on classical prototypes gave way to naturalism and he began to assimilate the influence of Gilbert and Rodin, as well as the contrapposto twist of the 15th century. Whilst the model initially calls to mind Meunier and Dalou's workers of this period, the sculpture in fact bears more resemblance to Gilbert's *Perseus Arming*.

Thornycroft's *Mower* is no 'hero of labour', but rather a contemplative image of youthful beauty, used as a sculptural vehicle to express the melancholic calm of Matthew Arnold's poem *Thyris*, an extract of which was published in the Royal Academy catalogue that accompanied the plaster in 1884: '*...who, as the tiny swell f our boat passing heaved the river grass, stood with suspended scythe to see us pass.*'





Photography by Julian Jans

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