

# The human touch of Kenny Hunter

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**I say seventies disco queen Gloria Gaynor but my 10-year-old daughter and friend say Blue Peter presenter Radzi Chinyanganya.**

In the end, all art is what you make of it and the man who made the giant head with the curvy Afro which is the crowning glory of Kontrapunkt, is thinking more along regal ancient Egyptian lines.

"We all have different reference points," says its creator, Kenny Hunter. "There are always many different layers in any sculptural form."

Kontrapunkt is the German word for the musical term counterpoint, which is a technique for combining melodies according to fixed rules. For Kontrapunkt, part of this summer's Scotland-wide series of Generation exhibitions celebrating the last 25 years of Scottish contemporary art, sculptor Hunter has brought together existing sculptural work and fashioned them into an entirely new artwork using his own set of rules.

This new - but old - work is the centrepiece of the inaugural show in House for an Art Lover's new Studio Pavilion, part of a new Artpark within the garden area of the house.

Kontrapunkt sits beneath a diamond-shaped cupola and consists - at first glance - of the aforementioned big head, a giant skeleton, a 'campfire', a boy's head, a mushroom cloud, a rolled up 'carpet', two birds and a plaster bag of rubbish, with detritus such as a red top tabloid, a banana and a cigarette packet spilling out. Hunter has arranged them around packing cases - one of which has the word 'dread' written on its side.

Packing cases are akin to a signature for Hunter, representing the transience of human existence. His 2010 work, iGoat, at Spitalfields in London, shows a sculpted goat standing atop disparate packing cases.

Hunter trained at Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in the mid-eighties and is best known for his bronze Citizen Firefighter sculpture outside Central Station in Glasgow, created as a tribute to the city's firefighters.

The work recently became the focus of international attention following the devastating fire at the Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed building known universally as The Mack.

Just days after the fire, a sign appeared around its neck with the words Thank You written in a Mackintosh-style script. The image went viral around the world-wide web.

Hunter was moved by the gesture and his phone started to buzz once the story broke. "I was impressed with it," he says. "Someone understood the importance of the moment. Everyone who had connections to The Mack knew what it meant when the fire happened. The person did it to let the sculpture and sign be the message. There was economy and humbleness of gesture. It underlines the importance of public art to people."

Hunter's work is also on show at Paxton House in Berwick-upon-Tweed and the City Art Centre in Edinburgh as part Generation, which features more than 100 artists in 71 locations across Scotland.

In the Generation guide book, produced by the National Galleries of Scotland and Glasgow Life, curator Andrew Patrizio says of Hunter's work: "His sculpture encapsulates moments in which human cultures, ancient and recent, clash together and become more strange and complicated the longer we consider them."

Kontrapunkt typifies this culture clash. The longer you look at it, circling it as you go, the more you impose your own narrative on it. There's the hopefulness of youth in the shape of a beautiful boy's head and the two birds, the cleansing nature of fire, the ever-present threat of death and destruction in the oversized skeleton, and the small-but-deadly mushroom cloud. The fact everything comes to naught in the end lurks in the rubbish bag with a rip in it.

Alongside Kontrapunkt, Hunter is in residence at House for an Art Lover's new Artpark working in an open-studio opposite the Pavilion Gallery on a project called Elephant for Glasgow.

"It's a new experience for me," he says. "I'll be 'on show' too and working away as the public come and go."

For Elephant for Glasgow, Hunter aims to model a life-size elephant in clay as

part of a project exploring Glasgow's industrial and cultural links with the Commonwealth.

The Elephant will ultimately be cast in part from metal from trains once deployed in the Commonwealth but built here and shipped from the Clyde. Once cast in iron this ten-ton public artwork will be installed on the site of the 1938 British Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park to celebrate the city's Commonwealth links and the legacy of the 2014 Games.

A tiny iron model of this elephant is on show in a former Dovecot on the site. And a lovely wee thing it is too.

"There's a long tradition of melting down in time of peace," says Hunter. "Again it's about layers and my trying to address this in sculptural form."

Kenny Hunter: Kontrapunkt, House for an Art Lover, The Studio Pavilion, Bellahouston Park, Glasgow. [www.houseforanartlover.co.uk](http://www.houseforanartlover.co.uk). Until September 4.