

## Elephant makes an awfully big adventure

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The legacy of Glasgow's great engineering tradition comes full circle in the latest piece of public artwork by Scottish sculptor Kenny Hunter.



Sculptor Kenny Hunter working on the elephant, and left and right, in his studio with some of his other work. Pictures: Nick Ponty

Scrap metal from locomotives built in Springburn that went to India and South Africa, the farthest corners of the Commonwealth, have been salvaged to form part of An Elephant for Glasgow, to be sited at Bellahouston Park later this year.

The life-size sculpture of an Indian elephant is already taking shape in the recently opened Art Park at Bellahouston, where Glasgow School of Art-trained Kenny is currently artist in residence.

"I've just been over looking at it - it's a huge piece of work, it looks fantastic" says Garry Sanderson, chief executive at House for an Art Lover.

"Kenny has already started work on the armature part of it, made out of metal, and then he puts wire right around it. Now he's in the process of putting clay all around the outside and

it's actually a very similar colour to an elephant."

The final part of the process will be to cast the elephant in iron recycled from locomotives.

It not only links the Commonwealth with Glasgow right after the success of this summer's Commonwealth Games, it is also a nod to the city hosting the British Empire Exhibition at Bellahouston Park in 1938.

Visitors to the park will get a chance to see the work in progress at the Art Sheds, which act as an open studio. Students from Glasgow School of Art have also been involved as part of the educational element of the project, working alongside Kenny.

"The armature should be finished in the next two to three weeks, then it will be cast, hopefully at a local foundry," says Garry. "Fingers crossed, it will be ready to go on show in the autumn."

He adds: "We worked with the Riverside Museum to locate the scrap, from the wheels and carriages of locomotives used in India and South Africa.

"It's a really great story. We already have artwork in the park that people can come and see, and this will be an addition to that.

"Kenny is a major artist so we're really chuffed to be working with him."

The idea for An Elephant For Glasgow came from Kenny and was fleshed out in collaboration with Art Park staff.

"We were actually chatting to Kenny about something else when this came up," says Garry. "He had done a couple of maquettes for other pieces for the park and then he pitched his idea to us about the Elephant For Glasgow to tie in with the Commonwealth Games.

"The whole idea evolved from there."

An elephant was chosen as it is seen as both a form of transport and an animal of symbolic power. It also functions as a symbol for Glasgow's former role as the workshop of the world, in particular to the often-overlooked human role and cost extolled in creating that output.

The industrial workforce of Glasgow, a beast of burden, which took to its role with diligence yet could also stretch its chains and panic its masters.

The thinking is that the transformation of metals from one form to another contains the ability to express great historical change and meaning through the process of re-casting, swords into ploughshares or statues into cannons.

An Elephant For Glasgow will sit near the western entrance to House for an Art Lover, gazing out towards Govan and the Clyde.

Just last month House for an Art Lover officially opened its architect-designed Studio Pavilion and Art Park Centre for Arts & Heritage, the latest phase of the development of Art Park Glasgow in Bellahouston.

Situated next to the house, the Pavilion will offer opportunities for artists to create and show public artworks in the context of Bellahouston Park through residences and exhibitions, while a dedicated studio space provides an innovative, creative education programme for children and adults.

The Art Park Heritage Centre, housed in original stables and dovecote buildings, has been refurbished and turned into an educational and research centre to showcase the history of

Bellahouston and its position in the ancient Parish of Govan.

Starting with the history of early Govan and moving through to shipbuilding, there will be a photographic display of public architecture and monuments and sculptures of Govan.

It ends with original images and footage of the magnificent Empire Exhibition of 1938, which attracted 12.5 million people to Bellahouston Park, and a newly commissioned animated 'fly through' by the Glasgow School of Art Digital Design Studio.

There is also a chance to see Kenny's contribution to Generation, a nationwide exhibition programme showcasing some of the best and most significant art to have emerged from Scotland over a period of 25 years, in Kontrapunkt, on show at House for an Art Lover's new Pavilion Gallery.

He has displayed a selection of new and existing sculpture with their packing crates, and the artworks are stacked and arranged to create a single form. The idea of the installation is to suggest process and flux, part studio and part retrospective.