



STEVE DILWORTH
JOURNEYMAN



Ark (detail)
2000, Bronze
& nickel silver
Unique
114 x 193 x 132 cm

STEVE DILWORTH JOURNEYMAN

The night I found this figure I dreamt of my own death. That's when I realised it was a powerful object. STEVE DILWORTH

As we heave the weighty case out of its travelling crate and slowly lift the latch that locks the strong box we collectively hold our breath, not knowing what will be revealed. Usually Steve Dilworth hides the objects he is venerating by encasing them, but in this early work he grants us access to find a carved, hessian covered figure. Discovered and purchased from a Nigerian street merchant in Chicago where Dilworth was setting up an exhibition in 1996, he returned home with the figure and immediately took to finding how to express his strong response to it. The resulting work which Dilworth calls *Doll Box* is extraordinary and beautifully crafted in wood, studded with copper roves and bound with steel, both externally and internally, in an attempt to subdue the figure's innate, unsettling power.

Dilworth often speaks of his work in terms of making objects for a tribe that doesn't exist using natural materials such as stone, sea and air as well the bodies of animals he finds on his wanderings or is given. However, *Doll Box* is an exception to the rule having been made originally for a tribe that presumably does exist - by a fellow craftsman. The complex case Dilworth has created to contain the figure reflects his acute, visceral response and thus pays tribute to its unknown maker. Indeed, many of the works in the exhibition, reveal Dilworth's ultimate respect for the objects he works with, exploring the power that can be gained by encasing or exposing them in the right way with the right materials. Indeed Dilworth often alludes to the alchemical metaphor of requiring the right elements in a battery for it to give

power. He says: *One of my ideas about making sculpture is that sculpture can be seen as combining the power or the presence of materials and by altering their position and shape and combining them, you can create a battery. A bit like a zinc and a copper plate placed in an acid bath can create a battery, each material has an energy and you have to find that balance.*

Another early piece in the exhibition which charts four decades of making from his studio on the remote Hebridean island of Harris, is *Rook*, 1980. As we speak about the work in the gallery, Dilworth cradles it like a child, its gently bowed back fitting snugly into the crook of his arm. Only the beak and its curled claws are exposed outside the sarcophagus which is skilfully carved from 10,000 year old bog oak and held together by hand wrought iron nails. It was the first piece Dilworth exhibited publicly after moving to the Isle of Harris and can be seen to signal an important transition from his previous works that often required binding or stitching like the infamous *Hanging Figure* (which directly preceded it), to encasing precious objects within other solid carved or constructed materials.

Ark is perhaps Dilworth's most important piece to highlight this change of direction and is the largest cast metal work he has created to date. Originally commissioned for a sculpture park



Doll Box
1997, Wood, steel,
copper & figure
Unique
42 x 37 x 26 cm



near Chichester, Dilworth wanted *Ark* to be a vessel worthy of travelling forward in time for millennia. This meant making the work more decorative than he would do usually in the hope it would never be destroyed. Inspired by the casting process, Dilworth came up with the idea of the carapace being cast in two separate metals - bronze and nickel silver - to give the work a unique aesthetic, with the metals not inlaid but fused together by welding. Within the egg, clutched protectively within the insectile legs, is another bronze and nickel silver sculpture which will never be seen unless the sculpture is brutally cut open. Within this sculpture lie the remains of a hooded crow, hated by islanders for preying on young animals and carcasses but esteemed by Dilworth for its ability to survive.

Porpoise Evolution III is another work that combines two metals and is the final work in a series of sculptures that focus on evolution. Shown for the first time together here in London, the series starts with the simple, curved, almost cellular, form of *Evolution I* which is smooth and irresistably tactile. *Evolution II* takes on a simple plated carapace which left empty leaves the viewer to ponder what creature it once protected. Skipping a few millenia of evolutionary change *Evolution III* has developed into an elegant imaginary creature with a fully articulated spine of sterling silver. Originating from the carcass of a porpoise washed up on the rocky beach outside Dilworth's home, we are invited to look within the work, past the carapace to a precious inner core.

When I visited Dilworth at his home on Harris last August, I was reminded of how eloquently and accurately Robert MacFarlane describes Dilworth's studio in his book *The Old Ways*. The studio is an apothecary of objects, both found and gifted, all sprinkled with a light film of dunite dust and sanded car filler. In one corner a large lump of driftwood sits on a bench which is being gently caressed and sanded back into life. Travelling the seas for who knows how long, this piece of Chinese Redwood had its own story to tell before it arrived in Harris. Gifted to Steve by a friend

Porpoise: Evolution III
2004/5, Bronze
& sterling silver
Unique
53 x 45 x 45 cm





(LEFT)
Steve Dilworth's
studio

(BELOW)
Steve Dilworth carving
in his studio & his
home

who enthusiastically cut a node off to determine what wood it was, Dilworth has carefully restored it back to its rightful place with silver staples - his own version of the Japanese practice of *Kintsugi* - which now gleam perfectly in contrast with the rich, red hue of the wood.

Also on the workbench are a number of pieces of the local Harris stone, dunite, which at 2.2 billion years old is dense and intractable. Yet Dilworth wields his angle grinder patiently and brings the shards he finds into being - enticing them to become beautifully poised sculptures with sharp edges that contrast with soft gentle undulations. One piece in particular catches my eye, the thinnest slither of rock which is being gently carved into the sensuous form of a feather. It is literally featherweight compared to the other heavy stones and its fragility is surprising. There were no feathered creatures on Earth when this stone was formed. As such, *Feather Stone* is a powerful reminder of our short existence on the planet but also highlights Dilworth's ability to look anew at objects and materials combining an ancient timelessness with an integrity of craftsmanship that is supremely rare.

POLLY BIELECKA







Ark
2000, Bronze &
nickel silver
Unique
114 x 193 x 132 cm

(PREVIOUS PAGE)
Wing Stone
2023, Dunité
Unique
13 x 36 x 11 cm



Cremation
2022, Mixed Metal
& bird ash
Unique
15 x 7.5 x 12 cm





Rook
1980, Bog oak
iron & rook
Unique
45 x 12 x 19 cm

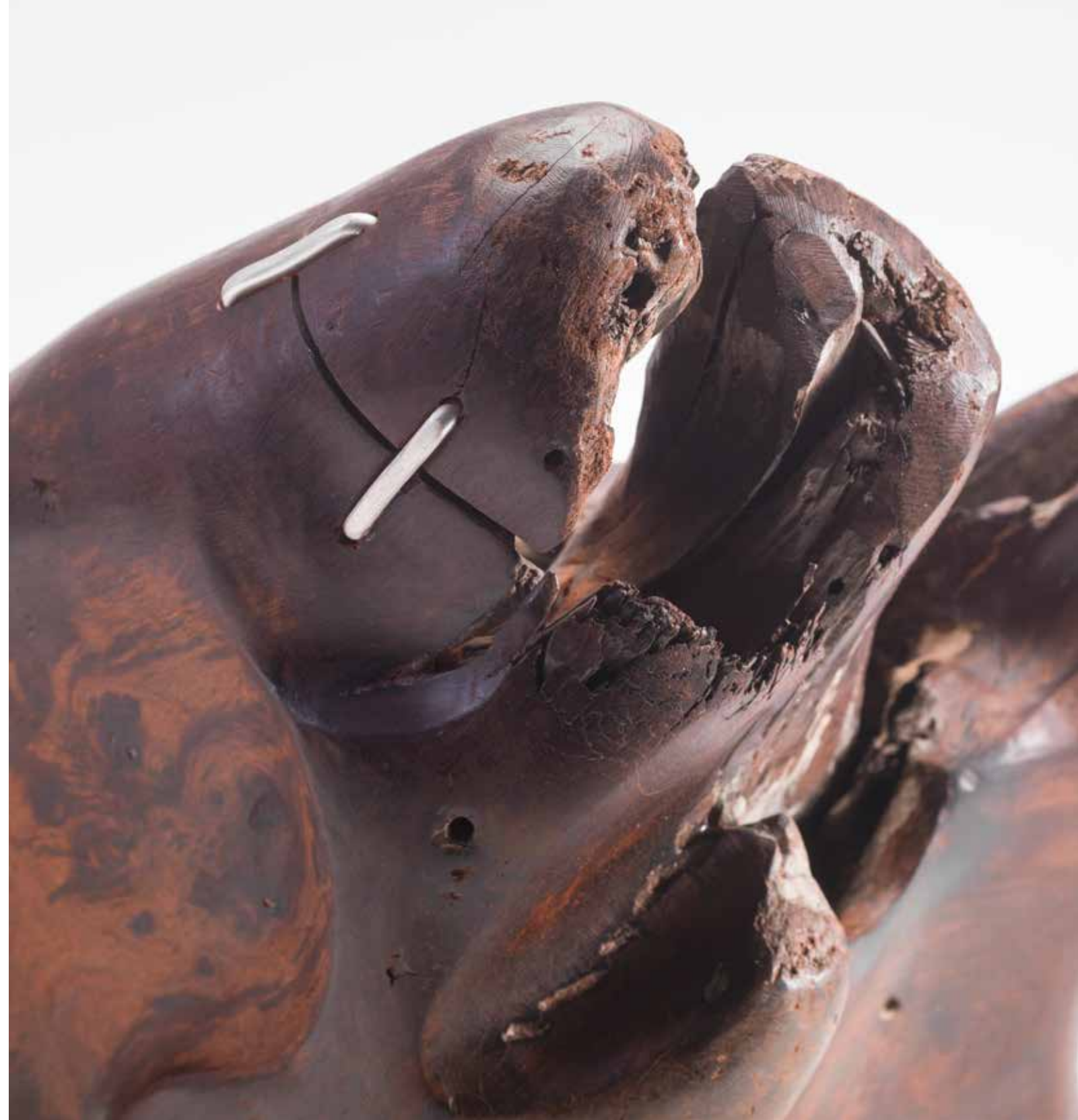




Evolution II
2006, Bronze
Edition of 5
33 x 44 x 35 cm



Drift Wood
2024, Chinese
Redwood & silver
Unique
29 x 47 x 27 cm



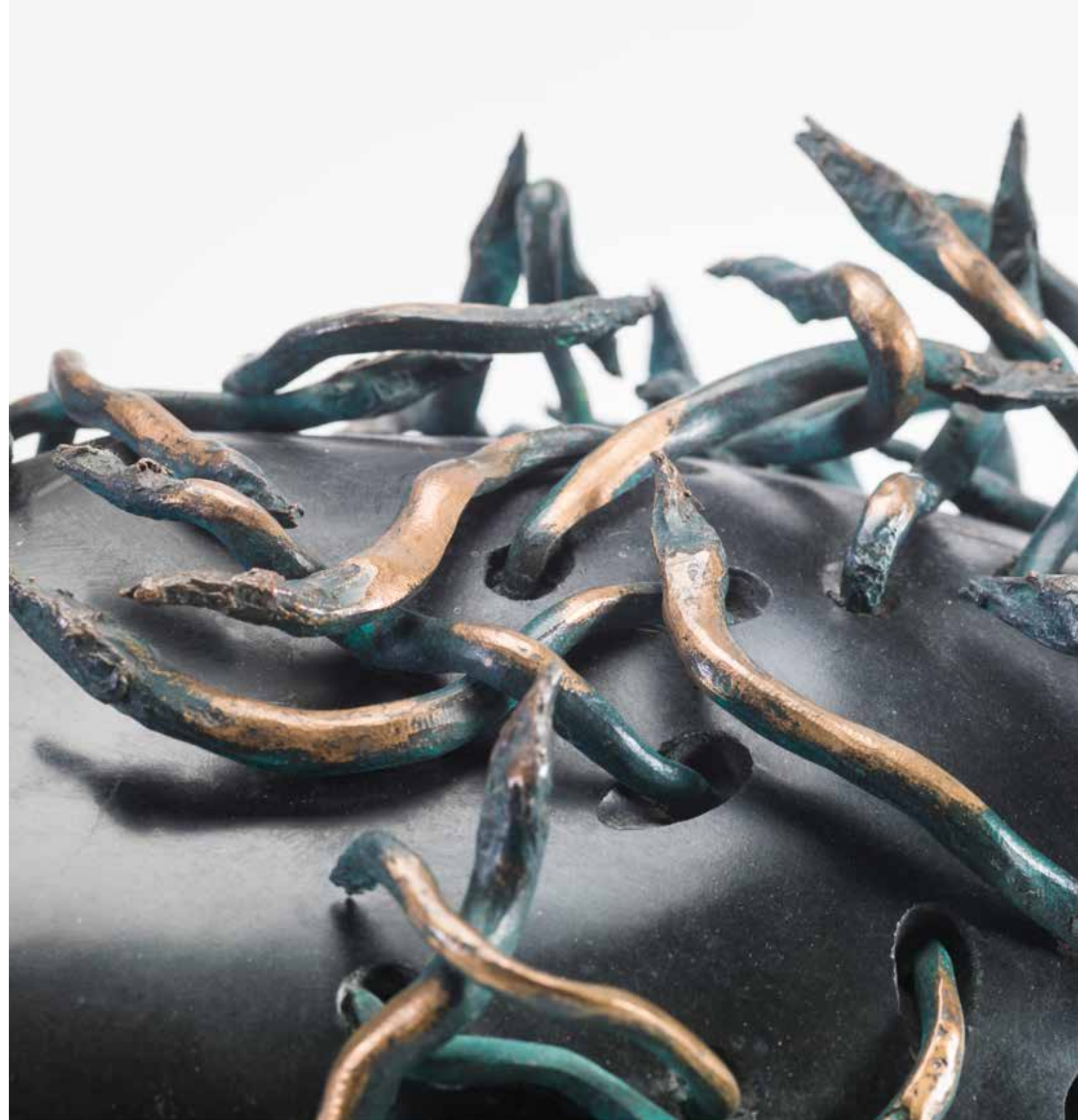


Feather Stone
2023, Dunite
& jesmonite
Unique
51 x 18.5 x 4 cm





Eels and Puffin
2006, Dunite,
bronze & puffin
18 x 32 x 22 cm

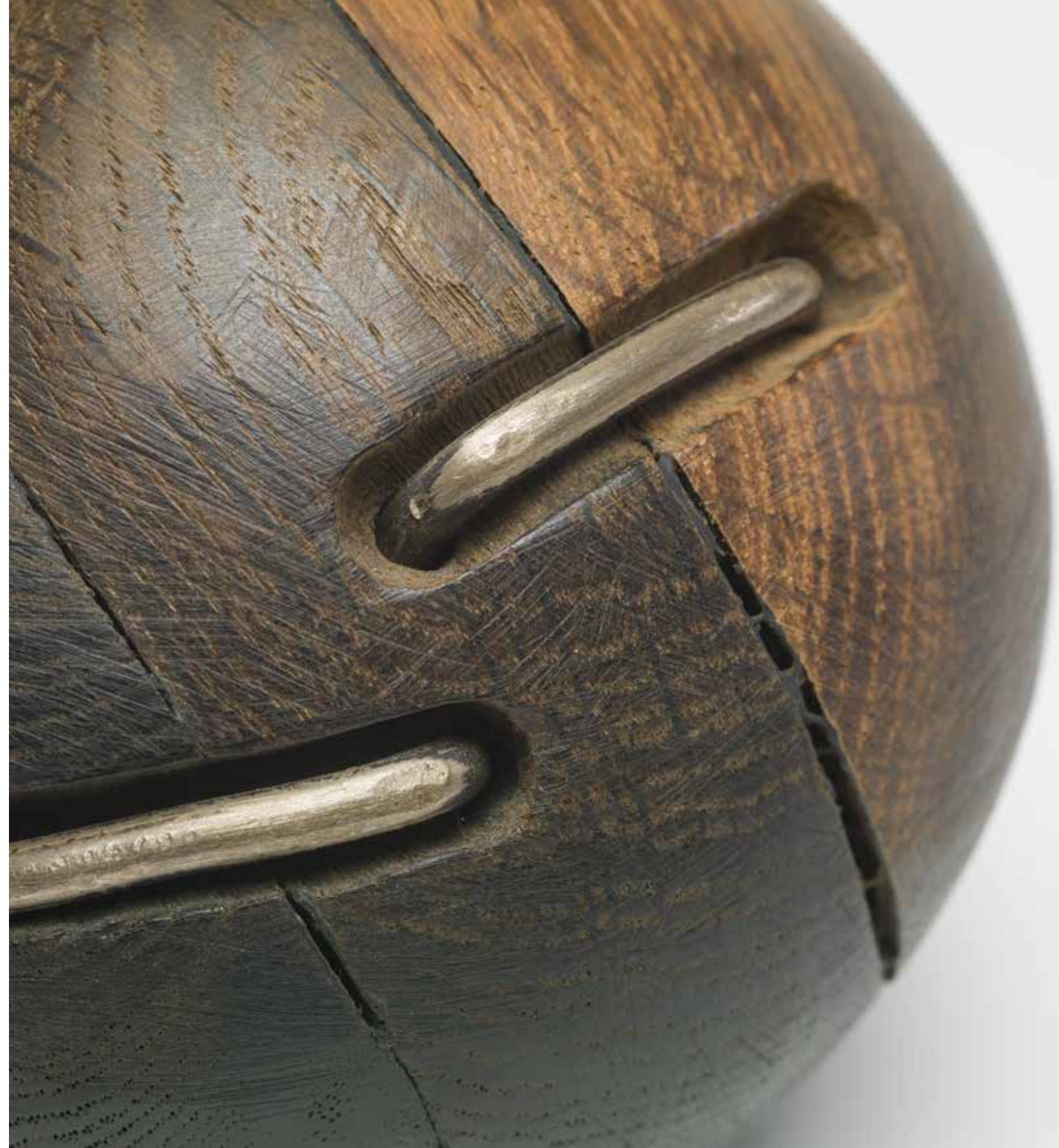




Evolution I
2006, Bronze
Edition of 5
24 x 32 x 25 cm



Throwing Object
2023, Bog oak, bird
& silver
12 x 10 x 10 cm





Carapace in Five Pieces
 2019, Bronze
 Edition of 3
 Largest: 18 x 28 x 15 cm





Anchor Stone
2020, Dunite
Unique
21 x 20 x 16 cm





(ABOVE)
Cover Stone Print
 1990, Print
 Edition of 26
 62.5 x 49 x 3 cm

(BELOW & RIGHT)
Cover Stone
 1990, Print, stone
 & copper
 Artist's proof
 Print: 62.5 x 49 x 3 cm
 Stone: 15 x 8 x 6cm





Balancing Stone
2023, Dunite
Unique
17 x 11 x 12 cm





Maquette for Carapace
2010, Bronze
Edition of 5
27 x 25 x 42 cm





Sail Stone
2023, Dunite
Unique
18 x 15 x 7.5 cm;
16 x 21 x 24.5 cm

Tooth
2023, Dunite
Unique
20.5 x 15 x 10 cm





STEVE DILWORTH
b. 1949

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017	‘Off the Rock’, Pangolin London
2012	‘Mortal Remains’ Retrospective, An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornaway
2001	‘Extracted from Cinnabar’ Hart Gallery, London
1997	‘Earthing Memories’ - Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hulll, Yorks
1996	Belloc Lowndes Fine Art, Chicago, USA
1995	‘Diversions in Natural History’ - The Booth Museum, Brighton
	‘Diversions in Natural History’ - The Gallery in Cork Street, London
1994	‘Close to the Edge’ – The Gallery in Cork Street, London
1994	‘Close to the Edge’ – Apex Gallery, Portsmouth
1991/2	‘Acts of Faith’ - Touring Exhibition, Scotland
1990	Euskirchen eV Koln, Germany

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022	‘Feathers, Bones & Stones’, Pangolin London
2017	‘Ark at Chester Cathedra’, curated by Gallery Pangolin
2016	‘Jubilee’, Gallery Pangolin, Gloucestershire
2012	‘Morbid Curiosity’ Museum of Culture, Chicago, Wellcome London
	‘Sculptors’ Prints & Drawings’, Pangolin London
2010 -11	‘Re-enchantment project – Cillein’ Paul Hamlyn Foundation
2010	‘Stirred for a Bird’ Pangolin Gallery
	‘Art at the Edge’ Olympic collaboration
2008	Royal Academy Summer Show
	Sterling Stuff II, Pangolin London
2006 -7	‘Evolution’ project with Gallery Pangolin, Gloucestershire
2005	‘Stone Works’ Canary Wharf, London
2003	‘Friends Gallery’ Royal Academy of Art, London
2002	‘Thinking Big’ Peggy Guggenheim, Venice
	‘Great Book of Gaelic’ book, film and exhibition
	Royal Academy of Art, London (Summer Show)
2001	‘In Praise of Trees’ Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire
	‘Living the Land’, Duff House, Banff, Scotland [touring Scotland & W.Isles]
2000	‘Sculpture, An Abbey and a Cathedral’ Malmesbury Abbey & Tewkesbury Cathedral
1999	‘Grand Opening Exhibition’ Beatrice Royal Gallery, Eastleigh
1997	‘6th International Shoe Box Exhibition’ University of Hawaii, Manoa (touring USA)
1995	‘Calanais’ An Lantair, Stornoway [tour Scotland & France]

	‘Objects of Love’ The Gallery in Cork Street, London
1993	‘Worlds in a Box’ South Bank Centre [touring UK for the Arts Council of Gt.Britain]
1991	‘The Shamanism of Intent’ Goldmark Gallery, Uppingham
1980	‘Imagination is the Venom’ Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

SELECTED COMMISSIONS & PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

	‘Guardian’, Marchmont House, Scotland
	‘Venus/bird skull’ Leavers Sculpture, Tonbridge School
	‘Fever Bird’ Knox Collection, Edinburgh
	‘Case’ Aberdeen University
	‘Venus Stone’ Sculpture at Goodwood Cass Foundation, W.Sussex
	‘Claw’ Sculpture at Goodwood Cass Foundation, W.Sussex
	‘Ark’ King’s Place, London
	‘Dailly Bridge’ Dailly, Ayrshire, Scotland
	‘Walrus’ Ferens Art Gallery, Hull, Yorkshire
	‘Fishbox’ Scottish Arts Council
	‘Swan’ and ‘Cormorant’ Scotia Pharmaceuticals
	‘Tick’ Dundee City Council

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2024	Journeyman - the art of Steve Dilworth, Georgina Coburn, Francis Boutle Publishers
2012	Short film portrait by Paul Cox - http://vimeo.com/40810322
	Atlas café interview
	https://www.mixcloud.com/atlasradio/atlas-arts-cafe-15-interview-with-steve-dilworth-r/
2012	‘Northings’ Georgina Coburn - http://northings.com/2012/10/23/mortal-remains/
2011	‘The old ways’ [Gneiss chapter] Robert Macfarlane
2009	‘Sculpture’ magazine July-Aug [cover & article] Robert Preece
2003	BBC2 ‘The Great Book of Gaelic’
	Independent on Sunday ‘Talk of the Town’ ‘Savage Beauty’ Kevin Jackson
2002	Sculpture@Goodwood ‘A Vision for 21st Century British Sculpture ‘ book
2001	London Review of Books Vol.23 No.22 ‘In Hackney’ Iain Sinclair
	Mare No.20 magazine ‘Geschichten und Geduld’ Hansjorg Gadiant
1998	Channel 4 ‘The Falconer’
	World Sculpture News, Vol.4 No.3 ‘From the Ancient Land’ RobertPreece
	Entropy Magazine ‘Acts of Faith’, Vol.1 No.6
	Stornoway Gazette ‘Marshall Anderson’s Hebridean Encounters’
1993	Art Review, xmas edition ‘93 Vol.XIV ‘A terrible Beauty’ Charles Hall
1992	The Scotsman ‘A Question of Answers’ Murdo MacDonald
	Aquarian Harper, San Francisco ‘Dreaming with Open Eyes’ Michael Tucker
1990-91	Late Show BBC2 ‘Alternative Turner Prize’
	Exhibition Catalogue ‘The Shamanism of Intent’ Iain Sinclair

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Steve Dilworth for all his hard work in creating this body of new work and also to those that have kindly lent works to the exhibition. Also a special thank you to both Steve and his wife Hilary for their hospitality last summer on a trip to discuss the show. Our congratulations and thanks also go to Georgina Coburn for her beautifully researched new book which is published by Francis Boutle Publishers. Our thanks also to Steve Russell Studios for the beautiful photography for the exhibition, Paul Cox for all his support and finally to Pangolin Editions for their skillful craftsmanship in bringing Steve Dilworth's bronze and sterling silver works to fruition.

Published to coincide with the exhibition:
Steve Dilworth: Journeyman
1st May - 8th June, 2024
Pangolin London
Kings Place, 90 York Way, London, N1 9AG
T: 020 7520 1480
www.pangolinlondon.com

Designed by Pangolin London
Printed in Iowan Old Style
Photography by Steve Russell Studios
Printing by ESP Colour