





# All Female Cast

Gallery Pangolin

November  
2006



## **All Female Cast**

The stage is Pangolin Gallery and Foundry. Eight female artists are the players. They are supported by the founder and his staff, who engage with the artists at all stages of rendering their sculptures into bronze, and are ready to consult, advise and experiment.

### *The Cast*

Halima Cassell

Ann Christopher

Deirdre Hubbard

Gabriele Koch

Charlotte Mayer

Eilís O'Connell

Antonia Salmon

Almuth Tebbenhoff

### *Prologue*

The imperative that all bronze cast sculptures have in common is that their forms are created in another material first, and artists have to take into account everything that might happen during the transformation from clay, wood, mixed media, plastic – the list goes on – into bronze. The risks involved in the process of bronze casting may be calculated, avoided, or turned to advantage; and the cast may be amended during the finishing

processes. Artists' individual vocabularies often grow through their involvement with the medium and they undoubtedly benefit from the wide and deep knowledge of the experienced founder. Historically, artists' use of bronze changed little until the twentieth and now the twenty-first century, although the procedures remain virtually the same. Greek and Roman artists invariably painted the surface of their bronze sculptures in colours that have rarely survived, although the bronze form has, with the surface altering through natural patination over centuries. In the course of time a vast range of patinating techniques has been developed, and today a bronze surface can be rendered into seemingly limitless colours and textures. In twentieth-century British sculpture, the bronzes of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were examples of new and exciting practice. Together they moved bronze sculpture into realms of abstraction not attempted before although, in Europe, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) and the Impressionist sculptors at the *fin de siècle* had laid the path open through their earlier innovation. Artistic development and collective experience gained through artists working in a myriad of other, and newer, materials have contributed much to their innovative use of bronze, which also includes casting from found objects and the human body – for example, Gavin Turk's (b. 1967) casts of a cardboard box, black bin bag and sleeping bag, and Antony Gormley's (b. 1950) body casts.

Today, artists who use bronze for their sculptures employ it both traditionally and differently. Some see bronze as a means of producing a single image in an edition, or as a way of replicating works made in less durable materials to give the piece a longer life. Some paint the surface, while others, such as David Nash (b. 1945), use the material qualities of bronze as part of the creative process – fire and earth, sand or wood coming into contact with the molten metal to create a unique form. Among other reasons, Damien Hirst (b. 1965) uses it for its strength for works made on a massive scale, achieving monumental casts as big as or even larger than the largest of Chinese Buddhas.

### *The Plot*

The work of eight women sculptors who choose to have their sculptures cast at Pangolin illustrates some of the wide range of possibilities that bronze offers – each has an individual approach, they are not a group.

Working with a foundry is new to Halima Cassell and, although bronze has not featured significantly in her work until now, she had attended a course on bronze casting as a student. An artist who worked until recently entirely in ceramic, she has turned to bronze as her interest developed in making works on a large scale for the public realm. She is learning how using bronze can progress the forms she creates. Her work is based in the repeat patterns of African textiles, and in architecture, particularly the way in which Islamic architecture is designed to utilise strong light.



'When creating a piece, the most exciting moment for me is when my flat designs become dramatically transformed when charted over a structure and then taken to another level by heavily carving into it,' says Cassell, adding 'I also rely on the piece itself to dramatise the tones and textures through the effects of light and shadow.'

When asked about the specific qualities that bronze contributed to her work, Cassell said she found that she had more control over the finish than she had with clay. At the time a work is consigned to the kiln the outcome is never quite guaranteed, particularly the colour, or variation in tone over a surface that could interfere with the play of light over her deeply carved surfaces. Using bronze allows her to patinate the surface of her sculptures to the tone and colour she envisages, and to polish the edges, thereby sharpening the shape of angular facets within a form. Adding bronze to her working methodology has given her a greater fund of possibilities on which to draw.



Model for *Rubicon* 2006



For the moment, Cassell uses ceramic models from which to cast her bronze sculptures. However, this may change as she becomes more involved with the metal. She thinks she might eventually fabricate large items in bronze, the best material, she considers, for sculpture on a monumental scale placed in the open air. She is also thinking of working with wax instead of clay on the models for smaller sculptures.

Ann Christopher is certainly one of the most experienced British sculptors working in bronze today. Occasionally she fabricates pieces in steel, but these are rare. As the material most likely to convey her requirement for sharp line and exact surface texture, bronze is the best for her, as she feels she can control it at all points in the journey from casting to patination. She makes her models in wood and fibreglass paste, building her sculptures slowly and carefully.



Model for *In Place of Silence* 2001

When the foundry has cast her sculpture, knowing that she can correct and refine the work by cutting, beating, welding and machining, provides her with the command over the material that she needs.

Ann Christopher uses line as both negative and positive form and force. She pierces the surface, builds on it, or inscribes it, or uses line as a separate member tangentially to the body of the sculpture. Ancient tools and spears, and monoliths, inform her sculptures' shapes; landscapes and timeworn artefacts are remembered in the surfaces. The late Bryan Robertson summed up her work in a catalogue introduction: 'Ann Christopher's sculptures abstractly invoke rather than record and their intimations of ancient events or sites are constructive, not descriptive, and quite free of sentimentality – which does not of course preclude sentiment, or strong feeling.' (*Ann Christopher Sculpture and Drawings 1969-89*, private publication 1989)

Places visited once, or time and again, feature in Ann Christopher's work. The series of collages under the title *The Power of Place* 2005 are made from digital photographs she has taken during her travels and printed onto a range of opaque, translucent and transparent materials, which also vary in texture. These are overlaid, concealing or revealing portions of those first placed on the surface. These works express the depth and complexity of surface and line she strives for in her sculptures, so closely are they coupled with landscape, history and the passage of time.

Although her work is abstract, the energy of the human form animates the sculpture of Deirdre Hubbard. There are two distinct impulses that drive her sculpture, which she describes as being the *Dionysian* – building over-voluptuous forms; and the *Apollonian* – refining towards harmony. She builds the original model for casting in plaster over wood, carving back and distilling the form until she achieves the smoothest of surfaces and curves which are so precise that the point where convex meets concave is barely perceptible. 'My sculpture,' she says, 'is based on forms from nature, very often the nude. However representational, or however abstract, the main intention is to achieve a harmonious interplay of curves and counter-curves. The pieces should invite touch.'



Model for *Floating Form* 2006

Simple curves and compact folds flow throughout Hubbard's compositions. The vigor she strives for seems to burst from within, but is held back to a critical point – one where movement is clearly implied, while the form is held in stasis. To do this she works a smooth surface to her bronzes, which she considers keeps inner forces at bay. The three pieces in this exhibition, *Split Sphere on a Column* 2001, *Sliced Nude* 2004 and *Floating Form* 2006 exemplify her aims, while *Floating Form* also claims to defy gravity.

Of all the artists in the exhibition, Deirdre Hubbard is the least concerned about patination, preferring to keep her sculptures the natural honey colour of polished bronze. However, there are some pieces in which surfaces have been worked chemically to emphasise form, direction and rhythm. Once the model leaves the studio to be cast, Hubbard continues to work on her sculptures in close collaboration with the foundry, as she considers her involvement to be essential at every stage of completing a piece. Her touches might be small, but only then does she feel able to say that she has 'lifted the veil' on the finished sculpture.

Unlike the others in this exhibition, being an artist is Gabriele Koch's second choice of career. She initially studied English, history and political science at the University of Heidelberg, graduating in 1973. On a visit to Spain during her student years she became inspired by the pots she saw there and, moving to England in 1974, she embarked on a course of studying ceramics at Camden Institute and later at Goldsmiths College.

Her recent ventures into working with bronze have added new strengths to her sculptural vocabulary. Having never seen herself as a potter in the traditional sense, her approach to making vessels is entirely that of the sculptor, and to use bronze was for her a natural next step. For Koch bronze was a particularly apposite choice for a bell form, as may be seen in *Bronze Bell* 2000. This sculpture is patinated, a very different surface from the highly polished *Golden Amphora* 2003 which gives back reflections of the environment in which it is placed. The touch, smell and visual characteristics of both polished and patinated bronze, and the sound of the bell-form when tapped, add further dimensions to the work. These are all qualities in which Koch revels. She says of her work, 'I am interested in the vessel as an abstract sculptural object. I am concentrating on simple essential forms which sometimes emphasise the relationship between internal and external space or the movement or stillness within the form.'



Model for *Golden Amphora* 2003

Finding bronze casting a complicated, though interesting process, Koch likes to be involved at every stage of making her sculpture. In the studio she builds her work by hand, eschewing mould-making, as she works 'organically', understanding the forms she creates not only through her eye, but also by her hand and intuition. She looks at ancient artefacts, visiting the British Museum regularly, as well as admiring the work of Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), especially for his work in clay; and Anthony Caro (b. 1924), although his work is very different from that which she strives to attain.

Over the past two years, the subject of *The Thornflower* 2006, a proposal for a Monument to Peace and Reconciliation, has preoccupied Charlotte Mayer. The delicate, hand-wrought forms of the flower petals, worked originally in wax from the shapes of crescent moons, bear the hallmark of her other bronze sculptures. The hard, grey-steel, thorny stems of the large model stand in stark contrast to the flowers, holding the petals, but not one pierces their flesh. The significance of *The Thornflower* lies in Mayer's memories of her grandmother, who perished in the Nazi Holocaust of 1942, and the sculpture gradually evolved to its present form through other versions reflecting memories of personal loss to its current state as a symbol for humanity, re-growth, and the harmony of opposites.

Like the blooms of *The Thornflower*, *Sea Scarf* 2003 is a delicately coiled and spiralling crescent moon. This piece shows clearly the way in which Mayer works, and the qualities she strives for in bronze. The original model was made in wax over an aluminium mesh sheet.



Model for *Sea Scarf* 2003

She considers wax to be a gloriously natural material, and works in an equal mix of beeswax and earth wax. The foundry uses her model to make a further wax, which is moulded and cast into bronze.

Mayer is very hands-on in the processes, visiting the foundry regularly during the course of a piece being produced, finding the whole methodology to be significant and exciting – part of a long tradition, with expertise being passed down the ages.



The model for *Reed Drift* 2004 was made from grasses picked in Devon, each individually dipped in wax and applied to the mesh. She also employs other materials for her models, including wood, card, plaster and balsa wood. Revelling in the range of colour and texture that can be achieved through the patinating process, Mayer ensures that the patina is correct for the piece, knowing that it will change according to the environment. For an artist who works with natural form, it is the living, changing qualities in bronze that excite her.

'The most fantastic thing is that you can make anything in bronze,' says Eilís O'Connell. 'For me, working in bronze was a complete liberation.' An artist who has worked through a great range of materials, and a store of found objects continually collected, O'Connell now works mainly in bronze. She considers that bronze can just be itself, or it can be used convincingly to mimic other materials – it may be traditional and timeless or the source of experiment. At all costs she avoids the possibility of creating a bronze patina that looks like plastic.

Because models made in wax can readily distort or be easily damaged, O'Connell makes her sculptures for casting mostly in wood and plaster. Her editions vary according to the work, from one-off for a commission, to larger editions for smaller items.



*Model for Gourd Form 2006*

O'Connell's sculptures in this exhibition were made during a period following a bereavement. She had been unable to work for a long time, returning to live in Ireland after many years in London. In Cork she began working at the Sculpture Factory, benefiting from the support of technicians and fellow artists. The works that she began there, and which were cast at Pangolin, encompass memories of the person she had lost, manifest in abstract form. She held the models in reserve before casting them, as it was important for her to keep them close. Each of her pieces in the exhibition has a distinct patina. The smooth surface of *Head 2003* moves between greys and greens, while the maquette and larger version of *Node 2003* and *Rineen 2005* are beautifully mottled like semi-precious stones.

There was a period in the 1990s when Eilís O'Connell wove sculptures with steel cable – a process that was long and arduous. These pieces were a direct response to Irish creels or baskets, of which *Sharp Back* 1997 is a fine example. She has made bronze casts of some of these sculptures, which are convincing versions of woven cable, although they are not shown on this occasion.

Four of the players in this exhibition began their careers as ceramic artists: Halima Cassell, Gabriele Koch, Antonia Salmon and Almuth Tebbenhoff. Of the four, Antonia Salmon considers that she is primarily a ceramicist, choosing to work on hand-burnished, smoke-fired vessels and sculpture. It is only recently that she has made some pieces in bronze. She sets out to make a sculpture, or vessel, fully intent on realising it in ceramic. When nearing completion, before firing, she decides whether or not it would be best to smoke-fire the work, or to fire it to biscuit stage for casting in bronze.



Model for *Winged Form* 2003

She had realised that very dark, smoke-fired ceramics could look like bronze, and wishing to test her work in metal, she cast *Moon Standing Form* 2002, patinating it to a textured mix of blue-greens and browns. The apparent solidity, permanence, and depth of colour that she achieved with bronze were revelations, and gave her the opportunity to extend her vocabulary, as she was able to use the metal to make work that could not be achieved in ceramic.

'The richest working moments for me are when an unexpected emotional trigger connects with a visual memory,' says Antonia Salmon. 'I am concerned with space, both within and around the form; attempting to express a sense of quiet tension and also centred-ness within one abstract form, whether it is a vessel or sculpture.' More importantly, she feels the work has a non-visual dimension that combines qualities of discipline and freedom, of holding and letting go. This gives the sculpture a sense of having its own energy, separate from the maker. Working in bronze, as in ceramic, means that the artist has to let go during the making process. In Salmon's case this means consigning the piece either to the kiln or to the founder. The advantage of bronze over ceramic in this instance, however, is that bronze can be returned again to the artist's hands for modifying and finishing.

The final artist in this cast of eight, Almuth Tebbenhoff, has recently started to work with bronze, following a career as a studio potter who turned to making sculpture, first in clay then steel. (She is currently learning how to work stone into her sculptural repertoire.) During her progression as an artist, Tebbenhoff has only recently felt ready to work in bronze, and was introduced to Pangolin by Charlotte Mayer. During her training she had been encouraged by Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005) to cast a figurative piece at AB Fine Art Foundry in Fawe Street, London, but at the time she was not ready to follow it up. Now, Tebbenhoff considers she is ready to work in bronze and utilises the weight and density she believes it has over and above other materials, and will use it further in the future. This marks a duality in her work, as her constructed steel pieces are light, open and linear.



Model for Core 2006

Tebbenhoff's bronze pieces in this exhibition are based on spheres – their secret interiors, their energy and how separate elements might fit together.

With *Infundere II* 2003, she expresses a funnelling implosion of energy, which might be visualised as a 'black hole' in the universe. In her *Empty Spheres I* 2003 however, she has combined solidity with voids in overlapping and interconnecting bubbles that are invisible but leave an impression. 'The life that shaped and hollowed the solid part has departed,' explains Tebbenhoff. With *Peel* 2006 she has made portions of a skin, which indicate that departed spheres have left their mark. Scale in these works is implicit, and ranges from the universe to the egg.

### *Epilogue*

The sculptures in the exhibition are lasting evidence of the thoughts, dreams, and feelings of eight women. They are made as a result of female thinking, created in essence by the hands of women. This does not claim their greater value by argument raised through the issue of gender, but to place before the audience sculptures made by a female cast of eight, and for that audience to make of them what they will.

Ann Elliott

September 2006



**Nexus**

Halima Cassell

Bronze

Edition of 8

13cm high







**Crystalline**  
Halima Cassell  
Bronze  
Edition of 8  
14 cm high







**Staccato**

Halima Cassell

Bronze

Edition of 8

14cm high





**Shadow Line**  
Ann Christopher  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
48cm high







**In Place of Shadows**

Ann Christopher

Bronze

Edition of 9

48cm high



**In Place of Silence**

Ann Christopher

Bronze

Edition of 6

124cm high

Photo: P Chinn



**Medium Floating Form**  
Deirdre Hubbard  
Bronze on Stainless Steel  
Edition of 12  
38cm high





**Split Sphere on Column**

Deirdre Hubbard

Bronze

Edition of 12

38cm high





**Sliced Nude**

Deirdre Hubbard

Bronze

Edition of 12

43cm high





**Bronze Bell**  
Gabriele Koch  
Bronze  
Edition of 6  
34cm high



**Golden Amphora**

Gabriele Koch

Bronze

Edition of 6

50cm high



**Thornflower Maquette**

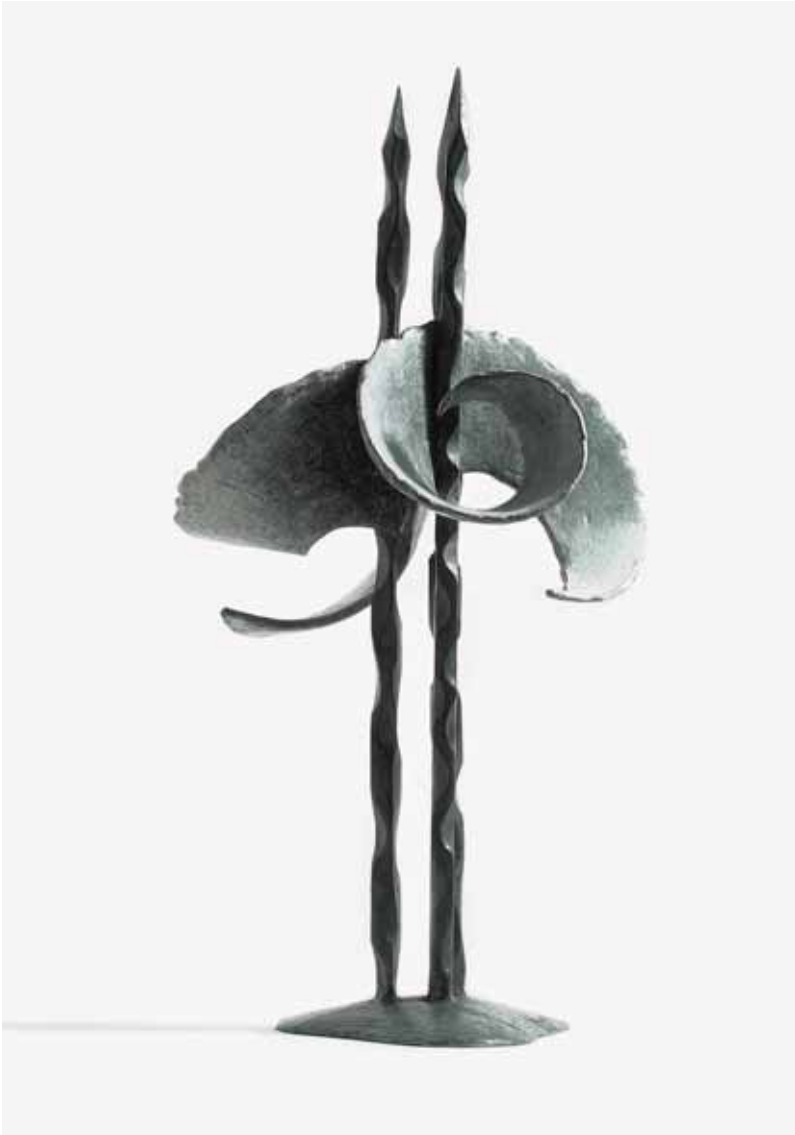
Charlotte Mayer

Bronze

Edition of 8

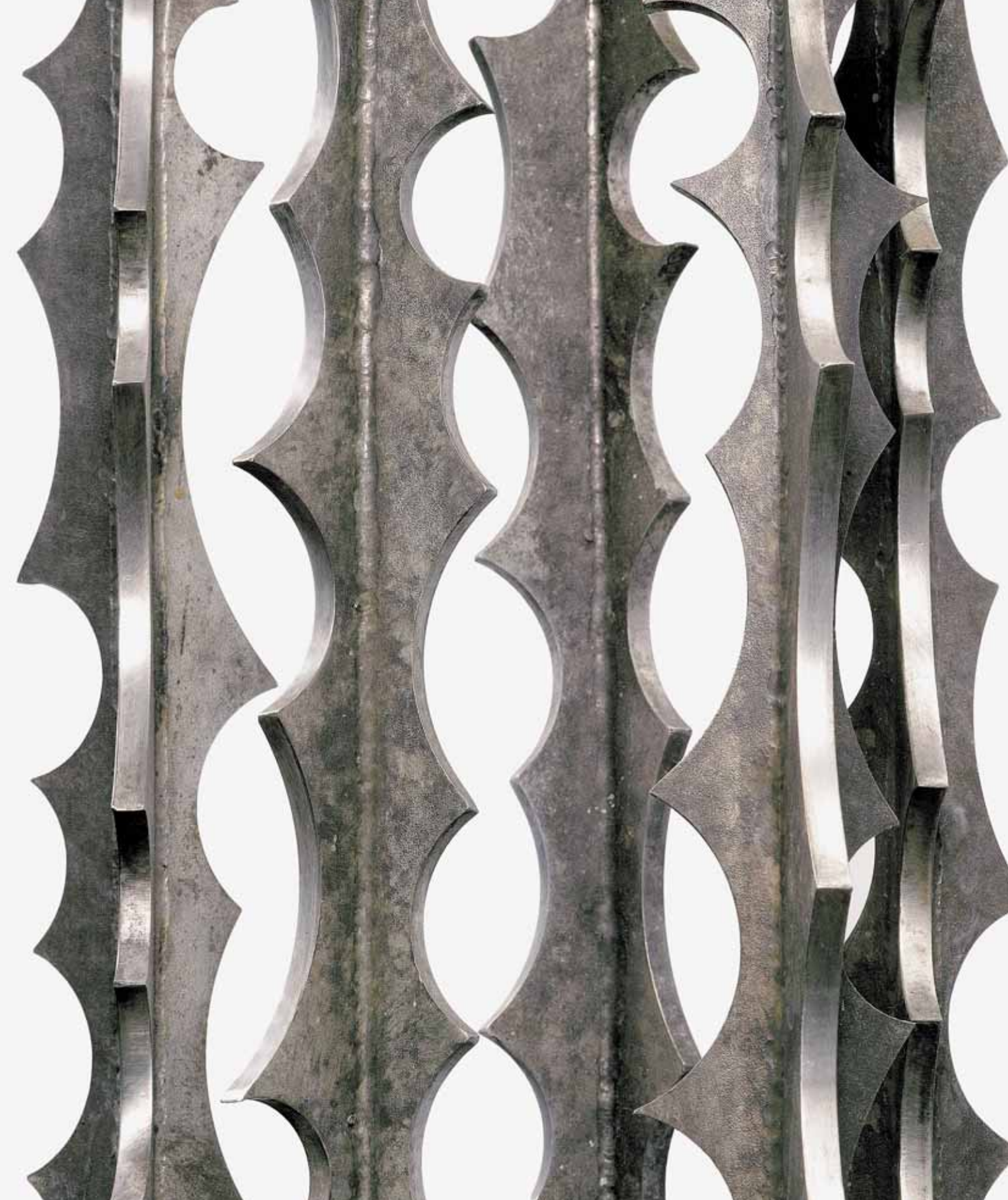
38cm high







**The Thornflower**  
Charlotte Mayer  
Bronze and Steel  
Edition of 12  
150cm high



**Sea Scarf**

Charlotte Mayer

Bronze

Edition of 7

35cm high







**Reed Drift**  
Charlotte Mayer  
Bronze  
Edition of 7  
62cm high





**Rineen**

Eilis O'Connell

Bronze

Edition of 5

24cm high





**Head**

Eilis O'Connell

Bronze

Edition of 5

28cm high





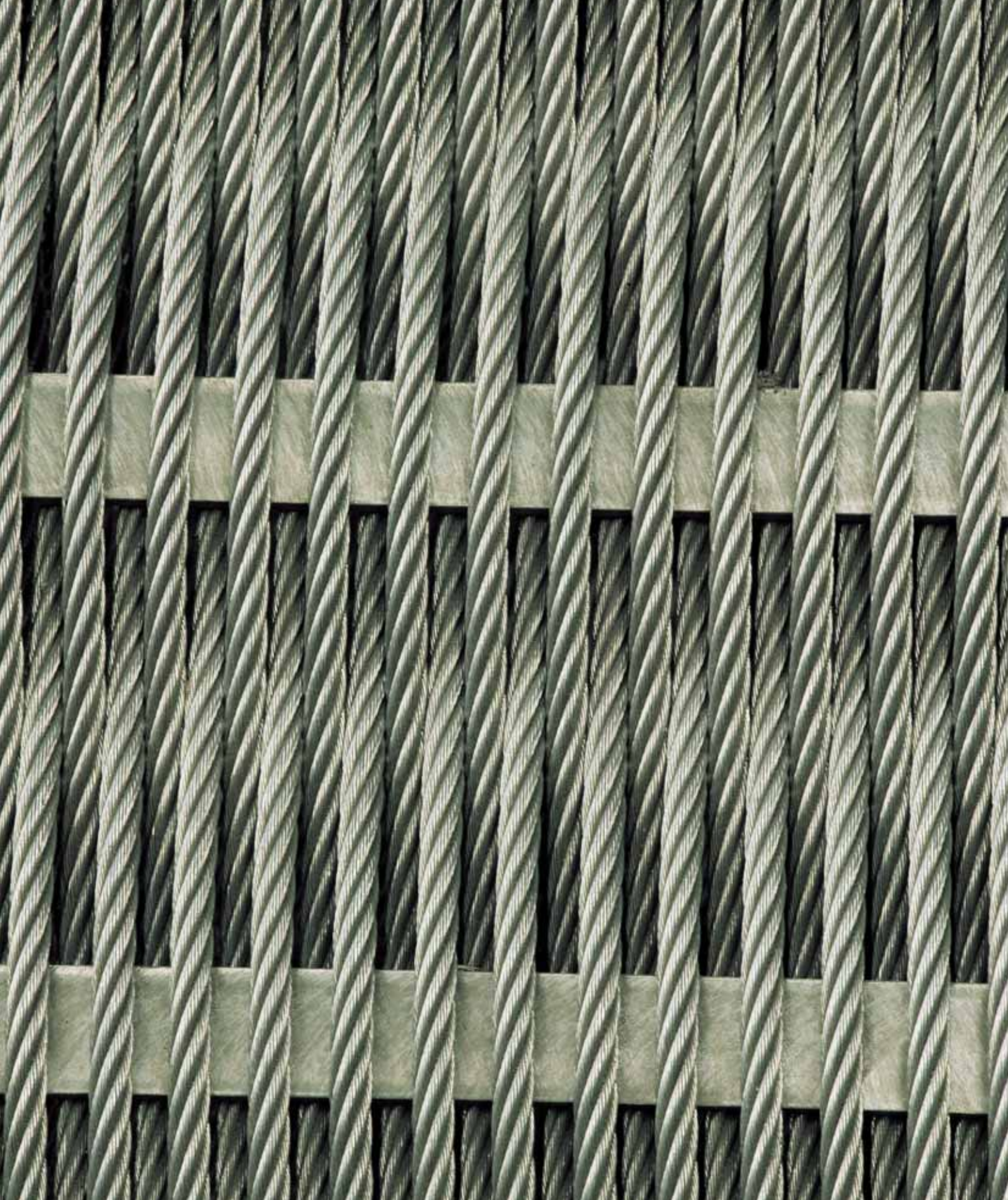
**Gourd Form**  
Eilis O'Connell  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
36cm high





**Sharp Back**  
Eilis O'Connell  
Stainless Steel  
Unique  
256cm high









**Kernal**  
Antonia Salmon  
Bronze  
Edition of 12  
13cm high







**Winged Form**

Antonia Salmon

Bronze

Edition of 12

13cm high





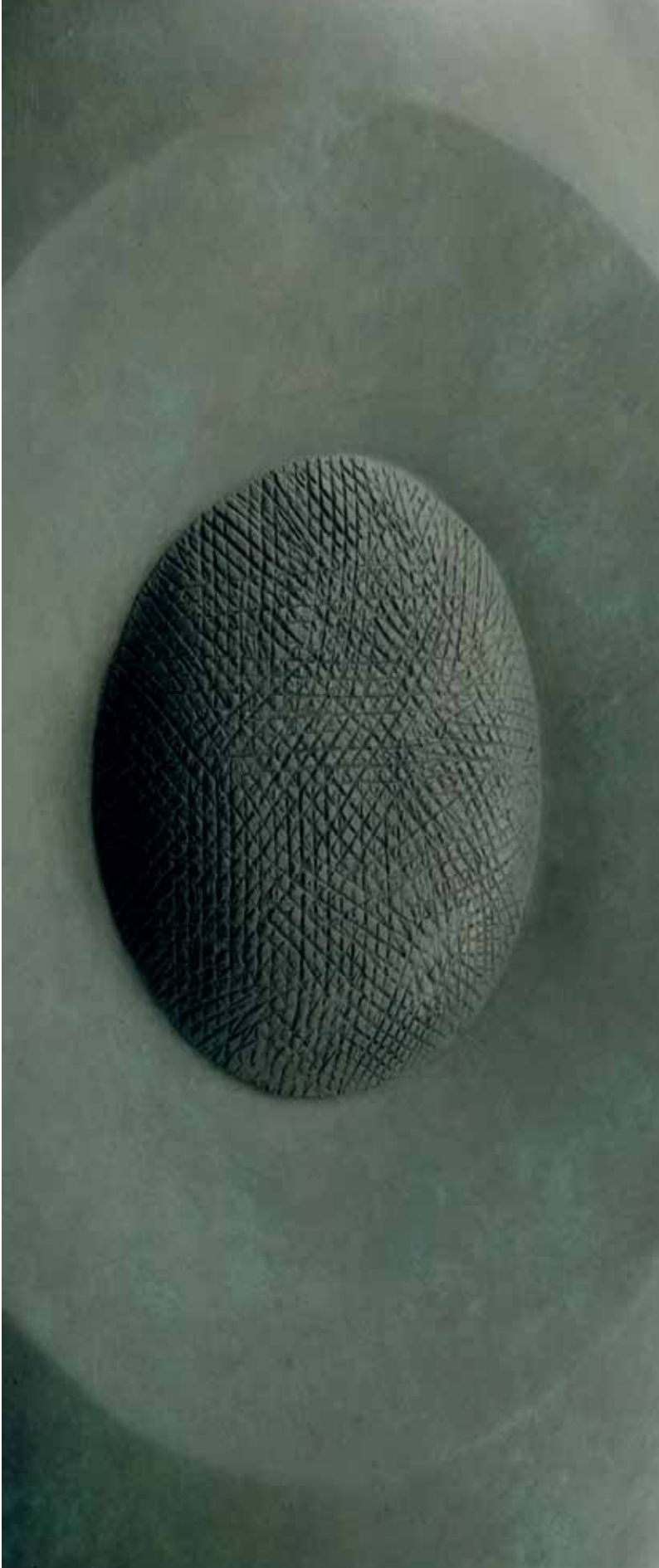
**Moon Standing Form**

Antonia Salmon

Bronze

Edition of 9

29cm high





**Empty Spheres I**  
Almuth Tebbenhoff  
Bronze  
Edition of 4  
25cm high



**Peel**

Almuth Tebbenhoff

Bronze

Edition of 5

27cm high







**Infundere II**

Almuth Tebbenhoff

Bronze

Edition of 4

28cm high



## Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to all the artists for allowing us to show their work. Without their help this exhibition would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank Ann Elliott for her scholarly and illuminating introduction and photographer Steve Russell who coped remarkably well with being the only male amongst this All Female Cast.

Jane Buck  
Claude Koenig

Casting:	Pangolin Editions
Catalogue Design:	Gallery Pangolin
Printing:	Healeys Printers Ltd



**GALLERY PANGOLIN**

Chalford Stroud GL6 8NT England

Tel 00 44 (0)1453 886527

Email [gallery@pangolin-editions.com](mailto:gallery@pangolin-editions.com)

[www.gallery-pangolin.com](http://www.gallery-pangolin.com)

## Artist Index

Halima <b>Cassell</b>	p 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Ann <b>Christopher</b>	p 5, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29
Deirdre <b>Hubbard</b>	p 7, 31, 32, 33, 35
Gabriele <b>Koch</b>	p 9, 36, 37, 39
Charlotte <b>Mayer</b>	p 11, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47
Eilis <b>O'Connell</b>	p 13, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55
Antonia <b>Salmon</b>	p 14, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61
Almuth <b>Tebbenhoff</b>	p 16, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67





