

HERO . GOD . MORTAL



APRIL 21 - JUNE 16, 2007

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Heroes, Gods, Mortals--Warriors all. This new phase of sculptures by artist Philip Hitchcock presents the human form, armored, idealized and poised for battle in a re-imagined landscape of postmodern mythology, which collapses influences from Greek, Nordic, Medieval and Egyptian traditions. Each sculpture in this collection seems to demand a retelling of classical mythology from Thor—The God of Thunder to Prometheus—the savior of mankind and bringer of fire, while encouraging us to ask: What adventures lie ahead for these new heroes? What enemies will they confront? And, what sacrifices will they be required to make in a time of need?

Hitchcock's work presents a renewed sense of urgency to reexamine the heroic in a modern context. His aesthetic presents idealized castings of the human figure, which are powerful enough alone, yet he retrofits these bodies, infusing them with technology, eroticism, and discourses on pain and pleasure. At the site of this fusion, the heroic figure transforms, activating new interpretations. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote, "Dead are all the Gods." But clearly, Philip Hitchcock's work seeks to resurrect these spirits for battle in the modern world.

I strongly suspect that these sculptures will inspire a new generation of artists and art lovers to seek out the heroic stories of the past, which are replete with powerful Gods, fearless heroes, epic battles, and endless struggles that still resonate today.

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PORTRAYING THE HEROIC

The subject matter is iconic and familiar, but the style of the pieces and the materials used in their creation are decidedly contemporary. My work explores notions of heroism in popular culture through a modern re-examination of ageless myths. Though cloaked in shrouds of lore and magic, my figures represent ordinary human beings, attempting to define the relationship between who they are and who they wish to be. Although the images are idealized, intrepid, and bold, never in doubt is their humanity. The work is metaphorical for the human condition in modern society in the first decade of the 21st century; a core of realism surrounded by the more unnerving images we wish the world to notice and judge.

Philip Hitchcock



Thor, God of Thunder, 2006
52" x 36" x 18," Cast gypsum, resin, acrylic, mixed media.

The son of Odin and Freya, Thor is the namesake for the day Thursday. He possesses a short-handled war hammer, "Mjolnir," which, when thrown at a target, flashes lightning bolts. To wield his hammer, Thor wears the belt "Megingjord," which doubles his already considerable strength. He is the protector of gods and humans and surpasses his father in popularity because he requires no human sacrifices.



Anubis, Egyptian God of the Dead, 2007

52" x 36" x 16," Cast gypsum, wood, resin, bone, mixed media.

As the ancient god of embalming, Anubis is traditionally depicted with the body of a man and the head of a jackal. He holds the divine scepter carried by gods as he conducts souls through the underworld. Anubis weighs their hearts, escorting "light" hearted souls to eternity with Osiris, and feeding "heavy" hearted, wicked souls to Ammit, the Devourer. Despite his eldritch appearance, Anubis is a purifier, filtering evil from the human bloodline



Nefertiti, Royal Consort to Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, 2006
22" x 10" x 12," Cast gypsum, mixed media. (Courtesy of Robert Weeks)

The original bust of Nefertiti, whose name means “the perfect woman has come,” is attributed to the sculptor Thutmose, and is among the most recognizable paragons of ancient Egypt. Later depictions signify further elevation of her status as “wise woman” when her face is represented with the first signs of age. Many scholars are adamant that she assumed a role as co-regent to her husband. She remains iconic for her beauty, power, and gender.



The Black Knight, 2007

42" x 40" x 14," Cast gypsum, mixed media.

The original Black Knight was Sir Percy of Scandia, a member of the Knights of the Round Table in King Arthur's Sixth Century Camelot. He serves his king dutifully as both an unassuming gentleman and as a mysterious avenging champion. Though slain by the treacherous Mordred, the Black Knight's enchanted spirit returns whenever the spirit of Mordred threatens. He is the archetypal rescuer and loyal guardian.



Prometheus Bound, 2006

60" x 46" x 14," Cast Gypsum, mixed media.

As punishment for bringing illumination to mankind, Zeus orders Prometheus chained to a cliff for 30,000 years where he is tormented by an eagle. The eagle devours his liver each morning and each night it re-grows only to be consumed again the next day. Eventually Prometheus is freed by Hercules. Even now, the term "promethean" refers to events or people of great creativity, intellect and boldness.



The Myth of Narcissus, 2006

30" x 28" x 14," Cast gypsum. (Courtesy of Tyler Olsen & Christopher Brennan)

After spurning Echo's affection, Narcissus, doomed by Nemesis to fall in love with himself, dies poolside while mesmerized by his own reflection. Depicted here as a perfect torso in mirror image, ***The Myth of Narcissus*** celebrates physical beauty and sexual freedom, while seeming to chide the viewer to consider his own conceit lest he linger too long at the water's edge.



Kroisos Kouros, 2006

45" x 24" x 14," Cast gypsum, wood.

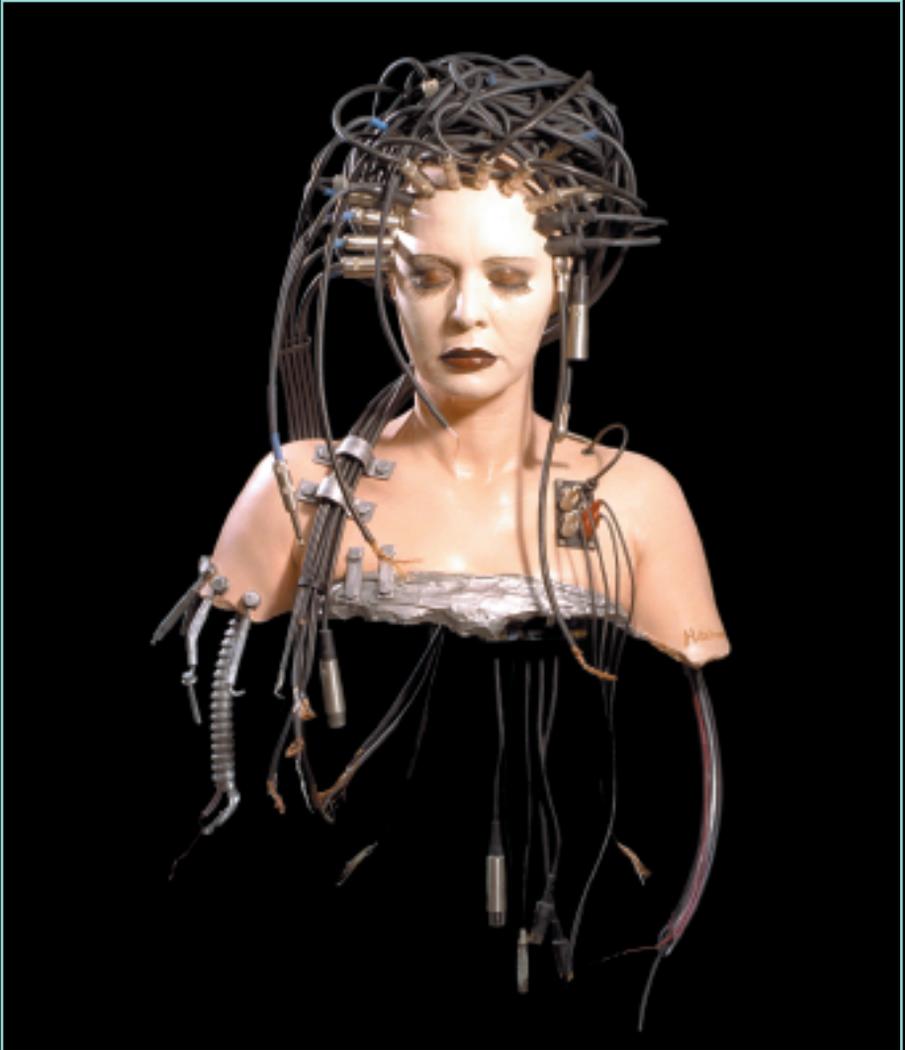
The Kouros from Anavysos, late Archaic c.530 B.C. typifies early Greek sculpture before the relaxed, "contrapposto" pose becomes the norm. Abundantly produced in the Archaic era, Kouros (youth) statues are always depicted nude, rigidly posed with hands clenched, and are generally commemorative in nature. Kroisos Kouros is a grave marker to a fallen war hero. It represents the embodiment of the ideal male warrior.



Anthropomorphism, 2007

Dimensions vary. Cast gypsum, mixed media. (Courtesy of Robert Weeks)

Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics or behavior to a god, animal, or object. Examples of anthropomorphosis abound in mythology, literature, and popular culture. Gods are presumed jealous or angry, penguins are thought to wear tuxedos, and hurricanes are given human names. In fact, it is extremely difficult for the average person to even discuss God without an anthropomorphic framework. More simply stated, humans define the world in a self-centered context, which could be described as anthropomorphic thinking.



Medusa, 1997

36" x 24" x 12," Cast gypsum, mixed media.

The Gorgon, in Greek mythology, is a female monster. The most famous of the Gorgons is Medusa. After boasting that her beauty outshone that of Athena, the Goddess turns Medusa into the snake-headed creature whose gaze turns men to stone. Perseus beheads Medusa and Athena places the head on her shield as a defense from enemies. The iconic Gorgon is reimagined here as a product of technology, snakes replaced by wires, her disembodied head revealing inorganic parts. She is both heroine and victim, cursed by transforming from gorgeous to grotesque.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Philip Hitchcock has challenged people with his art for over 20 years. Surfacing within Hitchcock's provocative, innovative, and sometimes-controversial work are recurring themes of heroism and forbearance which underscore the trials of human endeavors. The artist adds, "The strange beauty of fragmentation, brokenness, and suffering, depicted in my sculptural forms serve to emphasize the spiritual struggle and resilience of human identity." Hitchcock's work bridges high-photo realism and high-fantasy art, creating a realm wherein the imaginary is made manifest, and the emblematic made real.

Hitchcock has garnered numerous awards and accolades for his work including the 2006 Artistic Achievement and Public Relations Award from the Association of Lifecasting International, (ALI); the 1997 Broadcast Design Award for MGM/UA's *Outer Limits* limited edition sculpture, and the designation of being among "The OUT 100" in 2001, an annual list of the 100 most influential gay men and lesbians in America, according to *OUT* magazine. He is the author of *Dark Impressions, The Art of Philip Hitchcock*.

Commercially, Hitchcock has been commissioned to create work for Saint Louis University, St. Louis Pride, Inc., Central Institute for the Deaf, World Wrestling Entertainment, Fox-TV's *The Swan*, Disneyland's Tomorrowland, the L.A. Stage Alliance, Sony Computer Entertainment America, Inc., and Delta Air Lines, among others. His works have been featured in solo and group exhibits and are in prestigious collections such as Leslie-Lohman Foundation, New York, NY; Mark Taper Family/Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, CA; Henry Jewelry, Hong Kong; Barbie Benton, Aspen, CO; and Michele Rodriguez, Cagliari, Italy.

A magna cum laude graduate from UCLA, Hitchcock returned home to St. Louis in 2005. By opening phd gallery, he is formalizing his commitment to the revitalization of St. Louis, especially the visual art scene.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cherokee-Lemp

History Walk and Fair

A self guided tour through 200 years of St. Louis history. Music, food, & fun!

Don't miss the bodycasting demo!

Sat. & Sun., May 19 & 20, 2007

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily

ARTIST PANEL DISCUSSION

Ancient Myth & the Modern Hero

Stefene Russell, *St. Louis Magazine* Senior Editor and co-editor of the literary magazine *52nd City* and artist Philip Hitchcock are among our esteemed panelists who will deconstruct classical mythology from varying perspectives with audience insights welcome. (*Discussion begins at 2:00 p.m.*)

Sunday, June 3, 2007

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Refreshments Served

NEXT EXHIBIT

Body / Building

Jeff Palmer and Ken Konchel

June 23 through August 11, 2007

"An exhibition that juxtaposes unexpected combinations of black & white photographs of male nudes and architectural abstracts."

Opening reception

June 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m

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