

GRANT



**WILD BOAR**

By **Ben Fenske** and  
**Richard Zinon**



**'Wild Boar'**, the striking new bronze by Ben Fenske and Richard Zinon, vibrantly illustrates the 'new' Renaissance currently under way.

Spawned by major advancements in communications, travel and life sciences of the last 100 years, this cultural shift is now seen in the younger generation's art. In similar fashion to the 15th century fascination with all things classical, the perspective of these artists is a re-discovery of the ancients' knowledge, techniques and skills.

Led by a profound appreciation and respect for the art that was produced before their time, these young artists have studied the finest examples of craft and techniques from the last 500 years. And now, they apply these same skills, but to present day subjects.



In a departure from the last century's ego-based sense of the self, Fenske and Zinon prioritized the quality of the finished work, and actually pooled their creative energy, knowledge and perspectives to 're-visit' one of Florence's most famous sculptures. The result is 'Wild Boar', a bronze sculpture teeming with life, but also demonstrating a level of technical excellence and commitment not seen in many generations.



The Medici-commissioned Cinghali (wild boar) was originally intended for the Boboli Gardens. Pietro Tacca (1557 to 1640), the sculptor, was inspired by the marble copy of a long-disappeared and mysterious Hellenistic bronze. That marble was excavated in Rome in the 16th century and was known as the Caledonian Boar. An ancient symbol of the Caledonian hunt was chosen, as this hunt marked a time when many of the great Gods and Demi Gods came together - not unlike the gathering of great minds in Renaissance Florence.

The locals call this work 'Il Porcellino' (the Piglet) and it is a well-known tourist stop at Mercato Nuovo in Florence. Travelers as far back as 1643 have written about the luck to be derived from placing a coin in the boar's mouth and letting it drop through the grates below. Furthermore, a rub of the Porcellino's snout supposedly ensures one's return to the city, which explains its highly polished appearance in comparison to the rest of the statue.

The 'Wild Boar' created by Fenske and Zinon is an updated, more lively take on the Pietro Tacca's Cinghali. After many years spent living in Florence, both artists have been exposed on a daily basis to some of the greatest sculptures of ancient Greece, Rome, and the Italian Renaissance. Therefore, a move towards sculpting was a logical response to their environment, and a natural evolution of their work.

After months of studying porcine anatomy and visiting farms in Tuscany to observe the movement of wild boars from life, they produced hundreds of sketches and preparatory drawings. Then they built many models and armatures following sculpting techniques refined over thousands of years. This protracted process has been documented and can be seen on: <http://vimeo.com/67850415>

A partnership in the creation of art is a rare and humble act, but the relentless pace afforded by the energy and focus of two artists working on the same ideal clearly benefited the project overall.

'Wild Boar'  
51 x 33 x 25 inches, bronze,  
edition of twelve, 2013



**Ben Fenske** (B. 1978) is originally from Minnesota and has been living and working predominantly in Florence for the last 7 years. An oil painter in the spirit of the 19th and 20th century impressionists, he often chooses informal and contemporary scenes with an implied narrative. His work, which features brash and suggestive brushstrokes, delights in light and color and is regularly exhibited in shows across Europe and the US, although his work is regularly debuted at the Grenning Gallery. Fenske has been the subject of countless national magazine articles, notably American Artist Magazine which included him as one of the best 25 living artists in 2012.

**Richard Zinon** (B. 1985), originally from Manchester England, has been studying, teaching and working in Florence for the last 7 years. A classically trained art scholar with a very strong sense of tradition, his work is bound by a profound love and respect for the form. This spawns from various influences, ranging from the Greek Antiquity right through to our present day. These influences naturally led him to sculpture, and Zinon recently set up a studio in Florence to focus on this passion. He has been featured in English magazines, and his work can be found in private collections in Europe, the US, and New Zealand. His latest work can be found at the Grenning Gallery.



Zinon and Fenske working with the first casting, 2013.





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