

# New sculpture on display at The National Museum of Scotland

At the National Museum of Scotland there is a major new piece of metalwork by the internationally renowned metalsmith, Simone ten Hompel, on display from tomorrow.

This piece was commissioned by National Museums Scotland (NMS) and The Glenmorangie Company. It is a contemporary piece which will go on permanent display in the *Making and Creating* gallery, but it has its roots firmly in the past.

Although it is a very modern piece, ten Hompel's finished artwork, *Coordinate* explores Scotland's journey through time, its changing landscape and the continual rediscovery of its past. It is made from silver, corten steel, guiding metal and stainless steel.

The artist talked to us about her work. She said: "This is a really special event and it came out of the project from NMS and Glenmorangie. The commission asked particularly to look at early medieval silver and from that I gathered impressions and information and imagined a different world, a different society, a different culture way before our culture. As a metalworker I empathise, I have a lot of understanding because the tools and technique hasn't changed over millennia. So I really feel a closeness.

"I am an old-fashioned person. I like to make models and I scaled things up by hand with drawings. I didn't use a

computer except for photographs. Other than that, apart from the occasional electric cutting tool, and the welding which was electrically driven as well, everything else is done by hand. Lots of filing, lots of marking out by hand.

“This is from 700-1000 AD the period I was looking at. Those people didn’t have electric light so their working hours were different and I wanted to be in that same sort of vein to have a line that is from my heart or my body rhythm – as they would have done it.

“It is a piece of rusty metal in the same way as the Angel of the North is a rusty piece of steel. It’s called Corton steel. It’s actually quite a sophisticated steel that rusts over but unlike your car it will stop. Your car will go and on and disintegrate – this won’t. The steel is designed in that way so that you can use it to build bridges where you need that kind of security.

“The colour of the rust is so symbolic for me. The landscape has peat – and also it is the shade of whisky!”

German-born Simone ten Hompel is one of the foremost craft artists working in Britain and has earned a reputation as one of the most inventive metalsmiths of her generation. Her work is held in many public collections including the V&A Museum, Crafts Council Collection, National Museum of Wales, Goldsmiths’ Hall and Kolumba, Art museum of the Archdiocese, Cologne.



Artist Simone ten Hompel with her piece Coordinate which is on display at National Museum of Scotland from 6 March 2020.  
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Hamish Torrie, Corporate Social Responsibility Director at The Glenmorangie Company explained to us the thinking behind the company’s partnership with NMS.

He said: “We’ve been a partner of NMS for the last twelve

years for a very specific reason. We adopted a panel on a piece of sculpture which is on display downstairs here in the Early People Gallery as our logo. That is the very famous 8th century Pictish [Hilton of Cadboll](#) stone, from which we adopted the lower panel as our logo back in 2008.

“It was discovered near our distillery, so its sense of place -where the distillery comes from – drove that idea. If you go to where this was found there is a whole route called The Pictish Trail where there are other standing stones. These were placed outside signifying high status. Now of course the partnership with all its artistic and cultural connects is really about Scotland as a whole.

“This latest period 900 to 1200AD is when Scotland became a nation when all the tribes came together to form the early stages of a kingdom. This piece by Simone ten Hompel was a conscious effort by us and the museum to contemporise this and put it into a different part of the museum, the making and creating gallery, so it is all about the recreation of an idea.”

There was a competition to win the commission and Mr Torrie was part of the panel of judges. Collectively, they decided to ask Ms ten Hompel to create the sculpture for them. She created two mockups of two different ideas and then they chose one.

Mr Torrie said: “It was great fun. This long journey took over a year, but Simone is very inspiring to talk to. The fact that she is doing this in metal, in corten steel, this kind of brushed rusty steel plus silver and gold, means it has all the elements of Scotland in it.”