

*Rio***Eduardo Paolozzi**

Created 1964-5, bronze cast sculpture in six pieces

Extending above the foliage of Hospitalfield's Walled Garden, the bronze sculpture *Rio* (1964) appears like the vibrant vision of a distant city. The work of Scottish artist Eduardo Paolozzi (1924 – 2005), this euphoric collection of mechanical cast pieces stand both in contrast and synthesis with the organic, tended-to growth of the garden. Sited here for two years, it affords those of us at Hospitalfield the opportunity to live with an art work and to see it differently: to 'whittle out' what the artist's intentions may have been and what the work might mean to us personally as we experience the variability of the work and the garden across the seasons. The work's exhibition has prompted discussions with our audiences and peers on Paolozzi's reputation, his relationship to us here in Arbroath and new learning about his enduring influence in Scotland and beyond.

*Rio* is on loan to us from its usual home at The Hunterian Art Gallery's Sculpture Courtyard at the University of Glasgow. The work was donated to The Hunterian in 1986 by Gabrielle Keiller, a collector of surrealist art, member of the Keiller Dundee jam family and a friend of Paolozzi. *Rio* is an outstanding example of Paolozzi's art works from the 1960s: a time when he was exploring the human relationship with machines through three-dimensional assemblage.

As *Rio* beds into its new surroundings, I offer this short text which identifies some key methods and ideas emerging in the sculpture that connect back to Paolozzi's ways of making work and opinions on art. Namely, **collage**, "**metamorphosis of rubbish**", **influence** and **sculpture in the garden**.

**Collage**

*Rio* is a three-dimensional bronze collage. Each part is made of a metal cast created using the 'lost wax method' and subsequently welded together by the artist. The sheer weight of the work is around 1800 kilograms. Amongst the six towering pieces, it is possible to identify specific machine parts: there are film reels and a German saw-guard among the numerous components included to create the curves, straights, and negative spaces of each structure.

Collage is a method of assembling symbols, shapes and meaning and has been a mode long employed by artists. Particularly amongst the early 20<sup>th</sup> century surrealists, it became a method of creating a sense of other-worldly meaning through unexpected juxtapositions. By collecting disparate machine parts together in *Rio*, the artist appears to reference the potential similarities of creative and industrial production. Some of Paolozzi's most famous collages were on paper, using magazine cut outs as well as screen printing – I encourage you to look at his work with Nigel Henderson as Hammer Prints Limited to find out more.

**'Metamorphosis of rubbish'**

Paolozzi's collaging methods extended into 3D sculptural form as his interest in the idea of 'metamorphosis of rubbish' developed. *Rio* is made up of 'rubbish' transformed into a bronze art work; collaging the parts as an act of creation through destruction. It is a 'cannibalised' piece with many parts recycled from his former work *Tyrannical Tower Crowned with Thorns of Violence*, a work that Keiller bought 3 years prior to the production of *Rio*.

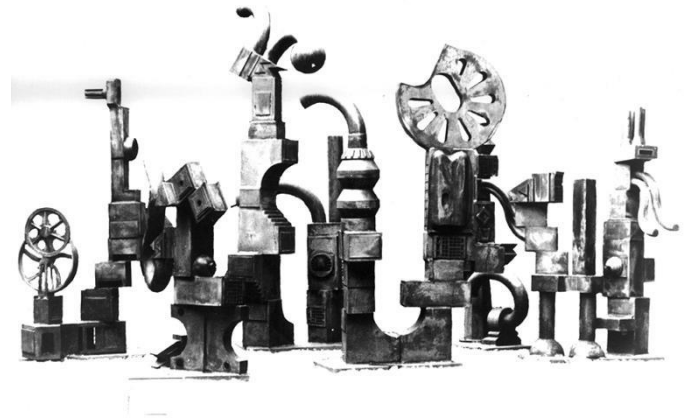
Paolozzi often discarded or re-purposed his own art works.

### Influence

At Hospitalfield the role of influence is something we constantly re-visit. Founded in 1901 as an art school and with the vision of the Allan Frasers of Hospitalfield as a site to support artists and learning in the arts, we are keenly aware of the role artists and creators have on each other, through teaching, tutoring and peer learning. Paolozzi had a prolific influence on people in Scotland, the UK and internationally. This is reflected in his numerous and often cherished public commissions from the late 20th century including the elaborate doors at The Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow (1974-76); the colossal body parts in [Manuscript of Monte Cassino](#) (1991) at Picardy Place, Edinburgh; the bending naked figure doing his geometry of [Newton after Blake](#) (1995), at the British Library in London; or the mosaic tiles (1985) adorning Tottenham Court Road Underground Station in London of which much is now in the collection of Edinburgh College of Art. Paolozzi arguably instigated new ways for artists to teach through his infamous BUNK lecture in 1952 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. At which, using an 'epidiascope' approach, he presented his raw found materials in series, including original magazine cuttings, temporally 'collaged', focusing on the physicality and symbolism of the vernacular images. This was accompanied by the sound of Paolozzi's macho grunts and sighs as opposed to the detailed explanations of intent and meaning of a traditional 'fine art' lecture.

His awareness of other artists' practices influenced his work immensely: he spent two years in Paris at the end of the 1940s where he came to know the work of artists such as Braque, Brancusi, Léger, Debuffet and Giacometti, under whose influence he created his sculptures. At the time that *Rio* was created he taught in Hamburg, Germany, where he was inspired by the boatyards and industrial production in the city. At Hospitalfield we are exploring Paolozzi's own continuing influence later this year through an exhibition with The Paolozzi Foundation and artists Emma Hart and Hardeep

Pandhal, opening on Saturday 9 September 2023 with a Study Day exploring influence and artists archives.



### Sculpture in a garden

Exhibiting in a garden was not necessarily the artist's intended habitat for his sculptures. Paolozzi had been keen to distance his work from Henry Moore, whose outdoor sculptures contributed to defining Modern British Sculpture. Paolozzi believed that *"the best modern sculpture is concerned with problems that have nothing to do with the outside"* – preferring the controlled environment of a white-walled gallery space. Despite this, *Rio* found its original home in the large private garden of Gabrielle Keiller, a collector of surrealist art as well as a good friend and patron of Paolozzi. The work was part of a series of his sculptures which Keiller eventually donated to public collections including the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art after a fire at her home in the 1980s. They later formed an exhibition curated by Frank Whitford at the Serpentine Gallery in London titled *Sculptures in the Garden* which toured to Scotland in 1988 as part of the [Glasgow Garden Festival](#).

Paolozzi may well have been quite satisfied with the exhibition of *Rio* in the Hospitalfield Garden: Upon the acquisition by the Hunterian in 1986, Paolozzi's assistant explained:

*"There is complete flexibility in arrangements for the elements of the work provided they are kept close enough together to make it clear that his is a cohesive piece. It is also one of the few sculptures which*

*Eduardo is happy to see outdoors.”*

For us, installing the work in the Garden brings to our attention the many possible interpretations of the work and its component parts. Thinking of *Rio* as a cityscape, a dystopic vision, almost like a future city, brings out interpretation in line with readings of his wider work:

“The work of Paolozzi is a collision between pop culture and high-end technological research, where objects and machines seem to act according to their own will, confirming in unforeseen nonhuman assemblages. These hybrids seem futuristic and dystopian, missives from an end of the world that will hit us eventually.” Mariana Castillo Deball, Artist (Whitechapel Gallery, 2017)

Within the team at Hospitalfield, we have interpreted its qualities as musical or lyrical. The title *Rio* in Portuguese and Spanish translates as *river* – could Paolozzi have been referencing a river in the sculpture’s fluidity of form? Or pointing toward a place: Rio de Janeiro in Brazil or even the small Italian Tuscan town? There are so many possible questions to be asked, then and now. How might we think of the ‘metamorphosis of rubbish’ in a contemporary world? The relationship we have with machines has only accelerated faster since his passing in 2005 but

so has our shared awareness of the climate crisis and the impact of the enormous waste humans and our industries produce.

As a final note, I would like to elaborate on the legacy of bringing *Rio* to the Garden at Hospitalfield. In 2021, after exhibiting Christina Mackie’s *The Judges III* from the collection of Nottingham Museum & Castle Gallery, the Hospitalfield team discussed the idea of borrowing an outdoor sculpture from a UK public collection as our annual sculpture exhibition. As we researched art works and contacted sculpture collections, it became clear to us the complexity of such a loan especially in terms of conservation. To exhibit *Rio* at Hospitalfield has involved working closely between the team at The Hunterian in Glasgow with the generous and continued support of The Paolozzi Foundation who made the loan possible. *Rio* required some light conservation work which we were able to undertake with Powderhall Bronze in Edinburgh. The life of *Rio* at the Hunterian has not been without its complications. High winds knocked over the sculpture in the 90s and 00s which meant heavier bases had to be attached to keep it fixed in place, work also undertaken by Powder Hall under the instruction of Paolozzi. We have been incredibly lucky to work with specialists who knew Paolozzi, his intentions, his personality and his influence.

### **Eduardo Paolozzi (1924 – 2005)**

Born in Leith to Italian parents Sir Eduardo Paolozzi was one of the most important British artists of the late twentieth century. His work, which included sculpture, drawing, printmaking, textile design and film, was culturally omnivorous. It incorporated a vast range of images and objects from sources as diverse as Hollywood and science journals to the pickings of a junkyard and the sculpture of Michelangelo. Often called a founder of Pop Art, a term he neither liked nor acknowledged for his own work, his art captured the breadth of the modern world.

### **References:**

Thanks to The Hunterian for their support in research and provision of materials for this essay.

*Eduardo Paolozzi: Sculptures from a Garden*. Catalogue from the Serpentine Gallery exhibition of the same title published in 1987. Introductory essay by Curator Frank Whitford.

*Eduardo Paolozzi*. Whitechapel Gallery 2017. Editor Daniel F Herrman. 2017.

Review of *Sculpture in the Garden* at the Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester, Art Review, April 1988. Author: David Lovely.

Sir Eduardo Paolozzi Obituary in the Guardian, April 2005, written by Frank Whiteford.

Copyright The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

**Written/researched by Cicely Farrer, Programme & Communications Manager, Hospitalfield. Edited by Alison Scott.**