

PLAY

WIRED CULTURE

THIS MONTH: 07.13

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 - GIANT RIDEABLE HEXAPOD
- EDITED BY TOM CHESHIRE



Art mix

Sculptor Nick Ervinck reinvents
Renaissance techniques in 3D



Pity the modern sculptor: “For new media I’m too classical and for the traditional sculpture world I’m much too new media,” Nick Ervinck says. The Belgian artist fuses the practices of both worlds, though, using 3D printers and Renaissance-era technology. Michelangelo, he says, used to “put small scale-models in coffin-like boxes full of water. He ran the water out in stages, leaving an ugly line on the model – but an ugly line he could use to calculate which parts to sculpt first.”

Ervinck does the same digitally, allowing him to make complex sculptures, whether they’re small scale and 3D printed, or traditionally sculpted at large scale. He remixes content as well as technique; in *Racht*, he stitches together ancient Roman busts to create a sentinel that looks like the chess piece of your nightmares. For another piece he reimagined Rubens. “I have respect for the old master, but I don’t have any affection.”

Ervinck went looking for “blobs” in Rubens’ paintings and found them in his female subjects. “It was not of course my intention to make a fat lady. I looked at the point of view from sculpture, putting a skeleton that is normally on the inside on the outside of the sculpture.” He called the result *Sniburtad* – Ervinck’s titles typically make more sense read backwards. “A lot of my new sculptures are built from old sculptures. So you’re copy-pasting, you’re transforming, and nobody will recognise them because they’re changed in the process. That’s the beautiful part of it – it’s not traditional drawing with software, it’s a belly feeling.” **TC** nickervinck.com

■ Ervinck’s *Olnetop* sculpture is inspired by macro-photographic images of splashing water

■ *Nieblooy*, an outdoor sculpture, is designed digitally, but manufactured by hand, using polyester



Tablet extra!

Download the WIRED app to view a gallery of Nick Ervinck's work





WHAT A WAY TO GO

Death may be a fact of life, but it hasn't stopped enterprising minds throughout the centuries from trying to bend the rules. But the right techniques always seemed to slip through their fingers – much like their unfortunate patients. Frank Swain *Swain's How To Make a Zombie is out in June*

BLOOD SIMPLE

In 1492, with Pope Innocent VIII in a coma, the desperate papal physicians attempted a blood transfusion. Unfortunately, the pope's staunch anti-intellectual stance meant Arab scholar Ibn al-Nafis's description of the circulatory system had not yet been translated into Latin. Blood drawn from three young boys was poured into the pontiff's mouth. He died, and so did the three "donors".

CHOP PHOOEY

In the early 20th century, Japanese martial-arts instructor Kano Jigoro brought judo to the US, and with it *kuatsu*, techniques used by jujitsu masters to revive students accidentally stunned or killed. Despite never learning judo, scientist Horace Ivie felt ready to test it on animals. After euthanising a small lamb, he attempted to judo-chop it into life. He was not successful.

SHOCK THERAPY

In 1818, an audience squeezed beneath the skeletons in Glasgow University's anatomy theatre to witness a shocking spectacle. Physician Andrew Ure applied powerful electrodes to the corpse of recently executed criminal Matthew Clydesdale, leading the body to thrust in energetic convulsions. Ure's request for a more intact subject went unanswered.

PUMP IT UP

Soviet physician Aleksei Aleksandrovich Kuliabko attempted reanimation in 1929, using a cocktail of drugs called Locke's Solution and a pump. According to Kuliabko, the corpse choked into life, and maintained a pulse for 20 minutes. Kuliabko later said, "The principle is a success. It only remains to develop the technique for surgeons to apply practically." We're still waiting.

