

Heavy Metal Man

With leading Spanish sculptor descending upon London, we dropped by his Madrid studio...

[Art & Culture](#)

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The looming works of Spanish sculptor [Xavier Mascaró](#) march into London today. In the run up to the launch of his first major solo show in the city, we flew out to visit his Madrid studio, finding out more about the artist, his inspirations and the overwhelming works this staggering exhibition will showcase.

Hosted by [SP KOREN ART](#) who specialise in Ibero-Latin American art, the collection of works includes pieces from Mascaró’s monumental *Guardians*, *Eleanoras* and *Departures* series. With a body of work both vast and titanic, and a career spanning almost twenty years, Mascaró had much to choose from: “the exhibition was a good way of making some sense out of what I was doing, and where I was heading. I was able to choose the work freely.”

As we hang out with the humble artist, his large-scale cast iron *Guardians* stand placid and silent in his hangar-sized studio. Like historical keepers, they err on the side of paternal – void of emotion, yet still somehow benign – I’m surprised of the beauty in their rusty presence. Mascaró will also present twenty five of his bronze and iron

boats, “a lot like my work with masks, the theme is departure and my main concern with the project was presence and absence.”







Sharing his time between Madrid and Mexico City, Mascaró concedes that space is of the essence in the creation of his oft-monumental pieces – and also to accommodate materials that include iron, copper, resin, ceramic, stained-glass, fabric and stone. Having exhibited around the world – including the Palais Royal in Paris, Marlborough Gallery in New York, and Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna – he says his heart is now in the cities in which he works. Both dramatically different and inspiring, they fuel his ideas and enable the sculptor to work on his three dimensional leviathans. His earlier works reference the past, and reflect his emotional side, often depicting the fragility of love, relationships and the struggle of power between sexes – “subjects of the heart have been depicted in art for centuries around the world, and I was inspired by that.”

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Sometimes you need to get yourself close up, others stand back – Mascaró’s use of differing scales and materials encourages interaction between his work and his audience. There are references to ancient armies, medieval contraptions, callused hands of yesteryear: “I am interested in the way that certain images from ancient cultures – far removed from our lives both physically and temporarily – can combine with others. I have many images in my memory that originate from other time periods, places, or even with something I just happen to see passing by in the

street.”

While he may find inspiration in the past, he is producing some of the most innovative work in contemporary sculpture today. Recognised and critically-acclaimed internationally – Xavier Mascaró’s London showing at the [Saatchi Gallery](#) is to be missed at your peril. Ends 5 October.

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