

Stephen Ralph

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About ten years ago I picked up a book on Gaudi and was amazed by his work, the way he took iconography, styles, technique, materials and technology from everywhere from the far east to ancient Greece and created these beautiful buildings that resonate with life yet also have a timeless quality. I try to work in a similarly intuitive way.

The merging of these materials (concrete, terracotta, wood, 24ct gold leaf) came about in a similar way to if you were building a house. In some ways I see these sculptures as architectural projects with their concrete foundations, timber floor, golden walls and terracotta roof.

When I made this group of sculptures, I started by modelling a section in clay. I might come across something that interests me, like a pinecone, a decorative detail on a building. Or it might be a particular section of a sculpture, like a log that's been carved in marble. I like those crossovers of materials; it reminds me of a game of Chinese Whispers and how the original message gets changed.