



Monkey and Dog

Date

1986

Primary Maker

John Kindness

Medium

Glass, steel, plaster

Dimensions

70 x 80 x 80 cm

Description

On graduation from the Belfast College of Art in 1974,

John Kindness worked professionally as a graphic designer before moving on to large-scale painting and sculptural installations in the 1980s. His work frequently contains irreverent satirical representations of the two opposing factions in his native Northern Ireland. In *Monkey and Dog Fighting*, Kindness uses animal allegory to encapsulate the bitter sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants. A Republican dog is locked in combat with a Loyalist monkey. The artist's choice of animals was suggested by an eighteenth-century print of Mrs. Midnight's performing animals in which a monkey town is besieged by dogs. The image reminded him of depictions of the siege of the city of Derry. The eternal circular stalemate depicted leaves no possibility of resolution, with the animals inextricably intertwined and evenly matched. The circular format of this sculpture is derived from the Japanese technique of 'netsuke' carving (small highly decorated toggle fastening for clothing) and allows the sculpture to be viewed from any angle. Although much of Kindness's work contains modern social and political commentary, he often harnesses traditional methods to express his creative talent. The beautifully patterned mosaic coats and elegant curvaceous forms of the animals belie the potency of the subject-matter of the work.