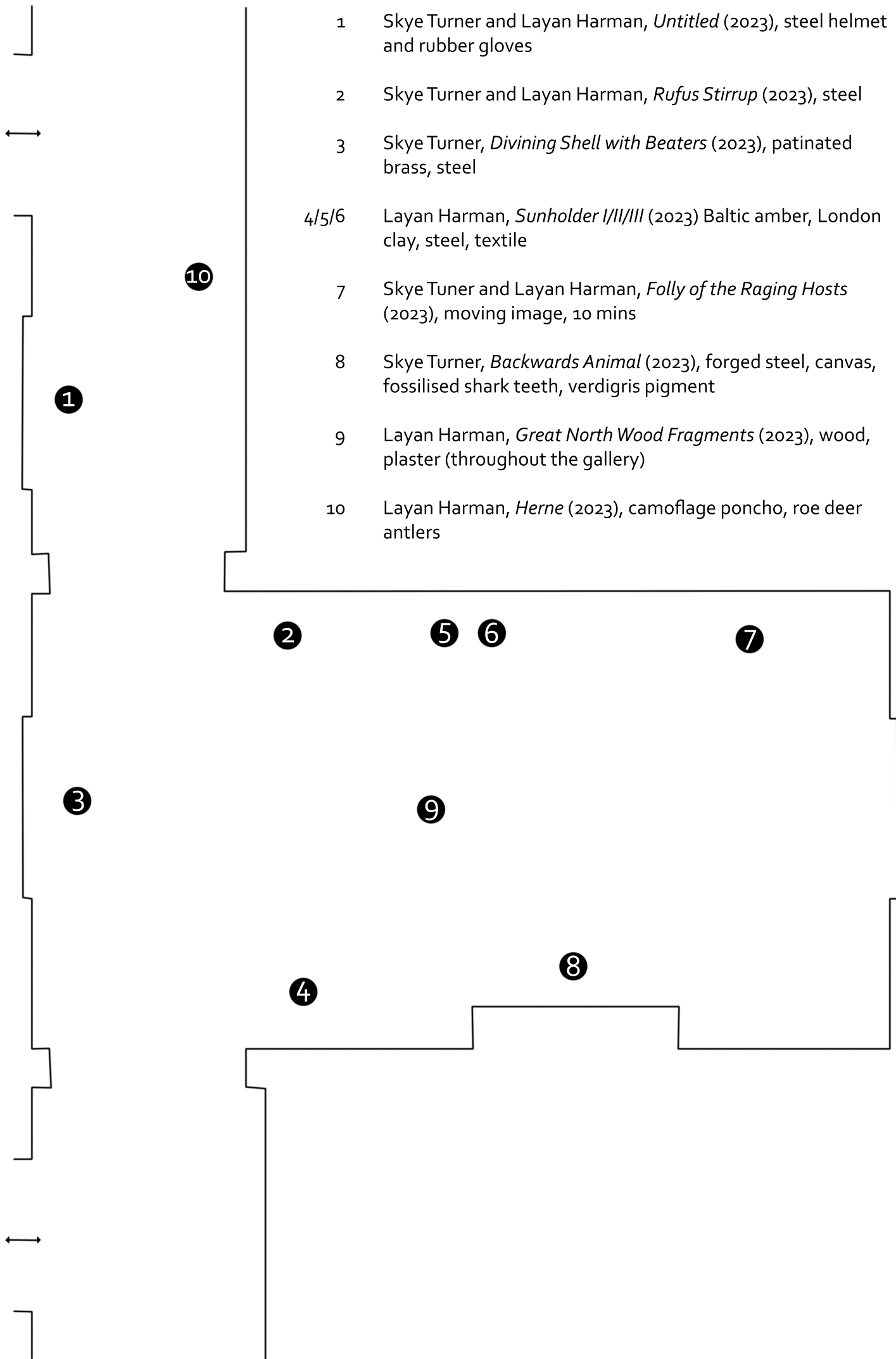


- 1 Skye Turner and Layan Harman, *Untitled* (2023), steel helmet and rubber gloves
- 2 Skye Turner and Layan Harman, *Rufus Stirrup* (2023), steel
- 3 Skye Turner, *Divining Shell with Beaters* (2023), patinated brass, steel
- 4/5/6 Layan Harman, *Sunholder I/II/III* (2023) Baltic amber, London clay, steel, textile
- 7 Skye Turner and Layan Harman, *Folly of the Raging Hosts* (2023), moving image, 10 mins
- 8 Skye Turner, *Backwards Animal* (2023), forged steel, canvas, fossilised shark teeth, verdigris pigment
- 9 Layan Harman, *Great North Wood Fragments* (2023), wood, plaster (throughout the gallery)
- 10 Layan Harman, *Herne* (2023), camouflage poncho, roe deer antlers



HORTUS CONCLUSUS

This show is dedicated to Alexander Darwall and Anthony Mangnall, and their undying love.

The *Hortus Conclusus* is an alchemical symbol of the enclosed garden, a perfect metaphor for nature as abundant yet subdued. Modern-day survivalists often turn to a presupposed "outside" for feelings of agency and escape, constructing survival situations to reassure themselves of their own capability. Historically, landowners have created hunting grounds as simulated primordial arenas in which to demonstrate their prowess through the medium of death. In both cases, what presents as radically individual and agentic serves mainly to reinforce dominant, hyper-conservative power structures, through rejection of communal aid or through land ownership and enclosure.

This show centers on two characters who dwell in the walled garden- one hunter, one survivalist, both occupying the same woods but in different paradigms. One is the archetypal leader of the pan-European myth of the wild hunt, a representation of a primal dream; a dream of dominance and the right to kill.

The other is a survivor in a volatile land, bound to conspiracies of lycanthropes and governmental transmutations of deep-sea sharks. Crafting armour and divining drums for themselves out of out of mythic crustacean shells, they are trapped by a self-sufficient paranoia, perhaps one that they themselves have created.

For both, the arena in which they must constantly test themselves entails an imposed separation from the rest of the world, a walled paradise in which to kill or suffer. But somehow the two meet, they find their gardens are joined, their dreams are interrupted and they must suddenly negotiate with one another. The fulcrum of this negotiation is the folly- a hollow structure designed to radiate an aesthetic of ancientness, harking back to a prelapsarian time of simplicity and authenticity, yet simultaneously expressing power by demonstrating the owner's exclusive connection to this myth. A post-apocalyptic bunker can also be seen as a form of folly, where the prepper acts out their dreamed, exclusive connection to a ruined future wilderness, where they can finally prove their dominion over nature and less-prepared others.

In the gallery are displayed the equipment of this negotiation, ambiguous artefacts that emerge from paranoia and misguided attempts at agency before the terror of a world whose ecology and society are palpably on the brink of disaster. To preserve their precious walls, the pair drag from the woods the rufus stirrup, a measuring device for hunting dogs- if the dog did not fit through the stirrup, it was lamed to impede its hunting ability. This violent object forms the portal into the enclosed garden, a filter for the preservation of the mythic wilderness. The price paid by those who cannot pass the filter is a symbolic mutilation, a necessary revoking of the right to the land, so that only a selected few may enter. In the hunting ground, nuclear bunker, and golf club, the illusory separation of humanity and nature must be violently maintained, for the alternative necessitates removing those structures of control for the sake of our own communal survival. These twin figments of the human dream of the wilderness can do nothing but remain in perpetual limbo in their wood. We invite you to observe their folly, and pity them.