



THOUGHTS (alloy), 1978, 29cm, edition of 6.
On the wall behind is a poster of Edvard Munch's lithograph, 'Madonna'.

UNDER PRESSURE

Life for the young couple was often difficult. Rowan's intensive work ethic distanced him from the family. At one point, Hanne, finding the pressure intolerable, packed her bags and retreated home to Norway with the two children. A distraught Rowan found himself sculpting his anguish and articulating the pain of the marital rift through his work – in the only way he knew how. Casting the state of his marriage in an alloy of aluminium was key. As Sally Arnup observes, aluminium conveys a message simply and directly without the enigmatic, intrusive nuances of bronze. Pure communication. The message was further enhanced by the use of perspex, both reflective and transparent.

An exhibition was put together and the venue was set: Drøbak, near Oslo. Hanne was invited to attend the opening and, reading the anguish in Rowan's sculpture, knew he wanted her back. Coolly acquiescing, she merely said, 'Why didn't you just write a letter?'

Life in Ireland was tough in the 1970s and 1980s, with workers leaving the Emerald Isle in their droves as, across the Irish Sea, Britain experienced its gluttonous Thatcherite boom. Rowan's return to the land of his forefathers might have seemed ill-timed but it was an immensely creative time for many. Two decades before the emergence of U2, Enya and The Corrs, such talents as Van Morrison, The Dubliners, The Chieftains, Bob Geldof, Seamus Heaney, Louis Le Brocquy, Edward Delaney and Michael Warren had blossomed in Ireland. These artists cut their teeth in the tough times and looked outwards to the rest of the world for their survival. Rowan too exhibited widely abroad at this time.

WE WANT TO CREATE, OR AT LEAST LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF, AN ART THAT GIVES SOMETHING TO HUMANITY. AN ART THAT ARRESTS AND ENGAGES. AN ART CREATED OF ONE'S INNERMOST HEART.

EDVARD MUNCH

THINKER (alloy), 1978, 31cm, edition of 6.

