

*Of Rhytonous Things* reflects the idea of 'mimesis' in several different ways. For one, it is concerned with the rhyton, a stylized vessel of the ancient world which itself was often mimetic. At times crafted in the shape of animal heads, rhyta could embody anything ranging from benign sheep to the mythological griffin. The creature's mouth typically acted as a spout, as these containers were meant to be drunk or poured from as part of some ceremony. The act of rhyton-related imbibing or decanting is directly mimicked in this work's opening material, a descending stream of downward runs, alternately punctuated and accentuated. This texture returns three times, unaffected by intervening episodes, apart from the proverbial fluid running its course. Literal imitation of liquid flow is thus the bedrock of this piece.

There is a variety of 'meta-mimesis' at play here too. Arguably the most celebrated and lavish rhyta are from the height of the Persian empire, the designs of which were later copied by the Greeks. Consequently, an imagined Iranian court, with all its costly treasures, is apt inspiration for the work's first episode. In less technologically developed communities, rhyta were made from animal horns, rather than fashioned ceramic or metal. The wandering Israelites, for instance, were thought to employ a ram's horn for both ceremonial sounding and drinking. It is the ram's horn call and its environs which are replicated in the middle episode of this piece. Some examples of Athenian pottery show horn-shaped rhyta and wineskins in the possession of aroused satyrs, who as companions of the gods Pan and Dionysus, were boundlessly hedonistic. The last episode of *Of Rhytonous Things* mirrors this depiction of rhyton-related debauchery.

All these various simulacra bound together evoke yet another sort of 'mimesis', this time in a philosophical vein. According to Platonic thought, diegesis, or telling, was of secondary importance to mimesis, or showing. Representations of nature were seen as the ideal form of the latter. Subsequent centuries led this mimesis to take on more meanings, including a temporal, or more accurately, atemporal aspect. Imitating nature was then, as a reflection of the divine, an articulation of timelessness. There are certainly traces of this notion in *Of Rhytonous Things*. Despite its episodic narratives, and even with the natural trajectory of its watery ritornello, the piece ends up more or less back where it started, all its activity merely a symptom of a continuous present.