

Tony Cragg

17 March – 17 April 2010

29 Bell Street

Lisson Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of major new works by Tony Cragg, whose first solo show with the gallery was in 1979.

Cragg's position as one of the pre-eminent artists and cultural figures of his generation was acknowledged in his award of the Praemium Imperiale in 2007. In September 2008 he opened Waldfrieden, a major sculptural foundation and outdoor sculpture park in his home town, Wuppertal in Germany. Last year Cragg was appointed Director of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, one of Europe's most prestigious art schools, where he was Professor from 1988-2001. In 2009 he presented a major exhibition of sculpture and drawings in Karlsruhe and Salzburg.

Tony Cragg's abiding interest is in the dynamic potential of matter to assume form. At the Lisson, he will present five large new sculptures, a series of smaller works and a number of related drawings. The selection demonstrates the consistency with which Cragg has pursued his sculptural explorations, particularly since he moved from his early assemblages to casting sculptures in the mid-1980s; it also demonstrates the range and ambition of those explorations.

Cragg, an unashamed materialist, is nevertheless a magician of matter, taking an essentially simple image like the human profile or the hollowness of many natural forms and subjecting them to extreme extrapolation.

This often takes place around an active axial structure: Cragg has said that in these works 'there is no longer a straight axis, the axis bends and re-orientates itself compressing the volumes around it. Obviously, the forms associated with these kinds of variable axis infer an energetic dynamic, the kind of constant material condition found in the whirlings of tornadoes...' (quoted in 'Tony Cragg, Signs of Life,' 2003).

In his new exhibition, Tony Cragg works with wood, fibreglass, cast and constructed steel, in each case taking his interest in material beyond the conventional constraints and processes of fabrication or imagination.

His drawings add another dimension to the work, often zooming in to microscopic detail or out to macrocosmic form.

About the artist:

Born in Liverpool, Tony Cragg lives and works in Wuppertal, Germany. He represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1988 and was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize in the same year. In 2002 he received the prestigious Piepenbrock Award for Sculpture; he was awarded the CBE for services to art in 2001 and the Praemium Imperiale in 2007 for the significant impact his work has had on the field of sculpture. He has exhibited extensively and has had major solo shows at the Tate Gallery, London (1989), Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1991), Concoran Gallery of Art, Washington (1991), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1995), Lenbachhaus, Munich (1998), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1996), Whitechapel Gallery, London (1997) the Tate Gallery, Liverpool (2001) and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2009).

Selected Reading:

Brockhaus, C, Kudielka, R and Schneegass, C, *Tony Cragg: In and Out of Material*, Walther König, 2006, Cologne, Germany.

Cragg, Tony, *Signs of Life*, Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland GmbH and Richter Verlag, 2003, Germany.

Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (Eds.), *Second Nature*, Du Mont Literatur and Kunst Verlag GmbH & Co KG, 2009, Germany.