

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Tony Cragg

19 November 2025 – 31 January 2026
27 Bell Street, London

PV: 18 November 6-8pm

Lisson Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by Tony Cragg, centred on the latest in his series of *Incident* sculptures, alongside recent pieces from related, ongoing bodies of work. The show revolves around numerous upright forms that resemble standing figures or columnar pillars, but which are abstracted and complicated through Cragg's rigorous process of hand carving – whether through the act of building up and constructing or through careful erosion and hollowing out. The porosity and openness of these new *Incident* works collapse any boundaries between internal and external structure, between solid and air, creating sculptural moments that are at once transitory and eternal, organic and deliberate. A further dimension to these animated and gestural configurations – which seem to dance and commune with one another as though being drawn in space – is their hard-edged materiality, being variously manufactured from patinated bronze, reflective stainless steel or the velveteen surface of weathered corten steel.

For over 50 years, Cragg has fostered a practice combining his interests in the natural and the manmade worlds that has nevertheless remained resolutely a product of his own invention, experimentation and imagination. A new 2025 iteration of his *Hedge* series, for example, only fleetingly recalls the twists and twines of the hedgerows he investigated as a child, before exploding out and growing into interweaving planes and sinuous lines. Similarly, the recent *Stand* works in this show can initially be read anthropomorphically – as torso-like volumes with heads or limbs – but soon transcend memory and dissolve perception, developing instead into original forms with fresh associations, both bodily and otherworldly.

Cragg's *Masks*, composed of stratified stone in circular or elliptical striations, lean toward a futuristic dynamism. Though abstracted from multiplied, compounded profiles of a person's face, these works are still deeply attuned to the human, in scale, material presence and in the way they invite a physical, almost empathic response from viewers. Across his oeuvre, Cragg's focus remains on the expressive possibilities of materials rather than any direct representation, harnessing instead the possibilities of movement, mass and molecular arrangement that are inherent in all matter.

This dialogue between the figurative qualities in the *Stands* and *Masks* continues outdoors, where monumental outdoor versions of these two series are installed side-by-side in the external courtyard. At the heart of the exhibition, the internal courtyard features a major bronze *Contradiction* sculpture, which rotates between a whirling, centrifugal force and a towering verticality – seemingly defying gravity and pulling skywards.

Alongside an interconnectedness and shared complexity across all of Cragg's output, these works together present an artist who is not only continuing to evolve and enrich the range of thoughts, materials and forms involved in his creations, but also someone constantly pushing at the limits of what is possible to achieve in sculpture.

This exhibition follows major solo shows this year at leading European institutions in Dubrovnik, Dessau, Salzburg and Rome, as well as his last major display in the UK at Castle Howard, York (2024). It runs concurrently with a presentation at the artist's Sculpture Park Waldfrieden in Wuppertal (2025–26).

About the artist

Tony Cragg was born in Liverpool, UK in 1949 and has lived and worked in Wuppertal, Germany since 1977. He studied at the Wimbledon School of Art, London (1969-1973) and at the Royal College of Art, London, (1973-1977). He taught at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany (1978-2001) and at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, Germany (2001-2006). He was the director of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany from 2009 to 2013. He held the Chaire de Création Artisque from 2013 to 2014 at the Collège de France in Paris, France. At the 43rd Venice Biennale in 1988 he represented Britain and was awarded the Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery, London, UK in the same year. He was elected a Royal Academician in 1994; In 2002 he was awarded Commander of the British Empire (CBE). He received the Praemium Imperiale for Sculpture, Tokyo, Japan (2007); was awarded the 1st Class Order of Merit of Federal Republic of Germany (2012) and was made Knight Bachelor in 2016.

Among his many major solo shows Cragg has exhibited extensively in museums worldwide including: Museo Nazionale Romano Terme di Diocleziano, Rome, Italy (2024); Castle Howard, York, UK (2024); Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Germany (2024); Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal (2023); Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway (2023); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2023); Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria (2022); Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2021+2007); Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK (2021); Museo Brasileiro da Escultura e Ecologia, São Paulo, Brazil (2019); Boboli Gardens, Florence, Italy (2019); Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey (2018); Teheran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran (2017); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2017); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba, Havana, Cuba (2017); Le Musée d'Art Contemporain du Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2017); Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany (2017); Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland (2017); The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2016); Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, Germany (2016); Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (2015); Gothenburg International Sculpture Exhibition, Gothenburg, Sweden (2015); Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York, USA (2014); Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan (2014); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Priest-en-Jarez, France (2013); National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan (2013); CAFA Art Museum in Beijing, Museum of Contemporary Art Chengdu, Shanghai Himalayas Art Museum, Shanghai China (2012); The Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, UK (2011); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, USA (2011); Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (2011); Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Germany (2009); Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2009); Museum Untereres Belvedere, Vienna, Austria (2008); Museo de Arte de Lima-MALI, Peru (2007); Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2006); The Central House of Artists, Moscow, Russia (2005); Neues Museum Nürnberg, Germany (2005); Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2004); Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, Germany, (2003); MACRO Museo D'Arte Contemporanea, Roma, Italy (2003); Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome, Italy (2003); Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2000); Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (1999); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK (1997 + 1981); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain (1997); Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota/Aichi, Japan (1997); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain (1995); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (1996); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (1993 + 1991); Contemporary Arts Houston Museum, Houston, TX, USA (1991); Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA, USA (1990); Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany (1989); Tate Gallery, London, UK (1989); Hayward Gallery, London, UK (1987); Documenta, Kassel, Germany (1987 + 1982); The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, USA (1986); Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands (1982).

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