

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Tony Cragg

1 October – 5 November 2016
27 & 52 Bell Street, London

This exhibition is Tony Cragg's fourteenth with Lisson Gallery since his first solo show in 1979. Spanning both London venues, it will feature the latest works in Cragg's career-long pursuit of his interest in developing specific groups of sculptural themes and forms. As always, Cragg's radical and experimental approach to making sculpture produces surprising new forms and meanings that add congruently to his already considerable oeuvre.

A process of continual enquiry infuses Cragg's practice with a restless energy, manifest in his continuing exploration of a multitude of materials and ways of reshaping the world around us. His axiom is that "There are many more things that do not exist than things that do exist" and with this he points to a deep well of things and forms that are as yet beyond our perception. Sculpture is for Cragg a method to unlock this enormous potential not just for new forms but the new meanings, dreams and language that will become associated to them. For him it is a method for discovering the as yet unseen.

The exhibition shows several new departures, including works entitled *Industrial Nature* resulting from the collision and fusion of organic and artificial elements within and without contained volumes. The juxtaposition of geometries with organic forms has been a constant theme in Cragg's earlier works and represents for him the dual nature of most things we see around us, given that our own mindset is inherently and necessarily rational, in order to build coherent forms, but is also obviously complex and subjective enough to be described as organic.

Very different approaches to related themes can be found in the monumental bronze sculptures *Willow*, *Skull* and *Migrant*, while white sculptures in wood and onyx entitled *Sail* open new lines of investigation that derive from his *Versus* series. A new body of glass works made in Venice and aggregate, seed-like casts of the sculptor's own head (*Identity*) are exhibited next to the latest developments of three of Cragg's larger groups of work *Early Forms*, *Rational Beings* and *Manipulations*. All of which have evolved far from their origins in the 1980s and surprise again in this exhibition with new twists and turns.

Cragg never forgets the path he has taken to arrive at his latest works that still find references in some of his earliest works, such as the stacks, assemblages and his figurative collages made from discarded materials. This latest body of work, however, once again affirms the contemporaneous nature of the artist's practice.

If nothing is as it first seems in this exhibition – materials, forms and resonances fool the eye and confound the viewer – then these disorienting sensations reflect Cragg's own conscious, dense layering of visual phenomena and historical references, one on top of another. This creation of an enhanced and extruded reality as experienced through technology and the multiple perspectives afforded to us by the pace and prisms of modern life, is further evidence of a sculptor working at the height of his powers.

27 & 52 Bell Street
London NW1 5BU
UK
T +44 (0)20 7724 2739

Via Zenale, 3
20123 Milan
Italy
T +39 (0)2 8905 0608

504 West 24th Street
New York NY 10011
USA
T +1 212 505 6431

lissongallery.com

The artist has recently been the subject of a major career retrospective 'Parts of the World' in Germany, at the Von der Heydt Museum (19 April – 14 August 2016) near his studio and sculpture park in Wuppertal. Next year Cragg is to be honoured with his largest exhibition to date in the United Kingdom at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (4 March – 3 September 2017).

About the artist

Tony Cragg is among the leading sculptors of his generation. Constantly pushing to find new relations between people and the material world, there is no limit to the materials he might use, as there are no limits to the ideas or forms he might conceive. His early, stacked works present a taxonomical understanding of the world, and he has said that he sees manmade objects as "fossilized keys to a past time which is our present". So too, the floor and wall arrangements of objects that he started making in the 1980s blur the line between manmade and natural landscapes: they create an outline of something familiar, where the contributing parts relate to the whole. Cragg has always had, from an early age, a passionate interest in science and natural history and worked as a lab technician, an experience that is reflected in his vigorous approach to material. He has said, "I see a material or an object as having a halo of information around it" (1992). For him form and meaning are interdependent, any change in form changes the 'balloon of information' and vice versa, so that any change in materials also changes meaning and significance. Cragg understands sculpture as a study of how material and material forms affect and form our ideas and emotions.

Tony Cragg was born in Liverpool, UK in 1949 and has lived and worked in Wuppertal, Germany since 1977. He has a BA from Wimbledon School of Art (1973) and an MA from the Royal College of Art (1977). Among many major solo shows, Cragg has exhibited at The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia and the Von der Heydt Museum in Wuppertal, Germany (2016); Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (2015); Heydar Aliyev Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan and Musée d'art Moderne de Saint-Étienne, France (2014); National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan (2013); CAFA Museum, Beijing, China (2012); the Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh (2011); Tate Gallery Liverpool, UK (2000); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, Madrid (1995); Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1991) and Tate Britain, London (1988). Cragg represented Britain at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 1988 and was awarded the Turner Prize later that year. He taught at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris from 1999-2009 and was Professor Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf from 2009-2014. Cragg was elected a Royal Academician in 1994, made CBE in 2003 and appointed Knight's Bachelor in 2016 for his service to visual arts and Anglo-German relations. In 2017, he will receive the International Sculpture Center's Lifetime Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award and will be honoured with his largest exhibition to date in the United Kingdom at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, a leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West Yorkshire.

Opening Hours

Monday-Friday, 10am-6pm
Saturday, 11am-5pm

Press enquiries

Helena Zedig or Cecilia Vilela at Rhiannon Pickles PR
Tel: [+44 7803 596587](tel:+447803596587); [+44 \(0\) 7449 872 799](tel:+447449872799)
Email: helena@picklespr.com; cecilia@picklespr.com

27 & 52 Bell Street
London NW1 5BU
UK
T +44 (0)20 7724 2739

Via Zenale, 3
20123 Milan
Italy
T +39 (0)2 8905 0608

504 West 24th Street
New York NY 10011
USA
T +1 212 505 6431

lissongallery.com