

## RICHARD DEACON

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### HOW MUCH DOES YOUR MIND WEIGH?

SALZBURG HALLE

24 Saturday - 18 Saturday

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Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition by British sculptor Richard Deacon, in our new space HALLE, of three major wooden sculptures from the past decade.

How Much Does Your Mind Weigh? (2001) is an enormous honey-comb of bent, steamed ash, held together with steel bolts. Its gracious and expansive form is hard to quantify, as it appears to be both heavy and solid as well as light and transparent simultaneously. The steamed wood has been constructed into layers of curved lines; they are flat and quite ribbon-like, suggesting an open basket weave. The eye penetrates through, but the structure presents a series of horizontal curved layers, intersected by ribbons of vertical curved slats. The overall impression presents long, wavy lines descending from on high somehow harnessed by the curved layers sandwiched in between each section.

Like many of Deacon's sculptures, it raises ambiguous questions about how we see. How does the eye read these forms and segments? Do we see space, line, a volumetric structure and where is the sense of weight? Deacon poses these questions in an intellectual slight of hand to the viewer and it is also what gives this work its consummate sensuality and playfulness.

Three years later, with Individual, using steamed ash and stainless steel again, the artist has changed his point of view and elaborately looped and turned a series of twisted curls around a central spine. Deacon has capped the left and right edges with stainless steel plates that appear to compress and hold the object in place. The color of the work is mottled and shadowed.

The steel bands used during the steaming process produce this addition of color and shade to the surface of the work. As the steam saturates the wood until it becomes flexible and malleable the steel straps used to brace them become so hot that they darken the wood and leave an imprint on the outer surface, which in the finished work is almost like chiaroscuro.

In 2007, Deacon represented Wales at the Venice Biennale and he converted the interior of a warehouse into a singular work by casting hundreds of bronze nails, which he inserted into previously existing postholes. In so doing, you could say he created a space of stigmata. He chose to install all the other sculptures in this building only on the walls, leaving the floor space empty. Ecstatic was the visual high point as it is a braided column of three twisted strands of steamed oak, extending over 6 meters in height. As its title implies and given the overall mood of the installation, the work took on an abstract, figurative aspect, little seen in Deacon's works overall. Richard Deacon How Much Does Your Mind Weigh 2001 Steamed ash steel bolts 375 x 365 x 400 cm.

Here, the stainless steel bands both constrict the column and attach it to the wall, suggesting a physical restraint and perhaps implying a violent "holding together" of things that on their own would fall apart. In the context of HALLE, this work, in contrast to How Much Does Your Mind Weigh? and Individual, takes on a singular minimalism.

After many years on the faculty of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Deacon was invited in 2009 to join the faculty of the Düsseldorf Kunst Academy where he is now teaching. Additionally, two of Deacon's new sculptures, More free Assembly and Two By Two, are currently on display at the Musée Bourdelle in Paris in a group show titled En mai, fais ce qu'il te plaît!, curated by Juliette Laffon, Director of the museum. His retrospective exhibition, The Missing Part, which closes at the museum in Strasbourg in September, will travel to the Sprengel Museum in Hanover, opening in January 2011. Another venue of this important show will be Tate Gallery, London.