

TONY CRAGG

NEW SCULPTURES/DRAWINGS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

06 May 2009 - 13 Jun 2009



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition of new sculptures by Anthony Cragg opening on Wednesday, May 6th through Saturday, June 13th. One of the most exciting sculptors of the moment, Cragg continues to astonish us with his endless creation of new forms and materials within contemporary sculpture. This exhibition on three floors of the gallery will include new works in stone, bronze, stained wood and polished stainless steel. There will also be an exhibition of new works on paper in the drawing space on the first floor.

In his recent works Cragg has been pushing towards a new abstracted understanding of the figure. For the last years, he has been playing with the notion of compression and expansion in the use of totemic structures where the appearance of the human profile is often a reclusive aspect of the overall structure. He has also taken the figure in an almost futuristic manner and divided it into quadrants at its very core. For example, an abstracted idea of a portrait suddenly becomes four different surfaces creating four types of images all joined at the back by an imaginary spine. These then appear as forms with no front or back, right or left but an organic moving trajectory that gives the appearance of movement as you walk around it.

In his new series of red stained wooden works, he continues to break new ground. We see the composite structure created from slices of wood, epoxied together in forms that are curved, jagged, sturdy yet rigorous. By staining the wood in this red colour, he insinuates some other material that appears closer to something man made. The works have an ambiguous reading because they are at once figurative and non figurative.

No one working in sculpture today can treat bronze with the same finesse as Cragg. He has developed a method for casting forms that appear to be liquid or molten. Their patinas ranging from thick dark chocolate brown to a more natural burnished green raise many images in the mind's eye. For example, a recent bronze sculpture called "Luke" has a voluptuous playful structure of circular forms that appear both to be rising up and sliding down from their centre. He is able to imply a sense of water flowing down the back of a rock surface in the fluid feeling he creates with bronze, one of the heaviest metals.

In the drawing space, Cragg will present a series of recent drawings that highlight his quintessential interest in how new forms can emerge from both figures and landscapes.

To coincide with the opening of this exhibition, Cragg's Column will be installed in the Tuileries Gardens behind the Jeu de Paume Museum. At the moment there is a major museum exhibition that opened in Karlsruhe, Germany (until May 3rd) and will travel to Salzburg later this summer; a catalogue has been published by Dumont to coincide with the museum shows and it will be available at the gallery for purchase.

Tony Cragg was born in Liverpool in 1949. He began his education by focusing on technical studies that led him to work in a biochemistry laboratory before embarking on his art studies at the Wimbledon School of Art. He was awarded his M.A. from the Royal College of Art in London in 1977. He has resided in Wuppertal, Germany since 1979, and teaches at Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts. In September 2008, Cragg opened a sculpture park, including 16 of the artist's sculptures, in Wuppertal on the grounds of the famous Waldfrieden villa.

Marie Laure Bernadac, Chief Curator of Contemporary Art at the Louvre Museum, has invited Tony Cragg to show his work in autumn 2010.