

TONY CRAGG

NEW WORKS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

21 May 2005 - 25 Jun 2005



The Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is happy to present, for the first time, new work created by the British sculptor, Tony Cragg. The artist, who works in Wuppertal, Germany, will present new pieces from his series- Column, as well as new works in bronze, wood and stone. This show will run in conjunction with a large exhibition of his outdoor sculptures that will take place in the gardens of the Cass Sculpture Foundation outside of London beginning in May.

Early works by Cragg employed a variety of objects and recycled materials that were then molded into glass, plaster, bronze and aluminium. In recent years, the artist's work has shifted from objects and images to materials and forms- raw materials into which forms are written- and from which forms emerge- directly through the process of working them. In this sense, he focuses on the form of the object and not necessarily on its relation in space. At first the shapes seem abstract, yet they are also rooted in the organic world; from these fluid shapes, emerge astounding anthropomorphic sculptures.

The diversity of materials employed by Tony Cragg remains a fundamental aspect of his work. For him, material or matter, derives etymologically from the word maternal. All materials put forth a presence, an emotional source that is the Mother of all inventions.

His work, organized by theme- Envelopes, Secretions, Rational Beings, Stacks and Columns- underlines to what degree his choice of material determines the shape of his sculptures. In his Columns series- wood, bronze and polished stone- all develop a volume around a central axis, forming circumvolutions of different diameters that, through an unseen tension, rise and whirl like a tornado and suggest, depending on your point of view, the shape of a spinal column or that of a human profile. The shape is no longer constructed or organic, but becomes dynamic- turbulence or displacement.

"If we look at the world of molecules, energy waves or the like," Tony Cragg reminds us, "it will become necessary to find a language to describe the invisible, the inaudible, the unsmellable or the untouchable. That could be a function of sculpture."

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, but he still maintains strong ties with England. His first retrospective took place at the Hayward Gallery in 1987. A year later, he represented England at the Venice Biennial and was awarded the Turner Prize. In 1992, he had an important show at the Glasgow Museum. In 1996, he collaborated with the Henry Moore Sculpture Studio in Halifax. He has had two shows at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the first in 1981 and then more recently in 1997. In 2000, his hometown of Liverpool honoured him with a major show at the Tate Liverpool. The Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac has been collaborating with Tony Cragg since 2003.