

Press Release

Tony Cragg New Sculptures

21 March—11 May 2024
Opening Thursday 21 March 2024, 6—8 pm

Thaddaeus Ropac
Salzburg Villa Kast
Mirabellplatz 2, 5020 Salzburg



Tony Cragg, *Untitled*, 2023.
Corten steel. 240 x 86 x 98 cm (94.49 x 33.86 x 38.58 in)

Focusing on his most recent bodies of work, this exhibition offers a view into the breadth of Tony Cragg's latest formal developments, which are defined by the British artist's continual investigation into the possibilities of a wide range of materials and his exploration of both the natural and the man-made worlds. 'His work has the accumulated effect of subtly unsettling the certainties of such categories, whilst

allowing us to think – through sculpture – about the complex material connectivities between [...] culture and nature,' writes art historian Jon Wood. Cragg's abstract sculptures manifest entirely unprecedented forms that nevertheless spark a sense of recognition as they gesture to the world around us.



Tony Cragg, *Integers*, 2022. Bronze.
160 x 103 x 111 cm (62.99 x 40.55 x 43.7 in)

The works on view range from detailed stainless steel sculptures from his recent series *Incidents* to softer, organic forms, such as his latest *Integers*, with each distinctive material informing the shape the finished sculpture takes. His polymorphic sculptures seem to emulate geographical layers of sediment when constructed from plywood. When cast in bronze, they appear more weighted, almost turned in on themselves, highlighting Cragg's deep understanding of materiality and how it affects our perception of the work. 'Every change in material form has a precise and immediate consequence for our thoughts, feelings and course of action and, with that, the future,' states the artist.

Highlighting the playful relationship between organic and geometric shapes, the streamlined *Integers* are juxtaposed with more intricate sculptures whose pulsating forms extend both inwards and outwards. This includes a series of works that feature formations reminiscent of solidified drop-shaped dabs of foam or emulsion. Cast in bronze, Cragg imparts the impression of malleability to this exceedingly hard and heavy material, the work's surfaces a nuanced blend of rounded and tapered contours.

The monumental work *Karst* (2020) evokes geological patterns of erosion. The artist has stated, 'although it is the human figure which interests me most deeply, I have always paid great attention to natural forms.' Inspired by karst landscapes, a topography shaped by the erosion of soluble rocks such as limestone, Cragg's sculpture features intricate textures and fractures found in these natural formations. By contrast, the rugged surface of the bronze sculpture *Mean Average* (2021) appears to be made up of stratified forms that are pressed into each other. Profiles and jawlines seem to emerge and recede from the undulating biomorphic mass, resolving from certain viewpoints, before dissolving back into abstraction.

Through meticulous craftsmanship, Cragg's sculptures captivate the viewer with their palpable energy and intriguing concepts of space. This exhibition highlights the many ways in which Cragg's practice continues to answer anew what is possible in terms of form.



Tony Cragg, *Mean Average*, 2021. Bronze.
135 x 56 x 62 cm (53.15 x 22.05 x 24.41 in)



Tony Cragg

About the artist

Born in Liverpool, Cragg has lived and worked in Wuppertal, Germany, since 1979 and has lectured at the Berlin Academy of Arts and the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts. Since the 1980s, his work has been shown at important international exhibitions, including documenta in Kassel (1982 and 1987); the British pavilion at the Venice Biennale (1988); and the São Paulo Biennial (1983). He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1988, made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by France in 1992, and received Japan's prestigious Praemium Imperiale in 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2023); the Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado, Lisboa (2023); the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art (2022); the ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna; the Museo

del Vetro, Murano (2021); Houghton Hall, Norfolk (2021); Museum Belvédère, Heerenveen (2021); Schlossmuseum Wolfenbüttel (2020); MON Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba (2020); Museu Brasileiro da Escultura e Ecologia, São Paulo (2019); Boboli Gardens, Uffizi Galleries, Florence (2019); Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See (2019); Istanbul Modern (2018); Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2017); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana (2017); and The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (2016).

A retrospective of the artist's work opened at Kunstpalast Düsseldorf in February 2024, followed by a further landmark exhibition at Castle Howard and York Minster, Yorkshire, opening in May 2024.

For press enquiries:

Dr. Patricia Schmiedlechner
Thaddaeus Ropac Salzburg
patricia.schmiedlechner@ropac.net
Telephone +43 662 881393 0



Share your thoughts with:

@thaddaeusropac
#thaddaeusropac
#tonycragg