

## Press Release

### Tony Cragg *Stacks*

20 November – 29 February 2019  
27 Bell Street, London  
Opening: 19 November, 6 – 8pm

*From Cragg's early and earthy stacks made at the Royal College of Art, through to his later and larger columnar, spinning stacks in wood, stone, bronze and steel, Cragg's sculpture continues to surprise and enthrall, offering up a fascinating mixture of order and disorder, balance and imbalance, method and madness, encouraging us to think about our place in the world and what lies beneath.*

Dr Jon Wood, 2019

For Tony Cragg's fifteenth exhibition with Lisson Gallery, the artist presents a selection of complex polymorphic sculptures, rendered in bronze, wood and steel, including a new series of works entitled *Stack*, alongside works from the *Over the Earth* and *In No Time* series, as well as works on paper. This exhibition also extends outside the galleries, featuring the debut of a monumental, outdoor bronze *Stack*. This presentation illustrates the movement, growth, dynamism and sense of wonder at the seemingly unlimited possibilities of sculptural form. The show also celebrates the artist's long-standing relationship with Lisson Gallery – the show being 40 years since his first with the gallery in 1979.

The exhibition focuses on the resonance of stacking in Cragg's practice, considering how the creation of solid, cohesive forms out of small, disparate parts has been a constant in his work, spanning over five decades of making. Cragg's *Stacks* developed initially in the '70s, coinciding with his emergence as an artist and the critical recognition of his exhibited work, as well as his move to Germany in 1977. Cragg has variously stacked, gathered and layered ever since, deploying various acts of stratification, compilation, accrual and accumulation in his work. These constructive, physical activities have also been animated by a range of ideas, references and narratives, drawing from geology, archaeology, biology, chemistry, natural history, psychology and anthropology. The geological concerns displayed by these early works – including the sculptural *Stack* presented at Tate in 1975 and *Minster* (1987) presented at Hayward Gallery that year, combining a multitude of miscellaneous, recycled and geological materials with physical hand-made endeavour – set Cragg apart from the other artists working in Britain at the time.

The exhibition also includes works from Cragg's *In No Time* series. These works conjure up emotionally-charged ideas of bodily enclosure, intimate habitation and the feeling of living between the layers, speaking to the connection between 'layer' and 'history' – the accumulation of meaning, and developing histories. Cragg has always been interested in etymologies and the ways in which experiences, ideas and words are materialized. In German, the word *Geschichte* means both 'history' and 'story' – two theoretically different concepts, with history referring to a 'factual' event in the past, and a story referring to a narrative or fictional tale. "We might also talk about 'storey' and 'story': the storeys of buildings and the stories of life", says Cragg. "Telling 'histories' as telling 'stories' and recounting 'tales'. I think about 'telling' as 'narrating' but also about 'accounting' or 'recounting'. You might recount a tale and tell a history, for example, or account for yourself. Counting and accounting, telling and numbering, adding and accumulating... these words and ideas also introduce time and are part of a broader, bigger idea of history as layering or a layering upwards of deeper experiences."

The exhibition follows a solo presentation of Cragg's work at this year's Armory show with the gallery, and museum exhibitions at the Kunstpalast Düsseldorf and the Franz Marc Museum in Kochel Am See (2 June – 6 October), as well as a major installation of his works at the Boboli Gardens, behind the Pitti Palace in Florence (7 May – 13 October).

A publication focused on the history of Cragg's *Stack* works will accompany the exhibition, featuring an essay by Dr Jon Wood, entitled 'Strata, structures, stories: 'Stacking' in Tony Cragg's sculpture'.

## About Tony Cragg

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, London, UK (1973) and an MA from the Royal College of Art, London, UK (1977). Among many major solo shows he has exhibited at Franz Marc Museum, Kochel Am See, Germany (2019); Boboli Gardens, Florence, Italy (2019); Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, Germany (2018); Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Isfahan (2017); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK (2017); the National Museum of Havana, Cuba (2017); MUDAM Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2017); Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany (2017); Wroclaw Contemporary Art Museum, Wroclaw, Poland (2017); The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia (2016); Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, Germany (2016); Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (2015); Gothenburg International Sculpture Exhibition, Gothenburg, Sweden (2015); Heydar Aliyev Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan (2014); Musée d'art modern de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne, France (2014); National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan (2013); CAFA Museum in Beijing, China (2012); Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (2011); the Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, UK (2011); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, USA (2011); Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden, Wuppertal, Germany (2010); Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2000); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (1995), Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (1991) and Tate Gallery, London, UK (1988). He represented Britain at the 43rd Venice Biennale in 1988 and in the same year was awarded the Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery, London, UK. He has been a Professor at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, France (1999-2009) and Professor at Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf, Germany (2009–present). He was elected a Royal Academician in 1994; received the Praemium Imperiale for Sculpture, Tokyo, Japan (2007); was Awarded the 1st Class Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2012) and was made a Knight's Bachelor in 2016.

## About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 60 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York as well as its new space in Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as other artists of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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