

## Conrad Shawcross: *The Measures of Change*

Exhibition 19 May–10 July 2021

**Victoria Miro Venice**, Il Capricorno, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy



**Conrad Shawcross**, *Fracture (R14C24)* detail, 2020

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

**Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition in Venice by Conrad Shawcross. Coinciding with the opening of La Biennale di Venezia: The 17th International Architecture Exhibition, *The Measures of Change* features a number of the artist's celebrated *Fracture* sculptures, the debut of a new series of *Perimeter Studies* sculptures, and prints from a new body of work, *Studies for The Patterns of Absence*.**

Conrad Shawcross creates sculptures and installations that, imbued with an appearance of scientific rationality, explore subjects that lie on the borders of geometry and philosophy, physics and metaphysics. He has gained a global reputation for extending the possibilities of art in the public realm and in dialogue with architecture.

Conceived of especially for the Venice gallery, this exhibition features the most recent examples of the artist's *Fracture* sculptures – ethereal, complex geometric forms that seem almost to disappear as they rise up and expand – a new sequence of *Perimeter Studies* that explore the geometric properties of the five platonic solids, and a new series of prints inspired by the gallery's waterside location, which highlight the connections between geometry and natural phenomena in the artist's work.

This exhibition features a number of the artist's *Fracture* sculptures in a variety of scales and materials including weathering and stainless steel, and patinated bronze. Borne out of his *Paradigms*, which are an ongoing exploration of the tetrahedron – a four-sided non-tessellating form and being the simplest of the platonic solids is conceptually the symbol of an indivisible unit of matter – Shawcross' *Fractures* are ethereal forms that seem almost to disappear as they rise up and expand. Imbued

with references to the manmade and natural worlds, each *Fracture* contains a central helical stem, a twisting spine that supports a series of branches which in turn support hundreds of triangular leaf-like fragments that dissipate in precise formation.

Explored across various materials, scales and registers of display, the *Perimeter Studies* have been an integral aspect of Shawcross' practice over the past decade. This new sequence of ten works, five structural and five solid, explores the geometry and the geometric properties of the platonic solids – the tetrahedron, the octahedron, the cube, the dodecahedron and the icosahedron. The artist explains, 'The radiant properties of these five solids are very much defined by the fact that they equally divide up the surface of a sphere. What I've done here is pushed and pulled and stretched these surfaces to form these crystalline geometric explorations. They've been rendered here in weathered steel to form this very scientific shelf in which the geometries can be compared and contrasted, and defined against each other, like musical notes within a score. They gain their gravitas and their meaning through their juxtaposition with each other.'

A number of new prints, each a *Study for the Patterns of Absence*, have been inspired by the gallery's canalside location in Venice. Using algorithms to create interference patterns, which are printed in dynamic sequences that move through a chromatic scale of blues, greens and complementary colours, the artist has arrived at a series of works whose optical effects are reminiscent of the shifting reflected light of the sea.

### **About the artist**

Conrad Shawcross, RA, was born in 1977 in London, where he currently lives and works. Forthcoming and recent major exhibitions and commissions include *Escalations*, a solo exhibition held at Chateau La Coste, Provence, France in 2020, where the artist's monumental new permanent commission *Schism (Château La Coste)* remains on view; *Pioneering Places*, a major public art work for Ramsgate Royal Harbour, UK (to be unveiled May 2021); and an exhibition to mark the 800th anniversary of Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire, UK (2020). Shawcross will create a major new public artwork for the Crossrail Elizabeth line at Liverpool Street, London. Titled *Manifold*, the bronze sculpture will be positioned outside the Moorgate entrance of the new station when it opens in 2022.

Previous major commissions and works in the public realm include: *Bicameral*, a permanent commission for Chelsea Barracks, curated by Futurecity, London (2019); *Exploded Paradigm*, permanent commission, Comcast Technology Centre, Philadelphia, USA (2018); *The Interpretation of Movement (a 9:8 in blue)*, HS1 Terrace Wires commission in conjunction with The Royal Academy of Arts, St Pancras International station, London (on view during 2017); *The Optic Cloak*, permanent commission for The Energy Centre Greenwich Peninsula, London (2016); *Paradigm*, permanent commission for the Francis Crick Institute, London (2016); *Three Perpetual Chords*, permanent commission for Dulwich Park, London, curated and managed by the Contemporary Art Society for Southwark Council (2016).

The artist has had solo exhibitions at international institutions including: Yorkshire Sculpture International, Dean Clough, Halifax, UK (2019); Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, USA (2018); the New Art Centre, Roche Court, East Winterslow, Salisbury, UK (2015); ARTMIA Foundation, Beijing, China (2014); MUDAM, Luxembourg (2012); Science Museum, London, UK (2011–2012); Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2011); and Oxford Science Park, UK (2010).

### **For further press information please contact:**

**Victoria Miro** Kathy Stephenson | Director of Communications | [kathy@victoria-miro.com](mailto:kathy@victoria-miro.com) | +44 (0) 20 7549 0422

**Rees & Co** Yasmin Hyder | [yasmin@reesandco.com](mailto:yasmin@reesandco.com) | +44 (0)7791 979839