

Press Release

Chicago sculptor Richard Hunt (1935–2023) given first major European retrospective at White Cube Bermondsey

Richard Hunt
Metamorphosis – A Retrospective
25 April – 29 June 2025
White Cube Bermondsey, London

Press Lunch and Exhibition Tour

With Sukanya Rajaratnam, Global Director, Strategic Market Initiatives at White Cube
Wednesday 23 April 2025
12.30pm–2.30pm

White Cube Bermondsey is pleased to announce the first posthumous retrospective of Richard Hunt (1935–2023), one of the foremost American sculptors of the 20th and 21st centuries. His work is also included in 'Paris Noir' at Centre Pompidou, Paris (until 30 June 2025), a group exhibition which retraces the presence and influence of Black artists in France from the 1950s to 2000.

Marking the inaugural comprehensive solo exhibition of Hunt's work in Europe, 'Richard Hunt: Metamorphosis – A Retrospective' comprises almost 40 seminal sculptures and works on paper, made from the 1950s up until the artist's death in 2023.

Born on the South Side of Chicago, where he lived and worked throughout his life, Hunt had a seven-decade-long career with more than 170 solo shows and over 160 large-scale public sculptures worldwide.

In 1971, at the age of 35, the artist achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first African American sculptor to have a retrospective at MoMA. In 2022, he was commissioned by Barack Obama to create a work for the Obama Presidential Centre in Chicago, which is scheduled to open in 2026.

Working predominantly in metal, Hunt was profoundly inspired by biological science and the natural world. His hybrid sculptures explore tensions that exist between dualities – the natural and the industrial, the surreal and the abstract, the geometric and the organic. Throughout his practice, the artist commemorated those central to the Civil Rights Movement and America's greatest heroes, including Martin Luther King Jr., Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary McLeod Bethune, Hobart Taylor Jr. and Jesse Owens.

The exhibition at White Cube Bermondsey includes early examples of Hunt's iconic 'linear' welded steel sculptures alongside bronze sculptures from the '70s and '80s, wall works

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made in the '80s and '90s, as well as his most recent stainless steel sculptures produced in the last years of his life.

Sukanya Rajaratnam, Global Director of Strategic Market Initiatives at White Cube says: 'Beginning with his early work commemorating Emmett Till in *Hero's Head* (1956), Richard's oeuvre reflects not just the arc of 20th-century sculpture, but also that of a nation aspiring towards freedom in all its forms. It is fortuitous that we open this retrospective on what the First Lady of Illinois, M.K. Pritzker, designated as 'Richard Hunt Day', signifying the immense footprint he left on his state and his country.'

'Richard Hunt: Metamorphosis – A Retrospective' is on view at White Cube Bermondsey, London, from 25 April until 29 June 2025. Hunt's work is also included in the exhibition 'Paris Noir: Artistic circulations and anti-colonial resistance, 1950 – 2000' at Centre Pompidou, Paris, from 19 March until 30 June 2025.

For additional press information, interviews or images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- Richard Hunt (1935–2023) was born in Chicago, Illinois, where he lived and worked. Throughout his career, he exhibited extensively, including solo exhibitions at White Cube, New York (2024); Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas (2024); Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois (2024); KANEKO, Omaha, Nebraska (2022); Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California (2022); Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois (2020–21); Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens (2018); Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Illinois (2014–15); Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News, Virginia (2011); and David Findlay Jr Gallery, New York (2011).

His work is held in over 125 public collections including Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; The British Museum, London; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California; MFA, Houston, Texas; MoMA, New York; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

Hunt is the recipient of numerous awards, among which are the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (1962–63); the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center (2009); the Fifth Star Award from the City of

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Chicago (2014); and the Legends and Legacy Award from the Art Institute of Chicago (2022).

- White Cube's exhibition programme extends across locations in London, Hong Kong, Paris, New York, Seoul and online. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.
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