Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to present Francis Upritchard's *Long Legs Long Arms go Eeling in New Zealand*, 2019-2021 at Independent 2026. The sculpture depicts a pair of elongated figures, one defined by exaggerated legs and the other by extended arms, drawing on the Japanese folklore of *Ashinaga-tenaga*—symbiotic beings who fish in deep water by combining their respective strengths. In Upritchard's interpretation, the duo is shown in an implied body of water, submerged to the neck: their pronounced limbs become adaptive mechanisms in this imagined ecology, allowing them to remain aloft and engage with their environment simultaneously. The long legs maintain elevation above the waterline; the long arms dip below to gather eels, which undulate around the figures' bodies with an almost weightless presence. Across this dynamic composition, the work balances effort and fluidity, suggesting mutual reliance, adaptation, and symbiotic aquatic order.

Upritchard's sculpture also reflects her long-standing affinity with the animated, elongated figures of Quentin Blake's illustrations for Roald Dahl, where playfulness and narrative are inextricably bound.

Long Legs Long Arms go Eeling in New Zealand was originally commissioned for the 2020 exhibition Francis Upritchard: *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Belgium. Conceived in 2019 in Balata rubber, the making of this piece marked a pivotal moment in Upritchard's evolving material practice, as the artist expanded her process into larger scales by building steel armatures padded with bubble wrap. In lieu of traditional water-bath casting for her balata works, the artist deployed cold water applied to the natural rubber's surface, allowing her to modulate pliability and set without full immersion.

In 2021, the work was cast in bronze at Fonderia Artistica Guastini, preserving the surface tactility and formal nuance of the original rubber. This moment coincided with Upritchard's growing interest in works suitable for outdoor and public contexts; the durability of bronze enabled a further extension of her practice into new spatial and environmental conditions.