

MARK HANDFORTH

The Modern Institute, Osborne Street

30 June – 25 August 2018

Preview Friday 29 June, 6-8pm

Clearly, sculptures by definition are stuff; and stuff is really a manifestation of desire, it is the stuff of carefully considered desire. And somewhere within these things lurk all those other more human ideas...despair, hope, force, possibility, failure...and the sculptures become vessels for those too. (MH)

Mark Handforth's third exhibition at The Modern Institute includes five new sculptural forms within the Osborne Street gallery space, which develop from the idea of the garden, and in particular, Handforth's own tropical garden in Miami.

Two large sculptural pieces – 'Jade Garden' and 'Asphalt Snake' – resemble oversized, crumpled and chopped pipes – anthropomorphic in form they search for a point of balance. Disarming one-another through their duality – the physical monumentality of 'Asphalt Snake' almost dissolves into the space through its subtle, mottled pink hue glaze, whereas the opaque glazed layers of paint neutralise the simplicity of the crumpled geometric form of 'Jade Garden'. Allusive but non-representational, these pieces become about the essence of sculpture, as opposed to representations of objects.

Around these forms, two brass, curving lines are carefully balanced on the roof trusses. Vine like, they reach out towards the space between the two larger structures – like drawings in space, they twist and invert, pulling us in. These delicate forms hold the space, occupying it, the hard won balance and line in twisted defiance of gravity.

At the entrance of the gallery is a form of a cat, an illuminated neon light representing the flaming matchstick balanced diagonally on its head. Based on a small possession of Handforth's, 'Matchstick Cat' is collaged from strips of painted and untreated wood, wall-based it resembles a shadow that embodies the spirit of the space.

Handforth utilises everyday forms within his work, exploring the possibility that a single object can exist simultaneously on sculptural, functional, and social levels. Light and its immaterial qualities are often an essential medium in Handforth's works, highlighting the contrast of "weight" between it and the other elements they are made of, and substantially transforming the way we perceive them. Handforth's sculptures and installations make a continual reference to the urban landscape and to familiar elements within it, its essential features, which come to mind and which are immediately recognisable.

Mark Handforth (b. 1969, Hong Kong; lives and work in Miami) grew up in London; he studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and at the Städelschule in Frankfurt.

Selected solo exhibitions include: 'Smoke', Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy (2016); 'The Excentric Circle', The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2015); 'Drop Shadow', Studio des Acacias, Paris (2014); 'Rolling Stop', Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2011); Kunstnernes Hus (with Urs Fischer and Georg Herold), Oslo, Norway (2009); Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2007); Kunsthaus, Zurich (2005); Le Consortium, Dijon (2003); and UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2002).

Handforth has completed several major public art commissions including: 'Dr Pepper', ICA Miami (2017); 'Sidewalk Island', Governors Island, New York (2014-15); 'Electric Tree', Miami (2012); 'Twisted Lamppost Star', Place de la Porte de Bagnolet, Paris (2012); 'Wishbone', Hessel Museum of Art Bard College, New York (2011); 'Texas Tom', Rachofsky House, Dallas (2007); and 'Lamppost', The Public Art Fund, New York (2003).