

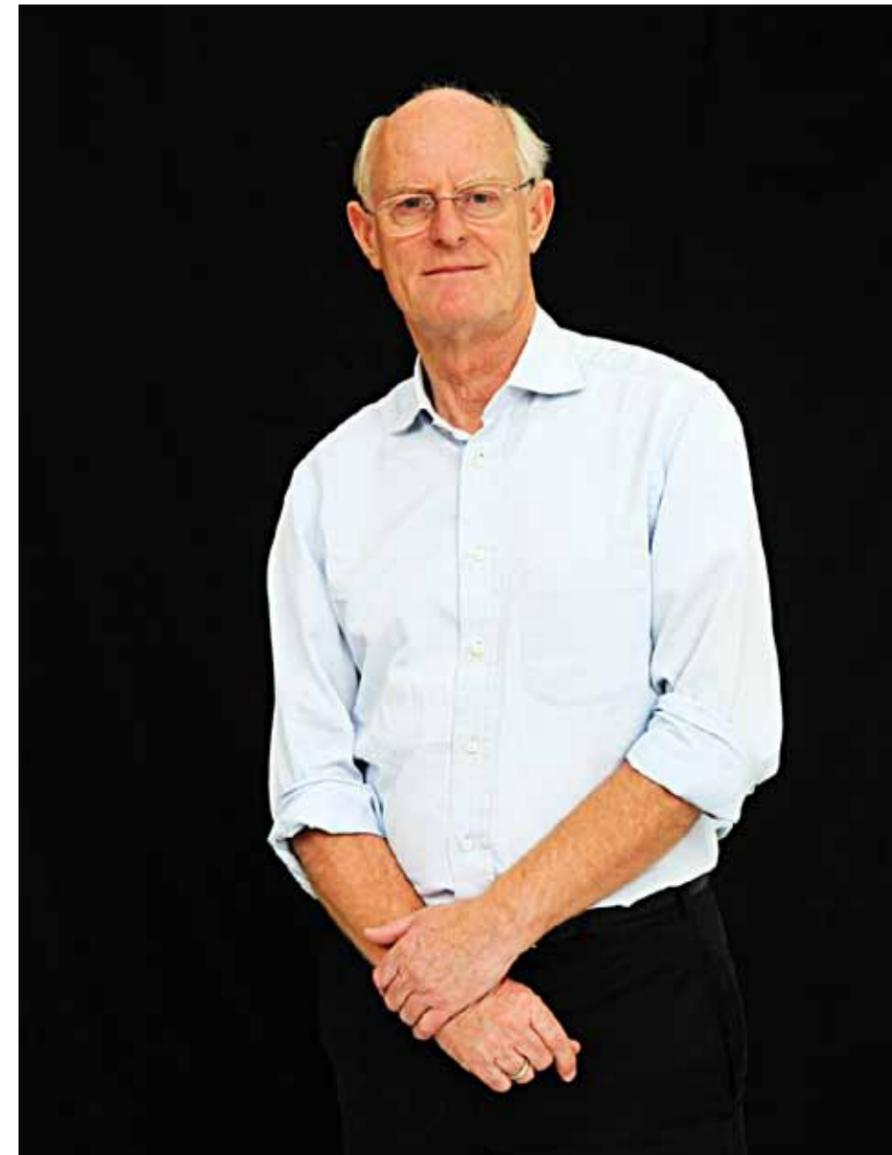
MATERIAL MATTER

AN INTERVIEW WITH TONY CRAGG

RAJESH PUNJ



Tony Cragg
Parts of the World, 2015
 200 x 133 x 66 cm, Painted Aluminium
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery



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 Tony Cragg
 Photography: Mart Engelen
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg's new works appear as these attractive alien interventions that are as well suited to the set of a science fiction film, as they are "sculptures as stage" as he described them. Brightly coloured contortions of wood, metal and glass that have been perfectly manipulated

by man and machine represent for Cragg a kind of beauty that is closer to nature and as far removed from man's modernist ideals as his practice allows. Reacting to the atmosphere every single twist and turn of the organic and artificial elements of his works are regarded by the celebrated British sculptor as a moral mutiny against the hardened line and fixed edge that defines everything else. As his new sculptures challenge our understanding of the physical constitution of an object, with its inner workings concealed by its encasing. Focusing on the foundation of a form Cragg invites us to scrutinise over the anatomy of our living and working environment, as we are surrounded by technological apparatus that are operative whilst being unobtrusive. By which the slick simplicity of everything new has rendered an object's complexity invisible. Yet as much as Cragg's contemporary works appear as aesthetically appealing as objects of new technology, his is a concern for the 'sub stance' of something as he explains it, in order we see within materials the anatomical structure of a more impressive world. Further demonstrating, by virtue of his belief systems, of his wish to examine the natural energy of an object's existence, as much as he is interested in the physical form itself. Deciding that, "Anything that resists gravity requires energy. So trees and people grow up, and with our own body we fight for the entire length of our lives, and the day we stop fighting we just get absorbed by it. That is why gravity is called gravity, because



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Tony Cragg
Industrial Nature 2015
 220 x 366 x 190 cm, Painted Aluminium
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg
Manipulations I & II 2015
 110 x 115 x 120 cm, 142 x 120 x 130 cm
 Bronze
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

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it pulls you into its grave. It takes your energy, your living energy to a zero state." Seeing "sculpture as a vital extension of us, a vital science, and a sign of vitality of our own existence."

Having organised and ordered everything for much of his adult life, as art stacked, shelved, packed and placed, Cragg has since absorbed new technology as a way of making works that are impossible to comprehend and accomplish by hand alone; and it is either an irony or an evolution that sees his sculptures being applauded now for their visual sophistication, when his approach in the 1970's and 1980's was much more elemental, by virtue of his selecting and intentionally rearranging a

series of domestic ready-mades into creative configurations. In the interview determinedly speaking of his replacing the rudimentary with something more rigorous, "With my work I am not interested in chaotic gestures. I am no longer interested in throwing colour at the wall or braking plates, I have gone a long way from that. I don't really want to do those things even though I know they produce nice effects. I want to keep my hands on the reins of the formal structure inside the work, and by doing that I can influence the outside appearance and my relationship to it. I am not really that happy when things change without my controlling them."

Side-by-side the early forms with

his modern manipulations, Cragg concentrates on what is current, replacing the stack of broken bricks and cracked and cut furniture for the whipped up energy of his contemporary bronze and wood works; as he sees sculpture as an opportunity to understand perfection from the inside out. Most striking of all of his new works are the tarnished coloured aluminum sculptures *Industrial Nature 2015* and *Parts of the World 2015*, that might well appear as reconstituted car body parts. Which for Cragg lead us into a parallel sphere of structures within sculptures; which he explains as seeking "a clear rational basis for an internal structure to the thing I am making." Propositioning "we couldn't even cope with ultimate

reality, we have no idea what ultimate reality looks like. It may not look like anything." As though our relationship with the real lies in our grasp of the incomprehensible.

Interview

Art&Deal: *What I was keen to do by way of introduction was to talk about the work here, and then if it requires we can go back to my original questions; in order for me to understand from your perspective the sculptures you have between the two galleries for your new Lisson exhibition.*

Tony Cragg: It is quite big for a gallery exhibition, but obviously gallery exhibitions are of new work. So it represents the work that I am concerned with right now. I think there are over twenty-five works here in a dozen different spaces when you add them all up. And there is one large space here that is not as easy to work with, which is at

a little bit of a right angle to the rest of the building. I put four sculptures in there, which are all my latest works. The first one is *Sail 2016*, and maybe even the title suggests something. A sail is a very rational thing because it is full of parabolas and forms that are obviously to do with wind pressure. That work itself consists of thirty-four elliptical columns, vertical, and they are all inside one another. The intention was to make something that looks on the surface quite organic but is also totally rational, because at any cross section you are able to see a series of ellipsis that run through it. So I think that is a good starting point for the exhibition because it is one of the fundamental aspects that I have concentrated on. I want an internal structure to the thing I am making, which I build up in certain ways.

A&D: *So there is a kind of architecture to how you construct your works, is that how you would describe it?*





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Tony Cragg
Hedge I & II 2016
 103 x 100 x 60 cm, 126 x 110 x 86 cm, Steel
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg (Left)
Migrant 2015
 220 x 150 x 147 cm, Bronze
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg (Right)
Ginko, 2015, Wood
 280 x 245 x 74 cm
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

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in a similar vein to an older work Stackfrom 1976. Which is a bad habit I have had for over forty-five years, of stacking things up as ecological structures. But the problem with stacking a work like Spring is that there are passages that were much too thin, and that wouldn't easily adhere to each other. So in the studio I scanned the sculpture in to be able to create cross sections, which become bigger throughout the work; and that way I created a greater optimal strength. And for that reason that sculpture is a lot about the way material works.

A&D: There is a real science to what you are doing.

TC: No I wouldn't say that, all of the material if you leave it to itself... look at the moon it just becomes dusty flat, while on our planet there is a lot of stuff going on. With living things anything that resists gravity requires energy. So trees and people grow up, and with our own body we fight for the entire length of our lives, and the day we stop fighting

we just get absorbed by it. That is why gravity is called gravity, because it pulls you into its grave. It takes your energy, your living energy to a zero state. That is what that is all about, sculpture is a vital extension of us, a vital science, a sign of vitality of our own existence.

So it has to be well made, if you don't make it well it will have to be dismantled and on the dump. Another work in that room is Migrant 2015, which is the latest version of a work that I first made in 1984. Whereby I took a known thing, a vessel and moved it through space to create another form. So the idea being I have never been interested in copying a natural model. I never made the figure it just doesn't interest me. It is there already so I could only ever make an inferior model of it. It was the sadness of art from the nineteenth century, and there is something terribly melancholic about it, because they were doing their absolute best to make a sculpture that resembled a person; and it



TC: Absolutely you could say that, but I see it as an 'internal structure' that is within everything. Like within our own bodies. We are not chaotic we don't have ears everywhere; we are carefully constructed. Even the most complicated things and material are well constructed. It is not just chance. It is not wildness and chaos. So it is part of our own existence, it is about our being human.

We are stuck with this thing for thousands of philosophical years, because we have the potential to be logical, systematic and rational about things. But on the other hand we also add a great deal of emotional input into our lives. We pride ourselves for our intellectual

abilities. Evolutionarily that is what has given us an advantage on this planet. But ninety-five to ninety-nine percent of our decisions are emotional. We are able to decide how we look, of how we dress, what you eat, how you spend the rest of our lives without emotion. So even in a carefully constructed work like Sail it has an internal structure to the extent that I feel takes on an emotional quality. And that is the characteristic of a lot of a work I make. Sometimes the structures are very different, which means that every surface and every point on the surface is not there by chance. It is there exactly because it has to be there. It can be a few centimeters in, it can be a few centimeters out, but it is exactly where it should be. We can

be in or out, but it has consequences for the entire form, and that is similar to the other works in that room.

Spring 2015, which is big work with the working title Inca, is a slightly more complicated work. With a lot of the work, I make it in wood initially. I use plywood, layering it up because it leaves me with an enormous amount of freedom to change the form. I can build it up, and if I don't like it take it down, change bits, cut it out again, and keep changing it until I have the sculpture I want to make entirely upon my own subjective needs or desires. And Spring is slightly different because the first one that was made had layers stacked up,

didn't. It is more like a hologram. If they could have had a hologram they would have had a hologram, then they would have had a copy of what they wanted; nature is more complicated. And also at the same time what that did was to show their obsession with copying anatomy, which lead them (artists from the nineteenth century) to copying and using specific materials to do that. And those materials were the best materials to copy things in. They didn't take on any risky materials. So that then became an idea in peoples' minds that still exists, of a skill attached to making sculpture. Now we realise, most of us, that sculpture is not about copying nature, in its essence it is about how material and material form affects us. And that is an enormous affect because everything we have in our head has come from the material world.

We have seen, heard, felt, smelt or tasted the material world. All of the terms we have in our minds, in our brains, all of the synaptic firings, the patterns we have in our brains, come from our experiences of looking at the outside world. With language every word is grounded in the material world, so human beings make disastrously boring things out of material. Like flat, white, straight edged, boring surfaces. Rectangular, circular, cylindrical, silly geometries, stupid geometries. Boring, with no colours. So we have to react to an enormous impoverishment of form on this planet. We cut down a forest and make a car park. It is always a disaster, it doesn't matter what we do. We are incapable because we cannot make anything as complicated as nature; nature has had a long time to evolve. It has obviously had billions of years to make things, so of course it is very complicated. But in the hands of human beings we will turn this planet into a desert. It will become a desert.

A&D: *Is that as a consequence*

of our whole adventure with Modernism?

TC: Well it is just the human era. It is what humans do.

A&D: *Control, design, determine.*

TC: Well not even that. It was only when the planet became populated by plants that produced oxygen. There was no oxygen on the planet originally so oxygen was a waste product of plants, and gave us and animals and bacteria possibilities to come in. So we'll just keep going until we have done our thing. It's not quite true, there are other aspects to the human period.

Anthropocene is a different period of the planet, so we were very adaptable. And we have a different consciousness about it, so maybe we can come up with a different result. Maybe we won't have to die like the trilobites. I love the trilobites, they were everywhere on the planet. They were the most successful species. And you get fossils and trilobites in all possible positions. It's like the Karma Sutra trilobites. And they were huge, and some of them were incredibly big.

A&D: *Going back to one of your original points, you talk very eloquently of the 'emotional' component of our automated lives. If the emotional supersedes a design for life, how do you encompass that in your work? How do you make the emotional physical?*

TC: You do, inevitably. There are no materials; there is nothing you can look at to allow you to understand an emotional experience. I think that was something that I maybe... you don't have to know you are having an emotional experience. That is the other thing, you are not conscious of it, it is entirely effecting.

A&D: *But also what is interesting is of your endeavor to capture something ephemeral, entirely*

abstract and make it more permanent. There is an incredible sense when I walk through the show of objects and arrangements that are not 'regular.' That are determined as much by detail as they are by abstractions, 'emotions' and 'sensations'. Are you constantly moving between what is physical or real and our mental state, or our response to what is in front of us?

TC: You have just used two fundamental terms there. When I was a student we would have terrible dogmatic rows about the figurative and the abstract. Everything you see is at the same time figurative and abstract, which is dependent on the way you want to look at it. If you say this is your figure, and you qualify that by saying that you are five feet ten tall, that is already abstract. Five-ten is already an abstraction, and we can't get away from that. It is completely crazy. It is just a stupid convention of art. But to get back to your point, there are always dichotomies and dualities to our own nature. As I said, the emotional, logical and rational, subjective and spiritual, corporal, bodily, whatever; is in everybody, in all of us. I don't know but I have a fluxing mind, I assume it is like that for most people, confirmed by my wife. Whereby I can never make decisions. I know I can make decisions, I am actually quite quick at making decisions, but it requires a going backwards and forwards; of going through the possibilities before something is decided. So I am always asking 'Do we think this? Do we think that? Do we really think this?', so there is never a rock hard position. We really are like (Arnold) Isenberg's Quondom; we can never actually decide where we are at any given moment. Because we generalise, 'I think that, or I think that', but for the most part of our lives we know certain things, a little bit; but beyond the horizon of what we know, we have to believe. And actually most of our lives, most of



Tony Cragg
Sail, 2015
280 x 149 x 51 cm, Wood
Photography: Charles Duprat
© Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery



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Tony Cragg
Early Form, 2014
 72 x 64 x 62 cm, Bronze
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg
Willow, 2014
 70 x 69 x 75 cm, Wood
 Photography: Michael Richter
 © Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

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back at history; there were very few pictures. All this painting going on, it will all rot thank God. So in the end if you go back all the artworks we know are bits of stone and bone. Stuff that could actually make a form, and most of those forms are about their spiritual relationship to something, be it fertility, sexuality, nutrition, to survival strategies, and all those kinds of things. They have acted as the fundamentals of art, the practical things we use as common denominators to make things. That's why they are so awful, so boring and incredibly repetitive, and sculpture is the total opposite of that. There are no lowest common denominators about things there. Things are complicated, and they do remain for better or worse. You walk past Hyde Park and shudder at the awful sculpture they have there. If ever there was an argument for the ephemeral it's those sculptures. God it makes me so angry.

A&D: *Are your sculptures a reaction to everything 'out there' that you don't approve of?*

TC: Probably, when I started making work in the late 1960's and into the 1970's, there were a lot of things going on; people living in skyscrapers dropping bombs on people living in bamboo houses, and lots of awful things everywhere. And when I grew up my father designed some of the electrical parts for aircrafts in lots of different places, so I went to several schools and we kept moving. Living in totally strange places, on council estates that were not built properly, there was no road, no pavement, just mud. So you start to accumulate a sense of dissatisfaction, not bitterness but you realise that everything is transient, impermanent. Can you imagine this place; it was only a couple of hundred years ago that this

our existence is based on what we believe.

Because we are in a time when awful people are fighting and going to war, dividing themselves up for what they believe. I am amazed that two people could possibly believe the same thing, because in that area of belief there are no proofs. So you could just believe anything. The whole idea of being on the back of a tortoise; the universe as the tortoise, why not? If that's what they want to believe, it doesn't make any difference. It doesn't have to be true does it to be believed? So what we are actually doing is making things, making art; I mean art is about being. Who makes the images that you believe

in? How do you start to imagine you have a belief system? You believe the chair is not going to collapse? So we are constantly in a state of belief on millions of different levels at any given moment. But in order to do that we have to have some basis for it, and somehow we conjure that up. How do you prove your beliefs? How do you revise your beliefs? How do you deepen and intensify them? Make them more relevant, whatever? Who provides images for that? So that is something religion has always done, and why other religions forbid it, because they don't want that you start making images that fool around with your beliefs. And in a funny way this is not about sculpture it is more about the ideal. Because it does

not belong in the natural world and it is not part of the industrial world either. It is not a practical necessity like everything else that is being made around us disastrously. It is in a little category of its own if you like.

A&D: *There is something wonderful contradictory in the notion of your making works of such permanence, when everything is in a constant state of flux.*

TC: Well every sculpture is just a stage.

A&D: *Do you see them as 'permanent stations' as you have said?*

TC: They are stations that look





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Tony Cragg
Willow 2016
123 x 110 x 110 cm, Wood
Photography: Michael Richter
© Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg
Ginko 2016
82 x 135 x 30 cm, Bronze
Photography: Michael Richter
© Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg
Skull I & II 2016
97 x 75 x 40 cm, 150 x 104 x 68 cm, Bronze
Photography: Michael Richter
© Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

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convention, because it becomes more much about the form than the material. And when you get out there what you are confronted with is the form of nature. We are not confronted with nature in this room, but when you step outside you are confronted with either an urban setting or something more rural.

What interests me much more is the natural confrontation, maybe not even confrontation, of being together with the natural being. And you notice that nature has had billions of years to make stuff, and it is very very good at it.

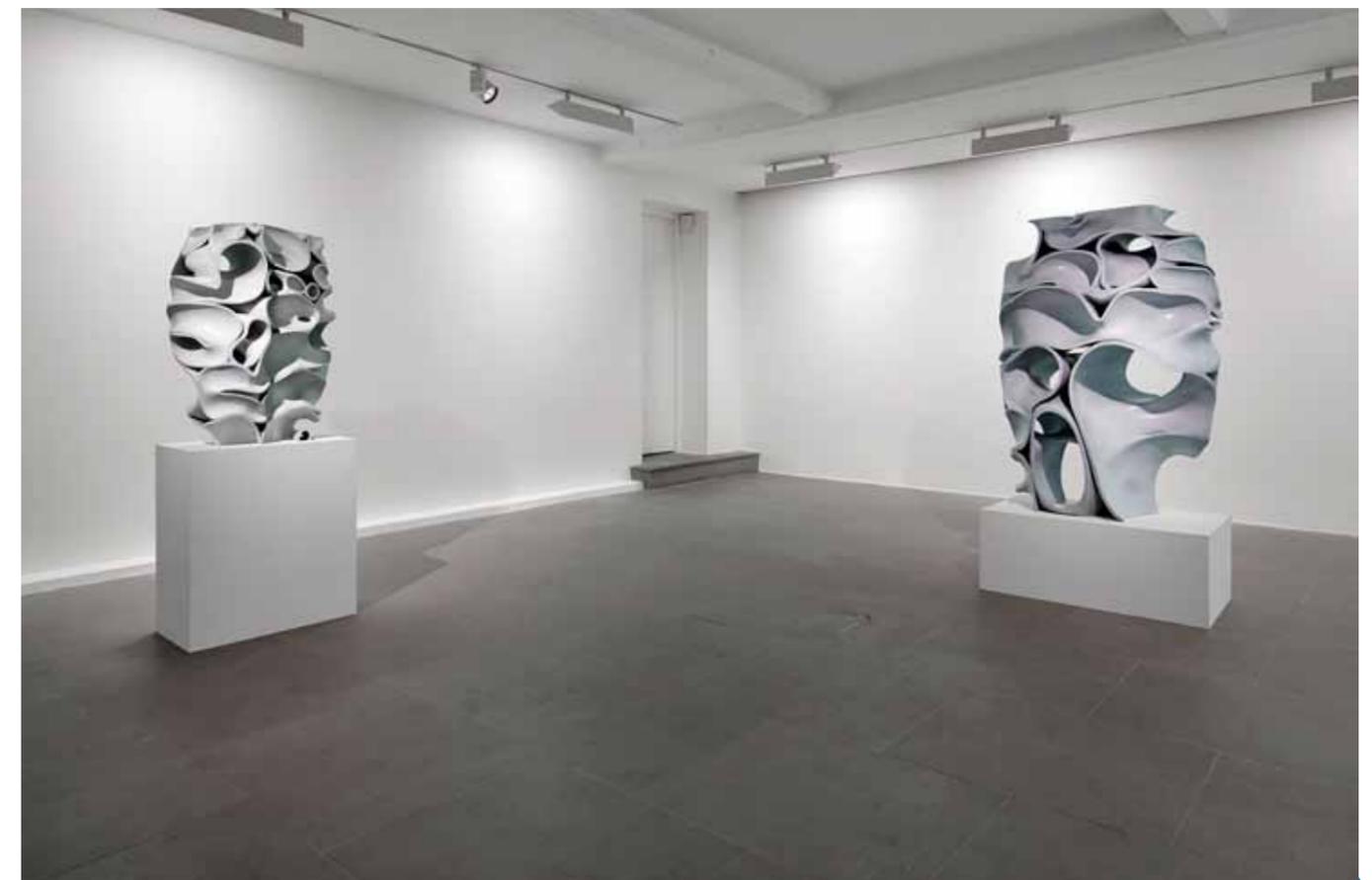
A&D: Are the works in dialogue with the outside world?

TC: Absolutely it is a dialogue with nature, so as I said you can make things. Most of my work I make in wood to start with, producing and applying layered wood because it is easier for me to do so. You have got to be able to make and model stuff.

And then it either gets made bigger or is cast in other materials, and that is the only way. You cannot put wood out there. Every now and then somebody tries to their peril. Two years and the work is rotting already.

A&D: Natural decay and the effect of entropic energy upon materials, do you have a desire to engage with that?

TC: Again with my work I am not interested in chaotic gestures. I am no longer interested in throwing colour at the wall or braking plates, I have gone a long way from that. I don't really want to do those things even though I know they produce nice effects. I want to keep my hands on the reins of the formal structure inside the work, and by doing that I can influence the outside appearance and my relationship to it; and that is how I work. I am not really that happy when things change without my controlling them. It is not a nice way to put it but when things are in



place (where we are now) was a field, a meadow with a nice little river running through it.

A&D: I immediately think of Wuppertal, Germany, and of your studio there; is that an attempt to detach yourself from this kind of gentrification?

TC: No I don't think it is any better than here; the same thing, still the same culture. There is not much difference between Germany and Britain, Everyone in Britain thinks Germans behave in a strange way. Wuppertal is nearer to London than Newcastle is. Calais is nearer to there than Bristol.

A&D: You have created a Sculpture Park in Wuppertal, which triggers

a question about your work being in-situ, off-site, while at the same time in the gallery space, and of how you determine that? Of how you decide upon a work's location in relationship to the weight of space around it?

TC: Well that determines itself. Sculpture in the nineteenth century was just about the figure, and of using certain materials to replicate it, and since then there has been an enormous evolution in the last one hundred and twenty years of people realising that sculpture is about the way that all material affects us; so it has become a study of the material world. And that is why it is so relevant. That's why it is so important because science tells you how things work, but it is only

art that gives material meaning. And it also provides the vision for science in some ways. Artists and poets walked on the moon before a scientist got there. There is always something, but when it comes to going outside there are not that many materials that you can put outside, and I am convinced that the oldest materials are the best.

Because that's why they have naturally existed for so long. Bronze, which is many of thousands of years old, is the best material to put outside, more or less. Iron rusts away, steel rusts and is problematic, stone you can use but not a great deal; and that's it. Plastics rot away in the sunlight. So it is kind of limited, and the thing about outside is that there is a different kind of



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Installation view:
Ginko 2015, Wood, Migrant 2015, Bronze, Lost in Thought 2015, Wood
 Tony Cragg
 Lisson Gallery, London
 1 October – 5 November 2016
 © Tony Cragg, Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Tony Cragg
Stack 1976
 200 x 200 x 200 cm, Mixed Media
 © Tony Cragg, Courtesy Lisson Gallery

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A&D: *As a form Industrial Nature appears as this alien shaped free standing structure, made up of a series of manipulated aluminum plates. How does the works creative damage relate to the kind of perfection you referred to before?*

TC: What happened with the green work *Parts of the World*, the more important of the two works standing, is that I previously made a work entitled *Hardliner 2013*, which I thought was a very good work, and *Hardliner* was really about the internal structure of a work. It was without the nice curves and clean finish, focusing entirely on the structure of the sculpture. That is very often what I am interested in, of the 'substance' of the appearance of things? What is the substance? What is carrying the form and the appearance of material? And I followed those shapes and decided to leave it open. So the green work *Parts of the World* I thought was

fantastic. It has a feeling of xylem, of cells, organs, of cross-sections, bio-botany and biology. And the red work entitled *Industrial Nature* is exactly the same, a different mock with a similar rectangular block. It is a little bit longer, with a square section and longer. Slightly canted, and all I did was literally extend the shape. I literally drew onto polystyrene those wings and nuts and leaves, and built them on and had them cast and welded onto the block; that was it. That was how the work was made. It took me a long while to make. It has been an incredibly long and expensive journey to have those two works made.

A&D: *So a work like Industrial Nature how many years is that in the making?*

TC: I would have liked to have that ready at the beginning of this year, but it has taken me about a year and

the studio they are about as good as they are going to get. Because the minute they start to move to the door they are in a state of decay.

A&D: *Do you seek a state of perfection with your work before you relinquish control of them?*

TC: Well perfection that is a very good question, because of course that is the point we are at now in our culture. Nobody believes in perfection do they? They want it to be cruddy. Everyone is afraid of perfection and solemnity now. It is the last thing that anybody can cope with. (English sculptor) Henry Moore would be unthinkable today, and as a young artist I really didn't appreciate his works. He was an older artist. But when you look at his work now, his main idea was that he

wanted to make the 'best sculpture'. What an amazing/crazy idea, he wanted to make the best sculpture. Which is a very non-contemporary idea, 'I am going to make the best sculpture, the best painting'. But it was his thing to do that, which is totally impossible today. It has to be 'grungy' or 'bleakly physiological' when it isn't that.

A&D: *Going back to your show here, can you explain a little more about works like Industrial Nature and Parts of the World, and of their aesthetic disorder?*

TC: I made *Hybrid 2015* in the back room here and have already talked about the work *Migrant*. Those works have been through all sorts of phases. Some that are straight forward, others more complicated,

with a lot of internal movements, baroque. Reducing everything into simple spaces, simple outer forms, cylinders, blocks, resulted in an enormous amount of internal activity, which I wanted to reveal. So I made sculptures inside of sculptures. Stupidly you could not see the inner ones, which took a long time to make. That led to sculptures with holes running through them so you could see more of the inside; leading to a breakthrough. Which altered the relationship of the vessels on the ground with space. The sculptures didn't have a natural relationship with the ground they were lying or standing on, they were in the air and I produced totally different coloured versions of that. They became two hyper complicated works using technical means.



a half to make, something like that.

A&D: *And with a work like that, is its completion a trigger for more works of a similar nature? It can't be that you stop there.*

TC: Yes everyone asks where your ideas come from. Of course working on ideas or whatever, there is no direct relationship between good ideas and good art, some people have good ideas and make awful art. So I am not so interested in ideas but I mean the most influential thing for me is the work I have just finished. That is what is in my mind, and for the last year or two I have had a good period in the studio where I have had lots of things that I feel are moving on and that I am moving through. Once I make progress I feel like I have understood something and will see how that develops. Did you see the glass skulls (Glass 2016) downstairs? I am in love with those. They are the best things I have made. When I see the show I am quite happy. I am looking forward to going back to the studio because of those (the skulls), because of the hedges. The Hedge, 2016 looks like a thing from the outside. Like a blob, but when you get inside a hedge it is a world within itself, of nests and insects. So that was the idea of the hedges. So the 'hedges', 'the skulls', and 'the industrial forms', all these provide an incredible energy for me to move on.

A&D: *Going back to curating and context, how do you see your works in relation to one another; when their isolation and independence proves one of their strengths? Moreover how do you 'curate' the works into the space? And by bringing a whole body of works together do they infringe upon each other or are they able to influence a better understanding of your practice as a whole?*

TC: Yes they do (infringe) but it's a rare coming together, they have never been like this before and they

will never be seen like this again. Because the exhibition I have done is, with minor exceptions, exactly the exhibition I sent to the gallery. I did a sketch of it months and months ago and it has not really changed since then. But they group up anyway. It is a competition in itself with congruity and some little contradictions; so tensions are building. Like everything else I am subjective, art is subjective, the exhibitions I make are subjective. There is no ultimate logic to anything.

A&D: *With your intention for greater control over the creative process, I wanted to understand movement as you encapsulate it within your work?*

TC: Well it is very simple, there are three trillion cells sitting in your chair, everyone of them in a constant state of movement; and in one cell thousands of chemical exchanges are going on in an instance. Things can be very still while movement and energy envelope them. The sun is a ball of energy in the sky with a billion atomic explosions. Anything that assumes a form is carried by complicated energy, it is never static. It requires incredible energy to do that. We send a message through our body to our spine eight times a second so that we don't topple over. So if the message doesn't come, if you have had too much to drink, or you are tired, or you die; you are on your way down and you give into gravity. Gravity is taking your energy away, and the ground is very pleased, that's it. As I have said that's what gravity is, that which takes you into the grave. Taking you to zero energy. All of these things are very natural.

A&D: *Which makes me think it is about how we see things.*

TC: It is. We make everything happen in our heads, there is nothing else. We couldn't even cope with ultimate reality; we have no

idea what ultimate reality looks like. It may not look like anything. Ultimate reality is something that we are nowhere near. The image we have of each other is something we have just made up, that our brains make up for us as all of the simple things. If you understand psychology of perception, you are aware of how much the brain is doing to make that image. From every surface we are just getting the light reflected off of it, and with that information you can make something of it; that's it. But again that is not a constant that changes with everything else. You can change with your experience. That's why it is important to make a material world and use nature, because that is what makes our heads. This is what makes our thoughts and our emotions. It is the stuff around you. You know that material affects you, so why be horrible about it, why make such stupid decisions because of the economy. Of course we are forced into it because of survival strategies, but we have to work against that. It is not about aims of perfection because that is something else. That is way down the line, but to get beyond the point we are at that's for sure what we should be doing.

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*Tony Cragg
We, 2015, Bronze
190 x 59 x 57 cm
© Tony Cragg; Courtesy Lisson Gallery*

