

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JON BUCK

TELLTALE FORMS

PANGOLIN
LONDON

9 May - 16 August 2025

Pangolin London presents *Telltale Forms*, a solo exhibition by the ever-inventive sculptor Jon Buck. Charting over four decades of his career, this exhibition intertwines Buck's early explorations in sculpture with his most recent works. Through his distinctive use of humour, colour, pattern, and form, Buck delves into profound universal themes - what it means to be human, our connection to nature, and the cultural narratives that both shape and define us.



Throughout his career, Jon Buck has sought to address fundamental questions about humanity's place in the world: "What do we feel about ourselves as human beings, about our relationship to each other, to other creatures, and to the wider environment in general?". Buck's work transcends the immediate visual appeal of contemporaries like Keith Haring, inviting deeper engagement through multi-layered meaning and thought-provoking themes.

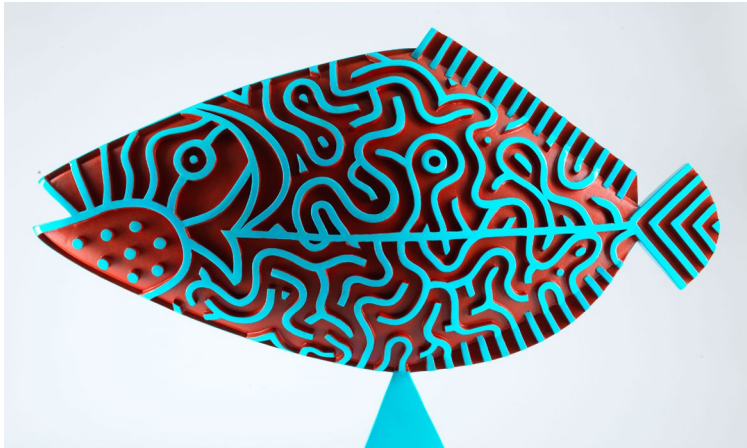
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From his formative years studying the figure as a reaction to the 'Caro-esque minimalism' of the 1970s, to his transformative visit to the Pech Merle prehistoric caves in 1994 - where he encountered 25,000-year-old prehistoric art - Buck's journey has been one of continual discovery. These pivotal moments have shaped his understanding of art as a process inseparable from the cultural evolution of life itself.

Buck's ability to blend the personal and the universal is at the heart of *Telltale Forms*. His sculptures seamlessly merge his own memories with broader cultural and evolutionary narratives. For example, he reflects on two significant moments from 1974: painting identification plaques for the aviaries at Bristol Zoo where he worked, and the groundbreaking discovery of the 3.2-million-year-old fossil "Lucy" in Ethiopia, which transformed our understanding of human evolution. These moments, both deeply personal and historically significant, converge in Buck's work as metaphors for our shared existence in the Anthropocene.





Jon Buck's childhood spent near the River Avon also left an indelible mark on his work. Sculptures such as *Ancestor Bird* and *Go-Between* reflect his early admiration for the natural world and its complexities. *Go-Between*, a pivotal piece in his career, revisits his early resin heads, but enriches them with intricate patterns inspired by prehistoric cave markings and doodles - imbuing the work with an extraordinary tactile quality.

In the 1980s, Buck rebelled against the dry formalism of the time, injecting colour, humour, and sensuality into his work. Inspired by his years working in a zoo, his figures evolved animal alter egos, creating a bold new visual language. Playful yet profound, these works explore our evolving relationship with nature while maintaining an underlying seriousness about sculptural language and humanity's impact on the natural world. This concern deepened in his previous exhibition *Time of Our Lives* (2018-2019), where Buck explored biodiversity loss through arks, bells, and preserving vessels, each adorned with intricate relief motifs. Marking a shift towards more organic patinas, this body of work celebrates nature's richness while warning of its decline.

Telltale Forms is both a reflection on the past and a vision for the future, presenting works that respond to ideas of cultural evolution, scientific discovery, and mythology. Works such as *Noah and the Raven* (1988) reinterpret archetypal imagery, connecting ancient stories to modern concerns. In contrast, pieces like *Beware of the Dog* (2025) and *Red Queen V* (2020) engage with contemporary scientific theories, including





Darwinian domestication and the Red Queen Hypothesis. These sculptures remind us of the delicate balance between nature and human intervention, provoking questions about our future as we navigate an era of rapid change.

Buck's unique skill lies in layering diverse influences into his sculptures. Drawing inspiration from ancient art, anthropology, and figures like Marija Gimbutas, the archeologist, he weaves scientific narratives with cultural metaphors. While informed by the rigour of evolutionary science, his work expresses these ideas through tangible, emotive forms. Through the medium of art, Buck expresses the profound human emotions that underpin our understanding of nature and existence. His sculptures are alive with glyphs, patterns, and symbols that suggest stories waiting to be discovered. These motifs, whether etched into the surface of the bronze or boldly embossed upon it, evoke humanity's innate need for storytelling. Buck calls this process "aesthetic co-evolution," where the interaction between artist and viewer creates new meaning.

Telltale Forms celebrates Jon Buck's extraordinary ability to bridge the personal and the universal, the ancient and the contemporary, the scientific and the mythological. This powerful retrospective invites us to reflect on the stories that shape us, led by a sculptor unafraid to challenge humanity's relationship with nature and its future.

A catalogue will be available on request.

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Images: Jon Buck in his studio, 2019; *Go-Between*, 1999, Bronze, 55 x 29 x 32 cm, Edition of 10; *Ancestor Bird*, Bronze, 33cm; *Recalling the Dog*, 2015, Bronze, 246 x 294 x 46 cm, Edition of 5; *Part of the Puzzle*, 2012, Bronze, 59 x 71.5 x 15 cm, Edition of 10; *Noah and the Raven*, 1988, Bronze, 61 x 57 x 24 cm, Edition of 5; *Red Queen V*, 2020, Bronze, 30 cm high, Edition of 10; *Ship to Shore*, 2007, Bronze, 300cm high, Unique, on display in Newfoundland Way, Portishead, Somerset.