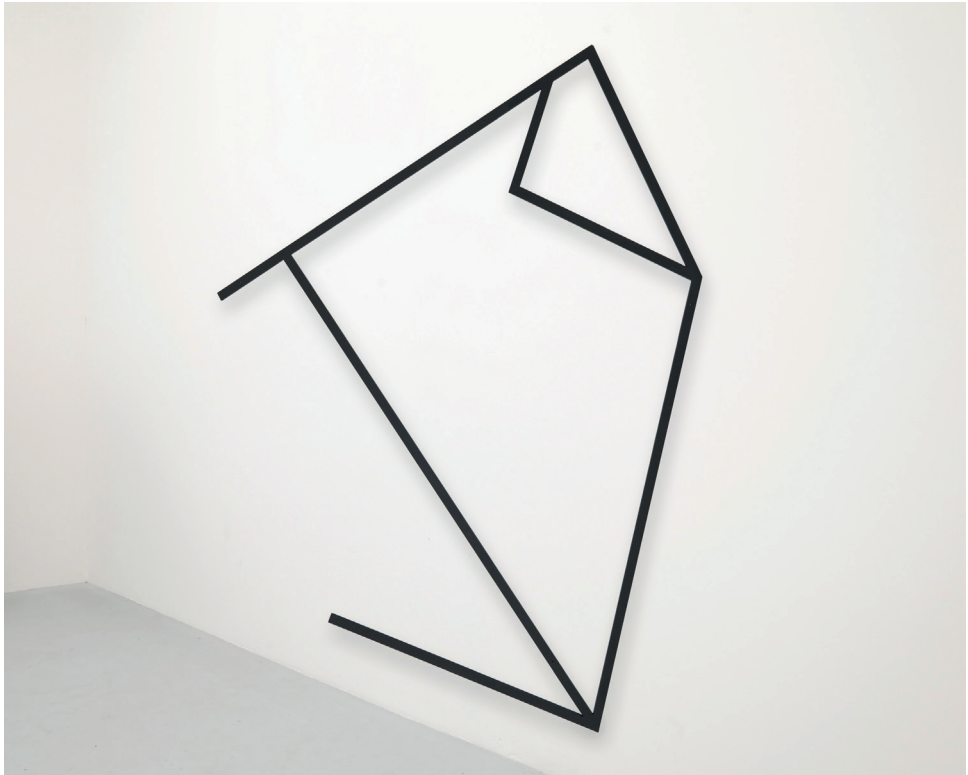


Tucker briefly considered making wall-reliefs in the early 1970s, but did not follow up the idea, although the huge preparatory drawings in one-point perspective from later in the decade seem the result of a similar impulse. The Berlin reliefs are cut into the gallery wall; those in London are constructed from aluminium, painted black, and are fixed to the wall. In both sets an initial impression of stark simplicity gives away to unexpected complexity, based on an ambiguity between the visual and the physical. It is not immediately apparent that the pieces in Berlin are cut into the wall, and even after this is understood, it is sometimes easy to forget that we are not just looking at a disembodied image. Yet – and this is the crucial bit – both sets of reliefs function as sculptural presences within the space they are shown, at least as much as they read as images illusionistically confined to a vertical plane. The reliefs demonstrate two fundamental features of Tucker's art. First, the capaciousness of his sculptural imagination, able to realise itself even with basically pictorial means. Second, the extent to which this imagination, for all its deep concern with touch and the haptic, is also bound up with vision, and beyond this, with the visionary.

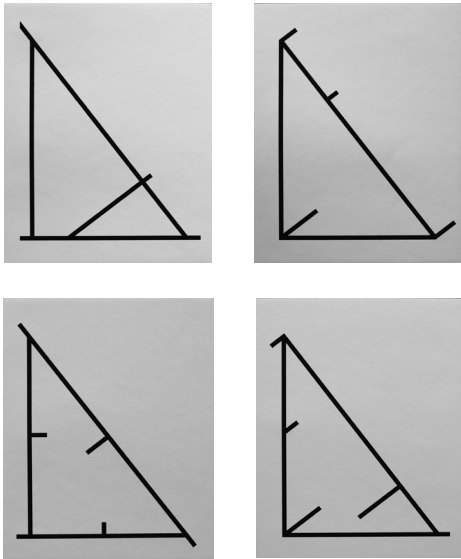
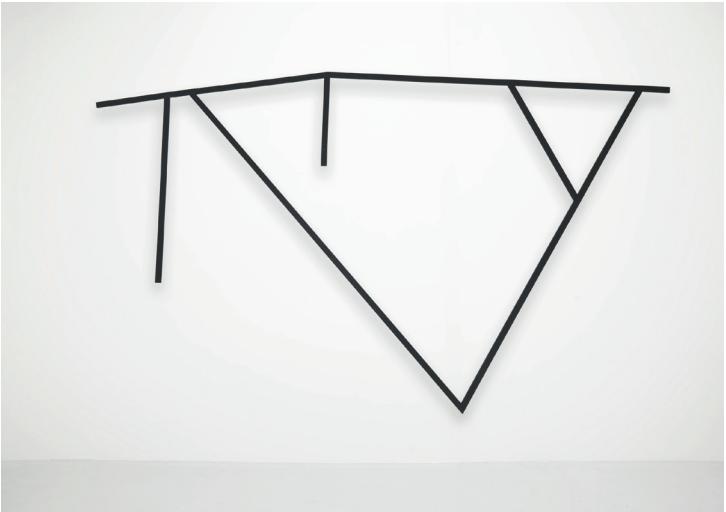
SAM CORNISH



(LEFT)
Cat's Cradle II
2020, Aluminium
Unique
559 x 240 cm

(ABOVE)
Porte II
2020, Aluminium
Unique
336 x 299 cm

(RIGHT)
Porte VI
2020, Aluminium
Unique
520 x 300 cm



(ABOVE)
Cat's Cradle III
2020, Aluminium
Unique
546.5 x 222 cm

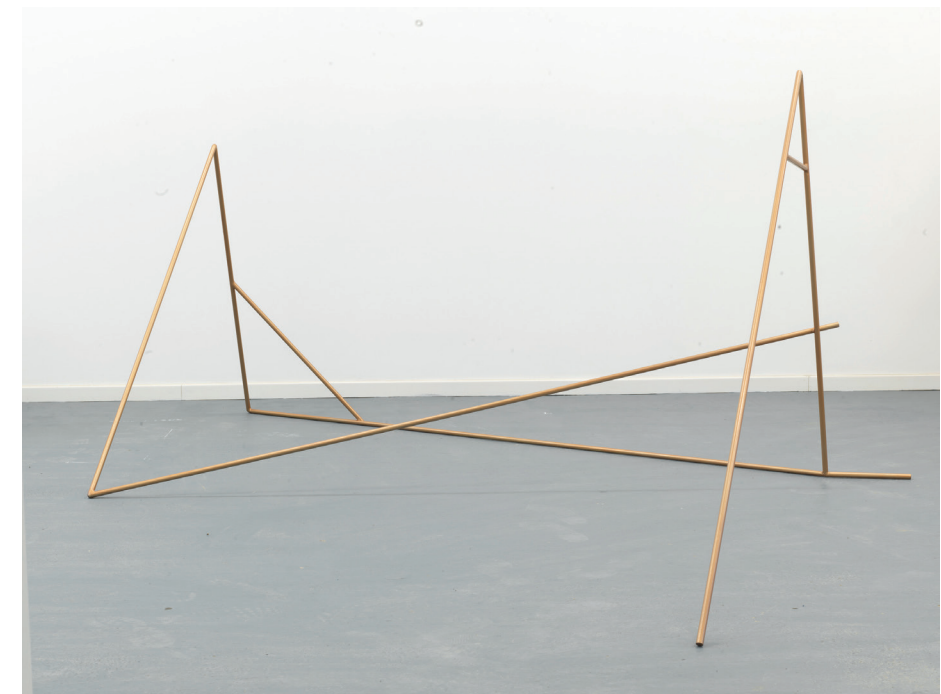
(LEFT)
Angel I - IV
2021, Etching
Edition of 20
39 x 33 cm each

WILLIAM TUCKER

WALL RELIEFS & DRAWINGS 1970 - 2020

Working on his first abstract sculptures in the early 1960s, William Tucker drew full-sized outlines on blackboards with chalk. He was searching for a meaningful silhouette, a simplified, organic and enigmatic image, abstract but not devoid of allusions to the world. The sculptures that followed these drawings were cleansed of any hints of scruffy chalk *pentimenti*, but expressed the transition from flat image to three dimensional form in other ways. Some sculptures juxtaposed a plane with modelled form in plaster or fibreglass; others involved simple folds, that thrust them away from the floor they were laid upon, and up into the surrounding space. Often Tucker worked with partial symmetries, sometimes suggesting reflections or shadows and implying an equivocal existence on the cusp of two and three dimensions.

Tucker has never abandoned a commitment to a sculpture which is both image and three-dimensional form, even if this productive paradox has played out in ways unimaginable from the perspective of his early work. In some senses the assertively inchoate sculptures he made since the early 1980s seem to renounce the very idea of drawing. His sculptures' ever-shifting contours and prodigious three-dimensionality – blatant yet somehow full of subtlety – seem opposed to long-held cross-cultural associations of drawing with control, foresight or the limitation to a flat sheet of paper.



Yet during these years Tucker's drawings and mono-prints have become an increasingly important and independent strand of his work. Most striking is his ability to make drawings that do not just parallel the motifs of his sculpture, but, without moving beyond a literal two-dimensionality, seem almost directly sculptural, and fully monumental.

Wall reliefs made in 2020 for exhibitions at Pangolin London and Galerie Buchmann in Berlin, are both an expansion and something of a missing link in the story of Tucker's engagement with drawing. The reliefs see him returning to his interlinked series of the early 1970s: the *Shuttlers*, *Cat's Cradles* and *Portes*. These works explored the idea of 'drawing in space', that had been a central part of modernist sculpture since the early twentieth century, and which had become an even more important part of post-war art. Tucker's contribution to this tradition involved emphatic, minimal structures that gave openness surprisingly sculptural qualities of mass, density and ground-ness, although in very different ways to the interaction of sculpture and drawing in his work of the 80s and beyond.

(FAR LEFT)
Cat's Cradle IV
1971, Painted
stainless steel
Unique
124 x 244 x 173 cm

(ABOVE)
Study for Tauromachy
2007, Charcoal on paper
Unique
84.5 x 119 x 4.5 cm



(LEFT)
Monoprint VII
1987, Unique
83.5 x 64 cm

(BELOW)
Monoprint I
1987, Unique
83.5 x 64 cm



(RIGHT)
Subject & Shadow
1962-2017, Aluminium
& fibreglass
207 cm tall
Edition of 3

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