

MARKS ON THE EDGE OF SPACE



INTRODUCTION

Although Ann Christopher's work thrives on its power as a mysterious abstract presence, her imagination is fuelled by a freewheeling range of sources in the observable world. By the time she has fully absorbed them, Christopher ensures that they can no longer be detected in the purged forms of her drawings and sculpture alike. But the photographs and 'found objects' preserved in her studio testify to the stimulus they provide while she develops her own work in progress.

At one extreme, Christopher has pinned to the studio wall a newspaper photograph of Concorde touching down at Heathrow after its final flight from New York. This poignant image does justice to the streamlined strength and gracefulness of an exceptional machine. Christopher has been beguiled by aeroplanes - the shape of their wings, the noise of take-off and even the smell of jet fuel - ever since she visited Heathrow as a child. Concorde became an obsession, leading her at one stage to take one of its astonishingly swift flights to JFK Airport. Yet its phenomenal speed cannot be detected in Christopher's sculpture, which prefers to emphasize stillness rather than indulge in any neo-futurist love of dynamic motion. The shape of wings, on the other hand, does seem to play a role in a large work called *Silent Space* hovering on the studio wall. To be cast in white resin, so that it acquires an alabaster quality, this impressive sculpture shows Christopher at her most minimal. Viewed from the front, it appears to be flying towards us like a stealth bomber. But its lack of volume lends this haunting form a ghostly air as well. It is a sculptural distillation, far removed from any hint of representational fidelity to the machine world.

Paradoxically, the shadow cast by this sculpture appears more solid than the object itself. Christopher attends very closely to shadows. Convinced that their importance cannot be overestimated, she likens them to marks made by the sculpture. The shadows could even be regarded as drawn versions of the sculpture, for Christopher has become increasingly eager to explore the interrelationship between drawing and three-dimensional form. A set of twelve drawings, executed during one intense month of prodigious and focused work in a French studio near Albi, bears the collective title *Marks on the Edge of Space*. Those arresting words have also been adopted as the title of her Pangolin exhibition, for Christopher

regards drawn and sculptural work as indissoluble parts of the same overall enterprise. Moreover, her use of cut paper - attached to these drawings yet at the same time curving out and away - makes us appreciate just how sculptural its presence can be.

For Christopher, drawing is the most direct and personal activity - the closest way to approach the centre of her vision as an artist. On one wall in her studio hangs a quotation from the psychoanalytic theorist D.W. Winnicott, asserting that "it is in the space between inner and outer worlds, which is also the space between people; the transitional space; that intimate relationships and creativity occur." Just how much Winnicott's words mean to Christopher is evident when we look at her set of six hand-cut etchings. As if to echo Winnicott, they are called *The Space Between*. And they explore, with admirable economy, the tension created when solid forms are divided by openings, or find their contours interrupted by shapes thrusting outwards with an almost seismic force.

Sometimes, the projecting forms in these etchings - particularly the second and third in the series - are reminiscent of birds' sharp beaks. Among the 'found objects' in her studio is a pair of delicate rooks' feet, along with a bird's skull where the beak opens and shuts if we manipulate it. Christopher sometimes accompanies her husband Ken Cook on his bird-watching expeditions. But she is equally fascinated by plant-life. Her studio even contains a piece of grass discovered in France, stuck on paper to highlight its essential structure. She has also preserved dead leaves peeled off a palm tree at Kew Gardens, and their projecting forcefulness may well have contributed to the vigour of a new bronze sculpture called *The Dark is Equal to the Light*.

Christopher likes casting her work in bronze: it is, after all, the easiest metal to colour, and far softer than stainless steel. Hence the notable lack of aggression in *The Dark is Equal to the Light*. The texturing on its surface adds to this tactile allure, as well as evoking the ruggedness of rock formations. Yet vulnerability is detectable in her sculpture, too. Although *Sense of Place* asserts an erect position, a fissure can be detected running down its centre. Christopher is very aware of imminent disintegration, and one of the photographs on her studio wall shows ice cracking dramatically at the North Pole.

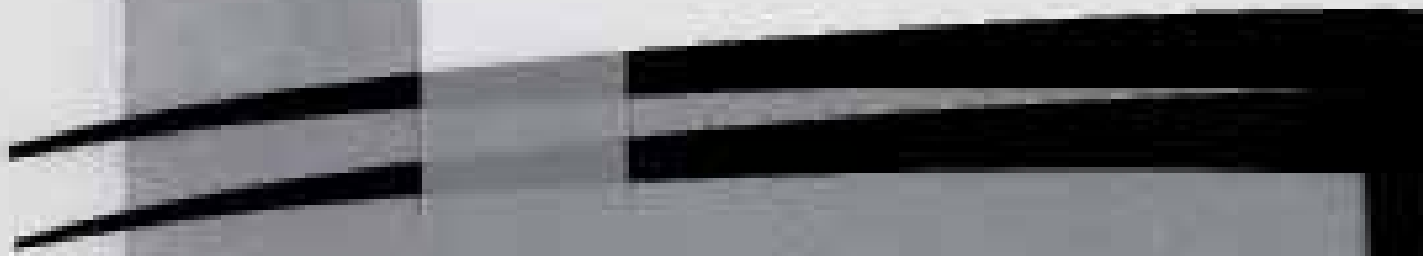
Even so, her art is alive with an unpredictable richness of diverse meanings. Vigorous lines can be found slicing through much of the bronze work, and she ensures that they are machine-cut. Savouring the tension between the organic feel

of a hand-made object and this machined-in linearity, she sets up a dialogue between roughness and the precision which metal enables her to achieve. The sharpness of the machined elements strengthens her sculpture, almost as if someone had commanded it to stand up straight.

In the end, though, Christopher plays off an assertion of substance against a very contrasting involvement with evanescence. The semi-opaque mylar sheets which she deploys in *Marks on the Edge of Space* give the drawings beneath a tantalising aura of indistinctness. And its blurred mystery, so different from the robust vertical palpability asserted in many of her bronzes, also stimulates her. As an artist who works in very intensive bursts, she often pauses before summoning up the all-important determination to concentrate on finding a productive path. This process could be identified as occurring in Winnicott's "transitional space", and Christopher is continually energised by grappling with a fundamental conflict between the ever-shifting appearance and disappearance of things.

One of the photographs on her studio wall was taken when she roamed through Venice on a misty morning and found that nothing was visible. Far from generating a sense of negation in Christopher's mind, it nourished her imagination on a profound level. Staring into the Venetian mist accorded with the notion of looking for the way ahead. And this quest lies behind two interrelated sculptures called *In Search of Light*, both made from perspex, resin and plastic. Each of these works seems bent on discovering a radiance strong enough to add the vital extra dimension provided by a shadow. So they fly out towards us, powered by the belief that light alone will bring them more fully into being.

RICHARD CORK



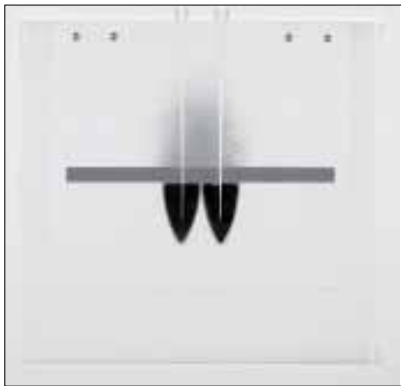
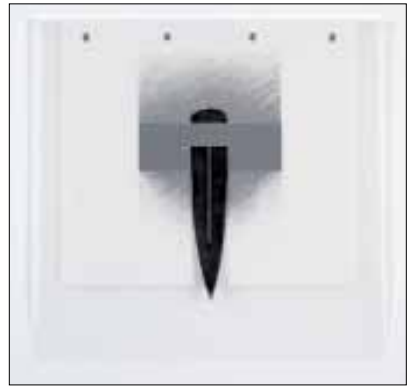


CATALOGUE



BEYOND ALL DISTANCE
Bronze
Edition of 6
99.5 cm high







MARKS ON THE EDGE OF SPACE 1-12

(Top left 1-6; lower left 7-12)

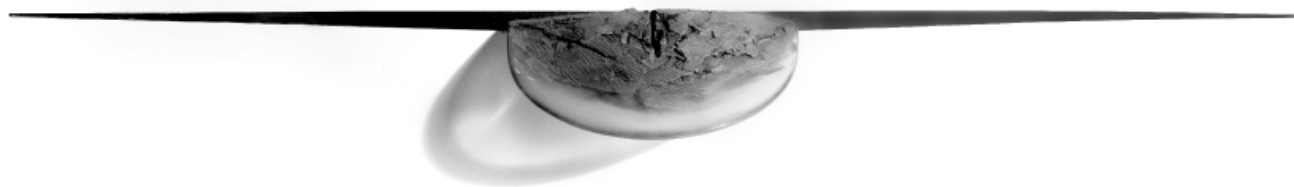
Conte, graphite, mylar & aluminium

Unique

460 x 470 mm framed



BROKEN SILENCE
Bronze & polymer
Edition of 9
25 cm high
Wall hung



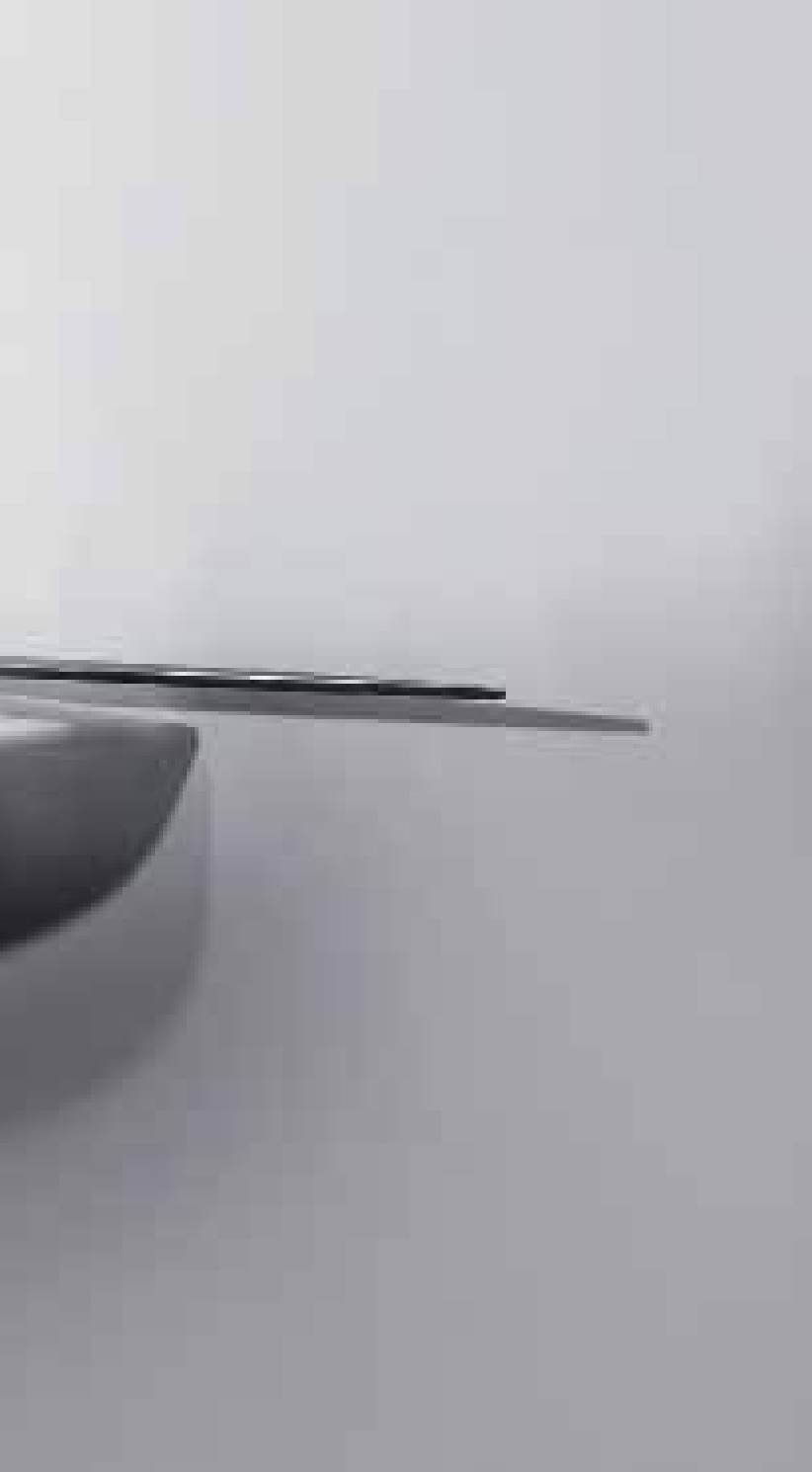
IN SEARCH OF LIGHT I
Perspex & Resin
Edition of 4
8 x 70 cm
Wall hung



IN PLACE OF SHADOWS
Bronze
Edition of 9
48.5 cm high







SILENT SPACE
Resin & Aluminium
Edition of 5
6 x 158 cm



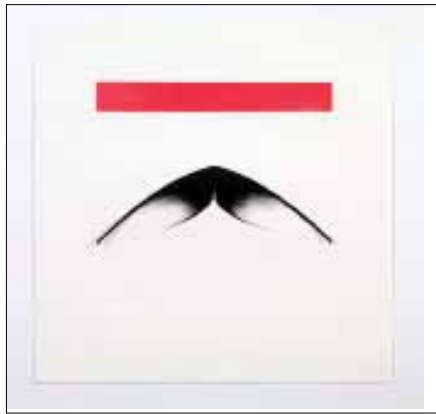
THE DARK IS EQUAL TO LIGHT

Bronze

Edition of 9

75 cm high





THE SPACE BETWEEN 1-6
(From Far left 1-6;)
Hand finished Etchings
Edition of 20
470 × 460 mm framed

SUSPENDED LINE
Sterling Silver
Edition of 20
12 cm long





WHITE LIGHT
Sterling Silver
Edition of 9
1.5 cm high
Wall hung

IN SEARCH OF LIGHT 2
Perspex & resin
Edition of 4
28 cm high
Wall hung







SENSE OF PLACE
Bronze
Edition of 9
43 cm high



SHADOW LINE
Bronze
Edition of 9
48 cm high

SILENT LIGHT
Stainless steel
Edition of 9
10 x 37 cm
Wall hung



ANN CHRISTOPHER

- 1965/66 Harrow School of Art
First visit to Greece
- 1966/69 West of England College of Art - BA Sculpture
- 1968 Won 1st prize in Harrison-Cowley Sculpture Competition
- 1969 First exhibition at Mignon Gallery, Bath
- 1971 Prizewinner in Daily Telegraph Magazine, Young Sculptors Competition
Received Peter Stuyvesant Award
First exhibited at the Royal Academy, London
- 1972 Sculpture presented to Daily Telegraph Young Writer of the Year
Elected Associate of the Royal West of England Academy
- 1973 Received Birds Charity Award
Commission for Bristol Literary Dinners, Publisher of the Year Award
Arts Council Award, Thornton Bequest
- 1976 South West Arts Award
- 1977 Arts Council Grant
Chantrey Bequest purchase
- 1979 Commission for Bath City Council
- 1980 Elected Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA)
Contemporary Art Society purchase
- 1983 Elected Royal West of England Academician (RWA)
First visit to New York
- 1985 Commission for Society of West End Theatre, The Laurence Olivier Awards 1985 - 87
- 1987 Visit India
- 1989 Elected Royal Academician (RA)
Commission for Grosvenor Square Properties
Ann Christopher 1969-89 Dorchester County Museum and Art gallery
- 1990-01 Three industry awards for ATE International
- 1992 Elected Fellow of Royal Society of British Sculptors (FRBS)
- 1994 Awarded RBS Silver Medal for Sculpture of Outstanding Merit
- 1995-97 External assessor of sculpture at City and Guilds Art School, London
- 1996 Frampton Award for sculpture in a public place
Curated A Sculptors Choice Royal Academy, London
- 1997 St Cuthbert's Mill print award

- 1997 Otto Beit Medal for Sculpture of Outstanding Merit
First working visit to Menorca
- 2001 Studio residency in France
- 2003 Visit Iceland
Studio residency in France
- 2004 Medal for British Art Medal Society
Visit Madagascar
- 2005 Visit Uganda with Ruenzori Sculpture Foundation
Visit Southern India
Short listed for the Charles Woollaston Award RA
- 2006 Visit China
Quarter leader in Drawing Quarters a practise based Symposium, UWE, Bristol
- 2007 Visit Borneo and Kerala, Sth India
Studio residency in France
- 2009 Senior co-ordinator of RA Summer Exhib. London
Studio residency in France
- 2010 Currently lives and works near Bath, UK
Represented by Pangolin London

EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE

- 2010 ** Marks on the Edge of Space Pangolin London 27 Oct – 4 Dec 2010
Crucible sculpture at Gloucester Cathedral (Pangolin) 1 Sept – 30 Oct
Scultura Internazionale a Racconigi 2010 Racconigi, Italy 6 June – 10 Oct
Material Lightness curated by Carol Robertson – Flowers Central, London
Sculpture Promenade Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge - March 2010 – Jan 2011
- 2009 In the Mix II Pangolin London
- 2008 Sterling Stuff -2 Pangolin London
- 2007/8 **The Power of Place Sir Hugh Casson Room, Royal Academy
- 2006 The Drawing Room Royal West of England Academy
- 2005 Artists of Fame and Promise Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames
- 2004 Discerning Eye 2004 (invited by Norbert Lynton) Mall Galleries, London
Small sculpture, Redfern Gallery London
** STILL LINES Jubilee Park, Canary Wharf, London
- 2003 30th Anniversary Exhibition: part II Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames
BLOK Canterbury Sculpture Festival Canterbury

- 2003 4th Triennial Sculpture Exhibition (invited + selector) Royal West of England Academy
Sterling Stuff Sigurjon Olafsson Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland
Art Palm Beach Florida USA (Redfern Gallery)
- 2002 Sterling Stuff Gallery Pangolin, Chalford
Thinking Big: Concepts for 21st Century British Sculpture Guggenheim, Venice, Italy
Five Women Artists Redfern Gallery
Artists of Fame and Promise Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames
Royal Academicians at Insidespace Royal Academy
Art Palm Beach Florida USA (Redfern Gallery)
- 2001 Concept Editions Goodwood Sculpture Park, Goodwood
Starting a Collection Art First, London
- 2000 Art 2000 Islington (Cyril Gerber)
Glasgow Art Fair Glasgow (Cyril Gerber)
Geneva Art Fair Geneva, Switzerland (Redfern Gallery)
Sculpture 2000 Gallery Pangolin at Milton Keynes
Sculpture in the Garden Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames
Works on paper Redfern Gallery, London
- 1999 **Solo exhibition Courcoux & Courcoux, Stockbridge
The Shape of the Century at Canary Wharf, London
**Six Academicians (works on paper) Royal West of England Academy
The Shape of the Century City of Salisbury
Winter Exhibition Cyril Gerber Fine Art, Glasgow
- 1998 Mixed Exhibition Redfern Gallery, London
Summer Exhibition Courcoux & Courcoux, Stockbridge
Small works by Academicians Royal Academy, London
- 1997 Exhibition of Royal Academicians Works Courcoux & Courcoux, Stockbridge
**Solo exhibition Redfern Gallery, London
Black, White and Colour - works on paper by members of the Royal Academy
Sharjar Art Museum UAE
(toured Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain National Museum)
- 1996 Adelson Galleries inc. New York
Monumental 1996 Foundation Helan-Arts, Bornem, Belgium
Summer Exhibition Redfern Gallery, London
A Sculptor's Choice curated by Ann Christopher, Royal Academy, London
- 1995 Summer Exhibition Redfern Gallery, London

Annually at Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London (since 1971)

RCA Secret Royal College of Art, London (annually since 2001)

** indicates solo exhibition

RECENT COMMISSIONS INCLUDE

2007/8	BEYOND THE EDGE edition of 12 46 cm bronze sculptures for Kings Place, London
2004	IN THE SKY THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST medal for British Art Medal Society
2002	THE EDGE OF LIGHT 2.2 m bronze for a private site nr Albi, France
2001	SHADOW LINE 48 cm bronze for Goodwood 'New Concepts'
	LINES OF TIME 19 cm multiple edition in stainless steel for Wingfield Arts, Suffolk
2000/01	TOWARDS THE SKY 5.5 m corten sculpture at Portishead for Crest Nicholson
1999	STILL LINES 2.5 m stone and stainless steel sculpture incorporating water at St Peters Hospital, Bristol for the John Pontin Trust
1998	THE SILENCE OF SHADOWS 3.3 m bronze for a private residence in Great Barrington, USA
1997	SILENT SHADOW 2.4 m bronze sculpture for Linklaters & Paines at 1 Silk St, London
1996	CUTTING LINE 4.9 m Corten steel sculpture for Spen Hill Properties sited at Marsh Mills, Plymouth
1994	BEYOND SILENCE 2.3 m bronze sculpture for a private site in Washington DC, USA
1993	LINE FROM WITHIN 4.6 m bronze sculpture for Royal West of England Academy sited in Castle Park, Bristol

WORKS IN COLLECTIONS

ATE International, London	Bristol Schools Arts Services
Bristol University	British Museum, London
Chantrey Bequest, London	City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery
Contemporary Arts Society, London	Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea
Goodwood Sculpture Park	Granville Holdings Plc, London
Grosvenor Square Properties, London	Gruss & Co, New York, USA
Harrison Weir Collection, London	Linklaters & Paines, London
Nef-Evelyn Stefansson, Washington DC	Prior's Court School, Newbury
Royal Academy	Royal West of England Academy
John Creasey Museum, Salisbury	Sharjar Art Museum UAE
Talboys Bequest, Bristol	World Wide Business Centres, Philadelphia
Private collections in Europe and USA.	

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ANN CHRISTOPHER:
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PANGOLIN LONDON
Kings Place, 90 York Way, London, N1 9AG
T: 020 7520 1480
E: gallery@pangolinlondon.com
W: www.pangolinlondon.com

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