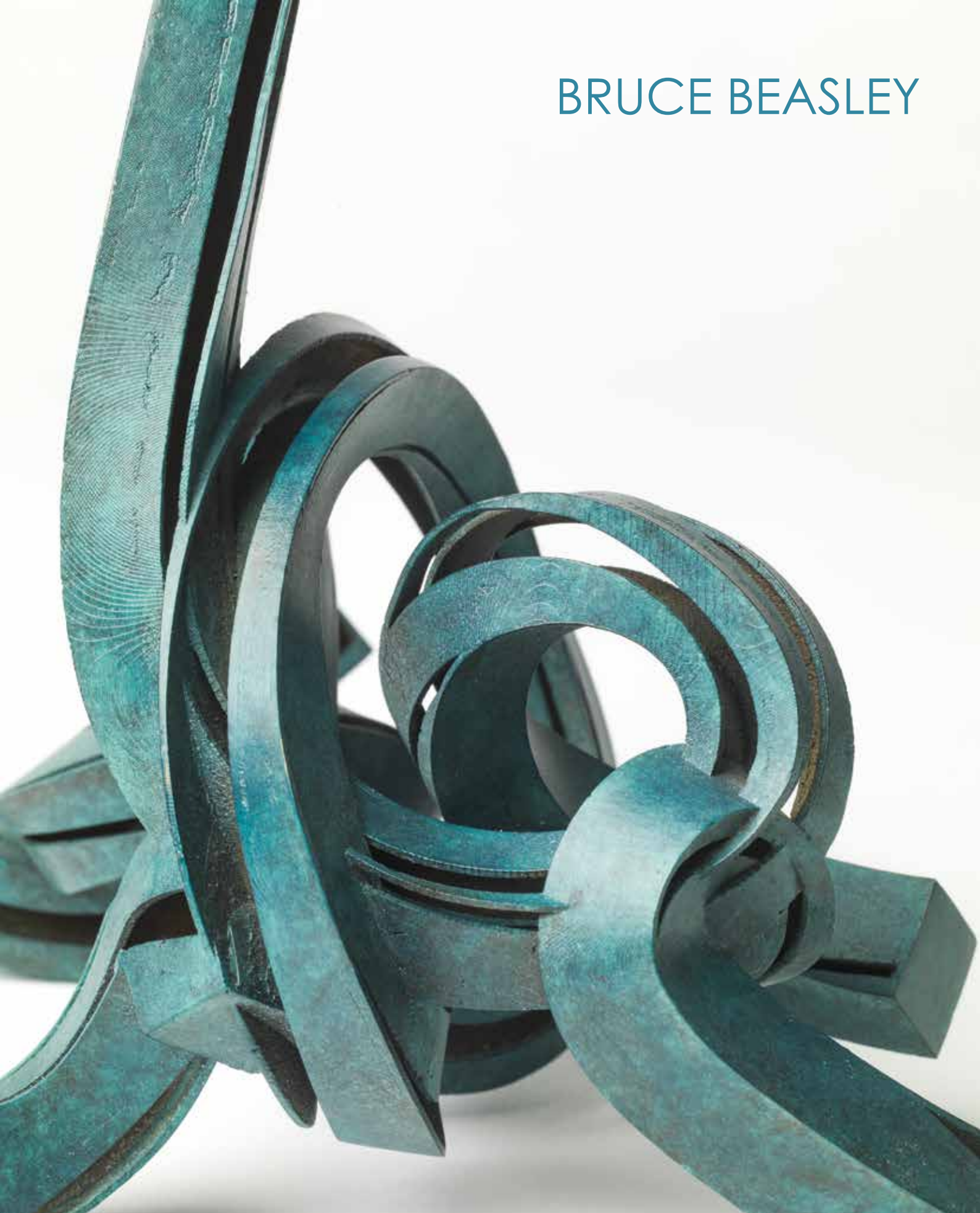


BRUCE BEASLEY





(LEFT)  
Bruce Beasley  
*Aeolis 6* (detail)  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 8  
36 x 15 x 10 cm

## FOREWORD

From the outset, Bruce Beasley established himself as an important sculptor. In 1962 he became the youngest artist to enter the permanent collection of MOMA, New York, with the acquisition of *Chorus* (1961). During the previous year he had contributed work to the same museum's *The Art of Assemblage* exhibition where his work was referred to by Philip Linhares, Chief Curator at Oakland Museum, as seminal. In 1963 he was awarded the purchase prize at the Paris Biennial.

Building upon these early successes, Beasley has continued to surprise with his diverse output and, in the process, he has created an outstanding body of work. This has resulted in numerous exhibitions throughout the world and strong representation in major private and public collections across North America and beyond.

Although he may not want to be described as a West Coast artist, this is where he hails from and where he lives and works. In Oakland he converted dilapidated premises in an unfashionable area of town into a studio, extensive workshops and a family home. He demonstrated a strong commitment to the local community and has now extended his space to include a sculpture park.

From Oakland he has criss-crossed America and travelled to many countries – organising major exhibitions of his work, creating public and private commissions and, through conferences and public debates, helping to promote a greater understanding of art and the contribution it can make to society. This manifested itself strongly through his long term involvement as an active and influential Board member of the International Sculpture Centre (ISC).

A love of materials, breaking down barriers, experimentation and technology have always been central to Beasley's practice. As a student he started to weld broken fragments of cast iron into sculptures. At the University of California he worked with the late Peter Voulkos to build the Garbanzo foundry. This artist-led cooperative foundry helped to revive an interest in bronze casting in the USA. In the late 1960s he moved from opaque surfaces to explore transparency, beginning to cast small sculptures in acrylic. Through experimentation and careful planning, and against all the odds, he found ways of working with acrylic on a large scale, which in 1970 resulted in the making of *Apolymon*, a major public sculpture for Sacramento.

This investigation into transparency emphasised his concern to bridge the technical and aesthetic aspects of making sculpture, along with a willingness to take risks, as he constantly pushed the boundaries of materials and, most importantly, his personal visual vocabulary. A fascinating side result to this was how through his art he created the so-called *Bathyspheres* for the Harbour Oceanographic Institute in Florida, USA which in 1986 assisted in retrieving the Challenger Space Shuttle from the bottom of the Atlantic ocean.

In the 1980s Beasley reassessed his use of metal in sculpture and began to work with stainless steel and aluminium. The surface qualities became increasingly important, along with the angles and shapes designed to reflect light, all helping to enhance the sculptural complexity of the works. In some, stainless steel forms were created to absorb and mirror the immediate environment. However, this seemingly more formal approach lost none of the fluidity of earlier works. These geometric shapes eventually morphed into cube-like intersecting forms. The cube became a central feature of his work, acknowledging his extensive understanding of art history and a debt to modernism, but also to the geometric structure found in organic forms and nature, as identified by Fibonacci, D'Arcy Thompson and others.

Using three-dimensional computer software has enabled the artist to model forms without the constraints of gravity, eventually resulting in spectacular and unusual upright and horizontal sculptures, which are then cast or fabricated in bronze. Through further experimentation, Beasley created new subtle surface qualities with delicate patinas, which at times have the quality of the work of a water colourist, whose palette has been influenced by shades of the landscape.

*Advocate IV*, 1998 which was sited permanently at YSP in 2017, has all of these qualities and more. Placed in a wild woodland area the sculpture contrasts vividly with a similar work located in Central Square, Newcastle, which emphasises the ability of Beasley's sculptures to relate to and absorb diverse locations. His exploration of metal continued apace, resulting in major public sculpture commissions in China, including *The Gathering of the Moons*, a monumental public sculpture for the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

For decades, Bruce Beasley has used computer programmes to explore the interactive boundaries between creativity, art and technology. Keeping pace with them has never over-shadowed his observation of the natural world and what he has described as exploring '...the aesthetic and emotional potential of complex shapes in space...'. His most recent works reflect this approach as he continues to expand the language of sculpture in shapes into even further unexplored territories.

PETER MURRAY  
Director  
Yorkshire Sculpture Park

(RIGHT)  
Bruce Beasley  
*Advocate IV* at  
Yorkshire Sculpture  
Park, 2017  
Photo: Jonty Wilde





(LEFT)  
Bruce Beasley in  
the digital studio,  
Pangolin Editions,  
2018

## TECHNOLOGY TO TOUCH

### THE VR INSPIRED WORKS OF BRUCE BEASLEY

This exhibition and catalogue celebrate US-based sculptor Bruce Beasley's second solo show at Pangolin London. The sculptures and collages included here fittingly harken back and dream forward.

We look back at classic Beasley cubic works that over a 60 year career won Beasley wide international attention, yet read as fresh and poignant today. And we note with admiration that after half a dozen decades of major private and museum shows, significant public installations across the world, an ever energetic Beasley, in his 80th year, embarks blithely and to great success on a wholly distinct artistic tack: virtual reality (VR).

Here Beasley moves into the cutting edges of VR's artistic applications to produce six new sculptures, as well as debut - for the first time ever in his *oeuvre* - bold, expressionistic, wall-bound canvas collages.

Beasley's engagement with VR in his second Pangolin show marks the next logical progression in his investigations of digital tools, from 3D modelling (1990s), to 3D printing (2000s), to works that here capitalise on VR's capacity to keenly explore organic, fluid gestures made in real time.

Beasley has been celebrated as an innovator in art-computer applications but he is quick to emphasise that he is not a techy artist, he is an artist who uses technology if and only when technology facilitates the demands of his goals as a classic abstract modernist. He accurately notes that the VR process and indeed his career-long use of computers is not very different from sketching in any physical material and setting aside the best ideas for further work. The advantage here is that what would take Beasley months to conceive, attempt, develop and 'see' in obdurate materials now happens in a fraction of time, with greater possibilities for subjective refinement.

Does he acknowledge that it is vital for any artist to be open to all the ideas and tools of his day? Absolutely. As Courbet noted over 200 years ago, this is the very essence of what it means to be "of one's moment" but Beasley insists that, much like the varied metal tips of an engraver's burr, or paint brushes that are flat or thin, VR is just another means by which the artist makes his vision manifest.

In spite of his reticence to forefront technology, we cannot ignore Beasley's contributions to pushing fine art-digital interfaces, to poking holes in rigid silos that short-sightedly separate creative means. Back in the late 80s when such technology was nascent and the exclusive purview of aerospace, Beasley used the research credentials of his close friend Donald Glaser, winner of the 1960 Nobel Prize in Physics, and renowned microbiologist to acquire the first



(LEFT)  
Bruce Beasley  
with his Bathysphere  
c.1976

computer programs for 3D modelling, self teaching himself to “draw” ideas for abstract sculpture. He was among the first artists to use 3D extruded printing as a way to make actual sculptural prototypes that allowed him to envision and eventually produce finished works of art.

When Beasley became interested in using light as a primary sculptural element, in order to pursue these ideas he invented the process for large scale acrylic casting when DuPont scientists said it could not be done. From this invention Beasley not only won the commission for his stunning installation, *Apolymon* permanently installed in the California state capital, in the process he also invented, as well as built, the first bathysphere a clear globe used by NASA and others to undertake deep sea research.

In 2000 Beasley’s ranging curiosity turned to how the language of line, edge, volume, space and emotionality would change if he ‘spoke’ in curvilinear rather than his signature hard edged abstract forms. Some of the early curvilinear works included the *Disc Cantata* series, one of which was selected for Olympic Park during the Beijing Olympics, followed by the *Torqueri* and *Rondo* works, best described as gallery-scaled or impressive environmental-ly-scaled ‘ribbons’ of stainless steel or bronze that undulate gracefully into themselves and in relation to the space they activate.

*Yes, it was infinitely easier to investigate curvilinear options on a computer rather than in haptic or real space where you are moving actual media and dealing with gravity. But this digital step is never easy or rote. I basically have*

(RIGHT)  
Bruce Beasley  
*Apolymon*  
1970, Cast acrylic  
Unique  
274 x 457 x 182 cm  
Sacramento, USA





(ABOVE)  
Bruce Beasley  
*Gathering of The Moons*  
2007, Stainless Steel  
Olympic Park, Beijing

(LEFT)  
Bruce Beasley  
with *Advocate II*  
Central Square,  
Newcastle, 2014



*to tell the computer when and how to fold, turn or rise in order to digitally create the flowing shapes I am seeking. A 3D printer makes a maquette and as I move step by step towards a finished work in bronze or stainless steel, I am continually adjusting surface, scale, orientation, and the like. We assume computers make this process 'easy;' it is more accurate to say technology begins the process; computers add complex creative steps that expand the eventual purely aesthetic outcome.*

Knowing Beasley's unique tech history, in 2017 Rungwe Kingdon urged the artist to come to the renowned foundry Pangolin Editions to explore and produce art using VR. Beasley says that this insightful invitation has added a summative component to a long career - the ability to capture and accurately translate active gesture.

*The stylus is like an extension of my imagination, I make a mark and it appears in front of me in virtual space. The program and the stylus permit me to determine the features of the mark making. I can 'draw' large broad gestures that match human scale or small tight ones, I can coil and arc the line.*

*The marks in space can be programmed to be linear or volumetric, rod-like, thick or thin, a rounded ribbon or a hexagonal one. It is completely spontaneous; if I like something I have just created, I continue, elaborate; if not I move on. I can save when a shape resonates and it will be translated into digital data that I later use to produce more work.*



(ABOVE)  
Bruce Beasley  
*Aurai 2*  
2018, Collage  
Edition of 8  
107 x 155 cm

(LEFT)  
*Torqueri IVB*  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
52 x 107 x 18 cm



Up to now, the bending forms made by Beasley tended to look, as he puts it "somewhat intellectual." What he means by this is that without VR his explorations of interesting curves require first imagining an evocative, typically complex folding structure and then very deliberately plotting/programming that shape point by point into the computer en route to conceive a refined and finished piece. "This methodical process can't help but express itself a little in the final work. The forms I am able to generate via VR flow directly with and from my hand and so the work made here at Pangolin is a breakthrough - the last step in achieving that sense of true spontaneity I've so long been seeking."

In addition to the new VR-generated sculptures, with this Pangolin exhibition Beasley also ventures with great success into an entirely new and slightly foreign media for him: VR inspired canvas collages. This is an artist who has famously claimed he is first and foremost a sculptor and as such he does not 'speak' well in or relate to two dimensions; for six decades he has eschewed graphic, flat work. He may have to eat those words.

For these collages, Beasley selects saved VR gestures that, as he puts it, 'sing' and then prints these onto thick canvas in large scale. He then studies the printed gestures and artfully cuts them into inventive graphic, black and white fragments. The piecemeal wave-like shapes are laid out then by hand the artist rotates, repeats, overlaps, selects and de-selects pieces until the arrangement coalesces into a new wall hung collage.

The resulting stunning collages exist formally, emotionally and poetically somewhere between flatness and low relief. The play of illusionary depth and



actual depth, the beauty and irony of real breaks in surface versus printed edges and recessions is charming. From the virtual to the fully tactile, Beasley has come full circle.

A career sampling of Beasley's earliest works, his museum-scaled and environmental signature cubic works, key sculptures from his *Rondo* and *Torqueri* sculptures, as well as a range of VR-related works will be featured in an in-depth comprehensive 60-year career retrospective at Grounds for Sculpture in New Jersey in 2020.

This exhibition at Pangolin London is a precursor and a teaser, introducing us to works that begin in VR, add a visceral and personal process to result in art as far from the cold blue screen as one can get. Here we are reminded that imagination advanced by tech can indeed render a work of fine art able to move us as no simple technology ever will.

MARLENA DOKTORCZYK DONOHUE  
Professor, Art History  
Otis College of Art and Design

(ABOVE)  
*Aeolis 2* being  
patinated at  
Pangolin Editions  
2018

(RIGHT)  
*Aeolis 1*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 5  
150 x 128 x 95 cm

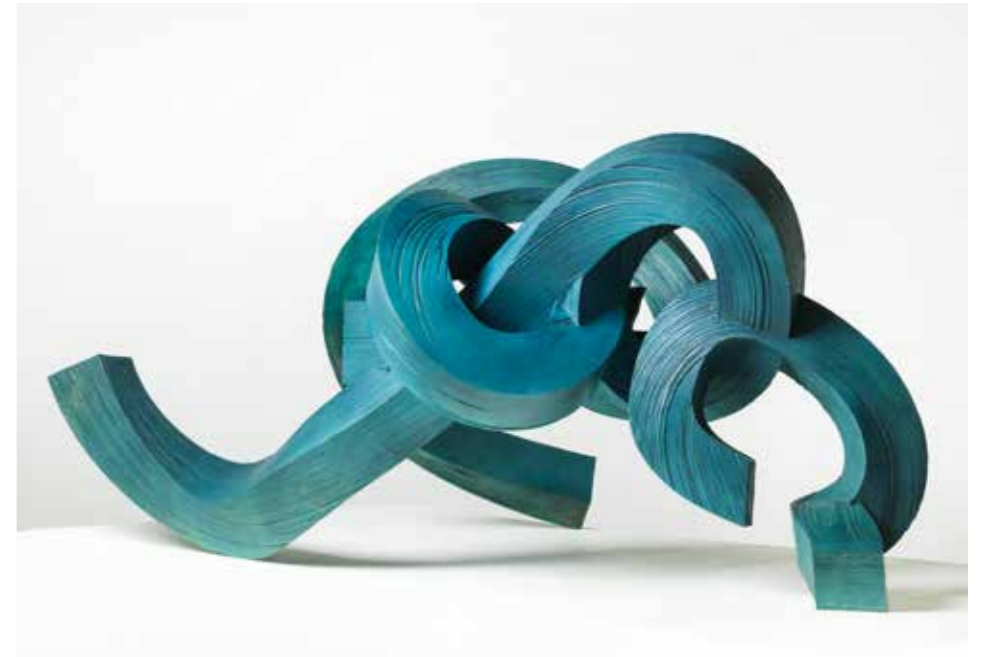








*Aeolis 2*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 5  
79 x 88.5 x 154 cm



*Aeolis 6*  
2018, Sterling silver  
with bronze base  
Edition of 8  
36 x 15 x 10 cm





*Aeolis 1*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 5  
150 x 128 x 95 cm



(RIGHT)  
*Aeolis 1 & Aurai 2*

(LEFT)  
*Aurai 1*  
2018, Collage  
on canvas  
Edition of 8  
106.5 x 117 cm



*Aeolis 1 Maquette*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 8  
23 x 28 x 17 cm





*Aeolis 3*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 8  
42 x 18 x 14 cm





*Aeolis 4*  
2018, Bronze  
Edition of 8  
22 x 20 x 12 cm





*Aeolis 5*  
2018, Cast iron  
Edition of 5  
126 x 126 x 100 cm



*Aeolis 5*  
2018, Cast iron  
Edition of 5  
126 x 126 x 100 cm



*Torqueri IVB*  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
52 x 107 x 18 cm



*Breakout II*  
1992, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
145 x 229 x 61 cm





*Maquette for Advocate II*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
57 x 14 x 14 cm

*Thrust*  
1993, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
48 x 41 x 33 cm





*Knight's Gambit*  
1991, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
64 x 80 x 61 cm



*Horizon II*  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
66 x 325 x 102 cm





(LEFT)  
*Ancile*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
97 x 71 x 23 cm

(RIGHT)  
*Seaborne*  
1989, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
35 x 55 x 23 cm





*Custos II*  
2001, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
128 x 94 x 27 cm



(LEFT)  
*Oceanus*  
2000, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
107 x 51 x 28 cm

(RIGHT)  
*Watch Tower*  
1992, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
96 x 38 x 33 cm



# BRUCE BEASLEY

Born May 20, 1939; Los Angeles, California

## EDUCATION

Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1957-59  
University of California, Berkeley, California, B.A. 1962

## MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France  
Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany  
Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco, California  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing  
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA  
San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, California  
University of Kansas, Spencer Museum of Art  
The Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California  
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington  
Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California  
Xantus Janos Museum, Győr, Hungary  
Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach  
Islamic Museum, Cairo, Egypt  
University of Oregon Museum of Art  
Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho  
University of California Museum of Art, Berkeley

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.  
Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco  
Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles  
China Museum of Contemporary Sculpture, Datong  
The Oakland Museum, Oakland, California  
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, NH  
Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden, UCLA  
Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas  
Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, California  
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida  
Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey  
de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara, California  
Stanford University Museum of Art  
Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden, UCLA  
Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA  
Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

M.H. deYoung Memorial Museum, San Francisco  
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA  
Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany  
Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, California  
City Center, Dortmund, Germany  
Mathematical Sciences Research Inst. Berkeley  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana  
Southern Oregon State University, Oregon  
Pepperdine University Art Gallery, Malibu, CA  
Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo, CA  
Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York  
Kouros Gallery, New York  
Scheffel Gallery, Bad Homburg, Germany  
Everett Ellin Gallery, Los Angeles  
Hansen Fuller Gallery, San Francisco  
Harcourts Modern, San Francisco  
Hooks-Epstein Gallery, Houston, Texas  
Atrium Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri  
Severn Gallery, Ketchum, Idaho  
Autodesk Gallery, San Francisco

San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, California  
Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Yorkshire, England  
Shanghai Sculpture Space, Shanghai, China  
Peninsula Art Museum, Belmont, California  
Mannheim City Hall, Mannheim, Germany  
California State University, Turlock, California  
Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California  
Hanson Gallery, San Francisco  
Loma Linda University Art Gallery, Riverside, CA  
Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California  
Kornblee Gallery, New York  
Utermann Gallery, Dortmund, Germany  
Galerie Marie-Louise Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland  
David Stuart Gallery, Los Angeles  
Fuller-Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco  
Gwenda Jay Gallery, Chicago, Illinois  
Solomon-Dubnick Gallery, Sacramento, California  
John Natsoulas Gallery, Davis, California  
Jaffe Baker Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida  
Pangolin London, United Kingdom

## PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

Federal Office Building, San Diego, California  
State of California, Capitol Office Building, Sacramento, CA  
San Francisco International Airport, San Francisco  
Stanford University, Stanford, California, (2 pieces)  
University of California at Berkeley  
City of Anchorage, Alaska  
City of Beijing, Sculpture for the Beijing Olympic Games  
City of Eugene, Oregon  
City of Fremont, California  
City of Monterrey, Mexico  
City of Palo Alto, California  
City of Shanghai, Sculpture for the World Expo 2010  
City of WuHu, China  
Sculpture Park Punta Sur, Isla Mujeres, Mexico  
La Jolla Crossroads, San Diego, California  
Gateway Center, Walnut Creek, California  
Voit Brea Business Park, Brea, California  
Central Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, England

Federal Home Loan Bank, San Francisco, California  
State of California, State Office Building, CA  
Miami International Airport, Miami, Florida  
University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon  
Miami University, Oxford, Ohio  
City of Bad Homburg, Germany  
City of Dortmund, Germany  
City of Flossmoor, Illinois  
City of Mannheim, Germany  
City of Oakland, California  
City of Salinas, California  
City of South San Francisco, California  
Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, San Jose, CA  
Djerassi Foundation, Woodside, California  
Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, California  
Deutsche Bundesbank, Frankfurt, Germany  
Blackstone Properties, Detroit, Michigan

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1961-2 *The Art of Assemblage* Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961-62 Travelled to The Dallas Museum of Contemporary Art, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art  
1963 Biennale de Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris  
1963 *Contemporary California Sculpture*, The Oakland Museum  
1964 *Eleven American Sculptors*, University of California Art Museum  
1966 *Selected Acquisitions*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,  
1969 *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture*, Krannert Art Museum  
1969 *Plastics and New Art*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia  
1970 Biennial Invitational, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California  
1970 *American Sculpture in Perspective*, Sheldon Art Gallery, University of Nebraska  
1970 *Sculpture Here and Now*, Stanford University Art Museum, Stanford, California  
1970 *Expo '70 San Francisco Pavilion*, Osaka, Japan  
1973 *Salon d'Mai*, The Luxembourg Gardens, Paris, France  
1973 *Salon de la Jeune Sculpture*, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France  
1973 *Refracted Images*, DeCordova Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts  
1980 *Across the Nation*, National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.  
1982 *100 years of California Sculpture*, The Oakland Museum  
1984-5 *The California Sculpture Show*, Los Angeles Olympic Games, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Great Britain  
1987 *Monumenta, 19th Sculpture Biennial*, Middelheim Sculpture Park, Antwerp, Belgium  
1987 *Steel Sculpture*, Park der Berg, Krefeld, West Germany; Wantipark, Dordrecht, Netherlands; Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Great Britain; Kunsthalle, Bremen, West Germany  
1993 *Fujisankei International Biennale*, Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan  
1994 *Sculpture Invitational*, Landesgartenschau, Fulda, Germany  
1999 7th International Cairo Biennale, Cairo, Egypt  
1999 *Blickachsen 2*, Bad Homburg, Germany  
2003 *Sterling Stuff*, Gallery Pangolin, UK travelled to Sigurjon Olafsson Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland & Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Bruce Beasley for all his hard work in bringing this exhibition together and to his wife Laurence for all her support.

We would also like to thank Peter Murray and Marlena Donohue for their insightful foreword and introduction, to Steve Russell Studios for their photography and to all the team at Pangolin Editions and Pangolin Digital for their skill and dedication.

## IMAGE CREDITS

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pp 8,9,11 Courtesy of the artist

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