

# PANGOLIN

LONDON



*Homage to Wegener*  
2012, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
30.5 cm high

# FOREWORD

In my childhood, finding a crystal of quartz or any other stone ranked high alongside finding a fossil for the sense of wonder and delight it engendered in me. I was enthralled with the perfection, the transformation and the idea that the processes which created the crystal were also the forces that formed the world. I knew that special conditions of pressure and heat had to exist before a crystal would grow. Looking into the transparent quartz and seeing the ghostly snowy outlines of smaller crystals within its glassy form was mesmerising, an enjoyment beyond the visual, as I invented in my mind the fantastic environment of its formation. When I learnt that I could create my own crystals by super-saturating sugar in water I was delighted by the perfect geometric forms that arrived like magic on the string dangled into the solution. I relate these early experiences as when I look at Bruce Beasley's sculptures I feel we must share the same enthusiasm for perfect natural forms. However, unlike me, Beasley has gone on to try and orchestrate those formal elements to control the responses he gets from the shape, line, volume and intersections of the crystalline formations of his own invention. This is of course a simplistic link but most of the power of sculpture resides in the emotional response to the object.

By setting himself the limitations of the cube and its extensions, Beasley has allied himself to the classical early Modernists and there are numerous parallels that can be drawn with the architecture, sculpture and painting of that period. However, Beasley also ensures that the energy and emotional intensity of the romantic traditions overlays the classical foundations of his visual grammar. So with Beasley you won't find the grid and isolated squares of Mondrian. He makes his forms fall out of the grid, teeter precariously just in balance or climb upwards and soar out, suffused with patinas whose colours morph from red to green, yellow to blue, intensifying the feelings generated by the forms on their own.



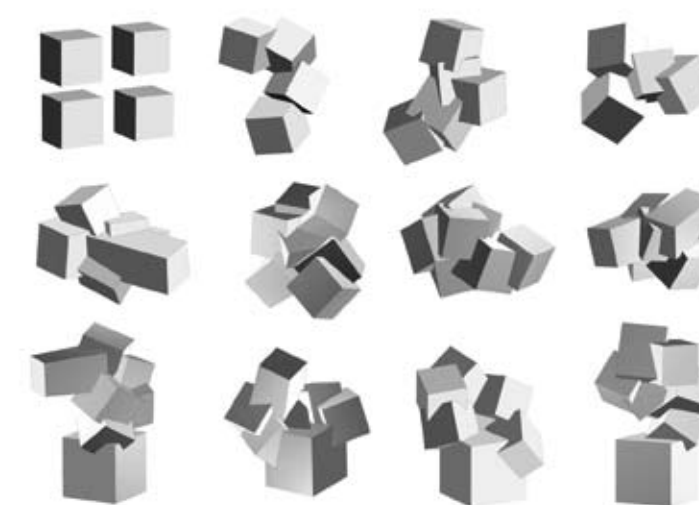
Looking into the complexity of the method utilised by Beasley to construct his pyritic forms, the surge of one faceted crystal into another and the way in which edge and surface play a tympanic game of positive and negative, bouncing light and shadow into stark relief, is reminiscent of looking into the quartz crystals within crystals: mesmerising! Beasley controls the way he arranges his component parts to his aesthetic ends; he can stretch them infinitely upwards to a vanishing point or compress them wide and flat as the floor, merging one cubic unit into another.

It is in the intersections of the crystalline constructions that the nub of Beasley's sculpture lies. These can be loose, easy, linear developments, echoes along a trail, or tight and dense, complicated, crowded agglomerations fighting for dominance within a defined boundary: from the languid pastoral to the cathartic finale.

There seems to me, a strong connection between music and Beasley's sculptures, like music they are only of themselves. In some synaesthesia like fashion, the forms seem to be related to sound; one particular group of shapes are loud while another seems soft. Tone and colour, repetition and harmony, it is hard to describe yet so easy to enjoy. Could this be the language of sculpture free from representational image? Abstraction for its own sake? The sheer elemental connection to a creative essence?

Abstract glyphs are as ancient an art form as the more familiar Palaeolithic images of Bison and Mammoths. Alongside the naturalistic depictions in the ancient caves are grids, lines, spots, circles and squares that are an important element of prehistoric art.

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(detail)*  
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Perhaps writing, that other means of communication has its origins in these visual expressions, but it is equally probable that human beings are intrinsically programmed to appreciate significant arrangements of shape and form just as we organise sounds into music.

This language of form is Beasley's territory. His is not the synthetic cubism of Braque and Picasso which was in any case a pictorial expression of solidity. They saw reality through a fracturing lens from multiple view points. Nor is it the delineated broken forms of the futurists in the mechanisation of organic kinetic reality. Beasley however, has absorbed from both these earlier "isms" particular elements that enable the viewer to make certain connections. It seems as if Beasley has gone to the central cruxes of the futurists' and cubism's fractured forms, to the impact points of the split and hardened mechanical edges and brought them into focus to celebrate the 'edge' and create forms from the interstices for their own sake, their inherent qualities and their excitement.

Small children love building wooden blocks and towers of all descriptions are constructed until they fall down, displacement only possible while within the realms of the centre of gravity. Beasley, to free his mind's eye from the constraint of gravity, has learnt to play with his blocks within the vacuum of his computer screen. In the spinning black virtual space of his computer he has the direct equivalent of forms turning in his imagination. Using powerful digital three dimensional design software, Beasley pulls out, stretches wide, compresses low and fuses and merges forms endlessly into arrangements that become meaningful, a means of noting down and then quantifying what he is imagining in a purely visual way.

*Untitled*  
2012, Drawing  
Open edition  
43 x 60cm



Once defined the computer can calculate all the sizes, angles and shapes of each facet in a remarkably efficient way of creating directly from the imagination into three dimensions. Far from being a constraint as many might imagine, the computer has for Beasley, within his self-imposed limitations, created the most flexible and free tool possible. Thereafter traditional craft based skills of construction; welding, casting and patination take over. Typically, Beasley is a man who needs to understand all about his processes and materials and get command over them. The then new software programme he worked on was still experimental and much of the work done by Beasley bore developmental repercussions and advantages for the programme and its commercial applications in a perfect symbiotic relationship between art and technology.

There is a hint of the infinitely slow tectonic processes of natural crystallisation in Beasley's sculptures. In slow motion choreography, a cube grows from its square base into a tapered oblong form; obelisks merge into a series of pyritic clusters, like a ballet for a modern city, of blocks woven together at a nascent point of origin which then grow into one another. Moving up through space into new incarnations, forms are dynamically held in space by the path of their journey and are an integral part of the entity, time, growth, space and movement.

For such a rigorous set of limitations it is surprising how organic many of Beasley's sculptures feel, this is not solely on account of his sumptuous patinas, although these are undeniably an important contributing factor. It is I think an inherent part of the manner in which the forms grow and evolve in his mind and in the way he manipulates them electronically. To see the forms spinning, as it were, in the screen is to see a strange dance of animated objects, and this fluid origin in their DNA is carried through to their ultimate bronze state.

The small quartz crystal I found as a child gave me an insight into a range of aesthetics that Beasley articulates with remarkable assuredness. These sculptures defy identification, whilst feeling familiar; they look hard edged and cold yet feel warm and organic. They are static yet suggest movement; appearing cerebral they touch an emotional core. These are sculptures that generously repay sitting with and given time to, will mesmerise, day after day.

RUNGWE KINGDON

*Advocate II*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
183 cm high





CATALOGUE

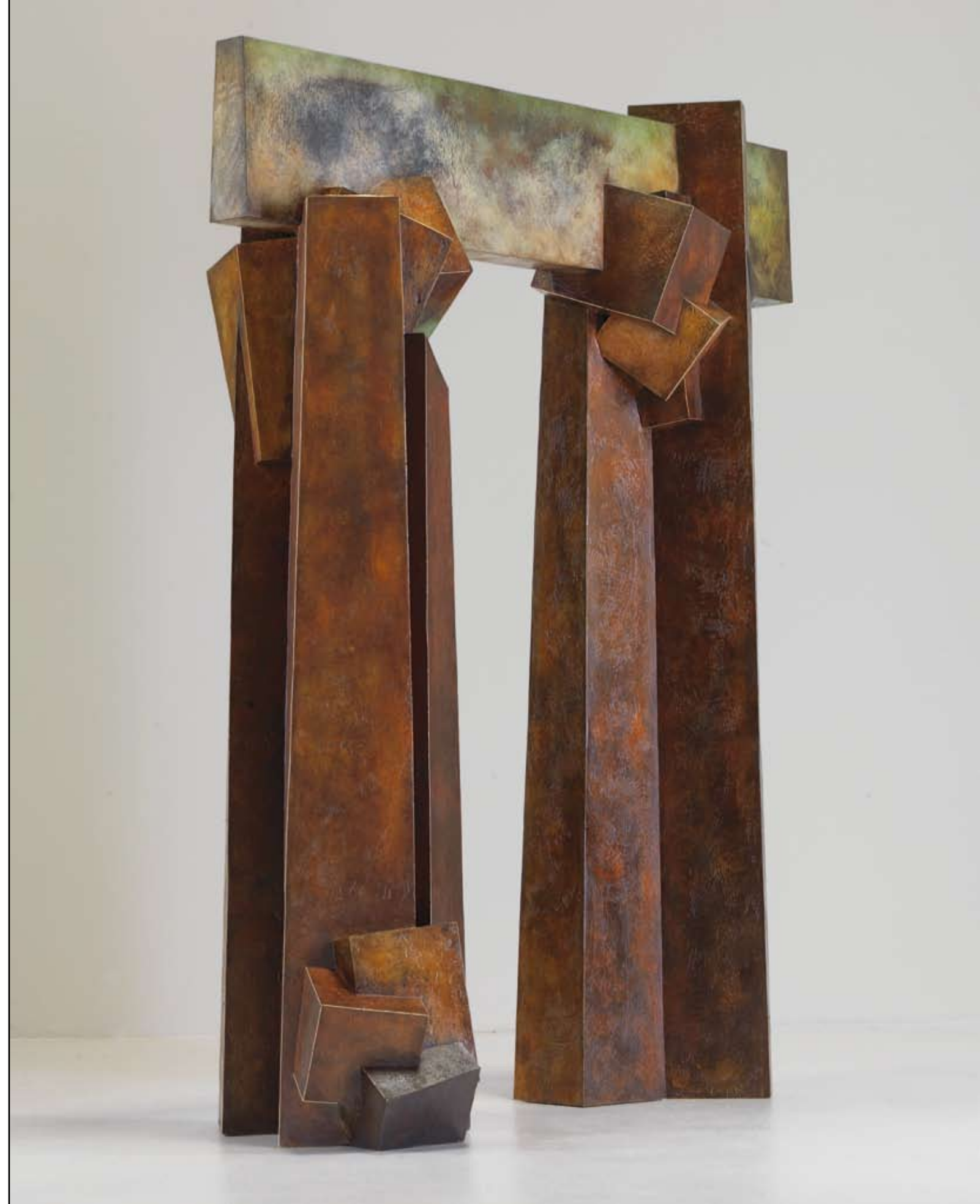




*Ally*  
1997, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
153 cm high



*Ascender II*  
1991, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
163 cm high







*Custos II*  
2001, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
128 cm high



*Ancile*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
97 cm high





*Knight's Gambit*  
1991, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
64 cm high







*Solid Sequence*  
1993, Bronze  
Edition of 6  
86 cm high

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*Arcanum*  
2002, Sterling silver  
Edition of 12  
10cm high

*Pillars of Cypress II*  
1990, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
88 cm high







*Sonata I*  
2003, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
90cm high

*Sonata II*  
2003, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
104cm high







*Advocate II*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
183 cm high



*Bateleur II*  
1989, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
97 cm high



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30.5 cm high





*Thrust*  
1991, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
64 cm high



*Outreach II*  
2002, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
165 cm high





*Tower of Silence II*  
1999, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
66 cm high





*Breakout II*  
1992, Bronze  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
145cm high



*Watchtower*  
1992, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
96 cm high







*Oceanus*  
2000, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
107 cm high

*Tenacity*  
1990, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
54cm high







*Seaborne*  
 1989, Bronze  
 Edition of 9  
 35 cm high





*Horizon*  
2006, Bronze  
Edition of 9  
66 cm high



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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