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BRYAN KNEALE

FIVE DECADES

25th March - 2nd May



BRYAN KNEALE WITH *POLYPHEMUS*, 2000, BRONZE

Highly respected Royal Academician Bryan Kneale presents five decades of sculpture and works on paper.

Bryan Kneale is a champion for the cause of sculpture, a champion whose name does not necessarily evoke instantaneous recognition; his focus throughout his long career has been on making and teaching rather than exhibiting and promotion. An exemplary draughtsman and painter, his artistic career began at the easel; perhaps as an omen of things to come his painting was thick, spiky, constructed with a palette knife onto the canvas. An innate fear of repetition he looked to sculpture and learned to forge and weld, working in brass, steel, copper and aluminium; his is not the traditional sculpture of carving, casting and modeling. The first abstract sculptor to be elected RA in 1974, this exhibition underlines the importance of Bryan Kneale in the development of 20th Century British sculpture.

PAN
GOLIN

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Born in the Isle of Man in 1930, Kneale left for London to attend the Royal Academy Schools where he was awarded the prestigious Rome Prize in 1948 and his experiences in the country ultimately led him to the conclusion that the entire Italian culture was sculptural.

Upon his return to London, Kneale began using a palette knife as a tool for painting, constructing the work; his paintings gained a strong following and he painted the portraits of Michael Redgrave, Richard Attenborough and Norman Parkinson to name but a few. However, painting in this manner soon ceased to interest Kneale as it once did and in 1959, his thoughts still on sculpture, he learnt to forge and weld. An exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1966 followed; a tour de force, of the fifty-two sculptures featured in the show, covering a period of 1959-1966, eighteen works were made in the preceding four months to the exhibition opening.

Not content with making and exhibiting, Kneale is also curator and teacher. The first abstract sculptor to be elected to the Royal Academy (elected A.R.A in 1970), he very quickly began to mount 'British Sculptors' the seminal exhibition of Modern British Sculpture at the Royal Academy in 1972. An exhibition of the work of twenty-four sculptors working in the UK at the time, it has since been described as the most groundbreaking exhibition of contemporary sculpture held in Britain. Bryan Kneale's career as a teacher began at the Royal College of Art in 1952, becoming Head of Sculpture in 1985 and Professor of Drawing in 1990. Influencing generation after generation of sculptors it is teaching that has enabled Kneale to stress what he considers to be most important – learning how to draw and how to think through the materials you are using.

Drawing is integral to the artist's practice and, although he rarely makes drawings as preparatory works for sculpture, each style of working often explores the same themes. His anatomical drawings are perhaps the best-known examples of his works on paper and there is certainly a connection between these sculptural skeleton drawings and his skeletal sculptures.

Metal is a source of inspiration for Kneale, but his is not the sculpture of the found-object. His method of working in metal is instant, it is a direct way of making sculpture and the artist can become involved in the actual making of the piece the same second as he has the idea; designing in the process of making. For Kneale making sculpture is a process of self-discovery. His innate fear of repetition means that once a form becomes familiar it is immediately discarded. What has been previously made will inform future new sculpture and will change the development of his work but that form as it stands will not continue.

To quote Bryan Kneale; *"(the point of making sculpture) is to try and discover in some way the meaning of your own life, to clarify in your own mind those capabilities, or abilities, to see things achieve an existence independent of yourself."*¹

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Pangolin London's first exhibition devoted to this remarkable artist it offers a unique opportunity to survey a selection of Bryan Kneale's sculptures and works on paper from the last five decades. Kneale has exhibited widely and his work can be found in many prestigious national and international collections including the Tate Collection and The British Museum, London, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the National Gallery of New Zealand. He lives and works in London.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Professor Brian Catling will accompany the exhibition.

Footnote

1. Dialogue with the artist by Bryan Robertson, *Sculpture: 1959 – 1966*, Whitechapel Gallery, February - March 1966 Fosh & Cross Ltd p.3

Gallery open Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

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IMAGE SHEET

BRYAN KNEALE



TRAPEZE, C.1971, STEEL



WALRUS, 1987, INK ON PAPER



PENDULUM, 1963, STEEL