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JON BUCK

TIME OF OUR LIVES

1 May - 8 June at Pangolin London

13 May - 28 June at Gallery Pangolin, Stroud



Jon Buck
Taking the Toll Maquette
2018, Bronze
Edition of 10

"What do we feel about ourselves as human beings, about our relationship to each other, to other creatures and to the wider environment in general? Science has tried to put us back as part of nature as we rapidly become more isolated from it, can art express this irony?" – Jon Buck

The sculptor who has pushed the boundaries and possibilities of colouring bronze, Jon Buck will be exhibiting a new body of work at two locations this Spring; Pangolin London and Gallery Pangolin. An ardent advocate of conservation, this exhibition celebrates the beauty of biodiversity with an exciting combination of timeless forms and intricate surface motifs.

PANGOLIN

LONDON

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Jon Buck, *Full of Life*, 2018, Bronze, Edition of 10

Jon Buck's work has recently seen a shift in focus, from his familiar subjects - what the artist refers to as his 'animals of the mind' - to developing a wider perspective, one which looks at the incredible variation of the life that has evolved and exists alongside us.

Throughout his career Buck has explored and interpreted the world around us, drawing his inspiration from poetry, science and anthropology. He has focused on his sculpture carrying an interpretable narrative through which the viewer can discover metaphors for life. For Buck, an artwork is the product of a historical process of 'aesthetic co-evolution' between maker and viewer. The form and surface of each work express the preservation of life, inviting a sensory response through their exploration of our modern culture and universal language of signs and symbols.

Jon Buck has always felt compelled by concerns for the environment, in particular the human relationship to the natural world. His experience working as a bird-keeper at Bristol Zoo in his youth was an important creative inspiration, and through his knowledge of nature and science he began to investigate the ways in which sculpture could stimulate a deeper primal physical response. In earlier works Buck explored surface textures and markings imprinted into the surface of the bronze, which led to an interest in pushing the boundaries of colour through experimentation with patinas and painted surfaces in collaboration with his foundry, Pangolin Editions. Recently, Buck's colour palette has evolved to radiate softer hues, as with *The Whole Caboodle* and *In Ferment*, and sees a move away from vivid, high gloss surfaces towards more earthy, organic patinations. Both the colour and texture of these new works imbue a mineral quality, and reinforce their connection to nature.

One of the largest works in the exhibition is *Ark* which was first exhibited at Chester Cathedral and marked an important development in Buck's work in using raised animal glyphs on the surface of a simple form to communicate the cultural imagery that is immediately conjured by the title. Another major new work in the exhibition is one of three bell forms, *Taking the Toll*. Buck says:

I have chosen to use the bell motif for a number of reasons. There is of course a long-standing tradition of making bells in bronze casting but in addition bells are redolent with cultural meaning and there is an inherent ambiguity in how they are used. In many societies bells are rung joyously in celebration but at the same time they can also be tolled as dire warnings of imminent danger.

I would like my current work to embrace both these aspects. The surfaces of the bronzes have an intricate network of relief motifs celebrating the biodiversity of the natural world. At the same time these bells can also be seen as a visual lament for the pressures we are imposing on our natural environments and the creatures that inhabit them. The title of the show 'Time of Our Lives' underlies these sentiments. While in the last forty or fifty years many of us humans have 'never had it so good', in that same period according to the WWF, the earth has lost more than half of its wild animals.

'Time of Our Lives' is an important solo exhibition which not only celebrates life and its incredible diversity but also warns us of the future. It couldn't come at a more poignant time and will undoubtedly resonate with us all.

Jon Buck studied at Nottingham and Manchester Art Schools. He is a Member of the Royal West of England Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. He has completed many public commissions including 'Returning to Embrace' for Canary Wharf in London and 'Ship to Shore' for Portishead Quays. His work is regularly exhibited both in the UK and abroad and is held in many public and private collections.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an introduction by well-known naturalist, writer and BBC radio producer, Tim Dee.

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