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RALPH BROWN RA

28th February - 29th March 2014



RALPH BROWN
TRAGIC GROUP

Renowned sculptor and Royal Academician Ralph Brown passed away during April 2013, aged 85. With a sculptural career lasting over sixty years, Brown rose to prominence in the 1950s, standing out as a master of human anatomy. Pangolin London are holding this memorial exhibition to celebrate the life and work of this highly regarded artist, demonstrating the immense talent Ralph Brown possessed in creating figurative works and the legacy he will leave behind as one of country's most ground breaking sculptors.

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RALPH BROWN
MEAT PORTERS



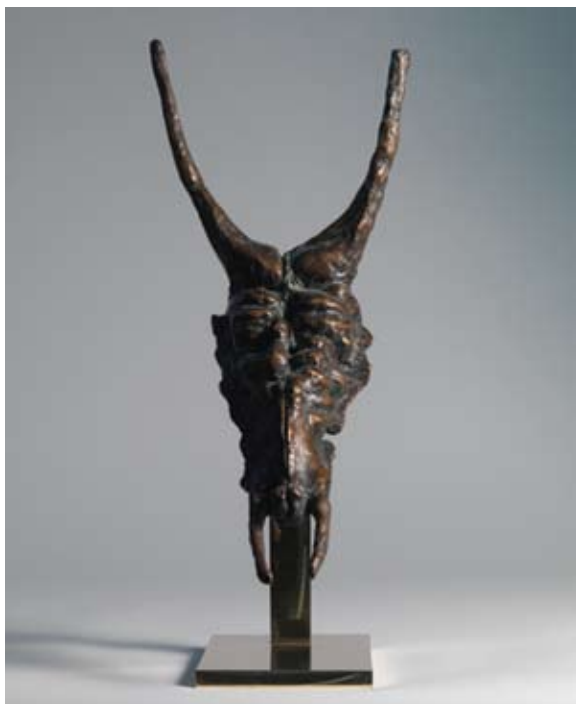
RALPH BROWN
WOMAN BATHING

Ralph Brown was born in Leeds in 1928, and is the younger contemporary of the eminent group of Yorkshire sculptors that included Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. He studied at Leeds College of Art, where both Moore and Hepworth attended, and the Royal College of Art where he was taught by Frank Dobson, John Skeaping and Leon Underwood.

Like Moore, who befriended him and became a patron, buying his bronze *Mother and Child* in 1955, Brown's art is deeply rooted in the figurative tradition. However, whilst his contemporaries focused their energies on carving and maintaining 'truth to materials', Brown chose to concentrate on modelling, allowing him to interact with his material on a more intimate level.

During the fifties Ralph Brown's work attracted much critical acclaim and was shown alongside the most prominent sculptors of the day including Kenneth Armitage, William Turnbull and Eduardo Paolozzi. He came to national prominence in the late 1950s with his large-scale bronze sculpture *Meat Porters* (commissioned for Harlow New Town, Essex), a version of which will be on show in this exhibition.

Brown's sculptures can be seen as enigmatic contradictions; they are shocking yet sensuous, savage but imbued with humanity. Their surfaces pulsate with an often erotic energy and, contrary to popular depiction, Brown's figure's clefts, folds, pits and creases explore sculpting the body from the inside out. The graphic genital imagery or 'erotic equivalent forms' as Brown termed them, proved controversial during the early period of his



RALPH BROWN
FIGURE HEAD

career and on occasion his sculptures had to be removed from exhibitions and photographs blacked out in catalogues. There is no doubt that his work was ahead of its time. The ox's gaping body cavity in *Meat Porters* is as obvious a metaphor as Sarah Lucas' *Chicken Knickers* and works such as *Figure Head* pre-empted the Chapman brothers' supplementation of genitalia for facial features decades later.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, when abstraction prevailed in British sculpture, Ralph Brown remained faithful to the human figure and he has long stood out among his contemporaries as one of the most accomplished sculptors of human anatomy. In 1962, for the BBC programme 'Art in the Making', Bryan Robertson enthused "everything he touches is charged by this sensibility: passionate, humane and with the courage to resist any easy or obvious eloquence."

Brown was elected a Royal Academician in 1972 and his work can be found in many public collections including the Tate Collection, the Arts Council of Great Britain, Bristol City Art Gallery, Leeds City Art Gallery and The National Museum of Wales.

This selling exhibition includes sculpture and works on paper and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. For further information on additional works in the exhibition please contact us.

Gallery open Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

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