

## ***Richard Deacon: Dead Leg*** **29 April – 17 July 2009**

**[Chicago] 16 March 2009** - The Arts Club of Chicago is pleased to announce the opening of the exhibition *Richard Deacon: Dead Leg* on 29 April 2009. Deacon has been an internationally recognized figure in British sculpture since the 1980s. Deacon's accomplished use of visual language and his continual curiosity with materials make him one of the most inventive artists working today. This exhibition will include the monumental wood sculpture *Dead Leg*, several small wall pieces, and works on paper.

*Dead Leg*, 2007, is composed of compressed 2-by-2 oak lengths bound together, in groups of two and four, by custom-fabricated stainless steel couplings. Beginning with the static bound "root" of the sculpture, the wood then splits, sprawls, and gyrates to span 28 feet by 9 feet by 8 feet high. The tension between the organic and the hand-wrought materials achieve a graceful fluidity that belies the challenging methods of their construction. The rigid leg conjures up a peg leg, a prosthetic limb, even the dead peg used to tie off in sailing. Also on view are several small-scale acrylic and plaster wall pieces, entitled "Some More For the Road," from 2007. Miniature in size, their brightly-colored, chunky forms bring to mind relics on display and carry a gravity in opposition to the size and material. This exhibition will include a selection of recent collages.

Deacon's knowledge and interest in materials is always apparent. The manipulation of structural elements is the core of his practice. Labor intensive, the works demonstrate an assertive physicality, many times utilizing specialized skills such as those of a carpenter, a ceramicist, a boat builder, a metal worker, or a textile craftsman. He acknowledges the significance of his collaborator of 24 years, Matthew Perry, with whom he has worked closely in the construction and production engineering of his wood sculptures. Together, they have developed technologies for manipulating wood beyond what has been thought possible, for what Deacon has termed his "disallowed combinations."

Richard Deacon has enjoyed major success since graduating from Chelsea College of Art, London in 1978. He received international acclaim in the early 1980s with his inclusion in important group exhibitions in London at The Tate Gallery, The Institute of Contemporary Art, the Hayward and Serpentine Galleries; and the 1983 Central/South American tour of "Transformations: New Sculpture from Britain." Deacon's work gained attention in the US through the 1987 landmark exhibition "A Quiet Revolution: British Sculpture Since 1965" that traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Newport Harbor Museum, CA; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; and the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY. Deacon has long maintained an active schedule of museum and gallery exhibitions throughout the world including solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, L.A. (1988), Whitechapel Gallery, London (1998), Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2003), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2003-4), and a retrospective at Tate Gallery, Liverpool (1999). He represented Wales at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale (2008); was awarded the Turner Prize in 1987; and was made a "Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres" by the Ministry of Culture in France in 1997. He was elected a member of the Royal Academy in 1998 and honored as a Commander of the British Empire from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his significant contribution to the Arts in Britain in 1999. Born in Wales in 1949, Deacon lives and works in London, but divides his time between Paris, where he teaches at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, and Cologne.

The exhibition runs through 17 July 2009. The Arts Club of Chicago is located at 201 East Ontario Street, on the southeast corner of Saint Clair and Ontario Streets in Chicago. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The exhibition is free and open to the public. Please contact Ryanne Baynham at [ryanneartsclub@mindspring.com](mailto:ryanneartsclub@mindspring.com) or 312.787.3997 for further information or images.