



Richard Deacon with Sui Jianguo and Incognito

British and Chinese sculptors at L.A. Louver plus ICA benefit event.

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SEP 06, 2018

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Welsh-born Richard Deacon is a sculpture of considerable renown, a winner of the Tate Museum's Turner Prize in 1987 and a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1999.

His work evolved unavoidably from the legacy of modern British sculpture — Henry Moore, Anthony Caro, Barbara Hepworth. A new show at L.A. Louver demonstrates his knowledge of that heritage. In constructing modestly scaled pieces out of chunky wood or stainless steel, he is doing no less than deconstructing and remaking history.



Richard Deacon Fold in the Fabric 5, 2018 Sculpture: wood (Holly and Cedar), epoxy Table: fumed oak and MDF board Sculpture: 12 1/4 x 13 3/4 x 11 in. (31 x 35 x 27.8 cm) Table: 18 x 21 5/8 x 21 5/8 in. (45.5 x 55 x 55 cm) Credit Line: © Richard Deacon. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

Deacon has worked successfully on a monumental scale for decades. It is something of a surprise, therefore, to find these mostly angular sculptures sited on low tables instead of pedestals. Instead of the awestruck upward gaze, you look down at them. The small tables themselves are part of the sculptures, and most are not more than knee high. An argument around late 20th-century sculpture has long involved the use or elimination of a pedestal. Deacon has incorporated it as part of the work while simultaneously controlling its ultimate presentation.



Richard Deacon Cuttings 2, 2018 Sculpture: stainless steel Table: oak and MDF board Sculpture: 13 3/8 x 20 7/8 x 11 1/2 in. (34 x 53 x 29 cm) Table: 21 7/8 x 21 5/8 x 21 5/8 in. (55.5 x 55 x 55 cm) Credit Line: © Richard Deacon. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

The show also includes four ceramics, irregular polyhedrons of five or six sides, slab-molded and glazed on top with neutral white or black or swirls of blue. He has transformed the pedestals into sculptures but when you look down at them, you not only see them as forms but as paintings. Made in 2014, each is titled Flat, an allusion to their appearance from above but not from any other angle.



Richard Deacon Flat 10, 2014 glazed dark clay 22 1/4 x 27 1/2 x 22 7/8 in. (56.5 x 70 x 58 cm) Credit Line: © Richard Deacon. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

Deacon's witty subtext comes through in a few titles: *Size is Everything #3* (2018) has strips of beech and elmwood bent into the shape of the letter C that hangs down from a simple table of made of tulip wood. The phallic reference is unavoidable and in its unerect state makes tacit allusion to the ways in which big sculpture has long been associated with big masculinity.



Richard Deacon Size is Everything #3, 2018 Sculpture: wood (Beech and Elm), epoxy Table: tulip wood and MDF board Sculpture: 29 1/4 x 23 5/8 x 6 3/8 in. (74 x 60 x 16 cm) Table: 27 3/4 x 23 5/8 x 23 5/8 in. (70.5 x 55 x 55 cm) Credit Line: © Richard Deacon. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

Deacon has showed at L.A. Louver previously but this show has a different angle. The work is shown in conjunction with that of Sui Jianguo, a Chinese artist from Shandong province who is a little younger but of the same generation. Many of the works in this show seem to have visual associations with the organic but many are made of galvanized photosensitive resin. Remiscent of scholar's rocks, they have dull silvery finishes that are textured on one side and smooth on another. The surfaces and shapes are evidence of the artist's hand working on the original clay molds.



Sui Jianguo Planting Trace -- Island 6, 2018 galvanized photosensitive resin 3D printing 11 x 13 1/2 x 5 in. (27.9 x 34.3 x 12.7 cm) Credit Line: © Sui Jianguo. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

The final sculptures, in resin or bronze, may be greatly enlarged through the use of new 3-D printing technology so that a single fingerprint from the artist becomes the size of a balloon. Or it may be greatly reduced.



Sui Jianguo Planting Trace 1, 2014-2016 cast bronze 114 1/8 x 70 7/8 x 67 in. (290 x 180 x 170 cm) Credit Line: © Sui Jianguo. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA.

The two artists have known one another since 1999 and the work by each resonates nicely with that of the other. This two person show offers a unique opportunity for them to be seen together in an informed but not overwhelming context. The show continues [through Oct. 20](#).