

Modern Art

Ricky Swallow
Sand in My Joints

7 April – 14 May 2022
Bury St, SW1

Modern Art is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by Ricky Swallow at its Bury Street gallery. This is Swallow's fifth solo exhibition with Modern Art.

Ricky Swallow's sculptures begin with ordinary, domestic materials that are then cast in bronze to create carefully honed final objects. For over two decades, Swallow has explored the process of conversion that takes place when an object or combination of materials becomes a sculpture. His initial objects are always made by hand; their tactile imperfections enduring into the casting process. Once cast at the foundry, Swallow's bronzes continue to be worked on in the studio, his participation a critical part of maintaining connection and control over the final form of the work. Latent references to painting, and specifically the Dutch still life tradition, resonate both in the figurative dimensions of his work as well as in its conceptual underpinnings. But these references are never uncomplicated, the trompe-l'œil effect for instance, present in Swallow's work since its beginning, has always been a means to an end – an attention trap, or a way to slow down perception and experience - rather than an end in itself. What becomes important is the tactility and physical presence of the sculptural components, a registered and experienced behavior of the elements comprising each piece.

Both in its process and in its figurative content, painting remains a clear reference in Swallow's new body of work for Modern Art, which can broadly be divided into two groups; one given the name 'Calendars', and the other 'Skewed Reliefs'. Wall-based and hung at eye level, each of these works is made as a gridded or lattice wooden shaped structure with rope interwoven into it in various formations, and then cast in bronze; the movement inherent in their original forms and materials suspended in space. While the gridded structures are patinated, the cast ropes are intricately hand-painted by Swallow over time, a process reflecting the meditative experience of being in the room with them. From piece to piece, the ropes looping and curving in different compositions, almost like musical scores of varying density, lyricism, and gravity; their shadows like an echo carrying equal weight. Swallow's new works bring together his interests in certain histories of painting, with Minimalist objects, as well as commonplace architectural fixtures and fittings such as the dynamism of a concertina structure, or the visual arrangement of duration in a wall calendar.

Ricky Swallow lives and works in Los Angeles, California, USA. He was born in San Remo, Victoria, Australia in 1974. In 2005 Swallow represented Australia at the 51st Venice Biennale. Swallow's work has been the subject of solo and two-person institutional exhibitions including Ricky Swallow and Lesley Vance, The Huntington, San Marino, CA, USA (2012); Ricky Swallow: The Bricoleur, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, VIC, Australia (2009); The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2007); Younger than Yesterday, Kunsthalle Vienna, Vienna, Austria (2007); The Past Sure Is Tense, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA, Australia (2006); and PS1/MoMA, New York, NY, USA (2006). His work has been included in exhibitions at the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA, USA (2020); The Michael Buxton Centre of Contemporary Art (MBCOCA), Parkville, Australia (2018); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2017); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, VIC, Australia (2011, 2005, 2004); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, NSW, Australia (2010, 2006); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO, USA (2008, 2007); Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan (2007); Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand (2006); Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, QLD, Australia (2005); and The Institute of Contemporary Art, ICA, Boston, MA, USA (2005).

For more information, please contact Alex Glover (alexander@modernart.net)