

OFFER WATERMAN

Alison Wilding:

Acanthus asymmetrically

26th May - 21st June 2017

Monday-Friday, 10am - 6pm
Saturdays, 12 Midday - 4pm



Mesmer, 2016. walnut, beech, teak, aluminium and tin, 172 x 245 x 56cm

Offer Waterman is delighted to announce ***Acanthus Asymmetrically***, a new exhibition by the acclaimed British artist Alison Wilding, presented in association with **Karsten Schubert**. The exhibition at Offer Waterman's Mayfair gallery will include 12 new and recent sculptures, alongside a selection of works on paper and prints.

Wilding's work is held in numerous public collections worldwide and she is recognised as one of the most important sculptors of her generation. Her work has been shown at the Serpentine Gallery and MoMA NY, and in three survey exhibitions at the Tate, including the Duveen Galleries in 2013 and a retrospective at Tate Liverpool in 1991. Richard Cork, in his book, *New Spirit, New Sculpture, New Money; Art in the 1980s*, neatly encapsulates the enduring appeal of this understated but mercurial artist; *'a wealth of complex relationships can be uncovered in Wilding's deceptively muted work by anyone patient enough to look'*.

Whilst she is known for the broad range of materials she has used in her sculpture, apparently delighting in the tension between hard and soft, transparent and opaque etc. Wilding pragmatically refutes that materiality is a significant driver in her work, stating, *'I'm not obsessed with materials and if I have used a huge variety over the years it's because there's lots of it freely available in the world. I don't believe in a hierarchy of materials. All materials, however mundane, can be transformed'*.

Mesmer (2016), one of four new sculptures presented at Offer Waterman, was created almost entirely from materials Wilding already had to hand in her studio, including walnut, beech, teak, aluminium and tin. The dynamic, deep v of the 'legs' of this work are the result of Wilding's problem-solving approach to making work; powerful magnets used to join the lengths of wood at their apex resulted in one leg being slightly raised from the ground - an accident which Wilding decided to embrace. *'The upraised 'leg' gave the work a different dynamic... I decided to keep it as it was. There was something reactionary in this - making a formal decision that belonged more to the 1960s!'*

The title of the exhibition, ***Acanthus Asymmetrically***, refers to another new work, made for the gallery's entrance hall and inspired by the building's heritage as the former headquarters of *William Morris & Co*. This site-specific wall piece; comprising hand-printed wallpaper with

sculptural element attached, translates and re-imagines the Acanthus motif of Morris, rendered with a deliberate asymmetry, typical of Wilding's sculpture.

Vessels, other forms of containment and interior spaces are frequent themes within Wilding's work and make multiple appearances in this exhibition, including *Belvedere* (2011) and *Whervish* (2016). Whilst her sculptures sometimes suggests or alludes to forms which appear familiar or anthropomorphic, they also frequently contain a sense of something mysterious, which confronts or unsettles the viewer - Wilding explains;

'If my work baffles the viewer maybe it's because they cannot let go of the idea that it's trying to tell them something ungraspable. Well, it isn't. There is absolutely nothing to say that isn't there in the work.'

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, which will include an interview between the artist and the art historian and writer Sarah Whitfield.

Notes to Editors:

Offer Waterman opened his first gallery in Chelsea, London in 1996. Now based in a five-storey Georgian building in the heart of Mayfair, the gallery has developed an international reputation for its exceptional 20th Century British art. The gallery's exhibition programme this year will feature both contemporary artists and historical exhibitions. Recent projects have included *Frank Auerbach, Early Works* in 2012, *David Hockney, Early Drawings* in 2015 and *Robert Rauschenberg, Transfer Drawings* in 2016. Offer Waterman is a benefactor of numerous museums and arts organisations and is currently supporting the major David Hockney retrospective at Tate Britain.

Alison Wilding was born in 1948 and currently lives and works in London. Having studied at Nottingham College of Art, Nottingham, Ravensbourne College of Art and Design, Bromley and the Royal College of Art, London; Wilding's first major solo exhibition was held at the Serpentine Gallery, London, in 1985. Notable awards include a Henry Moore Fellowship at the British School at Rome (1988), Joanna Drew Travel Bursary (2007), Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award (2008) and Bryan Roberstson Award (2012). In 1991, a major retrospective of Wilding's work, *Alison Wilding: Immersion – Sculpture from Ten Years*, was held at Tate Liverpool. Wilding was nominated for the Turner Prize in both 1988 and 1992, and was elected to the Royal Academy in 1999. Wilding has been exclusively represented by Karsten Schubert since 1987.

Karsten Schubert made his name as an exceptional gallerist in the late 1980s, representing many of the leading, young artists of his generation. He co-founded the publishing house *Ridinghouse* in 1995 and continues to represent a stable of British artists including Rose English, Tess Jaray, Robert Holyhead, Ann-Marie James and Alison Wilding. The gallery's next project with Wilding will be a solo exhibition at Bexhill's De La Warr Pavilion in 2018.

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