

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Ron Arad, *Puddles*, 2015, each unique, dimensions vary, installation view

RON ARAD SUMMER EXHIBITION

22 JUNE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2016

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition in London of internationally acclaimed artist, designer and architect Ron Arad. *Summer Exhibition* is the culmination of Arad's most recent work, spanning sculpture, hand-crafted studio pieces and industrial design, and showcasing the artist's constant experimentation with the boundaries and possibilities of materials, from metals to wood and glass.

An eye-catching installation of Arad's brand new *Puddles* (2016) – 32 unique mirror polished stainless steel tables created specifically for the exhibition – challenges the viewer's sense of reality versus illusion through a subtle game of reflections. Combining intelligent and beautiful design with the artist's pervasive sense of humour, the amorphous shapes of *Puddles* form a whirlpooled labyrinth as they curve around the gallery space, up the walls and around corners, reminiscent of *L'Esprit du Nomade* (Cartier Foundation, 1994), *38 Tables* (Triennale Milan, 1995) and *Paved with Good Intentions* (Miami, 2005). Other new, unique pieces fuse metal sculptural elements and hand-blown glass; *Standard Stoppages* and *Hedgehog* (both 2016) take their names and the shape of their metal frameworks from Marcel Duchamp's iconic works of the early 1900s.

Movement is a central theme in Arad's oeuvre. His works often encourage interaction, expressed both in his functional designs and purely aesthetic pieces. Drawing inspiration from William Morris's infamous quote 'Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful', *Useful, Beautiful, Love*. (2016) reveals Arad's ingenuity with materials, transforming a 900 kg cedar log into a seemingly weightless glider. The movement of the glider itself is echoed in the organic forms and gestural lines of Arad's handwriting, carved into the curve of the cedar bench, combining cutting-edge techniques with expert craftsmanship.

The poly-mirror stainless and COR-TEN steel *Free Standing China* (2009) appears to balance on one point, the island of Hainan, as Arad skilfully exploits the perfectly mirrored steel; this radical re-conception of the form and structure of objects and buildings has put Arad at the forefront of contemporary design and architecture. This sculptural bookshelf in the shape of the map of China and its provinces retains its essential function while questioning perceived limitations. Form and function are fused in the sculptural pair *Even the Oddballs* (2008), which recall the shape of Arad's iconic *Big Easy* chair from 1988. A further step in the artist's long exploration of what computers and machines are able to achieve, these chairs are precise positive and negative versions of the same reflective stainless steel silhouette – one chair features holes and the other is comprised of the gaps between the holes.

Summer Exhibition at Ben Brown Fine Arts will coincide with the unveiling of three major public artworks in London by Ron Arad in the summer of 2016; *Spyre*, in the courtyard of the Royal Academy of Arts (8 June), *Thought of Train of Thought*, winner of the Terrace Wires public sculpture series at St. Pancras International (7 July), and *Curtain Call*, a 360° interactive installation at the Roundhouse (6-28 August).

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

Educated at the Jerusalem Academy of Art and later at the Architectural Association in London, Ron Arad co-founded with Caroline Thorman the design and production studio One Off in 1981 and later, in 1989, Ron Arad Associates architecture and design practice. In 2008 Ron Arad Architects was established alongside Ron Arad Associates. From 1994 to 1999 he established the Ron Arad Studio, design and production unit in Como, Italy. He was Professor of Design Products at the Royal College of Art in London from 1998 until 2009. Ron Arad was awarded the 2011 London Design Week Medal for design excellence and became a Royal Academician of the Royal Academy of Arts in 2013. The first major retrospective of his work debuted in 2008 at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and later travelled to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, in 2009, followed by his first major survey in the UK at the Barbican in 2010. His work is included in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and Tel Aviv Museum.

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Founded in 2004, Ben Brown Fine Arts is located on Brook's Mews in the heart of Mayfair. The gallery has prominently positioned itself on the contemporary art scene with the sole UK representation of artists such as Ron Arad, Tony Bevan, Ori Gersht, Candida Höfer, Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne, Gavin Turk, Not Vital and Heinz Mack. Also renowned for its strong expertise in 20th century Italian art, the gallery has been exhibiting the work of Lucio Fontana and Alighiero Boetti, amongst others, since its inception. In 2009 Ben Brown Fine Arts took their first step in an international expansion with the opening of an exhibition space in Hong Kong.

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