TOM JOYCE: EVERYTHING AT HAND

July 28 - December 31, 2017

LAUNCHES CCA’S SUMMER EXHIBITION SEASON WITH NEW AND EXPERIMENTAL PIECES, SHOW IS JOYCE’S MOST AMBITIOUS YET

“Joyce, a recipient of the prestigious MacArthur “Genius” Award, is an internationally acclaimed creative genius and a local artistic icon,” says CCA Director Stuart Ashman

Foreground:
Datum I, 75 x 75 x 4 inches, 5,020 lbs (right) & Datum II, 80 x 80 x 4.25 inches, 6,050 lbs (left), forged stainless steel, 2017
Photo credit: Daniel Barsotti

Santa Fe, New Mexico—Internationally renowned sculptor Tom Joyce, who has innovated and elevated the art and science of forging iron to newly expressive heights, unveils his latest creations at the Center for Contemporary Arts on July 28 in a solo exhibition that promises to be one of the most important contemporary art events of Santa Fe’s summer arts season.

Tom Joyce: Everything at Hand continues Joyce’s explorations of iron as a profoundly symbolic material whose regenerative matter, aesthetic malleability, and cultural meaning resonate locally and globally at the deepest levels of history and contemporary life. Stretching from CCA’s Tank Garage to its new outdoor sculpture garden, the exhibition features new works by Joyce influenced by his many years of working with industrially forged remnants and byproducts of large scale manufacturing. In addition to
forged and cast iron sculpture, the show highlights iron-inspired photography, video, charred drawings and mixed media installations, including experimental bodies of work in materials newly utilized by Joyce.

“Initiated by mining everything within reach in my studio and in my experience, these works relate to the tools at hand that have shaped my world, and to the tools of industry that now influence it,” Joyce says. “It’s about what methods continue to hold relevance, what I move away from, and what the current work is gravitating toward.”

As a sculptor who trained in the process of blacksmithing in the northern New Mexico village of El Rito, who maintains studios in Santa Fe and Brussels, and who exhibits and lectures worldwide, Joyce represents the local-global brand of visual art and artists that CCA is working to support, says CCA Executive Director Stuart Ashman.

“Tom Joyce, a 2003 recipient of the prestigious MacArthur "genius" award, is an internationally acclaimed creative genius and a local artistic icon,” Ashman says. “This exhibition is not only an honor for CCA to host, it is an outstanding opportunity for Santa Fe to continue to build its reputation as an important destination for contemporary art.”

Decalescence, 37 h x 140 w x 212 d, 15,934 lbs, forged stainless steel (dimensions variable), 2017
Photo credit: Daniel Barsotti

**Material as Metaphor**
From his earliest work forging agricultural tools from worn iron hand-me-downs to the monumental contemporary sculptures he creates today from industrial manufacturing castoffs, Joyce has long been inspired by the metaphor of his material as the “offspring” of something that came before.

“I’m fascinated by the complex lineage of iron, its connection to a place, to a time, and to a use,” Joyce says. “It’s a piece of sculpture now, but it’s also a store of material, and in my eyes, always tied to its
origins. Its practical nature ensures that it will be used again for another purpose and that most assuredly it will be here long after I’m gone.”

Tom Joyce: Everything at Hand builds on the artist’s decades-long interaction with iron, a metal at the earth’s core that is crucial to human survival. The exhibition illuminates Joyce’s ongoing experimentation with tools and technology, both at his home-based studios and at the state-of-the-art forging facility near Chicago where he has worked since 2003.

More than 250 million pounds of iron is forged monthly at the factory to create what Joyce describes as “the infrastructure at the heart of the mechanized world.” Working there with a team of expertly trained industrial blacksmiths, Joyce refashions the freshly-served “offspring” into new works that express the indispensability of iron as both a natural and industrial product referencing the material’s political, environmental and historical impacts.

“Everything I know so intimately from my studio practice about how iron moves at white-hot temperatures precisely translates into whatever scale I’m working on at the factory,” he says. “Keeping my finger on the pulse of what is going on globally through the lens of this place makes the experience, and the result, more poignant. It would mean far less to me if I was incorporating only new material pulled off the shelf.”

Tenet, stereolithography printed clear polycarbonate, LED lights, metallurgical coke (one hundred eighty-five 3-D printed tools made and/or used by the artist), 12 x 24 x 20 feet (dimensions variable), 2017
Photo credit: Daniel Barsotti

An Exhibition of Extremes
In Everything at Hand, Joyce delves deeper into several alternate directions in his work—scaling up and down the size of signature sculptures; reinterpreting tools from his studio with cutting-edge technologies; and experimenting with new materials and processes that further his ongoing investigation of all aspects of iron. The resulting works of art, Joyce says, represent the extremes of his exploration to date—ranging from the smallest to largest; lightest to heaviest; most fragile to the strongest; most porous to most dense; most ephemeral to most permanent; most translucent to most opaque; and most colorless to colorful.

Joyce mines his studio and the world at large to push the micro/macro limits of his forged and cast iron sculptures, whose elegant aesthetics belie the fiery, violent process of their creation. For example, Joyce’s large-scale Berg sculpture, a seemingly buoyant form that touches the ground at only one point to balance 16,000 pounds of high carbon steel, will grow at once more massive and appear less weighty. Joyce’s monumental 42,500-pound stainless steel Stack VI sculpture from his Stack series, his clay-like Surge forms, and his grid-like Bloom structures will also be manipulated in size, weight and shape.
Joyce illuminates the unseen material characteristics of steel with re-interpretations of his *Aureole* forms. These enormous, disk-like sculptures magnify the grainy molecular structure that develops when smelted steel cools in ingot molds, creating a beautifully fissured metallic fingerprint that speaks to iron’s simultaneous strength and fragility. Imagining the “DNA” of various steel alloys enables Joyce “to express patterns that can’t be seen by the naked eye,” he says.

The mystery of iron’s knowns and unknowns has inspired Joyce to “excavate” hundreds of tools, jigs and fixtures in his studio as source material for archiving with laser scans and 3-D printers. Made for specific projects through time, Joyce says, “Within my lifetime, many have become obsolete and most will never be used again, though they once embodied a strategic role designed for very special purposes.” In a nod to the fleeting nature of tools and processes in the face of technology, and to his own artistic trajectory, Joyce is making translucent models of the tools on which he once depended.

"These ghostlike apparitions of the tools that have been in my hands for 45 years illuminate dissected fragments of hard won skills acquired over a long career that are no longer needed,” he says. “In a short space of time, not unlike at the threshold of the nineteenth century industrial revolution, a generation of practitioners have found their hand skills replaced—this time by computer simulation, design and manufacturing—a profound transition indeed!”

Finally, Joyce encourages viewers to consider forces at work behind the scenes of daily life as recorded in immense charred drawings on wood fiber; large-scale, highly-saturated, dye-infused photographs of iron and its impurities; lithographs based on CT scan animations; video projections representing forging processes of heating and cooling; and an iron-rich mixed media installation.

For Joyce, the CCA show provides an opportunity to share recent explorations with his home community and a way to establish a new connection to CCA, one of Santa Fe’s oldest nonprofit institutions dedicated to contemporary art in the American Southwest.

"Having founded my studio just down the road in 1977, I’ve grown up with CCA,” Joyce says. “Forty years later, I’m delighted we’re both still thriving and able to support one another in this timely collaborative effort.”
Tom Joyce: *Everything at Hand* is on view from July 28 to December 31, 2017 at the Center for Contemporary Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Sunday, 12pm-5pm, closed Mondays. Admission is $5.00 and is free to members and movie pass holders. Also, free for active duty military. A monograph on Joyce’s work published by the Santa Fe-based Radius Books will be released during the exhibition. A series of educational lectures will also be held at CCA through the run of the show, and the CCA Cinematheque will highlight related films.

*Ingot Study, WELL XI, 2017, dye sublimation photograph on aluminum, 40″ x 40″ x 3″ Photo credit: Tom Joyce Studio*

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