

Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

Frank Stella: New Work

25 May – 18 June 2005



penasar 2005

"... the whole idea of making art is to be open, to be generous, and absorb the viewer and absorb yourself, to let them go into it."

Frank Stella

Frank Stella's exhibition of eleven recent sculptures, free-standing and wall mounted, some on a monumental scale, combine unpainted stainless steel tubing and carbon fibre. The looping, interwoven tubing creates three dimensional sculptures which suggest movement and volume, as well as lightness and delicacy. They have the quality of spontaneous, linear drawings or sketches, suspended in space. Stella states, '...after all, the aim of art is to create space - space that is not compromised by decoration or illustration, space within which the subjects of painting can live'.

'Penasar' (2005), made from wide, circular loops around a steel cone, appears to spring upwards from the textural 'wings' which make up its base. Recalling the flight associated contraptions of da Vinci and Tatlin, 'Penasar' creates a vortex spiralling to a point beyond the sculpture. The wall sculptures, such as 'Mgarap Bangke' (2004), incorporate moulded sections of dark carbon fibre, with metal tubing and geometric support structures, which twist and turn like the movement of a rollercoaster or slide.

Stella's titles are Balinese words and phrases taken from a photographic essay written in 1942 by Margaret Meade and Gregory Bateson entitled 'Balinese Character'. These titles are chosen not to allude to Balinese culture but to increase the enigma of the art works.

Frank Stella was born in Malden, Massachusetts, in 1936. He studied art history and painting at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and continued his studies at Princeton University, where he graduated in 1958 with a B.A. degree in history. After gaining recognition as one of America's great abstract painters in the late 1950s with his minimalist "black paintings", Stella went on in the 1960s to explore flat geometric designs that evolved into three-dimensional canvases and sculptures. In 1970 his first retrospective exhibition opened at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In the 1970s and 80s, Stella abandoned his studied, minimalist aesthetic in favour of a more improvised, dynamic, and dramatic idiom in mixed-media. In 1987 he was honoured with a second retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other major solo exhibitions include: ICA Gallery, London (1985), The National Museum of Art, Osaka (1988), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1995), Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2000). The artist has received many awards: the New York City Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture (1981), the Award of American Art from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1985), Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government (1989), the Gold Medal of the National Arts Club in New York (2001). The artist lives and works in New York.

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