

Press Release

Victoria Miro Gallery

Conrad Shawcross

No Such Thing As One

14 October – 18 November 2006

Private View Saturday 14 October, 6 – 8pm

Victoria Miro Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of new sculptures by the British artist Conrad Shawcross. Conceived especially for the gallery spaces *No Such Thing As One* brings together a body of work that explores ideas concerning time and the essence of matter. Following upon his 2005 exhibition *Steady States*, which sought to investigate the essential harmonics of the universe, *No Such Thing as One*, takes the artist's concerns for cosmology and harmonics to a decidedly more mathematical and epistemological level. Inspired by the folly of the Greek conception of the atom as the most basic particle in the universe, this exhibition, using binary forms, seeks to explore the desire, in both science and signification, behind the search for the singular.

Crafted in wood and rope, Shawcross's mechanistic structures *do* nothing at all. They are objects that "aren't moving but that have all the implications of movement"; they are sculptures which deny rationality but which are "built in the guise of rational, empirical machines". Yet, it is precisely in this subversion of purpose that Shawcross's works in *No Such Thing as One* reveal the possibility that the certainties of science may be fiction and not fact. That there may not be any such thing as *one*.

Paradigm (Ode to the Difference Engine) 2006, is a giant double rope machine unraveling its rope as fast as it can ravel it. Comprising two identical machines, each made of hundreds of cogs, spools and pulleys, the twin structures turn in mirrored opposition to each other, countering all the other does. Built rationally and with intricate empirical precision the work was designed with the knowledge that it could never function – Shawcross's process from the outset was impossible. The artist has spoken of the work being reminiscent of Charles Babbage's unrealized Difference Engine conceived in 1822 and widely regarded as the first computer, also imbued with the same tragic elements of the unobtainable.

Binary Star, 2006, is the latest in Shawcross's series of kinetic light works and his most physically ambitious to date. Constructed specifically for the vaulted upstairs gallery, *Binary Star* takes the relatively recent discovery of stars that have found themselves locked in orbits around each other as its inspiration. As a model the binary star throws up an opposing reality to our own mono-solar system. The work, with its fast-moving geometry, is designed to engage the viewer through a complex and intricate dynamic revealing the arcing symmetries of this unfamiliar reality of space.

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Space Grid (Mirrored tetrahedron system), 2006 pursues the binary theme of the exhibition. With the help of a cosmological mathematician Shawcross has developed a system of tetrahedrons that tessellate universally in space. The system comprises of two types of tetrahedron that are identical but are in fact mirror images of each other. Shawcross arranges these tetrahedrons in a multiplicity of combinations and directions to form a 6-D grid of dense geometry that has infinite possibilities.

Born in 1977, Shawcross lives and works in London. He achieved an MFA from Slade School of Art in 2001 and a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from Ruskin School of Art, Oxford in 1999. Solo exhibitions include *The Steady States*, which toured The New Art Gallery, Walsall and The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 2005. In 2004, Shawcross had a solo exhibition at The Queen's House, National Maritime Museum, London entitled *Continuum* and presented work at *Manifesta 5*, San Sebastian, Spain. His work has been included in exhibitions both in the UK and abroad including, *Sudeley Castle 2006: Reconstruction 1*, Sudeley Castle, England, *S.N.O.W Sculpture in Non-Objective Way*, Galleria Tucci Rosso, Torre Pellice, Turin, *New Blood*, Saatchi Galley, London, 2004 and *New Contemporaries 2001*, Camden Arts Centre; Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland. Conrad Shawcross will have work included in *Riflemaker becomes Indica*, November 2006 – February 2007.

No Such Thing As One, an artist's book accompanies the exhibition. It includes a conversation between the artist and writer Brooke Lynn McGowan. Available from the Victoria Miro Gallery, special exhibition price £8.00.

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open Tuesday to Saturday
10am to 6pm, admission free
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