

## PRESS RELEASE

### ANTHONY CARO: PAPER LIKE STEEL

6 May – 2 July 2017

*Paper Like Steel* brings together major examples from Anthony Caro's innovative *Obama series*; these wall-mounted works in paper will be shown alongside some of Caro's freestanding paper sculptures. Paper might seem a surprising medium for the so-called 'man of steel', but in fact it materialised several times over the course of about twenty years - having first appeared in 1981 - and then most notably during his first visit to Japan in 1990.

Paper gave Caro the opportunity to explore the three-dimensional possibilities of the blank page and gave him a new freedom for experimentation; it was 'openness itself' he stated. Using paper allowed new sculptural forms to emerge from the flatness of the page without the need for bolts or welds. Instead, it could be rolled, folded, torn, scrunched-up, layered in different colours or drawn upon. The results are often elegant and delicate, but the appearance of these works belies the strength of the handmade paper Caro used, which, when wet, could be moulded and shaped. Looking at this collection of works, one feels the spontaneity of an artist discovering and coming to terms with the mandates imposed by the material, acquiring and adapting knowledge as he progressed.



In 1990, when Caro was invited to visit Japan, he asked if he could work with a traditional papermaker. He was introduced to Mr Ohé and his family in Obama, the village which subsequently gave its name to his series of sculptures. The Washi paper the Ohé family made for generations was remarkable for its strength – almost like steel perhaps – and in medieval times it had been used for making armour for Japanese archers. The strength of Washi paper provided Caro with the means to investigate surface textures and he used it for moulding forms and imprinting objects that were readily available; it could easily endure whatever rigorous, even strenuous, demands Caro asked of it. Sent back to the UK, the mainly white paper sculptures were enhanced with coloured tissue, pastel, gouache, watercolour and crayon to emphasise both their flatness and their forms. Sometimes he introduced found frames to further explore the relationship between two and three-dimensions, the pictorial and the sculptural.

Using paper gave Caro the opportunity to explore the visual poetry of the wordless page, and in the process, he created a new visual language of sculptural forms. The results are a reminder, if any were needed, that Caro was far more diverse and experimental during his long and prolific career than popular opinion has probably allowed. *Paper Like Steel* has been organised to coincide with the relaunch of **Sea Music** - Caro's only monumental sculpture for the public realm, sited on Poole Quay in 1991 and now the subject of a major conservation project to be unveiled on 13 May 2017, with an accompanying exhibition of his *Concerto series* in Poole Museum and a concert by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

**PRESS PREVIEW: SATURDAY 6 MAY 2017** Free bus from London departing Tate Britain (Millbank) at 9.45 a.m. and leaving Roche Court at 3 p.m. Please contact us to reserve a place or for further information about the exhibition: 01980 862244 nac@sculpture.uk.com.