



David Mach

Scottish born David Mach was elected into the elite band of the British Royal Academy's Royal Academicians in 1998 (and became Professor of Sculpture in 2000) joining such luminaries as artists David Hockney, Peter Blake, Anish Kapoor and architects Norman Foster and Richard Rogers.

Mach rose to prominence in the early 1980s with his remarkable large scale sculptures and installations, most notably 'Polaris', the life-size replica submarine made from 6000 tyres exhibited at the Hayward Gallery, London. This was the scene of a terrible tragedy, an arsonist set alight to it and also (presumably accidentally) himself and died from his injuries.

From his earliest student pieces at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and the Royal College, Mach's work has been characterized by the use of multiple, massproduced objects (that he refers to as 'nothing material'), most notably newspapers, tyres, postcards, matches and coat hangers.

Mach's postcard collages explore the possibilities of animation and fluidity in the process, to establish a relationship between the base material of the postcards and the image on top. Thus in 'Rock Solid', one of the works commissioned for the exhibition, thousands of identical postcards of Hong Kong's skyline overlap to form a 6ft square image of Buddha. Other commissioned works for the exhibition include a portrait of Mao using an image of Marilyn Monroe and a portrait of the Queen using I Ching cards.

The density of the installations is echoed in match heads where multiple objects make the whole. Thousands of safety matches are glued together so that only the coloured heads of the matches are seen. Mach sees the match heads as having three clear lives: the original head, the performance of burning it; and the burned head forming instantly aged black and white version of the originals. Mach has made several Buddha matchstick heads for the opening show.

The coathanger sculptures are made in a similar way to the matchheads. Using traditional sculptural techniques a figure or an object is modelled in clay, molded, cast and then the coathangers are laboriously shaped, fitted and welded around the shape. In these sculptures the hooks form a sort of fuzz that masks the identity of the object which makes it more enticing to look at. The hooks make a ghost out of the object from which they protrude.

As well as exhibiting extensively Mach has also made a number of commissioned public sculptures in the UK. He has works in public collections at the Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool, the National Portrait Gallery, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the British Council collection among many others.