

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



'Old age is a shock, but I still enjoy it': Sir Anthony Caro vows to keep working until he's 100

The artist, 89, who has no plans to retire, has just unveiled a new exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in London

Nick Clark



Sir Anthony Caro, widely regarded as Britain's greatest living sculptor, has vowed to continue making artworks until he is over 100-years-old.

The 89-year-old, whose acclaimed work ranges from small pieces to monumental sculptures, unveiled a new exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in London yesterday. Without making art he would "be bored".

He said: "I hope to carry on for another 10 or 12 years if I'm lucky. It's what I like doing. Old age is a shock, but I still enjoy making the works."

The Park Avenue Series comprises 10 abstract sculptures of similar sizes; the largest stretches 25 foot long and eight foot tall. They are made out of steel pipes, beams, disks and agricultural tools.

Sir Anthony said after an acclaimed 50 year career he was still "just beginning" adding he had the same enthusiasm for the art form.

"It's something to get up in the morning for and I look forward to going into the studio. I would be bored if I didn't do that," he said. "I've chosen a very pleasant life because it's something I like doing."

He has worked at the same studio in Camden for the past four decades, and works “a full day, every day except for the weekends”.

The latest exhibition, his first with Gagosian, grew out of a commission for New York, which fell through after two years of regular visits to the city.

“I abandoned that because I couldn’t raise the money and I didn’t want to spend my life trying to raise money,” he said. “Yet I had made these quarter sized models and I suddenly saw parts of sculptures, so I cannibalised them.”

Sir Anthony worked as an assistant to Henry Moore early in his career. His breakthrough came in the early 1960s with a series of steel abstract sculptures, which were credited with changing the face of the art form in Britain.

He said: “I did break something open at the beginning. A tremendous lot of possibilities opened up to me when that happened, and I’ve been exploring these different areas for the rest of my life. I’m fortunate in that way.”

The artist added: “Sculpture did have some assumptions and some, well, rules almost and I broke those rules. That opened things up not just for me but other artists as well.”

Sculpture is now “very lively and has a much bigger audience. There are some high level artists, and high level sculpture, but a lot is mistakenly called good. There’s a lot of muck which is called sculpture.”

While he professes not to know much about the state of arts funding in the UK, he said: “I don’t think that politicians love art in this country. I don’t know if they can be expected to because in the end I think people’s health is more important than art. But there needs to be some encouragement and I don’t think there is. In the end they love money more than art; it’s tough.”