

Wallace Chan

TITANS: A dialogue between materials,
space and time

One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London

14th February – 8th April 2022

Free to visit



A Dialogue between Materials and Time, Titans XIV, 2021. Iron, Titanium, 1,460 x 2,100 x 5,455 (mm), 930 kg

- Wallace Chan will showcase 10 of his large-scale titanium and iron sculptures at One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, as part of the building's ongoing public sculpture programme.
- The free-standing sculptural series, *A Dialogue between Materials and Time*, is an unprecedented survey of Chan as a sculptor.
- On display will be three new and never-seen-before sculptures, including one 5 metre piece that will be situated at the fountain in Cabot Square, alongside the work of renowned sculptors Henry Moore and Lynn Chadwick.

Chinese multidisciplinary artist **Wallace Chan** will showcase 10 of his large-scale titanium and iron sculptures for his exhibition *TITANS: A dialogue between materials, space and time*. Located at the vast lobby of the iconic One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, the exhibition will run from 14th February – 8th April 2022 as part of their ongoing public sculpture programme. Canary Wharf is home to London's largest collection of outdoor public art collected over 30 years with more than 75 freestanding and integrated architectural sculptures. It has a decade-long history of commissioning award winning art programmes and installation and is a long-standing celebration of culture and the arts.

The exhibition, curated by **James Putnam**, explores Chan's contemplation on the relationship between materials, space and time through titanium: a futuristic, space-age material that has

long been the subject of his experimental impulses. The russet, oxidised iron contrasts the titanium's polished silver surface and both materials evoke the passage of time; iron will eventually rust away while titanium can last for eternity.

On display will be three brand new works: *TITANS XIV*, *TITANS XV* and *TITANS XVI*. The central motif of many of these majestic, semi-figurative sculptures is a colossal head whose facial features are serene yet strong, with a peaceful aura reminiscent of a deity statue. The head is often distorted and elongated, almost anamorphic, simultaneously ancient and somewhat extraterrestrial. One of the new works, *TITANS XIV*, is a 5 metre high monolithic sculpture and will be situated at the fountain in Cabot Square, in the foreground of Canary Wharf's iconic building alongside the work of renowned sculptors Henry Moore and Lynn Chadwick.

Curator and writer James Putnam says, "*The verticality of the sculpture's elongated multi-tiered silver face creates a fitting dialogue with the 50 story steel clad skyscraper that rises behind it on the London skyline. By juxtaposing two very different sculptural materials, Chan evokes a sense of duality, where the lightness and durability of titanium is contrasted with iron's weightiness and susceptibility to corrosion.*"

Wallace Chan is one of the world's most celebrated jewellery artists, but his accomplishments in sculpture – an art form that he has been practicing for almost half a century – are less well known. As a carving apprentice at aged 16, opaque stones such as malachite, jade and coral were his materials, and auspicious Chinese motifs were his inspiration. Chan developed his skills and learnt the art of Western sculpture by visiting Christian cemeteries and admiring the marble sculptures of saints and angels. After six months of devoted monkhood in the early 2000s and having given up all his possessions, Chan found himself in the complete absence of artistic resources.

Whatever his medium, Chan is continuously driven by a fascination with materials and a desire to push them beyond their limits. Titanium, named after the immortal 'Titans' in Greek mythology, is the strongest, most durable and lightweight metal. Mainly used in the aerospace industry, titanium has been overlooked by artists due to its cost and complex production process. After many years of careful research and experimentation, Chan developed a method of working with titanium initially for his jewellery and more recently for his large-scale sculptures. Today he employs a range of sculpture techniques: from modelling and casting to carving, welding and assembling, Chan creates titanium sculptures that are very rarely seen on this scale.

Wallace Chan says, "*The large-scale titanium sculptures come from a lifetime of memories and experiences, including my early years creating carvings and sculptures inspired by Greek mythology. TITANS, named after a group of super-strong giants, connects my present to my past. The series also acts as a passage to the future; carved and sculpted with a material as strong and resistant as titanium, my sculptures act as time capsules.*"

Keith Watson, Public Art Curator, Canary Wharf Group says, "*We are very proud and excited to kick off our 2022 sculpture programme with Wallace Chan's exhibition, TITANS: A dialogue between materials, space and time. When I first encountered Wallace's work I was taken aback by the ingenuity and confidence in his practice. The use of raw construction materials and titanium is radical and surprising, full of contrasts, colour and texture, and the combination of structural lines and figurative work is unique in his work.*"

Notes to editors

TITANS: A dialogue between materials, space and time

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For further information please contact:

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About Wallace Chan:

Wallace Chan (b. 1956) is a Chinese jewellery artist, sculptor and innovator. Wallace Chan has gained worldwide recognition by becoming the first Chinese jewellery artist to exhibit at prestigious art fairs like TEFAF Maastricht and Biennale des Antiquaires.

His works are in the permanent collections of the British Museum (2019), the Beijing Capital Museum (2010), and the Ningbo Museum (2010). Chan has had solo exhibitions showcasing his jewellery and sculpture at Asia House (London, 2019); Christie's Gallery (Hong Kong, 2019), the Gemological Institute of America Museum (Carlsbad, 2011); the Capital Museum (Beijing, 2010); Kaohsiung Museum of History (Taiwan, 1999), and Deutsches Edelsteinmuseum (Idar-Oberstein, 1992). He has given talks and lectures at prestigious institutions including the British Museum (London, 2019), Royal College of Art (London, 2019); University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong, 2019), Christie's Education (Hong Kong, 2019); Gem-A (London, 2018); Sarabande Foundation: Established by Lee Alexander McQueen (London, 2018); Sciences Po (Paris, 2018); Harvard University (Cambridge, 2017); Central Saint Martins (London, 2017); V&A Museum (London, 2016) and Christie's (Paris, 2014).

www.wallace-chan.com | [@wallacechanart](https://www.instagram.com/wallacechanart)

About Canary Wharf Group

Canary Wharf Group (CWG) is the developer of the largest urban regeneration project in Europe. CWG develops, manages and currently owns interests in approximately 7.7 million square feet of office space, 0.9 million square feet of retail and over 1,000 Build to Rent apartments. CWG is the largest sustainable developer in the UK with over 11 million square feet of sustainable certified buildings. CWG also excels operationally as it purchases 100% electricity from renewable sources since 2012 and zero waste to landfill since 2009.

CWG has created a 24/7 city where people can live, work and play on the Canary Wharf estate and enjoy all the benefits: great transport links, access to green spaces and waterside living; and a wide range of amenities including an award-winning arts and events programme. Canary Wharf's retail offering comprises over 300 shops, including grocery stores, pharmacies, health clubs, bars and restaurants, all within 15 minutes' walk. The Company's current £1.3bn construction activity is composed of 500k square feet of commercial properties and over 1,100 new homes for sale and rent.

About James Putnam

James Putnam is an independent curator and writer and Senior Research Fellow: Exhibitions at University of the Arts, London. He studied Art History at London University, was Visiting Scholar in Museum Studies at New York University, and Senior Lecturer in Curating at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London (2004–2011). He founded and was curator of the British Museum's Contemporary Arts and Cultures Programme from 1999 to 2003. His book 'Art and Artifact – The Museum as Medium' (Thames & Hudson, 2000/10) surveys the interaction between contemporary artists and the museum. Since 1994, he has organised a number of critically-acclaimed exhibitions for major museums, juxtaposing the work

of contemporary artists with their collections. In the last decade, he has regularly curated projects for biennials, both in Asia and Venice.