

Richard Deacon

New Works

13 January—24 February 2024

Paris Marais



Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

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In his upcoming exhibition in Paris, Richard Deacon will present sculptures and drawings from three groups of works, each characterised by the distinct use of a different material, spanning glazed ceramic, stainless steel and pencil on synthetic vellum. The artist's work is invariably marked by his experiments with diverse materials and his deep-rooted interest in their specific consistencies and qualities. He remains faithful to the principles of craftsmanship that have driven his practice since the beginning of his career and constitute an integral part of his aesthetic. Deacon explains: 'The work in this show, which has several different materials, is all about colour, surface and shape.'

Among his most recent works are a group of sculptures in ceramic, a medium Deacon has been associated with for over 20 years. Marked by their shiny, glass-smooth finish, these works are entitled *Made of This*, after the 1983 Eurythmics song *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)*: as the artist explains, because 'they are rather succulent as objects. A lot of the ceramics I've made haven't been quite so delicious, so sweet.' The polygonal shapes are accentuated by prominently coloured rims, some of which have been rendered in contrasting hues. The final effect of the glazed surfaces is only revealed after the firing process, introducing an element of chance to his practice, otherwise usually governed by control. The artist explains: 'Colour is part of the process, but you can't tell what the glaze will look like once it is fired. What you see is never what you get and that is liberating.' Presented on low pedestals, the works encourage the viewer to look down at their reflective surfaces from above, highlighting their position in relation to the object.

The exhibition also brings together a group of small-scale stainless steel works from Deacon's *Tread* series. Consisting of rounded, organic forms, featuring variations on a distinctive wave-shaped surface, the works are characterised by both their soft curves and their sharp-cut edges, which, together with the highly polished surface, give them a workable, almost malleable quality. Deacon chooses the titles of his works to complement their associative potential. In his

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words, titles 'need to both say something about the work but also leave things open'. The *Tread* works are, as the artist says, 'a bit like shoes', recalling the act of treading with their relationship to the pedestal. Like the *Made of This* ceramics, the *Tread* sculptures have slightly rounded lower sides, giving them a 'rocking relationship to the ground' and investing their connection with the surface on which they rest with an unpredictability and a sense of almost living animation.

The sculptures are accompanied by three large drawings in pencil on synthetic vellum. A support with extensive art-historical antecedents, vellum is most often used today for technical drawing for its slightly translucent quality which lends itself to tracing. Fusing fluid freehand forms with lines drawn with a pair of compasses, a protractor and a ruler, these works include visible traces of their own construction. The artist describes himself as a 'fabricator', and explains that not knowing exactly where one is going is one of the main drivers in the act of drawing. Deacon's drawings – a constant in his practice – are autonomous from his sculptures: they do not necessarily have a direct preparatory function, and are seen by the artist as experiments in their own right.

The works in the exhibition are marked by the contrasts between sharp-cut edges and organic shapes; between lines drawn with a technical precision and freehand mark making. As the artist explains, in his work, 'the form is clear but there's also a desire for a potential plasticity or fluidity which remains latent.' Across forms and mediums, these works are united by a common sense of this potential: 'the sense of pushing and pulling against the idea of space.'

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Richard Deacon

Tread #6, 2020

Stainless steel

11.9 x 21.9 x 12 cm (4.69 x 8.62 x 4.72 in)

(RD 1054)



Richard Deacon
Tread #5 (detail), 2020
Stainless steel
12.5 x 21.3 x 8.4 cm (4.92 x 8.39 x 3.31 in)
(RD 1053)



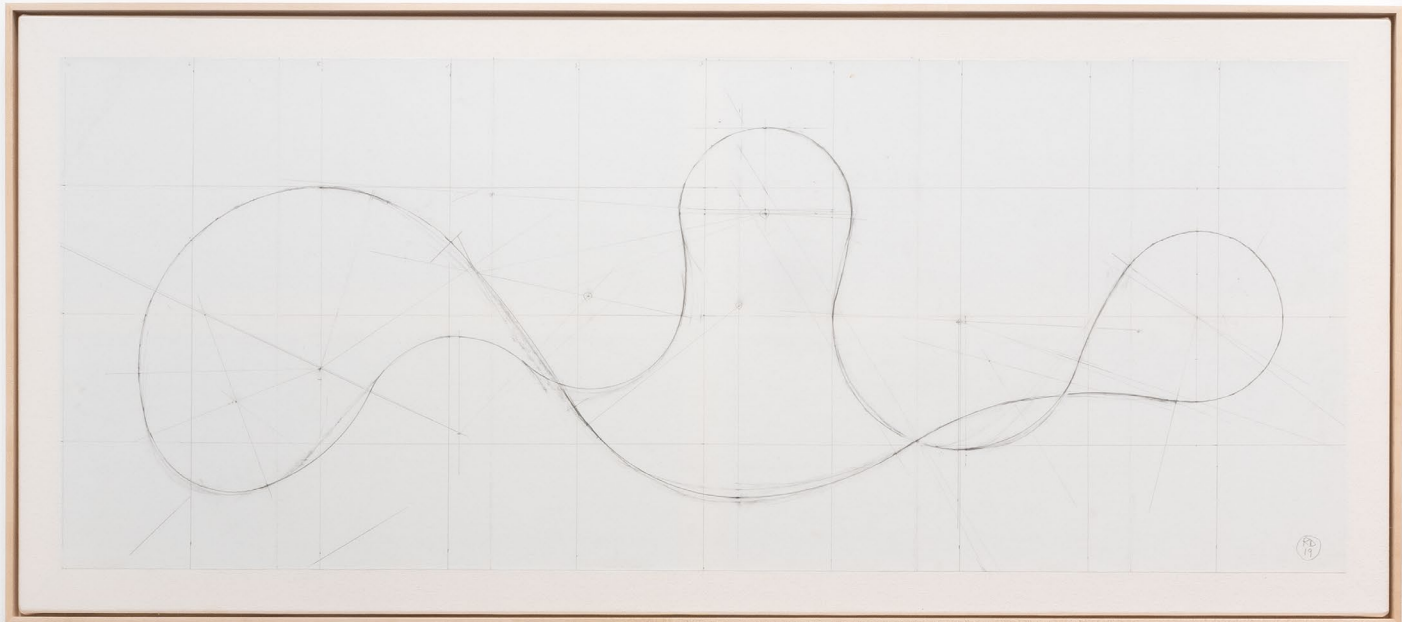
Richard Deacon

Tread #5, 2020

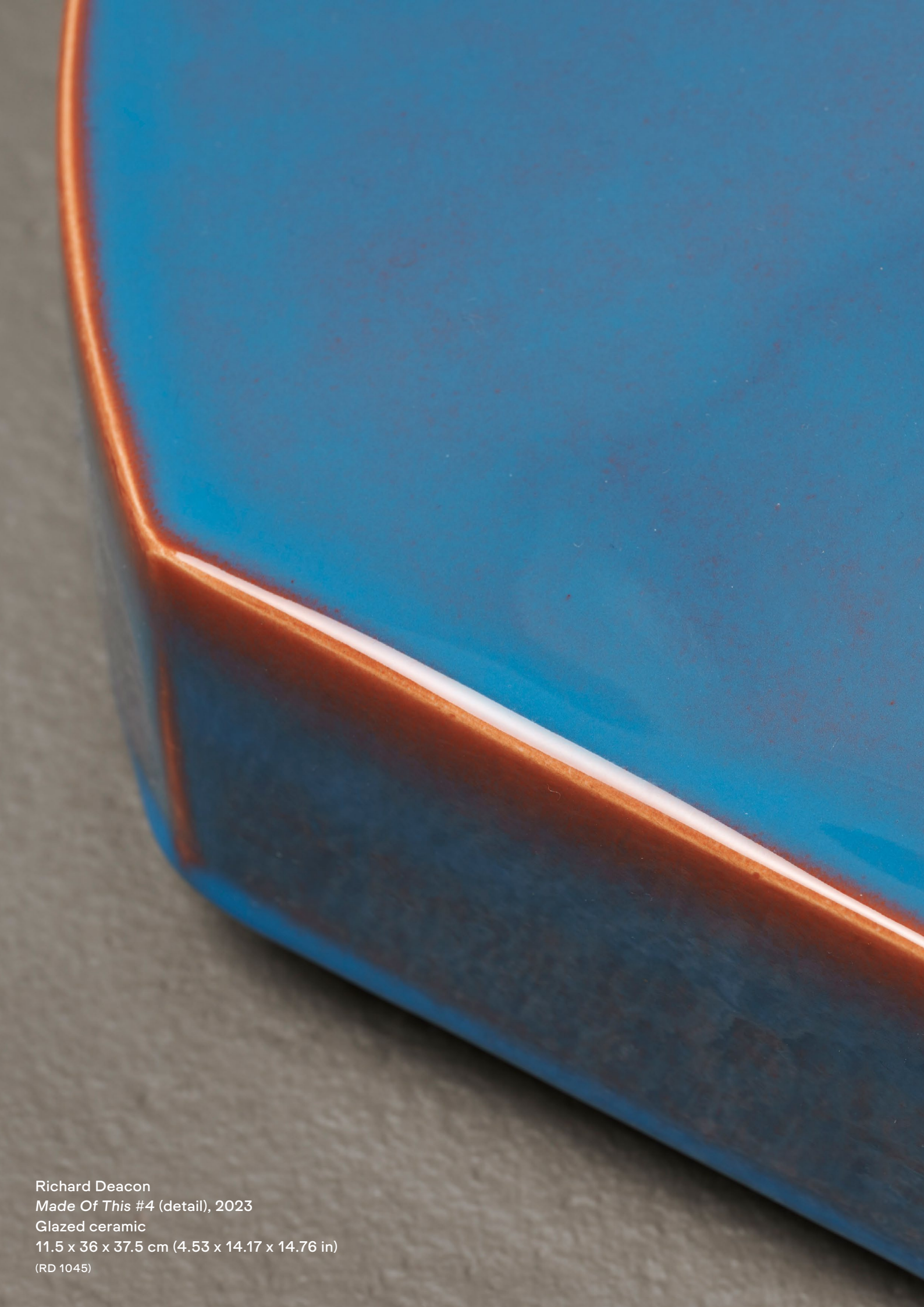
Stainless steel

12.5 x 21.3 x 8.4 cm (4.92 x 8.39 x 3.31 in)

(RD 1053)



Richard Deacon
It Only Has To Be Beautiful #1, 2019
Pencil on artificial vellum
60 x 155 cm (23.62 x 61.02 in)
(RD 1090)



Richard Deacon

Made Of This #4 (detail), 2023

Glazed ceramic

11.5 x 36 x 37.5 cm (4.53 x 14.17 x 14.76 in)

(RD 1045)



Richard Deacon

Made Of This #4, 2023

Glazed ceramic

11.5 x 36 x 37.5 cm (4.53 x 14.17 x 14.76 in)

(RD 1045)



Richard Deacon
Made Of This #5 (detail), 2023
Glazed ceramic
12 x 40 x 38.5 cm (4.72 x 15.75 x 15.16 in)
(RD 1046)



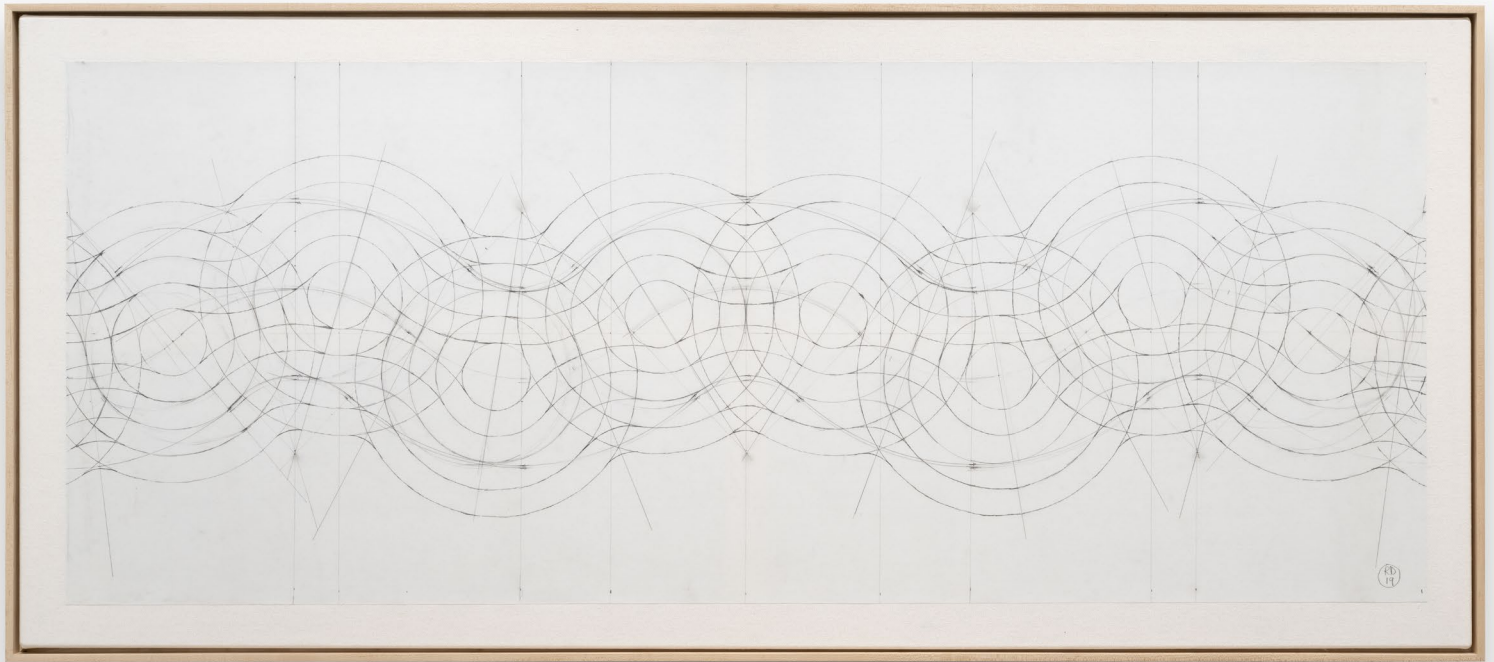
Richard Deacon

Made Of This #5, 2023

Glazed ceramic

12 x 40 x 38.5 cm (4.72 x 15.75 x 15.16 in)

(RD 1046)



Richard Deacon
It Only Has To Be Beautiful #2, 2019
Pencil on artificial vellum
60 x 180 cm (23.62 x 70.87 in)
(RD 1091)



Richard Deacon
Made Of This #2 (detail), 2023
Glazed ceramic
11.5 x 35.5 x 35.5 cm (4.53 x 13.98 x 13.98 in)
(RD 1043)



Richard Deacon

Made Of This #2, 2023

Glazed ceramic

11.5 x 35.5 x 35.5 cm (4.53 x 13.98 x 13.98 in)

(RD 1043)



Richard Deacon

Tread #2, 2020

Stainless steel

7 x 27.5 x 15.5 cm (2.76 x 10.83 in x 6.1 in)

(RD 1050)



Richard Deacon

Made Of This #3 (detail), 2023

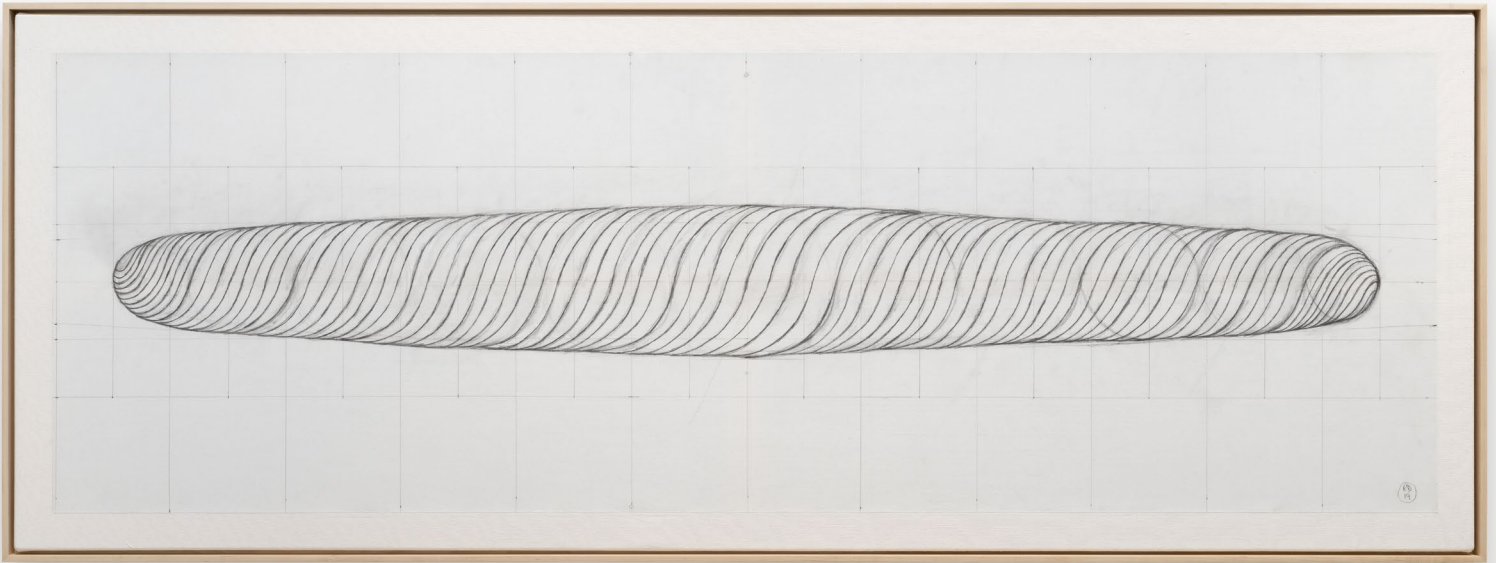
Glazed ceramic

11 x 43 x 33.5 cm (4.33 x 16.93 x 13.19 in)

(RD 1044)



Richard Deacon
Made Of This #3, 2023
Glazed ceramic
11 x 43 x 33.5 cm (4.33 x 16.93 x 13.19 in)
(RD 1044)



Richard Deacon
It Only Has To Be Beautiful #3, 2019
Pencil on artificial vellum
60 x 155 cm (23.62 x 61.02 in)
(RD 1092)

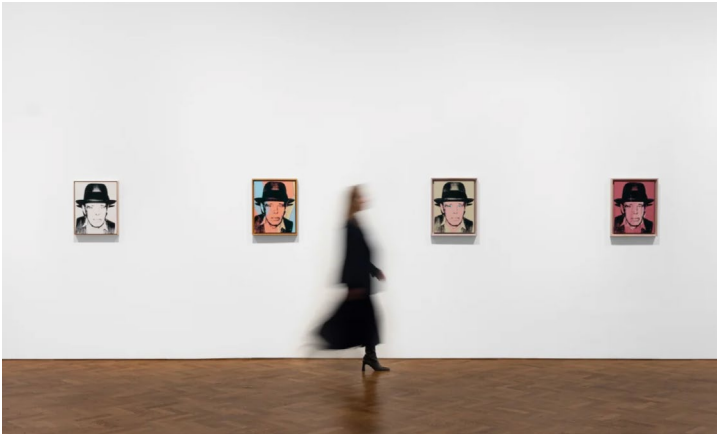
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About the artist



Born in 1949 in Bangor, Wales, Deacon lives and works in London. He studied at the Somerset College of Art in Taunton, followed by the Saint Martin's School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London, graduating in 1977. His first solo exhibition was held the following year at The Gallery in Brixton, London. This was followed by shows at the Riverside Studios (1984), Tate Gallery (1985) and Whitechapel Art Gallery in London (1998) and at Tate Gallery in Liverpool (1999). His work has been exhibited at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2003); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2007); Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg; and Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2010); CAC Málaga (2012); and Tate Britain, London (2014). Between 2015–16, a major retrospective was shown at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan; and Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany. The first comprehensive survey of his drawings was shown at the Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany in 2016, followed by his first major museum survey in the USA at the San Diego Museum of Art in 2017. His teaching activities include professorships at the Chelsea School of Art, the London Institute and the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris. Among other honours, he was awarded the Turner Prize in 1987, made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by France in 1997, and became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1999.

Current & upcoming exhibitions



Ely House, London

Andy Warhol
The Joseph Beuys Portraits
Until 9 February 2024



Drawn into the Present:
Portraits on Paper
Group show
Until 9 February 2024



Ely House, London

Erwin Wurm
Surrogates
15 February—14 April 2024



Paris Marais

Tom Sachs
"Painting"
17 January—24 February 2024



Paris Pantin

Alvaro Barrington
They Got Time:
YOU BELONG TO THE CITY
Until 27 January 2024



Re-Enchantment
Group show
17 February—24 May

Current & upcoming exhibitions



Salzburg Villa Kast

Richard Deacon
Tread
Until 20 January 2024



Marcin Maciejowski
Around You
Until 20 January 2024

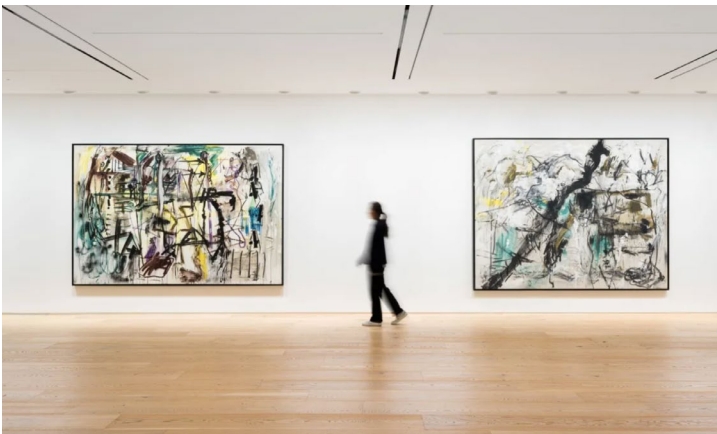


Salzburg Villa Kast

Irving Penn
The Bath
27 January—13 March 2024



Jonathan Lasker
Painting and Drawing
27 January—13 March 2024



Seoul Fort Hill

Emilio Vedova
Colour and Gesture
Until 13 January 2024



Nostalgics on realities
Group show
26 January—9 March 2024