



ANGELA PALMER
ADRENALIN

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19 November - 23 December 2014

THE FINE ART SOCIETY
CONTEMPORARY

ADRENALIN

A UNIQUE EXPLORATION OF A FORMULA ONE ENGINE

Artist Angela Palmer was given unprecedented access to the highly secretive world of Formula One engineering to realise the extraordinary collection of sculptures for this show.

In collaboration with Renault Sport F1, the artist deconstructed the world's most successful F1 engine, the RS27, with the help of their pioneering engineers at their F1 laboratories in Paris. The V8 engine powered Fernando Alonso to the world championship in 2006 and won a further four consecutive titles with Sebastian Vettel from 2010 to 2013. Renault design and build F1 engines for Infiniti Red Bull Racing, Lotus F1 Team, Scuderia Toro Rosso and Caterham F1 Team in the FIA Formula One World Championship.

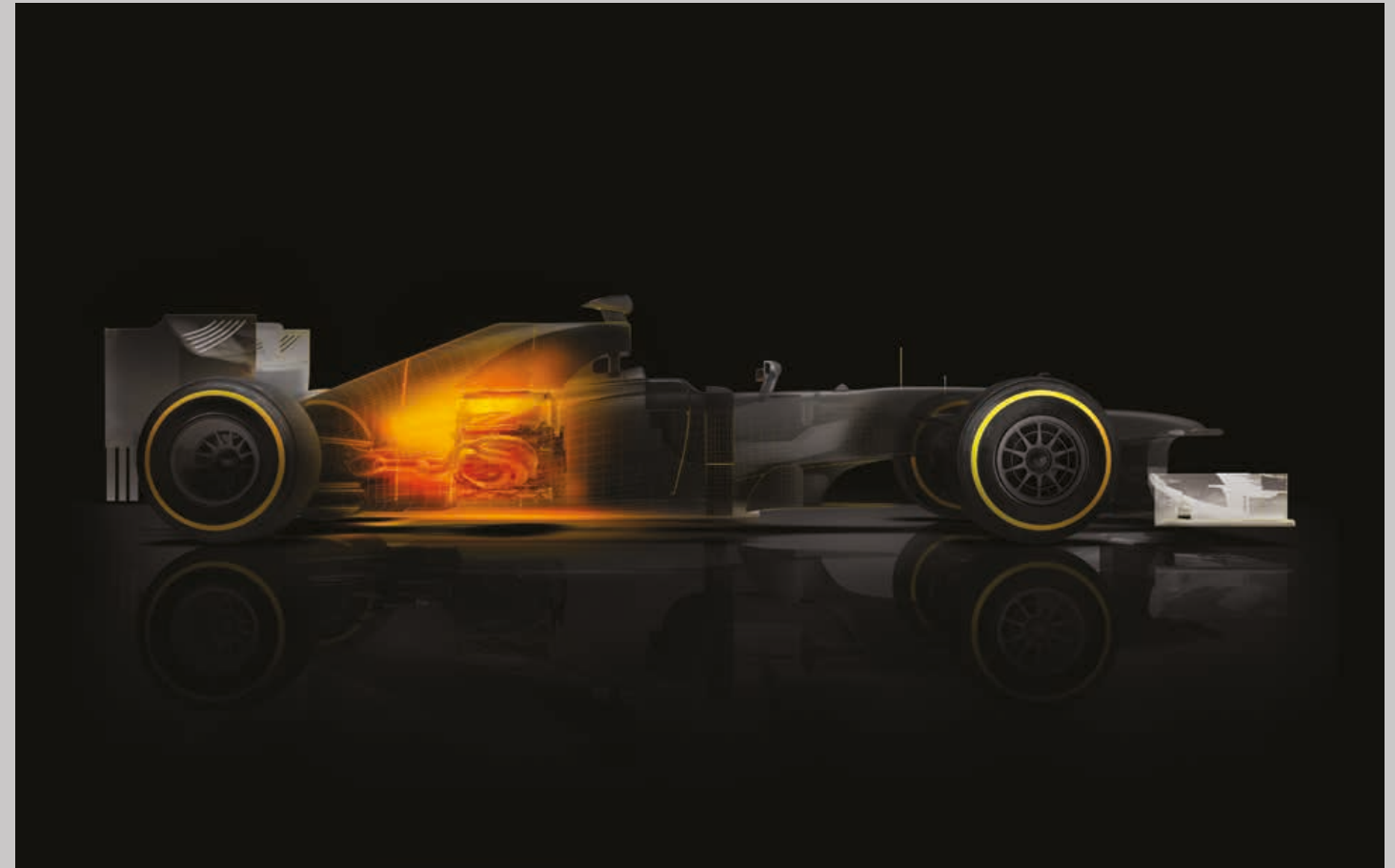
The artist was supplied with the engineers' CAD drawings as well as unique engine parts from the V8, each numbered and inscribed; it is material normally guarded with the strictest secrecy to prevent industrial espionage. However a dramatic rule change from 2013 to 2014 saw the V8 replaced by the downsized turbocharged V6 equipped with newly developed energy recovery systems. It was this change that provided the opportunity for Renault to unlock its sensitive data to Palmer.

The artist visited Renault's HQ in Viry-Chatillon where she found a scene more akin to a neuroscience laboratory than a factory. 'I was shown a set of components, each the product of the most complex scientific skills, engineered to the last micron to perform at their optimum. The dramatic evolution in engineering has unintentionally bestowed these components with a by-product to their primary function – aesthetic beauty of form, alas rarely appreciated beyond their creators in this closely guarded world.' In her sculptures, Palmer shifts the focus from function and mechanism to the visual power of form and material.

The artist used a variety of materials dictated by the sculptural language of the individual components and dramatically upscaled them - for example, she has recreated the V8 crankshaft into a seven-foot high 'totem' in walnut while one of the small cogs inspired a four-foot column in Portland stone. Drawn to the 'intestinal' qualities of the exhaust systems, she doubled their size, creating the right in walnut and the left in red-hot orange, reflecting its searing colour in action (the V8 exhaust reaches 1000 degrees celsius within 5 seconds). Palmer has also recreated the V8 engine life-size in glass, by hand drawing the cross-sections of the engine on multiple sheets of glass. The impression is the engine 'floating' in space, accompanied by headphones with the sound of the much lamented V8, now replaced by the less thunderous V6. The glass re-creation is shown in the exhibition alongside the actual V8.

Ann Hindry, the curator of Renault's renowned art collection, said the work created by the artist is 'so much related to what Renault has always searched for in its long relationship with art: a sharing of knowledge and creativity'.

Palmer also became fascinated by the world's F1 circuit tracks. 'Seen in the abstract, they are redolent of Eastern calligraphy'. She has recreated a collection of tracks, including Monaco, Belgian Spa-Francorchamps, Singapore, Brazil, Shanghai and Suzuka in wall mounted neon.



After visiting the British Grand Prix at Silverstone this year, the artist was inspired to create an installation in which visitors could experience the visceral, primal roar of Formula 1. She discovered that Nick Mason of Pink Floyd - who has a serious passion for performance cars – had recorded the sounds of his stable of cars driven to their limits at Silverstone with his test driver Mark Hales. He generously allowed her to use the recordings of his three 8-cylinder cars - a 1920s Bugatti, a 1930s Alfa Romeo and a 1980s Tyrrell. A remix of sounds was created, with the RS27 providing the climax. The exhilarating sound of four increasingly advanced 8-cylinder engines - spanning almost a century - can be experienced in an intimate room in the gallery, flooded by synchronised light.

Finally, to capture that most potent ingredient of Formula One – the heightened sense of risk – the artist borrowed a helmet worn by an F1 driver last year and cast it in delicate crystal glass, reminding us of the ever-present fragility faced by drivers in the fastest motor sport in the world.



FOREWORD

This fascinating exhibition by Angela Palmer challenges us to take a deeper look at man-made objects associated with motorsport. By isolating constituent parts of a car engine and making them in different materials and on a different scale, she helps us to see the beauty and organic quality that is inherent in them. The twists and undulations of an exhaust system, executed in walnut, allow us to appreciate the beauty of the design that resembles a section of intestine or a vine branch. There is a certain charm to many of the works, as if they have been given a chance to ‘show off’ for the first time, no longer a tiny part in a much bigger play.

Those of us who love speed and the inevitable adrenalin rush that comes with it, rarely take the time to appreciate the individual elements which are usually hidden from view. But we can only attain that speed by every piece, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, fulfilling its purpose. Just a quick glance at the V8 Renault engine, drawn on 25 sheets of glass, shows us how enormously complex modern Formula One engines are today. And often, translating an object into a different material can give it a completely new persona, such as the Formula One helmet blown in glass which brilliantly reminds us of man’s fragility in the pursuit of going ever faster.

I hope you will enjoy the exhibition and see things in a new way, just as I have.

EARL OF MARCH
Goodwood House, Goodwood

IMMACULATE FICTIONS

Angela Palmer is a very traditional artist in that she demands that we look at the world anew, and do that by the confrontation of actual physical things. This is very much in the way of classic Dutch still life painters who changed function into metaphor, almost as a side effect to the invention of a searing pictorial reality. This collection of dazzling new works shows us things we thought we knew and then reveals that we only understood them as visual rumour. The stunning clarity of these new objects in the world, instantly explains the grace of precision, made even more potent by the enigma of their contradiction of materials. The shock of their perfection is palpable and leads to the only possible conclusion: that we must be in the presence of immaculate fictions constructed from immaculate facts.

Palmer has re-invented anatomies before, laying bare the wonder of humans drawn in glass or transposing the ghost core of African forests into the disbelieving centres of European cities. This is the artist as medic, the artist as environmental ambassador, and as logistician using her powers of communication as the sharpest chisel in the box. Now she has scrutinised man's most fetishistic companion: the machine, the automobile. But the car engines she so lovingly took apart and the most sacred mantras in the industry are not worshipped or converted to symbols of futuristic power, nor over-revved into adolescent catalogues of auto-porn. There is nothing suffocating, jealous or devouring in the dynamic beauty of their sensuous stillness that she insists we see.

The petrifying dogma of 'truth to materials' has thankfully been dead these many years, but something of its weary plateau still exists as a moral high ground for those who still demand that an artist's uniqueness is gauged in the demonstration of skills. This tiredness is equally matched by some current forms of the lazy conceptualism that only ever produce minimal illustrations of its own self-awareness. The vibrancy of Palmer's works brush aside these cobwebs in a single joyous stroke. Her materials are alive and kicking, glowing with ideas and a delight to engage and brood. Brood because there is a fearsome mortality in these sculptures. The writhing octopus-like forms of the red and walnut exhausts have only ever breathed the purest of air, but their shadows know of petrol and smoke. The crystal helmet and the V8 glass chest also bear a darker weight of meaning inside their brittle transparency. All exposed for our speculation.

Part of this physical poetry comes from the purity of its rendition, part from the shifts in scale. When Palmer changes the size of a known thing to make it eerily unaccustomed, she does not use Pop Art gigantism, crowded and indulgent with signs of the hand that made it big. She performs the opposite and reduces that rude signature to a whisper, allowing the work to become profoundly monumental. She is not engaged in a simple scaling up processes with all the grandeur of its banality so predictably intact. Her changes in dimension are shifts inside the grammar of making, creating a multilingual interpretation where each of our recognitions of the work overlaps. The original inspirational object and its new sculptural identity are brought together inside the presence of the process that transformed them. These are the three dimensions that make the works so unique, generous and immaculate.

BRIAN CATLING

Professor of Fine Art, Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University



WORKS





PART 1

American walnut wood
213 x 34 x 27 cm
Edition of 4

PART 2

(not illustrated)
Crankshaft in mirror polished bronze
213 x 34 x 27 cm
Edition of 4



PART 3

Bronze
30 x 33 x 33 cm
Edition of 6



PART 4

Bronze

30 x 8.5 cm and 27 x 8.5 cm

Edition of 6

PART 5

Bronze

29 x 17 x 2 cm

Edition of 6





PART 6
Portland stone
27 x 135 x 27 cm
Edition of 4





PART 7

Resin
61 x 103 x 67 cm
Edition of 4

PART 8

(not illustrated)
Exhaust in mirror polished bronze
61 x 103 x 67 cm
Edition of 4





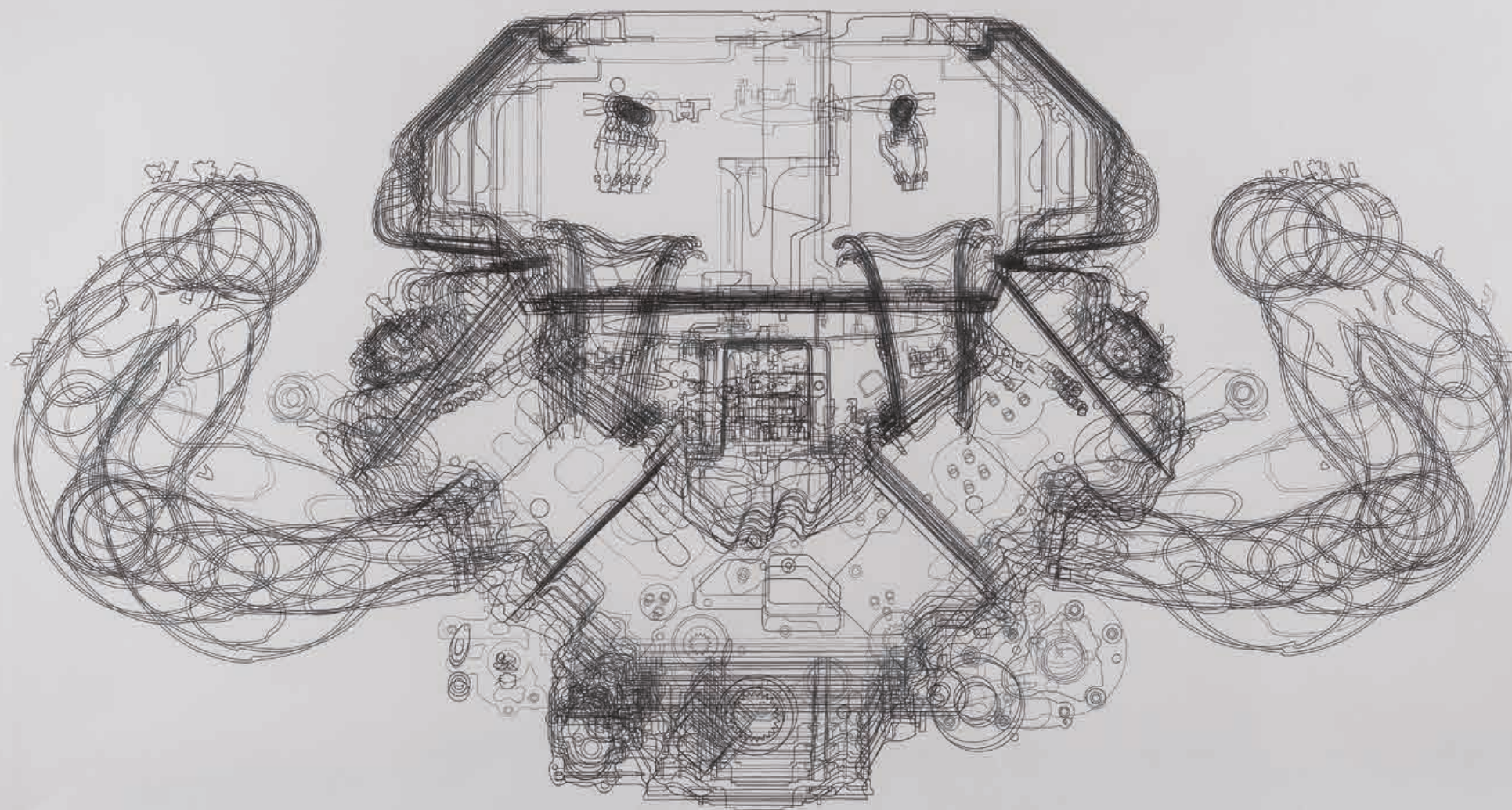


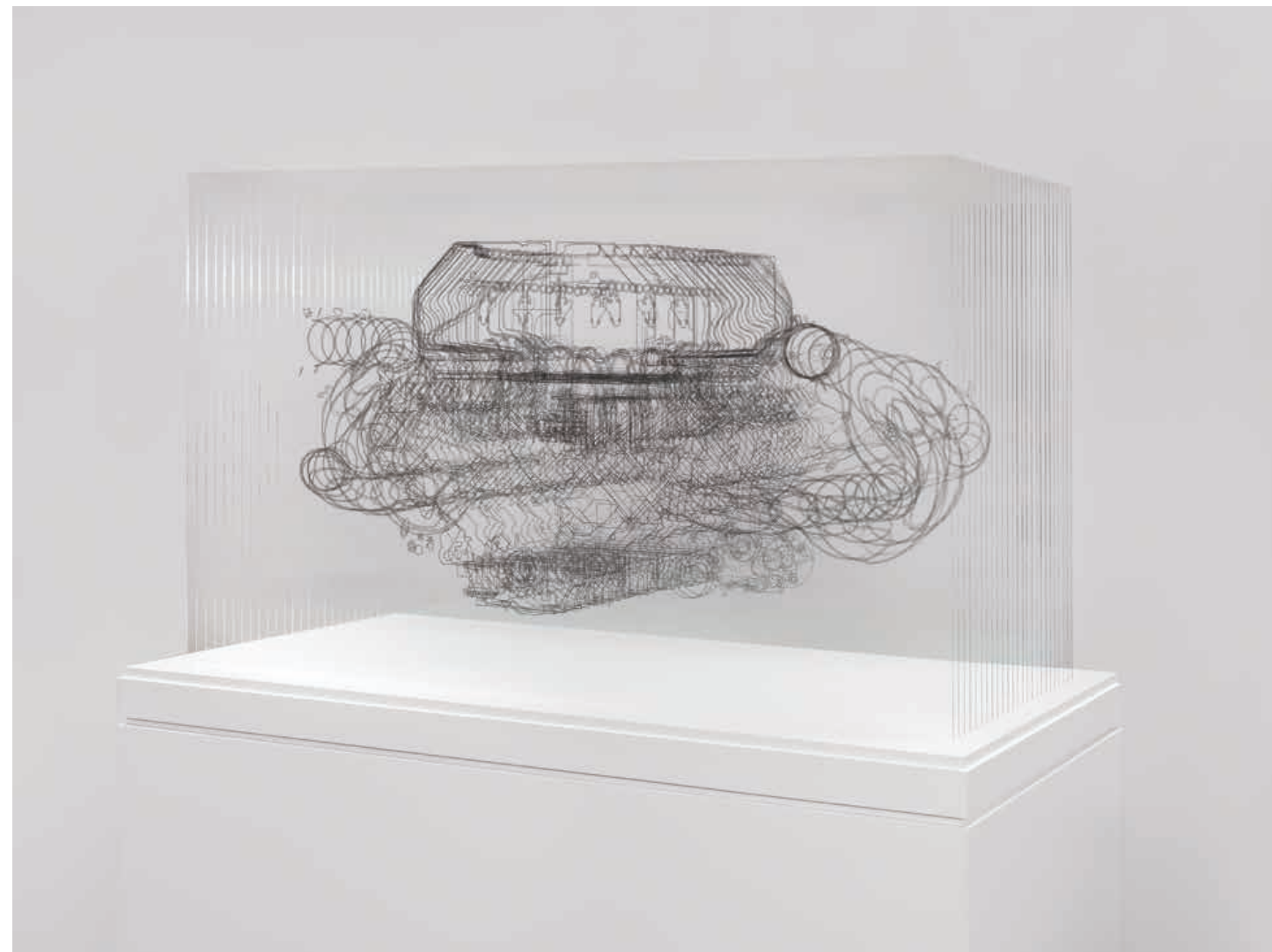
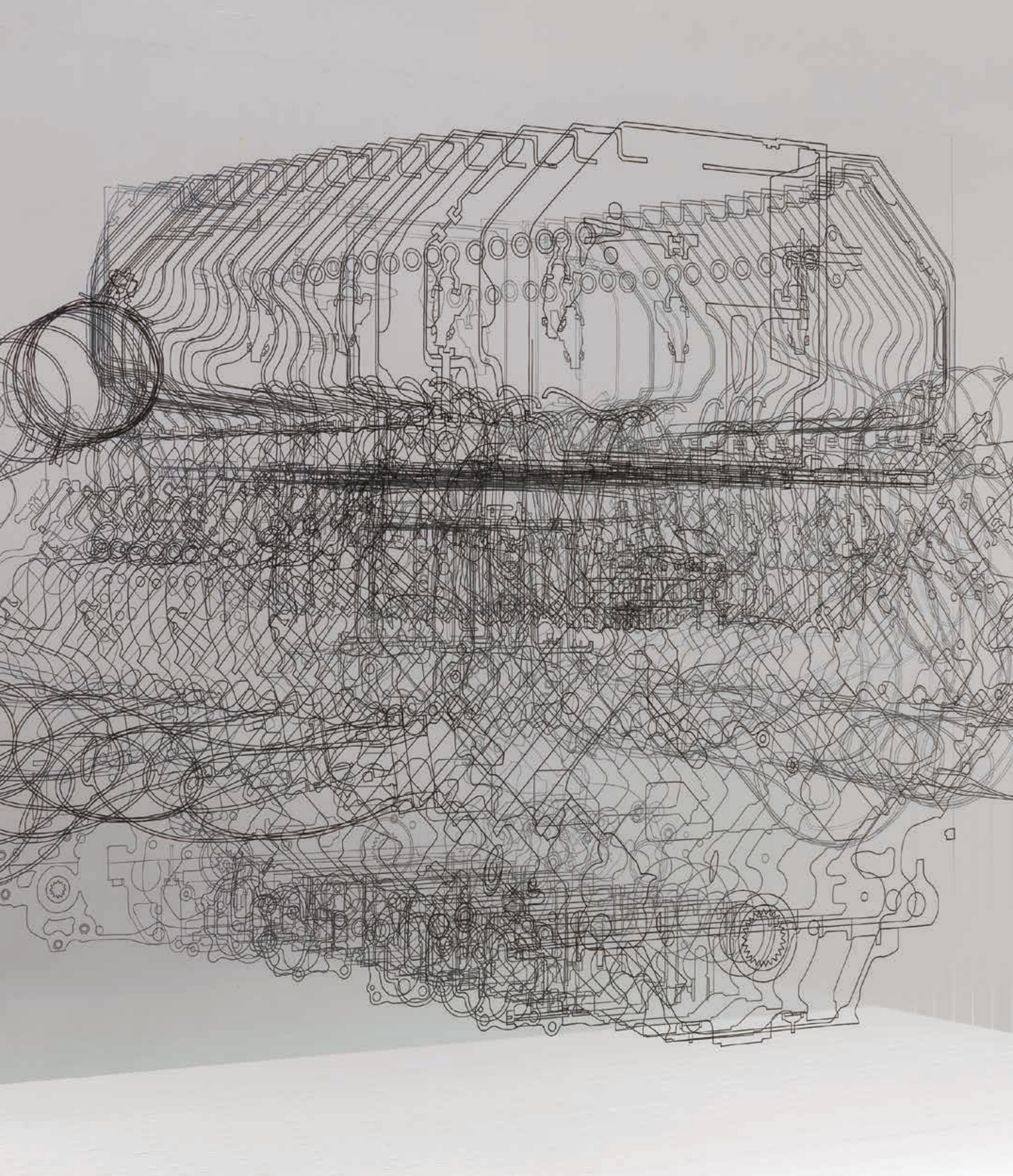
PART 9

American walnut wood

61 x 103 x 67 cm

Edition of 4





V8 ENGINE

Ink drawing on 25 sheets of Mirogard glass

75 x 119 x 72 cm

Edition of 3



F1 HELMET

Cast from a helmet worn by a F1 driver

Hand blown in crystal glass

25 x 24 x 34 cm

Edition of 6

RACE TRACK 2: SUZUKA INTERNATIONAL RACING COURSE, JAPAN

Neon mounted on aluminium
62 x 103 x 14 cm
Edition of 6 + 2 ap

Next page

RACE TRACK 1: CIRCUIT DE SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM

Neon mounted on aluminium
72 x 105 x 14 cm
Edition of 6 + 2 ap

RACE TRACK 2: SUZUKA INTERNATIONAL RACING COURSE, JAPAN

Neon mounted on aluminium
62 x 103 x 14 cm
Edition of 6 + 2 ap

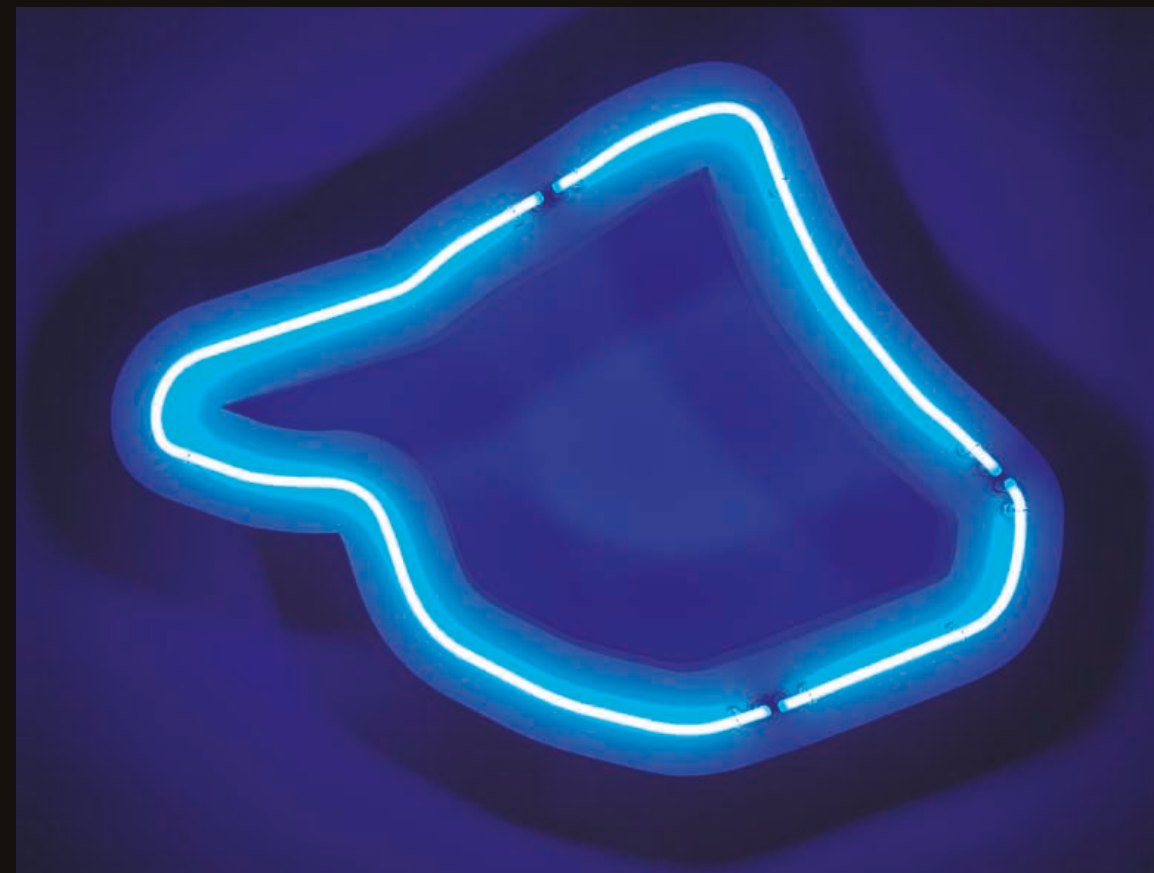
RACE TRACK 3: GOODWOOD CIRCUIT, UNITED KINGDOM

Neon mounted on aluminium
80 x 103 x 14 cm
Edition of 6 + 2 ap

RACE TRACK 4: AUTÓDROMO JOSÉ CARLOS PACE, BRAZIL

Neon mounted on aluminium
70 x 104 x 14 cm
Edition of 6 + 2 ap









Previous page

RACE TRACK 5: SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT, CHINA

Neon mounted on aluminium

65 x 96 x 14 cm

Edition of 6 + 2 ap

RACE TRACK 6: MARINA BAY STREET CIRCUIT, SINGAPORE

Neon mounted on aluminium

61 x 102 x 14 cm

Edition of 6 + 2 ap

RACE TRACK 7: CIRCUIT DE MONACO, MONACO

Neon mounted on aluminium

50 x 103 x 14 cm

Edition of 6 + 2 ap

TO THE LIMITS

SOUND AND FILM INSTALLATION: A COLLABORATION WITH RECORDINGS BY NICK MASON

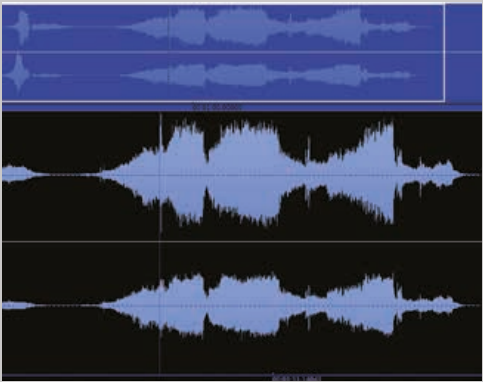
The artist has collaborated with Nick Mason of Pink Floyd to produce a sound installation featuring the engine sounds of four very special 8-cylinder cars driven to their limits - three classic cars belonging to the musician, dating from the 1920s, culminating with the iconic roar of the world's most successful F1 engine, Renault's RS27.

Angela Palmer worked with electronic musician Jake Williams to create the remix using recordings made by Nick Mason of his 1920s Bugatti T35B; his 1930s Alfa Romeo 8C 2300; and his 1980s Tyrrell 011. Mason, whose passion for cars and motor racing 'predates any involvement with music', made the recordings at Silverstone with his test driver Mark Hales. The exhilarating sound of four increasingly advanced 8-cylinder engines - spanning almost a century - can be experienced during the exhibition in an intimate room at the gallery, flooded with synchronised light, devised by the artist and Dom Ellis, light specialist.

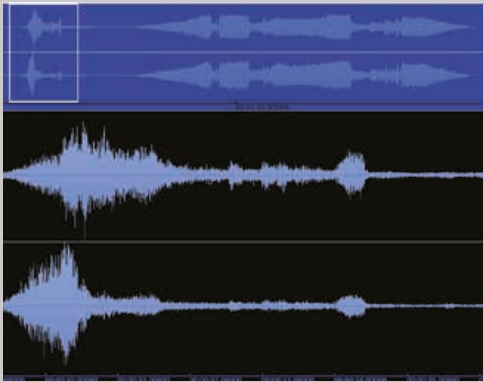
Sound Waves



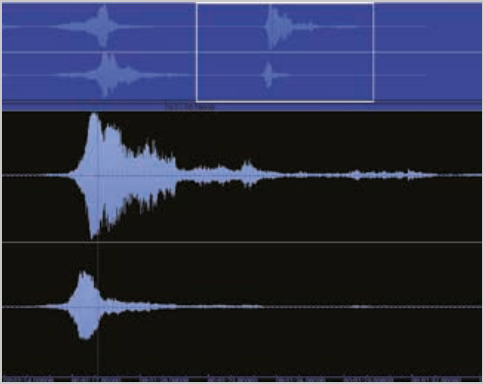
Nick Mason taking his Bugatti to the limits



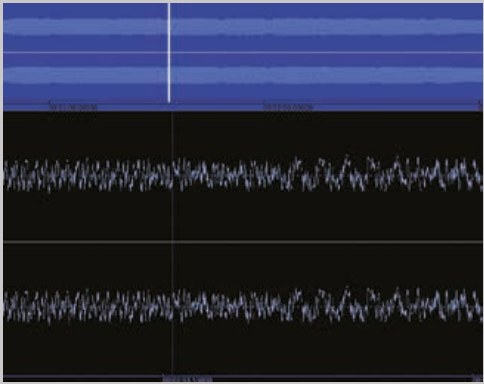
Bugatti T35B



Alfa Romeo 8C 2300



Tyrrell 011



Renault RS27

Nick Mason on his 1920s Bugatti T35B (top speed 130mph, 0-60mph: 6secs):

‘The 35B is a pure racing car...It is also unspeakably noisy, traumatising sheep and cows in its wake, as I once found out when I was severely reprimanded by an apoplectic farmer – I had foolishly stopped, mistaking his gesticulations for the sign of an enthusiast.’

On his 1930s Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 (top speed 120mph, 0-60mph: 9.4secs):

‘The history included the fact that this car was driven by Enzo Ferrari in his last-ever race...I was a late developer as an Alfa Romeo enthusiast, but when the lady selling me the 6C (his previous Alfa) handed over its documentation she showed me a photograph of her late husband racing the car. The photo revealed an Alfa with a vintage Bentley in hot pursuit. I recognised the Bentley instantly: it was my father racing at Silverstone. Any car that could manage to hold off my dad had to be good. That was it. I saw the light immediately’

On his 1980s Tyrrell 011 (top speed 185-190mph, 0-60: 2.9secs):

‘My first drive in the Tyrrell was unforgettable. During a general test session at Donington the traffic slowed noticeably; I thought it must have been stopped because of an incident and I’d missed the red flag. In fact, the Tyrrell was so quick in every form of movement that the rest of the cars seemed to be moving in slow motion.’

Stephane Rodriguez, project leader of Renault’s V8 RS27 which powered Fernando Alonso to F1 World Championships in 2006, and Sebastian Vettel with four consecutive F1 titles, 2010 – 2013:

‘The engine produces over 750bhp and the top car speed is over 330kph – not far off the cruising speed of a private light aircraft. Acceleration from 0-60kph can be done in 1.6 seconds, approximately the same as an F16 fighter plane....the heat produced by the engine is also such that the exhausts of the RS27 will reach up to 1,000 degrees C. To give you an idea of this unimaginable temperature, volcanic lava is between 700 degrees C and 1,200 degrees C.’

ANGELA PALMER

Education

2005 - 2007
MA, Royal College of Art, London

2002 - 2005
Bachelor of Fine Art, The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art , University of Oxford (Awarded Scholarship and Fitzgerald Prize)

Selected Exhibitions

2014
Adrenalin, solo show, The Fine Art Society, London
What Marcel Duchamp Taught Me, The Fine Art Society, London
Brain of the Artist, National Portrait Gallery of Scotland (permanent collection)

2013
Searching for Goldilocks, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Washington (permanent collection)
Natural Selection, The Fine Art Society, London

2012
Life Lines, solo show, Waterhouse and Dodd, London
Ghost Forest, permanent installation of rainforest trees, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Carmarthenshire, Wales
Carving in Britain, The Fine Art Society, London
Self-portrait, frontispiece, *The Fear Index* by Robert Harris

2011
Child Mummy, Egyptian Galleries, The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (permanent collection)
Unwrapped: The Story of a Child Mummy, Cast Gallery, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Scope Basel, Switzerland

2010 - 2012
Ghost Forest, installation of rainforest trees, Museum of Natural History and Pitt Rivers, Oxford

2009
Ghost Forest, installation of rainforest trees, Thorvaldsens Plads, Copenhagen
Ghost Forest, installation of rainforest trees, Trafalgar Square, London
Breathing In, Wellcome Collection, Euston Road, London

2008
Unravelled, solo show, Waterhouse and Dodd, London
Art fairs in Abu-Dhabi, London and Palm Beach, Florida

2007
Royal College of Art Society and Thames and Hudson Award
Polly Campbell Award, Jerwood Space, London
Inside Out: Body Imaging Sculptures, solo show, Hunterian Museum, The Royal College of Surgeons, London

2006
Self Portrait, Divided Selves: The Scottish Self-Portrait from the 17th Century to the Present, Fleming Collection, London
Self Portrait, Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh

2005
Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London
Solo show, Bourne Fine Art, Edinburgh
Winchester Festival of Science and Art
Modern Art Oxford, (Ruskin Show)
Director's Chair Exhibition, Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh

2003
Group Show, Fine Art Society, London
Medical Sciences Department, University of Oxford

Collections

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
The National Portrait Gallery of Scotland
The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Washington
Wellcome Trust Collection, London
The Royal Veterinary College
H. H. Sheikha Salama Hamden Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi
Lawrence Graff
Kenneth Clark Art Collection, Pembroke College, University of Oxford
Exeter College, University of Oxford
Institute of Medical Sciences, Aberdeen University
Royal Bank of Scotland



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Risk is, I believe, the most potent ingredient of Formula 1, that most crazy, dangerous, glamorous and intoxicating of sports. It should be no surprise that Renault Sport F1 was prepared to take the risk when I first approached them about a year ago to collaborate on this project - risk is in their DNA. But I still pinch myself that they had the guts to agree - allowing me to deconstruct and reassemble their baby, the RS27, the most successful Formula 1 engine in the world. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all who helped me at Renault; particular thanks to Nathalie Fiancette for her patience and generosity and to Jean-Philippe Raquin for imparting his prodigious engineering knowledge. My sincere thanks also to Adam Parr for arranging one of the most productive and exciting introductions of my life.

No F1 driver can operate without a team behind him, nor indeed can many artists. I could not have created this exhibition without the skills and determination of the craftsmen involved. Many of them freely admitted they were taken out of their comfort zone by the complexities; none ever flinched.

Creating the intestinal exhaust, twice its scale in walnut, was particularly challenging, but the team at Waywood in Chadlington, Oxfordshire, pulled it off. Clive Brooks said: 'Working with wood is unlike working with inert materials - it is a medium that breathes moisture in and out continuously, moving and twisting accordingly, and resisting attempts to impose your will on it.'

Asking for the most advanced Formula 1 components to be reinterpreted in bronze using a 6000-year-old lost wax method did not in the slightest faze the staff at the Pangolin foundry at Chalford near Stroud. Rungwe Kingdon, who leads the team at Pangolin Editions said: 'The conversion of 21st century high-tech machines, through the latest in computer design and 3d printing into handmade investments and metal finishing is an evolution in reverse. The technology that transformed the sculptural arts and gave birth to the metals industry six millennia ago is still the most viable and economical way to produce demanding artworks in bronze.' My thanks to all at Pangolin who worked with me on the project.

When I saw 'Deano' Fitzgerald's Harley Davidson outside his office at Axtell Perry Symm, the specialist stone company in Oxford, I knew he was my man. I was entranced by the form of a cog, or more precisely the 'double driven gear' and worked with 'Deano' and his colleague Stephen Byrne to turn it, like Medusa, into stone. One of the most advanced engine components of the 21st century has been reborn in Portland limestone formed at the end of the Jurassic period, 145 million years ago. My thanks to all the specialists at Axtell Perry Symm for their expertise and providing the stone for the sculpture.

The concept for the final work proved so hard to realise it was almost abandoned. To symbolise the fragility of man and machine in pursuit of the fastest speed in the world I wanted to create a F1 helmet in delicate glass. I was lent a crash helmet worn by a leading F1 driver and spent many dispiriting months consulting specialists who all said it couldn't be done. Then I met Keith Smith at Tudor Crystal in his office at Stourbridge in Birmingham; he said it wouldn't be easy, but he was

up for the challenge. He and his team cast a mould of the helmet from pure brass, weighing over 20kgs. Molten lead crystal from the furnace, at a temperature of 1400°C, was then mouth-blown into the mould, forcing the crystal into every detailed crevice. By the final stage in the process, the helmet had passed through up to 12 pairs of hands. When Keith unveiled the completed glass helmet, it immediately resembled a membrane, perfectly capturing the vulnerability I wanted to achieve. Bravo to the team at Tudor Crystal.

I would like to thank Nick Mason for sportingly collaborating on the sound installation; Jake Williams for his musical skills and Dom Ellis for his light fantastic; Lord March for his foreword and his enthusiasm as the project evolved; my former Oxford professor, Brian Catling for his essay, his formidable wisdom and his generosity in sharing it.

I'd like to thank Kate Bryan and her team at The Fine Art Society, and a special word of thanks to Sara Terzi for her catalogue design; my assistant Alison Munby for her good humour and ability to speak more French than me; Antonia Russell-Clark, for her invaluable skills and talent - without her I'd be in a strait-jacket; and finally, my husband Jeremy and our three children Jack, Will and Rosie for continuing to support me in my mad adventures.

ANGELA PALMER
Oxford, November 2014

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Cover

F1 HELMET

Cast from a helmet worn by a F1 driver, hand blown in crystal glass

25 x 24 x 34 cm | Edition of 6