

# THE PIPER GALLERY

**Peter Hide and Walter Early – *Protesting Time***

**Tuesday 15th October – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013**

Peter Hide and Walter Early have, over the years, spent considerable time in Ironbridge at the Museum of Steel Sculpture (MOSS). Last year Early took the opportunity, supported by the Henry Moore Foundation, to complete a summer residency at the museum with Hide. A dynamic synergy exists between their practices, with common ground in some of their formal approaches – both artists play with energy and the potential for movement – pushing and pulling within compact spaces. The weight and gravitas of Early's work retains a playful and joyous quality whereas Hide's sculptures suggest a sense of barely contained force. Despite the heaviness and visual density of the steel they use, there is vitality and originality to their work. These are two artists separated by a generation who have found interest in each other's practice. The Piper Gallery is excited to present these artists side by side for the first time.

Constructed sculpture had been explored by the Russian avant garde in the early 20th Century but it had been most fruitfully developed by Pablo Picasso, the welder Julio Gonzales and the American, David Smith. Later, welded steel sculpture found fuller expression in the abstract work of the English artist Anthony Caro. Working in the wake of Caro's success and acceptance, sculptors in Britain during the 60s and 70s grappled with the pervasiveness of Caro-style openness, seeking to find an alternative way to make sculpture.

Hide's father and grandfather were engineers, so steel was a material with which he was familiar from an early age. To him, steel offers unique freedoms as it can be joined and cut without the application of any mechanical pressure. The power of Hide's sculptures derives in a large part from his willingness to express feeling with subtle references to emotional states. Hide seeks to create an object that stands against time. As Ben Street notes in his accompanying catalogue essay, 'Mutability of form meets the permanence of matter; somewhere between the two is a moral truth about the demise of the body and the desire to sustain it.' His works are abstract, although allude to mood and other aspects of human experience and occasionally reference the body to imply movement and tension.

Since his residency at MOSS, Early has experimented with colour – looking at powder coating application as a preservative measure. Early applies glossy, inorganic colours to buckled and twisted sections of leftover steel plate. He is interested in the history of the offcuts. The bright coating transforms their steel surface and plays with perceptions of mass, weight and volume, individualising the pieces and preventing them from turning back into scraps. As in Hide's work, the artistic act is a protest against time.