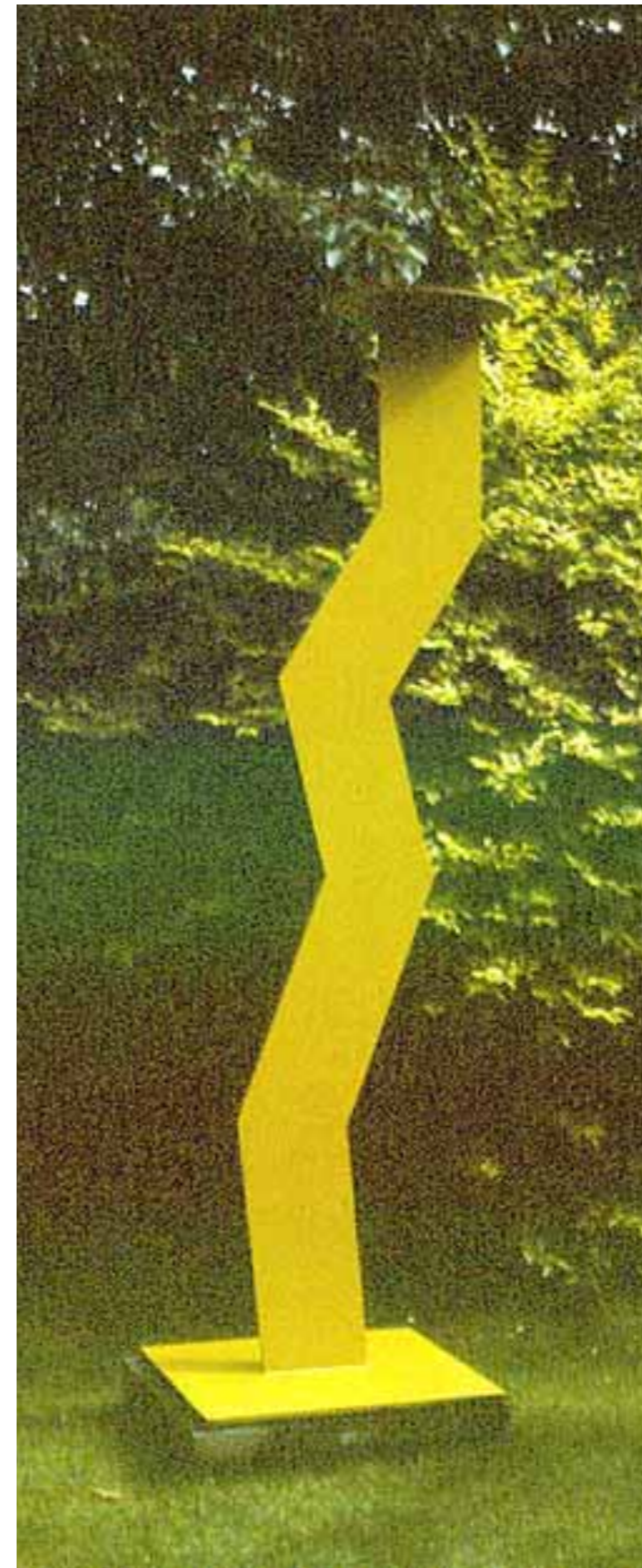




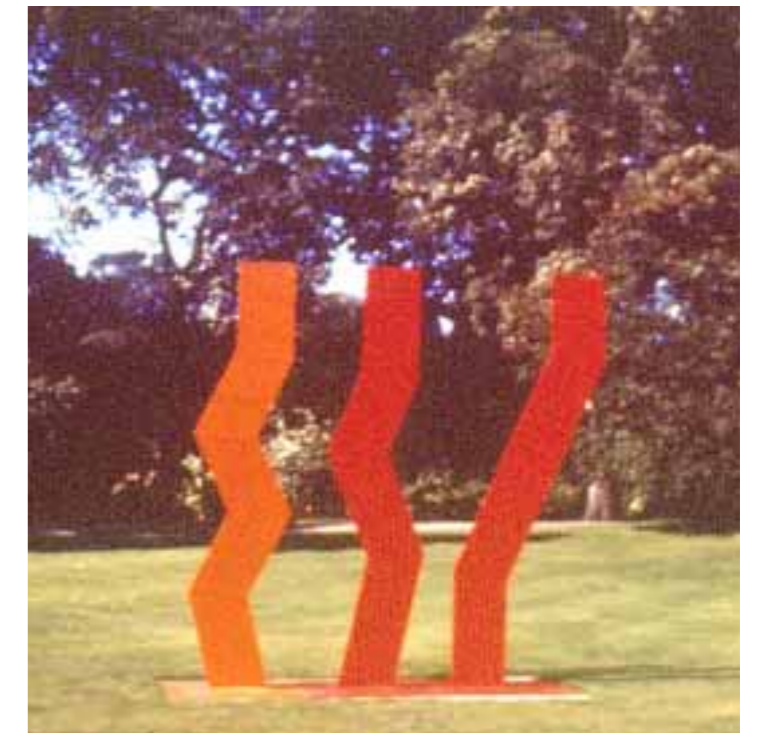
Pl. 2 (Cat. 88)
Aphrodite, 1958, Bronze,
 190.5 x 73.7 x 50.2 cm
 (75 x 29 x 19³/₄ in),
 Edition of 4



Pl. 3 (Cat. 122)
Spring Totem 2, 1962–63,
 Bronze, rosewood and stone,
 101.6 x 44.5 x 155 cm
 (40 x 17¹/₂ x 61 in), Unique



Pl. 4 (Cat. 133)
No. 5, 1965, Steel, painted
 mustard, 205.3 x 66.8 x 56.3 cm
 (80⁷/₆ x 26¹/₄ x 22¹/₆ in), Unique



Pl. 5 (Cat. 141)
3/4/5, 1966, Steel, painted red
 and tangerine, 254 x 236 x 79 cm
 (100 x 93 x 31 in), Unique,
 Tate Gallery, London

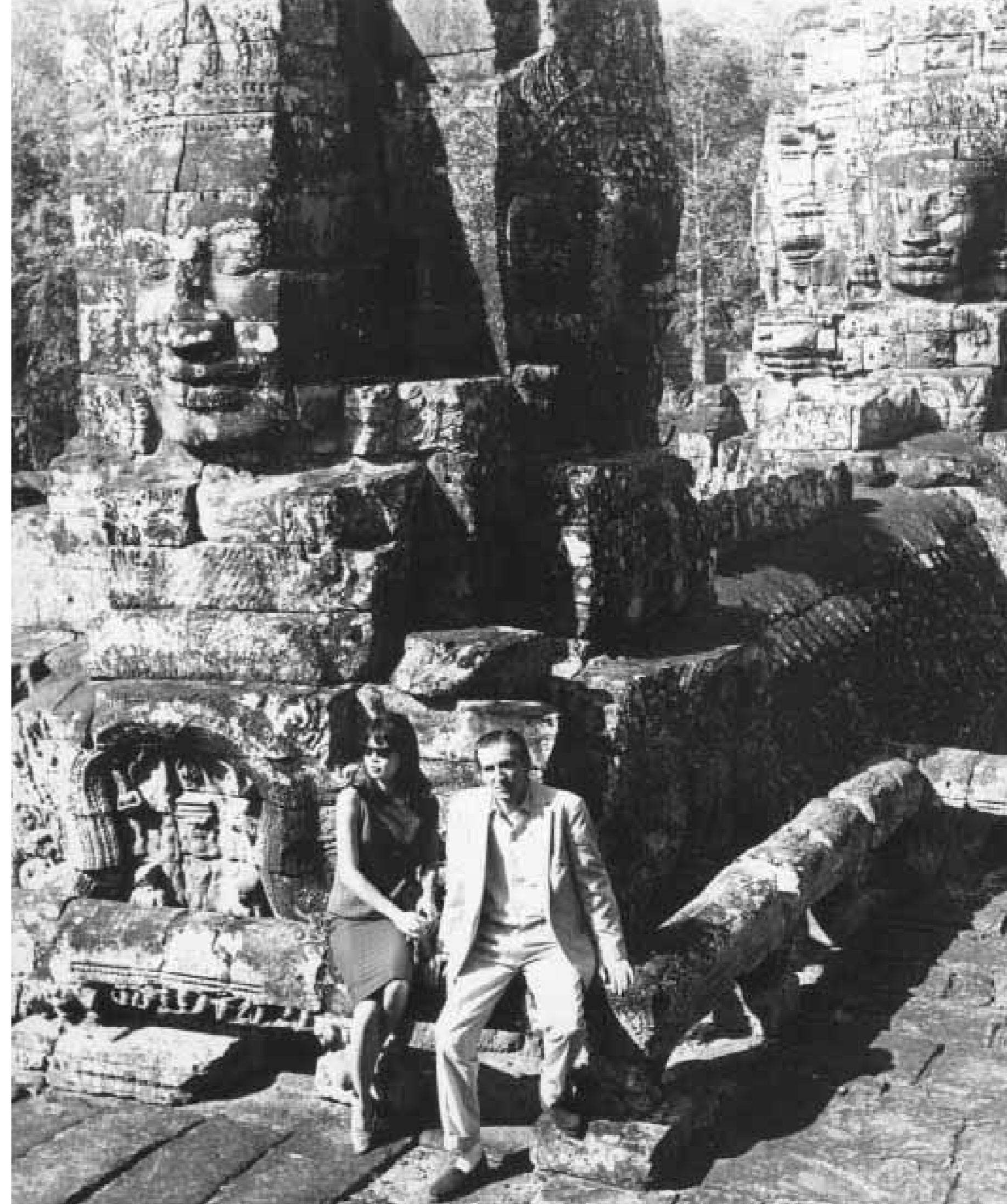
collection to the Tate Gallery as the McAlpine Gift, in the hope that the larger works could be housed and stored more appropriately and that all of the works would be viewed by the public. Twelve sculptures by Turnbull were part of the Gift, including *Horse*, 1954; *Janus 2*, 1959 (Cat. 92); *No.2*, 1963–64 (Cat. 126); *3/4/5*, 1966; and *Parallels*, 1967. These pieces were added to the formidable collection of Turnbull's works held by the Tate, which now range from *Mobile Stabile*, 1949, to *Queen I*, 1987 (Cat. 254).

Works from all periods of Turnbull's sculpture are now owned by many private individuals and public collections in the United Kingdom and around the world. McAlpine also gave *Oedipus 2*, 1962 (Cat. 117), to the Sydney Opera House and *No.8*, 1965 (Cat. 136), to the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The last phase of Turnbull's Minimalist period involved

using pre-manufactured pieces such as wattle fences, wooden grids and trestle tables. Although they were made of a much heavier substance than plastic, light was able to pass through their open structures. They were also open to flexible positioning; the elements of *Wattle*, 1971 (Cat. 180, Fig. 28) form mazes, enclosures and barricades, while the grids of *Sculpture*, 1971 (Cat. 182), can be spread or stacked. *Trestle*, 1971 (Cat. 181), which was exhibited in the Tate during Turnbull's 1973 major retrospective and bought by the Tate, is an idealised trestle table, an essential part of his surroundings as an artist. It is also an example of one way to raise the bulk of a piece above the ground. Like the paintings of this time, these pieces are an artistic response to Turnbull's daily working environment as an artist and make explicit his interest in the physical nature of sculpture.

Fig. 29: William Turnbull and Kim Lim in Angkor Wat, 1962



OVERLEAF
Fig. 30
Turnbull's Southey
Road studio, 1966–68

1 Patrick Elliott, 'A consistent way of thinking', in *William Turnbull: Sculpture and Paintings*, curated by David Sylvester, essay by Patrick Elliott, p.44.

2 William Turnbull, '1960', in 'William Turnbull: painter sculptor', *Uppercase 4*, 1960. Selection of statements from 1949–60 and photographs of 70 works. Unpaginated.

3 William Turnbull, 'Images without temples' (statement and photographs), *Living Arts*, no.1, 1963, p.15.

4 Colin Renfrew, 'The sculptures of William Turnbull', *Sculpture in the Close: An Exhibition of the Works of William Turnbull*, Jesus College, Cambridge, 24 June–31 July 1990, pp 6–15 (p.6).

5 Turnbull, 'Images without temples', p.15.

6 Ann Elliott, 'Gate 1972', *Sculpture at Goodwood: British Contemporary Sculpture 1997–98*, Goodwood: Sculpture at Goodwood, 1997, pp 72–3 (p.72).

7 William Turnbull, in Ann Elliott, 'Gate 1972', pp 72–3 (p.72).

8 Patrick Elliott, 'A consistent way of thinking', p.52.

9 Turnbull, in Ann Elliott, 'Gate 1972', p.72.

10 William Turnbull, in 'William Turnbull in conversation with Colin Renfrew, Waddington Galleries, 6 May 1998', *William Turnbull: Sculpture and Paintings*, exh.cat., Waddington Galleries, London, 24 June–18 July 1998, London: Waddington Galleries, 1998, p.6.

11 *ibid*

12 Turnbull, 'Images without temples', p.15.

13 Turnbull, '1959', *Uppercase 4*.

14 William Turnbull, 'The joining edge', Statement, *Gazette*, no.1, 1961, p.4, ed. Lawrence Alloway, Gordon House and William Turnbull.

15 *ibid*

16 Richard Morphet, 'Commentary', *William Turnbull: Sculpture and Painting*, exh.cat., Tate Gallery, London, 15 August–7 October 1973, London: Tate Gallery, 1973, p.59.

17 *ibid* p.60.

18 William Turnbull, in 'A twitch away from the straight and narrow', Marina Benjamin, *Evening Standard*, Thursday, 30 November 1995.

19 William Turnbull, Statement, in 'Colour in sculpture', Statements by Philip King, Tim Scott, David Annesley and William Turnbull, *Studio International*, vol.177, no.907, January 1969, pp 21–4 (p.24).

20 Turnbull, 'Colour in sculpture'.

21 Patrick Elliott, 'A consistent way of thinking', p.56.

22 *ibid*

23 Turnbull, 'Notes on sculpture', p.199.

24 William Turnbull, 'Liverpool', *Studio International*, vol.184, no.946, July–August 1972, p.23.

25 Turnbull, 'Liverpool'.

26 Gene Baro, 'Turnbull's nudes', *London Magazine*, vol.6, no.6, vSeptember 1966, pp 40–46 (p.40).

5

Metamorphosis:
new idols

1974 onwards

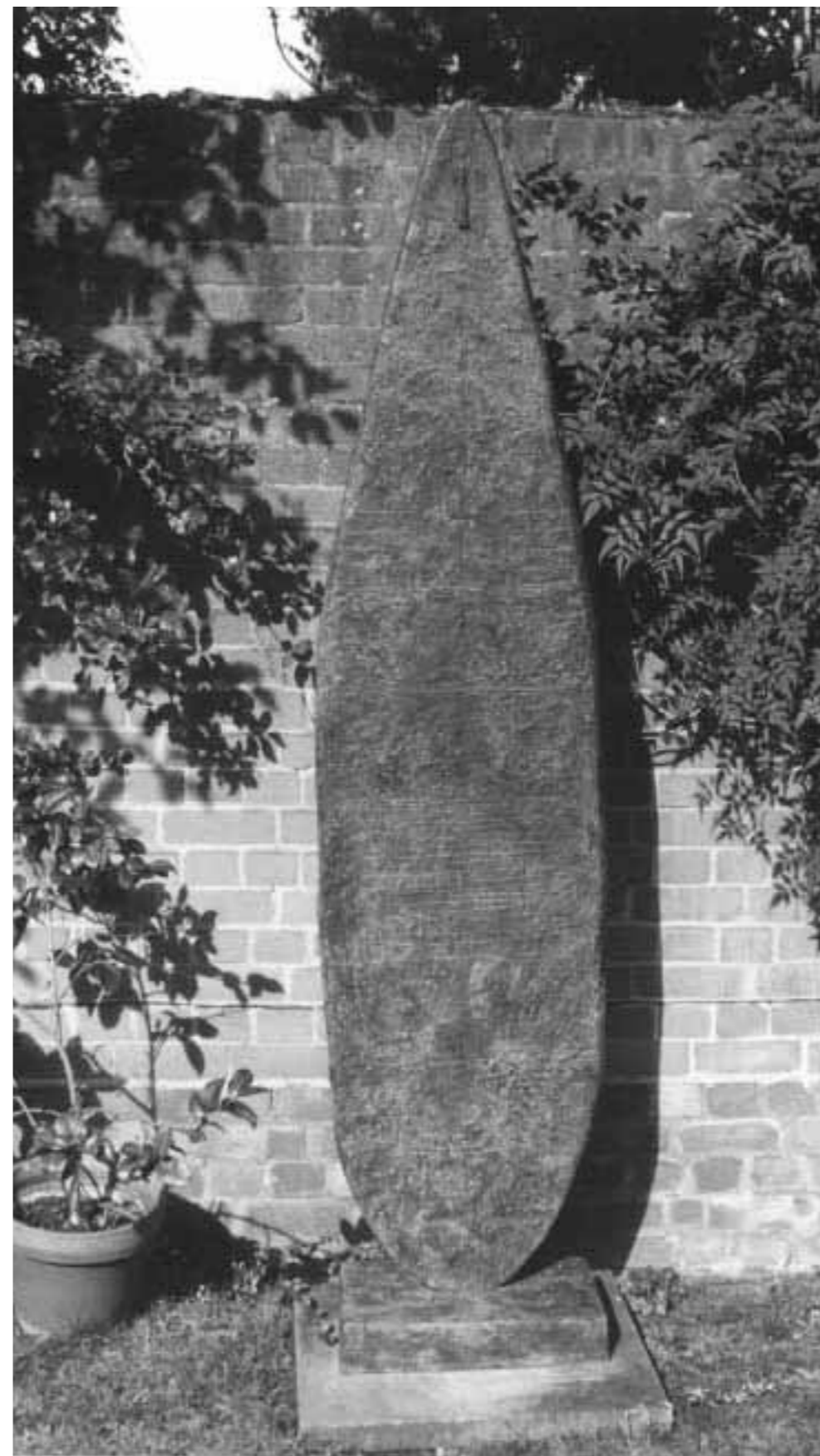
In the early 1970s, Turnbull concluded that he had taken his industrial minimalist work as far as he felt he could. He ceased making sculpture for several years and focused upon painting. In 1973, Richard Morphet curated a major retrospective of Turnbull's work at the Tate. When Turnbull saw the extensive exhibition, spanning every part of his career up to that point, he became conscious of the common themes and ideas that had informed his oeuvre, despite attempting to avoid consistency. In response to his experience of the Tate show, Turnbull decided to redefine his earlier ideas about sculpture. He began to make hundreds of small figures in a clay that remained permanently hard once dry, without the need for firing. These swiftly modelled pieces allowed Turnbull to discover new directions for his sculpture through the process of creation. From 1979 onwards he cast some of these pieces in bronze and developed others into larger versions to create a new series of idols. They are often intriguing mixtures of fertility figurines and prehistoric tools, with titles such as *Axehead Torso*, 1979 (Cat. 194), and *Large Metamorphic Venus*, 1983 (Cat. 223).

Turnbull went on to develop his archetypal tool figures into much larger pieces. He no longer disguised but celebrated the practical inspirations for some of these works. *Queen 1*, 1987, is both an idol and a skateboard, while the solemn *Queen 2*, 1988 (Cat. 257, Fig. 31), is also a surfboard. *Large Horse*, 1988–89, which is more than 3m high, is a highly stylised image of a horse's head. However, it is also clearly a gigantic adze – a form of axe that has been in use since the Stone Age and a tool that Turnbull himself employs in shaping pieces of wood. Here is another example of Turnbull transforming a practical object and the experience of creating art into an artwork.

By changing the situation of these simple shapes, Turnbull transforms them from tools into objects of spiritual contemplation. His earlier *Idols* echoed ancient figures that had become dislocated from any specific religious context; they provoked a sense of lost divinity and of the spiritual nature of art. The new idols not only reflect the spirituality of art in a secular society but also go on to ask questions about the value and use of the various subjects and of artworks themselves. As artworks rather than as equipment they create an experience of pieces of sculpture as physical and potentially practical objects. They achieve this through their overt reference to tools. They go beyond the earlier *Idols* by creating new versions of archetypal figures from unusual sources.

Turnbull explores how experiences metamorphose into art as he creates his new style of archetypal, totemic figures in bronze, revisiting the themes of balance, *Masks*, *Heads*, *Horses* and *Idols* in new ways. These are a metamorphosis of his earlier *Idols* informed by the clear, often slender forms and simple surfaces of his minimalist columns and paintings.

Fig. 31 (Cat. 257)
Queen 2, 1988,
Bronze,
214 x 48.9 x 27.9 cm
(83½ x 19¼ x 11 in),
Edition of 4



They usually have smoother surfaces than his first *Idols*, inscribed with fine marks, and Turnbull has experimented with different-coloured patinas. The later idols are overt combinations of abstract figures, primitive tools, modern objects and religious statues, exploring ideas of change and metamorphosis and the relationship between the past, present and future. However, these idols are also detached and unassertive, resisting polemic and drama, inviting the viewers to invest them with whatever metaphoric symbolism they wish, rather than imposing any values upon them.

Many of these new idols are highly abstracted figures, created from simple forms. However, rather than reduce the range of images and interpretations of the works, this simplification of the shapes and smoother textures of these idols has intensified their effect. By reducing any naturalistic element to a minimum, this formal concentration focuses attention on the symbolic flexibility of the works and the archetypal nature of their shapes.

In 1995, David Sylvester argued that these sculptures derive a detached, non-religious 'sacred' quality from their 'incredible lightness of being', which 'mainly belongs to the work of recent years'.¹ These recent works achieved 'a wonderful poise in space, a vibrant balance matching what he had previously achieved in the *Aphrodite*'² he created in 1958. The new beautiful, slender forms resemble ancient figures, tools and plants, but Sylvester wondered if they have a more personal resonance for Turnbull. He wonders whether these sculptures 'are not also an unconscious memory of the aircraft wings which he lived with for four years while a wartime pilot in the RAF. The plaques serenely carve their way through the air so that existence in space approaches a condition of pure movement or stance liberated from mass.'³

Sylvester believed that from 1979 until 1986 'the new degree of refinement, the increase in subtlety and suavity, were achieved at the not surprising expense of a loss of energy, a loss of pulse, in the images'.⁴ However, it is also possible to see works such as *Arm*, 1980 (Cat. 203, Fig. 32), and *Oracle*, 1985 (Cat. 236), as relating to Turnbull's early absurdist works from the 1940s. They combine the serious metamorphosis of human, natural and man-made sources in forms with a childlike innocence. These ostensibly simple forms stand as an affirmation of life in the face of death and the absurd. *Arm* is a stylised limb, both an arm and a branch, which appears to be waving, perhaps in a gesture of cheerful defiance. Turnbull describes *Arm* as expressing the general ambiguity of certain shapes: 'sometimes the fingers look like leaves. Sometimes, you look at a leaf and say it looks like a hand.'⁵

Like the new bronze idols, Turnbull's recent paintings are also sophisticated syntheses of some of his earlier ideas.



The catalogue attempts to list every piece of sculpture finished by William Turnbull. However, some pieces cannot be included because they have been lost or destroyed and no record or photograph survives. Several works that have been started in plaster but which have not yet been cast in bronze are also not included in the catalogue.

Titles

Several of the early sculptures were exhibited under alternative titles. The titles given here are the ones that William Turnbull has used most frequently and most recently.

Dates

The sculptures are listed in chronological order of creation. A range of dates indicates that the work was developed over a period of time. The dates of initial and subsequent castings are generally not included.

Dimensions

These are given in the form height x width x depth in centimetres with the equivalent inches given in parenthesis afterwards. Wherever possible the measurements given in the case of bronze works exclude the wooden or stone base.

Editions

As far as possible, the works are listed as unique or as an edition. In the case of editioned works, there is a maximum of one artist's cast.

Collection and location

Works held in public collections, and in public places, are listed, including those that are part of an edition. Many unique works and many editions are in private collections in the UK and across the world. Their locations have not been listed in the catalogue.

Exhibitions

Brief summaries of major exhibitions are given, along with the catalogue numbers and information about illustrations. Details are given in the list of solo exhibitions and list of selected group exhibitions.

Literature

If a work is discussed in a major book or article on William Turnbull this is mentioned briefly. Details are listed in the Bibliography.

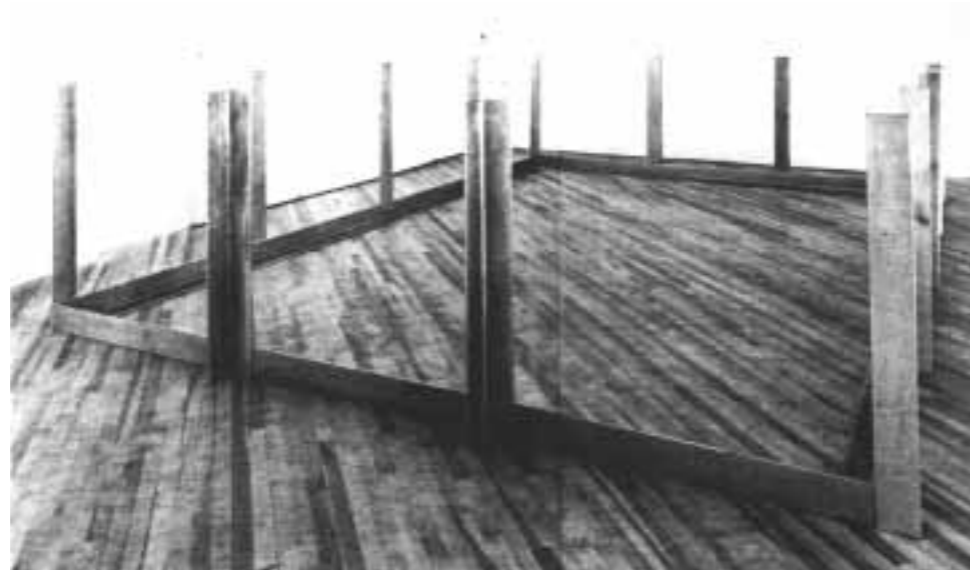
Catalogue of sculpture

Fig. 42
Workshop, 1955.
Including (Cat.57) *Idol 1*, 1955,
Bronze, 144.8 x 38.1 x 43.2 cm
(57 x 15 x 17 in), Edition of 2.

174 Enclosure 1968

Galvanised steel angle, painted silver
121.9 x 574 x 421.6 cm (48 x 226 x 166 in)
Unique

EXHIBITIONS Waddington Galleries, solo exhibition, 1970, Cat. 3 (illus. in b&w), Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 77 (illus. in colour p.15 and in b&w p.62)

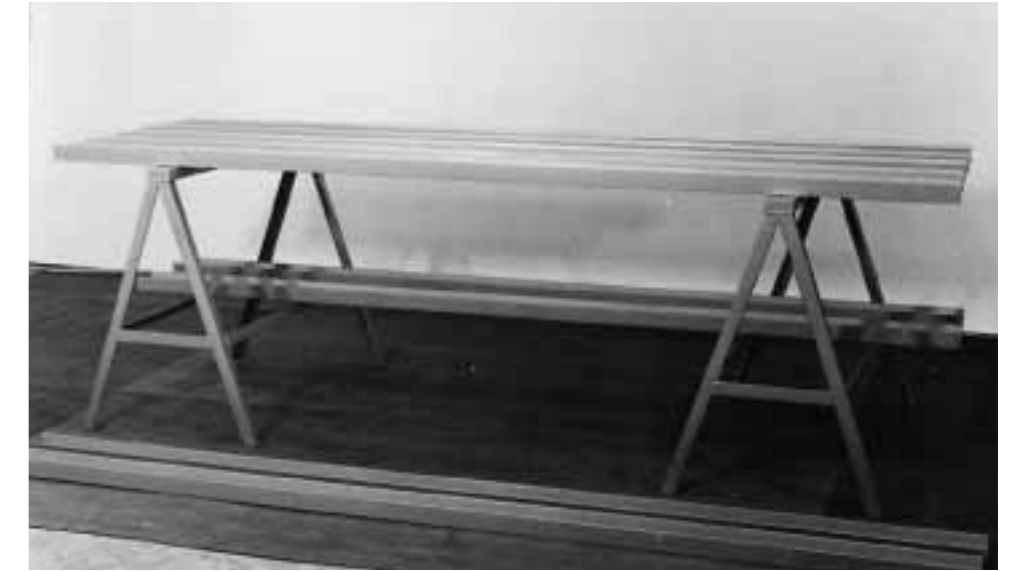


174

177 Trestle 1969–70

Steel, painted silver
Length 274.3 cm (108 in)
Unique

LITERATURE Morphet, exh.cat., 1973 (illus. in b&w p.65, Fig. 38)

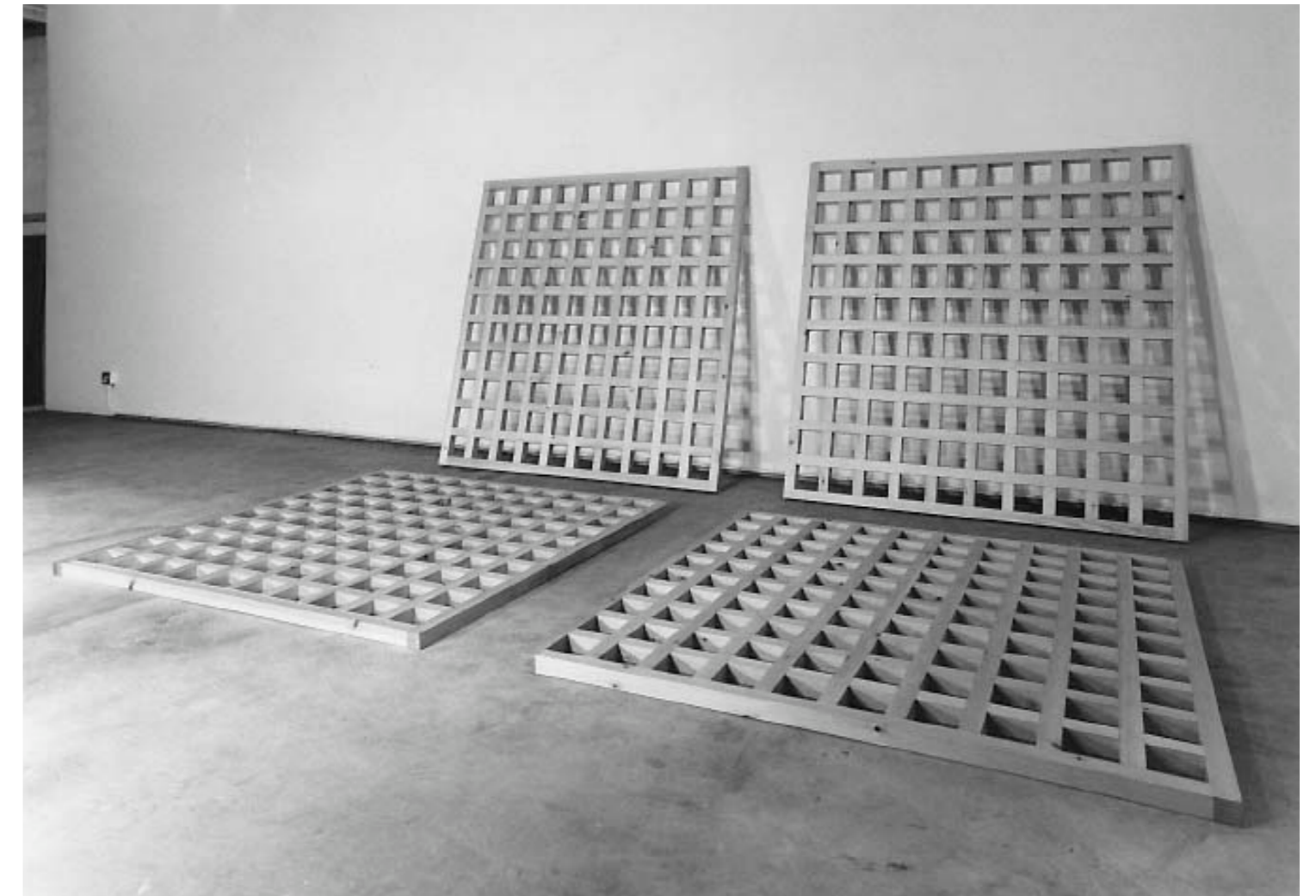


177

178 Sculpture 1969–70

Wood
Four elements
4.4 x 150.5 x 150.5 cm (1 3/4 x 59 1/4 x 59 1/4 in) each
Unique

EXHIBITION Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 80 (illus. in colour p.16 and in b&w p.64, two views)

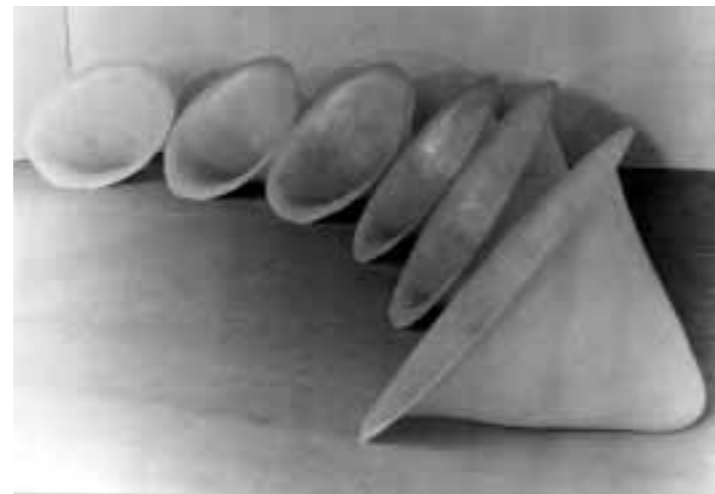


178

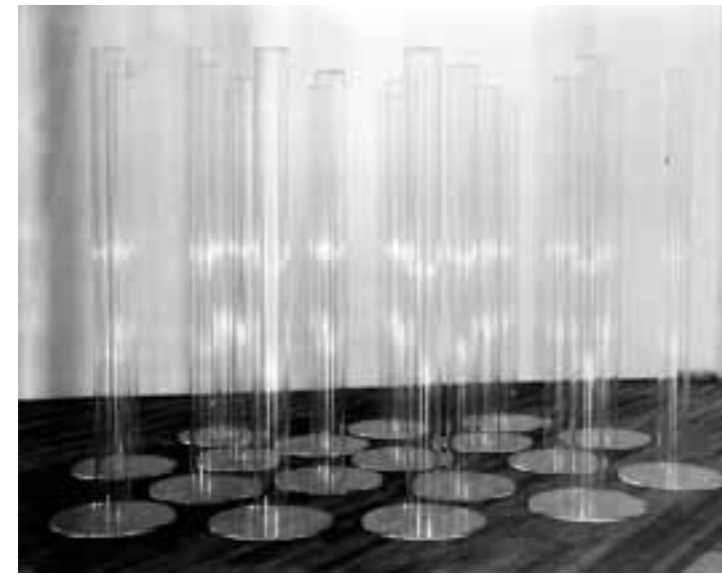
176 Cones 1968

Fibreglass
Height 72.4 x diameter 109.2 cm (28 1/2 x 43 in) each
Unique

EXHIBITION Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 79 (illus. in b&w p.63, three views)



176



175

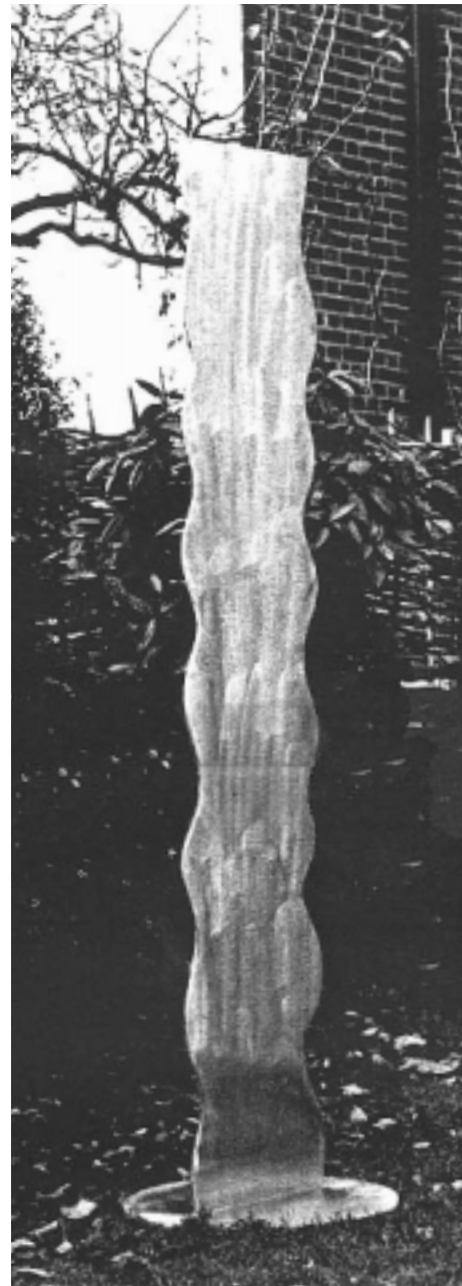
175 18 Transparent Tubes 1968

Perspex
Height 177.8 x diameter 45.7 cm (70 x 18 in) each
Unique

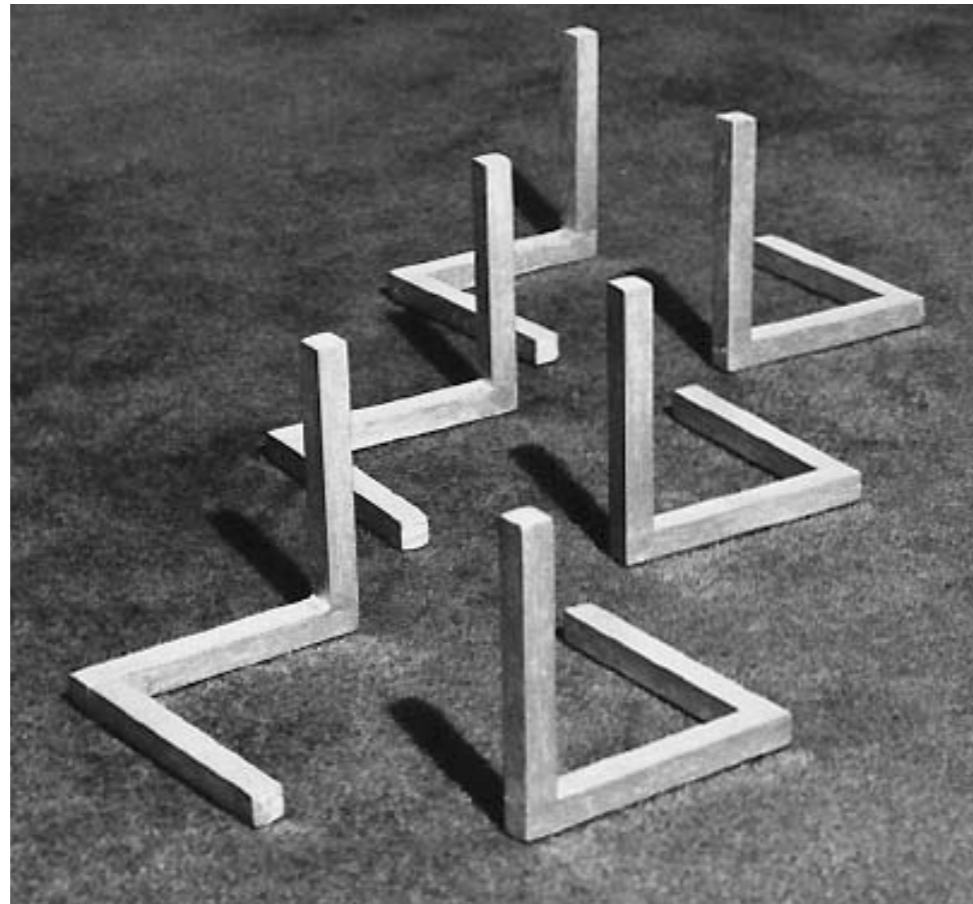
COLLECTION Tate Gallery, London

EXHIBITIONS Waddington Galleries, solo exhibition, 1970, Cat. 1 (illus. in b&w), Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 78 (illus. in colour p.15 and in b&w p.63), Tate Britain, group exhibition, 2002

NOTE Presented by the Artist in 1990.



183



184

183 Ripple 1966-72

Stainless steel

Height 227.3 x diameter 58.4 cm (89½ x 23 in)

Unique

EXHIBITIONS Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 69 (illus. in b&w p.51), Jesus College, solo exhibition, 1990, Cat. 15 (illus. p.28)

184 Angle 1971-72

Stainless steel

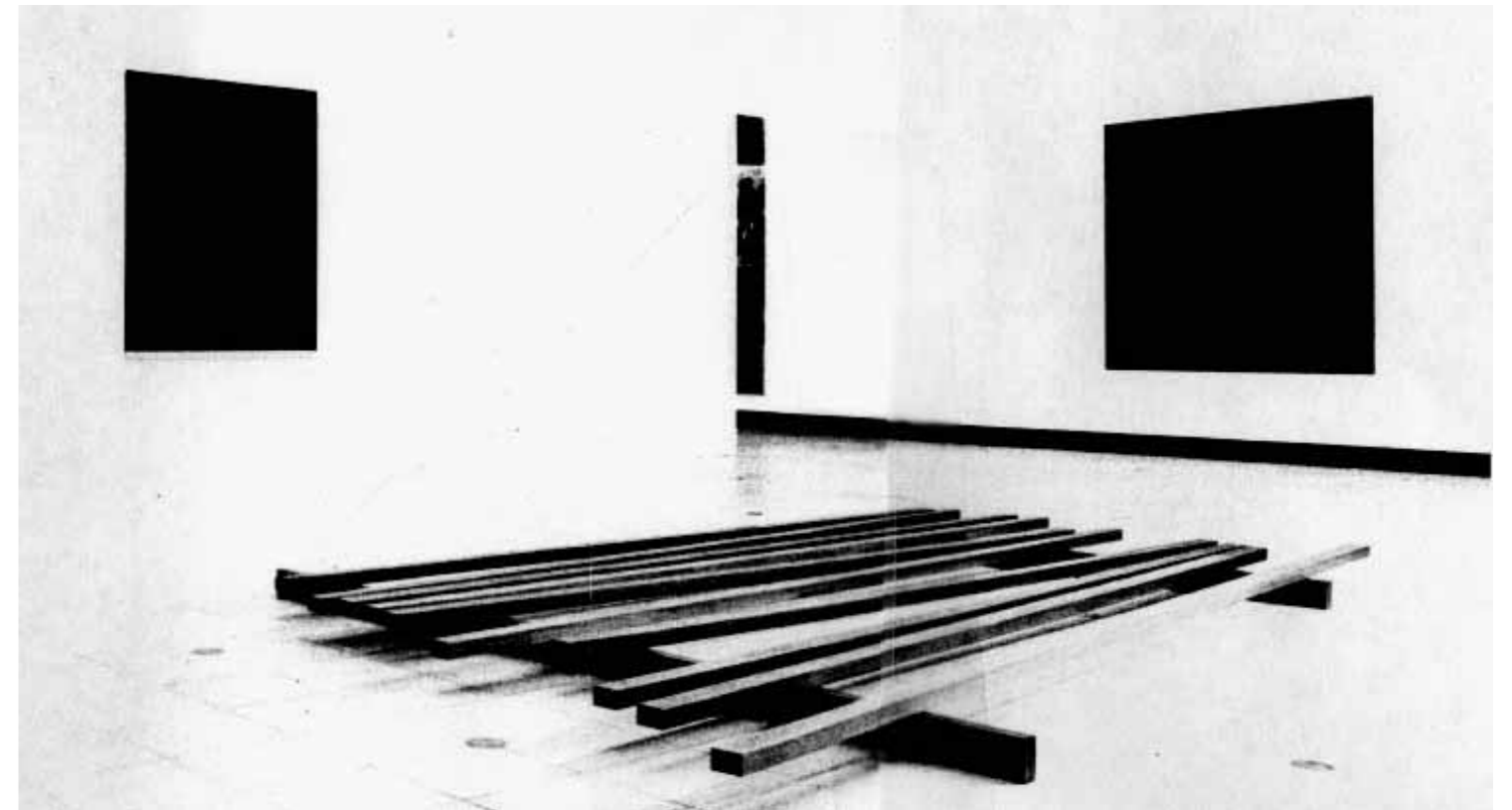
Six elements (18 sections)

Length 137.2 x 12.7 x 12.7 cm (54 x 5 x 5 in) each

Edition of four

EXHIBITIONS Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 83 (illus. in b&w p.55, three views), Jesus College, solo exhibition, 1990, Cat. 1 (illus. p.21, two views)

NOTE Each element is made of 137.2 cm (54 in) lengths of 12.7 x 12.7 cm (5 x 5 in) angle.



185

185 Random 1971-72

Wood

10.1 x 279.4 x 381 cm (4 x 110 x 150 in)

Unique

186 Gate 1972

Stainless steel

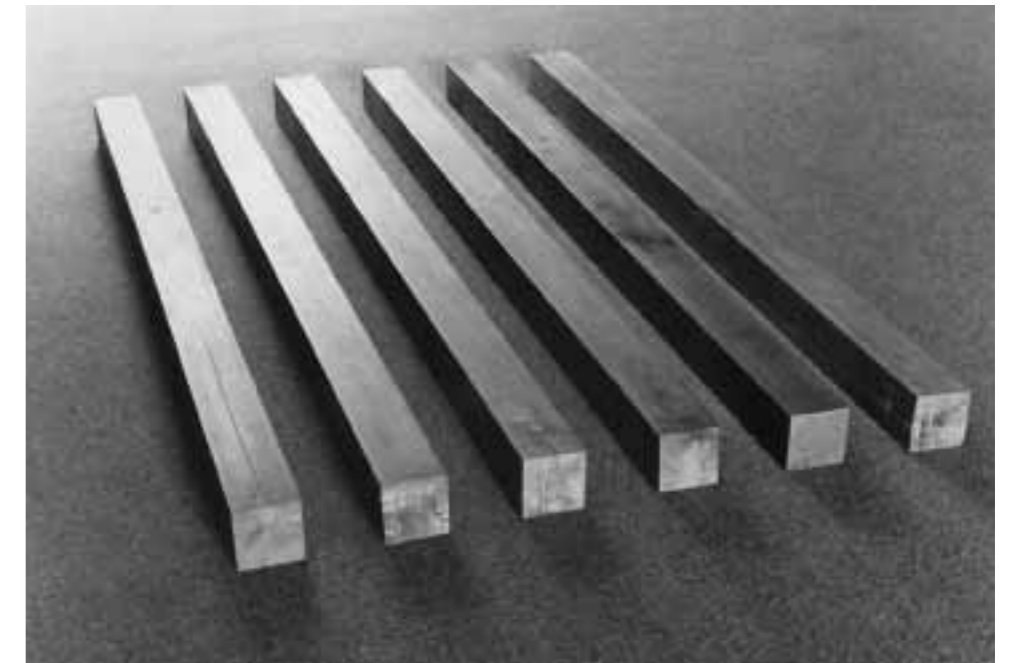
217.2 x 292.1 x 91.4 cm (85½ x 115 x 36 in)

Edition of three

COLLECTION Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (grounds of Dean Gallery)

EXHIBITIONS Tate Gallery, solo exhibition, 1973, Cat. 84 (illus. in b&w p.62), *Sculpture at Goodwood*, group exhibition, 1997 (illus. in colour, p.73)LITERATURE Elliott, exh.cat., 1995 (illus. in b&w p.59, plate 39), Strachan, 1984, *William Turnbull no.50*. Catalogue note: 'A construction that gains its effect by the clean simplicity of its form, the attractive Steel surface, and the way it – literally – frames a background of foliage.'

See page 56 for image



187

187 Sculpture 1975

Wood

Six elements

Length 190.5 cm (75 in) each

Unique