

Thaddeus Mosley  
Recent Sculpture  
Opening Reception: Saturday, March 4th, 6-8pm  
March 4–April 22, 2023  
22 East 2nd Street, New York

Karma is pleased to present Thaddeus Mosley: Recent Sculpture, a solo exhibition running from March 4th to April 22nd, 2023, at 22 East 2nd Street, New York. Thaddeus Mosley: Recent Sculpture presents new work made by Mosley between 2020 and 2022.

In a recent photograph taken in his studio, Thaddeus Mosley peers between the soaring columns of his sculptures. They are gallant constructions of wood, each hand-carved and formed out of unique sections from three to four logs. With his chisel, Mosley exalts the warm tones and woodgrain which lay beneath the outer tree bark. His dimensions vary, ranging from monumental to modest, rounded to angular, vaulted to hovering just above the ground. Their presence is determined by Mosley's negotiation between natural materials and an exploration of weight and space. A feat of balance, his sculptures exist in a constant state of suspension: heavy sections seem to float above the delicately-carved pieces that support them.

Mosley began creating wooden sculptures in the 1950s while working at the United States Postal Service, which enabled him to both provide for his family and develop his craft in his free time. At 96 years old, Mosley continues his life's work as an artist in his Pittsburgh studio near the Allegheny River. A strong influence in his practice can be traced to his encounter with a photograph of African American grave markers in Georgia. According to Mosley, their slender, soaring forms called to mind Constantin Brâncuși's *Bird in Space* (1923). He explains that "in each of them I saw a similar spirit, a similar approach to clean fluid shapes coming from people working close to the earth and trying to fuse the earth and human spirituality into a single form."

Mosley allows the natural forms of wood to guide him toward a conceptual and aesthetic meeting point, where European modernism meets the abstract and interpretive traditions of West African mask-making, and the movement of his chisel captures the rhythmic improvisations of a Jazz soloist. Mosley's process bears traces of Isamu Noguchi's own navigation of natural materials, providing new meaning to the late sculptor's adage that "it is weight which provides meaning to weightlessness."

Working primarily in hardwoods such as walnut, cherry, and chestnut, Mosley reveres the surfaces he uncovers with his chisel: deep lustres, arcs of bright coloration, growth rings, and the shadowy depth within deep cuts. *Panoramic Quarter* (2021) brings together inverted forms, in which recessed spirals and connected logs create a dramatic inflection. Horizontality is emphasized in *Phase of a Phrase* (2022), while *Path of Pendulum* (2020) delights in the vertical movement of arching forms, which are composed in a gravity-defying embrace. His work dances with viewers as they encircle it. Mosley's dynamic forms encourage deep looking, whether it is in *Id* (2021), a low, conical carving, or *Southwestern Suite* (2021), in which monumental sections seem to vanish when viewed at specific angles. In *Elegiac Stanza for Sam Gilliam* (2022), Mosley honors the life of the abstract painter and close friend through a lyrical intersection of walnut, varying between hewn and smooth surfaces.

On rare occasions, Mosley has incorporated salvaged metals into particular pieces of hardwood. In the case of *Industrial Collage* (2022), a curved cut of steel is affixed to a base of walnut, from which Mosley has balanced two pieces of chestnut, adorned with pounded metal that has been grounded off from the steel section. Mosley salvaged the steel piece from an abandoned industrial building, where it was previously used as a support beam for an industrial fan. It stayed with him in his studio for fourteen years while Mosley waited, searching for the right slab of wood. Each piece of wood, every material for Mosley is subject to this process of aesthetic consideration: a three-dimensional call-and-response.

Thaddeus Mosley (b. 1926, New Castle Pennsylvania) is a Pittsburgh-based sculptor working primarily in wood and bronze. In 2022, his work was exhibited at Musée Delacroix, in an exhibition titled *La Suite de l'Histoire*, which was displayed in Eugène Delacroix's former bedroom and garden. His work was also recently exhibited in *Forest*, a solo exhibition which began at the Baltimore Museum of Art, traveled to Art+Practice in Los Angeles, and will continue at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas this spring on May 13th. Mosley is the recipient of the 2022 Isamu Noguchi prize. His work is held in public collections including the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; and the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine.