

The title of the exhibition, *Metamorphology*, alludes to one of the fundamental principles of Starling's practice: the transformative potential of art, or transformation as art. These concepts also drive Starling's working method where he both repurposes existing materials for new, artistic aims and retells existing stories to produce new historical insights.

The exhibition is organized along two intertwining tracks, and metamorphosis is essential to understanding both. The first trajectory concerns Starling's interest in art history, particularly the golden age of modernism. Starling based the shape and form of *Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima)* (2010) in part on a quintessential Chicago story about the early days of nuclear energy development and the monument designed by British sculptor Henry Moore commemorating its discovery. The 12-foot-tall bronze sculpture is located on the University of Chicago campus at the site of the world's first nuclear reactor and firmly anchors the exhibition in the local context of Chicago.

In a similar vein, the work *Bird in Space* (2004) is named after a famous sculpture by Constantin Brancusi that was first shown at the Arts Club of Chicago in the early 1920s. Starling's unorthodox reinvention of Brancusi's modernist masterpiece, which is known for its smooth surface reminiscent of light, is now a large, unhewn block of steel. Starling's presentation of the work links the MCA and the Arts Club.

The second path explores the broader framework of geopolitical and socioeconomic concerns and their often-misconstrued relation to art historical narratives. These ideas are expressed in a series of works that demonstrate Starling's fascination with cycles of production, such as in *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* (2006). In this work, Starling reclaimed a wooden, steam-powered boat from the bottom of Lake Windermere, England. He took it on a four-hour journey on Loch Long in Scotland, where he dismantled the boat and fed it, piece by piece, into the very boiler that powered the boat. This eventually sank it, thus returning it to the bottom of the lake.

*The Long Ton* (2009) connects and collapses geographically remote situations. Two unrefined pieces of white marble hang from either side of a rudimentary pulley system. A one metric ton (1,000 kilogram) stone imported from China is held in balance overhead by a 250-kilogram piece of Italian Carrara marble, a material known for its use in art for centuries. The two stones, which have the same shape but not the same size, appear similar at first, referencing the market value of the Chinese stone and the Italian marble one-quarter of its weight.

*Flaga* (1972-2000) consists of a Fiat, an iconic Italian car first built in Turin before its production

moved to Poland. Starling drove a Fiat 126 from Turin to Poland where he changed the red car's doors, hood, and trunk to white. On his return to Turin, the customized Fiat was hung on the wall like a painting, or more appropriately, a Polish flag.

The exhibition also features one of Starling's recent film works, which takes into account the mechanics of the medium as well as its scientific prehistory. Functioning as 24-frame-per-second treatises in metamorphology, Starling's ventures into film embody the artist's attachment to the poetics of the loop.

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