

MICHAEL ROWE

PRE-GENUS : sequence showing the exhibition *Raising the Bar – influential voices in metal* at MIMA in 2009



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Raising the Bar Influential Voices in Metal

OPENING Friday 27 February – 10 May 2009

**Malcolm Appleby Julie Blyfield Rudolph Bott Kim Buck Robert Foster
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray Koji Hatakeyama Yasuki Hiramatsu David Huycke
Michael Rowe Tore Svensson Simone Ten Hompel**

Raising the Bar: influential voices in metal brings to Middlesbrough for the first time, objects by artists who have between them forged a new direction for metalsmithing traditions from around the world. The exhibition focuses on those senior artists who have established significant international reputations between them.

The 12 artists represented in *Raising the Bar* work across a range of studio practices, but are connected through a similar “hands on” approach. Their work shares a love of the language of metal through the vision, skill and creative imagining of the material. Although all are embedded in, or trained in an historical tradition of domestic metalwork, all work critically within that tradition. All move lightly through the landscape of art, craft and design, as well as their own different national traditions, to create individual works, which shows new possibilities of thinking through metal.

Raising the Bar carries forwards mima’s interest in contemporary jewellery design, grounded in its own collection of international artist made jewellery, by examining how some of the metalsmithing techniques employed in jewellery making can be extended to the vessel tradition. Many of the artists represented by this exhibition are just as renowned for their jewellery as they are for their non-wearable objects. The exhibition is further grounded in mima’s programme through the work of Michael Rowe, whose permanent commission *SUBJECTivity and OBJECThood*, as much a drawing as an object, is sited outside the mima event space. *Raising the Bar* will provide an opportunity for mima visitors to contextualise this piece through Rowe’s three-dimensional objects.

The quality and invention of the works on show all derive a profound engagement with doing, providing valuable insight into the way that substantial innovation can arise from an actively integrated engagement of hand to eye: intellect and imagination. The exhibition hopes to shift and update general perceptions of contemporary craft and raise the position of craft today - raising the bar. *Raising the Bar is an IC:Innovative Crafts* exhibition curated by Amanda Game.

