

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

PAUL MCCARTHY

in **THE BOX**

Tree Plug (Silver)

24 April – 30 May 2015



Paul McCarthy, *Tree Plug (Silver)*, 2014
fine silver, ed of 10, 19.1 x 11 cm, 7.5 x 4.3 in

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is pleased to present a new work in The Box by acclaimed US artist Paul McCarthy. Renowned for his subversive techniques, McCarthy disrupts codes of social propriety by actively engaging with forms of abjection and eroticism. Following the infamous deflation of his pop-up *Tree* (2014) at Place Vendôme, Paris last year, the presentation of *Tree Plug (Silver)* (2014) in The Box relates to the artist's ongoing engagement with butt plugs in his work.

Tree Plug (Silver) stages a dichotomy between good and bad taste, and high and low culture. Cast in fine silver, the work's crude associations with sex are offset by its prized, material value. Other than its erotic characteristics, the curved form is also reminiscent of an abstracted fir tree, or an early modernist sculpture. Here, McCarthy plays with the ambiguity of the object's signification, revealing how erotic fantasies are frequently repressed within everyday life. Adding to the humour of the piece, the contemporary sex device also takes on an ancient, relic-like quality in the shrine-like confines of The Box.

Paul McCarthy (b.1945) studied at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, before earning a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1969 and an MFA from the University of Southern California in 1972. He went on to become a professor at the University of California from 1984 to 2003.

Since rising to prominence in the 1970s, McCarthy has exhibited his work in major exhibitions at Economou Collection, Athens (2015), Monnaie de Paris (2014), Hammer Museum (2012) Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2009); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2007); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2006); and Haus der Kunst, Munich (2005) among others. He has also taken part in numerous international events, including the Berlin Biennial (2006); SITE Santa Fe (2004); Whitney Biennial (1995, 1997, 2004) and the Venice Biennale (1993, 1999, 2001). McCarthy lives and works in Altadena, California.

McCarthy's work features in numerous international collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; British Council Collection; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Opening 21 June 2015, The George Economou Collection in Greece will present a major two-person exhibition by Paul McCarthy and Georg Baselitz.

With thanks to Hauser & Wirth, London for making this exhibition possible.