Nao Matsunaga makes strange and elusive sculpture inspired by primitive understandings of the world. He is interested in archetypes and the title he has given this exhibition, Stones and Bones, refers to the basic, naturally occurring materials universally employed by man in the creation of artefacts to meet his functional and spiritual needs. The title also refers to the kinds of forms found within Matsunaga’s structural compositions with their bulky, round ceramic masses, and the hewn and carved shapes of their wooden legs or frameworks.

He works with dualities and contradictions that include his use of clay with wood, his juxtapositions of matt surface and globulous runs of glassy glaze, his enjoyment of monochromatic tones punctuated by bursts of colour, his mix of organic and geometric elements and his ambition to bring an impression of movement to something that is still. The clay skins of his pieces are indented and stretched, by fingertips and tools, giving them a fresh, visible energy that encourages the eye to explore the form. He carves the timber structures that cradle the works with ‘v’-shaped chisels to amplify their natural grain and to produce a hyper-real sense of wooden-ness. There is often an unsettling tension between a floating mass and its seemingly more delicate means of support.

Matsunaga’s works are distillations of natural and cultural references. Allusive yet ambiguous, playful yet profound, they speak of enduring human concerns and personal and collective experience.