



**NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART PRESENTS
ROBERT TAPLIN: SELECTIONS FROM THREE SERIES, 1985–2024
January 30 – March 9, 2025**



Pluto, 2004. Reinforced gypsum, fiberglass, and lights, 50 x 20 x 20 inches, edition 3 of 3.

New York, NY - December 18, 2024 - The New York Academy of Art is pleased to present *Robert Taplin: Selections from Three Series, 1985–2024*, a solo exhibition highlighting the imaginative work of sculptor and longtime Academy Visiting Critic, Robert Taplin. The show will run from January 30 through March 9, 2025, as part of the Academy's Winter Exhibition Series. An opening reception will be held Thursday, January 30, from 6–8 pm. The exhibition features works spanning nearly four decades, showcasing Taplin's innovative use of materials and his thought-provoking explorations of the human experience, mythology, and storytelling. Among the works on display are *Pluto* (2004), a haunting double sculpture incorporating reinforced gypsum, fiberglass, and light, and *The Coals* (1985), a striking forged steel composition.

Taplin's work transitions through three distinct series that explore themes of narrative figuration and cultural commentary. In the mid-1980s, he committed to full-scale narrative figuration, creating life-size sculptures such as *The Coals* from thin plates of forged steel. These hollow, tensile, and freestanding figures rest directly on the ground, presenting dream-like imagery and angular, tripodic compositions characteristic of the Neo-Expressionist era.

From 2001 to 2004, Taplin created *The Five Outer Planets*, a series originally exhibited at the Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University. The installation features five doubled figures four of which are hanging. One of each pair is illuminated from within. They cross reference the physical and mythological attributes of the outer planets. Included in this exhibition are Uranus and Pluto, demonstrating Taplin's mastery in merging form and narrative. The latest series, *History of Punch (2005–2024)*, focuses on the figure of Punch, the deformed clown from English tradition. Inspired by Domenico Tiepolo's 19th-century drawings, Taplin reimagines Punch as a figure that seems to be both the pariah and a free spirit. The series explores themes of guilt, shame, and social norms while placing Punch within the context of contemporary society. The final piece, *Young Punch is Presented to the World (2024)*, completes this series.

Taplin's connection to the New York Academy of Art is longstanding. He has taught bas relief courses for many years, served as a Visiting Critic since 2012, and been an active participant in the Academy's educational and artistic programs. In addition to his work as a sculptor, Taplin is a respected writer, contributing essays and reviews to *Art in America Magazine* and other publications. His accomplishments include solo exhibitions at the Zilkha Gallery, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, and MASS MoCA, as well as participation in the "Beautiful Beast" group show at the Academy.

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART

Founded in 1982 by artists, scholars, and patrons of the arts, including Andy Warhol, the New York Academy of Art is an independent, nonprofit graduate school that combines intensive technical training in the fine arts with active critical discourse. The Academy believes that rigorously trained artists can best realize their artistic vision. Through major exhibitions, a lively speaker series, and an ambitious educational program, the Academy is a creative and intellectual center for all artists dedicated to highly skilled, conceptually aware figurative and representational art

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On view: January 30 – March 9, 2025

Hours: 10 am – 6 pm daily

Opening Reception: January 30, 2025, 6–8 pm

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