

# ARTnews

## Tom Doyle

### Sundaram Tagore

Using carved planks and curved sections of trees that he felled himself, Tom Doyle constructed handsome, tripodal forms that vary from tabletop models to nearly eleven-foot-tall sculptures. Four of the 13 were displayed attached to the walls at eye level, but the freestanding sculptures held the most potency. The larger works resemble the bones of a long-dead vertebrate, but at the same time the elegance of their compositions make them seem animated. Each piece, in essence, is a tribute to nature and gravity; even the most imposing of the sculptures touches the ground delicately, the impressive sense of balance presented as a kind of static, masculine ballet. As the viewer walked around a cantilevered construction, it would change form dramatically—from one perspective, appearing to be a strange headless insect; from another, an outsize and elegant bird taking flight.

Most of the artist's original wooden creations were cast in bronze and then painted to look like the wood they came from—they, in effect, imitated themselves. The rough-hewn surfaces of walnut, oak, or sassafras trees showed cracks and histories, and each saw-cut or natural bulge was immortalized in metal. Works spanned the years 1986 to 2011 and boasted Gaelic titles—*Ballyoridge*, *Kallinskellig*, *Dowth*, *Togher*, *Ballyduff*—which added to their considerable charm. *Big Cruck*, the largest sculpture, was created from oak in 1986 and cast in bronze in 2009. Its imposing but still welcoming opening appears to be an archway leading to some magical place.

Doyle successfully establishes a sense of harmony with his sparse, sturdy explorations of man as a part of the larger natural world. —**Doug McClellmont**



Tom Doyle, *Big Cruck*, 2009, bronze, 10' 9" x 8' x 4' 6".  
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