



PHILIPPE CRAMER

Ouranos



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos I* (2023)

Black Irish limestone | 516 x 88 x 184 cm | 203 1/8 x 34 5/8 x 72 1/2 in



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos I* (2023)

Here shown during the *Biennale de sculpture*, Crans-Montana, 2023



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos II* (2026)

Patinated bronze | 57,5 x 5 x 13 cm | 22 5/8 x 2 x 5 1/8 in



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Philippe Cramer – Ouranos

With the *Ouranos* series, Philippe Cramer continues his sculptural investigation into monumentality, movement, and the relationship between sculpture and public space. Cast in bronze and finished with hand-applied patinas, these small-scale works occupy a singular position: they function simultaneously as autonomous sculptures and conceptual maquettes envisioning future monumental interventions at architectural scale.

The title *Ouranos* refers to the primordial Greek deity of the sky. As an archaic cosmic figure, *Ouranos* embodies an invisible yet foundational presence – a celestial structure preceding both gods and men. This reference immediately situates the works within an imaginary in which sculpture transcends objecthood to become symbolic axis, cosmological structure, and sacred yet playful presence.

Despite their reduced dimensions, the sculptures possess a striking monumental force. They appear as condensed architectural forms – fragments of possible cultural environments, remnants of imaginary architectures, or prototypes for future public structures. Each piece seems to contain within itself the projection of its own enlargement.

This ambiguity between maquette and autonomous artwork runs throughout the history of modern sculpture. One may think of Constantin Brancusi, whose sculptures possess an architectural presence despite their sometimes intimate scale, or Isamu Noguchi, for whom sculpture could become landscape, gathering space, or contemplative environment.

In Philippe Cramer's work, this relationship to public space remains central. The *Ouranos* pieces are conceived as forms that could be used at human scale. Their sculptural presence never excludes a latent functional dimension. They exist within a hybrid territory between art, architecture, and monumental furniture.

The series is distinguished by the remarkable fluidity of its line. Long metallic curves trace calligraphic trajectories through space, generating a sensation of suspended movement. Loops, circles, and sweeping inflections appear as though drawn in a single uninterrupted gesture, as if the sculpture itself had emerged from a continuous line unfolding in three dimensions.

This linear continuity gives the works a powerful visual tension. Despite their implied mass and monumental vocation, the sculptures retain an unexpected sense of lightness. Their forms seem to float, expand, and balance themselves with an almost effortless inevitability. Certain compositions evoke infinity symbols, orbital trajectories, or enlarged astronomical diagrams suspended in space. This fluidity contrasts with the archaic stability of their presence. The sculptures feel at once radically contemporary – in their formal reduction and geometric clarity – and deeply ancestral. They recall megalithic structures as much as cosmic signs or forgotten ritual instruments.



Isamu Noguchi - *Black Slide Mantra* (1988)

The relationship between line and monumentality becomes fundamental here. Whereas traditional monumental sculpture often relies on mass and volume, Philippe Cramer develops instead an architecture of drawing. Line itself becomes structure and movement simultaneously. In this respect, the work resonates with certain artistic investigations of the 1960s and 1970s, when artists sought to liberate sculpture from its historical weight and bring it closer to drawing in space.

One might think of Richard Serra in relation to bodily scale and spatial experience, but also of Alexander Calder's linear constructions or Max Bill's explorations of geometry, continuity, and equilibrium, where form generates a silent sense of movement.

The *Ouranos* sculptures also maintain a subtle dialogue with landscape. Although abstract, their curves occasionally evoke natural phenomena – waves, celestial trajectories, topographical contours, or the movement of water. This organic quality softens the rigor of the geometric compositions and lends the works a meditative dimension.

Bronze plays a central role within the series. Historically associated with permanence, stature, and memory, the material carries the legacy of sculpture from antiquity onward. Philippe Cramer approaches bronze through a deeply artisanal process: each piece is cast and hand-patinated, producing unique surfaces in which light continuously shifts and transforms.

Even at the scale of maquettes, the works possess a strong physical presence. Their reduced dimensions operate almost as a compression of immense energy. The viewer instinctively projects these forms into the urban environment, imagining their dialogue with architecture, landscape, and the movement of bodies through space: the *Ouranos* works are never merely technical models. Their strength lies precisely in this dual nature: they exist simultaneously as complete sculptural entities and as speculative visions of future monumental environments.

This ambiguity conveys to the series a utopian dimension. The sculptures appear as fragments of a future landscape in which sculpture, architecture, and collective experience might once again converge.

As in several of Philippe Cramer's bodies of work, a discreet spirituality also permeates the series. Without resorting to explicit religious iconography, the *Ouranos* sculptures generate a sense of silence, stability, and contemplative gravity. Their formal simplicity allows them to attain a universal dimension in which sculpture becomes primordial sign.

In *Ouranos*, Philippe Cramer develops a language in which line, bronze, and space enter into a fluid and medium defying relationship, works that appear simultaneously as three-dimensional drawings, potential architectures, and silent monuments destined to inhabit collective space.



Alexander Calder - *Flamingo* (1974)



Richard Serra - *Te Tuhirangi Contour* (1999 - 2001)



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos III* (2026)
Patinated bronze | 75 x 6 x 28 cm | 29 1/2 x 2 3/8 x 11 in



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos III* (2026)
Patinated bronze | 75 x 6 x 28 cm | 29 1/2 x 2 3/8 x 11 in



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos IV* (2026)

Patinated bronze | 74 x 12 x 27 cm | 29 1/8 x 4 3/4 x 10 5/8 in



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos IV* (2026)

Patinated bronze | 74 x 12 x 27 cm | 29 1/8 x 4 3/4 x 10 5/8 in

Philippe Cramer

Ouranos I

2022

Black Irish limestone

Edition: 3 + 1 artist proof

516 x 88 x 184 cm | 203 1/8 x 34 5/8 x 72 1/2 in

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75 x 6 x 28 cm | 29 1/2 x 2 3/8 x 11 in

Philippe Cramer

Ouranos IV

2026

Patinated bronze

Edition: 3 + 1 artist proof

74 x 12 x 27 cm | 29 1/8 x 4 3/4 x 10 5/8 in



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos II* (2026)

Detail view



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos II, III & IV* (2026)
Patinated bronze

Philippe Cramer

Born in the United States and having grown up in Switzerland, Philippe Cramer owes his first name to his ancestor Philibert Cramer, an 18th century figure who was celebrated in the poems of Voltaire and the paintings of Jean-Étienne Liotard. The artistic heritage of his family is rich: his great uncle Gérard Cramer collaborated with renowned artists such as Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse to produce artist's books, while his grandmother Adrienne Cramer founded a gallery in Geneva in partnership with Alexander Iolas, and she maintained close ties with Jean Tinguely, Niki de Saint Phalle and Meret Oppenheim.

Drawing from this legacy, Philippe Cramer began his career as a designer of furniture and jewelry, creating pieces that were both dreamlike and functional. Rather than focusing uniquely on their practical dimensions, he became interested in the aesthetic qualities of the materials, as well as a large range of fabrication techniques, in order to apprehend the visual and tactile qualities of natural or synthetic materials, testing the limits and potential of each one. Gradually, he created the conditions for his own economic, symbolic and creative autonomy.

In 2001, Cramer made the decisive choice to focus on self-published editions and the production of limited series and unique pieces. In contradiction to an exponentially digitized industrial world, this positioning allows him to pursue his exploratory approach to creating. But above all, it reflects a deep and long-held conviction: in a world of accelerating dematerialization, handcrafted workmanship and the uniqueness of an object foster emotional attachment on the part of its user.

Today, Philippe Cramer focuses primarily on fine art, drawing on the knowledge of craftsmanship and contemporary production techniques he explored earlier in his career to bring his intuitions to life. His approach expresses itself as much through the care given to the formal aspects of his works, as in his philosophical vision of creating art - balancing tradition while pursuing new forms.

In 2010, the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire of Geneva offered Philippe Cramer a carte blanche for the exhibition "L'Ornement Jamais" (Ornament; Never). The works created for this occasion have since been added to the MAH's permanent collection and are now part of the cultural heritage of the State of Geneva. His works are also featured in the collections of the Maison Tavel, the Ariana Museum, MUDAC, the Pictet Group, GNAMC (Rome) and numerous private collections.

In 2021, Philippe Cramer was also honored for his contributions to the arts by the UBS Foundation for Culture.



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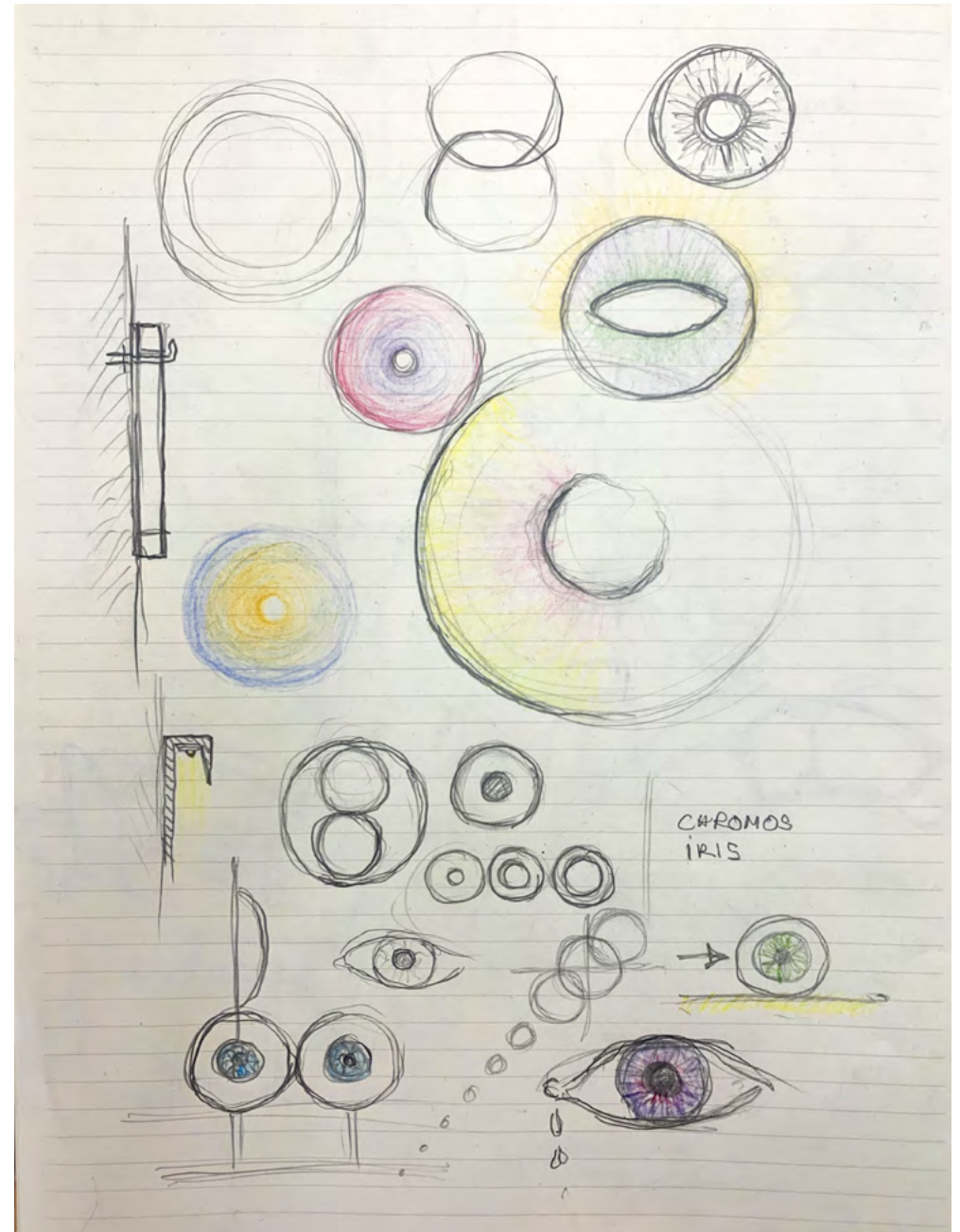
Artistic Practice

Philippe Cramer imagines artworks that alloy soft organic lines with rigorous geometric forms, often referring to Antiquity, modern art, and the poetry of nature. His vision combines bold colors with the finest of materials. Solid oak, walnut, ash wood, marble, limestone, onyx, gold leaf: his love of wood and stone confers a warm and tactile dimension to his body of work. But he has also skillfully manipulated industrial techniques and materials to produce unique forms that are always expressive. More recently, in an experimental approach, he has integrated generative AI to his range of production techniques.

If his work bears the mark of his attachment to Switzerland, to its spectacular landscapes and to its artisanal traditions, it also possesses a strongly evocative power reminding us that from Tuscany to California, from Japan to the Greek islands, his many travels continue to inspire him. Between ancient archetypes and childhood memories, his works ultimately possess the magical power of time machines.

Through his vision, we can take stock of deep time that allows us to escape from the ultra-present and nourish our imaginations in new ways. To develop his work, Philippe Cramer draws in his own manner from a type of paganism: he is inspired by a strong connection to ancient myths and a fascination with the cosmos. These imaginary worlds are marked by a form of open spirituality that has always been present in his art. Far from unbridled rationalism, they also inscribe his practice where poetry and magic reign. The totemic objects he creates thus take on a life of their own.

Intuitive and deeply committed to the act of creation, nourished by artisanal expertise, Philippe Cramer crafts pieces that are designed to be shared and passed down, thus building bridges between individuals, ideas, and eras.



The studio

Philippe Cramer established his studio in Geneva in 2001. Conceived as an artistic laboratory and an exhibition space for his work, the studio is a site for experimentation where he freely develops his creative ideas, linking traditional craft and the finest materials with innovative techniques.

He strives to offer ambitious works that are marked by the unique nuances that come with manual labor, producing one-of-a-kind pieces and limited editions that are meticulously crafted by artisans with whom he builds relationships of mutual trust.

Believing in the importance of engagement with the public, Philippe Cramer keeps his studio open to visitors, inviting them to discover and appreciate his work up close. The studio is thus a space where he takes the time to discuss with visitors who stop by, inscribing his practice in a form of transmission of knowledge.

Miscellaneous

Philippe Cramer has designed trophies for the United Nations Young Activists Summit and the Louis-Jeantet Foundation, as well as projects for the Swiss consulates and embassies in Geneva and Pretoria. He has also created works for the headquarters of Banque Pictet and Banque Piquet Galland. In 2021, Art Genève commissioned him to design the set for the pop-up art restaurant Night Fall.

Several institutions and galleries have exhibited his work, including Gallery S. Bensimon and Not a Gallery in Paris, the Swiss Cultural Center and the Michelangelo Foundation in Milan, the Audi Foundation in Beirut, Gallery Farb in Gstaad, Ormond Editions in Zurich, the Kisceffi Muzeum in Budapest, the Lapidarium of the National Museum of the Czech Republic in Prague, and the TEI Foundation in Tokyo.

Feature articles on his work have been published in numerous magazines and newspapers, including Wallpaper, Vogue, AD, L'Officiel, T, Metropolis, Le Monde, and the Chicago Tribune.



Philippe Cramer - *Aeternus Eternus II* (2025)

Here shown as part of the permanent collection of the GNAMC, Rome. Donation F.P.Journe, 2025



Philippe Cramer - *Ouranos IV* (2026)
Detail view

Institutional collections

His artworks can be found in the following collections :

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva
Maison Tavel
Musée Ariana
MuDAC
Groupe Pictet
GNAMC

Exhibitions

His work has been exhibited at :

Centre Culturel Suisse, Milan
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva
MuDAC, Lausanne
Musée du Lapidarium, Prague
Fondation Audi, Beyrouth
Musée Kicelli, Budapest
Collectible, Bruxelles
Doppia Firma, Milan
Biennale de Crans-Montana
Cimetière des Rois, Geneva

Edward Mitterrand, Geneva
S. Bensimon, Paris
ArtCurial, Paris
Ormond Éditions, Zurich
Galerie Farb, Gstaad
Sabrier&Paunet, Paris
Mint, London
Speerstra, Bursins
Fondation TEI, Tokyo
Ambassade Suisse, Tokyo

Publications

Numerous publications have covered his work :

NZZ	Vogue (DE, BR)
Bilanz	Elle Décoration (FR, IT, UK, DE)
Le Temps	AD (USA, FR, IT, DE)
La Tribune de Genève	L'Officiel
Espaces Contemporains	Metropolis
Annabelle	The Chicago Tribune
Tendances Deco	Le Monde
Wallpaper	New York Times

Many books reference him or illustrate his art:

Pas Besoin d'un Dessin, Jean-Hubert Martin, Un Musée, 2022
Geneva at the Heart of the World, Assouline, 2021
Les Collections du Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève, Favre, 2019
Design Blok Book 2018, Profil Media, 2019
The New Jewelers, Olivier Dupon, Thames&Hudson, 2012
Wallpaper City Guide, Wallpaper, 2012
Decors, Design et Industrie, Alexandre Fiette, Somogy Editions d'Art, 2011
Design, teNeues, 2002

