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PRESS RELEASE

AMIKAM TOREN — GOLEM — 7 February – 8 March 2003

Since his seminal solo exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 1976, **Amikam Toren** (b.1945) has been an artist of considerable influence and startling originality. Very much an artist's artist, a new generation is finding inspiration in his work, as is evident from his inclusion in many alternative and innovative exhibitions in London in recent years.

Toren addresses the basic nature of an object or an image and uses its own material, purpose or form to re-present it in a way that is an 'improvement' or re-invention of its original state. A wooden chair is whittled and sanded down to a skeletal form that is a stunning evocation of its anthropomorphic origin (*Actualities*, 1984 -); a copy of The Times newspaper is pulped and used as pigment to paint a huge abstracted letter of the alphabet – the material and linguistic stuff of record, painting an image of itself (*Of The Times*, 1983 -); a terrible junk shop painting is desecrated by cutting out of it the text of a found slogan, in so doing turning it into an object of contemplation and beauty (*Armchair Paintings*, 1989 -); A sash window becomes a painting through the application of safety whitewash and is removed from its housing to hang on the wall as an elegant balance of glass, cords and weights (*Safety Regulation Paintings*, 1988 -)…

Key examples of all these series of works will be on view but **Toren** has surprised us again with his new sculpture. *Golem* (2002) represents a fantastic imaginative leap where a domestic ironing board, a surface for pressing down upon, supports a massive block of Kilkenny stone; an object and a form which seems simultaneously to take flight and be grounded; a work which recalls Brancusi in its sublime reconciliation of rest and aspiration.

Toren has exhibited widely over the past 30 years including major solo exhibitions at the ICA, Arnolfini, Ikon, and in Basel, Berlin, Paris and Tel Aviv. Important recent group exhibitions include *L'Empreinte* (Centre Georges Pompidou) and *Live in Your Head* (Whitechapel Gallery).