

Peter Hide explains the qualities of steel

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Artists' Lives extract

Peter Hide: Steel's not clay, and it can be, it is an extremely versatile material but it's also contradicting almost, very resistant material it's harder and stronger than any material used in sculpture, for the, you know, I mean steel only arrived in the middle of the nineteenth century and steel sculpture came along about sixty years later. And this was a material that had all sorts of different properties to any material really that had been used in sculpture before.

And that in a way led to abstraction partly that the new properties of steel and how it could be joined and cut and its strength and the fact that it was equally strong in tension and compression, which is like wood but it can be joined and cut in a way that wood can't, it can be joined and cut without touching it actually.

When you, if you want to cut a bit of steel you use an oxyacetylene flame and you don't have to, like with wood, you have to saw it with a mechanical and there's contact, there's vibration. But that, with steel can be cut even with a water stream, very, very high pressure and laser of course and all other things, and it can be joined too without touching, by welding, by fusing, by heat and fusing.

This is a transcript of part of an interview from National Life Stories' project *Artists' Lives*:

Peter Hide, interviewed by Cathy Courtney, 2013 © Peter Hide, reference C466/344. Extract from Track 10. Starts: 16:24

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