

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

Thomas Houseago The mess I'm looking for

Hauser & Wirth Zürich

1 September – 20 October 2012

Opening: Friday 31 August 6 – 8 pm



Hauser & Wirth is proud to present 'The mess I'm looking for', an exhibition of works by Thomas Houseago. 'The mess I'm looking for' will act as the third part in a trilogy of exhibitions comprising Houseago's debut show with the gallery, with 'I'll be your sister' and 'Special Brew', opening at Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row on 7 September. For his first solo show in Switzerland, Houseago will present a new, large-scale figure and a selection of wall works, including reliefs and masks. Together, these works showcase Houseago's vast range of influences, from the abundance of nature and the sculpture of non-Western art to the superheroes and villains of comic books and cartoons. Houseago's interpretation of these subjects highlights his sensitivity both to the art of the Renaissance and the masters of Modernism, as well as his own innovative approach to figurative sculpture.

Spreading across over five metres of the gallery's floor, Houseago's monumental figure is resolutely flat – a combination of a head and hands formed from iron rebar and a torso and limbs made from boards of Tuf-cal plaster outlined with restless graphite sketches. Yet despite its raw, unfinished quality and its skeletal, two-dimensional form, the reclining figure seems to press into the ground with such force that it looks as if it might rise up from its supine position at any moment to tower over the viewer.

Houseago's masks vary in size from small wall works, to large visages balanced on wooden pedestals. Characteristic of Houseago's sculptures, each mask bears the mark of its maker; grooves from the artist's hands provide texture to the already rough surfaces of the works. Yet, despite the conspicuous presence of the artist, these ghostly faces seem to possess a character of their own. Their hollow gaze returns that of the viewer with a unique combination of aggression and vulnerability.

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A new bronze relief will also be on view in Zurich. An exercise and exploration of formal composition, Houseago's reliefs range from single panels to triptychs reminiscent of altarpieces from the Northern Renaissance, with each section defined by a rigid, rectangular border. Houseago fills the reliefs with sturdy trees with numerous snake-like branches and muscular human figures standing in traditional poses, all confined within the strict space of the panels.



Born in Leeds, England, Thomas Houseago's career has taken him from the United Kingdom to the Netherlands, to Belgium and finally to the United States, where he currently lives and works in Los Angeles CA. Houseago's works are currently on view in a number of group exhibitions including 'Art and the City', a public art festival in Zurich, Switzerland (until 23 September 2012); 'Great St. Helen's Sculpture Space', St. Helen's Square, London, England (until January 2013); and on the High Line, New York NY (until March 2013). 'Where The Wild Things Are', a solo exhibition of Houseago's works, is currently on view at Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, England until 27 January 2013.

Houseago's recent solo exhibitions include Hauser & Wirth Outdoor Sculpture, Southwood Garden, St. James's Church, London, England (2012); 'The Beat of the Show', Inverleith House, Edinburgh, Scotland (2011); and the major touring exhibition 'What Went Down' at Museum Abteiberg, Monchengladbach, Germany, realised in cooperation with Modern Art Oxford, England and the Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'île de Vassivière, France where the show was on view in summer 2011.

Concurrent with his exhibition in Zurich, Houseago will also present two exhibitions of new works at Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row which will be on view from 7 September to 27 October 2012.

On view in the ground floor gallery:
Paul McCarthy 'PROPO'
1 September – 20 October 2012
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

Forthcoming exhibitions:
Rita Ackermann 'Fire by Days'
19 September – 3 November 2012
Hauser & Wirth London, Piccadilly

Zhang Enli 'Topology'
27 October – 22 December 2012
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

Phyllida Barlow
5 November – 22 December 2012
Hauser & Wirth New York

Isa Genzken
15 November – 12 January 2013
Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row

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Untitled
2012
Tuf-Cal, hemp, iron rebar, graphite
213.4 x 543.6 x 292.1 cm / 84 x 214 x 115 in

Untitled
2012
Bronze
96.5 x 152.4 x 16.5 cm / 38 x 60 x 6 1/2 in