

# David Zwirner

New York London Paris Hong Kong

## Isa Genzken *Paris New York*

Opening 29 August 2020  
108, rue Vieille du Temple  
75003 Paris



Isa Genzken, *Untitled*, 2018 © Isa Genzken / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn  
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of recent work by the German artist Isa Genzken, on view at the gallery's Paris location. This will be the artist's fifth solo exhibition with David Zwirner and her first solo show in Paris since 2010. The exhibition coincides with a major presentation of Genzken's early work at the Kunstmuseum Basel.

With a career spanning more than four decades, Genzken has incessantly probed the shifting boundaries between art, design, architecture, media, technology, and the individual. Her prodigious oeuvre frequently incorporates seemingly disparate materials and imagery to create complex, enigmatic works that range in media, including sculpture, painting, collage, drawing, film, and photography. Deeply attuned to both the legacies of the twentieth-century avant-garde and the materials and forms of twenty-first-century global society, Genzken's work viscerally interrogates the impact of our increasingly commodified and interconnected culture on our everyday lives.

The show will feature an installation of Genzken's recent "tower" sculptures. These works stem from the artist's decades-long fascination with architecture and urban skylines. At once makeshift and monumental, these architectonic forms consist of vertical structures of medium-density fiberboard adorned with mirror foil, spray paint, and other media, complicating the distinctions between interior and exterior space. Engaging the architectural and sculptural histories of modernism, the towers are physically imposing, yet the materials and their open and porous forms allude to the inherent vulnerability of the modern built environment. In one tower, Genzken interweaves mannequins—a

ready-made sculptural form that she refers to as *Schauspieler* (Actors) and that appears frequently in her assemblages—further challenging the geometries and spatial orders of the structures. The inclusion of these mass-produced consumerist models of the human form, as well as other found material and imagery, makes for an uncanny visual and spatial encounter. A group of recent sculptures from the artist's *Nefertiti* series will be presented as well. Begun in 2012, this series comprises plaster replicas of the bust of Nefertiti—an ancient Egyptian queen whose image evokes an ideal of feminine beauty—on which Genzken has placed contemporary sunglasses and eyewear. Genzken installs the busts on wooden plinths at eye level, a practice she has utilized in her sculptural works since the 1980s.

Also on view will be a recent group of aluminum wall-mounted panel works. Genzken creates these panels by layering various industrially produced, commercially available materials on top of the flat aluminum support. These new panels vary greatly in the density of their material embellishment. Several of them feature smears and pools of acrylic lacquer that rest loosely at times on the surface of the panel, while others are densely covered in photographs, ephemera, and swatches of tape, foil, and fabrics. Visually, the works reference the materials and surfaces of minimalist sculpture, the gesturalism and materiality of twentieth-century abstraction, the cladding on corporate office towers, and modern screens and information surfaces, among other art-historical and modern design traditions.

These recent works testify to the importance of Genzken's art today, as it continues to redefine the way individuals relate to their ever-changing visual and material environments.

Born in 1948 in Bad Oldesloe, Germany, Isa Genzken studied fine arts, art history, and philosophy in Hamburg, Berlin, and Cologne, before completing her studies at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 1977. Since 2004, her work has been represented by David Zwirner. In 2019, she was the recipient of the Nasher Prize, awarded every April by the Nasher Sculpture Center, in Dallas.

Genzken's work has been the subject of many major museum exhibitions, including traveling surveys organized by the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany (1988; traveled to Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, both 1989); The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago (1992; traveled to Portikus, Frankfurt; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; Städtisches Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, all 1993); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2002; traveled to Kunsthalle Zürich, 2003); and Whitechapel Gallery, London (2009; traveled to Museum Ludwig, Cologne). Other venues that have hosted important solo exhibitions include the Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (2000); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2002); Camden Arts Centre, London (2006); Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck (2006); Secession, Vienna (2006); and Museion, Bolzano, Italy (2010).

In 2013, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, organized Genzken's first museum survey in the United States, *Retrospective*, making it the most comprehensive presentation of her work to date, encompassing all media from the past forty years. The show traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Dallas Museum of Art in 2014. Also in 2014, *Isa Genzken: New Works* was presented at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg and subsequently traveled to the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt. In 2015, an extensive survey of Genzken's work was presented by the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The show traveled to Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, in 2016. In 2019, Kunsthalle Bern in Switzerland presented a solo exhibition of the artist's work. *Isa Genzken: Works, 1973–1983* is being presented at the Kunstmuseum Basel from September 5, 2020, to January 24, 2021.

Her work has been prominently featured in international biennials and group exhibitions including the 2007 Venice Biennale, where she represented Germany.

Work by the artist is represented in museum and public collections worldwide, including the Dallas Museum of Art; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Genzken lives and works in Berlin.

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