

## PHIL FROST

### *The Lion Approaches*

López de la Serna CAC is delighted to be presenting *The Lion Approaches* by the American artist Phil Frost (b. Jamestown, New York, 1973), a project that spans his work of the last two decades, with a special focus on his latest works. The exhibition shows these recent works, produced over the course of the six years from 2016 to 2021, alongside some of his most emblematic pieces, so that viewers can appreciate more deeply some of the characteristics of his unique creative process. Frost's style combines the sharpness and fluidity of urban art, incorporating found materials, with the elegance of a pictorial aesthetic in which geometric schemes dominate and lend dynamism to his complex compositions.

The exhibition includes such significant works as the diptych *Accumulated Field of Perceptive Experience* (2002 – 2014) and the monumental *Divergence of Opinion* (2014 – 2018), two magnificent examples that formed part of his *Magnetic Shift*, the first major solo exhibit to be mounted at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York. That show places him among the small group of artists chosen to exhibit their works in conversation with those of the Rockefeller Collection, which contains pieces by Clyfford Still, Naum Gabo, Ellsworth Kelly, and David Smith, among others. Frost acknowledges these masterpieces as inspirations for him at the beginning of his career as a self-taught artist in the 1990s.

Frost's career started in the alternative New York scene with the graffiti movement, creating images of great expressive power, recognizable by the juxtaposition of white patterns, symbols, and letters, all layered in depth. He defines his personal visual language as "comprised of a depth of layered sinuous sheaths of glyphic information that I refer to as intuitive mathematics; they are overlaid and dance atop figurative busts and repetitions or grids of heads that I call perceptive portraiture", which he uses to express sensory experience through visual gesture. These figures, reminiscent of primitive art and evoking tribal masks or totemic sculptures, are complemented by geometric patterns and graphic signs that are repeated rhythmically in the various planes, generating a structure that is articulated both by chromatic intensity and by the contrast between positive and negative space.

It was archaeological walks in rural areas of western Massachusetts during his childhood that sparked his interest in incorporating into his works all kinds of recovered objects—including pages from comics and newspapers, boxes, bottles, jars, buttons, leaves, feathers, plates, cloth, baseball bats, boxing gloves, locks, keys, paintbrushes, numbers, and metal letters. He recontextualizes these found elements within the framework that modulates the pictorial surface, canvases built up with layers of acrylic, spray enamel, correction fluid, ink, and paper. The three-dimensionality of the reused elements gives real volume to the pieces, as can be appreciated in those where the supports are used doors that he has salvaged and which have a prominent place in this exhibition. The long period of time spent in making these works becomes a metaphor for the lees left by time in our existence, which collide with the sediments of other eras' objects and, at the same time, engage in dialogue with the viewer's present.

Phil Frost was recognized with the Pernod Award at the age of 23, and he was 25 when held his first solo exhibition at a New York gallery. His first institutional exhibition was held at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 2002, the same year that he received a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts. In 2004 he was awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and received a grant from The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation.

His solo exhibitions have included shows at the University Art Museum in Albany, New York; the Spiral Museum Cultural Center in Tokyo; and most recently at the CAC Málaga. His work has been exhibited in group shows at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut; the Bronx Museum of the Arts and MoMA's PS1 in New York; the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, California; and he has participated in the acclaimed *Beautiful Losers* (2004 - 2009) that toured the United States and Europe.

Major public collections that hold his work include LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art); the Princeton University Art Museum in New Jersey; the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in Chicago; Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; The Progressive Corporation in Ohio; Colección Solo in Madrid; and the Fundación Canaria para el Desarrollo de la Pintura in Las Palmas.