

Esther Schipper

Thomas Demand

memo

February 18 – April 1, 2023



Thomas Demand, **Daily #36**, dye transfer print, framed, 2022.
Image © the artist

Esther Schipper is pleased to present **memo**, an exhibition of works by Thomas Demand at our Paris gallery. This is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. On view are a selection of new and recent works, executed in C-print, dye transfer, and collotype.

Repository, 2018, imagines a small room which Alexander Kluge used as study in the 1980s. An homage to the senior German film director, tv producer and philosopher who has been a frequent interlocutor and collaborator of Demand's for many years, *Repository* reconstructs Kluge's longtime studio in Munich. Recreating a place that no longer exists, Demand constitutes a living memory of a life work: both as site of activity, for example, Kluge's extensive interview practice, and as repository of this work stored in multiple media, tape recordings, video cassettes, reels of film, and of course books.

A new work, **Memorial**, depicts a make-shift shrine with various bunches of flowers, candles and small placards, heaped together around a tree on a sidewalk. At first sight bright and colorful, the scene has a somber subtext. A reminder of the frequent gun violence in the United States for which such ad-hoc commemorations often quickly form, it draws on images from Buffalo, NY—although the specific reference may be less relevant than the lamentable ubiquity of the imagery.

The exhibition includes four works from **The Dailies**. As do all the works from this series, begun in 2008 and printed using the nearly extinct process of dye transfer, they picture small incidents of everyday life, based on images the artist caught on his cell phone. They recall moments of drifting attention in which our gaze is briefly arrested by an object that now catches our eye. Even with little visual information—all details carefully chosen by the artist—our imagination begins to construct a scenario for these vignettes. What looks like classic photography still-life also marks Demand's attention to the proliferation of amateur pictures shared in social media channels, or, as the eminent art historian Hal Foster puts it: "Certainly our shared media memory is a deep subject of Demand's work, and **The Dailies** also point to a mnemonic dimension buried in the trivia of our lives."

At the same time, **The Dailies** series evokes a rich legacy of art historical iconography. Thus **Daily #31** is

dominated by a green surface with two deep slashes that reveal orange padding. A scene of slight dilapidation, the image can be read as an oblique reference to the work of Lucio Fontana and his “cuts,” first produced in the late 1950s. The flattened orange of **Daily #33**, on the other hand, can register as abstraction, while the long paper trail depicted in **Daily #35** alludes both to an absent human who might have removed the excess, and an activity. **Daily #36**, finally, is indebted to the tradition of still-life painting. Depicting a cutting board with a knife and leftover peel from an apple, the shimmering metal blade and the soft glow of the white windowsill recall the virtuosity of competing polished surfaces in Netherlandish vanitas paintings. Incidentally, the “consumed” or “spent” apple also represents the final work in the series of **The Dailies**.

The collotype **Schilf** also has no apparent narrative content: tufts of reeds rising from the water are a familiar sight. Yet, the image can be read as water or sky, as plants or their reflection. In a self-referential gesture, then, the work alludes to Demand’s general practice of creating works at the threshold of two-dimensional image and three-dimensional object, but also to his monumental **Pond**, 2020, a work in reference to Claude Monet’s gardens of waterlilies at Giverny.

Concurrent exhibitions by Thomas Demand in Paris include **Thomas Demand: The Stutter of History** at the Jeu de Paume and **Forms and Patterns of Azzedine Alaïa by Thomas Demand** at the Fondation Alaïa with works drawing on the archives of the late fashion designer Azzedine Alaïa.

Thomas Demand was born in 1964 in Munich, Germany. He studied at the art academies in Munich and Düsseldorf. He received an MFA from Goldsmiths, University of London. Since 2011, he has been working as a professor at HFBK, the Hamburg University of Fine Arts. The artist lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles.

Thomas Demand’s **The Triple Folly**, a sculptural pavilion the artist designed in collaboration with Caruso St. John Architects, was inaugurated in September 2022 at Danish textile manufacturer Kvadrat’s headquarters in Ebeltoft in Denmark.

Thomas Demand’s work has been exhibited extensively. Recent solo exhibitions and special projects include: **HOUSE OF CARD**, MOCA, Toronto (2022); **The Stutter of History**, UCCA, Shanghai (2022); **Mundo de Papel**, Centro Botín, Santander (2021); **Mirror Without Memory**, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2021); **HOUSE OF CARD**, M – Museum, Leuven (2020–21); **The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied**, Fondazione Prada, Ca’ Corner della Regina, Venice (2017); **Thomas Demand**, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Villa Sauber – Project Space, Monaco (2016); **FOCUS: Thomas Demand**, The Modern, Fort Worth (2016); **Daily Show**, The Common Guild, Glasgow (2015); **Modellstudien**, Siza Pavillon, Raketestation Hombroich, Neuss (2015); **Pacific Sun**, LACMA, Los Angeles (2015); **Model Studies**, Graham Foundation, Chicago (2013); **Thomas Demand**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2012) (traveled to National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne); **The Dailies**, Kaldor Public Art Projects #25, Sydney (2012); **Thomas Demand**, Nationalgalerie, Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010); **Thomas Demand**, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2009); **Presidency. Embassy**, MUMOK, Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna (2009), and **Thomas Demand**, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005).

Demand participated in the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and represented Germany at the 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004). In 2011, Demand curated the critically acclaimed exhibition **La Carte d’après nature** at the Nouveau Musée National in Monaco, and **L’Image volée** at Fondazione Prada, Milan (2016).

His work is represented in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum Folkwang, Essen; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Tate Modern, London; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.

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