

Press Release

Thomas J Price. Beyond Measure

24 May – 20 August 2023
Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles
South Gallery



Los Angeles... Thomas J Price's multidisciplinary practice amplifies the visibility of marginalized bodies and challenges our preconceived attitudes towards power and value. 'Beyond Measure' marks the British artist's first comprehensive solo exhibition in the US, following his acclaimed public presentation 'Witness' (2022) with The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY. Featuring an entirely new series of sculptures in bronze and marble, the exhibition expands on Price's intrinsic understanding of materiality and scale to respond to traditional art canons and social structures. Whether encountered in a gallery or in public spaces, Price's works draw the viewer's attention to the nuances of conditioned behaviors and psychological frameworks, interrogating how we collectively occupy space. 'Beyond Measure' is a celebration of the strength of everyday individuals, focusing on the universal human qualities that unite us, and providing an opportunity to arrive at a shared moment of connection.

About the exhibition

For the first time, Price will present a group of large-scale figurative sculptures together in one location, enabling the viewer to inhabit the space around the figures and become an active participant in the narrative between them. The fictional bronze works are constructed from a full spectrum of amalgamated images and observations, as well as 3D scanning that took place during an open call in LA last summer. Ranging from 9 to 12 ft in height, the multi-layered works are emblematic of boundless and unfixed identities that are leaning away from social or racial profiling. Price never casts his figurative works at a one-to-one scale, stating that the size variations foster an interplay with silently coded monuments that permeate society, prompting us to reconsider who should exist in that form. Price continues to reference existing historical narratives and the western canon of classical sculpture, with 'A Place Beyond' (2023) he features a subtle nod to Gian Lorenzo Bernini's 'David' in the formal structure of the body and sense of tension in the twist of the torso.

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As a counter, Price's self-defined figures exist outside of the colonial gaze and monumentalize the ordinary, they encompass a space that transcend the need for dominance and aim to re-establish a deeper human context.

Adopting traditional materials and juxtaposing new technologies in order to critique art history is continued in a new series of pink marble heads, crafted in Italy using a dual approach of intricate hand-carving and digital techniques. Developed during the same open call as the full-scale figures, the works represent characteristics and physiognomy of real-life participants from LA, alongside details captured in the UK and beyond. In continuation of Price's Numen (Shifting Votive 1,2,3) series (2016) and Icon series (2017), these works embody archetypal objects of worship in a modern age, signifying a sense of importance and splendour despite their anonymous identities. Raised on plinths, the works exude a powerful cultural resonance while reversing a familiar sense of hierarchy attached to material and status. Much like Price's Acrylic Head series (2005 – ongoing), also on view within the exhibition, these works act as intimate portals into the subjects' inner landscapes. Consumed in their own thoughts, the powerful ensemble projects a quiet confidence that calls for a process of self-analysis from the viewer, dismantling archetypes often present in western media by both normalizing and elevating an alternative.



Price's critical investigation of these concepts extend beyond the medium of sculpture, utilizing material techniques and modes of display that question social and artistic conventions. Price's early photographic series Marble Draft (2010-2013) is extended to Hand Arrangement (The Complex Journeys of a Simple Form) (2023), presented in an enlarged grid formation within the exhibition. This line of conceptual inquiry sets out to interrogate themes of provenance, the passage of time and implied context, illuminating how identity can be attributed based on expert opinion or an institution as holder of fact. Price's hands simultaneously complete, connect and edit elements of the original classical subject, taking agency within the narrative and making a statement on the plasticity of truth. The autobiographical intervention reconfigures taught history and becomes an active medium within a newly rearranged and highly personal narrative.

Accompanying the exhibition, we are pleased to welcome back the Education Lab initiative, titled 'Traces of Us,' inspired by the work and practice of Thomas J Price. The Education Lab will explore themes of value, representation, and status within contemporary social structures, empowering young people to use art and their own first-hand experiences in a collaborative creative project. Participating students from local schools will explore the ways in which we celebrate success today and who they would like to commemorate, resulting in unique presentations within the Lab space throughout the summer.

About the artist

Thomas J Price has rapidly become one of the most important British contemporary artists of his generation, subverting stereotypical representations of figures we value in society and traditional power structures. After studying at Chelsea College of Art, he completed his MA at the Royal College of Art, London and began

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further interrogating the language of monumentalism to question the status inherent in public sculptures. Price has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton (2014), National Portrait Gallery, London (2016) and The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto (2019).

In 2021, Price was commissioned by Hackney Council to create the first permanent public sculptures to celebrate the contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants in the UK, unveiled in June 2022. Price's solo presentation, 'Witness,' with The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY was on view in Marcus Garvey Park from 2021 – 2022. Price has major forthcoming institutional projects in 2023 with the V&A Museum, London, UK and The National Portrait Gallery, London, UK, alongside a solo presentation at Rotterdam's historic central station and 'Art In The Park' at Baur au Lac, Zurich.

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Gallery hours:
Tuesday – Sunday, 11 am – 6 pm

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Carbon savings: Part of this exhibition was shipped by sea from Switzerland. Transporting by sea versus air resulted in a carbon savings of **50tCO₂e** (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent).

Caption and courtesy information:

All images:
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Thomas J Price
Grounded in the Stars
2023
Bronze
365.8 x 173.3 x 131.2 cm / 2 3/8 x 9 1/2 x 9 7/8 in
Photo: Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen

Thomas J Price
2022
Photo: Ollie Adegboye

Thomas J Price
Mental Structure #19 (Just Beyond This)
2017
Acrylic composite, perspex, automotive spray paint
21.6 x 11 x 12.3 cm / 8 1/2 x 4 3/8 x 4 7/8 in
Photo: Ken Adlard

Thomas J Price
Hand Arrangement (The Complex Journeys of a Simple Form)
2023
Lambda Print on Fuji Crystal Archive paper
Overall: 174.1 x 448 x 3.8 cm / 68 1/2 x 176 3/8 x 1 1/2 in (framed)
Photo: Damian Griffiths