

## Dana Schutz *The Sea and All Its Subjects*

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108, rue Vieille du Temple  
75003 Paris



Dana Schutz, *The Optometrists*, 2024  
© Dana Schutz. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by American artist Dana Schutz at its Paris location. This will be Schutz's second solo show with the gallery, and follows her major survey presentation *Dana Schutz: Le monde visible (The Visible World)* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris in 2023–2024.

*The Sea and All Its Subjects* reflects the artist's ongoing interest in constructing improbable scenarios that function as evocative visual allegories. Taking the playfully taxonomic title of the show as a broad starting point, Schutz explores distinct scenes within a vast and enigmatic world while also engendering a proliferation of possible meanings—as hinted at with homophonous slippage of associations between *sea* vs. *see* and *subject* (matter) vs. *subject* (to someone or something). Dense with color and mood, these wet-on-wet paintings are populated with figures that appear to float and drift within impossible, farfetched scenarios and exist under difficult, absurd circumstances. Characterized by their rich narratives and formal inventiveness, Schutz's new paintings attest to her continued examination of how subjective experience might be represented, as well as her ability to reveal the deeper ambiguities of the human condition.

A number of the works on view present figures engaged in seemingly difficult or futile tasks or exchanges. *The Optometrists* (2024) shows a group of one-eyed creatures picking up round (or almost round) objects, including various fruits, a deflated medicine ball, and broken eggs. Recalling depictions of the mythical Cyclops by symbolist painter Odilon Redon (1840–1916), the figures appear to be trading eyes—perhaps in a blind attempt to give each other the gift of sight. *Mourning an Octopus* (2024) shows a group mysteriously maneuvering a large octopus into or out of a museum. The creature's tentacles are camouflaged among the terrazzo floor, which in turn looks like a collapsed starry sky. The paintings hanging behind the figures are varied in style and period, loosely evoking works by artists like Vincent van Gogh, Frans Hals, and Giorgio de Chirico.

Other works in the show feature single figures subjected to impossible situations or challenging conditions. In one canvas, a woman sits in a high-tech chair that has the ability to project images, as if it were an extension of the world inside the figure's mind. The transparent projections depict images of nature—some symbolic, some painterly. The seated figure appears exultant yet somber; her almost religious presence is echoed in her gold necklace, which spells out *Glory* in looping cursive script. *The Catch* (2024) depicts a large idol in the form of a man being swallowed by a giant fish. A group of smaller figures carry the amalgam away on rocky terrain, as fishing lures hang from above. Both fish and man are trapped, and their formal confluence vaguely resembles an inert merman.

Double entendres and failing attempts at communication are evinced in works such as *The Medium* (2024), which shows a solemn figure being constructed as if out of clay, surrounded by various other people whose sculpting and carving tools lie on the floor nearby. The subject appears to be changing and shifting faster than the sculptors can fashion it; at the same time, it is unclear if they are building it or merely propping it up. The surrounding individuals also seem to be attempting to communicate through the central figure, who forms a sculptural medium as well as a medium between distinct realms. In *The Patient* (2024), a group attempts to transport an ailing female patient using a large cloth, like a canvas physically conveying its subject, while also evoking a quasi-religious or triumphant processional. Her discombobulated body rests uncomfortably on the cloth, as if about to slip off, eluding easy grasp.

Dana Schutz (b. 1976) is a New York-based painter and sculptor who constructs complex, allegorical visual narratives that engage the capacity of art to represent subjective experience. Often depicting figures in seemingly impossible, enigmatic, or invented situations, her works reveal the deeper complications, tensions, and ambiguities of contemporary life.

Schutz was born in Livonia, Michigan, and received her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and her MFA from Columbia University, New York.

A major solo traveling exhibition of the artist's work, *Dana Schutz: The Visible World*, was recently presented at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, followed by the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2023–2024). Recent solo museum exhibitions of the artist's work include *Dana Schutz: Eating Atom Bombs*, held at the Transformer Station, Cleveland (2018), which debuted a series of paintings by the artist; an exhibition of new work at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); a career survey at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2015); and a comprehensive solo exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield, England (2013; traveled to Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, Germany, through 2014).

In 2011, the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York, presented *Dana Schutz: If the Face Had Wheels*, a retrospective featuring paintings and drawings created by the artist over the previous decade. The show subsequently traveled to the Miami Art Museum and the Denver Art Museum in 2012 to 2013. The artist's work has been the subject of additional solo presentations at institutions worldwide, among them the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (2012); Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (2011); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2010); and Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Italy (2010). In 2006, the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, presented *Dana Schutz: Paintings 2002–2005*, which later that same year traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland. The artist's first solo museum presentation was

held in 2004 at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas.

In 2023, *Dana Schutz*, the first monograph on the artist's work, was published by Phaidon Press, with essays by Dan Nadel and Lynne Tillman and an interview with the artist by Hamza Walker.

Schutz has been represented by David Zwirner since 2020. Her first solo exhibition with the gallery, *Dana Schutz: Jupiter's Lottery*, was on view in 2023 in New York.

Schutz's work is held in numerous public collections, including the Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Cleveland Institute of Art; Cleveland Museum of Art; Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine; de la Cruz Collection, Miami; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Italy; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts; Rubell Museum, Miami; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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